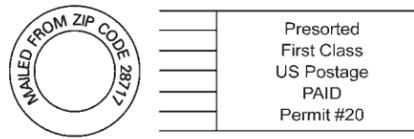


Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic  
P.O. Box 451  
Cashiers, NC 28717



# Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic

Fall 2013

We restore lives,  
one tooth at a time.



[www.blueridgefreedentalclinic.org](http://www.blueridgefreedentalclinic.org)



## Summer at the Clinic

May began our summer with seven “summer dentists” who were delighted to be volunteering in the new, expanded Free Dental Clinic. They joined our year round volunteer dentists to treat patients from our communities in need of dental care.

Severe discomfort and pain bring many patients come to our clinic while others come seeking complete dental care – all receive quality treatment and leave our clinic with smiles that haven’t existed in years.

The Blue Ridge Clinic is unique offering a wide array of dental services to our patients. From a simple extraction to crowns to more extensive care, our dentists reach out with kindness and compassion.

Our volunteer dentists often treat patients who are in fear of losing their jobs due to missed work from toothaches or have already been fired for missing too much work. People with tooth issues, from missing teeth to decaying teeth, do very poorly in job interviews.

We restore smiles. As our patients complete their treatment, they are able to go

to interviews with confidence and beautiful smiles..

Recently we completed treatment on a young man who had recovered from a meth addiction. He wanted to attend his best friend’s wedding and be able to smile as the best man. The dental work required was lengthy, as the meth addiction has severely damaged his teeth. Some required extraction while others were saved by the sheer talent of our dentists. The young man attended the wedding, served as best man and smiled - smiled until his cheek muscles ached. With great pride he showed us the wedding pictures. Words cannot describe how terrific he looked - the most wonderful smiles we had ever seen.

The talent our dentists bring to our clinic is astonishing. They are here to pay-it-forward in thankfulness for all their blessings - one cannot ask for more. Our clinic stands alone in its treatment of those in need. We are here every day to help those who ask for help. We delight in the smiles, the hugs and the happiness. The sheer joy of seeing someone embarking on a new avenue in life - a small thing to some, but so much to us.

In the expanded Clinic we can have three dentists treating patients simultaneously with the six operatories allowing the Clinic to treat more patients. This summer (May through September) our dentists performed over 1,958 procedures with 636 patient visits. Procedures ranged from extractions, fillings and cleanings to root canals, crowns and dentures - simply amazing. This year our service value to patients has exceeded \$420,000.

Many thanks and a sincere smile to all who support the Clinic – yes, you make a difference happen. –Karen Minton

The Clinic can be reached at  
(828) 743-3393

## Old Versus New and a Vision for the Future

Many volunteers have spent hundreds of hours nearly doubling the Clinic’s size to 2800 square feet of bright, welcoming and efficient space. We have increased the number of treatment rooms from three to six with the plumbing and electrical in place for two more. Auxiliary service areas were literally taken from closets and now have stand alone space appropriate to their function. The Clinic now has sixteen volunteer dentists, five assistants and a director which is quite a change from 2005 when we started with just one dentist, a dental assistant and a director. We thought it would be interesting to see what the dentists and others who have worked in the new and the old think about our expanded facility.

The first comment was a correction on the original size of the treatment rooms. The most generous estimate was two and a half ‘intimate’ operatories that were so small it was nearly impossible to turn around if there were more than three people in the room at a time. Despite the lack of space, everyone made do. The essential equipment and instruments were ‘right at hand’ as volunteer Dr. David Silverstein remarked.

Our volunteer from Louisiana, Dr. Claude D’Antonio, said that despite the intimate size of the old space, it worked very well. Was it difficult? “No – that was a time in Honduras ... working on a patient in a straight back chair on a sunlit back porch.”

