



# Catherine's H E A D L I N E S

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## Information: As important as medicine

**P**ills and insulin won't cure wrong information.

Those who grow up believing diabetes runs in the family often think their turn will come. Most think diabetes is their genetic heritage.

After all, if Mom and Grandma died following complications from diabetes, it's easy to think you are next. "Just about everyone in my family has diabetes. Those older than me died from it," says Eleanor, adding "I figured I would die of it, too."

Unfortunately, that is the background many bring to their

first visit at Catherine's Health Center.

For some, pills and insulin are critically necessary. For most patients, information, education and support are necessary supplements on their path to better health at lower cost to themselves and our community.

With your support, patients are learning how to manage their diets, how to access and prepare healthier foods and how to manage blood sugar levels through a combination of diet, exercise and lifestyle.

Says Cynthia, "My husband and I grow our own vegetables. We'd rather get something from



**Learning opportunity:** Catherine's patients attend a diabetes education class taught by MSU medical students.

the garden and cook it ourselves than eat anything else. And we're healthier!"

From Cynthia and many oth-

ers, thank you for helping bring accurate, reliable, life-changing health information! You're a life-saver!

## From the director: ALICE thanks you

From our beginning in 1996, Catherine's has offered an answer to the health care problems and needs of low-income, at-risk people in and beyond the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods.

People with income up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level look to us for compassionate, high quality care. Many of our patients work to get by on far less.

Nearly a million people in Michigan of all ages and races go to work each day but are not sure they will be able to put dinner on the table or afford the basics.

A recent report confirms what many have sensed and too many are experiencing:



**Thanks:** Karen Kaashoek salutes Catherine's supporters.

that the number of Michigan households who are unable to afford life's basic neces-

Hard-working people on the low end of the job ladder are falling behind. The report, released by The Michigan Association of United Ways, confirmed that many are falling behind even as they work to get ahead.

According to the report, "The fact is

sities far exceeds the official poverty statistics."

The group includes child care workers, home health aides, store clerks, office assistants and others in the workforce. The association offers insight into the plight of this large group by identifying them as ALICE: Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed people. For the full report, visit [www.uwmich.org/alice](http://www.uwmich.org/alice).

Thanks to you, ALICE can find an open door to health care! In fact, not one, but many ALICES. To all the ALICES that walk through Catherine's doors, you, our benefactors, are heroes and lifesavers.

# Grant helps patients 'Live Heart Smart'

## AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation funding aids Catherine's program

It takes a combined effort to improve our community's health.

In 2012, Executive Director Karen Kaashoek learned of a grant opportunity through the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation associated with AstraZeneca, a worldwide pharmaceutical company.

The Foundation promotes public awareness of health care issues and public education of medical knowledge.

Kaashoek submitted a proposal requesting funds to help at-risk patients by providing regular medical care supplemented with education, coaching and support.

The foundation responded with a grant of nearly \$162,000. That news set the health center's "Live Heart Smart" program in motion. Patients received lab tests, data was



**Showing results:** Sharon has been a participant in Catherine's walking program and diabetes management.

recorded, and interventions were designed to improve heart health.

And it worked. Patients reported reduced smoking habits and increased exercise; lab

levels for cholesterol dropped; and general health indicators improved.

The foundation reviewed "Live Heart Smart" program results. Convinced of its effectiveness, the foundation encouraged Catherine's work by awarding a second, similar grant for 2014.

Not all programs receive two grants in succession, and Catherine's officials were thrilled to be able to extend life-changing medical screening, help and education to their patients.

Now, the health center eagerly anticipates the results of the program's second year. Catherine's has submitted an application for a third year of funding and looks forward to an announcement in 2015.

While the grant from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation is large, every gift Catherine's receives has a life-changing impact on its patients. Staff members work hard with gifts of every size to be sure people in need have access to high quality medical care provided with compassion.

# Health Center charts a new course for MAP

The Medication Assistance Program, or MAP, is a program that assists patients who can't afford their medications by requesting them directly from the pharmaceutical companies.

Many pharmaceutical companies have programs that provide low-cost or free medications to patients who qualify, based on income and a qualifying status for insurance enrollment.

As of Oct. 1, Catherine's has saved qualifying patients \$467,948.62 in 2014. That's the average annual cost of health care for more than 70 people in Michigan.

While patients continue to benefit from this program, the face of health care has changed with the introduction of the Affordable Care Act — and MAP is no exception. Thanks to the diligence of navigators here at Catherine's, including MAP's Emilia and David, many of the health center's patients are gaining insurance coverage for services previously unavailable to them, including coverage for



**Showing results:** Medication Assistance Program Coordinator Emilia assists a Catherine's Health Center patient with her medication needs

prescriptions.

