

THE BRANCH



Access | Compassion | Excellence

Apple Tree Staff are Healthcare Heroes



“A patient came in who had been referred to an oral surgeon to extract tooth #18. He also needed tooth #29 extracted. Today he called in severe pain because his oral surgery appointment ended up being cancelled due to the pandemic. He was so thankful we could get the extraction done today.”



“We had a patient come in who had already been on a round of antibiotics and was still experiencing a pain level of 9. We were able to remove the infected tooth for her. The patient called back later in the day to express her gratitude because she hadn’t been this pain-free in weeks.”



“I took a call late in the afternoon on our training day in Fairmont. The patient was experiencing a severe toothache and swelling in his face. He was very grateful that we were able to work him in to our Outreach Day the following morning to triage his pain and Rx antibiotic.”



“A patient reported two days of visible extra- and intra-oral swelling, and she was feeling a kind of pressure in her throat. We were able to get her infected tooth out and prescribe antibiotics. This infection could have continued to grow without treatment, and her airway could have closed. Hopefully we kept her out of the ER.”





Heidi Donnelly, LDA



Ashley Johnson, DMD

Support Apple Tree with AmazonSmile

It's now available on the mobile app!

How to get AmazonSmile on your phone:

1. Make sure you have set up AmazonSmile on your account using a desktop computer. You can choose any nonprofit, and Apple Tree is an option!
2. Download the most recent version of the Amazon shopping app on your phone.
3. Open the app and find "Settings" in the main menu. Tap on "AmazonSmile" and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile in the app!
4. 0.5% of any of your eligible purchases will be donated to the nonprofit of your choice.

Two Apple Tree Staff Appointed to the MN Board of Dentistry

The People Pillar

Heidi Donnelly, LDA and Ashley Johnson, DMD

Two Appointments in Two Years

Back in 2018, Apple Tree was pleased to report in the BRANCH that Heidi Donnelly, LDA at our Little Falls Center, had been appointed to the Minnesota Board of Dentistry. Now, Apple Tree is proud to announce that a second staff member has been appointed to the Board of Dentistry — Dr. Ashley Johnson, who is primarily located at the Coon Rapids Center delivering mobile dentistry. Both of these clinicians play instrumental roles in providing services to patients, and as leaders in their profession, they have helped educate and guide Apple Tree staff and others in advancing the field of dentistry. They also provide powerful examples of how the dental profession, once occupied mostly by men, is becoming more diverse in today's world.

The Minnesota Board of Dentistry is made up of eight positions. According to its website, the Board "strives to promote and protect public health while ensuring adequate standards of safety, competency, and ethical practice by dental professionals."

Heidi Donnelly, LDA

Heidi was appointed to her position on the Board by former Minnesota governor Mark Dayton in 2018. The selection came after Heidi had worked with the Board for two years as a sedation inspector, and had helped develop sedation policies. In her two years on the Board, Heidi feels that she has brought a unique nonprofit point of view. Likewise, being on the Board has provided amazing opportunities to see how dental policies are made. She also says that, "getting to meet a lot of new people in the dental community has been wonderful."

Ashley Johnson, DMD

Dr. Ashley Johnson (affectionately called "Dr. Ashley") was appointed to serve on the Minnesota Board of Dentistry by Governor Tim Walz. She brings many years of public health experience, and has served patients in both urban and rural locations, both nationally and in Minnesota. She was instrumental in the launch of Apple Tree's Little Falls Center. Dr. Ashley is also an active member of the Special Care Dentistry Association.

We're very excited to see what these two amazing clinicians will be able to accomplish while serving on the Board of Dentistry!



New Outreach in Fairmont

Opening a new Center in a Pandemic

Despite all the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Apple Tree is moving forward with amazing work. In fact, not only are we still on-track to complete our new Fergus Falls Center, but we also launched the Fairmont Center!

Special kudos go out to Amanda Siem, Center Director for Madelia (and now Fairmont), and Cindy Neraasen, LDA at our Coon Rapids Center, for their hard work getting the outreach clinic launched and making sure that staff were trained on the mobile equipment. And, of course, a huge thanks to the entire Madelia team for all of their flexibility!

We are excited to continue hiring staff in Fairmont and to open the remodeled Fairmont Center for Dental Health full-time.

And a bonus — we just got our Google listing verified, so you can even find our new location on the Internet.



A Breath of Fresh Air

Safety Equipment for the Coronavirus Pandemic

Bipolar Ionization Systems

On April 8th, 2020, *Business Insider* published an article that heralded bipolar ionization as a “secret weapon in the war against COVID-19.” It had already proved to be effective against SARS, norovirus, and many strains of influenza, so why not novel Coronavirus?

