



Inside

A Message from John Teller, MD, Board Chair & VIM Volunteer

When Our Executive Director Was a Volunteer

Volunteer Awards • Volunteer Stories • Volunteer Facts

August 2020

Thank You From One Volunteer to Another



On behalf of the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic of the Cascades Board of Directors, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers for a job extremely well done. The mission, structure and delivery of care at VIM is inherently dependent on volunteerism. Thanks to you, we are able to uphold that mission, evolve our clinic and deliver healthcare to working patients in Central Oregon in excellent fashion – even under the extenuating circumstances of 2020. Thank you for your significant contribution to this cause.

It has been my privilege to be involved with VIM for over ten years. During that time, I have worked with founding members of the clinic, VIM staff, volunteers, donors and patients in one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my entire medical career. The volunteerism demonstrated at the Clinic of the Cascades is an affirmation of what we can accomplish together to improve our region, our communities, our lives. Our volunteers, as contributors to that success, deserve recognition for making Central Oregon better for us all.

2020 will go down in history as one of the most challenging periods in our world and in our culture. Together, we will tackle these challenges and together we will progress. Some problems seem insurmountable and beyond our reach. Others, like disparity in healthcare, fall within our basket at VIM. When our volunteers bring their perspective, experience and skills to Clinic of the Cascades, they are helping to address problems where we can and do make a difference. For that, the Board of Directors at VIM offers all our volunteers their gratitude.

On a personal note, 2019 marked my formal retirement from clinical medicine, forty-one years after the beginning of my medical training. VIM has given me an opportunity to stay involved “in the exam room” with patients even after my retirement. What a pleasure it is to continue caring for patients in collaboration with the medical staff and other volunteers at the clinic, as well as the larger regional medical system of which we are an important part.

(A quick shout out to our staff at VIM. The medical supervision provided to volunteers under the leadership of John Letovsky, MD and Jennifer Fuller, RN, BSN is remarkable. The referral coordination, led by Salome Chauncey, and the volunteer coordination, previously directed by Kristi Jacobs and now Alex Hinkle, are vital to the success of our program. Our charitable pharmacy at the clinic is an extraordinary success, managed by Alex Winn, Pharmacy Director and Stella Busse, Pharmacy Tech. The VIM front desk team, under the guidance of Lidia Vazquez, are the first to greet our patients upon entering the clinic. These wonderful people form the backbone upon which we as volunteers can do our part. A big thanks to them!)

I wish you all good health and safety in the coming months. Once again, a big thanks to our volunteers for being an integral part of the Volunteers in Medicine Clinic of the Cascades. See you there!

John D. Teller, MD / VIM Board Chair & Volunteer



Strictly Organic Coffee has been donating their organic, fair-trade coffee to VIM since the clinic opened. That's over 15 years! We go through a lot of coffee at the clinic, and we are so grateful for their partnership. Thank you Strictly Organic!

When Our Executive Director Was a Volunteer

Back in 2004, when the VIM clinic had just opened, I was a mom of three school-aged kids, recently relocated to Bend, and looking for a way I could become connected in my new community. I had been volunteering in the classroom, but I really wanted something to connect me to my previous working life in health care management.

It was with great interest I read the article in the Bulletin about a new volunteer free clinic that was opening in Bend, and I made sure to attend the first informational session held in the educational rooms at St Charles. The meeting was standing room only, and there was a palpable buzz in the room as Kristi Jacobs and Ron Carver, MD described the new clinic and handed out volunteer applications to us all.



I was very excited to get the call that I was scheduled for training and then assigned a regular shift at the front desk, making appointments, answering the phone, and conducting eligibility screenings.

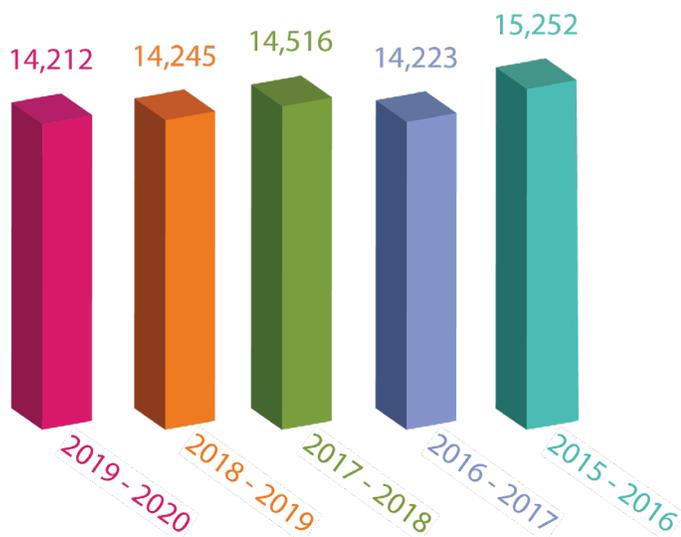
I looked forward to my shifts at VIM as a connection to being a working person again. And in the process, I was able to hear new stories every week from VIM patients, about their financial difficulties, their health worries, and their gratitude that we could help. I came home after every shift sharing the stories I had heard and felt connected to Bend in a new way.

