

3rd Annual Tunes by the Dunes



Concert with Children's Volunteer Health Network, Inc. as the primary beneficiary.



Since our Summer 2007 newsletter, CVHN has been able to help 8 more children receive braces, our total is now up to 14! Our sincere gratitude goes to the orthodontists in our network.



More than 1400 appointments have been made to date:

Dental 459

Medical 351

Mental Health 583

healthy happy kids

The Children's Volunteer Health Network (CVHN) is a faith based, 501(c)3, non-profit organization that facilitates free medical, dental and mental healthcare to uninsured and under-insured school children in Walton and Okaloosa counties. These children do not meet the Medicaid or Kid Care requirements, and therefore do not receive the care they require.



Born in Illinois and having spent her early years in Africa, Cindy L'Abbe now resides in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. She received her degrees from George Washington University and FSU.

In 1963 she moved to Destin, "when it truly was a small fishing village. As a child, South Walton was a sanctuary for me, providing beauty, nurturance and a spiritual connection. I was drawn into the land with its secluded stillness and quiet solitude. To this day, it is where I come when I need to nourish my heart and soul."

After twenty-five years teaching special needs children, Cindy decided to work more directly with the mental health needs of children. "There is a great deal of stigma attached to mental health in this country. Many insurance companies choose not to cover mental health needs or they only cover a minimum number of sessions, regardless of an individual or family's needs. These policies cover substandard care." according to L'Abbe.

After years in education, Cindy came to the conclusion that mental health is the single most defining factor related to life success. "If children and adults are carrying unresolved grief, trauma and losses, their chances for success can be greatly undermined regardless of their education" she says.

Rather than work for a community mental health organization, Cindy offers her services to individuals who don't meet the criteria set up by government sponsored systems. This led her to CVHN. Cindy volunteers her services to the very population that she had identified as a teacher who fall through the cracks: Working families that don't have the means to purchase health insurance and also don't qualify for government programs.

L'Abbe has an intrinsic love and passion for this work: "To serve the South Walton Community provides a deep sense of returning home and giving back to the area that not only nurtured me as a child, but also laid the foundation for my life's calling."



We are bursting at the seams!

Byron Chism, Owner of Bad Byron's Specialty Food Products, Inc. (www.buttrub.com) has graciously provided CVHN free office space for the last two years. Because of the ongoing needs of our area children, we have hired our 3rd full time

employee. There just isn't enough room in our 300 sq. ft. office to accommodate all of us, plus volunteer workspace. If you can think of that special someone 'with a huge heart (and wallet)', ask if they can donate office space for CVHN.

Woman's World magazine is writing an article on CVHN. They interviewed families we have helped, and arranged photo shoots of their beautiful children. Be sure to look us up in their February 2008 issue and help us spread the word on the wonderful things CVHN is doing.



Planning began in April for our second annual Cottages for Kids benefit. Board members Kate Johnson and Susan Breeden, along with some incredible volunteers, began brainstorming on what our 'theme' would be and how we could somehow make it different from last year. The decision was finally made...we'd go "green" and incorporate educational value. And so it began...builders and architects were signing up to participate, sponsors were committing their 2007 Raffle House support, and school children and celebrities were decorating birdhouses. The community was embracing CFK 2007!

Rosemary Beach agreed to once again host the event and the date was set for November 24th. Word was beginning to spread as we contacted local media and regional magazines leading up to the date. Susannah Rice, our Builder Liaison, somehow "sweet-talked" her way through to an editor at "Southern Living" magazine, who, sent a photographer to shoot the event for inclusion in a fall 2008 printing.

The stage was set...and all the hard work and details that come with an event of this magnitude were being finalized. On November 1st, the first of the 13 cottages arrived on the East Long Green of Rosemary Beach and we were all there...like expectant parents waiting for that special moment. After three days of deliveries, our landscapers created the village of "Greentopia." The village came alive and was ready for tours.

Volunteers were out on weekends dressed in their green aprons, giving tours and helping the kids stay safe while they enjoyed climbing, sliding and exploring each cottage. Other volunteers were selling raffle tickets and birdhouses, asking folks to vote for their favorite cottage and offering sugar cookies, warm out-of-the-oven from Wild Olives, to 5,000 visitors. Once again, a BIG hug from our community!

On Auction Day, visitors came from near and far. J.D. Johnson got the auction started with a prayer of thanksgiving and then challenged the crowd to "open their hearts and their wallets." They did both. The auction, which took about 2 hours, had bids from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for the cottages. Winners were from all over the country, including one from California who identified *Slide Away Hill* as the perfect fit for their active family. A favorite playhouse, *Dun Wishes & Dreams Castle*, was purchased and then donated to Point Washington United Methodist Church for the church playground. The *Pinwheel Windmill* made its way to New Orleans, won by a happy family of five. And *Sponge Bob's Pineapple Under the Sea* traveled the distance to Michigan.

