

COMMUNITY POWERED HEALTHCARE

"Not needing to worry about the financial impact from Bob's illness lifted a heavy weight off our hearts. VIM literally rescued us from going bankrupt."



VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE

CLINIC OF THE CASCADES

December 2020

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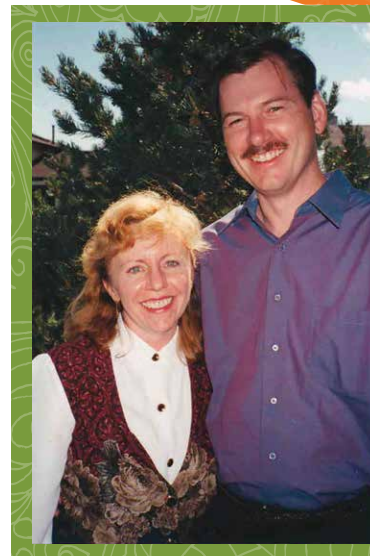
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Thank You
Funders!

In 2005 Julie and Bob moved with their three teenage children from Colorado to Bend in order to be closer to family. They loved it here, but when Bob was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2008 their lives became more challenging. Bob was told he needed surgery. **With Julie self-employed as a realtor and Bob self-employed as an audio engineer, neither had insurance through their jobs, and with three children at home they could not afford it independently.** They told their doctor they were tight on funds and they didn't know how they could possibly pay for the surgery. Their doctor encouraged Bob to check with Volunteers in Medicine. Julie tells their story:



"We had never heard of VIM, but we were greatly blessed to learn about the help that was available. All the volunteer staff at VIM treated us with care and professionalism as they processed our request for assistance. **We were pleasantly surprised to find out that many on the VIM medical team were highly respected doctors and specialists from the Bend area.** Some of them were retired from their own medical practices, and we had past patients of theirs tell us how good they were. This helped us trust that we were in good hands.

It was a hard road as we contemplated Bob's cancer situation. Without the surgery he could have died, especially since his type of thyroid cancer was very aggressive. We were working through some of the most sobering thoughts in life, including the possibility of Bob not surviving.

When we learned that we qualified for the services at VIM, it was a true gift of hope that helped carry us through those trying times. Not needing to worry about the financial impact from Bob's illness lifted a heavy weight off our hearts. We knew Bob's post-surgery radioactive iodine treatment and cancer follow-up would be very expensive. VIM literally rescued us from going bankrupt.

Since receiving help from VIM at such a critical time in our lives, donating to VIM has seemed like the perfect way to say, "Thank You"! Plus, it has been good to know we are part of bearing the burdens other people are facing. We want to make sure VIM is around to aid other patients in need.

Bob and I are cherishing life one day at a time, and we are thankful to still have days of life together. We are back to enjoying some of our favorite pastimes, like music, hiking, and BBQs with friends."



Persevering Through Challenging Times

This holiday season is like none we have known before. But in this season of darkness, we are drawn to the light. Across cultures, winter brings the celebration of light and warmth. There are luminaria and farolitos, candles in St. Lucia's crown, the Menorah of Hannukah, hygge and mys in Scandinavia, candles, fireplaces and campfires, and the lights on our homes and our Christmas trees in Central Oregon.

At VIM we experience the joy and light of the season through our supporters, volunteers and by caring for our patients.

This year it seems we are trying harder to see the light. We have growing numbers of patients and their families testing positive for COVID. We have volunteers who have tested positive and others who have lost family members. We miss the bingo fundraisers, our holiday potluck, and the caroling we enjoyed last year.

But there is light. **One initiative we are proud of is the partnership we have forged with the Deschutes County Public Health Department, which secured no-cost COVID testing for the VIM clinic starting this past August.** As demand continues to grow, we are thankful for this partnership which has allowed us to provide needed resources for our patients and their families. To increase accessibility and decrease in-person contact, we are continuing to provide virtual appointments and prescriptions by mail. We are finding new ways for volunteers to work from home: from making calls to patients to helping with grant reports.

