



Annual Report 2024



APPLE TREE DENTAL

Access • Compassion • Excellence

www.appletreedental.org

CEO's Message

During 2024, Apple Tree Dental celebrated another year of growth, innovation, and deepened community impact. Guided by our mission to overcome barriers to oral health, we continued to develop and test new ways to better serve our patients and their communities.

One example was our work as a CareQuest Innovation Partner, which linked Apple Tree with a startup company called GRIN, creator of a completely new way to take dental photographs using smartphones and artificial intelligence. In 2024, we first helped pilot the GRIN system, and it was so successful that we scaled up its use statewide.

Apple Tree earned the 2024 M. Dean Perkins Distinguished Service Award from the Association for State & Territorial Dental Directors. This national award acknowledges our many local, state, and national contributions to dental public health. In addition, we earned a Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator, affirming our transparency and effective use of resources.

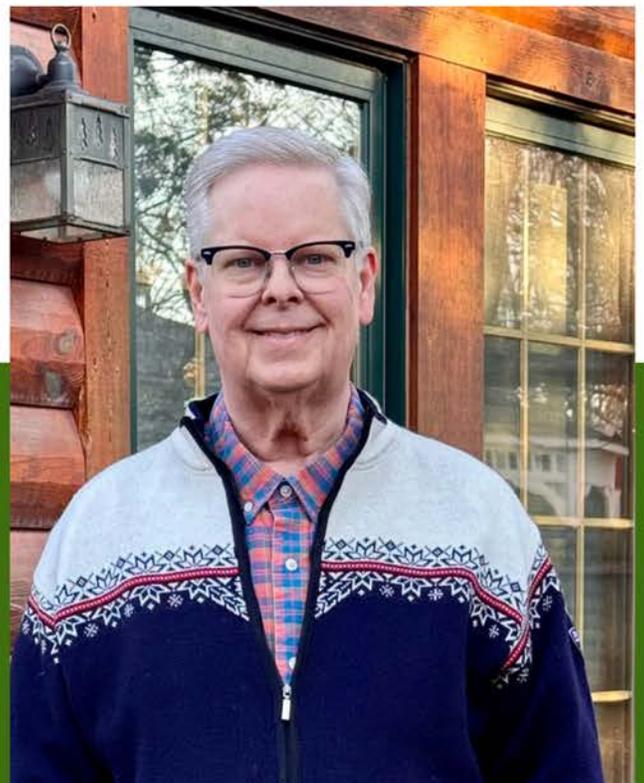
In 2024, we served 38,973 patients across Minnesota, providing comprehensive care through our Centers for Dental Health and Mobile Dentistry Programs. A total of 108,319 dental visits were provided, with services valued at \$46.5 million. With broad community support, our teams are improving health, overcoming challenges, and renewing hope far and wide.

I want to thank everyone for their unwavering support, which makes it possible to foster partnerships that create healthy communities.

Many thousand thanks!



Michael J. Helgeson, DDS
Chief Executive Officer





ABOUT APPLE TREE



MISSION

Our mission is to overcome barriers to oral health.

VISION

Our vision is to foster partnerships that create healthy communities.

BELONGING AT APPLE TREE DENTAL

Apple Tree is committed to welcoming everyone! We have patients and staff from every background and we are devoted to serving everyone.

OUR HISTORY

Apple Tree was founded in 1985 to address the barriers to care experienced by older adults living in nursing homes and assisted living centers. By 2024, Apple Tree expanded to ten brick-and-mortar Centers for Dental Health and delivered mobile care at about 200 community partner sites.

Oral health challenges

In Minnesota, almost **1 in 2** older adults (65 and older) have **partial tooth loss**, and almost **1 in 10** older adults have **complete tooth loss**.

Ten percent of Minnesota children age 17 and younger have **one or more oral health problems**.

The commercially insured population in Minnesota receives more frequent dental visits, despite **suffering from about half the disease burden** compared to publicly insured patients.

(Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Data Access; Get to Yes Coalition)





Deborah Jacobi, RHD, MPH (Left), Lyubov Slashcheva, DDS, MS, FABSCD (Middle), Michael Helgeson, DDS (Right)

M. DEAN PERKINS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

In April, 2024, Apple Tree Dental received the Association for State & Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD) 2024 M. Dean Perkins Distinguished Service Award. The award honors organizations that provide outstanding contributions to dental public health. This honor was awarded to Apple Tree Dental at the National Oral Health Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, on April 15, 2024.

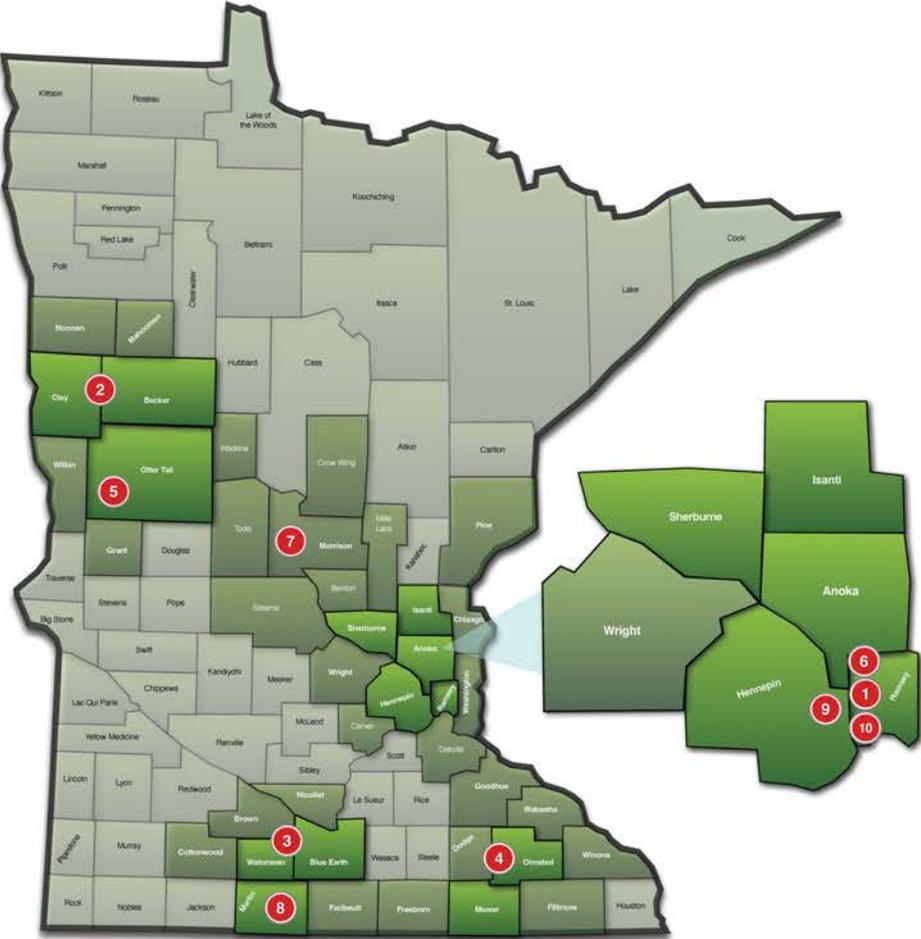
Julia Wacloff, RDH, MS, the immediate past-president of ASTDD, nominated Apple Tree for this award, and presented it to Apple Tree’s representatives at the National Oral Health Conference.

“Apple Tree’s story starts with the seeds of an inspiring mission, takes root when passionate supporters create shared vision, and bears fruit when local communities plant and sustain their own apple orchards far and wide.”

