

The Medical Record of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic

25 Northridge Lane, Lexington, Virginia 24450

Fall 2009

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RAFC is a United Way
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A VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVE: Paisley’s Story, “No man is an island”

My reasons for volunteering at the Free Clinic are such natural impulses that they hardly seem worth mentioning, especially in light of the little bit of time I participate. But small as my contribution is, working at the Clinic has done much for me; it has been an essential element toward my inner fulfillment.

Along the way in my life a helping hand has made the difference many times, and I thought perhaps to do the same for another; working at the Clinic makes me think that maybe I am. I feel I have been a lucky person, that for some undeserved reason I have received an extra helping of happiness and contentment and thought perhaps to spread the surplus around; working at the Clinic makes me think that maybe I am.

And finally, since I am an artist and a person who purposely lives alone, I tend to be a very inward-turned individual. Working at the Free Clinic keeps this from getting out of hand; the clients, the staff and the other volunteers all help me to keep in mind that “no man is an island, each is a part of the main” – even artists.

By, Paisley Griffin



Are you looking for a great Christmas present? Look no further...the Free Clinic cookbooks are here. We still have a limited number of cookbooks for sale. Recipes from volunteers and staff are compiled together in a beautiful book for \$12 a piece. Contact the Free Clinic for more information.

CHECK OUT THE NEW RAFC SIGN!

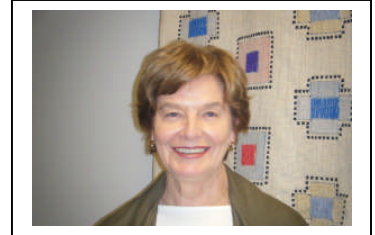
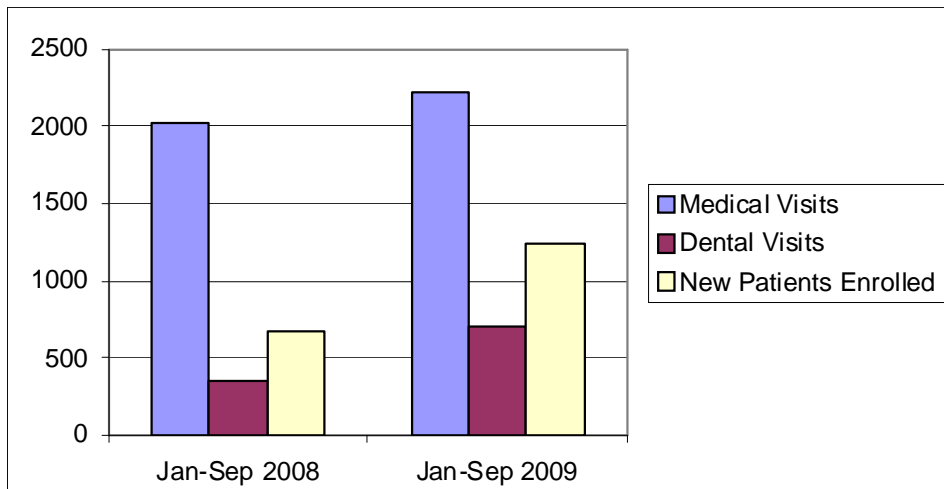
The Free Clinic will be more visible from Route 11 as a result of the efforts of Peter and Laura Simpson. Peter and Laura worked with Everbrite to have a sign donated to the Clinic. Spencer Home Center generously offered the wood to properly display the sign, and Ed Hamilton of Hamilton Woodworking assisted Peter in building the frame for the new sign. Our thanks to Peter Simpson for providing the artwork on the sign as well as all the others who helped to make our sign possible!



5 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE RAFC IN 5 MINUTES

- Become a fan on Facebook.
- Tell two people who have never heard of the clinic what we do and how to find us on the web.
- Donate items from our wish list.
- Share this newsletter with a friend.
- Check out volunteer opportunities by calling Lynn Foster at 464.8700.

Number of patients and visits increase!