Dental assistants, Alisha Fricks and Robby Cahill said they missed the adventure of opening a door while holding their breath and hoping that they would avoid hitting someone walking in the hall. An anonymous volunteer said the new configuration enabled her to avoid Clinic Director Karen Minton’s passion for country music in the Clinic. The observations and the related humor flow easily around the break room. The point is that the daily focus of the Clinic is enhanced by the ability to serve more patients and to serve them more efficiently.

There are common refrains among our dentists that include feelings such as, “... the Clinic has allowed me to use my skills for the benefit of the less fortunate; to honor my parents for the sacrifice they made to afford me the opportunity to develop these skills; to give back to the dental profession for the excellent training I received and the gratitude received from patients who have had little or no dental care....”

Our team, including the staff, dentists and board members, appreciate the amazing vision a few individuals had in 2005 for their less fortunate neighbors in need of dental care. Today, the dream of these visionaries not only continues but has grown into a modern, spacious facility with state-of-the-art equipment. It is easy to understand if you hear a volunteer express a busy day at the Clinic as a truly rewarding experience.



## A Unique Visitor to the Blue Ridge Dental Clinic

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic thought it had seen it all! Then the Clinic received a request from Dr. Edward L. Herod, DDS to visit and potentially provide dental services for a few days. Executive Director Karen Minton obtained the required volunteer dentist certificates and a few weeks later Dr. Herod arrived in Cashiers.



A unique dentist, Dr. Herod closed his practice fourteen years ago in Gainesville, FL as a ‘calling of fate’ led him to full-time volunteer dentist status. Dr. Herod says he has two passions: the dental poor and long distance hiking. To say he is a hiker is an understatement. In 2003, he became what experts call a “thru-hiker” by hiking the Appalachian Trail in its entirety in a single season. That’s 2,200 miles from Georgia to Maine in a single gulp.

Dr. Herod has treated the dental poor in India, Viet Nam, Peru, Cambodia, many parts of Africa, Jamaica, Guatemala and the list goes on. For many years he travelled alone but now prefers the association of groups such as Helping Hands Medical Missions. Despite this rigorous schedule, he continues to be a volunteer dentist a few days at week at the ACORN Clinic in Gainesville, FL.

The beauty of our mountain area, the intrigue and the similarity of the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic to the ACORN Clinic proved to be more than he could resist. In May, Dr. Herod treated 23 patients at the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic. In between his two visits in Cashiers, he participated in a hiking event in Damascus, NC.

Executive Director Karen Minton summed up Dr. Herod as, “...amazing...each patient had nothing but praise for him.”

### 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.



# President's Letter: A Time of Change

Those of you that have spent precious time and energy as a volunteer know there are challenges associated with the job. The pay is lousy, the meetings are interminable and the behind the scenes work that no one told you about goes unappreciated more often than not. All those challenges are magnified when you are the person in charge of a young, rapidly growing business like the Free Dental Clinic.

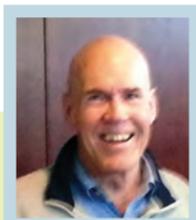
In the past two years, the Clinic has not only continued its rapid growth in number of patients served and procedures completed but embarked on an ambitious expansion program and hosted the North Carolina Dental Society's annual Mission of Mercy (MOM) clinic in Cullowhee on the Western Carolina University campus. The expansion has created a 2800 square foot facility with six treatment rooms that is the envy of all the dental clinics in North Carolina. The MOM clinic served nearly 350 patients in two days of intense dentistry. Either of these activities would have been considered exceptional in today's environment where many medical and dental clinics are sharply curtailing or completely eliminating their services.

Each of these events has resulted in enormous success. However, each required a great deal of planning, budget work and old school motivation of the many volunteers required to get the job done. As President of the Board, Lynne Keating readily accepted the responsibility for heading up these initiatives while still serving as chairperson for the grant writing committee. It comes as no surprise that some of the challenges inherent in these two initiatives were extremely stressful. In August, she made the difficult decision to resign her position after concluding that seven years of hard work and associated worries were all she could ask her family, her health and life in general to accept. The Board did not happily accept her resignation, but also understands the responsibility for balancing her life's demands.

