

A Volunteer You Should Meet:

by Susie Buchanan



Mary Morris

Mary Morris is a part of our group of committed, thoughtful citizens who are changing the world for the better. She has volunteered at the Moore Free Care Clinic for 3 1/2 years, since moving to the Sandhills from Virginia Beach with her husband Bob. Mary has five grown children: Kathy, Elizabeth, Bob, Paul & Charles, and has instilled the spirit of volunteerism in all of them.

Mary assists Millie Lopez, our Patient Care Coordinator, by calling patients to tell them their medications are ready to be picked up and recording data. But Mary, the consummate volunteer, helps

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” -- Margaret Mead

wherever she is needed. She files and answers the phone and suggests, “If you want to volunteer - come on out here and we will find something for you to do. The people who work here are wonderful to work with and you get the satisfaction of helping people who truly need our help.”

Mary’s enthusiasm is infectious. She has seen how a small group of people can change the world - she has seen the MFCC grow from our 500 square foot quarters to our new 3000 square foot facility - she has seen the increase in services for our patients and the growing numbers of those we serve. And, she has seen the need for volunteers increase to keep pace with our growing organization and our commitment to provide high-quality primary, preventive and specialty health care to limited-income people in Moore County who are uninsured and can’t afford access to health care. She is a gift we are all grateful for.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, just call our office at 910-246-5333.



WINTER 2009

A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters
of Moore Free Care Clinic
Visit our Website at: www.moorefreecare.org

Local Health Care Providers Join Forces with the Moore Free Care Clinic to Make Moore County a Healthier Place to Live

By Susie Buchanan, Board Member & Mark W. Wethington, Executive Director

The success of the Moore Free Care Clinic (MFCC), which gives medical care to the uninsured and low income of Moore County, is largely due to the partnerships the clinic has formed with local health care providers. By receiving free imaging, testing, lab work, x-rays, along with a multiplicity of free specialty consultations, the MFCC is able to care for more patients and offer an even higher quality of care to people of the Sandhills who have limited access to health care.

Dr. Mark Wethington, co-founder and Executive Director of the Moore Free Clinic, is convinced that the continued building of such networks among medical providers is the key to making our community an even healthier place to live and work. “Sharing services in a cooperative way is greatly impacting our productivity and is an extraordinary example of how our local health care providers can work together to enhance the health and well being of Sandhill’s residents.”

Major Donors in Health Care Make it All Work

Since the clinic began in 2004, FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital has contributed financially to the clinic every year. In addition, FirstHealth gives free lab and imaging services. During the past year, Hospitalists from Moore Regional Hospital have been seeing patients within the clinic on an average of 16 hours per week. In turn, Hospitalists are able to discharge patients who qualify for the MFCC and do not have a primary care doctor directly from the hospital to an appointment at the free clinic.

Pinehurst Surgical and Pinehurst Medical Clinic have also contributed financially to the free clinic. In addition, all five of Pinehurst Surgical’s departments; which includes orthopedics, ENT, women’s health, urology and general surgery; all give free consultation and, when required, surgery as well. Primary care providers from PMC volunteer time in the clinic to see patients, and also provide guidance for the clinic in the area of medical policies and procedures.



Major donors forming partnerships with the Moore Free Care Clinic are: (left to right): Joel Shriberg, future President of MFCC’s Board of Directors; John Rezen, CEO Pinehurst Surgical; Dr. David Bruton, co-founder of clinic; Mark Wethington, co-founder and Executive Director of the clinic; Chuck Frock, CEO of FirstHealth of the Carolinas; Ken Cormier, President and CEO of St. Joseph of the Pines; and missing from the photo, Rahn Smart, CEO of Pinehurst Medical Clinic.

St. Joseph of the Pines, a continuing care retirement community in Southern Pines, has also contributed financially to the free clinic this year. They are working with the clinic on future projects, including a mobile rural outreach program that will funnel patients to the Moore Free Clinic from the rural parts of our county. The program hopes to reach eligible people who previously were not aware of the services provided by the clinic or did not have access to it.

