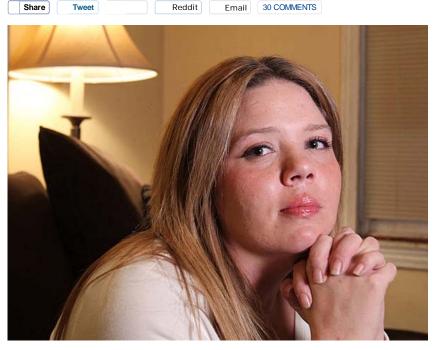


# Beaten Wawa worker gets a new smile



Barbara Zimath, whose teeth were severely damaged in an attack in Port Richmond in August, is receiving charitable dental work from a Fort Washington prosthodontist.



GALLERY: Beaten Wawa worker gets a new smile

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DAILY NEWS

AFTER the swelling went down and reality started to set in, Barbara Zimath

knew she was going to need new teeth.

Question was, how could she ever afford them?

Zimath had been wracked with worry over unenviable problems like this one ever since Aug. 28, when a pair of scumbags robbed her and pummeled her face for sport while she waited in the predawn darkness for the Route 15 bus in Port Richmond.

One front tooth was completely knocked out during the attack. Three others were left loosened and crooked because of a fracture in the bone behind her gumline.

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Repairing that damage, she knew, could cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Zimath, 30, didn't have health insurance. She was unable to return to her job at the Wawa on Richmond Street near Allegheny Avenue, which is where she was headed on the morning those heartless thugs turned her world upside down.

Numerous customers who adored the soft-spoken mother of two donated money to help pay her bills after reading about the assault in the *Daily News*. Wawa, too, provided her with financial support from an employee-funded hardship account.

The donations enabled Zimath and her family to just about make ends meet. Advanced dental surgery seemed like a luxury she couldn't possibly afford.

Enter Glenn Wolfinger, a prosthodontist at Pi Dental Center in Fort Washington.

"I read the story, and it struck home with me. I grew up in Philadelphia, and I go to Wawa every day," Wolfinger said.

The center, which specializes in dental implants and cosmetic surgery, has a charitable foundation that covers the costs of procedures that some people can't afford.

"A lot of times, we're bringing in people from other areas of the country," Wolfinger said. "I thought this time we could make a difference for someone close by."

Last week, the dental center gave Zimath a fixed set of temporary teeth to restore her smile.

Once the bone in her mouth fully heals, Wolfinger said, they'll replace the three damaged teeth - and the missing one - with four custom-designed implants.

Wolfinger said the company is also taking care of pre-existing dental problems that Zimath also had.

The dental center is doing the work for free, and persuaded an implant company to donate the materials for Zimath's new teeth.

"I would say it's probably been well over \$20,000 work so far," he said. "It's horrible, what happened to her, and I'm just glad we're able to help. She seems like a really, really nice woman."

Zimath seemed to struggle with her emotions as she described her gratitude for the new teeth, and for the outpouring of compassion from her neighbors and longtime customers.

"The help from the dentist and from the neighborhood, that



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doesn't happen to everyone," she said. "People get hurt all the time, and they just have to deal with it. I've been very lucky. I'm so grateful for what I have."

Friends and colleagues plan to hold a beef-and-beer benefit for Zimath from 7 to 11 p.m. tomorrow at the Polish American String Band's hall on Westmoreland Street near Salmon.

The two men who attacked her - both of whom were described as in their 20s, with white T-shirts and blue jeans - are still on the loose, as are two accomplices who waited in a green four-door vehicle while Zimath was robbed.

"I don't really go out by myself too much anymore," Zimath said. "When someone walks up behind me, I get nervous. It's still bad, but I hope it will get better with time."

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