

reunions

**Claremore '82:** Sept. 28-29, Janet Finical Johnston, 296-9569, chs1982reunion@hotmail.com.

**Claremore '87:** Sept. 28-29, Misty Jones Book, 918-519-1189, CHSclas-sos87reunion@yahoo.com.

**Stillwater/C.E. Donert '77:** Sept. 28-29, Jim McCollom, (405) 762-9059, Doug Emde, Doug@ER-ASStillwater.com, Kimmie Smith Miller, (405) 743-1324.

**Berryhill '87:** Oct. 5-6, Tammy Beeson Walker, walkerstas@msn.com.

**Cleveland '87:** Oct. 5-6, Denise Bauer Reid, 401-6155, Stacie Westmoreland Castillo, 296-0087, Harlan Guthrie, 293-9346, clevelandtigers1987@yahoo.com.

**Collinsville '87:** Oct. 5-6, Rob Hart, rhart@tulsa-counsel.com, collinsville1987.myevent.com.

**Broken Arrow '77:** Oct. 12-13, ba77.org.

**Mannford '82:** Oct. 12-13, Chris Downing, 497-0353, cheaprick-ed@sbcglobal.net.

**Muskogee '57:** Oct. 12-14, Sammie Henderson Rodden, 682-5867, srodden@suddenlink.net, Barbara Judkins Boyd, 272-3491, bboyd61@cox.net.

**Muskogee '72:** Oct. 12-13, Diane Morgan, morgan@nsuok.edu, Marilyn Smith Cox, 496-3388.

**Sperry '67:** Oct. 12-13, Vicky Gaynor Jolley, (918) 396-0463, Gary Steele, gsteale@utdallas.edu.

**Stillwater '67:** Oct. 12-13, Max Talley, Talley\_OSU@brightok.net, Marla Watson Reimer, (405) 743-2050 or (405) 742-4469, rmreimer@suddenlink.net.

**Stillwater/CE Donart '72:** Oct. 12-13, Sue Torrance Lamon, (918) 794-7062, slamon1@cox.net, Jack Reynolds, (405) 377-8902.

**Stillwater '77:** Oct. 12-13, 1977shs.com.

**Will Rogers '47:** Oct. 13, John Churchwell, 779-7585, Jeannie Devero Alaback, 742-7945.

**Sapulpa '87:** Oct. 18-20, Anissa Larson Murray, amurray@trustok.com.

**Bishop Kelley '67:** Oct. 19-20, Kristi Grisaffe, 609-7160, alumni@bkelleyhs.org.

**Edison '67:** Oct. 19-20, Peggy Easter Sheppard, (417) 887-9478, sheppard2@mindspring.com, Edison67.com.

**Webster '97:** Oct. 20-21, Melinda Paden Gordon, class.of.97@hotmail.com.

**Webster '67:** Nov. 02-03, Ed Massey, 446-0260, emassey@cox.net, Mary Sasser Cooke, 592-0300, mcooke11@cox.net.

**Memorial '67:** Nov. 23-25, Ira Smith, ijsmith1@sbcglobal.net, Sandra Wright Wylie, 298-1006, tulsamemorial67reunion.com.

Send information 14 days in advance to Reunions, Tulsa World, P.O. 1770, Tulsa, OK. 74102, or e-mail to: barbara.morris@tulsaworld.com, fax to (918) 581-8353.

# The gift of a smile

## Organization gives elderly, disabled access to free dental care

By KAREN SHADE  
World Scene Writer

Elmer Bowman greets his visitors to his small east Tulsa apartment, with a warm hand shake and a broad, genuine smile.

For a self-described loner, he has learned how to make new acquaintances feel welcome. An appointment with Eastern Oklahoma Donated Dental Services two years ago made the difference.

"It changed me completely," Bowman, 78, said.

An oral surgeon pulled his remaining teeth, and a dentist fit him for dentures.

"He needed a lot of help, and I knew he couldn't afford it," said Dr. Douglas Whitlock, the dentist who worked with Bowman.

EODDS, a recent addition to the United Way family of community-focused agencies, began in 2003. Foundations and organization contributions have been the core of financial support for EODDS. Most recently, the city of Tulsa and Tulsa Area Agency on Aging made a \$30,000 contribution to fund dentures and partial dentures to qualifying people living in Tulsa, Creek and Osage counties.