Mrs. Bunny Martin

LONG TIME VOLUNTEER JOINS THE FREE CLINIC STAFF

After having been a volunteer at the Free Clinic for over four years, Bunny Martin joined the staff in late August as the Eligibility Coordinator. Executive Director, Suzanne Sheridan, felt the need to create this new position to better serve our increasing number of patients. In the first six months of this year the number of new patients rose 20% over the same period last year.

Bunny graduated from the University of Buffalo (now the State University of New York at Buffalo) with a Bachelor of Science in Social Welfare and then worked at the Buffalo General Hospital for more than twenty years.

She will be responsible for all things "Eligibility." Patient eligibility determination, the recruitment, training and maintenance of the eligibility team and the expansion of the patient advocacy program are among her duties. She hopes to reach out to other agencies in the community so that the Clinic can be aware of additional services that may benefit the patients.

On a typical day of screening interviews, Bunny needs a team of at least three volunteers. She has been successful in developing a great team of volunteers, but the Clinic is always looking for people to work in any number of positions.

During Bunny's first week as a staff member, she experienced a wonderfully appreciative patient. The patient's name has been changed to protect his privacy. Jim was hospitalized and his doctor referred him to the Clinic for follow up care. While Jim was still in the hospital Connie helped him complete the Free Clinic eligibility process so that when he was discharged he had immediate access to Free Clinic services. When Bunny was able to give Connie an eligibility card for Jim, Connie thanked Bunny and embraced her with tear-filled eyes. She said she didn't know what they would have done without the help of the RAFC.

Bunny resides in Lexington with her husband, Chuck, who is a retired contractor. They are the parents of five grown sons.

COMMUNITY FESTIVAL, A HUGE SUCCESS!

Members of the Free Clinic staff prepared baskets of goodies ranging from Raphine Riches to Webkins and Downtown Dining. The staff members donate the items that fill these baskets as their contribution to the fundraiser. Then staff, volunteers and board members sold raffle tickets at the Festival. Proceeds from the fundraiser exceeded \$800 this year which is a record amount for funds received at the Festival.

The Free Clinic would also like to give special thanks to the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church for their generosity in supporting the Clinic at the Festival. Members of the Church hosted a bake sale, and they donated all the proceeds from their hard work to the Clinic. At the festival they raised over \$300, and the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans matched their funds with an additional \$150.

ALEXANDER THE ALLIGATOR VISITS THE AREA SCHOOLS

You may wonder just who Alexander the Alligator is or what he has to do with the Free Clinic. Al is the newest member of our Pediatric Dental Staff. He joined the team in late August. We are happy to welcome him to our program. Al is slightly different from most alligators in that he has a set of beautiful human teeth, and he is brought to life only when in the hands of a puppet master.

Our pediatric dental team recently started a new program, and Al has been very helpful in the progress of the program. Matt Hafen, Anne Plante and Carol Tyree, three of our faithful, human staff members, have been visiting local schools as a part of the YMCA afterschool program. In their visit, they have a full education component to teach children the importance of oral hygiene. Al the Alligator is simply a prop to assist in demonstrating the proper brushing techniques.

The schools that they've visited thus far include: Waddell, Central, Natural Bridge, Fairfield, Effinger and Mountain View. Each child leaves the dental education class with a "goodie bag" which includes a toothbrush, floss, toothpaste along with additional information about the Clinic's Pediatric Dental Program. Al and the other pediatric staff will return to the programs in October to present the second oral education training module.



Did you know?

- 1 in 8 women have breast cancer.
- The RAFC will provide at least 250 preventative mammograms this year.
- Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital sponsored RAFC on a live broadcast with 96.7, 3WZ for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

THINK PINK...OCTOBER WAS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic received a grant from the Susan G. Komen Foundation, and the Clinic plans to complete a minimum of 250 cancer screenings for women throughout the year.