Throughout the last nine months, the team at VIM has worked tirelessly and with good humor, changing course as needed, with a can-do attitude and perseverance that is inspiring and a source of light and warmth to us all. We at VIM hope that you are warm and healthy this holiday season. We are grateful for the little things this year in ways that had perhaps escaped us before. Family and friends remain close in our hearts. Thank you for your continued support. With some luck, continued hard work, and resourcefulness, may we all be able to gather together this time next year and share good cheer in company with each other.

Warmest regards,

Kat Mastangelo

We Care for Adults So They Can Care for Their Families

After Sarah's husband died, she struggled to support her five children. In an effort to make a living for her children, she left her small village in El Salvador to be with family living in the US. After a year in Portland, struggling to find work, Sarah decided to move to Central Oregon to join family that lived in the area. For the past sixteen years she has been living and working in Bend as a dish washer and food prep staff.

When she first moved here Sarah found medical care through Mosaic, but she sometimes could not afford the expensive medications to manage her diabetes and high cholesterol. Luckily she heard about VIM, qualified as a patient, and is now able to receive medications from VIM's charitable pharmacy and the care that she needs to maintain her health, while continuing to work and provide for her children. **"Everyone has always attended me really well. Thanks to VIM and thanks to God, I have received such good care at VIM. I can now take the medications I need to keep working and supporting my family."**



VIM Patients Increasingly Impacted by COVID



A single mother of four had symptoms of COVID and tested positive. VIM staff delivered an oximeter, cough medicine, masks and a thermometer to help monitor the patient's symptoms more accurately and to help her feel better. She had a fever, felt short of breath and was struggling to take care of her children, all under the age of 13. VIM staff monitored her by phone daily, and later in her illness when her oxygen levels were consistently low, more than once a day. While sick, she had to consider her options for finding help for her children, a few of whom had COVID, in case she had to go to the emergency room. This was a very complex situation as anyone potentially entering the house would be exposed to the virus.

Prior to contracting COVID, and in order to supplement her income since losing her job during the pandemic, she had been filling orders for tamales from friends and family. That essential income was interrupted, and as a result she was unable to pay her phone bill. Although she could receive calls, she could not make calls or

send texts. Her family helped her by bringing her and her children food, but it was not enough to last the five of them for very long. She was embarrassed to ask them to bring more since there were so many of them; she did not want to be a burden. Luckily, VIM referred her to community wrap-around services, which offered food drop-off, rent and utility assistance, and delivery of any medication needed by her family. In the end she made a full recovery without having to leave her children at home to go to the hospital for treatment.



A mother and father of three young children were diagnosed with COVID. They live in a multi-generational household with their grandmother, cousin, niece and her young baby, a few of whom also tested positive for COVID. VIM was able to deliver an oximeter, thermometer and cough medicine to them, and referred them to wrap-around services. Groceries were delivered to the family, and they received rent assistance, funds to help with bills and lost work income during their quarantine, as well as a hotel room for the grandmother who has several underlying conditions but tested negative. With nine people living in a three-bedroom apartment, it would have been almost impossible for them to keep the grandmother safe in an area away from the COVID positive family members. VIM nursing staff checked in with the patients daily to monitor their progression, as well as with the grandmother to give support in controlling her diabetes and monitoring for any signs that she might have contracted COVID. The wrap-around services provided her with food at the hotel and she was tested at the end of the quarantine period to confirm her negative result.

*Your donation is a gift
of health to a VIM patient!*

Reminder for your taxes:
**The CARES Act, which passed in late March,
instituted a provision allowing donors to
deduct \$300 for charitable contributions.**



