

# New dentists sign up for Volunteer Dental Clinic

**Jenn Watt**  
Editor

A newsletter sent out to 4,000 dental professionals garnered significant return for Haliburton's Volunteer Dental Outreach Clinic.

Three new dentists have agreed to join on, helping the clinic serve those who cannot afford dental care in the county.

"We really need new dentists to bring on new patients," said Lisa Kerr, a founder of the clinic.

There are more than 60 people on the wait list.

Kerr estimates that every dentist represents about eight patients who can be seen. Dr. Uros Jovovic, Dr. Michael Proctor and Dr. Tracy Berman have all agreed to start volunteering their time.

As of the clinic's second year-end June 30, they had seen 314 patients over 1,616 appointments totalling more than \$585,000 in free dental treatment.

Patients are prioritized based on the severity of their condition when they come to the clinic.

While dentists, dental hygienists and other staff volunteer their time, money must be raised every year to pay for equipment and supplies. The next fundraiser is the group's golf tournament Aug. 15 at Pinestone Resort and Conference Centre.

For information, go to [www.dental-outreach.com](http://www.dental-outreach.com).



**Jenn Watt Staff**

Dental hygienist Skye Smith and dentist Dr. Ian Gray work at the Volunteer Dental Outreach Clinic in Haliburton on June 28. Gray heard about the clinic from founder Dr. Bill Kerr. He lives in Newmarket and makes special trips out to Haliburton to help out. The clinic recently added three new dentists to its roster.





Volunteer Dental Outreach board member Janis Parker welcomed the volunteers to a special appreciation event at Bonnie View Inn on Oct. 27.  
Jenn Watt Staff

# Outreach clinic hits \$700,000 of free dentistry

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Editor

No matter how many times they revisit the story, volunteers and supporters of Haliburton's Volunteer Dental Outreach clinic can't believe how quickly the concept went from idea to reality.

At a volunteer appreciation event at Bonnie View Oct. 27, the room was awash with people telling stories of how the clinic has helped people of Haliburton County in need of dental work without the means to pay.

It started with an idea in the fall of 2010, Dr. Bill Kerr told the group.

"It was way smaller than this," he said. "[But] God had way bigger plans and so did Janis [Parker]."

Parker, a founding board member, told the group that of all her volunteer commitments "nothing has made me prouder" than the work of the VDO.

By May of 2011, the clinic was open and serving clients and less than two and a half years later, 356 patients had been seen.

Kerr said as of Oct. 27, those 356 patients had been in for 1,959 appointments worth \$701,201 in free dentistry.

The dental community has been supportive of the endeavour, which is for those without insurance or means to pay. They've received many donations of equipment over the years alongside staff hours from dentists near and far.

The help continued when the board decided to replace its panoramic X-ray

machine used for diagnosing patients.

The value of the new digital machine is \$40,000, but VDO was given a discount by Specialty Dental, which makes the machines.

The board will be embarking on a fund-raising campaign to pay for the remainder of the price.

The statistics are exciting to think about, Kerr said, but the real reward is connecting with people you help.

In informal conversations around the room, dental professionals told stories of people they had helped.

One man came in with his teeth reduced to stubs and much of his life in bad shape as well, Dr. John Purc said.

He was wary of dentists and nervous to come for help, but over the course of treatment, his smile and his life improved.

Kerr told the story of a man who after treatment for rotted teeth happily exclaimed that his mother hadn't seen him with good teeth in 20 years, saying he felt like Tom Cruise with his new smile.

County Warden Carol Moffatt congratulated all the volunteers for taking the project from vision to reality so quickly and offered her own anecdote.

"If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to raise a smile," she said.

The Volunteer Dental Outreach is based in Haliburton on Mountain Street next to Canoe FM. They are always looking for new dentists and have a waiting list of 54 patients. You can contact them at 705-457-3111.