Mobile Dental Unit

VFTH

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WKU’s Institute for Rural Health receives a grant will ensure dental care for approximately 16-hundred children over the next two years.

Amy Bingham explains how this community outreach works in this week’s View from the Hill.

The project is called “Saving the Teeth of a New Generation of Kentuckians.” It’s where dental hygienist take their show on the road (so to speak) for a service learning opportunity.

Elizabeth Belwood \ WKU Senior

Bonnie Petty \ Supervising Dental Hygienist, IRH

Daniel Carter \ Dental Director, IRH

Dr. Neale Chumbler \ Dean, College of Health and Human Services

 “Open big for me again.”

 “Our highlight of our semester is getting to come on the mobile dental unit.”

Elizabeth Belwood will soon graduate from WKU’s Dental Hygiene program.

 “From the first time I went on the mobile dental unit to now I feel like I’ve grown so much as a dental hygienist.”

WKU’s dental hygiene students get out of the clinic a couple of times each semester and hop on board the Institute for Rural Health’s dental mobile unit.

 “That gives them a great opportunity to learn about public health not only as dentistry but managing children as patients cause that’s whole different set of skills.”

Visiting schools across the BRADD region, IRH works with Family Resource Coordinators to identify students to see.

 “A big buzz word in academia is service learning. We’ve been doing service learning since before it was cool.”

Around for fourteen years, a recent grant from the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund will ensure the mobile unit reaches underserved areas for another two years.

 “It’s special because it’s gonna give students a chance to see a dentist that might not have had one.”

It’s a responsibility students like Elizabeth, who are about to enter the real world of dental hygiene, don’t take lightly.

 “A lot of children aren’t getting help they need. Because of mobile dental unit they are starting to get it.”

Dean Chumbler calls the 120,000 dollar grant a momentous gift not only for the Institute for Rural Health, but also for the College of Health and Human Services.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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