

About Catherine's

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

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Catherine's Health Center
1211 Lafayette Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
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Catherine's

HEADLINES

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From the director:

You created a miracle

In 2016, Catherine's Health Center intends to celebrate 20 years of service to the community!

We're excited, and we want to share our excitement with you. After all, your gifts and support made it all possible.

While I was not present at the very beginning, I have been with this remarkable organization long enough to know it is a story of miracles. To get an insightful look into the miraculous events that launched Catherine's in 1993, look on Page 2 for a piece pulled from our archives.

From early successes, the clinic emerged as a respected, valued provider of needed health care. Neighbors, friends, poor and working poor all came looking for the care first offered "behind the blue door," below St. Alphonsus Church.

First by the dozens, then by the hundreds and, now, by the thousands, they seek medical help — but also compassion, dignity and respect.

Your gifts, your support and your prayers have sustained Catherine's from the very beginning. When a major partner left 10 years ago, you helped us survive. When the community needed a new, larger clinic, you made it possible. When people come for medical care they cannot find elsewhere, you help cover the cost.

I could go on, but you get the point: We would not be planning a celebration if you had not shown compassionate hearts and remarkable generosity.

Our plans for celebration will unfold in a community that is richly blessed. The area



Something to celebrate: Catherine's is a story of miracles, Executive Director Karen Kaashoek says.

is recognized as a wonderful place to live and raise a family. It is home to leading colleges and a university. It has exceptional health care resources. We even are recognized for having great beer!

Yet, even in our resource-rich city, people are being left behind at a troubling rate. Wealth distribution curves show our nation's poor and low-income families don't even appear on the charts. While many now have an insurance card, far too many have learned that the card does not gain them access to medical care.

That's a background for celebration?

Emphatically, yes! Catherine's was born out of need, continues to address need, and is committed to an ongoing, compassionate and affordable response to the needs of our community. We have done that with your help, and we pledge to continue. Come on, join the celebration!

More than an appointment

By Sheetal Maragiri
AmeriCorps VISTA

When you help patients at Catherine's Health Center, you are opening the door to an appointment with a provider and much more.

Because patients face many barriers, choosing healthy options can be hard — or impossible. Behind Catherine's open door, new choices are available.

The skills and training of AmeriCorps VISTA (which is like a domestic Peace Corps) and volunteers help patients in a holistic way, with health coaching that addresses diet, exercise, alcohol use, smoking and more. Working through the "Heart Smart" connections program, funded by AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, volunteer coaches extend the impact of your support by helping patients improve their knowledge and change their health habits.

The approach is working. Healthier eating and increased exercise are behind lower blood pressures, reduced cholesterol levels, lower body weights and fewer office visits. In short, patients not only get medical care when they need it, they improve their health and need emergency care less often.

Thanks for helping Catherine's create a winning formula for better health.



Sheetal Maragiri

Here's the way it all started

Editor's Note: *This article is reprinted from Catherine's first newsletter, published in the spring of 1997. It was written by Frank Lynn, one of the early planners and co-founders of the clinic. It has been modified minimally to clarify references and ease reading.*

It all began on June 2, 1993. A small group of community activists met at the Creston Neighborhood Association to discuss the health care needs of Grand Rapids' near Northeast Side: Father Jack from St. Alphonsus Parish; Pastor Henry from Coit Community Church; Nancy Gritter from Community Education; Helen Lehman from Creston Neighborhood Association; Frank Lynn from the Neighbors of Belknap Lookout; and Audrey Moore from the Butterworth Med Station.

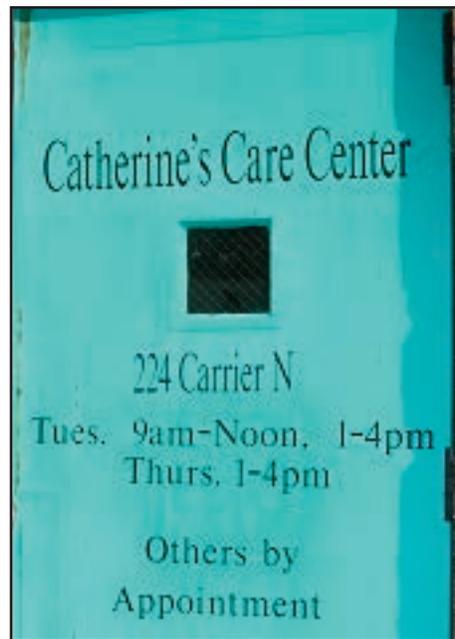
There was no medical clinic north of Michigan Street. The last one in Creston was closing, and the well-baby facility at Plainfield United Methodist Church was being shut down. We evaluated our resources and we visioned.

We dubbed ourselves the Community Care Collaborative, and we dreamed of a clinic like Baxter Community Center — of the community and by the community. We hoped and we went forward with a second gathering on June 29th. We would not give up.

On Nov. 30, 1993, we held our first Senior Care Day at Carrier Crest Apartments. It was a collaboration between Saint Mary's and Butterworth hospitals. We gave flu shots and did cholesterol, blood pressure and sugar testing and dietary counseling.

