



February
2021

...

INSIDE

Dr. Teller: Serving
VIM for Ten Years

A Message from
Kat Mastrangelo,
Executive Director

Clinic Timeline
(Stay tuned for an
ongoing timeline in
upcoming newsletters!)

Volunteer Sallie
Neillie: Determined
to Make Change

100+ Women Who
Care Central Oregon
Give to Patient Fund

...

We believe in
the health of
our community.

Gloria is from Tepic, the capital of the state of Nayarit, Mexico. She first visited Bend 18 years ago at the invitation of a friend and remembered thinking, "if I were to ever move somewhere else, it would be here." She immediately loved the clean and peaceful city and the cool, dry climate. Two years later, Gloria's sister moved to Bend with her partner, and when Gloria came to visit a second time, she decided she too would make Bend her home.

These days Gloria is a baker. She can't afford to pay for medical care on her own, but says, "Through the community, I heard that VIM offered good health care at no cost. All the volunteers and staff have been very attentive and kind. I have always felt that the medical staff listens to my problems, and I do not feel rushed. On two occasions I needed to have surgery. I was referred to specialists outside the clinic. Thanks to being a patient at VIM, these surgeries were performed with minimal cost to myself."

Recently, Gloria encountered a medical condition that afflicts 84.1 million adults in the US: she was diagnosed as pre-diabetic. Gloria tells her story:

I had no idea of the negative effects of a high carbohydrate diet. Due to the pandemic, I was at home with my daughter for several months not really eating healthy. I was referred to the diabetes education classes at VIM.

I decided to attend the classes because I was very concerned that I would become diabetic. Diabetes runs in my family, my father is diabetic. I was also concerned that my daughter could become diabetic. **Attending Joan Goodwin's diabetes education classes had a huge impact on my life. It changed my life. I learned how to eat a balanced and healthy diet with special attention to my intake of carbohydrates.** I am conscious of what and how much I eat. As a result, my daughter has also been eating healthy meals and occasionally asks me whether a certain food has too much sugar!

I decided to do a group challenge to lose weight with friends of mine. We each put \$40 in the pot and the person who lost the most weight would take the pot. We researched better meal and exercise plans. In the end, I won! The group challenge definitely changed my eating and exercise habits, and I have become healthier. In fact, before losing weight my right knee always hurt. With the weight loss, I am proud to say that my knee no longer hurts!

Since becoming a patient at VIM, my health has changed for the better. I am living a healthier lifestyle and my health issues have been resolved. I would not be able to afford medical care otherwise. I am very appreciative for the good experience I have received at VIM.

(Pictured above: Diabetes class at VIM, taken pre-COVID.)



Dr. Teller: Serving VIM for Ten Years

December saw the end of Dr. Teller's ten years serving on the VIM board. He has had a remarkable impact on the organization throughout this time, and the board and staff would like to extend our gratitude for his commitment, dedication, and drive to move the clinic forward in mission and service to the low-income and underserved communities of Central Oregon. We've asked him to tell his story:

In 2004, my wife Amy Tykeson and I realized that we needed to move to Bend, where Amy was CEO of BendBroadband. She had been managing the company from Portland with frequent travel to Bend. As her responsibilities grew, that became impractical. In early 2005 I reached out to Jim Ritzenthaler at BMC about work opportunities in Bend. When Bob Hakala announced his retirement later that year, Jim told him that he knew a doctor who could step into his

medical practice. Jim contacted me and I called Bob Hakala that same evening. We hit it off with our first conversation and the rest is history. Bob retired from BMC and became the Medical Director at VIM. I took over Bob's Family Medicine practice at BMC and we have worked together in the community since. Dr. Bob Hakala is a remarkable person. It has been my honor to try and fill his shoes over the years and I have loved it!