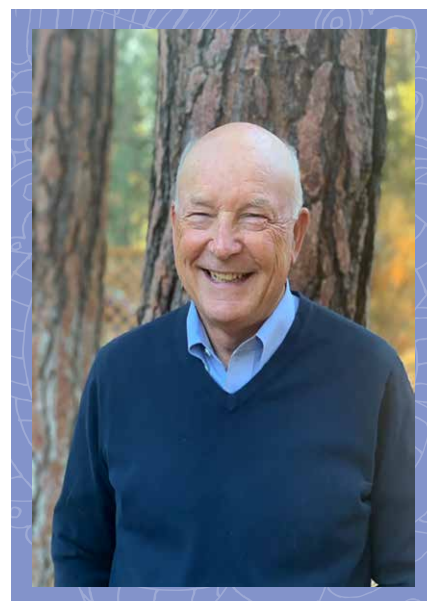


The Board Welcomes Dr. Fix, DMD

After volunteering as a dental provider in Bend for three years with VIM, Tyler Fix, DMD, MA was given the privilege of joining VIM's Board of Directors in October 2020. He works as a private practice dentist four days a week with PureCare Dental of Bend. When caring for VIM patients, he aims to humanize and personalize their dental experiences with an open ear, an open mind, and an open heart. In his free time, he enjoys playing tennis, skiing, hiking, and giving back to the community. Tyler serves as a Courtesy Faculty member at OSU-Cascades to guide students applying as pre-health professionals to doctorate programs; as a Chairman of Professional Development on the Alumni Council at Midwestern University in Arizona; and as a Councilman on the New Dentist Council for the Oregon Dental Association.

The Board Welcomes Dennis Purcell

After graduating from law school in 1975 Dennis moved to Eugene and began working as an attorney. He helped found a firm in Eugene where he practiced until 2015, primarily representing physicians. Dennis and his wife were part time Bend residents since 2009. In 2015 they moved to Bend full time to be near their three children and two grandchildren and to enjoy Central Oregon activities. As a native Oregonian he spent a good deal of time in Central Oregon attracted to the outdoors, especially skiing and golf. At the end of 2019 he retired. Through his work he knew several physicians who volunteered their time for VIM. He says, "What I learned about their commitment to volunteering and the need in the community for medical services caused me to become involved. As I learned more about VIM I was impressed with the quality of leadership and commitment to providing excellent care. I am proud to have the opportunity to serve along with the dedicated Board and staff of VIM."



Overcoming Barriers to Serve Those in Need



A VIM patient was struggling to find transportation to the clinic and someone to watch her toddler she could make her diabetes appointments. VIM offered her a telehealth option, and she was able to receive diabetes education from her home. Her visits with the diabetes educator focus on healthy eating, knowing how and when to take her medication how to monitor her blood sugar, and the importance of exercise. Many VIM patients face barriers including lack of transportation, child care, and no access or limited access to electronic devices such as laptops, phones and internet. At VIM, we are working to overcome these barriers, so the underserved in our community can receive effective, integrated healthcare services.

Dr. Goulding Opens His Clinic to VIM Patients



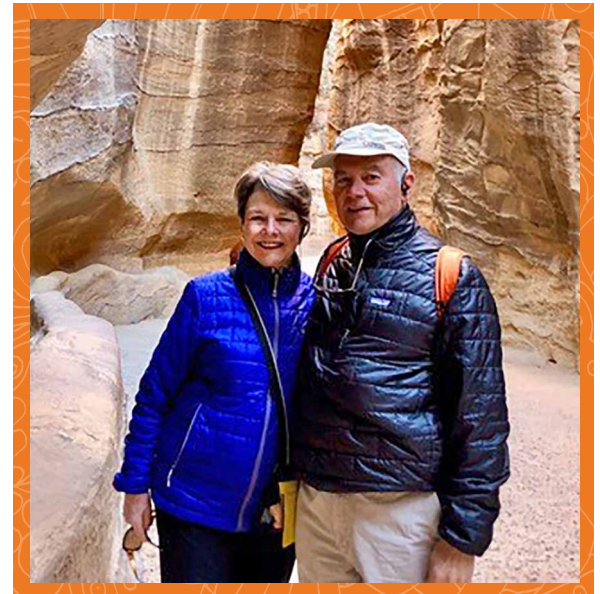
Dr. Joshua Goulding, OD, has been in Bend for three years and has recently begun seeing VIM patients at his clinic, Goulding EyeCare. He got connected to VIM through a patient of his who had an eye condition that required surgery but had no way of paying for it. An ophthalmologist recommended that Dr. Goulding reach out to VIM to see whether the clinic might be able to help. He got in touch with Salome, VIM's Care Coordinator & Lead Interpreter, saying "she was very helpful". About a year later Salome reached out to Dr. Goulding to ask whether he would join VIM's referral network and begin seeing VIM patients who could not afford routine eye exams. Dr. Goulding agreed.