We were packed. Over a hundred seniors attended, and by the end of the day, we were out of vaccine. What a success!!

During the winter of 1994, things began to come together. Saint Mary's Hospital stepped forward with a proposal called MOW, Mercy on Wheels. MOW, a vision of Melanie Brim, who was head of Ambulatory Care at Saint Mary's, and Helen Lehman, would have rehabilitated an old



In the beginning: "Get your health care behind the blue door" was a frequent introduction to what then was Catherine's Care Center.

Saint Mary's mammogram bus into a mobile clinic.

We began to hold planning meetings and included the Health Department. By March 1994, we had received a \$30,000 grant from the Redemptorists, a Catholic order of priests who staffed St. Alphonsus, for the project. Then: disaster!! Rehab of the mammogram bus would be at least \$60,000. TOO much.

In August, Helen wrote a Housing and Urban Development start-up grant. We continued to hold special clinics in the community, immunizations at East Leonard School, and cardiovascular tests at National Night Out.

We pushed forward and negotiated for the basement space in St. Al's Church. They became a full partner in the project. Then, in January 1995, we received the matching HUD grant for \$50,000 of John Heinz money. We were in business.

We completed a business plan and began to raise matching funds. Luckily, thanks to the generosity of some community people,

Glimpses from 1993

The year was 1993, when the first active discussions were held about what would result, three years later, in Catherine's Care Center.

- Bill Clinton is president.
- The savings and loan collapse is big news.
- Vice President Al Gore breaks a tied Senate vote to pass the Deficit Reduction Act of 1993.
- A bomb explodes in the World Trade Center's underground parking garage.
- U.S. Rep. Paul Henry dies of brain cancer.
- "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" replaces David Letterman on NBC.
- "The Jon Stewart Show" debuts on MTV.
- North Carolina defeats Michigan for the NCAA basketball championship.
- John Logie is mayor of Grand Rapids.
- Kurt Kimball is city manager.
- Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You" is the year's top song.
- "Jurassic Park" is the year's top-grossing movie.
- "Schindler's List" gets the Best Film Academy Award.
- A neighborhood health center for Northeast Grand Rapids is imagined.

by summer, we were ready to receive planning approval. Rehabilitation (of basement space at St. Al's) began in the fall of 1995. Over two years of dreams and vision. On February 14, 1996, Valentine's Day, it was a reality.

The community was united with the opening of Catherine's Care Center, a unique collaboration providing low/no cost preventative health care to the families of the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods.

A long journey to better health

Native of Nigeria praises care from Catherine's

"Fully engaged and highly enthused" fall short when describing Justus.

The 34-year-old native of Nigeria lets his whole body illustrate his words. Speaking rapidly with a strong British colonial accent, he beamed when he said: "I feel too good, too good today! You guys are so good to me!"

Justus just finished his session with the physical therapist and was feeling no pains.

Now in the United States for about 18 years, Justus has seen his share of challenges. He lived in local missions when he couldn't pay his bills; he has been on the streets; he has been a renter.

Now working part time in the trucking and delivery industry, he is achy, sore and tired — sometimes too tired and sore to work. The knowledge that his father has been comatose for a year is part of the burden he carries.

Still, his personal desire to



The door to help: Justus is enthused about the care he gets through Catherine's Health Center.

"do right" drives his efforts to live according to a moral compass he finds lacking in others both in Nigeria and in the US. But his enthusiasm is undimmed.

"I love you guys," he gushed.

"You treat me so well. I would do anything to help you. If I was rich, I would help. If I get rich, I will help! You guys are so good to me!"

Asked how he discovered Catherine's, he paused.

"It was a while ago," he said. "It was a woman I met on the streets. She was a good woman. Like me, she was trying to do right. I helped her and she said to me, 'Justus, you've been good to me. You need a doctor and you've got no insurance. I can help you get to Catherine's.'"

"Her name was Stacy. S-T-A-C-Y."

He went on to say, with satisfaction, that he is one of only three people Stacy keeps in touch with.

"She's got a job now and she's trying to do right, just like me, so she calls me every few months," he said.

Life is complex for many, but especially for those whose cultural heritage, family experiences and life challenges are outside the mainstream. Justus is working hard to "do right" and he is thrilled to have medical help.

He doesn't aspire to wealth.

"I'm content," he said.

Still, Justus is working to improve his situation and hopes for health, well-being and the ability to "do right."

With your help, through Catherine's he is in a pretty good spot now.

Why I give to Catherine's Health Center

Gifts of every size are highly valued at Catherine's Health Center.

We enjoy reading notes and hearing comments that describe the motivation behind giving:

Terri commented, "I am so happy that United Way is pass-

ing [my gift] on to my designated recipient. ... Mike and I are both happy to give to Catherine's and believe in your mission to serve the underserved in their health care needs. Thank you all for that you accomplish."

Geraldine said, "I remember

being poor and having no health insurance. I'm pleased to support the work done by Catherine's."

A note with an **anonymous** gift reads, "In gratitude for help you gave our family several years ago. God richly bless your service."

What's going to work? Teamwork!

