

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to our spring newsletter. I have much in the way of good news to share with you. The clinic continued its history of growth in 2013 by all measures. Karen Minton and her staff, along with our professional cadre of fifteen volunteer dentists, served 1,300 patient visits. Of these, 372 were new patients and 928 were patients who now understand the value of continued dental care.

Many patients come to the clinic as emergencies (404 in 2013). Once they see the new facility and experience the empathy of the staff and the dentists, they return for care they cannot afford elsewhere. Since inception, the clinic has provided service for 9,252 patient visits. Those visits resulted in 32,571 procedures with a market value of \$4,485,733. Dr. Tom Smith, Susan Posey, Bill Jacobs, and the other founders were absolutely right when they realized the need for a permanent dental facility in 2004.

Thanks to many of you, our fund raising initiatives were successful in 2013. Along with the growth in patient statistics and our move to an expanded and more efficient facility, our 2014 budget of \$300,000 is more than three times the 2005 budget. Many of you who contribute annually in the range of \$100 to \$1,000 are the bedrock of our operation. We would not be where we are today without your continued support.

In addition, I would like to share details of three substantial grants we received. Each will enable us to satisfy objectives we established within our strategic plan that was completed late last year.

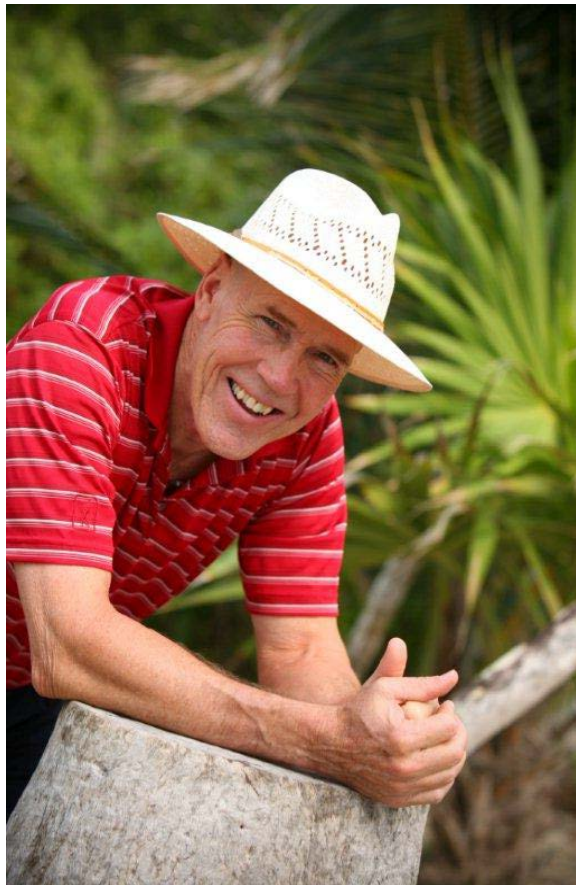
The first was from an anonymous source that fully funded the hiring of Dental Management Associates, located in Atlanta. DMA is a consultant with a history of helping non-profit dental practices. The Board realized the need to engage a professional to review our operations from top to bottom. We felt the need to be more productive with all our assets, including our people and your donations. We also wanted everyone in the organization to understand their roles in helping us reach our 3-5 year potential. We are currently in the early stages of this relationship.

The second award was from The Duke Endowment. The grant was spread over a two year period and exceeded \$184,000 in value. This grant was specifically for staff salaries, a budget item that has grown in parallel with the growth in patient visits. We worked closely with the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation over a two year period on all aspects of the grant writing process. This award continues our relationship with The Duke Endowment that began in 2006.

The last grant was also from an anonymous donor who agreed with me that our donor communication skills were "old school." We needed to update our website (www.blueridgefreedentalclinic.org) and increase our presence on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The Board made the decision to hire Gary Long, the owner and creative genius of Blue Truck Publishing (located in Sylva) as our communications chief. We are moving quickly with this initiative. You may have seen that the Tooth Fairies are going digital. We are excited about the potential social media offers and the opportunities that will come from making people of all ages aware of the unique value the clinic represents.

