



Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

Serving the area since 2005

FALL 2011

Missions Of Mercy- A Cooperative Effort For The Region's Needy

Imagine 300 people lined up at your door before 7:00 am. Consider the effort and logistics that it would take to provide dental care for them. That is what the Missions of Mercy weekend was like in Sylva, September 23rd and 24th.

Karen Minton, the Executive Director at the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, had been in touch with Dr. Bill Blaylock of the North Carolina Missions of Mercy and Paula Carden of Jackson County Health Department for some time about the need for another major dental clinic in our region. But, it wasn't until this summer that plans began to get serious and the September dates were settled.

The Clinic has seen increased calls over the past year and there were just too many needs that we could not meet on our own. "Our waiting list typically hovers at between 300 and 400 patients," said Minton. "The NCMOM Clinics allow people to get immediate treatment without having to wait for months to make it to the top of our waiting list."



(R-L) Dr. Bill Blaylock of NCMOM, Paula Carden of Jackson County Health Department, Ron Keller and Lynn Keating of the BRFDC

The Missions of Mercy Clinics were begun in NC in 2004 after the need was perceived for accessible care across the state. Typically, NCMOM sets up about 30 portable dental chairs, offering cleanings, extractions, and limited restorations to roughly 350 patients over the course of a weekend. Last year, the NCMOM program provided free dental care in 12 statewide clinics to 6,753 patients through donated services valued at \$3.1 million. It served roughly 300 patients in Sylva in 2010.

There was considerable coordination between Minton, Carden and Blaylock leading up to the event as they worked to coordinate volunteer dentists

and hygienists from across the state to show up and work long days. There was also a big push in our own region to persuade dentists and their staffs to donate their time and efforts. Blaylock offered this commentary: "What we see in the western part of the state is that there are fewer dentists available to begin with, and because of that fact, we have greater needs from patients."

Paula Carden, looking at the statistics for the weekend, offered this observation: "We had roughly 500 people show up over the weekend. Many arrived as early as 2:00 pm on Thursday for Friday morning. We treated or triaged around 240 both days. If we had more volunteer dentists and hygienists, we could have served many more."

The total number of volunteers involved was hard to gauge since they were coming and going throughout the weekend. Between the staff of MOM, volunteer dentists and professionals, dental students, health department staff, and community volunteers, Carden estimated that over 100 people helped to make the weekend a success.

The weekend was grueling. It included arrival a couple of hours before the doors open for meetings and preparation, and a couple hours after the last patient of each day for follow-up, evaluation and reporting.

Already, just weeks after this event, Minton and members of the board are in preparation for another visit from MOM in 2012. They are looking into expanding the space, the number of dentists and volunteers available, and possibly increasing the health services offered to those attending.

As contributors and supporters to the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, you can be proud of how your gifts are being used for improving the dental care and the lives of some of the neediest in our area.



Karen Minton (center) surrounded by volunteers at the Jackson County Health Department during the MOM weekend.



Volunteers at work on September 23rd in Sylva



Hundreds lined up prior to the doors opening at 7:00 AM on Friday morning, September 23

and hygienists from across the state to show up and work long



**Blue Ridge
Free Dental Clinic
Board of Directors**

2011 Officers

- Ron Keller—President
- Jim Smith—VP/ Secretary
- Larry Ray—Treasurer
- Karen Minton—Executive Director

2011 Directors

- Andrew Angle
- Jodie Cook
- Lynne Keating
- Ron Keller
- Dr. Mel Livernois
- Nancy Pankey
- Larry Ray
- Michael Rich
- Jim Smith

Our Volunteer Dentists

- Dr. Thomas Smith
- Dr. Michelle McDonald
- Dr. Mel Livernois
- Dr. Chris Dyer
- Dr. David Silverstein
- Dr. David Jones
- Dr. W. Craig Ashton
- Dr. Tommy Day
- Dr. Allen VanOverbeke

Connect with the
Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic
and the Tooth Fairies on



**A Message from
Ron Keller
President**

The Story Continues

“Leaders are visionaries with a poorly developed sense of fear and no concept of the odds against them.”

Robert Jarvik, artificial heart developer

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic began as the dream of a few Cashiers visionaries. Thanks to six years of hard work and support from people like you who share the vision, it continues to grow and fulfill its mission of “restoring lives, one tooth at a time.”

The numbers in the accompanying chart paint a picture of increasing patient demand brought on by the recession that has directly impacted us all, especially our less fortunate Western North Carolina neighbors.

	2005-2008	2009	2010	YTD Aug 2011
New Patients	1,323	347	348	211
Returning Patients	2,000	867	811	582
Total Visits	3,323	1,214	1,159	793
Procedures	13,178	4,072	3,746	2,421
Value	\$1,784,868	\$549,999	\$563,266	\$356,750

But these are just numbers. The real story of the Clinic lies in the commitment shared by a dedicated group of nine volunteer dentists. Their professional expertise enables the Clinic to develop complete treatment programs for patients willing to maintain a regular dental hygiene lifestyle. They are supported by a highly motivated staff led by Executive Director, Karen Minton, who effectively manages the complexities of working with these distinctively different professionals. I didn't fully appreciate the scope of her task until I got to know the dentists and the many differences in their operating styles.