Treasurer, Larry Ray, and Secretary, Ron Freeman, stepped in to fill the void on a short term basis. This month, the board asked me to return as president and I have accepted the position through 2014. Everyone who has worked alongside Lynne is deeply appreciative of her tremendous contributions to the clinic's development and its future. We all recognize this as a period of change for the clinic. Much of her work will be the cornerstone of changes that will make the clinic a better place for our dentists, our staff, and, most importantly, our patients. We are no longer a small operation with one dentist, one dental assistant and one staff person. Our mountain population has never been more vulnerable and in need of high quality dental care. We are hard at work on plans for 2014 that we hope will enable the clinic to continue to be the #1 free dental clinic in western North Carolina.

Thank you for your continued support, both personal and financial.

Respectfully,  
Ron Keller, President



# New Board Member

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic Board inducted Duncan D. Wheale as a new Board Member at its September meeting.

Duncan was raised in Greenville, SC and is a graduate of the Military College of South Carolina, more popularly known as The Citadel. After serving in the U.S. Army, he became a police officer in Atlanta until he left to attend John Marshall Law School in Atlanta. In 1976, he graduated with his law degree.

Duncan and his wife, Carolyn, called Augusta, Georgia home for many years. Duncan was in private practice and Augusta proved to be a fine city to raise their sons, Ryan and Patrick. After serving clients for a number of years, Duncan was elected a Superior Court Judge in Augusta. As a Judge, he was an active proponent of change. He helped put an end to court practices that wasted time and money and confused and exhausted those who sought justice in the Augusta Judicial Circuit. His advocacy for positive change and active participation in local not-for-profits resulted in the Augusta Chronicle naming him as "one of the 10 most influential people in Augusta over the last decade."

He was also recognized for his judicial skills and dedication through awards such as: the Justice Benham Award for Community Service; the Distinguished Service Award by The Georgia CME Church Convention and The Martin Luther King Lifetime Legacy Award.

In addition to being an active Citadel alumnus, Duncan was also active in the Augusta community where he served as Chairman of the following organizations: Safe Homes of Augusta (for abused women & children); Georgia Commission on Family Violence, the Shield Club of Greater Augusta (financial aid to policemen/firemen injured or killed in the line of duty); the Augusta Port Authority and the New Hope Community Center.

He was also President of the Augusta Sports Council which presents the annual Ray Guy Award to the nation's top collegiate punter. Duncan also found time to serve as Chairman of the Salvation Army Advisory Board when it embarked on the building of the \$100 million Kroc Center, named for the founder of McDonalds Corporation. The Augusta center is the second largest Kroc Center in the country.

After ten years of service as a judge, Duncan retired to Charleston, SC. However, the lure of the mountains proved too much of a draw. Since 2010, Duncan and Carolyn have spent most of their time in Cashiers.

Last year Duncan joined the Cashiers Valley Rotary Club and made an immediate contribution in time and energy. He traveled to Montero, Bolivia on a Rotary Wheelchair Mission from Cashiers Rotary and helped assemble and deliver 550 wheelchairs to Montero's most severely disabled.

Duncan's dedication to civic organizations and experience working to help communities will be a huge asset to the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.



Duncan Wheale (R) and Ron Keller work together both as Rotarians and Free Dental Clinic Board members.

# The Tooth Fairies – Add Value

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

-Rabindranath Tagore Poet, Playwright

Value can be defined as a vision for appropriate courses of action or outcomes. Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. I don't think any member of the Fraternity of Tooth Fairies thought they could influence attitudes and behavior regarding dental care. That was before they donned their wings and tutus and worked their magic on children and adults throughout our community.

When we are together and in costume, we are excited to be the advocates of good dental hygiene. We look forward to supporting the Children's Dental Health Care Program as part of Dr. Michelle McDonald's team when she screens K through 5 children at Blue Ridge School and at Summit Charter School. Dr. Chris Dyer offers the same outreach for the students in the Highlands School. Our tiaras flash brighter when we celebrate with Clinic Board member Jodie Cook and the Highlands Rotarians after another successful Tooth Fairy Bingo night. Donations from Tooth Fairy Bingo are used to offset the cost of maintaining and expanding the Children's Dental Health program.