Best wishes for a warm and comfortable spring. I look forward to seeing you on the web.

Ron Keller



ROTARY CLUB TOUR

Spring 2014 saw Duncan Wheale and Ron Freeman hit the road as ambassadors of the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic. They were the program speakers at Rotary Club meetings in the towns of Brevard, Franklin, Sylva, Cashiers, and twice in Highlands.

The purpose of the speaking tour was to increase awareness of the clinic in the region, and to promote the June golf tournament sponsored by the Ladies Golf Association at Sapphire National. Duncan and Ron told the story of the clinic with a powerpoint presentation and personal testimony that were well received.



RUBBING ELBOWS

The Honorable Jim Davis (NC Senate, District 50) paid a visit to the clinic on Friday, April 4. He took the time to congratulate the clinic on the physical expansion and remodeling. Davis had high praise for the modern equipment and the overall presentation of the clinic, commending the staff, volunteers, and board members for their care for the region's people in need of dental care.

Not only is Davis a friend of the clinic, he is a practicing orthodontist in nearby Franklin, NC. During this visit, Dr. Jones and Davis both realized they graduated from dental school the same year and know many of the same people.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

David Jones

New board member, David Jones, graduated from Emory School of Dentistry in 1974 and has been practicing dentistry in Atlanta since then.



He currently works with Oral Surgery Associates & Dental Implant Centers of Georgia and has been a volunteer in the BRFDC clinic specializing in TMJ and making dentures.

He is an Olympic class kayak enthusiast and was a part of the U.S. Whitewater Canoe and Kayak Team from 1980-93 and 2006-10. He is a watercolorist who, along with wife of more than 40 years, Vesta, splits his time between Highlands and Atlanta.

Rev. S. Bruce Walker

Bruce graduated from the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina. He practiced general dentistry from 1981-94 in Spartanburg, when he moved to Seawannee and enrolled in the seminary at University of the South.



After completing his studies in 1997 he served as rector in Augusta, Georgie and Morganton, North Carolina.

He moved to Highlands in 2012 to serve as rector of the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation. He has volunteered in the clinic since 2012 and we welcome him to his first term as board member.