I have spent the last 16 years at VIM. I have made countless new friends, done what I can to make sure that over 10,000 people have been able to receive care for free, and been enriched by our community.

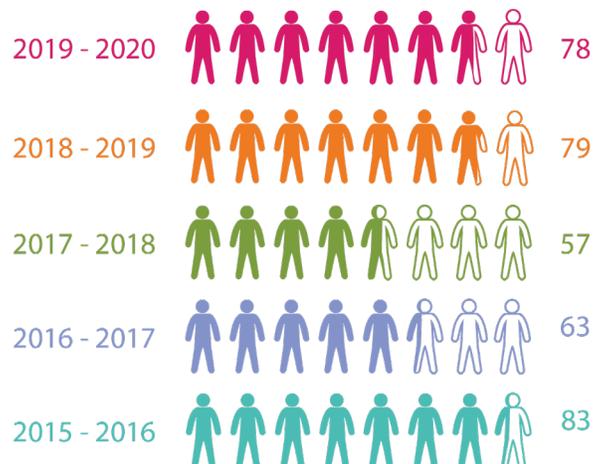
So, here's to us, volunteers young and old, new and OG and everything in between. Thank you!!

Kat Mastangelo

Volunteer Hours



Number of New Volunteers



Volunteer Awards

(As of April 2020)

Thank you for your service!

15 Years of Service

Ronald Carver Donna Sweeney

10 Years of Service

Tom Barber Bruce Brundage, MD Gale Estergreen Charlotte Lin, MD Frances McCabe

5 Years of Service

Kurt Barker Liliana Bernabe Pam Cheeney, RN Maryclaire Collis
 Robert Hakala Crispin Henthorn Kelly Hester, RN Karlyn Hetzler Grace King
 Marianne Lebre Desiree Strawn John Teller, MD Lisa Vlessis, RN

1,000 Hours

Alegria Kent Stan Shepardson, MD Marianne Lebre

500 Hours

David Andersen, RPH Wendi Ayala Liliana Bernabe Lottie Brown Bill Claridge, MD
 Addie Finseth Cheryl Hadley, MD Crispin Henthorn Karlyn Hetzler Janet Kunz, RN
 Deirdre Nauman, RN Ann Pfingsten Enrique Riquelme Marilou Smith, RN Alan Hilles, MD

250 Hours

Judy Alford Rebecca Doden, RN Stephen Ebner, MD Doug Jordan
 Catherine Steffano, FNP Dana Topliff Helena Conway Ginny Contento

An Average of 25-30
Volunteers Every Clinic Day



VIM Founder & Volunteer Tells Her Story

My name is Judy Granda Alford, and I was born and raised in Tampa Florida, where virtually all my family lived (with a few relatives in Cuba). We were living in Las Vegas, where my husband, Les, was stationed in the Air Force. We first heard of Bend when good friends announced they were retiring to that small Oregon town. This piqued our interest, and the next summer we decided that we, along with our two daughters, would tour the Northwest and see what Bend was all about. In the mid-1980's Bend's population was a little less than 20,000, and this really appealed to all 4 of us. One of the memories that most stands out to me is that the intersection of Hwy 20 and 27 was a 4 way stop!



Les decided to retire in 1987, and we moved to Bend that summer. Our daughters, Karen and Krista, incoming 9th and 10th graders, registered at Bend High, and I got a job teaching part-time at COCC. As an undergraduate, I had majored in English Ed and Spanish Ed. A few years later I went back to school and earned a graduate degree in English. This graduate degree allowed me to teach in the COCC Humanities Department, which I did for 10 years and thoroughly enjoyed it. After our daughters were gone and on their own, I retired. Les and I took advantage of our time and traveled to a number of countries.

