



Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

Serving the area since 2005

SPRING 2011

The Children's Dental Health Project - Rotary Club and BRFDC Work Together

February marked National Children's Dental Health Month, and the folks at the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic and the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley were busy responding to the needs in our community.

Children at Blue Ridge and Summit Schools were visited by Dr. Michelle McDonald and Lavender the Tooth Fairy from the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic who instructed them in proper oral hygiene and preventive tooth care.

This was in follow-up to the dental screenings done in November, 2010 in these schools. An analysis of the data from the 236 students screened revealed that 61% of the students had cavities, up from 2009 numbers. Notes were sent home to over 50% of the students suggesting that they see a dentist soon. Also discovered in these screenings were numerous restorations and generally reduced plaque levels, a sign of increased awareness of the students.

"I'm really proud of what the young kids are learning," says Dr. McDonald of the children she has counseled this month. They know how to brush and floss, and they understand the importance of taking care of their teeth. Cavities in kids can be caused by a lot of factors. One year's increased cavity rate should not discourage us."



Dr. Michelle McDonald

The screenings in the fall, along with the visit by Dr. McDonald and weekly fluoride rinses are made available to the students through "The Children's Dental Health Project," a joint program of the Rotary and the Clinic now beginning its fourth year.

The Children's Dental Health Project is the brainchild of

Robby Cahill, a Rotarian, former volunteer and current staff member at the Free Dental Clinic. "At the Clinic, we see young people in their twenties all the time with almost no savable teeth," he says. "They want them all pulled and come in expecting to leave with full dentures. I just can't imagine what it would feel like to lose all of your teeth that young."

Cahill presented the idea of a proactive preventive program to Rotary in 2007, and in an effort to "break the cycle" of poor dental hygiene and early dentures, Rotary created and funded the three-pronged approach for teaching children proper dental care. The message is loud and clear: "There is no reason why you should have to lose your teeth if you take care of them."

"This program is really a blessing," says Carol Mullarkey, RN, School Nurse at Blue Ridge School. "The more doctors learn about how oral health relates to overall good health, the more we can appreciate its importance." Indeed, people with gum disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease as those with healthy mouths, according to the American Academy of Periodontology.



Dr. Michelle McDonald

Dental decay in the Appalachian Mountains is no joke. The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic receives hundreds of calls a year from people who are in excruciating pain, disfigured, sleep deprived, or emaciated due to dental decay, according to Karen Minton, Executive Director. "Many of these people could have been spared if a program like this had existed when they were in school," she says. "Instead, we find ourselves having to do countless extractions that could have been avoided." (The Clinic, which opened in 2005, performed 903 extractions in the last year alone.)

Dr. McDonald and Nurse Mullarkey have both expressed an interest in expanding the scope of the program to include parents. "We'd love to have parents involved in making sure their kids brush and floss," says Mullarkey. "The more we can make them aware, the more families will benefit."



"Wouldn't it be great to see the next generation of Cashiers youngsters grow up with healthy smiles?" adds Cahill.



"Lavender" and a few of his fans



*Blue Ridge Free
Dental Clinic*

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Free Dental Clinic
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- Ron Keller—President
- Jim Smith—VP/ Secretary
- Barry Moore—Treasurer
- Karen Minton—Executive Director

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- Ron Keller
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- Barry Moore
- Michael Rich
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Our Volunteer Dentists

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- 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**

Five years and counting...

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic completed its fifth full year of operations in December, 2010. The numbers tell a story of continued growth in all aspects of our operations. However, the real measure of success is our consistent ability to make a difference in the lives of our less fortunate Western North Carolina neighbors. Last year alone, we scheduled over 1,160 patient appointments. For those of us who take dental care for granted, it is difficult to imagine the circumstances that caused 200 of these patients to show up at our doorstep in such pain that they required immediate treatment.

