An offering with teeth

Dental hygiene student directs her senior project to an area of great need

By LAURIE MCVICKER
Columbia staff writer

The number of fillings and extractions didn’t seem to bother the patients at Clark College’s dental clinic on Saturday. They gladly sat down on vinyl chairs, opened wide, and let dental hygienists and dentists look around, drill and fill cavities.

The alternative? Well, Benny Bugge, 45, doesn’t want to talk about that.

“A day of pain is better than months of pain,” Bugge said, before being escorted to one of the dental chairs at the clinic. Bugge, an uninsured resident of Vancouver’s Share House, doesn’t have regular dental or medical care, receiving most treatment at hospital emergency rooms. The bills are often too much. But so is the pain.

He was among 45 homeless men benefiting from Saturday’s free dental day, organized by Clark College dental hygiene student Audrey Herman as part of her senior project.

Herman’s class was asked to hatch a public health project aimed to people in critical need of dental care — low-income children or young pregnant women, for instance.

The 35-year-old picked homeless men.

“Women and children get the most privilege — these guys get overlooked,” she said. “Their population has the greatest need and the least amount of service.”

That’s because much of the community’s free dental services, such as February’s annual dental health day put on by Ronald McDonald House Charities, are aimed at children. But homeless men, who often lack nutrition and the personal care to protect themselves from cavities, need it just as much, she said.

“Not many people go and offer things to them,” Herman said. “Most of them are in pain when they walk in. And some of them have lived with it for so long.”

In previous years, dental students have done similar projects geared toward homeless men. But this is the first year a project for that demographic has been this wide-scale, Herman said.

Last year, only a dozen men received treatment from 20 volunteers.

“This year, 70 volunteers, including Herman’s fellow dental students and six local dentists, took on the project. The Blind Onion restaurant, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church and the Clark College Foundation donated lunch.

Herman said she got the word out to classmates and dentists through a mass e-mail, and she and volunteers performed initial screenings at Share House. Those with the most need for the dental treatment were invited to the clinic Saturday, she said.

One of the volunteers, Dental Student Stephen Wu, said he felt compelled to help because of the heart of the project.

“This is the day of giving, and we really need to do it to help people who can’t help themselves,” he said.

Dr. Stephen Wu and Clark College dental hygiene student Lauren Ferrar — among 75 volunteers participating in a senior project hatched by another Clark College student — work on Share House staff member Jim Miller’s teeth Saturday. The 45 homeless men who received free dental care were selected through screenings for the magnitude of their need.

Two Fort Vancouver students make a splash at high-tech STEM still a male

By HOWARD BUCK
Columbia staff writer

A few weeks ago, Fort Vancouver High School students Daysha Baliy and Batista

It was the 100th SEMI event to increase student exposure, touching more than 3,000 students so far.

This time, nearly three dozen girls from

Fire inspect fees go up to reduce costs

Fire marshal works to balance costs

By STEPHANIE RICE
Columbia staff writer

After last year’s controversial decision to triple fees for fire inspections, Clark County will change the pricing method in a way that means many business owners can pay less.

Clark County Fire Marshal Jon Dunaway said Thursday that the county will charge $150 an hour instead of a flat fee, which currently runs $315, based on the size of the building.

A public hearing on the proposed fee change is set for 7 p.m. April 27 at the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St.

The county does annual inspections of 693 restaurants, hospitals, theaters, factories and other businesses in the unincorporated county and smaller cities.

The fire marshal’s office gives business owners written notice of inspections, and the letter includes a list of common violations.

By charging an hourly rate, Dunaway said, he hopes to encourage owners to be in compliance before the inspector walks through the door.

They can’t just be will the inspection,” Dunaway said.

Last year’s cost to county business owners due to the delinquency rate rose to 4/17,500,000 in rate. Other cities had similar fees.

The fees to close a building falls on the business owner. The program was designed to keep the county from violating the state’s $5,000 in state funds, but not to make a profit.

The $5,000 fee covered the costs of the state and county’s fire inspection program.

If a business owner paid the $5,000 and the inspector found nothing, the county would refund the fee.

DIGGING MOTHER RILEY

Riley Robbins, 7, left, and Gate Robbins, 4, from worms in compost at Marshall Park during an Earth Day event on Saturday, held this weekend.

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