We offer women's health services at our monthly Women's Clinics. The Clinic staff also participates in awareness building events throughout the year. For the month of October, RAFC staff attended these events and provided information about Breast Cancer awareness:

- October 3 – Harvest Festival at Rockbridge Vineyards
- October 14 – Women's Clinic at the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic
- October 17 – Cakewalk to benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation at the American Legion in Buena Vista
- October 28 –
Women's Clinic at the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic
VIP tour for Breast Cancer Survivors at the Free Clinic

Hopefully you saw someone from the staff at an event that you attended this fall. If you have any questions about the services that we offer, please contact Laura Simpson at 464-8700, ext. 115.



Our patients share their thankful words:

--I could never "thank you" enough for what you do for me. You guys deserve a "special crown" in Heaven. Please know how much I appreciate each and every one of you!

--Thank you for all your help to keep me alive.

--Thank you for your time and helping me to smile again. I got my teeth back!

--Thank you so much for your generous support of the Free Clinic. Your time means so much to so many. I'm grateful to receive such quality care. It's people like you that make this world a better place. Your gifts really do make a huge difference. Thank you! Thank you for your time so well spent.

--Thank you for making health care possible. I am a college educated 40-ish white female professional without health insurance!!!

It's not a shared appointment – it's a TEAM APPROACH!

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic recently started a new Group Medical Visit program for patients with uncontrolled diabetes. The Group Medical Visit program is part of the Free Clinic Public Health Initiative, a collaborative effort between the Free Clinic, area health providers and students pursuing a career in the health care field. The program aims to provide Free Clinic patients with comprehensive management of their chronic illness in a single visit.

The new model of care will allow the Clinic to meet the challenge of managing a greater quantity of patients and at the same time increase the quality of care. The Group Medical Visits will enable the nurse practitioner to see more patients throughout the course of the day and will also provide patients with access to pharmacy and dietetic consulting services. It is anticipated that this innovative model of care will empower patients to change their lifestyle and better manage their chronic disease.

The RAFC plans to hold the Group Medical Visits monthly. The ninety minute appointment includes a physical assessment by RAFC's staff nurse practitioner, a session with a volunteer Registered Dietician and medication counseling and prescription refills by the RAFC's licensed pharmacist and pharmacy technician. W&L students assist the nurses with vital signs and foot exams. The appointment also provides patients with an educational presentation and allows time for group support. After the meeting, W&L Campus Kitchens Program provides the patients with a free diabetic-friendly meal, complete with a take-home recipe.

RAFC hopes that enhanced learning as well as increased efficiency will occur. Nurses expect that patients will benefit from more extensive teaching from the staff about how to manage their chronic disease and prevent complications, and nurses hope that patients will also learn from each other in a support group fashion. Future plans for the program include guest appearances from speakers on these topics relevant to the disease: dental hygiene, depression management, kidney disease, neuropathy, obesity, smoking cessation and podiatry. BB&T Bank generously helped with the purchase of a Hemoglobin A1C machine that will allow the Clinic to complete on-site lab work during the Group Medical Visits beginning in November.

The first Group Medical Visits turned out to be highly successful in large part because of Laura Simpson RN, coordinator of the program, as well as all the other Free Clinic staff: Janice Marshall FNP, Jessica Beverley LPN, Phyllis Miller RPh, and Jenny Parker CPhT. The Free Clinic is grateful to Amanda Kaster, Registered Dietitian, of Compassionate Eating, LLC, who volunteers her time and expertise to every Group Medical Visit. In addition to these core team members, Washington & Lee and Southern Virginia students, as well as volunteers and employees of Washington & Lee Campus Kitchens provide countless hours of behind the scenes support to make the program a success. In the words of one patient: "Thank you for supporting the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic. I have diabetes and high blood pressure, and no health insurance; without the clinic I would be unable to afford medical care and my medications."



Nurse Jessica Beverley checks patient vitals when the meeting begins.



Amanda Kaster, Registered Dietician, coaches patients on proper eating habits.



W&L students give foot exams to all the patients.

**WE'RE ON
FACEBOOK!**

Search for the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic, and become a fan today! Then pass our page along to all your friends...and our grassroots effort will grow immediately!