NEW STAFF MEMBER

Michele Coward

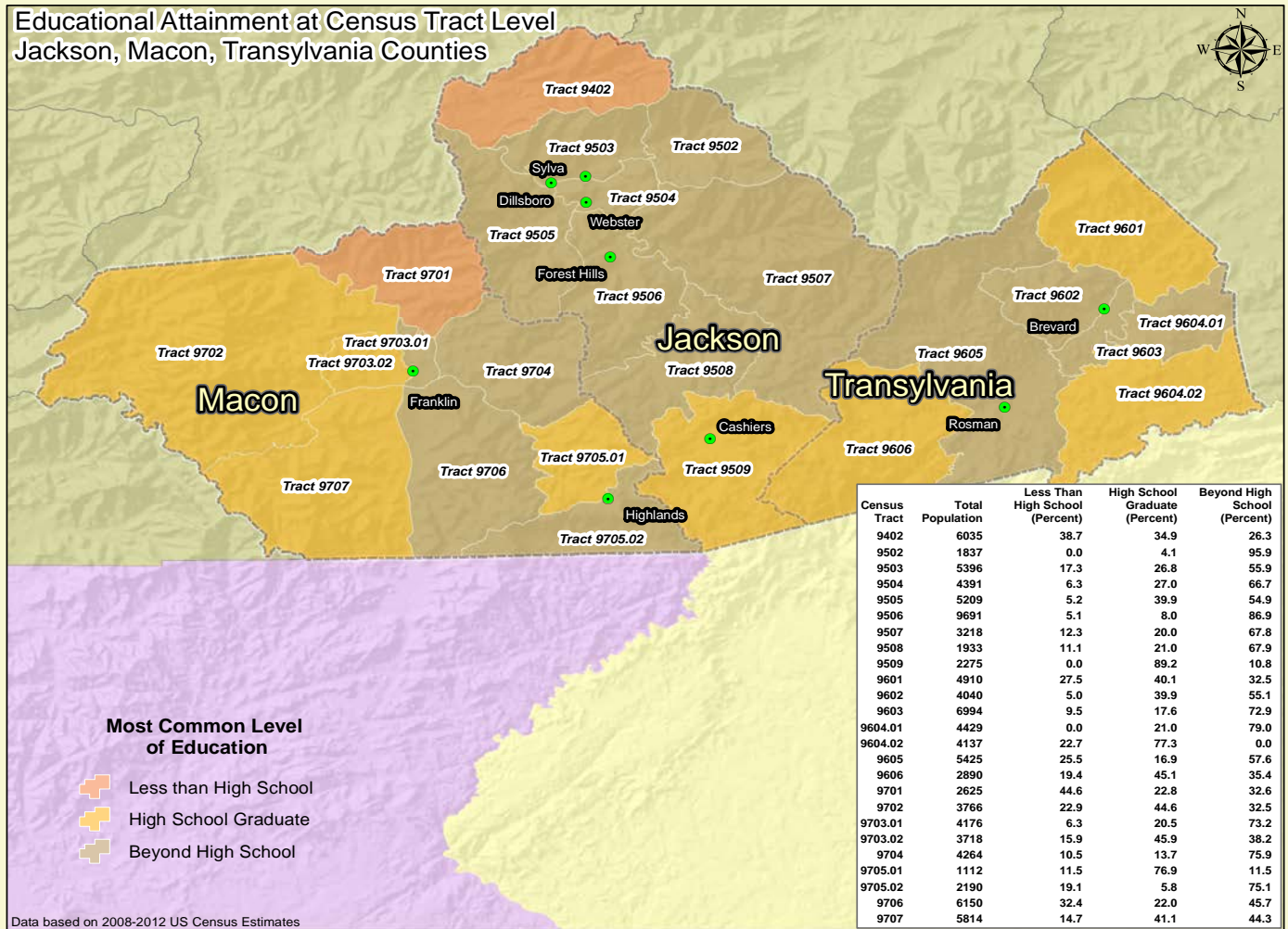


We welcome the smiling and enthusiastic Michele Coward to our staff. "I was born and raised in Clyde, NC and moved with my husband and kids to Glenville in 2010. We love it here! I started out as a receptionist for Dr. Michelle McDonald and really wasn't sure I would like dental assisting but I really enjoy it."

Michelle added that she is thankful to be able to advance her career while using her knowledge and skills to help the clinic.

THE PICTURE OF POVERTY CONT.

The maps on education and age are equally compelling. The map shows a high percentage of the population with less than a high school diploma.



Talk briefly with Karen Minton, Director of Clinical Operations, and she'll quickly tell you about the direct correlation between poor dental health and lower levels of education in families.

The maps tell the story plainly: the clinic needs to grow in order to help more people, and the need is clearly out there. Is the solution more dentists? Transportation for patients? Educational programs in the local schools? More volunteers? There is no silver bullet for this complex situation, but our board will be wrestling with these issues during the coming year. I trust that they can find the right combination of solutions.

I stepped into this role imagining myself simply wrangling those feisty Tooth Fairies and promoting their positive image, and that is a very fun part. Now I see the importance of the story with which I'm entrusted and I'm glad to be telling this story.

Gary Long is directing the communications efforts of The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.

