



Many of us know that Dr. Ron Tracy has long been the sole provider of onsite dental care to the nursing homes of Pierce County. The American Society for Geriatric Dentistry, now the Foundation for Special Care in Dentistry, awarded him Fellowship status in 1987. He has been a member since 1975. There are very few dentists in this state who have membership in this organization and who provide care for the elderly, handicapped, and institutionalized.

The demise of DSHS adult dental care has made it impossible for Dr. Tracy to cover his minimal expenses in providing this much needed service. Dental assistant, supplies, and lab work must be paid for. The concern that his nursing home patients would be left without any visiting dentist has led him to form a 501(c)(3) charitable organization to receive tax deductible contributions to continue this work. The Pierce County Dental Foundation has recently funded a portion of his need, but more donations are needed. I recently had lunch with Dr. Tracy and felt his story was worth an article in the newsletter. What follows is a response to several emailed questions about his history and I think he tells his own story better than I could.

"I graduated from Loyola Dental School in Chicago in June of 1969. Within 60 days, I was inducted into the Army Dental Corps, per the agreement with the Early Commissioning Program then in effect. I spent the first year at Ft. Lewis and then a one-year tour in Viet Nam with II Corps, which was headquartered in Nha Trang. I was assigned an outpost dental clinic in Phan Thiet. While there we went on several Dent Cap missions to nearby villages/orphanages utilizing the Huey helicopters for transportation. I took the portable ADEC dental units and chair along with two male dental assistants on these day- trip missions. We treated lots of children and adults with moderate to severe dental maladies. For the most part, dental extractions were necessary in about 80 percent of the cases. Upon returning to the States I was reassigned to Ft. Lewis.

After serving for three years and in light of the civilian attitude to the military/war in Viet Nam, I decided to return to civilian life and started a dental practice in Kirkland, WA. I was contacted that first year by a nearby nursing home for the severely disabled in Southeast Bellevue for some dental treatment evaluations. Seeing their plight for dental care, I assembled some dental equipment and started going there biweekly. I relocated my practice to Sumner in 1974 and began to see a few residents at local nursing homes to fill in my appointment schedule a day a week. Then other nursing homes began to call and request my services. Over the next 20 years, I have gone to and treated just about all the nursing home facilities in Pierce County. Being limited to just myself, I had to confine my weekly treatment mobile calls to just the facilities that provided me with the most help and were also appreciative of my efforts. During the course of providing the mobile dental care, I built and patented a mobile operatory that was similar to two Army foot lockers stacked and easily moved on large casted wheels. With this equipment I was able to provide a large range of dental services including operative (both amalgams and composites), prosthetics, basic periodontal therapy, occasional anterior endodontics and simple/minor oral surgery.

Over the past three decades I have seen a marked reduction of nursing home residents that have full dentures. There are more elderly who have removable partial dentures. There is now more need for operative procedures to reduce the amount of root decay that is caused by the patient and nursing home staff not being diligent about plaque removal and lessening the amount of sugary treats that are served. I continued to go to local Pierce County nursing homes until about two years ago when the state of Washington reduced the reimbursement amount drastically, and now completely eliminated all adult dental care. I am grateful for the Pierce County Dental Foundation for helping me re-institute the mobile dental program with a starter grant to treat a couple of nearby nursing homes and their residents." *As you can read from the above, Dr. Tracy is dedicated to a service that most of us could not or would not do. Accordingly, the PCDF will match any contribution for Dr. Tracy up to \$6,000 for this calendar year.*

***PLEASE CONSIDER MY GIFT TO SUPPORT
DR. RONALD TRACY'S NURSING HOME CARE***

***Funds will be matched by
Pierce County Dental Foundation up to \$6,000.00***

Founding Member \$500 or more Contributing Member \$100 - \$249
 Sustaining Member \$250-\$499 Supporting Member \$50 - \$99

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Your gift is tax deductible. Please retain a copy for your tax records PCDF TAX ID #16-1682835

Please mail to: PCDF, 221 B Tacoma Ave S., Tacoma, WA 98402

Our most sincere thanks to you for your support!