He says, **"I see a lot of unemployed and low-income patients, and I'm painfully aware of how hard it is for many people to afford eye exams. A lot of my patients who come in have gone without glasses for months, or years, because they couldn't afford them."** I wanted to do at least a little bit to try to help with the problem. I hope someday I will feel like I can do more."

Susan: Dedicated to Our Community

Susan has always had a passion for both language and volunteerism. She attended high school in Peru, and her Saturdays were spent reaching out to youth in nearby communities for tutoring. While attending college in the states, Susan found more opportunity to study abroad. She spent time in Switzerland and decided to focus on learning French. After graduating college in San Francisco, Susan became a bilingual teacher. Throughout her career she sought out opportunities volunteer and use her language skills. When Susan and her husband moved to Minnesota, Susan volunteered working with children in an art museum.

Shortly after retiring to Bend, where she has also picked up Italian, Susan continued to find ways to embrace diversity and give back to the community. Fifteen years ago, Susan says, "there was a buzz about a wonderful new clinic" that was opening, so naturally she called to inquire about volunteering. At the clinic, VIM volunteers and staff welcomed Susan and her extensive experience and knowledge of languages. She became a volunteer interpreter, and she still actively volunteers both in the clinic and through telehealth visits.



"After finishing a four hour shift at the clinic I feel renewed and know that my time was well spent there. It's wonderful to experience the patients eternal gratefulness for VIM and relief to be able to speak their own language in a place where they feel heard, safe and honored."

*Epic, Zoom and Mobile App Help At-Risk Volunteers Deliver Care From Home**

There are around 200 volunteers at the clinic who care for an uninsured population of primarily Latinx patients. **The ripples of COVID-19 hit especially hard in this community, where many lost jobs in the hospitality and tourism industries.** Further, most volunteers are over 60 and at higher risk of COVID-19 complications.

Through a partnership with local St. Charles Health System, the Bend clinic installed Epic electronic health record (EHR). It went live on Epic on January 23, 2020. The Bend clinic's previous EHR system was not accessible remotely, so VIM volunteers would have had to suspend operations during COVID-19 if they had not gone live with Epic when they did.

"In mid-March 2020, it became quite apparent that VIM was going to need to pause in-person visits to the Bend clinic," said Jennifer Fuller, RN, clinic nurse manager at Volunteers in Medicine's Clinic of the Cascades. "The COVID-19 pandemic had reached a level that the highest-risk community members were being asked to shelter at home."



Volunteer Catherine, FNP

The Bend clinic ran a report on its volunteer pool and quickly discovered that it had only a handful of active volunteer nurses and providers under the age of 65, the age determined to be at highest risk of COVID-19 death. VIM knew it needed to protect its volunteers from COVID-19 exposure, so temporarily closing its doors was essential. "On March 17, 2020, the Bend clinic held one final in-person clinic and then asked all of our more than 200 volunteers to shelter in place," Fuller said. "This crucial decision was the safest decision we could make for our volunteer pool. However, we now were left with a clinical staff of three: one doctor, one nurse and one referral coordinator to meet the medical needs of 1,200 patients in the midst of a worldwide pandemic."

It is important for VIM to serve two purposes in the community, Fuller explained: Meet the medical needs of the low-income working community members and provide a valuable and lively place for community members to volunteer. With this temporary, unexpected closure, VIM staff knew they needed to find a way to continue to meet both goals.

"The clinical staff began actively calling patients who had previously been scheduled for chronic conditions [and] managing their care over the telephone," Fuller recalled. "We also were fielding incoming calls from patients experiencing acute medical needs. We quickly found that the clinical staff of three could not efficiently and safely meet the needs of what upwards of 60 clinical volunteers used to accomplish."