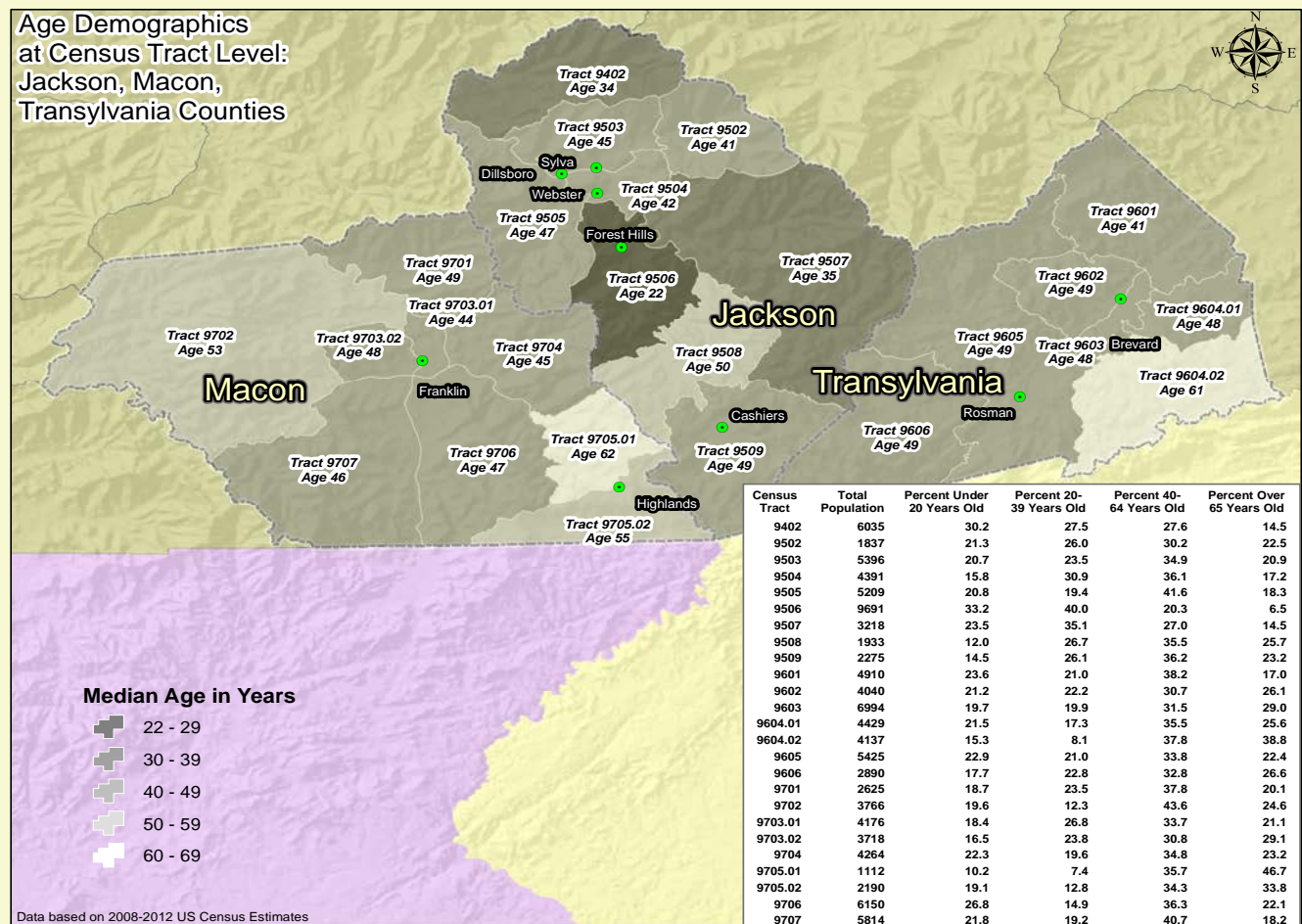
THE PICTURE OF POVERTY CONT.

