

# Free Dental Clinic Opens

The Lamb Center is providing free oral healthcare to area homeless.



**A Lamb Center guest receiving a dental exam at the free, onsite clinic.**

The Lamb Center (TLC), a day-time drop-in shelter serving poor and homeless individuals in central Fairfax County, announces the opening of a free dental clinic located onsite at 3160 Campbell Drive in Fairfax City.

Before The Lamb Center began introducing dental services in late March, too often, the only free oral health service available was an emergency extraction. Today, TLC guests working with a case manager can receive exams, x-rays, simple restorations and root canals at no charge. Beginning in August, cleanings and preventive services will be offered thanks to a partnership with the Northern Virginia Community College Dental Hygienist Program.

The dental clinic is a natural outgrowth of The Lamb Center's commitment to caring for the whole person. Living in the woods or on the streets is not conducive to good oral hygiene. Mouth and gum infections can contribute to serious health issues, including heart disease. Compounding health challenges, poor dental health can impact self-esteem. "Your smile betrays your economic

wellbeing. Imagine trying to get a job with broken or missing teeth," said clinic coordinator, Sharon Jones, a retired psychiatric nurse and TLC board member. Apprehension about seeing a dentist is not uncommon, but it's worse for a person living on the street. They might be ashamed of their poor hygiene or scared of receiving bad news about treatments they can't afford. "Having the clinic onsite, we are able to listen to our guests' fears and take the time to reassure them," said TLC Senior Case Manager Deb Haynes.

The dental clinic is supported by a growing network of volunteer dentists who share TLC's commitment to offering hope and dignity to poor and homeless individuals. Oral healthcare professionals interested in supporting the dental clinic should contact The Lamb Center's Executive Director, John MacPherson at 703-691-3178.

In addition to dental services, TLC provides hot meals, showers, case management, pastoral care, and access to medical and psychiatric nurse practitioners. Visit [www.thelambcenter.org](http://www.thelambcenter.org).