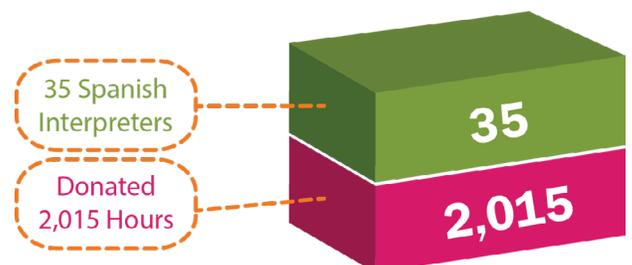
I decided I wanted to polish up my Spanish, which I had spoken as a child to my parents, grandparents and all my relatives. My interest led me to St. Charles, which had a growing number of Hispanic patients and very few employees who could speak to them. St. Charles needed me in all departments and called almost every day. COPA, the pediatric clinic, and the women's clinic began asking me to help with patients. The obstetricians at the women's clinic often asked me to accompany patients in labor, and I was present for many deliveries and Caesarians.

We became interested in VIM when we saw the commitment and dedication two of our friends were investing in the idea of a Volunteers in Medicine. Jim Petersen's and Ron Carver's excitement at the idea of bringing such a clinic to Bend was contagious, and we, along with others in the community, allowed ourselves to be swept up in their excitement. We were convinced, and still are, that a clinic was vital to Central Oregon. Les and I became involved in the actual planning and construction of the building, and we celebrated with the community when the project was finally finished.

For the past 5 years I have volunteered once a week at VIM as a Spanish interpreter. The smiles and words of gratitude from the patients is a wonderful reward and reaffirms to me that the clinic is a most important and needed medical facility in Bend. Especially amazing to me is the great interest and care that each provider takes with each patient. These medical professionals might be volunteers, but they provide the highest degree of service that they can, and it is a great privilege for me to work with each one.

I am appreciative of every single person I've interacted with here at VIM. Every volunteer's desire to help our community is so inspiring to me! I want to say thank you all so very much for every second of time you've put in to helping out at VIM. You're helping impact lives for the better!

- Alex Hinkle,
Volunteer Coordinator



Improving Lives Through Interpretation

Gerardo moved from Puebla, Mexico to Bend so his wife could pursue her master's degree in counseling. Gerardo himself has a business degree and works in real estate, and warehouse and logistics administration. Now a local to Central Oregon and a volunteer interpreter at VIM, he says he loves Bend and any outdoor activity or sport.

"I knew VIM through a friend of mine. He told me all about it and how badly they needed help with translations, so I decide to give it a try and help at least one full day per week. I think the impact VIM has in our society is huge and love to help people that need it the most. I have many stories that have touched my heart deeply, **I have witnessed peoples' lives changed for the better** and that is something you can't put a price on. Working at VIM makes me feel I am a better person and makes me happy in general. It gives me goose bumps to see all the doctors, nurses, and staff helping so much and changing peoples' lives. Maybe it's partly because I am from Mexico and many patients are from Mexico as well. I want to thank all the staff for the wonderful work they do and hope to see them soon!"



Bobbi: 3,300 Hours of Service & Counting!



In 2003, Bobbi read an article announcing a new free clinic was opening in Bend and promptly called to inquire about volunteering her skills as an RN. Growing up in a borough of Pennsylvania, Bobbie dreamed of becoming a doctor. Over the years her journey brought her to the West coast where she practiced as an orthopedic licensed vocational nurse helping to pioneer a center of excellence for joint replacement and had the privilege of participating in the 'People to People' program. This group traveled to New York, Russia, Hungary, Germany and the former Czechoslovakia to see how patient care was done in other countries. She shared, "direct patient care was my favorite part of nursing." After obtaining her BA in Health Science she worked as a RN in nurse management for 17 years before retiring to Bend in 1999.

Since the clinic opened in 2004, Bobbi has donated over 3,300 hours of service and currently volunteers twice a week supervising nurses, triaging patients and managing the flow of patients with the providers throughout clinic. She likes staying connected to the medical community, likes VIM's philosophy and that patient care is not rushed.

"All who are here want to volunteer or work in the clinic because they want to help patients have better health and have a safe place to get the care they need. I am glad we are here for the community. Our patients are awesome! I have found my time at VIM to be rewarding and valuable, it's a privilege to end my career at VIM."



207 Active Volunteers
112 Clinical & 95 Non-Clinical

Average Hours
Per Volunteer

Salome Chauncey, Interpreter & Referral Coordinator



I started volunteering as an interpreter at VIM while taking the health care interpreting course at COCC. I was gaining confidence with my new learned skills and wanted to start helping the Latino community I was preparing to serve in the health care setting, when I was told about VIM. I began volunteering on a weekly basis and filling in on other days. It was rewarding to help with the much-needed language interpreting, while improving my medical vocabulary and interpreting skills.