The daily operation of the Clinic is one of continued staff education and development mixed with the appropriate amount of patience, persistence, and perspiration. As a result, the Clinic has received recognition from the North Carolina Dental Society, the NC Association of Free Clinics, and other civic organizations.

But the rest of the story is best told in the words of our many patients who, with the help of the Clinic, have overcome adversity to lead productive and capable lives in our community.

Over the past three years, I have enjoyed the opportunity to lead the Clinic as Board President. One of the best moves I made was to surround myself with good people. I am very proud of how we responded to the financial challenge required by the increase in patient demands. Many free clinics in North Carolina have been forced to curtail services because they relied on a single source of funding, whether from federal or state grants or from one large institution. Under the very capable leadership of Lynne Keating, our Chairperson for grant writing, the Clinic has expanded its source of funds beyond its original core.

As a result, a growing percentage of our annual contributions come from foundations and corporations outside the local community, but don't misunderstand that statement. The reality is that all of us have been impacted by the financial problems that the country is facing. Both individuals and institutional donors have reduced their contributions to not-for-profits. Your continued support, combined with external contributions, has allowed us to continue funding an increased patient load with a higher level of service, and to increase our endowment. This capital provides assurance that additional services can be considered even when traditional funding sources are expected to produce less in annual contributions.

I was first introduced to the Clinic in July 2006, when my wife, Kaye, suggested that the first gala would be incomplete without a tooth fairy. That fairy turned out to be me, complete with a pink tutu and gossamer wings. Since then, I can honestly say that I have enjoyed being a significant part of the Clinic's growth. There have been challenges, as there are with all growing organizations. As a team, we have learned to invent, adapt, and then reinvent. I will turn over the leadership reins to Lynne Keating when my term expires in January, but my heart will not be far from the people I've worked closely with over the past five plus years.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE "FRATERNAL ORDER OF TOOTH FAIRIES"

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic is pleased to welcome three new Members to the "Fraternal Order of Tooth Fairies." On Tuesday, September 6, Michael Devine (left), Ron Freeman, and Gary Leedham (right) recited their Tooth Fairy Oaths as Baby Huey, Firefly, and Hoot, respectively. The Tooth Fairies represent the Dental Clinic as ambassadors, attending schools, parades, and fund raisers in an attempt to raise awareness of the Clinic's mission to deliver high-quality dental care to people who cannot otherwise afford these critically needed services.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE BLUE RIDGE FREE DENTAL CLINIC



Nancy Pankey

Nancy Pankey of Cashiers, NC is a native of Coral Gables, FL and studied design at Stephens College and Parsons School of Design. She was married to Dr. Lindsey Pankey in 1961 and raised two children while he grew a successful dental practice in South Florida. Lindsey died in 2008. Her children and four grandchildren all live in Florida.

Nancy is very involved in community service here and in Miami, FL, during the winter months, where she is involved with the Junior League, the Beaux Arts Festival at the Univ. of Miami, and the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.



Larry Ray

Larry Ray of Highlands, NC is a native of Northern Indiana and has degrees from Purdue University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He enjoyed a 40 year career with Allis-Calmers and its successor company, Siemens.

Larry and his wife Mary Ann have two daughters and four grandchildren. They first came to Highlands in 1989 and bought property at the Cullasaja Club. They have been full-time residents here since 1998. Larry was President of the HOA for six years. They are also very active at Highlands United Methodist Church, where Larry has served on many boards and committees.



Jodie Cook

Jodie Cook of Highlands, NC is originally from Atlanta, GA and a graduate of Georgia Tech. After 15 years with DSM Chemicals, he established Highlands Chemical Corp. in 1994. He and his wife, Caroline, have been living in Highlands since 1996 and have been coming to the area since 1975.

Cook is very active in the town of Highlands and Macon County with a number of organizations. He has been especially active in the Highlands Rotary Club, where he is the immediate past president, and is currently the Assistant District Governor for District 7670.

YONAH- OUR THERAPY DOG

Yonah, Jessie's Buddy, had been to the clinic on a few occasions. Now he and his owner, Chris Pierson are on duty. Yonah is a beautiful Shiloh Shepherd that weighs 135 pounds and is a source of calm to both adults and children.

Chris and Yonah live in Sapphire, where Chris has been living and training search and rescue dogs since 1998.



Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

P.O. Box 451

Cashiers, NC 28717

(828) 743-3393



We restore lives, one tooth at a time

The IRA Charitable Rollover for 2011

Many donors can make a charitable gift straight from an IRA. The renewal of the IRA Charitable Rollover for 2011 is great news for people age 70 ½ and over who want to make a generous gift to the Free Dental Clinic and satisfy required minimum distributions from their IRA. Let us know how we can help. Call Ron Keller at **(828)743-9920** for a quick review of the basics. Please consult your tax and financial advisors when considering your IRA distribution.



Mission Statement

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic delivers high-quality dental care to people who cannot otherwise afford these critically needed services. Motivated by the beliefs and core values of our contributors and founding churches, we restore lives, one tooth at a time.

The Free Dental Clinic is located upstairs in Laurel Terrace on Highway 64 East, downtown Cashiers, NC
The Clinic can be reached at (828) 743-3393
www.blueridgefreedentalclinic.org