This isn't a story about the map you see on the page. Instead, the map is a story about the deep needs in the BRFDc service area. I have an agreement to "manage communications" for the clinic, but I'm really a storyteller. It's the story of the clinic, the donors, volunteer dentists, and patients told in print, social media, and on the web. Oh yes, I'm responsible for branding those bodacious Tooth Fairies - who wouldn't love this work?

As storyteller, I want to put a "face" on the clinic, but medical privacy laws prevent BRFDc from sharing the identity of our patients. It's unlikely you will ever see the smiles on the faces of the ones you help when you support the clinic.

It occurred to me that, while I had to protect patient identity, there might be another way to paint a picture for you. That's why I sat down with Ryan Sherby, the Executive Director for the Southwest Commission. Sherby heads up a seven county regional effort to provide support for economic development. He's also a mapping genius, and when I told him I wanted to paint a picture of the poverty situation in our three county service area, he was immediately on board. Ryan is a fan of the Tooth Fairies, too.

Over a couple of months we came up with the maps you see in print here. It's no accident that poverty, age, and education tell an interwoven story. The first map shows in hard numbers the people who would financially qualify for service from the clinic.



People earning less than 200% of Federal Poverty Level by county

Macon County - 13,617

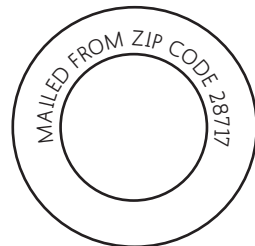
Jackson County - 17,922

Transylvania County - 12,915

More than 44,000 people in our service area fall below 200% of Federal Poverty Level!

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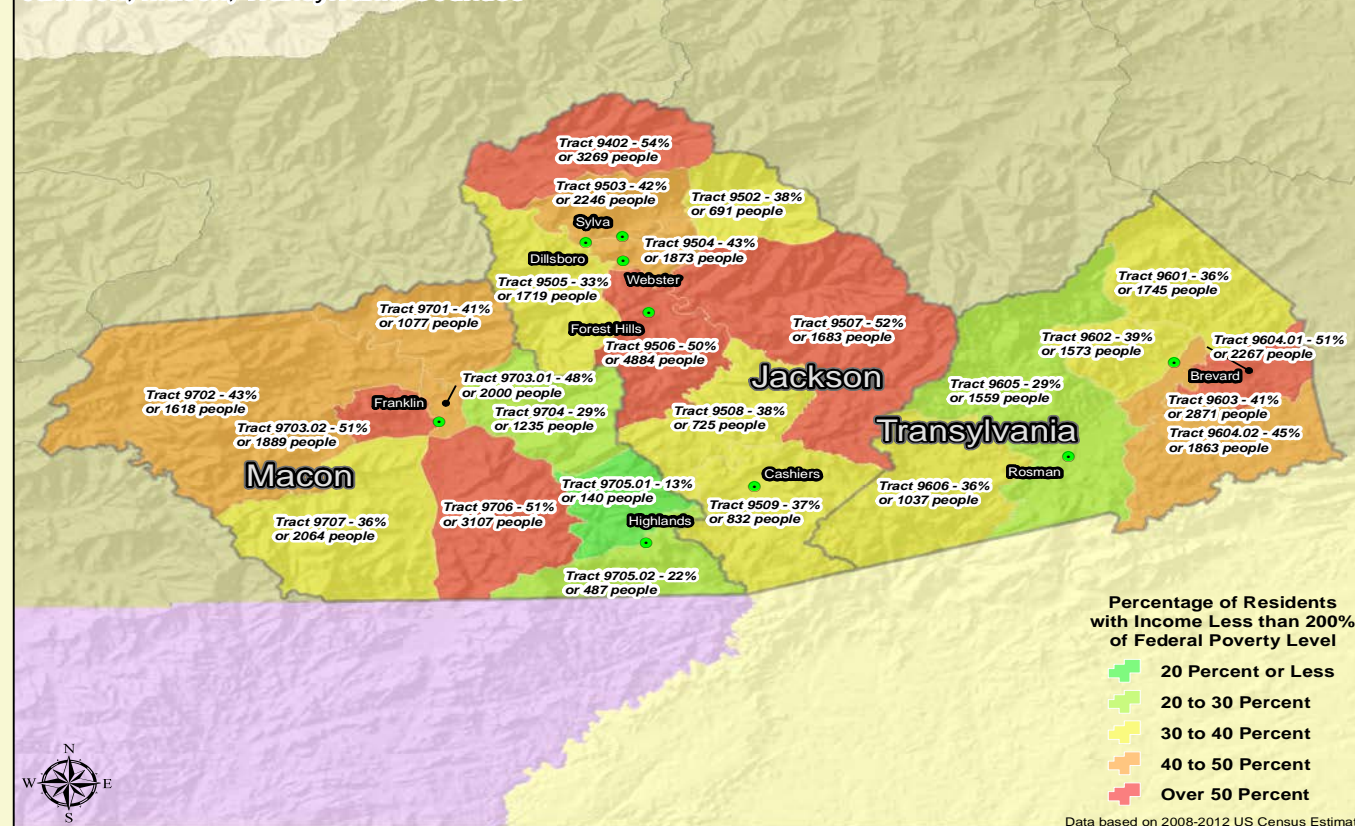
*We restore lives,
 one tooth at a time.*



