



2020 Holiday Newsletter

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Happy Holidays from all of us at VINA to you and your families! We hope you have a safe and relaxing holiday season full of joy and smiles.

Reopening VINA

After closing the clinic except for emergencies, VINA was able to open back up in mid-August. With the arrival of air purifiers, we are able to safely see hygiene patients again. The protection and health of our staff, volunteers and patients is our top priority.

Some important COVID changes in the clinic include:

- * Air purifiers in the clinic and waiting room;
- * Masks required at all times (except for when you're in the chair);
- * Temperature checks and screening questions for all patients, volunteers and staff;
- * Patients wait in their vehicle until their chair is ready;
- * No companions allowed in during appointments (except for translators);
- * Sneeze guards and hand sanitizer at the front desk;
- * Procedures in place in the event a patient, volunteer or staff member tests positive.

We continue to monitor recommendations from the American Dental Association (ADA) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) to update protocols. We ask that anyone who enters the building adheres to the rules and guidelines in place for the health and safety of our community!

The Tailgate

This year, The Tailgate went virtual for a three-week long silent auction with mini contests, videos and updates on social media. Thank you to everyone who helped make The Tailgate successful!

The winner of the 2020 Tailgate is the same as the winner on the field, **Michigan State!**

This puts them ahead of Michigan for VINA Tailgates 7-5. This year, the Spartans claim the added prize of having an MSU canopy outside of the clinic all winter! This canopy is needed to protect our patients, staff and volunteers from the Michigan winter during our COVID screening process.

We would like to extend another very big “thank you” to all sponsors, bidders, donors and volunteers who helped make the first-ever Virtual Tailgate a success. We could not do this without all the continual support from our community!



Thank you Sponsors!

How to Help

VINA would not be successful without the help of our loyal supporters and community. There are many different opportunities to support VINA if you aren't already. You could help VINA by:

Volunteering. You can help out at the front desk greeting patients, answering the phones and helping with patient screenings. Our need for front desk volunteers is high right now, as some of our regular volunteers head south during the winter. We are always thrilled to have volunteer dentists and hygienists, even if you can only help once a month.

Getting involved. There are so many ways to get involved in different fundraisers and events. Simply participating in fundraisers or going the extra step and donating items for silent auctions or helping reach out to local businesses can make a world of difference.

Donating. Individual donors are a huge part of VINA. When you get that email or letter asking you to give, consider the difference you can make in your community by supporting VINA. On a budget? You can set up a monthly donation or donate through our website with the orange “Donate” button.

Spread the word. Tell the people in your life about VINA. They could be potential patients, donors or volunteers. Telling others about VINA is a simple, virtually effortless way to show your support.

Shopping. You can support VINA every time you go to Kroger or whenever you order something off Amazon. To learn more about how to enroll in these programs and support VINA while you shop, visit our website at vinadental.org and click “How To Help” underneath the “Fundraising” menu tab.

2020 Accomplishments

* VINA acquired the necessary PPE and implemented new procedures to fully reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic (air purifiers shown on the right);

* VINA saw a 15% increase in patients from September and October 2020 compared to September and October 2019;

* Beginning in January 2021, VINA will double the number of hygiene appointments with University of Michigan senior hygienists. This helps us continue to establish VINA as a “dental home” for our patients;

* The Victors for Veterans program began in late October and is very successful, booking full schedules of patients twice a month;

* VINA quickly regained patient volume after shutting down due to COVID-19. VINA saw more than 800 patients in 2020, right on track with recent growth taking into account the near half-year closure due to COVID-19;

* VINA secured funding from numerous grants for the Prevention Incentive Program and Emergency Dental Program, which enhances our abilities to serve our patients.



