



Mass vaccination clinics mark start of 2021

Fifty-three volunteers including staff members helped track, administer, and log vaccinations during weekend and weekday clinics that began outdoors at the Clinic on February 8.

Working in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health, which provided the Moderna vaccines, volunteers assembled regularly on designated days over the next five months to schedule appointments, direct parking, distribute and pick up paperwork, prepare the vaccines, fill out vaccine cards, administer the shots, and observe individuals for any concerns or side effects. Close to 200 vaccines were given during some of the weekend clinics, which could extend all day.

The Clinic worked from lists supplied by the VDH to assure essential workers in the community were covered as well as Clinic patients and others as they became qualified during the roll-out. By June, when vaccines became more readily available at various locations, the Clinic had given close to 3,000 of the vaccines.

State Secretary of Health pays a visit to the Clinic

Virginia's Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Daniel Carey, MD, visited the Clinic June 15 to hear about the Clinic's response to Covid-19 during 2020 and its vaccination program at the start of 2021, when vaccines became available.

Sec. Carey recognized the Clinic's involvement early on with the Virginia Department of Health to organize, manage, and run community vaccine clinics. He also listened to the challenges the Clinic faced in maintaining medical, dental, and pharmacy services during the Covid crisis.



Secretary Carey (center) listens as Medical Director Dr. Charles Maresh explains some of the new protocols in place.



VCU School of Dentistry students, whose rotations were suspended in March of 2020 at the start of the pandemic, resumed in June of 2021, much to the delight of patients and staff. Dr. William Broas, DDS, (standing, third from left) who began working this spring, is overseeing the students three days a week, and on other days is managing the denture program. Staff members Sarah McClellan, Raven Davis and Alan Hays are to the right of Dr. Broas.

Americares awards national grant for air purification additions

The Northern Neck – Middlesex Free Health Clinic was one of 25 free and charitable clinics nationwide to receive a \$10,000 grant to cover costs related to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.

The funding was awarded by Americares, a health-focused relief and development organization which sought funding proposals from its network of 1,000 partner clinics and organizations expanding access to health services.

Americares awarded \$10,000 grants to 25 nonprofits in 16 states. The Clinic was the only non-profit in Virginia to receive the funding, which went toward new air filtration systems in the Dental Clinic, including each of its six dental operatories.

The Americares grant triggered considerable NNMFC's pandemic-related facility improvements, including air filtration and purification units throughout the building, as well as extra personal protection equipment and supplies, and thermometers and blood pressure units for patients to use at home. These expenses were on top of its \$1.5 million operating budget, and came during a time of increased demand for services and canceled fund-raising events.



Patient Myesha Davis was so appreciative of receiving dental care during the pandemic that she joined the Clinic dental staff to say thank you to Americares.



Little Free Pantry in Clinic lobby: Thank you, Bill and Susan Westbrook

"Take what you need, leave what you can."

That's the message on the new Little Free Pantry that Bill Westbrook built and installed in the Clinic lobby. The Westbrooks also filled the pantry with canned and non-perishable food items, and the Clinic is restocking it as needed.

The concept took off. Clients began using it right away and deeply appreciate having an emergency food source between the Healthy Harvest Food Bank's regular food pantries.

Thank you for your work and kindness, coming at a time when help is needed by so many.

The past year and a half underscores how critical access to health care is. As the nation went through a lockdown the Northern Neck – Middlesex Free Health Clinic remained open for the area's most vulnerable populations – those with limited incomes and with little or no health insurance, and without their own medical or dental provider.

This was the time to focus on a healthy community.

Then, with the approval of vaccines and the gradual, cautious reopening, the Free Health Clinic organized a full schedule of vaccination clinics open to everyone.

This was the time to keep the community healthy.

We are proud of the steps taken during Covid-19 to make our facility as safe and welcoming as possible for patients, volunteers, and staff.