-Michael J Helgeson, DDS - Apple Tree Dental CEO and Co-Founder



Centers for Dental Health



- 1 NEW BRIGHTON (1986)
- 2 HAWLEY (1997)
- 3 MADELIA (2004)
- 4 ROCHESTER (2008)
- 5 FERGUS FALLS (2009)
- 6 MOUNDS VIEW (2014)
- 7 LITTLE FALLS (2018)
- 8 FAIRMONT (2020)
- 9 MINNEAPOLIS (2023)
- 10 ST. PAUL (2025)

Expanding Twim Cities Services

In 2023, Apple Tree Dental purchased the New Brighton Community Outreach Center, and in mid-2024, Apple Tree moved its corporate, lab, and mobile care coordination teams to the New Brighton Center. We said goodbye to the Coon Rapids Center, which was in an older building, and moved clinical operations to join the team at Mounds View. Now, all of our north Metro personnel have access to newer buildings with state-of-the-art equipment.



Highlights

2024 was a year of learning, teaching, growing, and celebrating. Thank you to our staff, donors, and supporters for making last year's accomplishments possible!



Board certified pediatric dentist Dr. Quentin Knutson poses in front of the US Capitol at the AAPD Pediatric Oral Health Advocacy Conference (1), CEO Dr. Michael Helgeson, Advanced Dental Therapist Heather Luebben, and other colleagues presenting at the Chicago Midwinter Meeting (2), Staff celebrating longtime HR employee Connie Knutson's retirement (3), Panelists at 2025 NOHC present the ASTDD Older Adult Oral Health Policy Statement and Apple Tree's embodiment of key strategies (4), Dr. Helgeson helps host an Open House at the Mounds View Center (5), the Coon Rapids team poses before joining with the Mounds View team (6), the proposed new Hawley Center remodel (7).



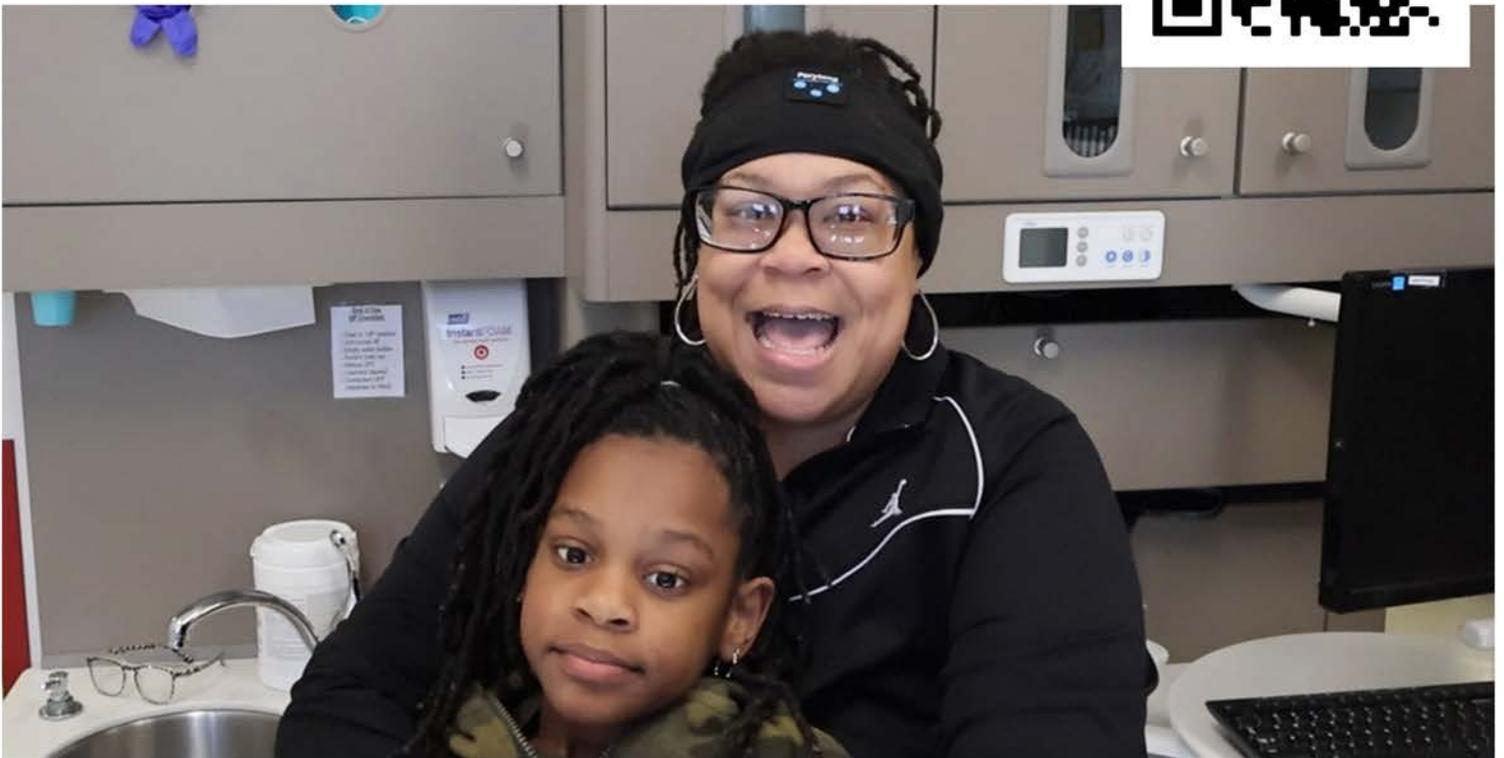
You Make a Difference!