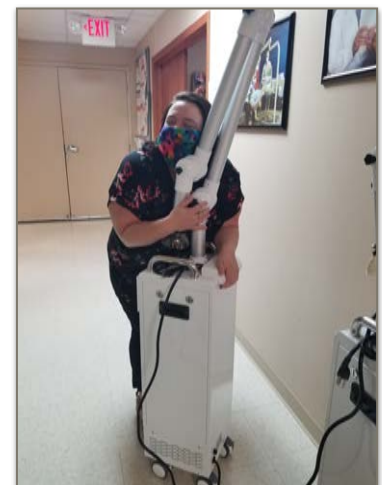
The idea behind bipolar ionization is that charged oxygen molecules will cluster around microparticles, surrounding and deactivating substances like airborne mold, bacteria, allergens, and yes, viruses. When installed into an HVAC system, the bipolar ionization units will create an active cleansing process that provides continuous disinfection.

Apple Tree’s COVID-19 Command Team, — especially Dr. Teresa Johnson, who has put in an incredible amount of work keeping our staff safe — wanted to invest in bipolar ionization for all of the Centers as an extra precaution. As a result, Apple Tree was able to start installing the systems in mid-July. While the bipolar ionization process doesn’t mean that staff and patients can stop wearing masks, it does mean that we can all feel a little better about the air quality!

ADS-EDSS

ADS-EDSS, or ADS Extraoral Suction Systems, are another way that Apple Tree is prioritizing safety and infection control at our Centers. In April, Apple Tree submitted applications for grant funding in order to purchase 70 ADS-EDSS units. Thankfully, Apple Tree received the full funding and was able to order all of the units from Patterson Dental.

The units are designed to remove aerosols and droplets from the air directly outside a patient’s mouth during dental procedures. This, on top of the thorough protocols Apple Tree has developed on PPE and patient screening, will help keep our staff and patients protected from the spread of the coronavirus and other airborne pathogens.



COVID-19 Infection Control Training and Updates

Coronavirus Protocols

Since March 2, 2020, Apple Tree has been implementing new protocols and requirements for staff to operate more safely during the pandemic. As federal and state guidelines evolve, Apple Tree's Dental Director, Dr. Teresa Johnson, has continued to monitor these guidelines in order to update Apple Tree's protocols and training. Special thanks also to Karen Engstrom, Dr. Ashley Johnson, and Heather Luebben for helping to provide this crucial information to our staff.

Full training videos are available at web.microsoftstream.com (just log in with your Apple Tree email address and password). Check with your Center Director if you have questions about required training videos.

Apple Tree is dedicated to protecting the health of patients and staff, and we're proud to have implemented a variety of safety precautions to improve our infection control.

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS:

Keep in mind that staff are expected to take reasonable precautions, such as:

- a. DO NOT come to work if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed. If you come down with symptoms at work, request to go home.
- b. Follow all protocols, including wearing applicable PPE, aligning with social distancing guidelines, and following infection control rules.
- c. Please make responsible choices outside of work to prevent contracting illnesses.

Every staff member is responsible for helping prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Meet Our Residents AEGD Program Graduates and Newcomers



Dr. Shelley Sidhu
University of British Columbia
- Vancouver

University of Minnesota
School of Dentistry

2019
2020



Dr. Wahab Khodadah
Creighton University

Creighton University
School of Dentistry



Dr. Ellory Busch
Marquette University

University of Minnesota
School of Dentistry

2020
2021



Dr. Meghan Weber
University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota
School of Dentistry

*“Learning isn't a way of reaching one's potential
but rather a way of developing it.”
- Anders Ericsson*

It's Our Birthday!

35 Years of Apple Tree

That's right — Apple Tree Dental's 35th birthday was July 3, 2020. And, we're planning to celebrate all the way until next July!

Make sure you check out this section in upcoming issues to learn more about Apple Tree and how we're making this year special (despite a pandemic!).



Notable History of Apple Tree

- **Apple Tree was founded in 1985** to address unmet dental needs of frail elders living in the Twin Cities.
- The name "Apple Tree Dental" was chosen because apple trees bear a fruit that is a symbol of dental health, and apple seeds create new orchards far and wide!
- The official **Apple Tree Dental logo** has changed multiple times since 1985. Here's an example of an early logo on one of our trucks!
- Apple Tree's model was inspired by the **Mayo Clinic**, which has a global reputation for its team model and has a focus on putting the needs of patients first.
- The Centers on the official Apple Tree **Locations map** are numbered in the order that they were opened, starting with Coon Rapids (1986). Our new map, which came out this year, includes the year that the Center was opened next to the name, and includes the Fairmont Center.



Incredible Individuals

The People Pillar

In this issue of the Branch, we'll highlight some awesome Apple Tree staff members who have made their mark!

