Imagine a medical director who works a full day, every day, coming into a full night of volunteer practice almost once a week for 10 years and calling this evening assignment “relaxed and enjoyable.” That gives you a sense of the commitment Steven Marks, MD, has made to VIM and this community by not only providing patient care, but also serving on the Board of Directors and the Medical Advisory Board of Volunteers In Medicine Clinic.

“This is a very energizing and rewarding way to practice medicine because the people are so grateful,” Dr. Marks says. “It also isn’t a schedule that you have to see to productivity, to see four to five patients per hour, and it is a delightful staff to work with.”

Dr. Marks has been with VIM since the beginning, since before VIM opened its doors, when Sister Monica Heeran brought the concept of a free clinic for the uninsured to the community in 1999.

“I was enamored by the whole idea, the whole...
Q&A with DeLeesa

Will the need for VIM ever go away?
I personally feel there will always be a need for VIM. Even with health care reform, we will still have people who will be unable to afford the premiums. Plus, there is a shortage of primary care providers. Unless we get a lot more primary care providers in our community, under health care reform, those primary care practices that do receive low-income patients will fill up quickly. VIM will always work hard to keep a healthy-sized pool of providers to see these patients.

What’s one goal you have for VIM in the next year?
To better coordinate all the providers. We’re working on better coordinating the schedule of volunteers, to match their expertise to patients and their illnesses.

What has changed most about VIM in the last 11 years?
We’ve diversified the kind of volunteer providers at VIM. When we first started, we had mostly, if not all, primary care physicians. Now our volunteers span the spectrum of specialties, from gynecology to cardiology to physical therapy.

What is one of the most exciting things happening at VIM?
There are too many exciting things to name just one! But one thing is we have the most school affiliations in our history. It helps us and it helps the students to get good clinical skills under their belt. We have connections to high schools from the health occupation courses and for Spanish translation. And we have many connections to internship programs, including the University of Oregon, Northwest Christian University, and Portland State University for counseling; the Oregon State University pharmacy program; and Pioneer Pacific College and Lane Community College for both their nursing and medical office assistant programs.

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Find more stories, information online, at www.vim-clinic.org

Our Vision

May we have eyes to see those rendered invisible and excluded, open arms and hearts to reach out and include them, healing hands to touch their lives with love and, in the process, heal ourselves.

Our Mission

Our mission is to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved and other household members who live and work in the greater Lane County area.
Premed students commit time, money

University of Oregon senior Anna Berenbeym says the college campus offers so much to students. But as a premed student, she wanted “to broaden her outreach.”

Through her work with the UO Asklepiads, a student-run club for premed students, Anna, club president, says she has rounded out her experience, on campus — and off. “The club is more campus-oriented, and through volunteering, I get a feel of the community more,” says Anna, who has volunteered in the VIM Dispensary since January 2011.

Anna is one of many student members of the Asklepiads who not only have donated their time but money in the past few years. With bake sales, raffles of a Kaplan MCAT prep course, and other fundraising activities, the Asklepiads have raised nearly $900 annually, which they have donated the last two years to VIM.

But sophomore and Asklepiad fundraising chair Leigh Martin, 19, says “money only goes so far.”

For her, the volunteering shows sincere caring for the community. That students go beyond the campus borders to help others. Leigh says the reward is also having her work at VIM bring meaning to her studies because she’s not practicing medicine at this time.

“It shows you what your future can be,” she says. Because of VIM, she is considering not moving directly from an undergraduate to a graduate program, but volunteering for a year between, to gain more experience.

Rohan Borkar, a UO sophomore in biology, says his experience at VIM “has contributed a lot to my understanding of how the medical system works,” he says. “I definitely understand better how people work together, and all the systems that come together.”

Rohan, 20, started volunteering last year, racking up more than 120 hours, and will continue to volunteer until graduation.

For their differing intersections with the volunteer experience at VIM, the student volunteers coming from the Asklepiads share one thing: the notion that volunteering at VIM has instilled in them a sense of giving back now, as students, and in the future, as professionals.

“Everyone who volunteers here is an exceptional person,” Anna says. “I want to be a part of something like that when I’m older, as well. Working here has made me more excited about doing that.”

For more on this story, view the video at www.youtube.com/LaneCountyVIM
This 2011-2012 school year, the baristas at The Duck Store are donating all tips to Volunteers In Medicine! When at the UO, grab your favorite coffee drink at The Duck Store, drop a tip, too, and thanks for your support!

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concept of providing a service for people who didn’t have insurance but who were working hard to make ends meet,” he says.

As medical director (retiring this June) of PacificSource Health Plans, an insurance company, Dr. Marks says he could see directly the people struggling to get access to health care, and he wanted to use his clinical skills for this kind of community service.

In addition to VIM, Dr. Marks also has volunteered for international health care work over the last four years, with three medical trips to remote villages in Uganda.

“I guess I’ve always had a volunteer ethic. It seems like a good way to give back to the community,” Dr. Marks says. “You just feel like you are getting a lot of positive feedback for the service that is being provided.”

And, he added with a smile, “We don’t have to send out bills. This is much more relaxed and enjoyable, in many ways, than an office practice. A lot of those burdens are lifted off your shoulders.”

NOTE: These phone numbers are local. 458 is a new, local area code!