Meet Kiesha and Aden

When Kiesha began searching for dental care for her daughter Aden, she quickly ran into barriers. Many clinics either didn't accept their insurance or weren't equipped to meet Aden's unique needs as a child with autism. Kiesha needed a provider who would offer not only quality care but also patience, understanding, and flexibility.

*Scan the QR code
to watch Kiesha and*

Aden's story:



That's when a friend told her about Apple Tree Dental. Kiesha decided to give it a try, and from the very first visit to our Mounds View Center, she knew they had found a solution to their problems. Our pediatric team took the time to understand Aden, making thoughtful accommodations and creating a calm, welcoming environment where Aden felt safe and supported.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff, Aden received the dental care she needed without added stress or fear. Today, Kiesha can't imagine taking her daughter anywhere else. In fact, she's become a strong advocate, encouraging her grandchildren to receive their care at Apple Tree as well.

Stories like Kiesha and Aden's remind us why accessible, compassionate dental care matters, and why we're committed to providing it every single day.

Access | Compassion | Excellence



“It’s not scary for him anymore... Quite a difference from screaming and crying and not wanting to go to a dental appointment.”

Meet Jewell and Noah

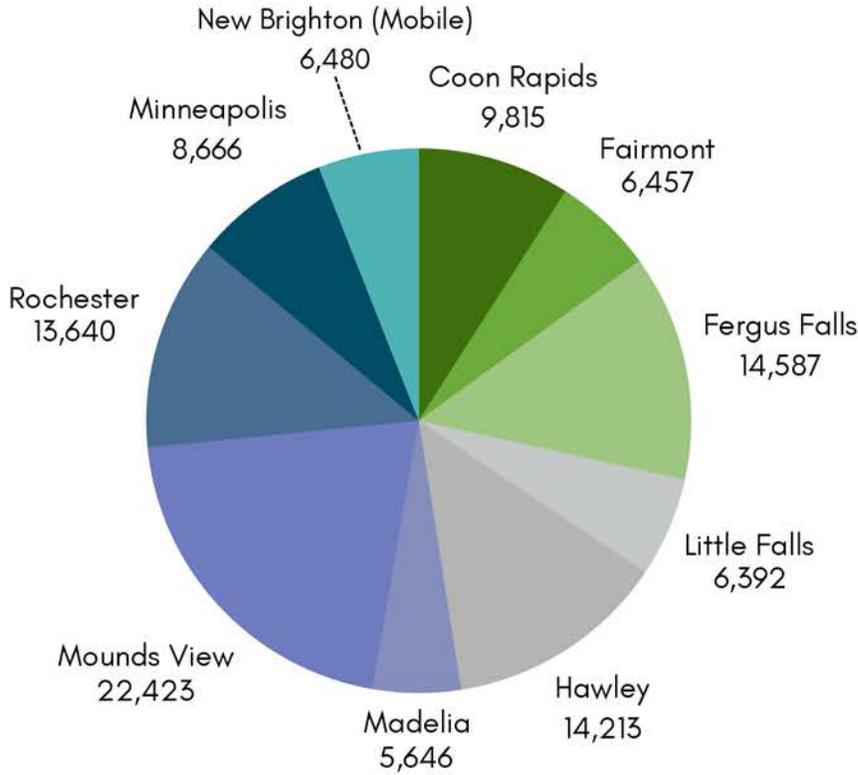
Jewell was searching for dental care for her son, Noah, but traditional clinics felt overwhelming for him. Sitting in a standard dental chair just wasn’t possible. Thankfully, our Mounds View Center offers sedation dentistry. With the support of Dr. Cook, Noah was able to comfortably receive the care he needed. Since then, he’s returned twice, cavity-free each time!