We were fortunate to be able to increase our professional staff with the addition of Dr. Allen VanOverbeke. With his presence, along with that of Drs. Craig Ashton, Tommy Day and David Jones, who joined the Clinic in 2009, we have expanded our professional staff to nine dentists and are now open three and a half days a week during the April to October period. This allows us to increase our patient load, as well as provide more restorative work, including TMJ splints and full and partial dentures.

Since inception in mid-2005, we have served nearly 5,700 patients and completed over 21,500 procedures. The value of these procedures exceeds \$2,900,000. As I write those numbers, I have to remind myself that this is a FREE DENTAL CLINIC.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Since Inception
New Patients	234	303	420	366	347	348	2,018
Returning Patients	160	459	689	692	867	811	3,678
Total Visits	394	762	1,109	1,058	1,214	1,159	5,696
Procedures	1,179	3,708	4,141	4,150	4,072	3,746	21,596
Value	\$229,200	\$461,700	\$553,878	\$540,090	\$549,999	\$563,266	\$2,907,133

We are able to generate these extraordinary results on an annual budget of slightly less than \$200,000. Despite our expected increase in hours and services, we do not expect significant budget increases. We are deeply indebted to the local community that includes our churches, civic associations, and both full-time and seasonal residents. It takes all of us to get the job done.

Given our impressive patient data, it is noteworthy that we closed the year with a waiting list of 500 individuals. We don't expect that number to decline in the near term, as the local economy remains dependent on tourism and the construction trades. Neither sector shows any measurable improvement in the three-county area we serve: Jackson, Macon and Transylvania counties.

Our staff has responded to the additional workload by signing on to an internal training program developed by Dr. Mel Livernois and monitored by our Executive Director, Karen Minton. We have upgraded our patient data systems with the addition of a new laptop and a specialized software system generously donated by Patterson Dental.

Our Board remains highly motivated while willing to work for the spiritual salary a volunteer board expects. We welcomed Barry Moore as our Treasurer. Debbie Bennett has assumed responsibility for the new Board position of Donor Relations. Michael Rich is now our Community Relations chair. Toby Summerour, Carl Norman and Bill Jacobs completed their terms on the Board in January. We are pleased that Bill will continue to serve on the Endowment Committee and work on special projects as the need arises.

Thanks to your continued financial support, we are continuing to help our rural neighbors become more self sufficient while "We restore lives, one tooth at a time."

CLINIC HIGHLIGHTS

A PATIENT STORY

Chelsea Jones* wrenched our hearts from the moment she walked into the Clinic. At the age of 29, she had reached the unhappy realization that her life was in shambles. The single mother of three children, she did not have two dimes to rub together. She had recently lost her job due to her unsightly appearance, although she is not unattractive. It was her teeth that had led to her job loss, and as soon as we looked at her X-rays, we knew that her problems were much worse than a little visible decay. Every tooth in her mouth was deeply decayed and abscessed; her chart read "most teeth are hopeless." She would need full dentures. She was in tears – unhappy at the prospect of losing all of her teeth, and completely unable to afford even a portion of the cost.



Dr. Tom Smith and Robby Cahill

Thanks to a prosthetics grant from the GlaxoSmithKline Ribbon of Hope Program, we were able to provide her that very day with the funds to buy the dentures she would need. She was still crying as she left the office, but now exclaiming that no one had ever done anything that nice for her! She was off to get her first, temporary set. All of us were visibly moved by her emotion.

Two weeks later, Chelsea was back, excited and all smiles. She had her new dentures in hand, had arranged for her family to baby-sit her children for a week, and said she couldn't wait – unusual behavior for a person facing mass dental extractions. She wanted us to pull all of her teeth that day! Dr. Smith wished he could comply, but was concerned about the amount of anesthetic that would be required, so we set her up with an additional appointment two days later and agreed to pull all of her uppers that day, and all of her lowers at her next appointment. Dr. Smith then surgically extracted her 16 upper teeth. Several of them were nothing but root nubs, and the extractions were challenging. But Chelsea left the office wearing a new upper denture, grinning ear to ear. She was just as happy at her next appointment, when Dr. Smith removed all of her lower teeth and fitted the lower denture.

