



# Catherine's

## HEADLINES

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## Patients offer inspiration of gratitude



**Serving gratefully:** Mariah Sika helps patients get essential medications while on a budget.

**By Mariah Sika**  
AmeriCorps VISTA member

Marcia, a woman in her 40s, recently moved to Michigan from Kentucky. She needed a doctor and came to Catherine's Health Center on a day I was working the Medication Assistance Program desk.

With a limited income, Marcia, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, had been unable to fill a pre-

scription for some time. She was putting her health at risk because she could not afford the medications prescribed for her.

As I explained what Catherine's could do through our Medical Assistance Program, her eyes began to well up, and soon, tears rolled down her cheeks. Just as I began to think, "Maybe I said something wrong," she started to thank me.

She was so grateful that

someone took time and helped her. She was even more grateful she could get her medications at no cost.

A few days later, Marcia returned to pick up her medications. She thanked me again for everything Catherine's had done. Not every patient expresses thanks as Marcia did. But she and others like her truly inspire the workers at the clinic to live and serve gratefully.

## From the director: Thriving in a season of changes

**By Karen Kaashoek**  
CHC Executive Director

This year's eagerly awaited spring, as in years past, will bring changes. Many will be enjoyable: flowers in bloom, refreshing rains, no more winter coats. Some will be less welcome: flooding, mud and the possibility of severe weather.

Health care also is in a new season of change. Who can ignore talk of Obamacare or fail to notice the higher costs of medical care? At Catherine's, we are working hard to adapt where we must and lead where we have expertise, all the while keeping our focus on offering an open door to quality care for people at risk.

Let me highlight some of the exciting things we've experienced recently:

- ◆The addition of Dr. Jonathon Reitzenstein to our staff tops the list and allows us to see more patients.
- ◆In February, we announced for the sec-



**The director speaks:** Karen Kaashoek says Catherine's must be a leader.

insurance plans for some of our services, a new element of the Affordable Care Act.

ond year a major grant received from the AstraZeneca Health-Care Foundation for our Live Heart Smart! program. It is by far our largest grant.

◆Our implementation of an Electronic Health Record continues, with expectation it will be operational by late May.

◆We also will have the opportunity to bill a handful of Medicaid

Meanwhile, our crew of certified health care navigators has been busy helping people find the plan that best fits their situation.

We also received generous gift support from the community, exceeding our 2013 budgeted goals and assuring our ability to offer services.

We were honored in late 2013 to receive the Torch Award for Ethics from the Better Business Bureau and to receive the Spirit of Collaboration Award from the Michigan Cancer Consortium.

Add to the list all of the services and programs we routinely provide, and you get a pretty good picture of a thriving clinic, hard at work improving the health and habits of people in and beyond the Northeast neighborhoods of Grand Rapids.

In this new era, we're convinced that we're more needed than ever by those who need access. Thank you for partnering with us to meet the challenges.

# Dr. Reitzenstein, I presume

Meet the newest member of the medical team at Catherine's Health Center

**By Ron Rozema**  
CHC Development Director

Catherine's is pleased to introduce the newest member of its medical team, Dr. Jon Reitzenstein (pronounced "rite-zen-stine").

Trained in family medicine, he comes to Catherine's after serving for six years as a physician with the Air Force. Reitzenstein originally is from Portland, Ore., and has lived in Hawaii, California and Colorado. He and his family now make their home in Grand Rapids.

"I am excited to join the team at Catherine's Health Center and to be part of 'your neighborhood working together for a healthier you,'" Reitzenstein said.

An aspect of medicine he enjoys is helping people navigate the health care system, which he likened to being a tour guide in a foreign country. That, along with his training, experience and commitment, makes him a good fit at Catherine's.

"I hope to have some valuable knowledge to translate and pass along," he said. "Over time, I hope this will develop into meaningful relationships with patients as we approach challenges and successes together."

In his view, each patient is a person, not an illness or a collection of symptoms; he



**The doctor is in:** Dr. Jon Reitzenstein, a native of Portland, Ore., served as a physician in the Air Force before settling with his family in Grand Rapids.

works to stay focused on the whole person while working to improve health.

His heart for service has been evident over time. Reitzenstein has served with free clinics in California and Colorado. Since relocating to Grand Rapids, he has been associated with Oasis of Hope, a small free clinic just a few blocks from Catherine's.