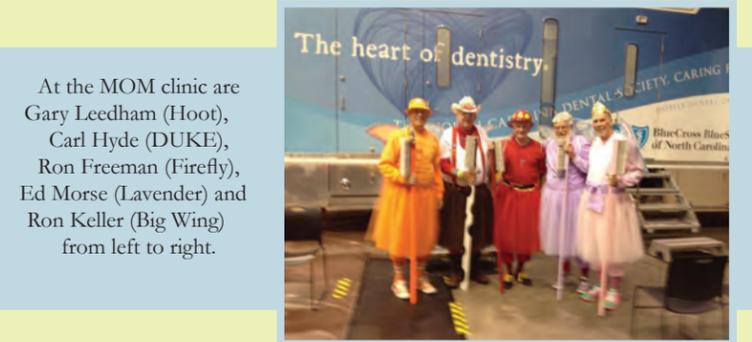
In June, our versatility was in evidence as we served as traffic cops, making sure donors arrived safely at the Clinic's Annual Anniversary party.

In July, our job changed to encourage patients to smile and relax as they waited for free dental care at the Mission of Mercy Clinic. During the two day event, held at Western Carolina University, nearly 400 patients received much needed care and many left with smiles and a commitment to brush and floss regularly.

We loaned Lavender (Ed Morse) to Relay for Life and many of you responded in making the event a success by donating as he sat outside Ingles in his Tooth Fairy costume. We visited with the Trillium Ladies Club and enjoyed the opportunity to update them on the Clinic's expansion project. In August, we welcomed Dick Santee (Papa Bear) and Jeff Breckenridge (Cookie) as Tooth Fairy number 12 and 13.

Inspiring, humorous, motivating – we hope all the children and donors we meet find that we add value to their lives. We look forward to seeing all our friends at the local Christmas parades.

–Ron Keller (Big Wing)



At the MOM clinic are Gary Leedham (Hoot), Carl Hyde (DUKE), Ron Freeman (Firefly), Ed Morse (Lavender) and Ron Keller (Big Wing) from left to right.

# Summit Charter School

–Jack Talmadge

There is nothing more precious than a child's smile and the children at Summit have reason to gleam. Of the students in grades K-5, more than 120 actively participate in what they have nicknamed "Swish & Spit". The fluoride rinse program brought into the classrooms weekly by the dental clinic is a tremendous benefit to the children as it helps keep hundreds of teeth protected each day.

Hygiene lessons taught by the water-spitting snake and counterpart, Dr. Michele McDonald are interactive, engaging, and most importantly, memorable. From free dental exams, preventative treatments, continuing education, dental supplies, and invitations for follow-up visits at the clinic, the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic and Cashiers Rotary remain an extremely valuable and smile-worthy resource for our kids.

# Blue Ridge Elementary School and Blue Ridge Early College

–Carol Mullarkey, RN, BSN

This school year began with 176 students from our school participating in the fluoride program. The ease with which the program flows from school year to school year has made it an anticipated part of returning to school. The students are getting fluoride that they would get in no other place.

This program does not stop there! The presence of Dr. McDonald and the Tooth Fairies in our school makes dental care approachable for children without a dental home. Dr. McDonald reinforces what some of our students have come to accept - they deserve good dental care and that they can make a difference with their smile today.

Thank you, Blue Ridge Dental Clinic, Dr. Michelle McDonald and the Rotary Club of Cashiers for your continued presence in our school.

# The Highlands School

–Dr. Jim Rothermel

The annual Highlands School Dental Education Day was celebrated on October 11th. Tooth Fairy Mary McClean (her real name) again came from Nashville, TN where she is the Coordinator for the School Based Dental Sealant Program. Tooth Fairy McClean would select several volunteer children from each grade group to be teeth and one to be the tongue as she used them to demonstrate dental care such as brushing and flossing. These teeth also served to show that plaque comes about when brushing and flossing are neglected.

