



## For Hobbs & Associates, giving back is a family tradition



*Tara Quinn and BJ Hobbs at Wise MOM*

BJ Hobbs is President of Hobbs & Associates, Inc., a family-owned operation founded in Virginia Beach, Va., that provides heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) products and engineering services to commercial and industrial contractors from Richmond, Va., to Nashville, Tenn. In 2016, Hobbs & Associates became a corporate sponsor of the Virginia Dental Association Foundation (VDAF). He recently chatted with Tara Quinn, Executive Director of the VDAF, about his experience volunteering at the VDAF's Mission of Mercy (MOM) project in Wise and service to the community.

### **Tell me what inspired you to support and get involved with the VDAF.**

My Cousin (Rob Walker) approached me about supporting the MOM events, in part because there are MOM events where our family hails from (Wise County), and the other side of my family hails from Grundy (where another MOM event is held). Upon hearing this, my son William decided he wanted to volunteer for the VA Beach MOM event, where my parents live. After the event, William was so moved by the need for dental care he saw, and so impressed with the level of treatment provided, that we decided to support monetarily, and to both volunteer for the Wise MOM event.

### **What has surprised you most about working with VDAF at the MOM project in Wise?**

The level of pain and suffering from thousands of people who cannot afford dental care, and to see what it meant to them to receive the dental care they needed. One young lady was getting married a few weeks after the event, and she broke down in tears because she will be able to smile without embarrassment in her own wedding photos. Many people will now be able to eat solid food because they received necessary dental care. I was also surprised and impressed by the commitment of the dental health professionals who were there, the level of care and specialty procedures that were done on location, and the number of volunteers that allowed for thousands of people to receive needed care in just two days.

### **What do you wish other people knew about the VDAF?**

I wish everyone in the state to know what I have learned. The VDAF musters the talent and commitment of professional dental providers to provide care for thousands of people who are in desperate need of dental care they cannot afford, and that VDAF provides more of these events and treats more people in need than in any other state in America. I met families who came from all over, New York, Pennsylvania, and even a family with four beautiful daughters from Ohio who had never seen a dentist. I see in the VDAF a desire to reach as many people as possible. The number of professional volunteers I saw are willing and able to do more, and the only limiting factor is the available funding.

**How did volunteering at Wise make you feel?**

It humbled me to see what I have taken for granted in my life, and it engendered in me a firm desire to support the VDAF and volunteer for more MOM events in the future.

**Tell me about some of the people you've met while volunteering for the VDAF?**

I have already mentioned some of the patients I saw, but I also got to meet several of the dental hygienists, surgeons, dentists, x-ray technicians, nurses, dental students, denture technicians, EMTs, and general volunteers who were there to help others - all giving of themselves without the desire to receive recognition or remuneration.

**Tell us more about Hobbs & Associates.**

We are a manufacturer's representative firm, providing Heating and Air Conditioning products for commercial construction. Interestingly, we also sell air distribution systems for procedural and operating rooms. For more information, you can visit our website at [hobbsassociates.com](http://hobbsassociates.com)

**What would you tell someone who is thinking about donating, volunteering, etc. for the VDAF?**

I would say that any money contributed or hours volunteered goes directly to the benefit of a population that needs care they would not otherwise get. We do not stop and consider that our ability to talk, to smile, to feel comfortable in group settings because of our smile, all depends on our oral health. Our basic health depends on our ability to eat, not to mention the extreme pain that can be caused by untreated dental problems. With this in mind, I would encourage anyone who can help to do so.

**What do you enjoy doing when you aren't working or volunteering?**

I am a voracious reader, and enjoy cooking. I have been blessed with three children - William (age 15), Olivia (age 14), and Mariam (age 13). My wife (Michelle) and I both enjoy, and are sometimes very tired :) with all the events in their lives.

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**ABOUT THE VIRGINIA DENTAL ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION (VDAF)**

*Founded in 1996 as the charitable and outreach arm of the VDA, the VDAF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide access to dental care for underserved and underinsured Virginians. The organization provides funding for and coordination of the Mission of Mercy Program.*