

Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic Celebrates Its

5th Anniversary

Spring 2010



Dr. Tom Smith, our first
volunteer dentist.

Our beginnings were humble. In April 2005, the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic opened its doors with one volunteer dentist, hand-me-down equipment, and a rented facility. Today, we are happy to be celebrating our 5th Anniversary.

In five short years, we have fulfilled our mission of restoring lives, one tooth at a time, by responding to the dental needs of 1,700



The Clinic currently has eight volunteer dentists and a trained cadre of supporting clinical staff. In 2010, we expect to add two more dentists and serve 400 new patients — delivering dental care with a monetary value of \$600,000, all on an expense budget of \$200,000. The Clinic has also brought over \$500,000 in outside foundation grants into our community. We own our facility and everything in it and are completely free of debt. We have built an endowment that will provide a cushion as our expenses rise and we no longer receive **“start-up” foundation support;** and we have managed the endowment successfully during a tough economic environment.

As impressive as all that may be, the real story is the impact on the lives of those 1,700+ patients who had nowhere else to turn — who, on average, required multiple visits and over 10 procedures to deal with the pain, infection and disfigurement of dental disease. That translates into hundreds of families with parents who have been freed from suffering and are now able to earn wages and devote themselves more fully to their children.

(Continued inside...)



Volunteer dentists David Jones, Chris Dyer, Michelle McDonald, Tom Smith, and Mel Livernois.

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.



**Blue Ridge Free
Dental Clinic**

Board of Directors

2010 Officers

- Ron Keller—President
- Jim Smith—VP/ Secretary
- Bill Jacobs—Treasurer
- Karen Minton—Executive Director

2010 Directors

- Andrew Angle
- Mike Grilli
- Bill Jacobs
- Lynne Keating
- Ron Keller
- Carl Norman
- Jim Smith
- Toby Summerour

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



**Bill Jacobs
Past President
and Treasurer**

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It translates into men and women who were effectively disabled and perhaps confronting death due to infection, but who now are productive citizens. It also translates into neighbors who were shrinking from public contact due to their painfully disfigured mouths but who now have the confidence to seek better jobs and normal social lives.

If you have donated funds or services to the Free Dental Clinic, your generosity has helped make us successful. The Clinic is unique in North Carolina in the volume, scope, and sophistication of its services -- few other free clinics even provide fillings to save a tooth, much less root canals or assistance with crowns or dentures. And many have simply closed down due to inadequate support.

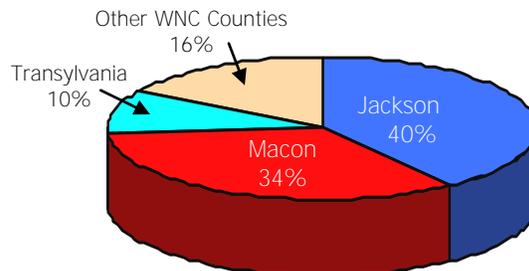
The Clinic is working in the Cashiers/Highlands area because of our skilled retirees and our culture of volunteerism that provides dedicated dentists, board members, and office volunteers. It is also working because of the financial generosity of our residents, both year-round and part-time, and because our communities have recognized the critical need for dental care among many of our lower-income neighbors.

As we begin the celebration of our 5th anniversary, we are cautiously optimistic. Despite all that has been accomplished, the need for critical dental services has not diminished, and never has your generosity been more needed and appreciated. Our mountain neighbors are worth it!!

**In five years, Blue Ridge Free
Dental Clinic has:**

- Served over 1,700 patients**
- Performed over 18,000 procedures**
- Monetary value exceeds \$2,300,000**

**In 2009,
we served
patients
from the
following
counties.**



A Tribute to our Founding Members

Humble beginnings



When we refer to our “humble beginnings,” we aren’t kidding around. Just ask Susan Posey, who was there from the start.

“It all began in 2003, when a few members of the Church of the Good Shepherd decided to address some of the needs of Cashiers’ poorest residents,” she says. “We solicited help from other area churches and put together a three-day outreach program at the Community Center. Volunteers cooked meals, the Methodist church set up clothing racks, the Health Department provided immunizations, and we set up a medical clinic in the Fire Department. We also borrowed the North Carolina Baptists’ Mobile Dental Van and parked it on the grounds. The response exceeded our wildest expectations.”



