

## Trekkers conquer the Inca Trail for Dentaïd

Oral health charity Dentaïd is celebrating another successful challenge trek as 23 trekkers have returned from Peru victorious having walked the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.

The 10 day trip saw the group spending a couple of days in Cusco acclimatising to the altitude before commencing the 4 day walk along the trail. Whilst in Cusco the group took part in a walking tour of the city, visited the ruins of Sacsayhuamán, trekked the Sacred Valley and visited the market town of Pisac. They also visited the Kausay Wasi clinic where the group had a tour the dental facilities and met some of the young patients, helping the trekkers to see the type of projects the money they have raised would be supporting.

Finally it was time to start the trek proper. Walking sticks in hand the trekkers left civilization behind them and started to trek the Inca Trail. Immediately they were immersed in the awe inspiring mountains with original Inca stonework, ruins and tunnels, winding uneven paths, spectacular cloud forest and snow capped peaks.

The next four days were extremely challenging, but an amazing experience. By day the trekkers ascended and descended the seemingly never ending Inca steps, climbing to 4200 metres above sea level on day 2, reaching the top of Dead Woman's Pass in the early afternoon. At night they slept in tents underneath the Peruvian star filled sky. Inca ruins were scattered along the route and cultural explanations were given by the guides throughout the trip.

On the final day the group woke at 4am to reach Intipunku (Gates of the Sun) for sunrise although the thick mist impaired the view of Machu Picchu. Luckily as the group made their final descent the mist began to clear and revealed the magnificent site of Machu Picchu. After a guided tour around the Inca site and lots of photos, the group visited Aguas Calientes, before returning to Cusco ready for a well deserved celebration meal.

Jenni Phillips, Communications & Fundraising Manager at Dentaïd, who accompanied the trip, said "The trek was an amazing experience, it surpassed all our expectations and I'd like to thank everyone who took part. We had a fantastic group who supported each other and who instantly bonded to become firm friends. It was a trip I'll never forget and I feel lucky to have had the chance to take part, it was hard but definitely worth it."

The trek has raised around £22,000 so far to help with Dentaïd's work. With so many new projects currently being set up, the money raised could be going towards programmes such as; school oral health and toothbrushing in the Cameroon, 8 dental surgeries and engineer training in Lao and a major project to address the issue of infant oral mutilation in Africa.

This trek was organised as part of the Dentaïd/Denplan partnership and number of the trekkers involved were from Denplan practices.

In September 2008 Dentaïd is taking a group to trek Mount Toubkal in Morocco. In September 2009 Dentaïd is also planning a trek to the Great Wall of China. For information about either of these treks please contact Felicity Patterson on 01794 324249 or e – mail [info@dentaïd.org](mailto:info@dentaïd.org) for an information pack.