

Features



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*Article Submitted by a
Radical Fan of the
ShowMe Times*

Dexter, Missouri - A parking lot filled to capacity will often times create a question of “I wonder what is going on there?” That would have certainly been the case if you passed by the Lighthouse Christian Center this morning as area residents arrived to be involved or be treated at the Lighthouse Dental Clinic mission.

The vision of a dental clinic came to the Lighthouse through many different paths, but the willingness of local professionals, ministers and lay people has taken a spark of hope and delivered in a grand fashion a ministry of smiles.

“One day a few years ago, I met a young lady that I had seen a complete change God had performed in her heart, explained Pastor Tim Russell. “She would always hold her hand over her mouth as she spoke and at that moment I knew that God had a plan for me to help that young lady.”

As often found, Brother Tim Russell is one that always has a willingness to put his faith into action. As the idea unfolded, Kevin DeArman quickly came onto the scene to assist to take the dream to a vision. The vision has now become a full fledged ministry.

Beginning the process in a small dental trailer that the team was blessed with from over in Kentucky, the ministry has now become a 10-chair clinic in the upstairs of Lighthouse Christian Center. Darrin Thurston worked tirelessly with Pastor Tim as

the previous “catch-all” storage area was transformed into a moderately modern dental clinic.

A vision of this magnitude is a

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tremendous undertaking and becomes an all-consuming fever at points. However, the vision of a clinic of this nature would never be fully realized without a the gracious gift of a strong team of dental professionals.

Step by step, the vision of the dental clinic continued to expand as Dr. Bill Kane and his wife, Brenda, and Dr. Gary Riddle began to share their passion and love for others through their gifts and training. And much like in the Scriptures as one begets another, the dental team began to grow with more dentists, more hygienists, more volunteers and more equipment.

“God has truly been a blessing to this ministry, and we give all the glory to Him for what we’ve been able to accomplish,” commented Kevin DeArman.

You will quickly discover that if you are not being treated or working on the day of the dental clinic, you could be in the way. The facilities are tight quarters as the crowd of over 200 individuals packed the Lighthouse facilities in need of dental work.

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The doors open early at Lighthouse Church on

Dental Clinic Day, and the volunteers are ready to prepare breakfast and lunch for everyone. The 5:00 AM arrival time is not uncommon as this dedicated team of cooks and helpers begins the process of cracking eggs, making gravy and biscuits and frying up the meat for the meal.

Happy smiles greet the patients as they arrive for the clinic. Attendees go through a brief check-in process including an evaluation of needs and request for any prayer concerns.

They sometimes say that “waiting is the hardest part”, but the wait is overshadowed by the sweet spirit of volunteers from throughout the community and Lighthouse Christian Center. A group from the Gideon’s organization was on hand passing out New Testament Bibles, while others were simply available to fellowship and offer any assistance needed.

Upstairs in the dental clinic, the care is churning and going strong as individuals are moved through the pre-services and then escorted to the clinic room upstairs. A short wait later, the patients sits before a dental professional filled with joy, compassion and hope to deliver a smile back to the faces of those that attend.

The vision has only begun at the Lighthouse



Dental Clinic. Many previous visitors comment that they have seen the facilities in the past but were not aware of the expansion to these new levels. Things are changing rapidly with more plans in the wings.

“Currently, the primary focus is on extraction but we are working to literally put the smiles back on the faces of these people,” commented Darrin Thurston. “There are methods of creating dentures quickly while individuals wait that we would like to make happen really soon.”



To do that, the facilities will require an

additional expansion at Lighthouse and Brother Tim has a plan.

“We have already begun the process of an additional facility on the east side of our current building,” noted Pastor Russell. “We are simply walking by faith knowing that if this ministry is to continue in that direction, God will provide a way for us to get there.”

There is a very special feeling that surrounds this sort of volunteerism and service to others. It’s extremely contagious! The experience alone of watching the passion of the dental professionals, the church members and community members that make this day possible speaks loud volumes to the scriptures that we are to “love one another”.

This is truly love put into action for the people of Southeast Missouri.

“The Image In The Mirror Is A ... SMILE” might seem like an odd title for this article. Consider the depth of that a smile reaches into the soul of a person.

Remember that God forgives all our sins, but many times, the tricky part is to forgive ourselves. The mirror can sometimes be a subtle reminder of our past that Lighthouse Dental Clinic is transforming into smiles and hope for a better tomorrow.

A special thanks for the hospitality and kindness shown by the volunteers and staff to the ShowMe Times during our visit. There are critical volunteers that have been omitted to this entire project that could and should be named in this article. Thank

you for all the time, love and effort your give to this great mission work.

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This article: <https://showmetimes.com> **The Image In the Mirror is a ... SMILE!!** was first published on

Written by Staff Writer

Date: August 17th 2013



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