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V.O.I.C.E. Congregations Celebrate \$200,000 raised to expand Dental Care for low-income adults in Western Fairfax

Today V.O.I.C.E. clergy leaders, partners and donors cut the ribbon around a huge papier mache tooth to mark a milestone — \$200,000 in private funds committed to add a full-time dentist to the Northern VA Dental Clinic in Sterling to serve low-income adults in Western Fairfax County. One hundred fifty people from St. John Neumann Roman Catholic, Trinity Presbyterian (Herndon), Northern VA Hebrew Congregation and The Unitarian Universalist Church of Reston gathered with food and Latin music to celebrate the hiring of a dentist who will start seeing W. Fairfax patients July 1. V.O.I.C.E. leaders announced that thanks to two new commitments just this week, they have met their goal of having enough funds pledged to cover the cost of a dentist for two years.

Among the donors recognized today for their commitment to this effort: Joy Charitable Trust of N. VA Community Foundation, Delta Dental Foundation, Inova Health System, Jon C. Burr Foundation, Molina Healthcare, Reston Hospital/HCA, St. John Neumann Parish, St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church, The Closet and DeITek Corporation of Herndon. Also three area dentists: Dr. Kristin Donohue, Dr. Peter Smith and Dr. Stuart Graves were thanked for their contributions.

V.O.I.C.E. is a broad-based, non-partisan citizens organization working in Fairfax County as well as Alexandria City, Arlington and Prince William Counties. This initiative began last spring when leaders of V.O.I.C.E. congregations in the Reston-Herndon area pledged to organize their people to leverage commitments of private money to put a full time dentist alongside volunteer dentists in the new Sterling location of the Northern VA Dental Clinic. V.O.I.C.E. had already worked with the Northern VA Dental Society and others to win public dollars for a full-time dentist at the NVDC's Bailey's Corner location. The effort received an early boost in the form of a \$100,000 anonymous "challenge grant", which VOICE leaders would need to match in order to ensure two years of funding.

Fr. Tom Murphy pastor of St. John Neumann, asked those gathered to give themselves a hand in recognition of their collective efforts. Noted Gladys Suarez: "We are celebrating our ability to come together as people of faith to make change happen in our community. We celebrate all of you here today who believed in this vision and worked and prayed to make this a reality." Those gathered received information on how to access the services July 1 through Fairfax County Coordinated Services and Reston Interfaith, who will handle certification and appointments.

A number of county and state elected officials were recognized for their support, and a letter of congratulations from Congressman Frank Wolf was read, acknowledging the broad-based effort of faith communities, private companies and government officials.