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triage center and an X-ray station.

"If it wasn't for this, I would have to wait for tax time," said South Norfolk resident Jessamy, who has a job but no insurance until she pays a year of premiums. "Dental work is a luxury."

Harper and Melissa Sears of Newport News work in fast food, and dental insurance is unavailable to them because they are not management.

"We have no insurance whatsoever," said Harper, who has needed several of his bottom teeth pulled for at "I just heard about this clinic oral health care through con-unteers. The couple from least a year. "All the dentists from a friend last night. I'm in Newport News and nobody has an opening. When they do, they want an arm and a Community outreach leg to pull teeth."

fillings.





After two days of dental procedures. Tina Favre of Newport News takes a look at herself - the first time she had smiled in over a year. She gives Carol Cleckner, wife and dental assistant of Dr. Dennis Cleckner, a hug after getting two new front teeth and having damage corrected to other teeth, the result of a physical assault she suffered last year.

really excited about it."

Dental Access Days was Spence went to the den- sponsored by local dentists tist three years ago and was Dag Zapatero and Albert told she needed a half dozen Konikoff. Both are alums of the Pankey Institute, a non-

tinuing education.

brought together dentists, hygienists and assistants from of walk-ins.

"I couldn't afford it," she profit organization in Key and his assistant and wife, feel like they're valued, like admitted, awaiting an X-ray. Biscayne, Fla., that promotes Carol, were among the vol- we're all in this together."

Western Branch said their The community outreach intent, as always, was to put patients at ease.

"No matter where we go, all over Hampton Roads, we treat people as if they largely on an appointment basis with a limited number patients," Carol Cleckner said. "I give them hugs, es-Dentist Dennis Cleckner cort them out. I want them to

Virginia Beach's Nakeasha Johnson appreciated the extra touches. A single mother of three, including 4-year-old twins, Johnson said fixing teeth can easily be put on the back burner I just got two teeth pulled," when money is tight.

"You ask yourself, 'Can I smile. "I'm so happy." really put \$200 aside for an X-ray?' " she said.

with her wisdom teeth for the last seven years. The pain worsened three years ago when half of one tooth cracked off. But her job does not include dental insurance, so she put off fixing the problem until Saturday.

"This is a really wonderful service," she said.

Great Bridge's Thomas Bakke echoed that sentiment. A licensed truck driver, Bakke has battled medical problems, losing three jobs in the last five years due to ill health. "I need nine fillings."

Wait time was short for most patients, many of whom left notes of gratitude for the work they received. It was pouring rain when Johnson got out of the chair, but she didn't mind getting drenched on the way to her car.

"It's messy out here, but she said, showing off a huge

Vicki L. Friedman, 222-5218, Johnson has struggled Vicki.Friedman@pilotonline.com



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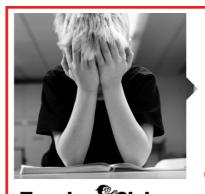
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