It hasn't come easily. **We are deeply thankful for all the support we have had to stay open, make facility improvements, and change protocols and procedures. Special loans and grants were secured to see us through a most difficult period, and as the nation re-emerges, the Clinic is in many ways stronger than ever.**

There is a bottom line, however. Our annual budget of \$1.6 million is built upon community support and contributions, and these are needed to continue being a driving force for health. Please help. Donations may be sent to the Clinic at P.O. Box 1694, Kilmarnock, 22482, or made through www.nnmfhc.org.

We deeply appreciate the kindness and unsolicited support given by patients, students, volunteers and other Clinic supporters during the challenging times of Covid-19. Two summed things up beautifully in their letters to the newspaper:

Unsung heroes: As we close a most surreal year with a pandemic still raging, our community is most fortunate to have the Northern Neck – Middlesex Free Health Clinic on the front lines to serve our most vulnerable citizens. Unknown to many, director Jeannie Nelson, the amazing staff, doctors, nurses, pharmacists and cadre of community volunteers have worked tirelessly to screen over 5,721 patient visits this year for medical and dental care. Their commitment, strengthened by community generosity, will help ensure this first class care, so urgent to all those in need, will continue. They work so diligently and often anonymously to serve and provide health care to our community. – **Dorie Battelle, 2020**

Free Clinic comes through: Like many other employers in late winter, I was struggling to find vaccines for my employees. Those were hopeful but somewhat frustrating weeks. The Northern Neck – Middlesex Free Health Clinic stepped up to the challenge and through a determined group of volunteers got local businesses and their employees vaccinated early and back to work. The free health clinic turned out an incredible volunteer medical and administrative force. They were efficient, well-informed and happy to be of service to the public. As a regular visitor to the free health clinic, I know that the attitude of their volunteers is on display every day during regular operations. But their efforts were good for the larger community to witness during that very difficult time.

I hope that in the future, as budgets are debated and justified, that the services of the free health clinic, especially in times of public need, are remembered and rewarded. Gratitude can be a fleeting emotion but sincere appreciation for a vital community resource should last well into the future. – **Carolyn Quinn, Dug In Farms, White Stone**



Just a few of the vaccination clinic volunteers. Thank you for your time and goodwill to make this a healthier, safer community.

Access to health care is needed now more than ever. And just as patients need us, we need our donors and supporters.

You are the heart of the Clinic.

All of our funding comes from community goodwill, and we are grateful. With an annual budget of \$1.6 million we hope you can continue your contributions.

Stay safe.

What the students say: Quinton Pooler, one of the five VCU School of Dentistry students on the first rotation after resuming this year, wrote: “I had an amazing time.... Everyone on the staff from the front desk, assistants, to the doctor were all very helpful and friendly. I got to push myself and see what I can actually do in a full day; it has been the closest experience to feeling like a dentist I’ve had thus far. The patients were super friendly and it made the long and busy days worth it.”

Board Chair's Report

G. Scott Graham

Hats off to the Clinic staff for weathering the storm throughout the Covid 19 pandemic. With greatly reduced numbers – particularly acute due to mandates that volunteers and others stay home – the Clinic was able to remain open for our most vulnerable populations, while at the same time create and maintain new health and safety protocols and spaces for anyone visiting the Clinic for any reason.

The pandemic's been disruptive in more than the obvious ways. It affected how and when medical, dental, and pharmacy services could be provided, but it also wreaked havoc with our traditional fund-raising efforts:

- There could no longer be a Chefs' Table event at Indian Creek, for example, an event so well received among Clinic supporters and one that helped spread the word of the good works of the Clinic to a broader community.
- Churches and civic organizations were knocked out of their regular meetings, and while some were able to continue contributions the volume declined significantly.
- Businesses – including the Clinic – were scrambling to meet payroll and were taking out their own loans to stay afloat.
- Some grant opportunities were put on hold, though thankfully others developed to help the Clinic stay in the black during a very dark year. These were one-time shots, however, and related directly to costs associated with Covid 19.
- Individual donors were facing their own economic disruptions and uncertainties, and fund-raising appeals were put on hold.