While many patients are happy to gain coverage, many prescription assistance programs only are available to patients without coverage. MAP is adapting to this transition, finding ways to save patients money through co-pay assistance programs and appeals to the same programs patients have used for years, when drugs aren't covered by a patient's prescription plan.

And, as always, patients who don't qualify for coverage can apply to prescription assistance programs as before.

MAP is changing, but the goal remains the same: to assist our patients in improving their health through access to quality medications at an affordable price. Thank you for your part in making that possible and we appreciate your continued support in the changes ahead.

# Cost-effective care is a CHC hallmark

“Jennifer” arrived in poor health. Like many who walk through Catherine’s open door, she hadn’t seen a health care provider in years.

“My health was so very bad! Everything was off the charts,” she said.

She is hardly unique in that way. People who become Catherine’s patients are struggling to make ends meet. They find themselves choosing food or rent over health care or taking comfort in readily available junk food when feeling beat down by life. Eventually the pattern takes its toll.

With your help, Catherine’s offers “health care plus.” The “plus” might involve coaching, education or access to exercise.

These low-cost supplements help patients who come feeling defeated to build healthier habits by building knowledge, improving habits and assuring follow-through.

Jennifer illustrates the point: “After Dr. (Jack) Walen told me my lab levels were terrible, he had people call to make sure I’d follow up. It was like a gift from God.”

Some patients think when symptoms disappear, the health problem is solved. Others worry about losing a job if they take time for health care. Some, like Jennifer, have fallen into poor health practices when limited resources offer no alternatives.

To address those challenges, volunteers



**Connected:** Catherine’s community gardening program is one way health center patients learn to develop healthier habits.

and AmeriCorps/VISTA members stretch Catherine’s resources, providing minimal-cost interventions such as reminder calls for those not in the habit of health care diligence. Such interventions typically result in positive changes and better health.

Jennifer added changes to her lifestyle

and has learned to think about nutrition. She began to cook healthier foods with help from classes she took through Catherine’s.

Now, 30 pounds lighter and feeling much better, Jennifer is enthused about the care she receives here. “The kids there are like family,” she said of the staff members.

## From the development director: Giving back

Telling our story is important. Actually, we have many stories to tell.

Every day brings new experiences and tales. Real people with real health needs and challenges walk through the doors of Catherine’s Health Center, hoping for help, bringing their life stories with them.

We listen, we care, we teach, we offer healing and renewal. And many of those we help want to give back.

Lacking money, our patients often are willing to share their stories, hoping they offer something to help open the door for others.

When LeRoy, a new patient, heard that telling his story would help others, he im-

mediately volunteered to share, confirming that he had no money, but if sharing his involvement at Catherine’s would help someone else, he would be happy.

Catherine’s story is one of people giving generously to benefit the neighborhood and community. Gifts of money, talent and time have all left their mark in the form of better health, improved health habits, restored



**Every bit helps:** Ron Rozema says there are many ways to help.

### United Way giving

While Catherine’s is not a United Way agency, it is easy to designate a United Way payroll gift to us. Simply write in our name, Catherine’s Health Center, and our tax ID number 20-3572418, in the space provided on your United Way Campaign form. All gifts will be put to immediate use providing health care for people in need.

hope, greater productivity and more. Thank you for being part of the story!

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## Too much — yet not enough

### Catherine's partners with Family Outreach Center

-From the look of him, life had been hard: disheveled, eyes downcast, a shuffling walk. His story included the loss of his spouse, a back injury on the job that left him unable to work, and now a heart condition.

One glance and you recognize that life has thrown too much at him. With no family, few friends and no resources, he had no support and nowhere to turn.

Thankfully, that's not the end of the story. Your support for the mission and work of Catherine's has helped "Darren" take a step toward health.

A new partnership with Family Outreach Center has opened the door to needed support services for people who are overwhelmed and laid low by life events beyond their control.

Lisa, a trained, credentialed therapist with Family Outreach, now spends a day each week counseling Catherine's patients.



**Needed assistance:** Therapist Lisa engages in counseling at Catherine's.

The service fills a needed void, since counseling and behavioral health assistance are among the most difficult services to get for low-income people in our community.

But thanks to you, Darren has found help behind the Open Door at Catherine's. Health center staff are eager to see the day when he looks up with new hope!

For more about Family Outreach Center, visit [www.focgr.org](http://www.focgr.org).

**Mission statement:** Catherine's Health Center is a nonprofit, community-based health facility dedicated to serving low-income, uninsured residents of the northeast sections of Grand Rapids, Michigan, primarily those who live in the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods.

**Location & Hours:** Located at 1211 Lafayette Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, Catherine's is open by appointment only, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Information:** 616-336-8800

**Visit us online:**  
[www.CatherinesHC.org](http://www.CatherinesHC.org)



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### **Donate to Catherine's**

Catherine's Health Center  
1211 Lafayette Ave. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
or online: [www.catherineshc.org](http://www.catherineshc.org)

**Thank you for your support**