Scan the QR code to watch Jewell and Noah’s experience:



Impact during 2024

Total Visits and Screenings by Center



38,973

Individual Patients

108,319

Total Visits and Screenings

\$46M+

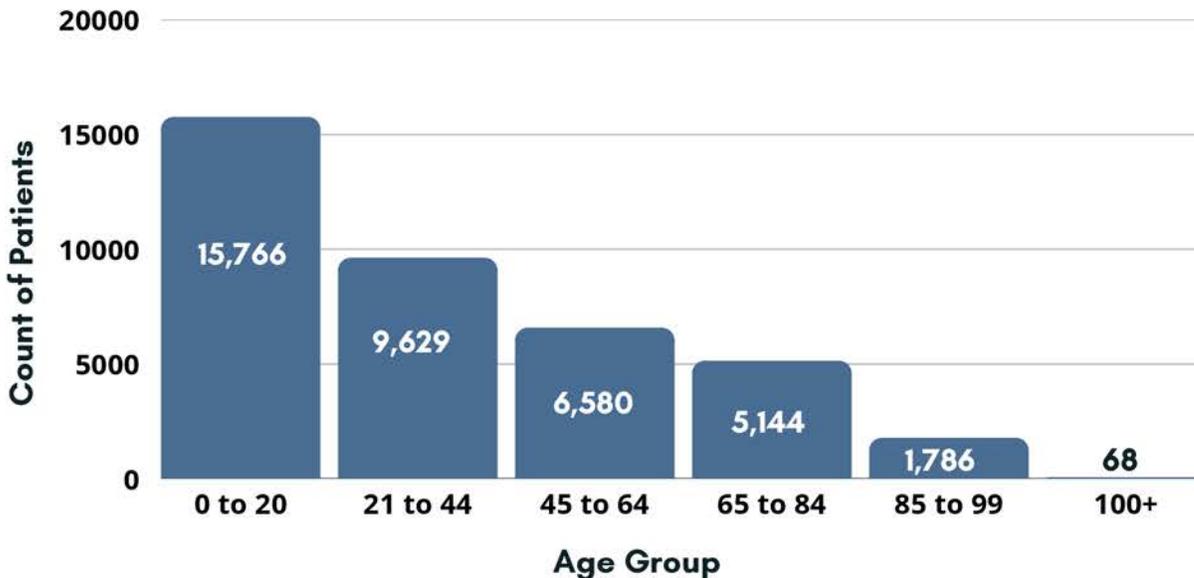
Value of Care Provided

\$20M+

Value of

Uncompensated Care Provided

● Number of Patients by Age Group



76%

Percentage of patients on Minnesota Health Care Programs

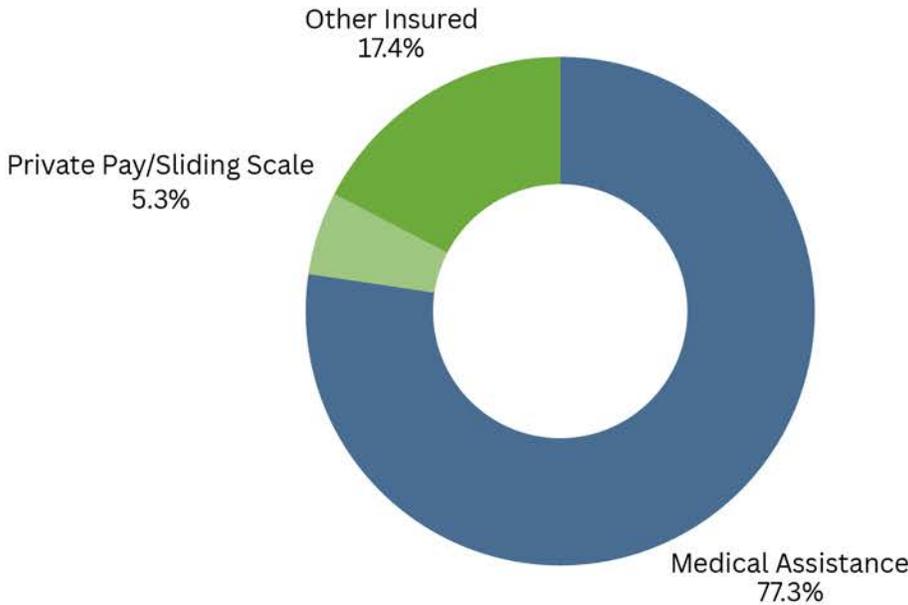
Financials by the numbers

Gross Revenue - Patient Services

Nearly 8 in 10
Apple Tree patients
rely on
Medical Assistance



Apple Tree's Revenue Sources



Medical Assistance

\$35,927,279

Private Pay / Sliding Scale

\$2,457,421

Other Insured

\$8,067,757

\$46,452,457





Dr. Kennelly's Legacy

In 2024, Apple Tree's longest-serving provider, Dr. Margie Kennelly, retired after 37 years. She made an incredible impact in the time that she was at Apple Tree Dental, almost entirely by serving older adults through Apple Tree's mobile dentistry program.

Over her tenure at Apple Tree Dental, Dr. Kennelly had impressive stats!

Dr. Kennelly's Career Stats

Patients Seen: 15,290
(26% of all CR mobile patients)

Visits Done: 92,136
(24% of all CR mobile visits)

Service Value: \$24,140,430
(29% of all CR mobile value)



Scan this to see a Dr. Kennelly tribute video!