In 2005 I began volunteering as a medical provider at VIM. At the time, I saw VIM primary care patients in my office at BMC. The great thing about seeing patients for the VIM clinic was learning of the roles and responsibilities that this group of people play in our region. They are very often what we now like to call "essential" and they are people with a profound work ethic. The volunteer work at VIM embodies the core values that we were after in becoming health care workers to begin with. That provides a very powerful professional experience for our volunteers, including me.

"Thank you John for your many years of dedicated service to VIM. You provided extraordinary leadership during some challenging times and always with professionalism and grace."
-Jim Petersen, VIM Founder, Emeritus Board Member

In 2011 the VIM Board Chair at the time, Rod Ray, approached me about joining the board. It was a busy time for my family. When Bob Hakala suggested that I would benefit from being involved, I jumped at the opportunity. Bob was an icon in the Central Oregon medical community, a mentor to me and a friend. By 2011 I was well aware of the role VIM played in Central Oregon health services and joined the VIM board.

"As a board member (and chair) I always found his calm, thoughtful and respectful communication style to be amazing – it is something I can only aspire to but have enjoyed the opportunity to learn from him. This combined with his commitment to always do the right thing, has helped VIM and its board stay inspired and energized. And I always think "wow – it is no wonder his patients loved him!".
-Jenn Welander, VIM Board Treasurer, CFO St. Charles Health System

I became the board chair for VIM in mid-2014, following Cynthia Kane, who was a real delight to work with. That transition was very smooth but occurred just as the Affordable Care Act was being implemented. One result of the ACA was that our patient population went from 1,200 clients to about 700, as many of our VIM patients became eligible for Medicaid insurance. In addition, a number of our donors suspected that VIM was no longer essential, mistakenly thinking that the ACA would take care of those patients. That was not the case and VIM remained a critical safety net clinic in our region. I am very proud of the way VIM managed those changes and continued to serve our patient population.

Over the last 10 years, I have seen the VIM clinic mature in so many regards. Our clinic structure, our relationships with the medical community and our fundraising efforts have all developed in an ongoing and progressive nature. It takes a village, and I would like to acknowledge Kat

Mastrangelo and her staff at VIM, the tremendous role of our volunteers, the St. Charles Health System and the larger medical community of Central Oregon. Dr. John Letovsky is the latest in a string of dedicated physicians (starting with Dr. Ron Carver, Dr. Bob Hakala and Dr. Jim Ritzenthaler) directing the care of our patients as medical directors for VIM.

Also key from my board chair perspective is the talented and balanced group of board members that are in place for VIM. It is a rather remarkable board of directors with a broad set of skills and the ability to work together to the benefit of our patients at VIM and within Central Oregon. I am proud of the growth and adaptations at VIM during my tenure and very proud of the sound financial footing of the clinic, thanks to our donors and contributors. I want the VIM Board and the community to know how much I have enjoyed my role as chair. I hope that Central Oregon will continue to understand, recognize, and support this important safety net clinic. VIM is recognized for its mission and its role and will continue to adapt to change and strive to improve the care of our clientele.

"I've known John for 25 years and recruited him to BMC to take over the practice of Dr. Bob Hakala. John had big shoes to fill, but he stepped into that role and did an excellent job. He's always been an extraordinarily caring and thorough physician and top-notch family practitioner. Just as Bob's patients loved him, they too loved John. Every role he's assumed he's performed above and beyond, whether it was in his role as a physician, as a physician leader, or as a philanthropist investing his time, knowledge, and resources into building communities with his wife, Amy."

-James Ritzenthaler, MD, Former VIM Co-Medical Director and Current Volunteer

John's devotion to VIM's mission was demonstrated over so many years and in every way: time, talent and treasure. His leadership of the Board was exceptional. -Stephen Hacker, VIM Board Member, CEO Transformation Systems International, LLC

From my first interview with John about being on the board, he has been so supportive of all of us who volunteer and work for VIM. He exemplifies all of the best values of service, wisdom, and compassion in all of his leadership of the VIM board. Thanks John. -Barry Heath, VIM Board Vice Chair

