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## A Message from Robert Gates

*President, VCC Board of Directors*

Since VCC opened its doors to patients in 1972, you have been our allies in our work to nurture healthy communities in San Diego North County.

The year 2015 was no exception.

Thanks to your support, we had two successful fundraisers. The Health and Hope for Our Youth Gala, held in November, drew 500 guests and raised more than \$225,000 for the Project REACH youth development program and pediatric services at VCC. The 29<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Homes Tour, held in December, raised \$50,000 to benefit the VCC Kare for Kids Fund which is dedicated to provide medical services to children whose families could not afford the care otherwise.

Your donations have touched VCC in many ways. We have improved our facilities and

expanded our services. With your support, we serve our patients with affordable, high quality care. You have helped us become what we are today: a trusted provider of health care helping thousands of patients of all ages and income levels lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

I am humbled by your generosity. My hope is that you will continue to support VCC in the new year. Every contribution, irrespective of how much you give, matters. Each dollar you donate leaves a legacy of health and wellness in North County.

**Please support VCC by using the Donate Now button below or contact Betsy Heightman at 760.631.5000 x1139.**

Your gift makes a tremendous impact on the health of our community.

[Donate Now](#)



## A Helping Hand for Patients in Need

More than 400,000 San Diego County residents face food insecurity or lack of consistent access to nutritious meals, according to a 2015 study by Feeding America San Diego.

Among them, is Rose, a VCC patient who is unemployed and without a car. She rations food and skips meals. The ever-present uncertainty about food clouds her daily life.

“Many days, I have gone without eating



## A Cancer Patient Finds Care and Compassion

Like many caregivers, John had little time for himself while he looked after his ailing elderly mother. He had not seen a doctor in four years until he pulled a muscle while moving a large TV in his home. That's when he saw Dr. Cheryl Thompson, a VCC physician. After an examination, she insisted that he get the lab tests for which he was due.

The results came back, indicating a need for further testing. After he underwent a colonoscopy, John was diagnosed with

and without transportation to a soup kitchen," Rose says.

A VCC food distribution program, launched in June 2015 in partnership with Feeding America San Diego, is helping patients like Rose who struggle with food insecurity and health issues.

While providing a dependable source of food to low-income patients, the program is also helping them manage their diabetes.

A regular at the monthly food distribution at VCC: Vale Terrace, Rose comes in early to join other patients in line to receive bags filled with rice, beans, pasta and vegetables from VCC staffers and volunteer board members.

"What I get here is a big help," Rose says. "I will have something in hand to make a meal. I am pre-diabetic and I have high cholesterol. I am trying to eat healthy."

Each month, Feeding America San Diego, part of a nationwide network of food banks, provides 1,800 pounds of food for distribution to VCC. The program serves about 300 patients each month.

For VCC patient Catalina, the food she receives every month stretches her family's grocery budget and helps her eat healthier.

"I was diagnosed with diabetes 10 years ago," Catalina says. "I have eight children and five are still at home. As a family, we are trying to change our

colon cancer. The frightening news left him inundated with anxiety. He did not have a road map to what lay ahead.

That's when Dr. Thompson stepped in to help John in his cancer treatment journey.

"She sent me to all the right people for treatment," John says. "When I was feeling down and out, she reassured me that everything was not dark and gloomy, that there was hope. She gave me confidence. She listened to me and encouraged me to never give up. She looked out for me and made sure I stayed on track with my treatment and medications. Her kindness gives me the strength to carry on."

About a year ago, John underwent cancer surgery. After the operation, his initial stage 1 diagnosis was reclassified as stage 3 cancer which required chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

"If I had not seen Dr. Thompson, and if she had not insisted on my lab tests, I wouldn't be here today," he says.

Along with Dr. Thompson, her staff at VCC: Grapevine was behind John every step of the way as he began his cancer treatment.

"The treatment process can be frustrating, but Dr. Thompson's staff was very helpful in giving me referrals, helping me with paper work, helping me see the proper people," John says.

***Please help us help our patients get the care they need, when they need***

eating habits to eat healthier. I am trying to follow my doctor's advice on nutrition. We are eating more vegetables and whole wheat bread, but it's not always easy on the budget. This is a great help for my family."



## A Scaffolding is Raised for North County Dads

This spring, VCC will launch a program to provide education, job training and other services to help low-income dads in North County succeed in the work force, become self sufficient and forge close relationships with their children and family members.

The \$2.5 million New Pathways for Fathers and Families grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services will be known as Dads' Club or Club de Padres. It will be staffed by a team of case managers, a workshop facilitator and a program supervisor.

Dads enrolled in the program will receive employment and job skills training, and referrals to social services. They will participate in workshops in communication, relationships and conflict resolution.

***it. Make a donation by using the Donate Now button or contact Betsy Heightman at 760.631.5000 x1139.***



## An Early Start to Good Oral Health

A large, white van emblazoned with the VCC logo is a familiar sight on many mornings at school campuses in Vista and Oceanside. Inside the dental clinic on wheels, VCC dentists and dental staff deliver care and education to school children on the importance of good oral health.