His wife, Allyson, is an opera and musical theater performer, teacher and director, whom he met while they both sang in a church choir. She is associated with Civic Theatre. They have a 4-year-old son, Ian.

They chose Grand Rapids, in part, because Allyson's family is from West Michigan, and they wanted to be nearer to family during the child-raising years.

Dr. Reitzenstein enjoys the outdoors, traveling, singing and playing piano. He describes himself as "social and outgoing" and said he looks forward to meeting new friends through Catherine's. The clinic is pleased to welcome him to the team and looks forward to working together to affect the health of people at risk in our community.

## Why I give to Catherine's Health Center

**By Lauri S.**  
A friend of Catherine's Health Center

You want to know why I give to Catherine's? Sure, that's easy.

Years ago, I visited the clinic and a nurse took my blood pressure. She was very supportive, even though my pressure had been high. That was the turning point where I decided to lose weight and start exercising.

Now, I'm eating healthier, walking and running regularly, and I am determined to keep my weight down.

I've been really impressed with the way Catherine's provides health care and with the way people are treated with respect without any regard for their financial ability.

So, I want to help others. It's as simple as that.

### Quilt has a new home

Last fall, Jenny Lynn donated a quilt to benefit Catherine's. Her Scrappy Stars pattern was a hit, generating more than \$2,000, which has been put to work providing health care for patients. The drawing in early December chose Karl Deschaine of Rockford, Mich., as the winner. Many thanks to him and everyone who sold or bought raffle tickets to help the clinic offer access and care for the community.

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*With Heartfelt  
thanks to all  
whose support  
made Open Doors  
& Quality Care  
a reality in 2013!*

\*Blue font denotes multi-year donors.

Information here is based on our 2013 gift records. If you believe your name is listed incorrectly, we sincerely apologize and invite you to contact us so that we can make corrections.

# Better choices mean better health

**By Ron Rozema**  
CHC Development Director

Moody, a retired asphalt worker, has been working with Mariah Sika, one of our health care navigators, to search for health care coverage to best fit his needs.

While this will be the first time that he will have coverage, he credits Catherine's with positive changes in his health, even when family circumstances left him with no ability to pay.

A Michigan resident for years, Moody originally hails from a small town near Newport News, Va., where his family developed its love of southern seafood dishes.

"That's how they all make their living. I love the southern food," he said with a smile, but added that the diet caught up with him.

"I needed a doctor, but I had no money, no insurance, and no

**"Dr. Jack (Walen) helped me out a lot. Now I have to manage my diabetes, but my blood pressure is down, and my cholesterol is, too."**

— Moody, a patient at Catherine's Health Center

place to go," he said. "My daughter found Catherine's; that's how I got started."

Moody confirmed that during his first visit, his blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar level were elevated, likely in part because of his diet.

"Dr. Jack (Walen) helped me out a lot," he said. "Now I have to manage my diabetes, but my blood pressure is down, and my cholesterol is, too."

He gets his insulin through



**Collaborative effort:** Navigator Mariah Sika helps Moody find health coverage to best fit his needs.

Catherine's Medical Assistance Program and said that Dr. Walen keeps him in line managing his health.

Moody has learned that the southern food he so enjoyed did

his body no favors, and he has changed his eating habits.

Moody is pleased to enjoy better health and now says, "Whatever I can do to help Catherine's ..."

## Community helps clinic help those who have little

Open door to quality health care exists thanks to you

**By Ron Rozema**  
CHC Development Director

Franklin Delano Roosevelt reportedly said, "The test of our progress is not whether we add to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough to those who have little."

Times were different when he spoke, but the test is still good.

Through Catherine's Health Center, our community is providing health care for those who have little — thanks to you.



**Bridging the gap:** Catherine's Development Director Ron Rozema says, "We couldn't do it without you."

For people living in and beyond the Creston and Belknap Lookout Neighborhoods, we are

able to offer an open door to quality care because of your help. For more on this, read

David Henry's article on the back page of this issue.

While many in our community and country are better off financially than many in Roosevelt's day, the gap between those who have resources and those who don't is the largest it has ever been. In spite of gains, medical bills lead the way as the reason for personal bankruptcies in the United States, making up 62 percent of filings.

