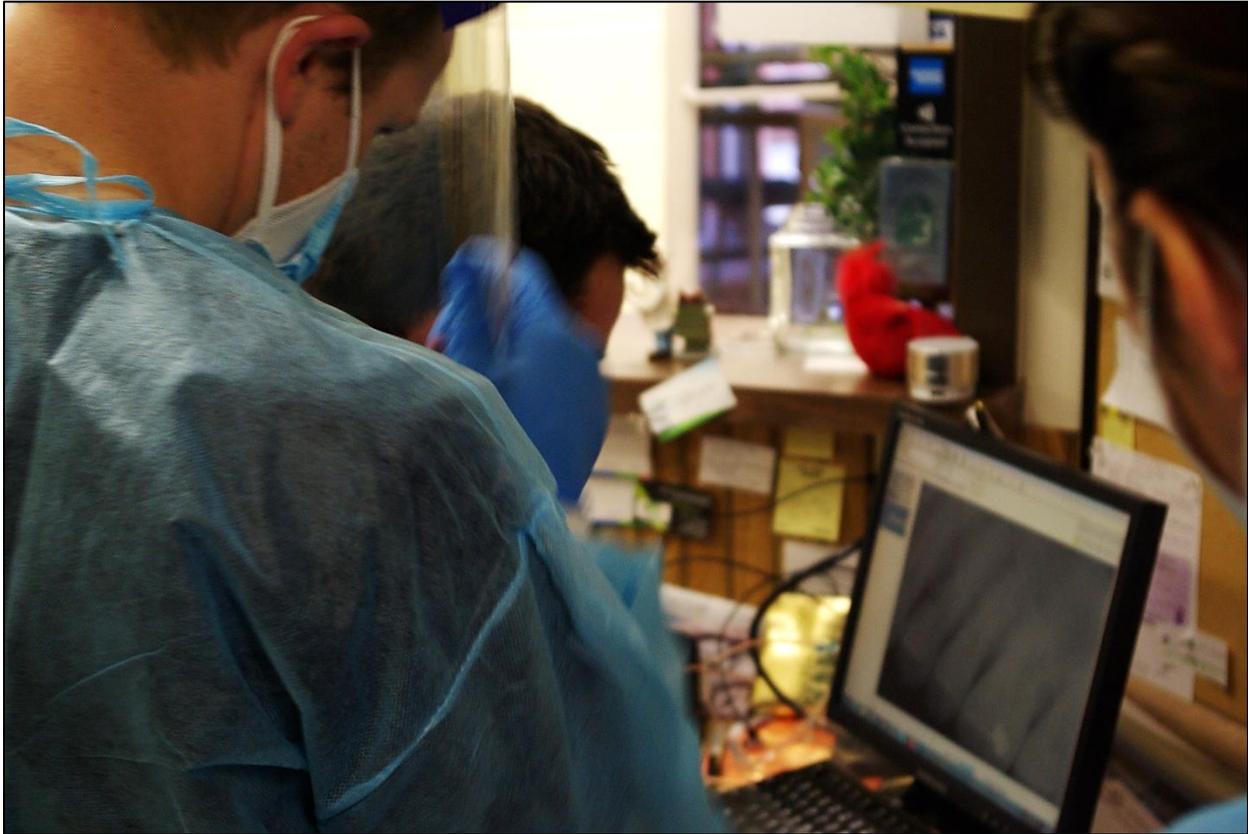


Dental program accredited



Students training at Red Bird Clinic can receive credit for work

When the Red Bird Dental Clinic comes up on Parker Falkenberg and Derek Arnoczky's rotation, they are eager to come.

Now, thanks to the Council on Dental Accreditation, they can earn credit for the work they do, not just the hands-on experience. Dr. Bill Collins learned the outreach program he's been supervising for University of Louisville School of Dentistry students received accreditation.

"It's pretty awesome to come here," said Parker, a fourth-year student along with Derek.

"We get to see things we don't get to see at other places.

"It's a different demographic. A rural community is totally different from an urban one. The people here are so much more laid back."

"The people here are the salt of the earth," Derek added. "They are just so grateful for the work we do."

The program attracts third- and fourth-year students. In the past, four would come a week, but with the accreditation, the clinic can take on six students.

Parker and Derek arrived on a Sunday night, work Monday and Tuesday before heading back on Tuesday night. Two more students arrive on Wednesday night to work the next two days. While here, students stay on campus.

Both of them were interested in going to medical school. Learning about the work involved helped them decide on dentistry.

“I thought it was just cleaning teeth and filling cavities,” Parker said. “But really we can help people get out of a lot of pain and give them a better smile.

“Plus I know a dentist (back in Tucson) and he’s a pretty cool guy.”

Derek added: “A dentist really helped me out of a bad spot (in Cleveland). I accidentally shot a friend in the mouth with an Air Soft gun. It knocked a front tooth and it was totally shattered. The dentist patched him right up and I thought that was pretty cool.”

In addition to Red Bird, the students have rotations in Elizabethtown, West Louisville, and a new one in Paducah. COVID-19 has put one on hold that caters to patients with special needs.

As for the 3-hour drive, Derek and Parker are getting used to it and enjoy it. The patients they see also make it worthwhile.

“They are so willing to have you work with them,” Derek said. “And they are more likely to express their appreciation.

“It’s very refreshing.”

For information about the dental clinic programs, please call 598-5138 or go to rbmission.org.



Parker Falkenberg (L)
and Derek Arnoczky