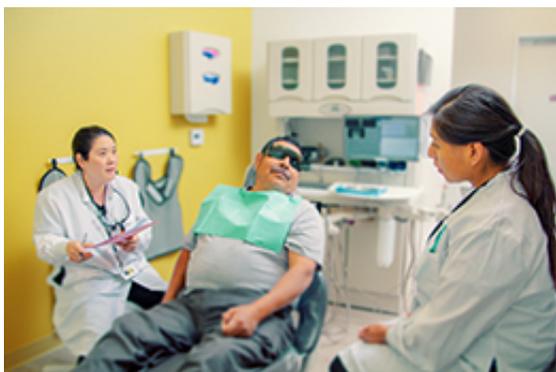
The mobile dental health program, known as A+ Teeth, began in 2014. Since then, it has grown to include 25 school campuses and is expected to log 3,000 student visits by the end of the school year.

Students receive screenings, sealants, fluoride varnish and dental hygiene instructions. They also get a dental report card with the findings of the visual examination and suggestions for follow-up care. A VCC care coordinator works

In addition, VCC will provide free enrollment assistance for health insurance and services such as CalFresh and CalWORKs. Those in need of mental health services will be connected to behavioral health providers at VCC.

Our partners in Dads' Club include Solutions for Change, North County Career Center, North County Lifeline, Community Housing Works, Vista Unified School District, Oceanside Unified School District, Vista Adult School, North County Career Center, Center for Community Solutions and Interfaith Community Services.

VCC ran a similar program from 2007 to 2012, also known as Dads' Club. The program served more than 600 low-income men in the five-year period with case management and services to help them become self sufficient and improve their parenting skills.



## A Thank You to our Funders

Our health services and health education programs would not be possible without

with families of children who need follow up dental work. A+ Teeth is open to all students whether they have dental health insurance or not.

“Good dental health begins with education and what a perfect setting to reach out to those in our community who need us the most,” said Dr. Rebecca Cornille, Dental Director at VCC. “We are able to identify potential dental problems early and apply preventative sealants to permanent molars to protect them from decay. This is also a great way to connect children who might not have a dentist with a dental home so that they can receive comprehensive dental care on a regular basis.”

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, tooth decay is the most common childhood chronic disease which adversely impacts a child's growth and development, and school learning.



## The Shining Stars of VCC!

Celebrate the Success, the annual VCC gathering held in December, was an opportunity to recognize employees who have made a difference. Here's more on those honored at the event.

grants from public and private funding organizations. We would like to thank them for their support in helping us in our work to serve our patients and community residents.

**Avon Breast Cancer Crusade:** \$50,000 for the VCC Breast Health Outreach Program to provide education, breast health screenings, referrals and patient navigation services.

**California Wellness Foundation:** \$250,000 to support dental staff at VCC: North River.

**Molina Foundation:** 141 books for Project REACH participants.

**Molina Foundation:** 503 Spanish language books for distribution by Maternal and Child Health programs.

**SDG&E:** \$5,000 Helping People in Need grant to support the VCC Kare for Kids Fund which provides health services to children from low income families.

**San Diego HIV Funding Collaborative:** \$20,000 to treat patients with HIV.

**Samuel H. & Katherine W. French Fund:** \$4,995 for exercise equipment at Club 55, a VCC-run fitness center for adults in Oceanside.

**Center for Medicaid and Medicare Innovation:** \$87,650 subcontract from UCSD to provide health coaching on medication adherence, diet and exercise, as well as other lifestyle modifications to reduce chances of heart attack and stroke for at-risk patients.

**USDHHS Administration for Children & Families:** \$100,000 myLife Comprehensive Abstinence Education grant for Project REACH students. The program is designed to decrease teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Congratulations to all!

**Call Center, Department of the Year:** The call center team, pictured above, was recognized for its hard work, resourcefulness and commitment to provide the best service to patients and the public. As the voice of VCC on the front lines of communication with the outside world, the call center played an important role in defining the patient experience and shaping the perception and image of our organization.

**Karla Placencia, Employee of the Year:** Karla, a family planning health educator, was recognized for her readiness to take on new projects, creativity, problem solving, and her positive outlook which shines through in her interactions with patients and colleagues. Her accomplishments in the year were many. She led the VCC family planning project; participated in several training projects; and supported her management team in various capacities.

**Dr. Loretta Stenzel, Provider of the Year:** Dr. Stenzel was honored for her extraordinary dedication to her patients. She works tirelessly to make sure that patients are kept informed and pays meticulous attention to make sure that no aspect of their care is overlooked. She is ready to take on new projects and presents new ideas to benefit patients. She has provided care to patients with HIV for many years and participated in the San Diego Task Force to implement safer prescribing practices for controlled substances in the county.

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Connect with VCC



**Our mailing address is:**  
1000 Vale Terrace Drive  
Vista, CA 92084  
[info@vistacommunityclinic.org](mailto:info@vistacommunityclinic.org)



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