BlueRidgeFreeDentalClinic.org
 TheToothFairies.org

THE PICTURE OF POVERTY

Number & Percentage of Population Under 200% of Poverty Level, by Census Tract
 Jackson, Macon, Transylvania Counties



Poverty data comes from the United States Census Bureau with mapping provided by Ryan Sherby of the Southwestern Commission

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June 9th - Charity Golf Tournament
- June 10th - Donor Appreciation Party

OFFICERS:

- Ron Keller, President
- Ron Freeman, Secretary
- Larry Ray, Treasurer

DIRECTORS:

- Sue Holmes
- David Jones
- Rev. Bruce Walker
- Duncan Wheale
- Rick Willeford
- Nancie Wilson

KEEPING UP WITH KAREN

A short catch up with Karen Minton, Director of Clinical Operations



Any drop in visitors at the clinic will find our Director of Clinical Operations, Karen Minton, engaged in a wide array of tasks. She might be tracking down a hard to find patient who needs follow up care, scrounging up supplies for dentists, or repairing an x-ray machine. Hired in 2005, Karen knows the clinic inside and out, and serves as a vital link between the Board of Directors and the Clinic.

Karen says, "The Spring is a busy time for the us. We are getting prepared for the summer influx of dentists and the patients we'll treat." She was quick to add, "The staff and volunteers really enjoy the new and expanded facility."

Karen was asked what need she would meet if she had a magic Tooth Fairy "wand." Without hesitation she said, "We need a new X-ray machine. We've scavenged parts for eight years from an old machine and just recently got the last of the useable parts to repair the one currently in use. If this one goes out during the busy season, we'll be in trouble." Cost for a new machine is around \$7,500. She also cited a need for new slow speed motors within the year. These motors power the devices used to safely remove decay from a tooth without causing harm to the tooth. "We've taken good care of the ones we have, but they are all about 25 years old," Karen reports. The clinic currently has six of these in use and replacement cost is around \$300 each.

THE PICTURE OF POVERTY

This story is from Gary Long, communications consultant to the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.

I chose to write a first person story for this newsletter because I was deeply compelled by the things I discovered when I began digging into my work in the cold of January. None of the cold indifference of journalism fit what I'm about to share.

In This Issue:

Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of the **The Molar Express**, the redesigned newsletter for the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic. With a new name, masthead, and layout, this edition brings you up to date on the work of the clinic. You'll find:

- Feature story, *The Picture of Poverty*
- Correspondence from Ron Keller, Board President
- Word from Karen Minton, Director of Clinic Operations
- New staff, new board members
- Government leader tours the clinic

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.