With donations, sponsorships, birdhouses, a raffle and the auction, Cottages for Kids raised \$125,000 for Children's Volunteer Health Network, Inc. There are so many people to thank for making CFK 2007 such a success. You are our builders, architects, designers, contributors, sponsors, volunteers and friends. You are our heroes. We are already looking forward to next year...we hope you are too! See a video on our playhouses at http://youtube.com/watch?v=cMBLmtuCC_Y

Lights Camera Action....er..Stage Fright!

Most of us can tell a good story about something we know and are passionate about, but when the camera is turned on, we may experience a case of amnesia.

Recently, the Florida Association of Realtors sent a film crew to capture the "essence" of CVHN. The kids were natural scene stealers. Some of us, however, were technically challenged when the lights turned on. Thank goodness for name tags.

Florida Association of Realtors (FAR) Vice President of Communications, Jeff Zipper, learned of CVHN through the efforts of Harry Millsaps, a CVHN Board member and Emerald Coast Association of Realtors President. At a recent FAR state convention, CVHN founder Tricia Carlisle-Northcutt was presented with the FAR Humanitarian Award. At the awards ceremony, Harry suggested FAR should come see for themselves what CVHN was all about and meet the people and families that make it all possible. FAR spent 2 days interviewing kids, parents, doctors and school nurses. The team left with approximately 4 hrs of taped interviews. They had to reduce the footage to 3-4 minutes. It couldn't be done...the story had to be told. Discussions ensued and after editing and re-editing, the result is an 8-minute DVD, titled "One Step." This video will be premiered at the Midyear FAR update in Orlando and put on the FAR website. The goal is to encourage other communities to take "one step" to help our uninsured and underinsured children throughout the state of Florida get the medical attention they need.

Most of us in the video won't be giving up our day jobs for Hollywood, but if you would like to see the story, log on to our website, www.childrensvolunteerhealthnetwork.org/far/video.htm



We, at CVHN would like you to join us in welcoming our new Executive Director, Dr. Mary Konovsky. Her leadership abilities and vision have already directed CVHN down new and exciting paths.



CVHN Treasurer Jane Bahr

Jane is a native of Birmingham AL where she was involved with Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as President, Treasurer, Secretary and Board member.



She also served on the Board of Girl's Inc. for ten years. Her primary focus for Girl's Inc. was fund raising and making the community aware of the need to raise the self-esteem of young women.

Jane and her husband Greg know how important it is to give back to the community. In 2003 they moved to Seagrove Beach and are happy to be a part of such a giving and spiritual community.



Letter from the Founder

Are we "Gived Out ?" So it seems to one reporter. On a recent nightly news report, the reporter lamented on the state of charitable giving. Due to the economy and current events, he stated, " people were 'gived out'." His words, not mine!

The first thought that came to my mind was he obviously hasn't been to this part of the country. Yes, there is an economic downturn; but this community continues to care and give generously to help uninsured and underinsured kids. You have not only given your money, but your time. Your generosity has assisted in making kids lives healthy and happy. Since the spring of 2005, almost 1400 medical/dental/mental health appointments have been facilitated for children. Volunteers have driven many miles to make sure these kids get to their appointments. One volunteer has driven over 100 appointments. And again this year we had builders, designers and architects donate their time, talent and money to build our Cottages For Kids playhouse village. And the families we have assisted have generously come forward and told their stories on camera and to national publications to help others understand the plight of the uninsured.

Are we "gived out"? Absolutely not! Stretched, perhaps. But that is how we continue to grow as individuals and as a community that has been blessed abundantly. We are blessed to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.

We all have something to give. No matter how small a gift may seem, when it is combined with the gifts and talents of others, it is dramatic. 2007 has been a year of stretching and so will 2008. We will continue to grow and serve "one step" at a time. We may get "tuckered out" but never "gived out." Thank you Community for being such an integral part of CVHN !

Happy and Blessed New Year, Tricia

Has Its Eyes on CVHN

CVHN is seeking grant funds to support its "Just for Grins" Dental Bus Program. We recently received \$96,000 from the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida that will cover almost 1/2 of the first year's operating cost of the Just for Grins Program. We applied to the Case Foundation for additional funds and entered their "Make It Your Own" Awards competition. Out of almost 5,000 applications, the Just For Grins Program was selected to be in the "Top 100" contenders. The top 20 winners from this group will be selected in February based on their grant applications. Then, beginning February 13 and continuing throughout the month, the Top 4 winners will be selected by online voting. The Top 4 winners receive \$10,000 and the top vote getter receives an additional \$25,000.

You Can Help!!

Please support the "Just For Grins" Program. You can contribute financial support, online, through our widget provided by the Case Foundation. In February if we are selected to be among the Top 20 Winners, you can vote for the Just For Grins program to be funded by the Case Foundation.

