

Highlander news

Dental Outreach to hit \$500K in treatments

Charity continues growth and expands roster

By Will Jones

Haliburton County's Volunteer Dental Outreach (VDO) has provided 1,321 free appointments for 278 people and carried out treatments worth just shy of \$500,000 since its inception in May 2011.

The registered charity has seen an amazing uptake of its services since day one. Over 400 people have been financially screened to assess their eligibility and the vast majority of these applicants have gone on to be treated by the VDO's dedicated team of volunteer dentists, dental assistants and hygienists.

"So much has happened in the evolution of the VDO, and so many local residents have been positively impacted by the clinic's services to date," said Lisa Kerr, VDO board member. "We are delighted to announce that local dentist Dr. Ed Smolen, along with his wife, dental assistant Dani Smolen, have agreed to join the team starting in April."

The VDO's roster now includes 12 dentists, eight dental

assistants, eight hygienists and five front desk volunteers. In addition to dentist Dr. Bill Kerr, whose vision it was that conceived the VDO, local professionals such as Dr. John Purc volunteer regularly at the clinic, while dentists from as far a field as Newmarket and Scarborough offer their services whenever they can.

"Bill's colleagues have been very supportive and we have also reached out to other professionals through the dental journals," Kerr said. "We now have a 'Dentists to the Dock' initiative, which offers accommodation in the Haliburton Highlands in exchange for time worked at the clinic. We've had a great response and are looking forward to welcoming dentists and associated professionals from around Ontario and showing them the delights of the Highlands, while providing the community with the benefit of their expertise."

All of these services come at a cost though. Last year the clinic applied for and received \$20,000 from Green

Shield Canada's Community Giving program and it raised \$28,000 at the annual VDO Golf Tournament. These large sums came in addition to the support from many local individuals, service clubs and businesses. Although the VDO has helped many county residents

there is still a waiting list for services and all help, be it professional or financial, is welcomed. Approximately \$70,000 per annum is required to meet the operating budget of the clinic.

With this in mind, the VDO is now taking registrations for its 2013 Charity Golf Tournament (to be held on Aug. 15 at Pinestone), and

there are now 27 Tooth Fairy boxes dotted around the county. Kerr asks that people donate just \$2.00 to assist the VDO in helping the poorest in our community and thanks all the local businesses who have agreed to accept a box. For more information see www.dental-outreach.com or call 705-457-3111.

So many local residents have been positively impacted by the clinic's services to date.

Lisa Kerr

Board member, VDO

VDO exceeds the half-million-dollar mark

The Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton County (VDO) has hit another milestone worth celebrating

As of May 16, the outreach provided over \$550,000 in free dental treatment to local residents in need. Of that, \$47,000 of this work has gone towards providing denture repairs and new dentures to over 50 patients. In addition, this month also marks the end of VDO's second year of operation in the Highlands.

"We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our dedicated volunteers, donors and the community," said VDO board member Lisa Kerr. "All have been key players in allowing us to follow through on our mission."

The clinic, which opened its doors on May 19, 2011, provides free urgent dental care to low-income residents of Haliburton County. The other purpose of the clinic is to educate

patients and the public about preventative dental care.

Over the past two years, a total of 301 patients have received treatment through 1,509 appointments provided by volunteer dentists and dental hygienists. Unfortunately, there are 77 patients on the waiting list who have qualified for treatment, but there are not enough appointments available. Many of these individuals will have to wait a year before they can be treated.

Due to the current backlog of patients, VDO board members are looking to recruit more dental professionals willing to volunteer at the clinic. This past spring, the Toronto Academy of Dentistry offered the VDO a complimentary booth at the Ontario Dental Association's fall convention in order to promote what we are doing in Haliburton County to address the issue of lack of dental care for patients with nowhere to turn

for dental care due to financial barriers.

"Hopefully that will help us recruit more volunteers to help with the backlog of patients who have qualified but are on a waiting list," said Kerr.

Since it costs approximately \$70,000 per year to operate the clinic, fundraising is a must. On Thursday, Aug. 15, the VDO will host its third annual golf tournament at the Pinestone Resort & Conference Centre. Golfers, sponsors and people interested in coming for lunch only are all welcome. The net proceeds will go directly to cover ongoing expenses.

To register for the tournament, email janis@parkerpad.com or kerrfamily@cottagecountry.net.

More information about the clinic is available online at www.dental-outreach.com.

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VDO passes half-million mark

By Matthew Desrosiers
Editor

The Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton County (VDO) has cause to celebrate.

As of May 16, the outreach has provided \$550,000 in free dental treatment to residents in need, according to a press release. Of that, \$47,000 of the work has gone towards providing denture repairs and new dentures to over 50 patients.

May also marks the end of the VDO's second year in operation.

"We are very grateful for the ongoing support of our dedicated volunteers, donors and the community," said VDO board member Lisa Kerr in the release. "All have

been key players in allowing us to follow through on our mission."

Over the last two years, the clinic has treated 301 patients through 1,509 appointments provided by volunteer dentists and hygienists, however the organization is still looking to recruit more dental professionals.

Due to the clinic's \$70,000 yearly operating expense, the VDO is hosting its third annual golf tournament fundraiser at the Pinestone Resort & Conference Centre on Aug. 15. Net proceeds are used to cover operating expenses.

To register for the tournament, e-mail Janis@parkerpad.com or kerrfamily@cottagecountry.net.