

Highlander sports

Golfers tee off for dental care

By Mark Arike

Through a day of golf, games and auctions, approximately \$25,000 was raised for the Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton County (VDO).

A total of 143 golfers participated in the second annual VDO golf tournament, which was held at the Pinestone Resort on Aug. 16. The 18 holes of play followed the best ball format and a number of challenges, such as longest drive and closest to the pin, were part of the event. On the course participants were able to enter a 50/50 draw in the "beat the pro" challenge. This year's celebrity was former NHL player Mark Napier.

Golfers then dined on a lunch provided by the Pinestone while they bid on a number of live and silent auction items.

To date, the VDO has provided over \$337,000 in free dental care to 217 Haliburton County residents who could not

otherwise afford the services. In August, two new volunteer dentists and two volunteer hygienists joined the VDO team.

To learn more about the VDO or to make an online donation visit www.dental-outreach.com.

Tournament winners

Top foursome: Len Heise, Matt Kelly, Mike Storey and Craig Jermyn

Top mixed foursome: Tim and Lynda Wood, and Brad and Heather Laviolette

Top ladies foursome: Marci Mandel, Carol McClellan, Chris Cochrane and Roberta Coles

Men's longest drive: Alex Monk-Cray

Ladies longest drive: Lori Isenbaum

Men's closest to the pin: Len Heise

Ladies closes to the pin: Pennie Murray

Youngest golfer: Jack Kent



Dental outreach beats targets

By Mark Arike

It's been one year since the seeds were planted for the Volunteer Dental Outreach for Haliburton County (VDO). Only weeks after the outreach's founding members called their first planning meeting on Dec 17, 2010, dozens of partnerships were formed and a need in the community was recognized.

On May 19 of last year, the doors to the VDO – located at 739 Mountain Street in Haliburton – opened. As of this week, volunteer dentists and their teams had seen 132 patients in 470 appointments – and provided a staggering \$154,102 in free dental treatments. It originally was the group's goal to provide \$150,000 worth of work after its first year of operations; that goal was reached in just seven months.

Fundraising has been important for starting the clinic and sustaining its activities. Concerts, silent auctions and a golf tournament held last summer at Blairhampton Golf Club (an event that raised over \$22,000) have all contributed to the cause. This past weekend on New Years Eve, the Ya Babys performed at a fundraiser-cum-silent-auction and raised another solid \$2,341.

"This clinic exists because of the community effort it took to build and support it," said Lisa Kerr, one of the clinic's founders. "Thousands of hours of people's donated time to build, run and fund the clinic have led to the success."

Kerr and her husband Bill, a dentist, came up with the idea for the VDO along with local hygienist Lisa Stoughton. Their vision was largely inspired by mission trips they made to Honduras to provide free dental work to residents in need.

Once their vision was put to paper, the organizing committee created a simple and straightforward mandate: "To provide free urgent dental care for low income residents of Haliburton County."

Since the clinic opened, Kerr says that the demand in the county has been overwhelming.

"The need for the services is at least double what we are able to provide at our current rate of being open 11-13 days per month. Our waiting list continues to grow."

To help them balance the high demand for services, an assistant was recently brought on board.

"It was necessary to hire an assistant to manage the demand because we had more dentists willing to volunteer than dental assistants available to work with them," said Kerr, adding that more volunteer dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants are still needed.

The rest of the health care professionals and support team all volunteer their time to provide the much-needed services, which include root canals, fillings and more. "The patients are extremely grateful for the care they are receiving," said Kerr.

Those interested in learning more about the dental outreach clinic can go to www.dental-outreach.com or call 705-457-3111. Residents in need of urgent work are encouraged to call SIRCH at 705-457-1742 ext. 44 to start the application process.

There is also a golf tournament in the works to benefit the VDO, scheduled for August 16. Organizers are hoping to raise in excess of \$30,000 to ensure the work of the clinic continues. Donations to the clinic can be made on SIRCH's website at www.sirch.on.ca.