They say everything is bigger in Texas. The state itself is big (equivalent to the geographic size of Europe), BBQ is big, the ranches are big and football is big. Fifty miles south of Austin in the small town of New Braunfels you’ll find Treetop Pediatric Dentistry, the pediatric dental practice of Dr. Brandon Shamblin, who has one of the biggest hearts in Texas.

CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING GREATER THAN YOURSELF
Dr. Shamblin's upbringing was anchored in a strong community and faith. He grew up in Mexia (pronounced mə-HAY-ə), Texas a small town of about 7,000 people. "There was a love for the community; you always knew there was someone there to help you if you needed it. People always gave of their time, effort and their money even when there wasn’t a lot of extra money," he said. For Dr. Shamblin, growing up in that type of environment taught him to be grateful for what he had and to give generously. His Christian faith also guided him toward a life of compassion and charity. "You have a natural instinct to give and to contribute to something greater than yourself," he said. Dr. Shamblin chose to take this innate service mentality from his upbringing in Mexia into the rest of his professional life.

PRE-DESTINED FOR PEDIATRICS
The choice to become a pediatric dentist seemed pre-destined for Dr. Shamblin. After considering many majors in college, he found he was drawn to dentistry. On a break from school, he turned to his hometown dentist in Mexia, Dr. Cholopisa, whom he had known since he was young. When he asked Dr. Cholopisa what he thought about this career option, he quickly replied, "You know, I’ve always thought you would be a good dentist." The next step was to choose a specialty. He decided he would pursue pediatric dentistry in his third year of dental school while on a pediatric rotation. "From day one, it just clicked for me. It was natural. There was no anxiety, and I felt very comfortable seeing kids." Soon after that he was offered a summer internship in pediatric dentistry. He graduated from University of Texas at San Antonio with a D.D.S. degree.
DENTISTS MENTOR YOUNG DR. SHAMBLIN

During his dental residency, Dr. Shamblin met Dr. Kenny Havard and Dr. Travis Hildebrand, who had established a thriving pediatric dental and orthodontic practice in Georgetown, Texas. “We just kind of hit it off—our personalities are very similar,” said Dr. Shamblin. The two were happy to help Dr. Shamblin as he started his career, and Dr. Shamblin says he hasn’t stopped asking them questions since they met.

DRAWN TO SMALL-TOWN LIFE

When the time came to start thinking about starting his career as a pediatric dentist, Dr. Shamblin and his wife, Terry Lind, had a big decision to make. Where? For them, quality of life was the priority. They were drawn to small-town life and the same environment they both grew up in. “It was more important to live somewhere that we would enjoy rather than just picking a place that needed a dentist the most,” said Dr. Shamblin.

TIMELINE FOR POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP TOO FAR OUT

They wanted to stay in south Texas between Austin and Houston, and chose the town of New Braunfels. New Braunfels offered the active, family-oriented community that they wanted. Dr. Shamblin ran the decision by Dr. Havard and Dr. Hildebrand who also thought it was a smart idea. He then reached out to the dentists in the town to see if they wanted a partner in their practices. After following many leads, it became clear the timeline for a potential partnership was too far out. So Dr. Shamblin started to put a business plan in place to start his own practice. His practice, Treetop Pediatric Dentistry, opened in November of 2012 in New Braunfels.

BEGINNING OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Dr. Shamblin started community outreach in New Braunfels before the practice was open for business. He started by going to New Braunfels preschools. He and his wife put together a plan of action the night before their first visit. “We created Happy Teeth Academy, our preschool program, and we talk about going to the dentist. We dress the kids in a tooth costume and let them look at the dental instruments,” he said. They found that many of the three- to five-year-old preschoolers
MEET THE TEAM!
Nicole Speck, Brandi Stehling May, Shannon Stokes Ramirez, Dr. Brandon Shamblin, Alison Benedict (Burkhart Account Manager), Priscilla Torti, Marcie Beckham
had never been to the dentist so it could be very intimidating for them. This outreach continues today and has evolved to include his staff, who now facilitate Happy Teeth Academy presentations.

**MAKING THE OFFICE A FUN PLACE TO VISIT**
Dr. Shamblin and his staff try to make the office a fun place to work and visit. "The staff enjoys that it's more than a job they come to. "We can do silly stuff. We sit down and plan dress-up days, and they contribute ideas to Happy Teeth Academy," he said. The Treetop Pediatric Dentistry staff also participates in community events. For instance, in last year’s parade they dressed up as Minions while Dr. Shamblin was Felonious Gru from the movie "Despicable Me." They also participated in KidsFest—a two-day kids event. At KidsFest, each vendor has games and prizes. Treetop Pediatric Dentistry participated with a booth where Dr. Shamblin dressed up as the Tooth Fairy. He and his staff want the families to know that visiting the dentist can be fun. His intention is to lessen the anxiety for the children visiting the practice.

