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## **APPLE TREE DENTAL CELEBRATES THE GRAND OPENING OF THE LITTLE FALLS CENTER FOR DENTAL HEALTH**

(Little Falls, MN; March 9, 2023) – Apple Tree Dental is pleased to announce the Grand Opening Event for the new Little Falls Center for Dental Health, located within CHI St. Gabriel’s Hospital in Little Falls, Minnesota. The Grand Opening will take place on Tuesday, March 21, starting at noon, and will feature speakers, a ribbon cutting, and tours of the clinic. The community is invited to attend the event at 808 3rd Street SE, Little Falls, MN 56345 in the Franciscan and Lindberg conference rooms.

Apple Tree Dental, which was co-founded in 1985 by Michael Helgeson, DDS, and three colleagues, first opened the Little Falls Center for Dental Health as an outreach clinic using customized dental equipment on wheels. Apple Tree’s mobile dental offices were designed to be brought to outreach locations, including nursing homes, assisted living centers, and Head Start centers, to be used for on-site care by the organization’s specialized clinicians. The Little Falls Center was launched in 2016, and over the next few years, plans to build a permanent new clinic were underway. The COVID-19 pandemic put fundraising efforts and construction plans on hold, but with generous funding from the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation, the Otto Bremer Trust, and South Country Health Alliance, a beautiful new permanent clinic has been built. Additional support has been provided by A-dec, Central Lakes College, CHI St. Gabriel’s Hospital, the Minnesota Dental Foundation, the Minnesota Department of Health, Morrison County, Morrison County Public Health, the National Children’s Oral Health Foundation, Patterson Dental, Primus Dental, and Sourcewell.

“We really wouldn’t have been able to build the new Little Falls Center without some amazing support,” said Mary Larkin, Apple Tree’s Development and Marketing Director. “This project was delayed because of the pandemic, so it’s especially fulfilling to see it come to life now.”

“We joined in collaboration with the community to help advance oral and overall health outcomes in Morrison County and the surrounding areas,” said Stephanie Albert, President of Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation.

The Otto Bremer Trust also provided major funding for the new Center. “OBT is elated to support the renovation of Apple Tree Dental’s Little Falls Center,” said Daniel Reardon, co-CEO and trustee of the Otto Bremer Trust. “The center’s location within CHI St. Gabriel’s Hospital achieves efficiency and effectiveness by allowing people to schedule more than one appointment on the same day, saving time for those traveling from remote rural areas.”

Leota Lind, CEO of South Country Health Alliance, was in agreement. “Morrison County was in need of more dental access. We are pleased that the Community Reinvestment Grant awarded to Apple Tree provided the foundation to expand services to Morrison County and resulted in building and equipping a new dental clinic within the hospital. It is a win-win for medical and dental services in the area.”



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Dr. Michael Helgeson, Apple Tree's CEO, thanked the incredible staff at the Little Falls Center, who worked so hard during the pandemic, and all the donors who made the new Center possible. "With our team and broad community support, the Little Falls Center officially became our eighth beautiful new Center for Dental Health in Minnesota. When leaders in Morrison County said, 'Mike, we need an Apple Tree in Little Falls' we were deeply honored to join forces to make it happen."

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**About Apple Tree Dental**

*Founded in 1985, Apple Tree Dental's mission is to overcome barriers to oral health. Apple Tree provides comprehensive preventive care and dental treatment services at eight Centers for Dental Health throughout Minnesota to individuals and families, and also operates on-site care programs at 150 community partner locations for vulnerable communities using the industry's latest technologies. With special expertise in pediatric, geriatric, and special needs populations, Apple Tree is nationally recognized for its pioneering approach to integrating dental care as part of overall health and wellbeing. For more information, visit [appletreedental.org](http://appletreedental.org)*

**About Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation**

*Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation supports optimal oral and overall health outcomes while advancing social equities by expanding access to dental care and investing in the communities across Minnesota.*

**About the Otto Bremer Trust**

*The Otto Bremer Trust, based in St. Paul, Minn., is a private charitable trust established in 1944 by founder Otto Bremer, a successful banker and community business leader. OBT owns 92 percent of Bremer Bank and also manages a diversified investment portfolio. The mission of OBT is to invest in people, places and opportunities in the Upper Midwest. Since its inception, OBT has invested more than \$600 million in organizations throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, and western Wisconsin. Visit [ottobremer.org](http://ottobremer.org).*

**About South Country Health Alliance**

*South Country Health Alliance is a county-based purchasing health plan owned by 8 Minnesota counties - Brown, Dodge, Goodhue, Kanabec, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, and Waseca - in a joint effort to support accessible, quality health care through partnerships with community services and local health care providers for Minnesota Health Care Program enrollees.*

*Apple Tree Dental was one of 17 health care organizations selected in 2014 for a Community Reinvestment Grant. The \$277,800 seed grant was intended to establish a new outreach clinic in Little Falls to help serve Morrison County and the surrounding area and address an extreme shortage of dental providers serving Medical Assistance recipients. Morrison County was a participating county owner of South Country Health Alliance from 2007 through 2019.*