



Dr. Lisa Sibley, DDS, treats patients at the Catholic Charities Fort Worth dental clinic. (NTC/Rodger Mallison)

ALL SMILES

Catholic Charities Fort Worth operates low-cost dental clinic

By Mary Lou Seewoester

When she was 12 years old, Lisa Sibley lost two teeth that could have been saved.

“I was that kid who didn’t have dental insurance. We only went to the dentist when it hurt ... and when it hurts, they pull it out because that’s the easiest option,” she said.

Today, Dr. Lisa Sibley, DDS, ensures that her patients at the Catholic Charities Fort Worth Dental Clinic know all possible options for treatment.

Sibley, who left a career in corporate dentistry for the CCFW Dental Clinic,

said “dental care is expensive, and my desire was always to go back and help those who could not afford it.”

She recalled a middle-aged man who recently came to the clinic after receiving a “long laundry list” of services he couldn’t afford from a private dental practice. Sibley put together an alternate, affordable treatment plan that met his needs.

Sibley said though the clinic doesn’t offer braces or implants, “We provide services that [patients] can receive in private practice. We don’t eliminate or exclude anything here.”

The clinic opened in 2013 with one dentist and a hygienist. Today, the

five-chair clinic serves more than 200 patients a month. It has three X-ray machines, a panoramic X-ray, and a staff of six, including two dentists, two full-time dental assistants, and a full-time hygienist, Sibley said.

Xergio Chacin, director of immigration services and the dental clinic at CCFW, explained the clinic is a “social enterprise,” meaning it is a costly service to operate, so CCFW charges reduced fees.

“We are not seeking to make a profit,” he said. “It’s a service we provide because the need is there. But we need for that service to be sustainable and financially self-sufficient.”

He said clinic dental fees are at least 50 percent lower than fees at private practices. The clinic keeps the cost of the initial visit artificially low to encourage patients to have a baseline comprehensive exam before establishing a treatment plan, he added.

“Many of our clients cannot afford regular dental care, and by the time they come to us they have a great need,” he said, adding that most clinic patients are uninsured with little or no income.

“Thankfully [the clinic] receives funds from St. Joseph Health Care Trust every year,” Chacin said.

This year, the clinic received \$285,516 from the St. Joseph Health Care Trust, which also granted CCFW \$457,020 for transportation services and counseling.

Renée Underwood, chief development officer for the Diocese of Fort Worth Advancement Foundation, said the St. Joseph Health Care Trust is “one of our largest endowments, and each year it produces enough income that we can be generous with grants.”

“CCFW is a truly good steward of any dollar you invest in them,” she said. “We are called to serve the least among us in whatever form that takes.” 🇺🇸