After being at VIM just under a year, the bi-lingual communications/referral position opened and the staff member who was vacating the position approached me about joining the team. I was working in the healthcare systems interpreting, and I had gotten to know the work she did with the referral partners. It was an exciting

possibility to be able to help facilitate more access for the patients I had grown to know throughout the year.

After interviewing, I was hired for the position and have not looked back. The role of referral coordinator is unique as I am able to experience firsthand the generosity of the referral partners who volunteer their time, that of their staff to take care of our patients at their clinics, as well as the volunteers who graciously come to VIM every day to give of their time and talents. It is wonderful to witness the amount of people who come together to help provide for the medical needs in our community.

Danny, From Volunteer to Medical Student

I came to VIM in January 2016. I had moved to Bend just months before, had decided to pursue medicine only weeks before that, and had returned to the U.S. from a few years of international cycle touring just months before that. Why medicine? In short, the overwhelming acceptance I had been shown while traveling instilled a desire to make the world a better place however I could, and my analytical mind and passion for science and truth tilted me towards medicine.

While working and studying for the MCAT, I applied to be a front desk volunteer, which challenged me to advocate for patients, learn the system, and improve my Spanish. Volunteering weekly over the next few years, I would help train other volunteers, learn other roles in the clinic, and become part of the family. I even ran a marathon with Alex Winn, VIM's pharmacy director!



Now, three years after I first started volunteering at VIM, I write this as a first-year medical student. I am exhausted, overfilled with knowledge, and only 1/3000th of the way there. But I know this is the right road. My time at VIM solidified that.



Due to COVID-19 we are not currently accepting new volunteers. However, you may submit an application and we will be in touch once we begin trainings for new volunteers. More information and an application can be found at www.vim-cascades.org/volunteer. Email Volunteer Coordinator, Alex Hinkle with any questions at alex.hinkle@vim-cascades.org.

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Interpreter Ginny: The Path to VIM

Ginny grew up in Palto Alto back before Silicon Valley became Silicon Valley. She feels fortunate to have grown up in a diverse environment, and she continued to work in multicultural settings as she pursued her degree in English Lit and received a Masters in teaching from the School of International Training. She taught ESL in Venezuela and Spain for a total of 9 years, and when she returned to the states she worked as a high school Spanish teacher for 18 years. She says her career path was "kind of funny, because I was not exactly a stellar Spanish student in high school."



Her move to Bend came in 2015 when a friend of hers moved here from Seattle and invited Ginny and her husband for a visit. As a child Ginny's family would visit Rock Springs Ranch in Bend over their summer breaks, but she had no idea what Bend really had to offer. Ginny says, "I thought for decades that I would teach high school forever, as I was so inspired at the schools where I was teaching. But then in 2015, something in me shifted. Like finishing up a big, nutritious meal, I suddenly felt like I'd had "enough," and I needed a change." They ultimately moved for the more relaxed lifestyle and easy access to the outdoors, but Ginny also enrolled in the COCC interpreter course. Now, along with healthcare interpreting, she is on the team of instructors teaching the COCC course mentoring upcoming interpreters. This is what lead her to volunteer at VIM. Ginny tells her story:

"When I took the COCC Interpreter course in 2016, I had the opportunity to get my first practice at VIM. Salome was SO helpful in coaching me, giving me practical advice that can't be taught in a classroom. I began volunteering about one to four times a month. I come away from a day volunteering at VIM feeling inspired by everyone I meet, feeling like I've contributed something of value to our community. Like everyone who works there, I'm always struck with how appreciative the patients are, showing an appreciation that healthcare providers in "the real world" don't get nearly enough of.

As we're currently being reminded with the spread of COVID-19, good community health plays a crucial role in good health for every one of us. VIM makes that all the more possible here in Bend. Happily, I've also met many kindred spirits and made some dear friends. It's been a wonderful way to get to know Bend better.

So many of the patients seen at VIM are very hard-working, actively contributing members of the Bend community. One story that stands out to me was a woman who was suffering from horrible stomach pain. Thanks to VIM, she had gotten all the necessary tests, and yet nothing was found. I witnessed Dr. Anderson so gently help her articulate sources of stress in her life, which were numerous and frankly heartbreaking. So skillfully, he helped her understand how the stress and anxiety were manifesting as very real physical pain. I could see a huge wave of relief come over her, as she seemed deeply grateful that someone could finally see her and her situation fully. She was then referred for counseling at VIM, a plan she was eager to pursue. That was one of many examples of amazing care that I've been privileged to witness at VIM."