Victors for Veterans

In the end of October, VINA kicked off the Victors for Veterans program in partnership with the University of Michigan School of Dentistry. The program provides free dental care to veterans in a seven-county area. Twice a month, VINA hosts University of Michigan School of Dentistry faculty and students who volunteer to serve veterans by providing free dental care and education. We are grateful and excited to thank the brave men and women who served our country. For more information about the Victors for Veterans program, please call VINA at (810) 844-0240 or Veteran’s Advocate Navigator Lori Gurke at (800) 833-3865. New patients must be screened to determine eligibility prior to scheduling an appointment.

Hear From Our Patients

Pamela

In 2014, Pamela had a stroke and all her income went to her medical care. She was unable to work, as she could not stand for more than 20 – 25 minutes at a time without her walker. She moved from her long-time home and business in the Upper Peninsula to be near family. Looking for a dentist while on Social Security, Disability, and VA Disability was difficult. One of her neighbors in their low-income housing complex suggested VINA and so she applied.

Pamela says, “It was a wonderful experience. I am so grateful for what I have and for the feeling of welcome from VINA. I had an efficient, kind experience. I have never met a single negative person there. The volunteers are fabulous, students and dentists are amazing. They always answer all my questions. The dental care has been wonderful, I needed two caps on my teeth and old fillings replaced. My mouth wouldn’t be my mouth without the generosity of VINA, I am thankful for all the people at the clinic. To have the help I got from VINA, oh my goodness, thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Randy & Kathy

“We are just a couple of the many lower income folks that have made it to later in life and we need to watch where we spend our money. For us, VINA was the right place at the right time in our lives. We are grateful for all they provide and wish to thank all of their supporters. We have no ‘special’ story to tell, just thoughts of some very nice people there.”

2020 Update & Holiday Appeal

OK, admit it, you're glad 2020 is nearly over. I won't rehash for you the litany of 2020 events that made this year one of the most stressful of our lives, but I will recap the 2020 VINA "highlights" for you.

We started 2020 with such high hopes: increasing patient visits, grants to support our preventive programs, a dynamic new staff dentist, a Spring Gala all gussied up and ready to roll...then, COVID-19 happened. The following week we were shut down for all but emergencies.

Highlights (actually lowlights) of 2020:

- * Shut down for all but emergencies for 5 months;
- * Spring Gala as virtual auction instead of in-person event, reducing VINA revenue;
- * Cancelled Golf Classic;
- * Reopened in mid-August, but with significant investment in air purifiers, new equipment, PPE and supplies to guarantee safety totaling nearly \$10,000;
- * Tailgate Event as a virtual auction, raising one-half of the amount of last year's event (but a BIG thank you to the Fundraising Committee for making it happen at all!);
- * The final blow – two X-ray heads and X-ray processor go out, leading to \$8,500 additional expenditures.

Actual Highlights (where we are now):

- * We are back open at full speed, appointments up by 15% for September and October versus 2019;
- * Collaborated with U of M Dental School on Victors for Veterans, a new comprehensive dental program for veterans in need;
- * We are making progress in catching up the five month hygiene appointment backlog;
- * Our team of paid staff and volunteers is the best we've had in years and the future of VINA is bright as a beacon of care for limited income adults in Livingston County who could not otherwise afford dental care.

EXCEPT...

We need your help. Fundraising events are down considerably from 2019 (nearly \$45,000) and although grants are up and covering much of the PPE and Preventive Hygiene Programs, we will see a significant shortfall in overall income for 2020, heading into 2021.

We are asking you, our donors, to give what you can this holiday season. We know things are rough economically for many of you, but we also know that some of us still have the means and the heart to give this year. We continue to experience an influx of new patients as the economy takes its toll on those families living on the edge and we expect that to continue. We have been able to weather uncertain times in the past and we will weather this as well.

Please prayerfully consider our mission and use the form below to make this year's holiday gift to VINA. The volunteers and staff at VINA and the thousands of our neighbors we serve thank you for your support.

Blessings to you and your family,

Jim



Make Checks Payable to: VINA Community Dental Center, 400 E Grand River, Brighton, MI 48116

Name: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

Billing Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Card # _____ Exp. _____ CV Code: _____

Signature: _____ Card Type: Visa Mastercard Amex Discover