

VOLUNTEER

News
&
Views

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Spring 2008

Rockbridge Area Free Clinic
Serving the community since 1982

35th NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

April 27 - May 3, 2008

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic Staff would like to thank our volunteers for the time and talent they so unselfishly give to the Free Clinic.

In FY06, your support made possible 10,491 patient visits, serving 1,182 individuals. These visits included primary care, specialty care, dental care, patient education and social services.

The monetary value of program services provided by RAFC in FY06 was valued at \$2,713,930.

The value to our community? *Priceless.*

WHY WE'RE HERE: A Brief History

Rockbridge County is an area of immense natural beauty coupled with cultural and intellectual opportunities. The presence of three institutions of higher learning in a rural area with a population of 32,000 creates an appearance of wealth. The recent influx of a large number of retirees from all over the United States accentuates that appearance.

But despite its apparent prosperity, there is significant poverty in Rockbridge County. As recently as fifteen years ago this was one of the areas in Virginia with the highest percentage of houses with no indoor plumbing. In the last two decades the city of Buena Vista, traditionally a blue-collar town, has lost most of its major manufacturers, resulting in lost jobs and income. The county's rural economy, based on small farming, has changed little in the last fifty years. And with the national economy facing trouble, it's likely that difficulties will only increase for area residents.

Many lack adequate health insurance – or any insurance at all. Many of the elderly, retired or disabled may have some type of insurance for physician visits but no means of paying for prescribed medications.

A Children's Clinic, founded during the Depression, closed its doors in the early 1960's, and for a long time the medical community sought a way to provide care to needy families. Finally, in the early 1990's, a group of volunteers, both medical professionals and others, came together in a project that became the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic.

Our first clinic was held in the office of the local public health department on December 17, 1992. Since that first night, the clinic has continued to grow in both number of patients and services.

Now, in 2008, we have a Nurse Practitioner who provides care for patients with chronic or long-term illness as well as those needing acute care services and counseling. Every Thursday evening, area doctors and nurses volunteer their time to see and treat clinic patients. The Clinic Pharmacy helps obtain medications for those who otherwise could not afford them. Stonewall Jackson Hospital and Rockbridge Medical Labs work with us to provide laboratory, radiology, and physical therapy services. And in January, 2008, we opened a brand-new, sorely needed Dental Clinic.

A lot of what we do can be measured: number of patients served, amount of money spent, total prescriptions dispensed. But some things can't be quantified. Like the security of knowing you can see a doctor when you're sick, even if you've lost your job and your insurance. The relief of knowing that you can get the medications your doctor prescribes, even if you don't have the money to pay for them. The confidence of knowing that, after working all your life to support yourself and your family, you won't have to cope with illness on your own.

You can't measure hope and the assurance of medical care. But those are probably the most important services we can give to our neighbors, and the real reason for the existence of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic.

Suzanne Sheridan, Executive Director

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT

If you love working at the Free Clinic, but you're tired of doing the same old thing week after week...why not make a change? That's what long-time volunteer Anne Plante did. In January, Anne moved from the Reception Desk into the newly opened Dental Clinic. Now she's assisting at chairside during dental procedures. It was a natural move for her, since she had previously worked in the dental field.

Not sure you want to make a permanent change? Try it for the summer! Our college student volunteers will be gone till September, leaving a number of jobs at the clinic vacant. Maybe you or a friend could fill in. And if you know any students who would be interested in working at the clinic for the summer, send them our way – it's great experience.

Volunteer coordinator Lynn Foster says that changing jobs can be a good idea. "Seeing the clinic from a new perspective can be energizing. And there's a bonus – learning new tasks keeps your brain active and healthy!"

To discuss what's available, give Lynn a call at 464-8700, ext. 105.

CHECK THIS OUT

Eligibility volunteers and staff meet on the third Wednesday of each month to discuss eligibility processes, policies and issues. If any volunteer is interested in attending this meeting, please contact Judy Weeks for time and place.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

March

Peg Leinback - 3/1
Dolly Shumate - 3/4
William Rush - 3/7
Eddi Snyder - 3/21
Jacqueline Bittner - 3/4/
Alice Furgerson - 3/11
Laura Williams - 3/17
Margarete Baisley - 3/18
Whitney Burns - 3/20
Mindie Perdue - 3/23

April

Dolores Snarr - 4/21
Dot Fogo - 4/3
Jenn Plumley - 4/07

May

Kris Ravenhorst - 5/9
Katie Coyne - 5/13
Irvin Reuther - 5/22

June

Joyce Noveras - 6/1
Emmy Parks - 6/2
Anne Owen - 6/4
Carol Rendleman - 6/7
Katie Kain - 6/9
Olivia Williams - 6/18
Deborah Desjardins - 6/26



More than 200 people attended the second annual Bull & Oyster Fest on a chilly day in April, to raise money for the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic.

~~Life isn't about how to survive the storm,
but how to dance in the rain.~~

THE NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED

Congratulations to Priscilla Jamison and Roberta Grist, who organized the victorious write-in campaign to name our newsletter *Volunteer News & Views*. Priscilla has been a Free Clinic Volunteer since August 13, 1998; Roberta's first day as a volunteer was March 1, 1997.

Now, *HELP!* We need someone to put the newsletter together (in other words, do the layout) once the articles have been written. If you know, or would like to learn, Microsoft's Publisher program, please get in touch with Alison Rilling at abrilling@gmail.com or 463-5392.

The next issue of *Volunteer News & Views* will appear in July.

CARTRIDGES FOR KIDS

Now you can clear out your old cell phones, inkjet cartridges, PALM Pilots, laptop computers, and DVD's – and do a good deed at the same time. Fairfield Elementary School will send them to *Cartridges for Kids*, which pays the school for each item donated. Payment can range from 25 cents to 65 dollars!

Leave your unwanted ipods, video games, digital cameras, etc., in the box near the pharmacy desk. For more information about the program, call Julia White at 464-3815, or visit www.cartridgesforkids.com.

AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...

You can clear some space in your desk by donating unused greeting cards to the clinic. Bring in any birthday, sympathy, holiday, and blank cards. We can put them to good use!

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Volunteers Dolores Snarr and Debbie Wallace have signed on to head up our cookbook project. They will need assistance with a variety of tasks on this project, so if you have any spare time contact Debbie Wallace or Dolores Snarr at the clinic. Dolores volunteers on Monday morning and Debbie volunteers on Tuesday morning.

The Cookbook Committee will be looking for dozens of recipes from RAFC volunteers, staff, and patients. Maybe it's finally time to write down Grandma's delicious rhubarb pie recipe...or your little brother's recipe for barbecue sauce...or what goes into that amazing punch your father-in-law fixes for New Year's Eve. This will be a terrific – and tasteful – fundraiser for the Free Clinic.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Over 84% of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic patient population is employed, comes from a working family or is retired.

*Service is the rent you pay
for room on this earth.
- Shirley Chisholm*

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic

25 Northridge Lane
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Suzanne Sheridan, Executive Director
Judy Weeks, Executive Assistant
Mary Jo Doig, Coordinator of Special Programs
Jessica Beverley, Patient Care Coordinator
Janice Marshall, Nurse Practitioner

Phyllis Miller, Pharmacist
Jenny Parker, Pharmacy Technician
Lynn Foster, Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator
Carol Tyree, Dental Assistant

You can receive the Volunteer Newsletter in the mail or by email. Please let us know which one is most convenient for you. (Hint: We'd love to save on postage!)

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Please send me the newsletter in the mail

Please send it to me by email

Clip this and drop it in the Newsletter Box. Thanks!

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