

Rhonda Seltz - Free Clinic's Dental Fairy

Next time you're at your dentist's office, you just might see a tooth fairy.

Rhonda Seltz, the Free Clinic's new dental program volunteer coordinator, has a goal of approaching every dentist in the New River Valley to ask for their help in supporting the Free Clinic. But Seltz isn't alone in this effort, she has a special helper to get her past the front desk. A young girl, dressed in a tooth fairy costume, accompanies Seltz on all of her visits and has been the key to opening doors with the dentists. "Before, I could never get past the front desk," said Seltz.

Seltz's ambitious goals for the newly expanded dental program center around increasing awareness within the community about the need for dental services, letting people know about the Free Clinic's services, and moving toward proactive cleaning and education rather than reactive treatment.

She also is working with both dental hygiene schools in the area and hopes to be able to provide at least one full day of cleanings at the Free Clinic each month. "By maximizing the use of volunteers, it becomes a win-win situation," Seltz said. "It's a learning experience for the students and provides valuable services to the community."

Seltz has had success with local dentists donating services and supplies and plans to follow up with each of them. "I want to make sure they know on an ongoing basis that they're appreciated," Seltz said.

Seltz, who was born and raised in the New River Valley, has worked in Los Angeles county and Washington state with the Department of Health and Human Services. "It's nice to come back to the community and make a difference," Seltz said. "As long as I'm making a significant difference in healthcare access and making people's lives better, I'm happy."