COVID is No Joke - A Patient Shares His Story

Emilio started to feel ill on December 2nd. Like many low-income essential workers of color, he had contracted COVID. Over the holidays he was hospitalized with pneumonia and later discharged on home oxygen. **He says, "When I was sick, (VIM staff) Jennifer and Salome would call me. The fact that they called every day gave me more desire to live. I was so isolated and couldn't speak with anyone. They helped resolve the issues I had with the symptoms."**

In total, due to his illness and the complications developed with it, he had to take a month and a half off work. He has just recently been able to return to his construction job pouring foundations, but he's unable to work full-time as he's still recovering. His oxygen levels vary throughout the day, and he says, "being sick has made my work more difficult. I've had a harder time breathing, my lungs hurt, and I work close to the mountain where it's colder. After having COVID I'm scared because I got pneumonia. My face mask was freezing and would get icy." To help, VIM reached out to **BlackStrap**, who donated a sock hood and balaclava for Emilio to wear on the job so he can avoid an icy mask and pain from breathing the freezing air. Emilio is grateful for the care from VIM and the community, but adds, "People take care, COVID is no joke."





Letter from the Executive Director

Some have compared COVID to the London Blitz of WWII. The response to the pandemic certainly has a lot in common with a war by demonstrating our collective resilience and solidarity. The staff and volunteers at the clinic have proved to be remarkably strong, resilient, creative, and courageous during the last year.

Jeanne Young, DC was featured in our last newsletter for ensuring that our patients, and others in the region without insurance could get COVID testing at no charge. Thanks to her hard work and continued care, we have been able to extend that program well into 2021. Thank you, Dr. Young!

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Alex Hinkle, has stepped up to new duties outside the VIM clinic. He is continuing his work at VIM, but is now also spending half his time (at least!) working at the incident command with Deschutes County, helping to process and coordinate the over 700 volunteers needed to work at the mass vaccination clinic at the Fairgrounds. His background and experience with VIM volunteers as well as large event planning have made him the perfect fit. Thank you, Alex!

A free clinic depends on grant writing, and grants come with reporting requirements. Two volunteers, Lottie and Deirdre have been instrumental in helping us fulfill our grant requirements. They have become experts at pulling clinical data from our electronic health record so we can report it to foundations such as the Meyer Memorial Trust, and the City of Bend Community Development Block Grant program, among others. Thank you, Lottie and Deirdre!

New work flows and needs means new IT demands as we have staff and volunteers contributing from home. Planning and coordinating all of the myriad changes in our technology needs is our Operations Manager, Cynthia Hunt. With her dedication, patience, and support, we have been able to care for our patients seamlessly. Thank you, Cynthia!

Distancing means that we try to minimize patient encounters at the clinic, including the appointments we have for financial screening. Thanks to Eligibility and Scheduling Manager, Lidia Vazquez and her staff including Lourdes, Yannely and numerous volunteers, we have been doing a lot more screening over the phone and by mail. Making changes, sometimes every month, has been a challenge. But through it all, our patients tell us they appreciate the help they receive to make sure they can be a patient at VIM. Thank you, eligibility and scheduling staff and volunteers!

The past year has been a challenge. Being in the trenches with everyone who has contributed their time, and experience has made it all easier, and dare we say, fun? Good humor, making a contribution to something bigger than ourselves, and the gratitude we encounter from those receiving care, are the reason the past year has been eventful and memorable. While I look forward to being back together in person all the time, I know I will look back on this year fondly too. Now, we shall be calm, and carry on. Thank you, everyone!

Kat Mastangelo

Bilingual Spanish / English Volunteer Interpreters Needed!

Over 80% of the patients we serve are Latino immigrants. Many individuals in our communities face inequities in healthcare, and we are committed to working against these inequities. This includes offering interpreters for those who are not fluent in English or speak it as an additional language.

If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out our application at
www.vim-cascades.org/volunteer

Timeline: Volunteers in Medicine Clinic

1999

Site visit to original Volunteers in Medicine Clinic in Hilton Head, South Carolina by Jim Petersen (pictured right / Chair of the St. Charles Board), Jim Lussier (pictured below / President and CEO of St. Charles) and Stan Shepardson, MD (Board Member on the St. Charles Board).