**BIT BY THE VOLUNTEER BUG**
Just months after opening his practice, his wife, Terry Lind, sent Dr. Shamblin a text asking if he would be interested in going to Haiti to volunteer. Without considering the logistics of closing his practice, how he would fund the trip, or how he would find the supplies, tools and equipment to do his work properly, he replied, "Sure!" Dr. Shamblin had done previous volunteer work and as he put it, "got bit by the bug" of volunteering. It also seemed only natural for him to answer without hesitation because of his grounded upbringing and Christian faith. "God chooses a path for you and sometimes you have to have faith—even if it’s not what you planned," he said.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY**
The staff of Treetop Pediatric Dentistry frequently make appearances in full dress-up gear at local events and parades. Some memorable costumes included the cast of *Despicable Me*, pirates, superheroes and beyond! The staff also enjoys helping with the Happy Teeth Academy, and finding ways to make dentistry more enjoyable for younger generations.
When his wife asked if he would be willing to volunteer his skills to orphans in need in Haiti, Dr. Shamblin jumped at the chance. There are over 750,000 children who were left orphaned in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, and a consistent need for help. Dr. Shamblin plans on making a trip back to Haiti every six months to continue making a difference.
PROVIDING CARE TO ORPHANED CHILDREN IN HAITI

Six months later, in 2013, they were on a flight to Haiti with the organization Coreluv. Founded by Mike and Mandy Reiszner, Coreluv is an internationally recognized non-profit organization that provides life-saving care to orphans in Haiti. The population of Haiti is more than ten million people and 70% live in poverty with an average annual income of $400. Prior to the 2010 earthquake, the estimated number of children who were orphaned or abandoned was 380,000. That number climbed to 750,000 after the devastating earthquake in 2010.

DENTAL SERVICE IN HIGH DEMAND

When Dr. Shamblin arrived at the orphanage in Haiti, there was no dedicated space to perform dental procedures. He had to choose and clear an area to set up shop. The closest dentist was six miles away from the orphanage which meant the services Dr. Shamblin offered were in high demand. On the first day of work, a line of people had formed to see him before he even arrived at the orphanage. He had to quickly develop a priority plan of action for the week he was there volunteering: examine and treat the orphans first, then the staff of the orphanage, then townspeople who were suffering pain from dental problems. The week went by quickly and Dr. Shamblin saw about 100 patients. He knew after his first week in Haiti that there was a profound need for his skills and he would have to return.

HELP WITH CLINIC FOR ORPHANS AND COMMUNITY

Since that initial trip, he has gone back three times and treated approximately 500 patients. In his continued work with Coreluv, Dr. Shamblin has also dedicated time and effort to improving the infrastructure of the orphanage. Working with Mike Reiszner and Jake Sangster, he was able to give input on the construction of a health clinic that includes a dedicated dental room. “It’s somewhere I can set up shop without having to clear an area. It’s come a long way. It’s very humbling to be a part of that,” he said. Not only is it a clinic for the orphans, it’s also for the community. His long-term goal is to visit Haiti every six months and provide regular dental checkups for the orphans. He would also like to eventually have a fully equipped and stocked dental room year round.

FELLOW DENTIST SHARES EQUIPMENT

Dr. Shamblin’s trips to Haiti are all self-funded, but he gets help where he can. He has turned to fellow New Braunfels
dentist, Dr. Michael Cole, for help. Dr. Cole volunteers his services in Guatemala, also a country of great need. Because of this, Dr. Cole has collected equipment to take on these trips and has lent Dr. Shamblin equipment to perform dental work in Haiti.

Dr. Shamblin also partners with Burkhart to source the supplies that he takes. His Burkhart Account Manager, Alison Benedict, works with the laundry list of needs that he provides her. Burkhart has supplied him with items such as gloves, gauze, bibs, masks, cotton rolls, anesthetic, needles, hardware and tubing for the dental unit. He’s also relied on the expertise of Burkhart Service Technician, Chip Bryant, who helped him fix a supply line to a portable delivery unit. Burkhart supplied him with tubing that he needed to use this portable unit.

When asked what he receives personally from his work with the orphanage in Haiti, he replied, “Being a dentist is a very unique skill. I would be doing an injustice if I didn’t volunteer outside of the practice. Kids are kids, whether they’re in New Braunfels or Haiti. Seeing the dentist can make them feel anxious. I understand there will be no Facebook likes or applause for what I do. But it’s important for me as a Christian to do something for the greater good. Maybe they’ll remember that I helped them without expecting anything in return.”