Long-time employee, Judy Weeks, leaves the RAFC

Mrs. Judy Weeks joined the Free Clinic staff in May of 1998, and over the last eleven years she has been instrumental in Free Clinic operations. In August of 2009, Judy resigned to move on to a new phase of her life, and we will all miss her very much.

When Judy started in 1998, the RAFC had only two staff members (including Judy). Over the course of the last eleven years, the Clinic has grown tremendously - serving over 2,000 patients with medical, pharmaceutical and dental coverage.

Judy was the first person at the Clinic that many of our patients met. She greeted the patients in their time of greatest need: many of them were frightened, embarrassed or even angry with the healthcare system. Judy was talented in establishing a positive relationship with the patients and never forgot a name.

Jud will be missed, and we wish her the very best as she moves forward.

Worried about the flu?

Here are some tips to avoid the flu:

- Take time to get a flu vaccine. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three seasonal viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often.
- Try to avoid contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.
- Contact your doctor with any other questions you may have regarding the flu.

Did you know...the United Way is in the middle of a \$250,000 campaign? The RAFC is proud to be a United Way agency. Please support the United Way by making a gift today. For more information, contact David Dax at 463-4482 or by email: ddax@unitedwaylexva.org.

RAFC Wish List

- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Copy paper (white & color)
- Hand disinfectant
- Large trashcans
- Greeting cards
- Vacuum cleaner
- Plates
- Cups
- Trash bags (tall kitchen size)
- Fluoride toothpaste
- Experienced painter to paint interior areas
- Carpeting cleaning
- Office and paper products
- Shredder
- Refinish tile floors (stripping and waxing)

RAFC Receives Recognition for over \$400,000 in Free Prescription Medication Received

On July 22, Phyllis Miller, Pharmacist, and Suzanne Sheridan, Executive Director, of the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic received a certificate in recognition of the \$415,803 of free prescription medication the organization has received through participation with the statewide nonprofit Rx Partnership (RxP).

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic began participating as an RxP Affiliate in April 2004 and has seen significant benefit for the Clinic's patients since that time. Phyllis Miller commented about the relationship with RxP: "The biggest benefit to the patient is that we have the medications in stock, and they will not have to wait six to eight weeks for their medications to come in. RxP also benefits our staff because we can order one bulk order once a month rather than having to complete numerous individual orders for each patient. This saves us a lot of time." As a result of the relationship with RxP, patients have access to a variety of free prescription medication and prescriptions can be filled immediately, avoiding the 6-12 week wait that is common to other Patient Assistance Programs.

In addition to the pharmaceuticals acquired through RxP, the Free Clinic also receives medications through the Medication Assistance Program which requires individual applications for each medication provided to a patient. Pharmacy Technician Jenny Parker leads a team of volunteers including Alice Ferguson, Don Thomas, Catherine Nash, Janice O'Connor, Katie Kain and Pat Randolph to acquire over \$1.4 million in medications.

Not only does the Rockbridge Area Free Clinic help provide medications to the patients, but the Clinic also provides medical and dental care to the uninsured and underinsured of the Rockbridge area. Medical clinics function on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday during the day, and the RAFC holds a night clinic on Thursday evenings. To find out more about the services offered and eligibility requirements, please visit the website at www.rockbridgefreeclinic.org.

FREE CLINIC GOES GREEN!

In an effort to be better stewards of your gifts and our environment, we are asking that you submit your email addresses. This will enable us to communicate with you through email rather by snail mail (which saves money on paper and postage). If you have an active email address please email it to Katy Bahhur at development.freeclinic@comcast.net.

Mission

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is a community-based nonprofit organization providing quality health care for uninsured and underinsured residents.

Vision

Serve as a vital and caring Rockbridge area resource promoting and providing access to quality health care to build a healthier community.

The Rockbridge Area Free Clinic is proud to be a United Way/ United Fund member and encourages your donations to those agencies during their annual campaigns.

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