Catherine's joins in coalition to help improve community health

Getting people in any community to live healthier is a big job — too big, in fact, for any one organization.

The North End Wellness Coalition has come together to identify barriers to healthy living, to educate people at risk and to create strategies that encourage people toward healthy living.

Building on a long history of collaboration, Catherine's Heath Center is actively involved with a group of nearly 30 churches and organizations in northeast Grand Rapids hoping to make a positive impact in local neighborhoods.

Early discussions have fo-



Role players: Jess, left, and Ben, center, current VISTAs, and Andrew, a former VISTA and now a volunteer at Catherine's, represent the clinic in the effort to encourage healthier living. VISTA refers to Volunteers in Service to America, a sort of "domestic Peace Corps."

cused on identifying local concerns and on visioning how the group can make an impact.

Catherine's is pleased to have a spot at the table and looks forward to further strengthening its relationships with existing part-

ners, which include Creston Neighborhood Association, the Kent County Health Department, YMCA, New City Neighbors and a dozen area congregations.

Jess Eglinton, Andrew Har-

mon and Ben Verduin have been involved representing the health center in the discussions and look forward in hopes of a strong team impact for the people living nearby. It's teamwork with an impact!

Nurse practitioner joins staff

We are truly pleased to introduce Debra Bossenbroek as our newest health care provider.

Debra, trained as a nurse practitioner specializing in family practice, is more than familiar to many at Catherine's. She has worked successfully with us for several years as a nurse practitioner and as a nursing instructor with Calvin College.

In that role, she introduced many students to the health center. Many testify to the exceptional training they received.

Debra brings community nursing experience, a heart for excellence in health care, and a passion for improving the health of the community. Her special interest and area of focus is women's health.

She looks forward to providing family care and plans to launch a support group for women going through menopause.



Now on staff: Debra Bossenbroek is eager to help women in menopause build knowledge and coping skills.

Please join us in welcoming Debra to Catherine's Health Center.

United Way giving

Many friends of the clinic enjoy supporting the work of Catherine's Heath Center through United Way payroll contributions. Although we are not a United Way organization, you can designate your contributions by specifying Catherine's Health Center on your enrollment form. Our tax ID number is 20-3572418.

Looking backward and forward

By Ron Rozema
CHC Development Director

Looking back and looking ahead are both worthwhile and necessary.

Neither, however, should keep us from looking at the here and now. This issue invites you to look back with us and also to anticipate a celebration.

While you reflect, I invite you to ask, "How might I have touched a life through Catherine's?" Did you offer a prayer? Send a gift? Suggest someone visit us?

There are countless ways you may have helped someone. Maybe, you simply offered information.

As you look forward, you may want to ask, "How might I continue to touch lives with healing?"

Your prayer now will help. Your gift, directed to Catherine's, will be life-changing for someone who needs you.

As you look at your own present situation, you may want to ask, "Can I make a difference even beyond my own lifetime?"



Thinking beyond ourselves: Gifts of a lifetime touch lives beyond the life of the giver, says Ron Rozema, Catherine's Health Center development director.

When you look back on the ways you have been blessed, take into account your situation today and anticipate what lies ahead.

There may be no better time to make a

provision that will outlive you.

For ideas or a confidential discussion about how to make a life-changing gift through your will or estate plan, call or write us today. Then celebrate!

Help reduce your risk of illness

Health center can provide flu vaccinations

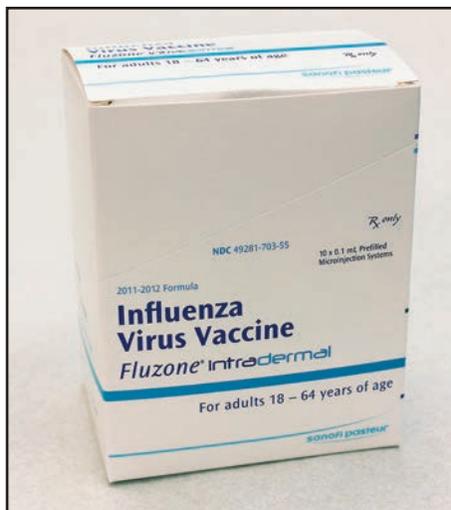
With fall upon us, it reminds us flu season runs from late fall through spring, typically peaking in January.

Because Catherine's Health Center wants you to stay healthy, the clinic joins the Kent County Health Department and others urging you to have a flu shot.

The vaccine reduces your risk for the most dangerous strain of influenza and helps reduce the spread of the disease.

Do you know someone who needs a flu shot but can't afford it? Catherine's can help. Have them call the health center at 616-336-8800.

For more information on flu and flu vaccines, visit www.flu.gov.



For your protection: Catherine's Health Center can help people who can't afford it get their flu shots. (Photo by Centers for Disease Control)

Wish List — 2015

Here are some items Catherine's Health Center could use:

- "Forever" postage stamps
- Board-style paper cutter
- Diabetes education materials
- Floor vacuum
- Centrifuge
- Automatic blood pressure cuffs
- The Rapid bus passes

For more detailed information on any of these items or other gift ideas, please contact Catherine's Development Director Ron Rozema.