Funder Spotlight

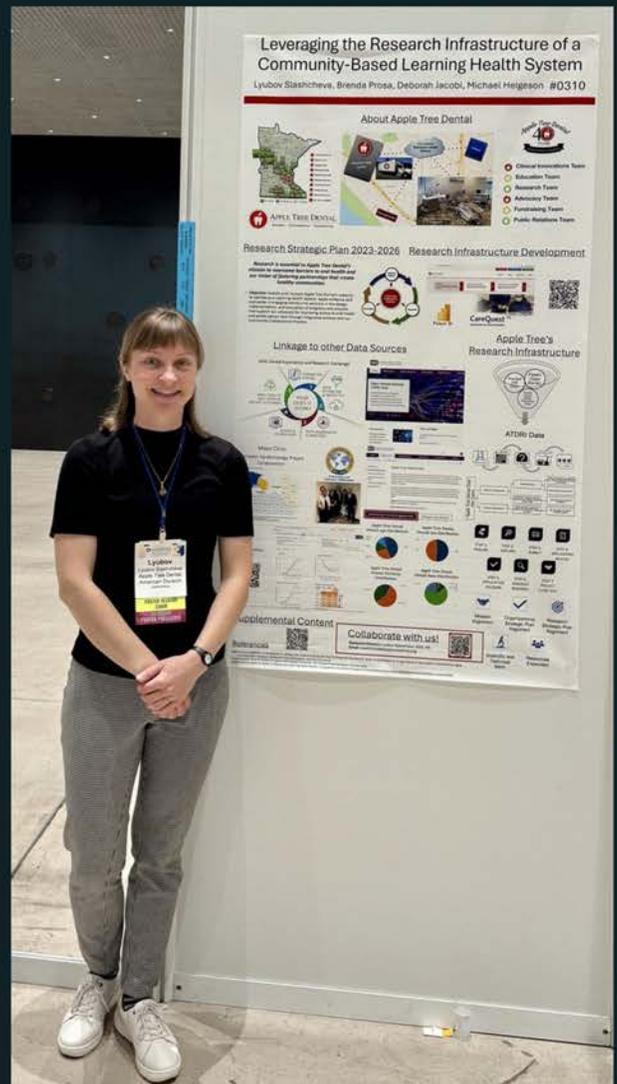


CareQuest Institute for Oral Health is a generous supporter of Apple Tree Dental's mission to overcome barriers to oral health - which aligns perfectly with their work to champion a more equitable future where every person can reach their full potential through excellent health.

Since 2021, CareQuest Institute has awarded Apple Tree nearly \$445,000 in grant funding to support initiatives, including the creation of research infrastructure for Apple Tree's historic data. Today, this new infrastructure is used by collaborators to advance their strategic goals, using evidence-based data to inform policymakers and clinicians to positively impact oral healthcare across the nation.

Our joint efforts are making meaningful inroads to create equitable healthcare for all people.

www.carequest.org



APPLE TREE DENTAL RESEARCH DIRECTOR DR. LYUBOV SLASHCHEVA SHOWS APPLE TREE'S RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE IN A POSTER SESSION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL RESEARCH

Supporters and Donors 2024

- Becker County
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
- Blue Plus - HMO Minnesota
- CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
- Children's Surgery International
- Dorothy M & E Milton Kleven Family Foundation
- Elevate Oral Care
- Essentia Health Foundation
- Frank W. Veden Charitable Trust
- Gary & Mary West Charitable Trust (West Health Institute)
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Henseler & Kocian
- Hue-Man Partnerships
- Mayo Clinic Health System in Fairmont
- Meyer Family Fund
- Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education
- Minnesota Oral Health Coalition
- National Children's Oral Health Foundation (America's Toothfairy)
- Opportunity Services Florida
- Otto Bremer Trust - The
- Park Dental Partners Foundation
- Rochester Area Foundation
- Schmeeckle Foundation
- Solventum Corporation (formerly 3M)
- SourceWell
- Sunset Dental Technologies
- Trillium Family Foundation
- UCare Foundation
- West Central Initiative (WCI)

To discover the many other supporters that have played a pivotal role in Apple Tree Dental's growth and impact over the years, visit <https://appletreedental.org/supporters/>.

Apple Tree Dental is also grateful to all of our individual and anonymous donors who support our statewide programs.

Apple Tree aims to cover ongoing operating costs with earned income. Grants and gifts are essential for innovations and growth.

Total gifts in 2024

\$1,754,380

How can you help?

Donate today to help patients get the care they need.

Please consider setting up a monthly recurring donation!



Support accessible, compassionate, excellent care.

Your dollars go toward helping kids, families, older adults, and patients with special needs get care. Our goal is also to help each of our team members grow within their career, which expands access to care for our patients.

Learn more about Minnesota's Dental Crisis by watching the documentary "Uncovered" at tpt.org/uncovered.

Our Team

2024 Board of Directors

Barbara Smith, MPH, PhD – Board Chair

Leigh DeBiase, JD – Vice Chair

James Lanigan, CPA – Treasurer

Naimul Karim, PhD

Gayle Kelly

Daniel Sampson, DDS, MD

Karl Self, DDS, MBA

Diane Thorson

R. Stephen Tillitt, JD

Susan Voigt

James Wyvell

Executive Team



Michael Helgeson, DDS
CEO, Co-Founder



Karen Engstrom, LDH
COO



Nancy Schumacher
CFO



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