

Whale Foundation Health Fair  
By Robby Pitagora  
Summer 2004  
Volume 17 # 2

When Tom Myers first floated the idea, it made sense. As I watched it come together from the periphery of Whale Foundation board meetings, it sounded really good. But when I saw the "Health Fair" in action...it blew my mind.

With the help of Steve and Sarah Hatch, we set up in the office above the warehouse/dance floor at Hatchland. The Fair flowed into the recently remodeled "boatman's lounge" area. Just climb up the stairs...

There you were met by a volunteer who asked you to register and introduced you to the availability of brochures and handouts on numerous health topics and the amazing group of health professionals on hand to offer their services.

Meet Dr. Diane Hoffman and Eric Pitcher, pt from Flagstaff Medical Center Physical Therapy, there to offer suggestions and assistance on repetitive stress and other injuries.

To their left is Dr. Maureen Meyer, who will take a look at your eyes, screen for glaucoma, lens disorders, corneal and retinal disorders and visual acuity problems and answer your optical inquisitions.

Next up the "Boatman's dentist" Jim Marzolf, who will be happy to grab your tongue and take a look at your oral state of being. Screen for anything obvious, and offering his friendly advice if you have any questions.

Watch out for young Eva Hatch chasing her mom, Sara, then head back and shake hands with Dr. Walt Taylor, the greatest family practitioner, humanitarian and friend to ever set foot in these parts. Walt will take a look and see how your skin is holding up to all that sun and wind and rain we sometimes live out in. Not to mention he is there to talk to and answer any questions you have.

Are you getting a general theme here?

Lora Colten, offering her lovely smile and to take your blood pressure, just...fyi.

Dr. Michele Starr-Grua was next, teaching self-examination techniques for women to check for breast lumps and to pass out certificates for a free mammogram.

Then take a seat and talk to Dr. Tom Myers, another outstanding family doctor and humanitarian who hatched this whole idea in the first place. He wants to know about your family health history and what you may want to be aware of down the line...and he wants to give you a voucher for a blood work series to check for anemia, leukemia or infection. A basic metabolic profile voucher was also available which includes blood sugar level (diabetes), electrolytes (potassium, sodium, chloride) and kidney function. Then a full lipid profile: Total cholesterol, hdl, ldl and triglycerides. And, psa: prostate specific antigen for prostate cancer.

Yes, it too is free. Oh, and if you're in the risk group for prostate cancer...there is another voucher for a free test.

Whew!

OK, let me get this straight...

In an era of ever increasing health care costs and difficulty gaining access to medical professionals...here was a group of them, members of our community, volunteering

their time and expertise to come to Marble Canyon (or wherever) to “check up” on their brothers and sisters.

When you stop to add it up, a retail examination by these docs would run about \$75.00 each, a physical therapist \$60.00, Marzolf \$60.00 then with the two mammogram vouchers worth \$200.00 each and the twenty lab work vouchers saving each recipient \$100.00, you can see what an incredible donation and ridiculous bargain this was. And as it turns out, some skin cancers were discovered which gave a couple of people a head start on treatment. Right on!

By all accounts a majority of the working guides present at the gts registered to go through the “health fair,” to run the gauntlet and get an idea of how it’s looking for them. They were smart, ahead of the curve...lucky...it doesn’t matter.

But it is a visionary idea that has a very bright future.

So what...you were there and you didn’t take advantage of it. No big deal.

You couldn’t make it to the spring gts this year. That’s ok.

The Whale Foundation and all the Doctors are fired up about it and we’ll be there again next spring.

This is our community. We get it. We’re going to take care of our own.

Do you have something you want to share? See you all next spring.