We are edging back to something more normal and recognizable, with a focus on access to health care for everyone, regardless of their station or status in life. I hope you can join us as we continue, on a \$1.6 million annual budget, working toward a healthy and vibrant community.



CEO's Report

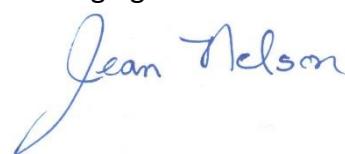
R. Jean Nelson

Dear Volunteers,

Oh how we've missed you!

It has been a real treat to see some of you returning, and as we work our way through the ins and outs of pandemic restrictions I hope more of you will be filling our halls once more. New patients are coming in daily. The Dental Clinic is in full swing with VCU School of Dentistry students. The Pharmacy has returned to 30-day prescription refills and pick-ups at the window inside. Vaccine Clinics are held as needed and are open to everyone in the community, not just Clinic patients. Schools are reopening and vaccines are available for returning students if they choose and are eligible. We also hope to resume the healthy-eating classes for patients, held here at the Clinic every week in partnership with Healthy Harvest Food Bank and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

While delivery of health care undergoes significant changes, even outside the pandemic, the Clinic is committed to being constant in its service to the community. If you know of people who are uninsured, or under-insured, or on Medicaid, or simply unable to access the health care they need, please send them our way. We are changing with the times but we're not changing who we are. We're here for the community and we're here to stay.



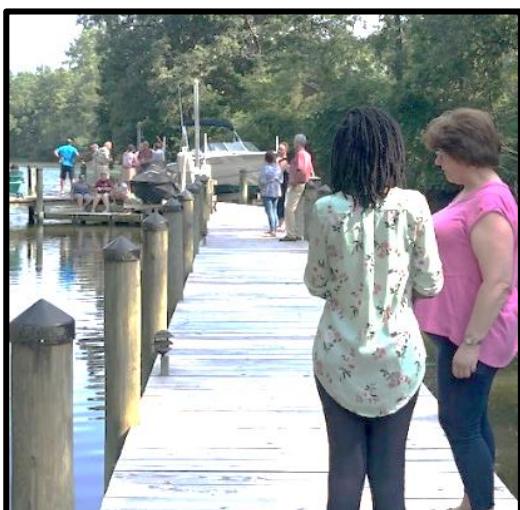


From left are Medical Director Charlie Maresh and his wife Allison; hosts Sandi and Bob Sutherland, CEO Jean Nelson, and Board Chair Scott Graham.

NNMFHC Vaccine Clinics: Celebrating the volunteers

Bob and Sandi Sutherland hosted a Friday evening dinner reception and celebration July 16 at their home near Kilmarnock for the 53 volunteers who helped make the vaccine clinics this year possible. Beginning in February, and working with the Virginia Department of Health, volunteers turned out on weekends and during the week to schedule, administer, record, and track some 3,000 vaccines to area residents, including front-line and essential workers as well as Clinic patients.





Vaccine Clinic volunteers enjoyed a buffet dinner and comraderie inside and outside the Sutherland home, from the kitchen to the deck to the dock



Northern Neck – Middlesex
FREE HEALTH CLINIC



Bridging the
health-care gap
since 1993

**The Northern Neck—Middlesex
Free Health Clinic's Mission:**

We embrace health and wellness as the foundation for quality of life, and we dedicate ourselves to providing the highest level of health care to all those who ordinarily lack access to it within our community.



Two Locations in Kilmarnock

Main Facility at 51 William B. Graham Court:

Medical, dental, and pharmacy services
5 days and 2 evenings per week

Phyllis Smith Building at 115 DMV Drive:

Patient education, and group patient care

In Syringa

Freeshade Community Center:

Outreach Office every Thursday, 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm



**Northern Neck - Middlesex
FREE HEALTH CLINIC**
Since 1993

51 William B. Graham Court • P.O. Box 1694 • Kilmarnock, VA 22482 • 804-435-0575

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