Dr. David Bruton, co-founder of the MFCC along with Wethington says, “The tradition of our medical community working together to provide service is not limited to MFCC. For two years our physicians, hospital administrators and FirstHealth community board members have been working to create an Integrated Delivery System (IDS) for our community. They have hired consultants, worked in committees, met about every two weeks, and

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Our Mission

In the spirit of compassion and concern, the Moore Free Care Clinic provides high-quality primary, preventive and specialty health care to limited-income people in Moore County who are uninsured and can't afford access to health care.

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Our Community Partners



The Duke Endowment



ST. JOSEPH of the PINES



Carolina Eye Associates PA

Drs. Monroe and Monroe, General Dentistry

Neese Family Health Clinic

Pinehurst Radiology

Moore County Health Department

Southern Pines Physical Therapy

John W. and Marjorie A. Roffe Endowment

Moore County Community Foundation

The Cannon Foundation

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Cooper's Pharmacy



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have made site visits to La Crosse, WS and Springfield, MO in an effort to learn how to develop a patient-centered, team oriented, integrated medical care system that will deliver high quality care that costs less. It is thrilling to observe our physicians, hospital administrators and community board members working hard together to provide better health care for our community."

The clinic's expanding network of partnerships with providers is growing every month. In addition to FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, Pinehurst Surgical, and Pinehurst Medical Clinic, other partnerships include: Pinehurst Radiology, The NC Diagnostic Imaging Center, Carolina Imaging, Southern Pines Physical Therapists, Pinehurst Foot Specialists, Monroe and Monroe dentists, Carolina Eye, FirstHealth Behavior Services, the Sandhills Community Care Network, FirstHealth First Quit program, the Neese Clinic, nutritionists, and many volunteer medical providers and specialists, both active and retired. In addition, the MFCC has a limited pharmacy permit and area pharmacists volunteer in the checking-in and labeling of prescription drugs received from pharmaceutical companies. WalMart and Coopers Pharmacy both work with the clinic in providing the lowest cost medications possible.

The Moore Free Care Clinic is testimony to how cooperative partnerships within the health care community can bring about a much healthier community for all people.

The Cost of "Free"

(co-authored)

Beth B. Wethington, Administrative Assistant and Mark W. Wethington, Executive Director

You've seen the advertisements: Free DVD! (that is, it's free IF you purchase 12 more DVDs at full price over the course of six months, and the full price is unusually high). Or: Free night in Cancun! (that is, it's free after you pay for the first 3 nights at a high price that "builds in" the cost of the "free" night). "Free" so often comes with a hidden cost that makes it not so free!

We are the Moore FREE Care Clinic. What does the "free" in our name mean? Are there hidden costs for those we serve?

We serve people who can't afford to pay for health care. There is a strict process which all persons must go through in order to become eligible as a patient of the free clinic. Income must be less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (e.g. \$16,245 for an individual, \$33,075 for a family of four). Documents must be provided to substantiate eligibility.

Patients of the free clinic can have no insurance of any kind including Medicare or Medicaid and they must live in Moore County. After approval for eligibility, patients are scheduled for an appointment with a primary care provider who will create a plan for treatment or referral to specialists as needed. Patients incur no costs for any of these services. We are providing FREE health care to hundreds and hundreds of residents of Moore County who have limited ability to access it, with no tricks!

Is there ANY cost to our patients for the health care they receive? Extremely little, but for a reason. While we are able to receive many prescribed medications for free through pharmaceutical assistance programs, in some cases there are medications not available through this means and patients are prescribed generic medicines that can be bought at local pharmacies. Generally the cost of these medications is \$4 for a 30 day supply, \$10 or less for 90 days. As a way of encouraging a patient's "self-care" we have them buy this low cost medication through a local pharmacy. Usually this is the only expense our patients incur.

At times there can be one other cost: to further encourage our patients

to take responsibility for their health, we have a policy which addresses "no shows", namely, a patient who neglects to show up for an appointment and also neglects to let us know. A patient who fails to notify us that he or she will not be keeping the appointment will be charged \$10 for the next one. This policy was borne out of the need to take full advantage of all appointment slots for any given day. With a growing waiting list and daily urgent care calls, we cannot afford a less than full slate of patients. Many people are waiting in line for care and "no shows" deprive others of that care.

