

SERVICE IN ACTION

April 2023



Begun in 2011 by volunteer dentist Dr. Michael Spradlin and an advisory board of prominent local dentists, the dental clinic offers over \$1 million in basic dental services to nearly 1,200 patients each year. These services include same-day appointments for extractions on Tuesday evenings, and hygiene and restorative care during the remainder of the week.

Dr. Jennifer Cook joined CCEOK as the clinic director in 2012. Along with treating patients herself, she manages clinic operations and a small, but mighty team of dental assistants. With such a small staff, how do you suppose the clinic is able to deliver the quantity and quality of services they do? Volunteers, of course!

The clinic relies on the services of nearly 100 volunteers each year. These volunteers include dentists, many of whom volunteer on a regular basis, both at the extraction clinic and for restorative care during the week. Dental students from OU College of Dentistry in OKC and the Tulsa location, hygiene students from OU Hygiene in Bartlesville, and Tulsa Community College, and

other volunteers considering a career in the dental field play an essential part in advancing the mission of caring for everyone who seeks dental care.

Patients receive care through two main avenues. Those in pain or needing extractions seek consult and care by calling the clinic Tuesday morning for an appointment the same afternoon. Those patients having broader dental needs may apply to be seen for comprehensive care, including a treatment plan, dental hygiene care, restorative dentistry and complete and partial dentures. Once treatment is complete, a list of other dental resources is given to the patient and they are asked to find a permanent dental home.

In the future, Dr. Cook plans to continue to grow both the student and private practice volunteer base to help more of those in need of care.

If you or those you know may be interested in volunteering or learning more about the dental program, please contact Dr. Jennifer Cook at jcook@cceok.org.

A New Old Program Returns to CCEOK

A program that has returned to campus after a brief hiatus - Refugee Resettlement (RR) - is how Catholic Charities helps 'welcome the stranger' to Tulsa.

CCEOK has been resettling refugees in eastern Oklahoma since the 1970s, as a part of the U.S. State Department's Refugee Resettlement Program. Under this program, each year the President decides how many refugees - those who've been forced to flee their homes due to war or persecution - will be allowed to resettle here. From 2000-2017, the average number of refugees admitted to the U.S. each year was 75,000. During 2017 - 2020, refugee admissions dipped to all-time lows and, with so few refugees arriving in Oklahoma, the decision was made to consolidate, with Catholic Charities in OKC overseeing all refugee resettlement for the state and CCEOK shuttering its program temporarily in May of 2019. Since that time, refugee admissions have increased to previous levels, allowing CCEOK to re-open its refugee resettlement program in October of 2022.

Some of the faces in the new RR program may be familiar from their work as either volunteers or employees from the Afghan Resettlement program (APA), or in CCEOK's former program.

Like all CCEOK programs, volunteers make it possible for the RR program to provide incredible hospitality and to welcome refugees to Tulsa.

Ally Fjeldsted, the new Community Outreach Coordinator, said volunteer roles like airport welcomes and housing set ups can make a big difference for the person or family arriving to Tulsa.

"That warm welcome at the airport is a refugee's first impression and experience in the place that is their new home," she said. "I've seen how that weight of uncertainty has been lifted when a refugee walks into a home that's been set up just for them. It's so nice that our volunteers get to play that part in a refugee's resettlement journey."

Volunteers for this program have different options based on how much they want to be involved.

"One thing that's nice about volunteering with our program is that there is a full range of participation levels. This program is really exciting and calls for a lot of community engagement, so there's a lot of great volunteers I have the opportunity to work with," Ally added.

Taking care of refugees and migrants has been a key theme of Pope Francis' pontificate. He has consistently emphasized the need to welcome, protect, promote and integrate them into society.

To get involved in the Refugee Resettlement program, contact Ally at afjeldsted@cceok.org!



This is Ally!



HANDS OF CHRIST

By Deacon Dave Johnson

Being the hands and feet of Christ means we are to be like Christ in the sense that all that we do must be done with a heart poured out for others. It means doing the things Jesus did. Hands are the instruments of our work.

Jesus used his hands to work as a skilled carpenter. We, too, have skills we can use to help others, such as helping a friend fix their car, using your gifts to update the church website, or cleaning up a neighbor's yard after a storm.

Jesus also blessed people with his hands, like the children who were brought to him. In the past, I've brought meals to families where a sick patient lives. I've unloaded and re-loaded cars with food during the pandemic through the Farmers to Families program. Now I am teaching a GED class through Catholic Charities. These are all practical ways we can use our hands to bless others.

And Jesus also used his hands to heal. We can all hold the hand of a sick friend when praying for their healing, console a teen who's disappointed after not making the team, or hug a grieving friend.

St Teresa of Avila has a beautiful poem that begins with:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world.

I love doing Christ's work where I can place all my trust into him and step out of my comfort zone and try doing things I never imagined doing. So don't let fear or uneasiness dominate your actions. Just say YES!



A big CCEOK

to all of our newest volunteers!

Madacyn Byrd – Dental
Rachelynn Coffman – Dental
Susanna Coker – Dental
Daysha Davis – Dental
Rebecca Decet – Dental
Elise Fay – Dental
Savannah Lee – Dental
Madison McGraw – Dental
Jordan Morrison – Dental
Chloe Price – Dental
Daisy Rameriz – Dental
Athziri Jailene Sandoval – Dental
Regan Sewell – Dental
Sonya Wolfe – Dental
Darlene Irons – Kitchen
Brenda Gregory – Market
Jeff Hanisch – Market
Vergil Rhodes – MMO
Casey Devlin – MOC
Joshua Gibson – MOC
David Heckman – MOC
Cheryl Tackett – MOC
Dcn. Rick Stookey – Porta Caeli House
Lisa Swords – Porta Caeli House
Logan Banfield – Refugee Resettlement
Sr. Brigid Mary Meeks – Transitional Living



We love it when students volunteer!



SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party will be Friday, June 23rd!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Apr. 6, 7, 10 - The Market is closed for Easter
- Apr. 11 - The Market - altered hours 12-7pm
- Apr. 26 - All Staff Retreat - All CCEOK locations closed
- May - Mental Health Awareness Month
- May 23 - Adult Education Graduation
- May 26-28 - Rachels Vineyard Retreat in Spanish



Help us grow our garden volunteer team! Scan this QR code with your phone to sign up for one of the two info sessions: Tuesday, April 25 at 6:30 PM or Saturday, April 29 at 10 AM.



GET INVOLVED



Volunteer with us! cceok.org/volunteer
Join our Facebook Group!
For story ideas, feedback, etc.,
email: volcommunications@cceok.org