Additionally, VIM has a vibrant mental health program, she added. VIM staff knew continuing to support their patients' mental health needs would be crucial during this highly stressful time. The question arose, "How does a counselor maintain connection with a patient without having a face-to-face interaction?" VIM staff decided to implement work from home with their clinical volunteers.

"We had the idea of building a strong nurse triage work-from-home pool using the remote access to our EHR and considered the idea of video conferencing for our mental health appointments," Fuller said. "This would alleviate the

problem of limited access to care for our patients, while at the same time provide a meaningful volunteer opportunity to at least some of our clinical volunteers.” The newly implemented work-from-home process evolved over several months. Being an Epic Community Connect partner with St. Charles Health System, the Bend clinic already had remote access capability to the EHR.

“Our volunteer coordinator worked with five of our volunteer registered nurses and two of our volunteer providers to access Epic through the Citrix platform from home,” Fuller explained. “This involved loaning home-use laptops and installing Citrix if the volunteer was using their home computer. Then the volunteers could securely access Epic through St Charles’ Gateway website.”

Doctors and nurses now were fully equipped to see the Epic Telephone Triage List of calls to return, see the provider appointment schedule, call patients and document the call, all from the safety of their home environment. “For the first several months, the nurses and providers were using their own cell phones and blocking their phone numbers,” Fuller noted. “This would result in several unreachable patient calls, as some patients would understandably ignore a call from a blocked number.”

About three months in, VIM was able to upgrade its phone system, and the nurses were able to use a mobile app called SNAPmobile. When a call was placed, the VIM phone number would show on the patient’s caller ID. This greatly increased the success of reaching the patient on the first attempt.

Implementing remote access to Epic, call access via InfoStructure’s SNAPMobile and video conferencing through Zoom has allowed VIM to continue to meet the needs of its patients on a daily basis, Fuller said, spring-boarding the suddenly closed clinic to “virtually open” in a matter of a couple of weeks. **“In accomplishing the vital ongoing patient care, VIM also accomplished the goal of ongoing community member volunteerism,” she added, “two passions that VIM holds strongly.”**

VIM Welcomes Breanne to the Team

Breanne moved from the Midwest to Bend in 2017, after reading about our city in a fiction novel. She says, “I had no idea what to expect, but have definitely fallen in love with the area and all it has to offer in the world of outdoor activities. I have big goals of slowly becoming a great rock climber and skier.”

Breanne first heard about VIM from her old roommate. She decided to reach out to the clinic to volunteer this past summer, when she says, “I started feeling very strongly that I was needing to volunteer my time and skill set for a good cause. I started volunteering in August and have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a volunteer and now as a staff member. I enjoy interacting with coworkers and patients who genuinely care about their health and wellbeing, especially those patients who listen, acknowledge, ask questions, and make the effort to help themselves.

Breanne has worked as a pharmacist since 2016, mostly in retail pharmacies, and notes how she enjoys the change of pace and the general positive attitude she feels working at VIM. “Working at VIM has been a breath of fresh air for me. I have struggled with being a pharmacist after working in retail and feeling defeated, unheard, and replaceable in the health care community. **Being at VIM is rewarding in itself because of the overall goal of helping, healing, and supporting those in need. But it is also rewarding for me personally to feel as though I too am contributing something meaningful, significant, and possibly life changing for at least a few individuals.** Moving forward at VIM, I hope to *finally* learn Spanish, and to continue enabling patients to feel like they have power in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.”

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**Thank you to the individuals, foundations, and organizations who
have made it possible for VIM to continue to provide medical
services to the underserved throughout the pandemic.
We are grateful for your support.**



the autzen foundation



Our mission is to improve the health and wellness of the uninsured and medically underserved through the engagement of professionals, community partners, and dedicated volunteers.



2300 NE Neff Road | Bend, Oregon 97701
(541) 330-9001 phone (541) 585-9002 fax
info@vim-cascades.org | www.vim-cascades.org | VIM Tax ID Number: 93-1327847