

Focus: Different Business Models in Independent Dental Hygiene



From Humble Beginnings to a Mobile Dental Hygiene Clinic: A Journey of Service and Empowerment

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Jose was the subject of a TV Ontario documentary showing how mobile independent dental hygiene practices are filling the gaps in dental hygiene care, serving the most vulnerable populations, and changing the landscape of oral health care. [youtube.com/watch?v=2H3D7bXsoWE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2H3D7bXsoWE)

When I reflect on my journey as a dental hygienist, I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude. It's a story that started far from the world of oral health care: one shaped by hardship, resilience, and a strong desire to help others. Today, I am proud to operate a mobile dental hygiene clinic that brings care to those who might not otherwise have access to it. But this path was not an easy one—it required patience, sacrifice, and a deep commitment to my community. I hope my story can inspire others, especially those who have faced struggles or doubts along the way.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY: A HUMBLE BEGINNING

When I arrived in Canada at the age of 14, I didn't have the luxury of a home or a clear path forward. My first home in this new country was the Red Door Shelter in Toronto, where my family found refuge and support. It was there that I learned the importance of community and how resilience can be born from adversity. Starting over in a new country wasn't easy, but it taught me to appreciate the little things—a roof over my head, the opportunity for a fresh start, and the value of hard work instilled by my parents.

THE BIRTH OF MY MOBILE CLINIC: A DREAM IN THE MAKING

Reflecting on my career through the COVID-19 pandemic, I realized how important it was for people to have access to oral health care. Many people were not fortunate enough to get out and have dental or dental hygiene appointments. It became even clearer to me that professional oral care should be available to all, regardless of their circumstances. This understanding fuelled my decision to create a mobile dental hygiene clinic. I envisioned a clinic that could go directly to people in need—whether in nursing homes, shelters or other communities where access to oral health care was limited. My goal was simple: break down barriers (mental, physical, and/or financial) and bring care to those who needed it the most.



But creating a mobile dental hygiene clinic wasn't without its challenges. I had no prior experience with business or logistics, and there was so much to learn. Thankfully, I connected with a retired dental hygienist who helped me make my dream a reality. I was able to purchase dental equipment from her, which allowed me to hit the ground running. Once I had the equipment and support from my girlfriend, Maria, we worked together to build the mobile dental hygiene clinic. The process was not easy, but with determination, it became a reality.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY AND MENTORSHIP

Through this journey, I learned that the most important thing I could rely on was community. My family, friends, and mentors—such as Maria Peragine, a classmate and the owner of Glow Dental Hygiene Clinic—were instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of building a mobile dental hygiene clinic. What I didn't expect was how powerful a ripple effect my work would have in the community. I received constant feedback from patients, who are often elderly, experiencing homelessness, refugees or those living with disabilities. The gratitude they expressed reaffirmed my purpose. Every smile after an appointment, every word of thanks from a patient who hadn't seen a dentist in years reminded me that I was on the right path. My mobile dental hygiene clinic wasn't just about oral care; it was about restoring dignity and empowering those who often felt forgotten.

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A MOBILE DENTAL HYGIENE CLINIC THAT MEETS A GROWING NEED

I am proud to say that the clinic has been instrumental in reaching individuals who might not otherwise have received oral health care. From routine scaling and debridement to oral cancer exams and oral hygiene education, the impact has been undeniable. I have had the privilege of working with organizations such as the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre, and the Toronto Island community. The most fulfilling part of this journey is knowing that I'm making a real difference in these communities. It's not just about teeth—it's about giving people the tools and knowledge to live healthier, happier lives.

MOVING FORWARD: EXPANDING THE VISION

The journey is far from over. I'm in the process of developing a new, more advanced mobile dental hygiene clinic with restorative capabilities to expand our reach and serve even more people in need. This new clinic will be fully designed to meet the needs of those I aim to serve while ensuring that we meet all health and safety standards.

Looking back on my journey, I'm proud of what I've achieved, but I know there's always more to be done. My story is one of resilience, but it's also a reminder that every challenge we face can be an opportunity for growth. From living in a shelter to running a mobile dental hygiene clinic, I've learned that anything is possible with dedication, hard work, and a passion for helping others.



FINAL THOUGHTS: AN INVITATION TO SERVE

To my fellow dental hygienists: I hope my story has inspired you to think creatively and find new ways to serve your communities. Whether you're considering a mobile dental hygiene clinic or looking for other ways to make a difference, remember that our profession has the power to change lives. Keep pushing forward, keep dreaming big, and never forget the impact you can have.

If you take anything from my journey, let it be this: no matter where you start, you have the ability to create something meaningful. Your work matters, and your passion will always lead you to where you're meant to be.