Highlands Rotarians packed special bags with a tooth brush, tooth paste and dental floss for the 160 children K-5 and distributed them to delighted children.

The weekly swishing program ("Rinse & Spit") with fluoride rinse is going well in all grades and the lessons on brushing and flossing put to poetic rhymes are a real treat to hear and certainly show that the children are learning the ABC's of healthy teeth.

Thank you Highlands Mountain Top Rotary, Rotary Club of Highlands and Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.

Tooth Fairy Mary demonstrates brushing one tooth as two teeth and a tongue look on.



Pictured above: (Left) Tooth Fairy Mary asks K-2 children when they brush: first thing in the morning; after school and before bed. (Right) Tooth Fairy Mary and her hand puppet thank the K-2 children as the children get ready for their package of tooth paste, floss and a tooth brush.

## BURN THE MORTGAGE CAMPAIGN

The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic delivers free high-quality dental care to patients living primarily in Jackson, Macon and Transylvania counties who cannot otherwise afford these critically needed services. The vast majority of the patients earn about 90% of the stated annual income for “poverty level”.

To put the term “poverty level” in perspective, consider the following 2013 poverty guidelines:

<u>County</u>	<u># Living in Poverty</u>	<u>Poverty Rate</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>
Jackson	7,101	19.3%	\$36,741
Macon	6,501	19.3%	\$36,229
Transylvania	5,115	15.9%	\$40,652

<u>County</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Deep Poverty Rate</u>	<u>Low Income Population</u>
		(50% Fed Poverty Level)	(Below 200% Fed Pov Level)
Jackson	36,389	10.3%	42%
Macon	33,222	7.5%	40%
Transylvania	31,347	7.5%	34%

In 2012 the need for additional clinic capacity became more and more apparent, and our clinic was at a physical capacity limit. Our three treatment rooms, sterilization area, laboratory and front office were crammed into 1250 square feet of inefficient space. We had to turn away volunteer dentists and were forced to maintain a lengthy waiting list. When the unit immediately next door became available, we responded by purchasing the space and completely renovated it to the exacting standards of a modern day dental office. We used the best equipment from the old facility and completed the suite of six treatment rooms with new state-of-the-art dental equipment.

The total cost of the expansion was nearly \$600,000. Remember, valued donor, all this was done in an environment in which many dental clinics across North Carolina are either closing their doors or significantly reducing the level of service they offer.

The cost of the expansion was funded in part by mortgaging the new facility space. Our current mortgage balance is \$130,000.

Prior to the expansion the clinic operated debt free. This allowed almost all of our contributions to be directed to the cost of patient care. The monthly cost of the mortgage now consumes money that would otherwise be available for expanded patient care. We feel it is prudent to retire this debt as soon as possible. Our goal is to do this in three years or less.

As you consider your end of the year financial planning, we ask that you put the free dental clinic at the top of your list. In the past you have been a loyal contributor to this much-needed service. You have kept our doors open since we started in 2005 with one dentist, Dr. Tom Smith, one dental assistant and one staff person, Karen Minton. Today, we have 16 volunteer dentists eager to support the expansion of services our new space offers. Our patient population continues to grow regardless of the economic “recovery” we are supposed to be experiencing. We need your willingness to help us in two ways: first by continuing to contribute to our everyday operations and second by making an additional donation to help burn our mortgage.

If you missed your chance to take advantage of the charitable IRA legislation in the past, you may consider the provision that allows individuals ages 70 ½ or older to make outright gifts of up to \$100,000 to qualified charitable organizations through their IRAs without paying income tax on the IRA distributions. If you are able to take advantage of this opportunity, you can improve your overall tax situation while helping the clinic meet its goals and achieve its vision for the future. Please call Ron Keller (843.860.7136) for additional information.

Thank you!