To learn more about Just For Grins, visit our online website hosted through the Case Foundation at <http://miyo.casefoundation.org/just-for-grins>



Terry Beth, a local fifteen year old honor roll student, is on the dance team and highly regarded at her high school. CVHN received a phone call this summer asking if we could help her get an abscessed tooth pulled.

Two weeks after the extraction, Terry started having fevers and wasn't feeling good. Her mother took her to the ER and after many tests, determined that the abscess had attached itself to her heart. She was rushed to Shand's Hospital in Gainesville where she underwent heart surgery. The doctors said that if the surgery had waited one more day, she would have died.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to the growing number of Americans who lack health insurance. Unfortunately, less attention has been paid to the startling and often overlooked fact: **One out of every 5 uninsured Americans is a child.** Through no fault of their own, these youngest and most vulnerable members of society lack coverage for the health services they need to develop into healthy and productive adults.

Terry Beth is one of the lucky ones, she survived. Her school band director is quoted as saying, "Thanks for taking care of Cheerios for us (that's what the kids lovingly call her), we would be lost without her.

Dental Bus Update

You have probably heard the term "dental bus" used in conjunction with CVHN recently. No, it's not a rumor, but one of our 2008 goals as we strive to serve the medical and dental needs of kids in our community.



What is a dental bus? Think of it as a dental office on wheels which will be parked at area schools for as many days as needed to serve eligible kids by providing preventive dental services such as exams, cleanings, fluoride treatment and sealants.

Why do we need a dental bus? In the last two years of CVHN's operations, nearly 90% of the dental needs we responded to were emergencies. Dental care is a luxury to many, and the families we serve simply cannot afford it. What you also may not know is that a lack of dental care leads to unhealthy teeth which can cause a number of other serious ailments, including life-threatening illnesses. CVHN treated one child who, as a result of a previously untreated tooth abscess, nearly died from a heart infection.

Who will be eligible for dental bus services? After much research, we decided to make eligibility simple. If a child is on the free or reduced lunch program at school, then that child is eligible to receive services through our "Just for Grins" dental bus program. This includes close to 64% of Walton County School kids.

When will "Just for Grins" be on the road? CVHN has just been notified that it received \$96,000 toward the first year's operation of "Just for Grins." This amount will cover about 1/2 the cost of the first year's operation of the bus and dental program. When we raise the remaining funds, we will put our bus and dental program of 'preventive treatment and education on the road.

How can you help? If you want to make a contribution toward the first year's operational cost of "Just for Grins" you will be assisting CVHN in providing needy children with the dental services they so badly need. We welcome your support. Please contact the CVHN office at 622-3200 and ask for Kate Johnson, the Dental Bus Committee Chair, or Mary Konovsky, CVHN Executive Director.

Volunteer Spotlight:

Susannah Rice is a woman for all “seasons” with many talents. She doesn’t walk into a room full of people, she captures it. With her easy manner and unassuming style, you are immediately drawn in by her smile and outgoing personality. She is the type of person you feel you have known your entire life. However, what many people may not know about Susannah is her heart is even bigger than her smile.

Last fall, Susannah was hostess to her fellow “queens,” a fun loving organization of professionals who meet monthly to network and enjoy each other’s company. At a previous meeting, Char Blanton was the guest speaker and told the group about the mission of CVHN. The queens voted to adopt CVHN as their charity and donated a very generous check. Perhaps more importantly, Susannah made a promise, “If there is anything and I mean anything I can do to help or volunteer my time, I would be thrilled to help.”

Susannah kept her promise. She came to a volunteer coffee and completed a volunteer form indicating her willingness to help CVHN. Board member, Susan Breeden commented at the time, “This lady is really special!” And she is.

A thirty-something business owner and licensed builder in several states, Susannah is quite accomplished. With a major CVHN fundraiser, Cottages For Kids, on the horizon, she was tapped to be the Builder Liaison. Without a second thought, she accepted the challenge of acquiring builders and architects to create kids’ playhouses. In a matter time, there were commitments from builders and architects to build 3 times the number of playhouses than were built the first year. With that astounding success, comes 3 times the space to display the cottages, 3 times the volunteers to work the weekend tours, 3 times the financial responsibility for printing, signage, etc. To Susannah, this meant more fun.

Following a recent meeting, Susan Breeden, Cottage for Kids chair, thanked Susannah for her efforts. Susannah quickly responded, “No, thank you! I love doing this! God has always blessed the work that I do as a builder. But recently, my projects are progressing so well here and in Louisiana, I have more time to devote to CVHN.” And so it seems.

Breeden’s final comment sums it all up. “While we as volunteers are dedicated and together work tirelessly for a common purpose to help our children, our paths cross with those who bless our lives beyond measure and give us the momentum and energy to continue our calling.” Susannah is indeed that special person who continues to bless CVHN beyond measure.

If you would like to volunteer for CVHN, contact Char Blanton at (850) 622-3200
or admin@childrensvolunteerhealthnetwork.org



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