2001

April: Amy R. Hamlin, Executive Director of the VIM Institute spoke to Bend citizens about VIM clinics and the problems of the uninsured, and began soliciting interest in developing a local clinic.

May: The Steering Committee began developing plans to open a VIM clinic in Central Oregon. Initial members of the Steering Committee included: Jim Petersen (Co-Chair); Ronald Carver, MD (Co-Chair); Ed Cheeney; Dick Ettinger, MD; Madelle Friese, RN; Neal Goldsmith, MD; Bob Hakala, MD; H.M. Kemple, DDS; Jim Lussier; Dan Peddycord.



2001

Summer: Biweekly meetings held at St. Charles to confirm there were 10,000+ uninsured individuals in Central Oregon, to solicit interest among the medical community, to adopt a clinic name, to develop vision and mission statements, to draw up By Laws and Articles of Incorporation, and to apply for non-profit status with the IRS.

The committee Identified over 400 nurses, physicians, physical therapists, dietitians and social workers who expressed interest in volunteering to help meet the needs of the new VIM clinic.

September: Adopted VIM By Laws and Articles of Incorporation developed by Jim Petersen, and Steering Committee officially became the VIM Founding Board of Directors.



2001

September: Ron Carver, MD (pictured right) began the long process of working with the Oregon Medical Association, the Board of Medical Examiners (now the Oregon Medical Board) and local legislators to draft legislation to reduce cost and eliminate the Special Purpose Exam (SPEX) for out of state retired physicians. This would make it easier for retired physicians in Oregon to obtain Emeritus Licensure and volunteer at free clinics across the state.

November: Volunteers in Medicine Clinic of the Cascades received official 501(c)3 non-profit status.

November: St. Charles Medical Center provided a bus for the Board to make a site visit to the VIM clinic in Eugene in order to learn more about the challenges of starting a free clinic.

November: First VIM Clinic of the Cascades Case Statement (case for support of the organization / fundraising plan) completed and adopted.



2002

January: Christine Winters (pictured top left) hired officially as Program Manager with salary paid by St. Charles Medical Center. Christine met biweekly with Co-Chairs Jim Petersen and Ron Carver to discuss progress and actions over the next two years. The VIM Board met biweekly for the next two years, planning and evaluating the progress of clinic development.

February: Office space provided for VIM at the Deschutes County Health Department. (VIM patient pictured above.)

February: Les and Judy Alford (pictured bottom left) pledged \$750,000 for design and construction of the current VIM building. "People don't just give to causes. They give to people whom they highly respect, knowing that they will use it wisely. Jim and Ron were the spark plugs behind this and why we got involved." - Les

February: Established a VIM Medical Advisory Committee with Ron Carver serving as Chair.

February: First outreach presentations began, informing the public about the problems of the uninsured and VIM's mission.



Sallie: Determined to Make Change

Prior to moving here, Sallie and her partner had vacationed in Bend in the past. She says, “When we were done with the gray, rain and traffic of Seattle, we looked at a number of communities. True to form, I built a spreadsheet and made a list of what was important to us. We visited a handful of places and quickly realized that Bend hit all the high marks on our list! We love the outdoors: hiking, cross-country skiing, clean air and open spaces. Having a free clinic in the community was on our list of things we wanted. It was indicative of the community’s commitment to the low-income and uninsured, so it seemed only natural that I volunteer once we moved. I think we were in town about 2 months before I made an initial inquiry about volunteering.”



Sallie has been an admin/fundraising volunteer with VIM for nearly two years. “As the former Executive Director and Founder of Project Access Northwest, a free clinic in Seattle, Sallie has been an asset to VIM. She has the skills, commitment to the underserved, and dedication to VIM’s mission to help our clinic grow in significant ways”, says Development Director Mary Overman.