With your help, people who use Catherine's Health Center do not have to avoid needed medical care or rely on the emergency room for their care. They — and we — couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

# Program helps patients get 'Heart Healthy Now!'

Wellness offering connects women to help they need

**By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper**  
CHC Volunteer and Program Coordinator

"I thought it was just stress," Terrie said, recalling a positive family event she assumed was the source of her racing heart-beat.

When her symptoms didn't go away after the event, she knew it was time to see a doctor.

Like 65 percent of the people who come to Catherine's, Terrie was working. In fact, she held two part-time jobs, while her husband was self-employed in construction.

Without benefits and unable to meet the cost of premiums, the couple had no health insurance and no provider.

Terrie was happy to learn about Catherine's Health Center from a co-worker.

"There were no openings when I first called," she said, "but then the WISEWOMAN Program opened up, so I could get started with the screenings for breast



**Connected:** Clinic patient Terrie checks out after an appointment.

cancer. That opened the door for more, and when they listened to my heart, they got right on it. The EKG showed my heart was in atrial fibrillation (a heart rhythm disorder)."

Terrie described how Dr. Jack Walen, whom she greatly appreciates, prescribed medication. Volunteers in the Medication Assistance Program pointed her to a low

## More information

WISEWOMAN is a wellness program for uninsured women age 40 to 64, and a subset of our Live Heart Smart wellness program funded by AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation. Recent data shows more than 66 percent of CHC WISEWOMAN participants reduced their blood pressure, 62 percent showed a drop in Body Mass Index and 52 percent showed lower blood cholesterol levels.

cost resource for her medicine. Life and health became much better.

"I'm happy to tell anybody about Catherine's," she said, smiling. "Now I'm learning more through the evening cooking classes, and it's just great with a really great group of people."

For Terrie and many like her, Catherine's pledge to *Open Doors and Quality Care* have become life-changing realities.

# Clinic staff humbly celebrate two awards

**By Ron Rozema**  
CHC Development Director

In late 2013, Catherine's Health Center was honored with two awards.

The Torch Award for Ethics, presented by the West Michigan Better Business Bureau "annually identifies businesses and organizations which best demonstrate and value honesty, respect, integrity and transparency in daily business transactions with not only customers, but employees, vendors, suppliers, and the community in general."

What this means, according to the award description, is that Torch Award winners "go above and beyond" and do it "on a regular basis."

The other award, the Spirit of Collaboration Award, was presented by the Michigan Cancer Consortium in recognition of collaborative work with a team of community agencies through the clinic's "Live Smart!" program.



Catherine's has long been and remains committed to integrity, transparency and teamwork, recognizing that the health center holds the trust of the community and that it simply cannot be effective on its own.

Indeed, the clinic's published values confirm that orientation when we affirm that, valuing stewardship, we are "Managing the organization for effective and efficient use of human and financial resources" and that we "Commit to developing business plans that support long term sustainability."

Clinic staff are humbly celebrating the recognition of those values and practices



**Honored:** Catherine's Health Center Executive Director Karen Kaashoek, center, accepts the Spirit of Collaboration award from the Michigan Cancer Consortium.

and extend their deepest thanks to The Center for Character Ethics, the Michigan Cancer Consortium and all clinic partners whose teamwork and support paved the way for these awards.

## Growing awareness

**By David Henry**

AmeriCorps VISTA member

Growing up on the Northeast Side of Grand Rapids, not far from the Catherine's Health Center location, I always thought of my section of town as fairly wealthy, compared to the rest of the city.

Although our family likely would have been considered middle class, over time, circumstances found my parents buried in bills. Extra money got hard to come by, and I came to think of our family as being on the poorer end of middle class. Yet I was never wanting; my needs were met.

Now, working at Catherine's, I confess to some shame about discovering my relative richness. It's disturbing how I took some things for granted — like health insurance — all my life. Even living on a very modest stipend, I now have more income than many of our patients.

If I need help, I have family nearby who can assist me if I am short money here or there. I have a history of good health, in part because of consistent access to a physician. I had good early training about diet and ex-



**Service provider:** David Henry is a resource to patients with questions about the Affordable Care Act.

ercise, as well as financial literacy.

The older I get, the more I am thankful for the blessings I have been afforded. My position continues to shine a revealing light on how fortunate I am and how important it is to invest in those who have not had similar privileges.

AmeriCorps/VISTA is offered by The Corporation for National and Community Service. For more information, visit [nationalservice.gov](http://nationalservice.gov).

**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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