

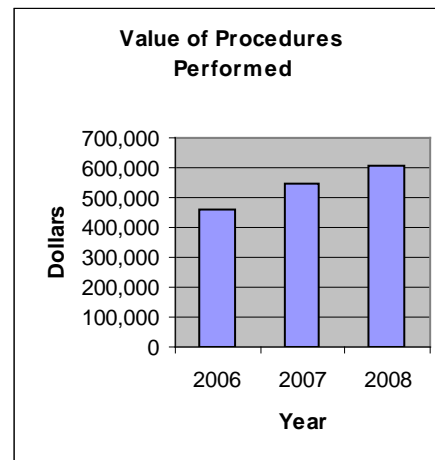
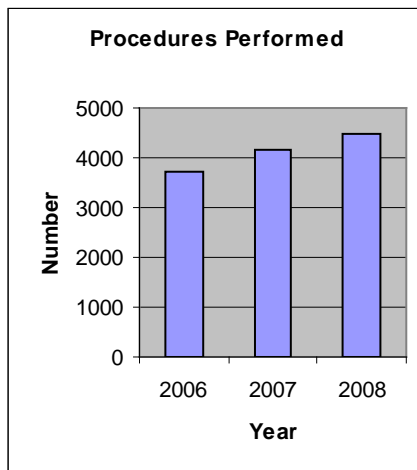


## Free Dental Clinic 2008 Annual Report

2008 was the Free Dental Clinic's third full year of operation. In many ways, the resulting stories are familiar – many individuals receive critically needed dental care, often for the first times in their lives. Yet for the Clinic's dedicated dentists and staff, each case is different. Every individual who can now work and support his or her family, whose health is no longer threatened by infection, who can eat a normal diet, or who is able to smile in public, brings a different identity and story. Each patient benefits in different ways, and each is deeply grateful. Mountain neighbors that we treated include:

- A woman whose infected teeth were threatening her unborn child.
- Four brothers, ages 8 to 13, who could not sleep or function at school because of constant dental pain, and who now (after a combined 40 visits) are happy, active little boys.
- A man who hugged our Executive Director in Ingles, as he bought his first Christmas ham in 15 years -- because of our prosthetics program, he can now chew solid food.

**Key Statistics.** We are particularly happy that the Clinic increased the number of procedures performed by 8%. The value of those procedures rose by 11% to \$650,000 -- that's more than



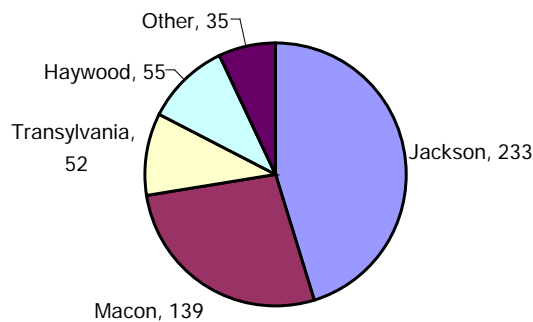
**four** times what we spent to provide those services. In 2008, we extended our approach of doing as much work as possible during each patient visit (some free clinics will do only one procedure per visit). By doing all the work needed in one quadrant of a patient's mouth at one sitting, our dentists bring faster relief to pain and infection, and reduce the time and expense devoted to the numbing process. This approach also helps patients deal with work absences and transportation.

We continued to emphasize priority treatment of emergency situations, with a 20% increase in emergency visits, and a major decrease by year-end in the emergency waiting list.

**Our Prosthetics Program.** During 2008, we received additional grant funding for our prosthetics program, which is unique among North Carolina free clinics. For patients requiring dentures, we prepare their mouths and then contract with Affordable Dentures for fabrication and installation. As a result, a number of former patients are, for the first time in many years, able to eat normally and

smile freely. In addition, we now have the equipment and skills to prepare molds for crowns and to install the finished crown. This enables us to save teeth that would otherwise be pulled. We carefully screen our prosthetics patients -- this unusual resource is for people who not only will benefit, but who will change their habits to protect their teeth and gums from future disease. We also require that those who are able contribute to the outside lab costs of their new teeth.

- Our patients predominantly live in Jackson and Macon Counties. The proportion of Hispanics declined to 10%, perhaps due to reverse migration caused by scarce job opportunities.
- All our patients are from households unable to afford care for their extensive dental problems. Their median household income was 90% of the federal poverty level.
- They have severe problems – 70% of our 930 extractions required surgery because there was too little tooth left to pull.



**Our Dentists.** Drs. Tom Smith, Mel Livernois and Michelle McDonald are the backbone of our regular Clinic hours. Both our patients and our community owe them recognition and thanks for their exceptional service. During 2008 they were joined by Dr. Christopher Dyer of Highlands and Dr. David Silverstein of Franklin, who are each volunteering one Friday every month. Drs. Dyer and Silverstein are exceptional professionals who enable us to serve more patients and to treat additional problems. Both contribute greatly to our progress in reducing the emergency waiting list.

We are very encouraged by a change during 2008 in North Carolina's licensing for out-of-state dentists who would like to volunteer their services. Using a new streamlined procedure, we hope that practicing dentists who have vacation homes in the mountains will be able to help in 2009.

**Our Finances.** We again enjoyed extraordinary generosity from individuals, churches and organizations in Cashiers and Highlands. We are deeply appreciative of their confidence in the Clinic and in its contributions to the lives of our neighbors, and to the welfare of our communities. In addition, we successfully raised funds from important foundations for operations as well as

specific programs, particularly hygiene and prosthetics. We also received capital grants that we used for key equipment and renovation of our facilities. And our innovative prosthetics program won the Clinic a \$10,000 award from the BlueCross BlueShield Foundation.

Clinic operating expenses for 2008 were \$144,400. Our donors covered these costs, and also enabled us to increase our endowment to \$561,000. As we have increased our services, we are also increasing some of our costs, and the 2009 expense budget is \$161,000. We hope to meet this challenge. We also hope to add to the endowment, which will provide income in 2010 and later years, when we will no longer be eligible for important start-up foundation grants we have been receiving.

**We Need Your Continued Support.** The Clinic's success reflects the talents and generosity of our community. It depends on you for both volunteer hours (please call Karen Minton at 743-3393) and funding (tax-deductible contributions can be made to BRMHP, Box 451, Cashiers, NC 28717).