In her prior role at Project Access Northwest, Sallie says, “Serving in a state-wide role, I worked with multiple communities in Washington to improve access to health care services for low-income, uninsured residents. With family practice services donated through free clinics or sliding fee schedules at community health services, Project Access built a network of specialists who would donate care for the free clinic patients with specialty care needs. Each specialist involved committed to care for a very discrete number of uninsured patients per year whom that provider would serve in their own office. Local hospitals donated all the services the specialists needed including imaging, surgery time, in-patient beds, etc.

I introduced this model to my Seattle community and the local planning table thought the idea was good and viable, that is, if I was willing to start it. So long story short, the planning table became my board (over a couple of years) and we were off to the races!

Over my eleven years as ED, we built a network of 1,600 specialist serving over 4,400 patients per year and worked with every hospital in a three-county area. The organization continues successfully and is evolving to continue to meet the need of uninsured patients, while giving specialists an opportunity to volunteer in their community.”

In addition to volunteering at VIM, Sallie is serving on a couple of the Regional Health Improvement Plan Committees and facilitates a quarterly phone call between free clinics in Oregon as an opportunity to support each other, share information, and tell their collective story to partners and funders. She says, **“I had and continue to have a core belief that appropriate health care services is a right rather than a privilege.”**



Donate Your Old Car to VIM

Donating is easy, the pick-up is free, and your gift is tax-deductible.

Fill out a donation form at
www.vim-cascades.org/Donate/OtherWaysToGive

Board of Directors 2020-2021

Kate Wells - Chair
PacificSource Health Plans

Rev. Dr. Barry Heath
Vice Chair
(retired)

Kurt Barker - Secretary
Karnopp Petersen, LLP

Jenn Welander, CPA,
MBA - Treasurer
St. Charles Health System

Tyler Fix, DMD, MA
PureCare Dental

Stephen K. Hacker
Transformation Systems
International, LLC

Sarah Hall
Morgan Stanley

Fran McCabe, MD
St. Charles Health System

Erika McCalpine
OSU Cascades

Roxana Ocaraza
Bridges to Communication

Dennis Percell
Percell Law

Karina Smith
The High Desert
Education Service District

• • •

Emeritus

Bob Hakala, MD
Volunteers in Medicine

Jim Lussier
The Lussier Center

Jim Petersen
Karnopp Petersen, LLP

Rod Ray, PhD
Bend Research

John Teller, MD
BMC Summit

100+ Women Give to Patient Help Fund

100+ Women Who Care Central Oregon (100+WWCCO) donated \$7,275 to VIM's Patient Help Fund. This fund pays for medical costs VIM patients accrue for care not offered within the VIM clinic.

VIM has an extensive referral network including 309 off-site medical providers who donate their time and resources to support the working poor the VIM clinic serves. **These community partners provide discounts on services to our patients, yet there remain costs that exceed our patients' ability to pay.** Through this fund, our patients pay within their means, and VIM subsidizes the remaining fee.



Left: Kat Mastrangelo, ED, VIM
Right: Kristin Betschart,
Leader, 100+ WWCCO

The first VIM patient served using funds donated by 100+ WWCCO was a woman who had three remaining teeth in her mouth. One was chipped, and all were held in place by a bridge that was eight years old. Her son had bought her bottom dentures a few years back, but once her chipped tooth was extracted, she would have no way to use the bridge for her remaining teeth. **Denture Artistry** offered a discount to get a top denture made for our patient.

This patient works as a housekeeper and the other women she works with often asked her to sit with them during their lunch break. She always declined this invitation because she was so embarrassed about the few teeth she had and the way she had to eat. She would always eat alone. **She told VIM staff that now that she has dentures, she has a new confidence, and she's excited to be able to join the other women for lunch!** Thank you 100+WWCCO, for making this happen!



Donate & Win!

Donate \$15 or more February 15 - March 31 and you will be entered to win this bicycle garden planter made by a VIM patient! Winning donor will be chosen April 1st and notified via email or phone.

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