Last year alone, the organization helped 621 new patients, but there are approximately 1,800 names on a waiting list, said Pam Beard, EODDS executive director.

"One of the biggest unmet needs in health care is dental," Beard said.

Dentists in the community saw a need to provide good dental for low-income elderly and disabled people.

Rent, bills, medication and basic needs leave practically nothing left over to put toward dental costs, which are not covered by Medicare, Beard said. Medicaid only pays for extractions.

A group of 215 dentists did more than \$926,400 in work for patients last year without charging them a cent.

"Your teeth effect everything. If you don't have proper nutrition, you're going to end up with all kinds of other problems," Beard said.

Bad oral hygiene isn't just about physical appearance. It can be dangerous. An abscessed tooth, in which the



Dr. Doug Whitlock, a dentist for the United Way Eastern Oklahoma Donated Dental Services, with patient Elmer Bowman at Whitlocks offices in south Tulsa. Bowman had major reconstructive dental work done by Whitlock thru the United Way program.



center of the tooth becomes infected, can lead to infection in other parts of the body, including the brain.

Also, being unable to chew food limits the variety of foods a person can consume, and food that has not been chewed properly can cause gastrointestinal problems, she said.

Beard said she often speaks to a people who are desperate. "A lot of them, especially the elderly, finally call because they're losing weight rapidly because they can't eat right," Beard said.

Bowman knows about such complications first hand. After a lifetime of putting dental

care behind other needs, his teeth ended up paying for it.

"They were very bad," he said. "... Once in a while they would bleed."

Retired after working 45 years as a tool and die maker, just like his father, Bowman had been proudly self-reliant. Once, he pulled out his own teeth with a pair of needle-nose pliers after he knocked them loose and they never "tightened" back into place.

Gradually the problems grew beyond his ability to repair with anything from his toolbox.

"I think I really started neglecting my teeth, and the rest of my body for that matter, after my wife died. The only thing I could think about was being at work," he said.

His wife, Virginia, died in 1974 of bone cancer in her spine.

"I never really got over it. I just neglected my health and

everything else. It deteriorated and deteriorated, especially my teeth. I neglected them more than anything," he said.

When Bowman moved to Tulsa six years ago, he joined a church where he met David Barnett.

Barnett said Bowman's health and spirits both were in decline. He was missing many teeth, making it difficult for him to eat.

Most of the time, Bowman could eat little more than oatmeal. Sores developed around his mouth and he was sickly.

Barnett and found Beard and EODDS assistant director Margaret Lippert, who enrolled Bowman in the service program.

Whitlock remembered how grateful Bowman was following the surgery and during all the denture fittings.

"He's just a super nice guy, very appreciative. He was here for all his appointments." Whi-

### What is EODDS?

Eastern Oklahoma Donated Dental Services is a nonprofit organization serving low-income elderly and disabled residents living in the 918 area code. Dentists participating in the organization provide free dental work for patients who qualify.

Clients cannot possess other means of payment for dental services, and also must meet the current Annual Federal Poverty Guideline.

EODDS, however, will make exceptions in extreme situations.

To find out more about EODDS and to see if you qualify for services, call 742-5544 or 742-5548. Forms and information are also available online at [www.tulsaworld.com/eodds](http://www.tulsaworld.com/eodds).

Whitlock said. Whitlock has been donating dental services more than 20 years, and plans to continue to offer his help to those in need.

"I've had a lot of help in my life, too. I happen to be fortunate enough to have parents that could help me and people that were willing to help me," Whitlock said. "When I see other people who need help, that's just payback time. There's some people who really can't afford it that are out there suffering. It's a daily thing. I see it daily."

After he'd gotten used to a new set of dentures, Bowman was able to eat a steak without worry or pain. He began to talk more to people in his neighborhood and church.

His teeth, which had made him self-conscious for a long time, no longer hindered the social life he didn't know he craved.

Barnett, who takes Bowman shopping and to his other appointments, has noticed the changes, too.

"They did a full service for Elmer," Barnett said.

Beard has seen it before. "When they can smile, it changes their life. It really does," she said.

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