Free Clinic? For our patients "yes". For our wider community there is a cost that "buys" a healthier community for all. The Moore Free Care Clinic maintains a small staff to take care of administrative and clinical necessities. We have regular monthly operating expenses that include the leasing of Hospitalists to provide increased and consistent medical support; we buy some "gap" medications, and also medical supplies. We have utility, phone and internet costs, along with electronic medical record fees. Our annual rent for the clinic facility is \$1, thanks to the generosity of our landlord.

Relocating from Carthage into the larger facility in Southern Pines has allowed greater expansion of services and volunteer opportunities. The four exams rooms created in this larger space have enabled us to have a consistent and increased presence of more providers, thus allowing us to see more patients daily and to increase our numbers of new patients.

The greatest portion of "costs" customarily comes from treating and stabilizing chronic and acute condi-

tions. Many of these "costs" are contributed by medical professionals and lay volunteers, and an ever-expanding network of partnerships, which help us in caring for our patients (see article in this newsletter).

You should know: *Every dollar you contribute to the Moore Free Care Clinic is leveraged at least six and one half times.* With an operating budget of approximately \$500,000, we have provided over \$3.5 million dollars worth of health care services. We have hardly done this on our own.

Generous donations from our supporters allow us to continue to function as a professional medical clinic serving the health needs of Moore County. In recent months health care has become a very public debate. As the discussion of how to provide care for a growing population of uninsured persons continues, free clinics ensure that a portion of this population receives quality medical care. The reality of health care in the United States today is this: "...Americans who die or go broke because they happened to get sick represents a fundamental moral decision our country has made. Despite all the rights and privileges and entitlements that Americans enjoy today, we have never decided to provide medical care for everybody who needs it. In the world's richest nation, we tolerate a health care system that leads to large numbers of avoidable deaths and bankruptcies among our fellow citizens." (*The Healing of America* by T.R. Reid). The Moore FREE Care Clinic serves as one answer to closing the gap. We are deeply grateful for the support of all of you!

Success In The Pines

More Than 700 Guests Dined in the Pines
to Raise Over \$42,000 for the Moore Free Care Clinic

by Susie Buchanan, Board Member

The 5th annual Dining in the Pines fundraiser benefitting the Moore Free Care Clinic is wrapping up its activities for 2009. Sixty seven couples hosted dinner parties over a two week period in October with more parties scheduled over the holidays. Events ranged from large cocktail parties to intimate dinner parties, with several Sunday brunches thrown in to round out the dining extravaganza.

An on-line auction was conducted over the same two weeks raising \$5,200. "New this year was the addition of eBay's "Mission Fish" charitable arm that allowed us to auction off our golf packages and basketball tickets to a wider audience," stated Bobbi Erdman, creator of the Dining in the Pines concept. "We received bids from California, Massachusetts and New York state." Other items of note that were auctioned off; learning to drive on a high performance race track, a stay at a Bear Creek cabin and dinner for eight at a committee member's home.

Sponsors of the event included: Dr. Sklandany of Dental Design Innovations; Harris Printing, Co., Inc.; First Bank; BB&T; Doctors Vision Center; Southern Pines Woman's Health Center; NC Self Storage; and Terry Riney Insurance Agency.

Committee member Kathy Lannon praised the great turn out and the committee's hopes for next year, "We want 2010 to be even bigger. We hope to expand the fundraiser to all parts of Moore County to build awareness for the Moore Free Care Clinic which serves people with no insurance and low income from the entire county."



Enjoying Dining in the Pines fundraiser party are(left to right): Kathy Lannon, MFCC board member and Dining in the Pines committee member, a hostess; Beth Wethington, MFCC Administrative Assistant; Mark Wethington, co founder of MFCC and Executive Director; Mary Schneider, MFCC board member and Dining in the Pines committee, a hostess; and Art Lannon.