



APPLE TREE DENTAL

Access • Compassion • Excellence

Date: November 11, 2019

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NEWS RELEASE

Apple Tree Dental to open new dental center

Fergus Falls facility will increase care for underserved patients

Apple Tree Dental is pleased to announce construction of a new *Fergus Falls Center for Dental Health* on Western Avenue that will improve access to dental care for low-income families and people with special needs in West Central Minnesota – those not easily served by other dentists.

Construction on the \$4.1 million facility has already begun, with targeted completion during the Summer of 2020. The center is made possible by more than \$1.8 million in combined grant funding from the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation, the Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust, and the Otto Bremer Trust. The city of Fergus Falls and Bremer Bank are providing long-term financing.

Apple Tree’s CEO and co-founder, Dr. Michael J. Helgeson, said strong community support has paved the way for the project. “Collaborative efforts have been the key to creating partnerships and attracting the funding needed to make the new Center for Dental Health possible. With extraordinary contributions from our funding partners, and help from so many community leaders, we’re poised to help thousands of area residents get critically needed health care.”

Apple Tree’s current Fergus Falls clinic lacks the capacity to meet the needs in the region. Last year, it provided more than 9,000 dental visits and screenings to more than 3,400 patients. Even so, more than 1,000 people remain on its waiting list. The new 11,000-square-foot facility will feature state-of-the-art equipment and facilities designed to accommodate people with special needs. It will also host training opportunities for dentists, dental therapists, hygienists, and assistants.

The new Center for Dental Health is the culmination of three years of planning between Apple Tree, key community partners, and local officials and stakeholders. “I am so pleased for this project. The need to expand access to dental care for lower-income people is huge,” said Diane Thorson, former Otter Tail County public health director and Apple Tree Dental board member. “Partnering with dental education programs will help rural communities recruit providers.”

GROUNDBREAKING EVENT on Friday, November 15th

Apple Tree Dental’s CEO, Dr. Michael Helgeson, welcomes everyone to a Groundbreaking Event on **Friday, November 15th at 12:30pm at the AmericInn by Wyndham at 526 Western Avenue in Fergus Falls.** Media and the public are encouraged to attend.

Lead support for the project came from the Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust, a local foundation created and named in honor of prominent Fergus Falls dentist, Dr. Frank Veden, who lived and practiced in Fergus Falls all his life. The Trust has supported expanded access to dental care in Otter Tail County for many years. “By forming strategic, long-term partnerships, Apple Tree will be able to

optimize financial resources and clinical expertise,” said trustee Gary Johnson. “This new center will serve thousands of underserved children, adults, and seniors for decades to come.”

Delta Dental Foundation of Minnesota provided a generous grant of \$650,000. The foundation strategically invests in programs that build an oral health workforce and provide educational resources and programs to help children and parents prevent common dental issues. They regularly provide funding to support and establish clinics that serve Minnesotans who may not otherwise be able to access care. “Delta Dental is pleased to see the center come to life,” said Joseph P. Lally, executive director of the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation. “The need is there, and the center is a big step toward meeting the needs in the Fergus Falls area. The foundation’s support aligns with our mission to bring oral health care to all Minnesotans statewide.”

The Otto Bremer Trust, a long-time supporter of Apple Tree, also provided a generous grant of \$500,000. The Otto Bremer Trust awards grants to organizations throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, and western Wisconsin for major projects. “We’re excited to support this unique partnership between Apple Tree and several key community partners,” said Daniel C. Reardon, co-CEO and Otto Bremer Trust trustee. “This is a great example of organizations working together to create a long-term asset for the benefit of the community.”

Local dentists, the City of Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County, and other organizations such as the West Central Initiative Fund, Patterson Dental, Primus Dental, and A-dec have also shown strong support.

About Apple Tree Dental

Founded in 1985, Apple Tree Dental’s mission is to improve the oral health of all people, including those with special access needs who face barriers to care. Apple Tree provides comprehensive preventive care and dental treatment services at seven Centers throughout Minnesota and operates on-site care programs at 145 community partner locations for vulnerable communities. In 2018, Apple Tree provided more than 96,000 dental visits and screenings in Minnesota to low-income children and families in rural and urban areas, children and adults with disabilities, minorities and new immigrants, mental health patients, elders living in nursing and long-term care facilities, and more. For more information, visit appletreedental.org.

About Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation

Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation is founded on the belief that everyone deserves a healthy smile. In 2009, Delta Dental of Minnesota’s parent organization sold a company and used 100% of the proceeds to establish and fund the Foundation. The foundation’s mission is to improve the wellbeing of Minnesotans through oral health. To date, the foundation has invested more than \$35 million to expand prevention and care, reaching more than 1 million people to promote healthy smiles statewide.

About Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust

The Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust was created and named in honor of prominent Fergus Falls’ dentist, Dr. Frank Veden. Upon his death, Dr. Veden left funds to establish a private charitable trust. Dr. Veden’s funds have supported important civic and community needs within Fergus Falls and the West Central Minnesota region for many years.

About the Otto Bremer Trust

The Otto Bremer Trust is a bank holding company and a private charitable trust based in Saint Paul, Minn., that works at the intersection of finance and philanthropy. OBT is the 92 percent owner of Bremer Bank, a regional financial services company, and also manages a diversified investment portfolio. Since its founding, OBT has invested more than \$700 million in people, places, and opportunities in the Upper Midwest. Visit ottobremer.org.