We are continuing to follow up with Chelsea. She is now under the care of Dr. Jones, a denture and TMJ specialist who volunteers his time at the Clinic monthly. As her gums continue to heal and change, the temporary dentures must be re-adjusted. But she will eventually get permanent dentures that fit snugly and comfortably.

Meanwhile, Chelsea is one ecstatic lady. (*name changed to protect patient privacy)



JENNIFER MCKEE IS 2010 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

In the many aspects of a free dental clinic, the first call made to get a job done quickly and with the highest quality goes to the best volunteer or staff member. That's the call made numerous times in the years Jennifer McKee has been associated with the Clinic. She has served the Board as a Public Relations committee of one with creative ideas to keep the Clinic's activities in the forefront of the newspapers serving Jackson, Macon and Transylvania counties. She has been instrumental in making the Spring and Fall newsletters both attractive to read and full of current information. Her enthusiasm for Clinic activities caused her to spend more time in the office, and that has led to her current status as Dental Assistant II which qualifies her to help the dentists with chair-side support. Everyone from Board members, her fellow staffers and the dentists benefit from her engaging smile, willingness to share a story, and her ability to make almost any job seem doable. Jennifer joins last year's winner, Ed Morse, as a wonderful example of an individual who understands the mission of the Free Dental Clinic and who works tirelessly to continue our success.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS BEGIN SERVICE IN JANUARY 2011

Debbie Bennett – Donor Relations Chairperson

Debbie is an active volunteer both in Cashiers and in Charlotte, NC. Locally, she holds Board responsibility with the Cashiers Designer Show House, Cashiers United Methodist Church, the Humane Society and the Cashiers Historical Society. She is on the Board of Visitors at Duke University's Divinity School and on the Parent's Council at Duke. Debbie has two grown daughters, and, despite her busy schedule, still finds time to train and show her award winning dogs.

Barry Moore – Treasurer

Barry graduated from Georgia Tech in 1963 with a BS in Industrial Management and achieved his CPA certificate in 1972. He spent the next 30 years providing health care consulting services as a member of both Touché Ross and Company and Kurt Salmon and Associates. His experience extended to a variety of community hospitals, medical school hospitals and medical schools in areas focused on organization structure, governance and operations. Barry and his wife Carole live in Sapphire and are members of the Cashiers Valley Rotary Club and active in many other local philanthropic activities.

Michael Rich – Community Relations Chairman

Michael is the Director of the Plus 50 Program at Southwestern Community College. He received a B.A. from Huntington College, then a Masters of Divinity from Duke University and a Ph. D. from the University of Maryland. He has worked in churches and church organizations for over 20 years, including a five year post in Kobe, Japan. Michael is a member of the Cashiers Valley Rotary Club and lives in Waynesville with his wife Rose.



Michael Rich, Debbie Bennett, Barry Moore



Mike "Pistachio" Devine
& Carl "Duke" Hyde

NEWEST TOOTH FAIRY

Michael Devine was raised in Hollywood, Florida. Michael and Meryl currently reside in Atlanta, Georgia with Michael's son, Ryan Devine. Meryl's daughter is a sophomore at Florida State University. In addition to their Atlanta residence, they also have a home in Sapphire Valley, North Carolina. For 35 years, Michael owned and operated a very successful landscaping company, Environmental Design, which was located in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Michael is a graduate of Florida State University and is an avid Seminole fan. All bets are on during football season. His interests are residential interior design, antiques, landscape design and property development. As the newest member of the Fraternal Order of Tooth Fairies, Michael is looking forward to supporting the work of the The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.

Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

P.O. Box 451

Cashiers, NC 28717

(828) 743-3393



**We restore lives,
one tooth at a time.**

IN MEMORIAM

Jessie, our Therapy Dog,
retired in February 2011 and
passed away just weeks later.

Our thoughts go out to
her owner, Deanna Klingel.
Jessie will be missed.



Be the first to become a member of the
CROWN CLUB

Curious?

Contact: Debbie Bennett

tbennett17@carolina.rr.com



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