Service Awards

Dr. Ali Mohebbi - *joined Apple Tree in 1994*

For the last 25 years, Dr. Mohebbi has been an integral part of the Apple Tree Dental team. He is passionate about improving oral health through implant dentistry and tissue engineering. Missy Herbst, who was his dental assistant for many years, had a lot to say about Dr. Mohebbi's work at Apple Tree: "He is a truly compassionate man who believes in

Apple Tree's mission. And it's a huge bonus that he's so skilled at what he does and that he will always put in one hundred percent to do the work for a patient who needs help." Thank you, Dr. Mohebbi, for 25 years with Apple Tree!



Joy Robertson - *joined Apple Tree in 1993*

For years, Joy Robertson was the Lab Manager at Coon Rapids, making sure that our lab techs worked closely with the dentists to create the best dentures possible. "Joy had so much dedication and took so much pride in the lab's contribution to patient care," Karen Engstrom, COO, remarked. Even after retiring from the lab, Joy returned as on-call Project Coordinator. She fully retired in spring 2020. Her work with the organization is greatly appreciated!

Professional Achievement

Dr. Teresa Johnson - *Special Care Dentistry Association's 2020 Education Award*

Anyone who works with Dr. Teresa knows that she has a passion for education. Not only did she achieve tenure as an associate professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry, but now she is instrumental as Apple Tree's Education and Quality Assurance Director and AEGD Residency Director. Her achievements in educating colleagues and students were recognized by the SCDA this year, as she earned the 2020 Education Award.

Congratulations to Dr. Teresa for this amazing accomplishment!



“A Tale of Two Hygienists” *Podcast Recordings*

Last fall, Apple Tree Dental was contacted by the team that produces the hygiene podcast *A Tale of Two Hygienists*. Two Apple Tree hygienists, Maureen Johnson and Deb Olson, provided online interviews for the podcast in December and January, respectively. Dr. Helgeson also gave an interview for the podcast. All three episodes are about special care and Apple Tree’s delivery model, which includes mobile and in-clinic care.

Highlights include what happens when patients aren’t cooperative, how unique challenges can arise, and of course the professional satisfaction that come with treating patients with special needs.

To listen to these episodes of *A Tale of Two Hygienists*, go to <https://www.ataleoftwohygienists.com/protectingourpublichealth/page/2/> and find episodes 23, 24, and 25.

Building Our Culture of Excellence:

People- Apple Tree’s commitment to increasing employee engagement to provide a supportive, encouraging work environment to provide career opportunities at all levels.

Quality- Apple Tree’s commitment to providing continuous quality improvement for optimal clinical outcomes.

Service- Apple Tree’s commitment to provide quality care and an excellent patient and caregiver experience that gains trust and loyalty to grow our practice.

Financial- Apple Tree’s commitment to stewardship and strengthening the financial operations and overall performance of the organization.

Growth- Apple Tree’s commitment to meeting the changing needs of the community through continued assessment, organizational growth, advocacy, and collaboration with other local, regional and national organizations.

2019 Service Awards *The Service Pillar*

5 Year Awards: Casey Berge, Ashley Hueman, Angie Lohmann, Tessa Fahey, Eddie Norman, Krista Stewart, Clark Natalie, Kayla Kraetsch, Colleen Hueman, Kelli Weber, Angela Townsend

10 Year Awards: Shaylee Seedorf

15 Year Awards: Julie Nelson, Teresa Kerr, Duane Jensen, Chandra Stapher

25 Year Awards: Ali Mohebbi, Joy Robertson (now retired)



In the News

The Quality Pillar

Apple Tree Helps Author Research Article in PLOS One

In May 2020, peer-reviewed scientific journal PLOS One published a research article studying the cost and dental utilization patterns for older adults in outpatient and long-term care settings in Minnesota. Apple Tree’s own Dr. Barbara J. Smith (co-founder and current Board member), Dr. Michael J. Helgeson (co-founder and current CEO) and Brenda Prosa (Information Systems Director) helped to author the article, along with colleagues from West Health, including Tracy Finlayson, Mario Orozco, Padideh Asgari, Ian Pierce, Gregory Norman, and Eliah Aronoff-Spencer.

According to the study, the costs of providing comprehensive dental care to older adults in long-term care settings were “modest and declined over time,” which suggests that policymakers should address the oral health needs of these older adults, and consider adding coverage for comprehensive dental care to future policies.

The research article is available in its entirety and can be found at journals.plos.org.

As always, we welcome your input for future issues of the Branch. **Please send your ideas for topics, a powerful patient story, or the above-and-beyond efforts of a colleague which should be highlighted.** These shared experiences help us grow together.

With appreciation,

Emma E. Larson, Marketing / Communications Specialist,
Chad Engstrom, Human Resources Director, Deborah Jacobi, Policy Director, and
Mary Larkin, Development & Marketing Director