Volunteers for the first outreach

On the first day of the outreach, the skies opened up and the rains came! But that did not stop the needy masses from flocking to the temporary clinics. “They stood out in the pouring rain waiting to be helped,” Susan recalls. “Everyone with medical needs was seen, but because the dental van had such limited capacity, we were only able to treat about 30 people per day. Over a hundred people were left untreated. It was heartbreaking to see families turned away in tears, and we knew that something more would have to be done.”

That is when Susan and a core group of dedicated individuals began the quest that would consume the next four years of Susan’s life — the quest to set up a permanent Free Dental Clinic to meet this desperate need. Says Bill Jacobs: “Susan was the founding energy and determination, truly the Founding Mother. The amount of work she did is staggering.” In fact, it was Susan who initially funded the purchase of the current facility.

Susan, however, is quick to credit Dr. Tom Smith, who scoured dental offices throughout the South to obtain donated equipment and committed to working regular volunteer hours, ensuring the Clinic’s continuing operation.

In April of 2005, through the efforts of Susan, Tom, and a cast of other contributing Board members, the Blue Ridge Mountains Health Project opened the doors of the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic in its current location.



2007 Board members Lester Freeman, Susan Posey, Karen Minton (Executive Director), Lynne Keating, and Bill Jacobs accept NC accreditation certificate.

The Clinic would like to thank some of the volunteers who, in the beginning, gave so much of their time and talent: Roger Bacon, David Beam, Lester Freeman, Bill Jacobs, Penny Johnson, Susan Posey, Pat Rowe, and Tom Smith.



Dr. Michelle McDonald with Sue Bumgarner and Sharon Holt of the Cashiers Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Michelle McDonald receives the 2009 Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce “Volunteer of the Year” award. The award was presented in recognition of Dr. Michelle’s contributions to the Clinic, as well as her work with the Children’s Dental Health Project, a joint preventive care initiative with the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley. The award-winning project has proven so successful that it was adopted by the Rotary Clubs of Highlands, with the first “swish-and-spit” fluoride rinses administered in January.

Blue Ridge Mountains Health Project, Inc.
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Cashiers, NC 29717
(828) 743-3393

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



www.blueridgefreedentalclinic.org

5th Anniversary Issue!

Welcome to our new online home!

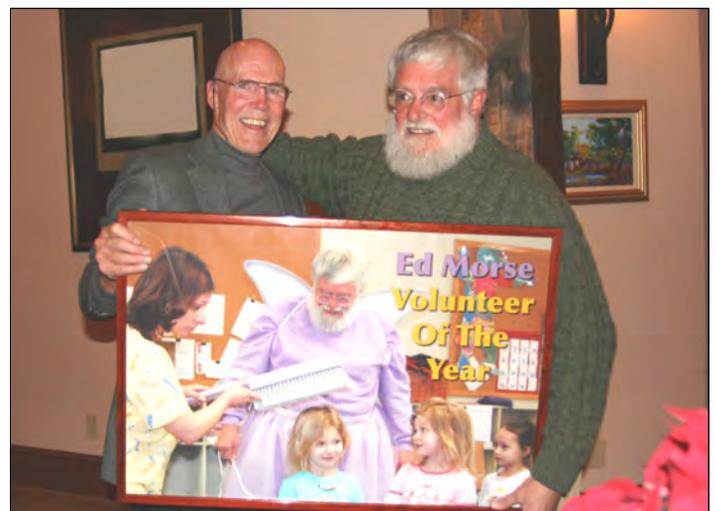
The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic is celebrating its 5th Anniversary with a redesigned website that boasts a totally new look and feel. We have streamlined the navigation process to enable you to quickly learn about our volunteer dentists, or to stay longer and share patient experiences from our "Storybook." We're proud of our new digital home and hope you like it. We invite you to take a site tour, and we look forward to your feedback. Write to Andrew Angle at andrew@blueridgefreedentalclinic.org. And come back often. There's a lot of news we would like to share with you.



Congratulations to Ed Morse, Free Dental Clinic 2009 Volunteer of the Year!

Tooth Fairy Extraordinaire, Ed Morse, is always there when a school function, hospital visit, or parade beckons. Dressed in his matching lavender high-tops, tutu, and fairy wings, he is as comfortable speaking to a group of Rotarians as to a flock of eager pre-schoolers.

Ed has tirelessly given of himself spreading the message of the Clinic and of proper oral hygiene as a means of preventing dental disease. The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic extends a special thanks to this unique and dedicated individual.



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.