

Happy Birthday Virginia Garcia

Our hearts are with Virginia's family at this time and always for the memory of their dear daughter whose life was tragically cut short, inspiring great change for our community.

It is an opportunity to contemplate what her life could have been and the lives we supported since her tragic death. It's a time to share our gratitude for the inspiring community members who demanded care for the most vulnerable in our community so that no other child would die such a senseless death. We reflect on how we've grown from the three-car garage, providing health care in makeshift exam rooms with volunteer providers to a 16 clinic, two-county health system serving over 45,000 patients every year.

On what would have been Virginia's 48th birthday, we are also nervous. We're concerned by the changing political winds and that access to health care for all may change dramatically. We're nervous for our patients and their families who may feel like they are no longer wanted here or worse, treated as less-than full members of our community.

We will be calling on you, our supporters and friends, in the months ahead. Your voices will be needed to ensure Virginia's legacy. Happy birthday dear girl, let us never forget our mission to provide critical health care services and to fight for those who need and deserve them.

Best,



Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation
Executive Director



Hot Off the Presses: 2015-16 Annual Report



2015 was all about looking forward and preparing for a future that includes providing quality health care to even more patients. This year included new programs, new doctors and a groundbreaking for a new wellness center in Beaverton. The report also serves as a 2017 wall calendar.

If you would like to request one, please [contact us](#) with your mailing information and we will get one out to you.

2016 Give!Guide Blows Away \$25,000 Goal

November began with the Give!Guide kickoff at Revolution Hall, a \$5,000 match from partner Bob's Red Mill and a goal of reaching \$25,000 by midnight on December 31st. The previous year VG had raised just over \$23,000.

Within the first week, the generosity of the donors helped VG meet the \$5,000 match set by Bob's Red Mill. By December 1 the donations were closing in on \$25,000 and when the final bell rang on December 31 at midnight, VG donors had surpassed total donations to an unprecedented **\$38,799!**

VG would like to thank everyone who donated to us these past few months through the Give!Guide program. Your generosity is overwhelming and we are honored by the trust you have shown us with your support.



2016 Book of Lists Gives Nod to VG Twice

Every year, the Portland Business Journal releases its annual Book of Lists. The list rates everything from restaurants to retailers and banks to breweries. Ratings are based on income, revenue or production over the calendar year.

VG was included in two rankings this year: 6th out of 25 in **Metro-Area Health-Related Nonprofit** and 10th out of 52 in **Metro-area Public Benefit Nonprofits**. 2016 is the first year that VG has been included in the Book of Lists.



Employee Spotlight: Dr Tochukwu Onwuachusi-Okeke



VG dentist Tochukwu Onwuachusi-Okeke has probably the coolest name in all of Oregon, but she has discovered it's easier on everybody if she simply goes by Tochi (pronounced low-chee).

Dr. Okeke (O-hay-kye), as she's known by her patients, grew up in Nigeria and said her name, Tochukwu, is pretty common there. It means praise God.

The daughter of educators, Tochi wanted to be a gynecologist when she was a youngster. She has no idea why, but it stuck with her until she talked with her college-age sister about it. "You're a woman, you'll be on call all the time in a hospital," Tochi said her sister warned. She

suggested dentistry.

"I thought about it a long time," Tochi said. Eventually, she decided it might be an easier route than gynecology. "How hard could it be? I wouldn't have to study the whole body." Well, she laughed, "That didn't turn out to be true."

Dental school is difficult, and Tochi elected to go through the program twice.

Despite having a dental degree from the University of Benin in Nigeria and nearly five years of experience as a dentist in Africa, the United States would not accept her dental degree. When she, her husband Augustine and baby daughter moved to Connecticut in 2005, she couldn't work as a dentist and, instead, completed a master's degree in public health.

She worked in reproductive health at a hospital in New Haven, Conn. While she enjoyed the work, she missed being a dentist. "Being in a hospital environment, I felt like I'm a doctor, too, but nobody recognized that."

But dental school would take three years and Tochi was pregnant with their second child. The family would lose her salary and have to pay tuition. She was reluctant, suggesting to her husband that they wait for their kids to get older and for him to complete all the exams needed for his ECFMG certification.

Instead, Tochi said he convinced her otherwise, saying "This is your dream. You want to pursue this. I will not be the husband who tells you abandon your dream. I would not be able to live with myself if I did."

Tochi loved working with underserved populations in New York. During her first year at NYU, she worked in special patient care dentistry, serving people with complex medical conditions, such as cerebral palsy. "There was no other place where they could go," she said.

She wanted to continue that work in Oregon, but struggled to find it. She worked for a couple of private dental offices, but Tochi really wanted to help vulnerable populations and kept searching the internet until, one day, she came across VG.

"It would be so cool if I could work here," she remembered saying, and coo-called dental director Lisa Bozzetti about job opportunities. A few months later, Tochi, who speaks Spanish, joined the Newberg Dental Clinic. She's been there for five years.

"I'm really, really lucky to have found VG," she said. "I find it rewarding to help people who would otherwise have no place else to go. They're not the only ones we treat at VG, but that piece is rewarding to me."

In her free time, Tochi spends time with her family and volunteers as a dentist at various Compassion Clinics through her church, Cedar Mill Bible Church and Nzako Ndi Igbo of Oregon & South West Washington -- a Nigerian sociocultural organization.

"Know Your Rights" Needs You



This Saturday, January 7 the VG Cornelius Wellness Center will be hosting a "Know Your Rights" event. The morning will include a presentation by a local immigration attorney as well as opportunities to get signed up for insurance coverage with VG medical providers and a Q&A session with immigration attorneys.

There is currently a need for volunteers at the event. If you have time this Saturday morning to come out and help, please send your contact information (including a cell not accept text messages) to our [great@vghc.org](#).

November & December Major Donors*

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*Special thanks to the donors from Inez, Hilda and Camille who donated to Virginia Garcia in December through their employee giving programs. We will receive those gifts in late January and look forward to thanking you for your gift and acknowledging you in our next February e-newsletter.

VG By The Numbers

44,239

Unique patient visits in 2016

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