



Catherine's

HEADLINES

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Checking up: Eulalee has her blood pressure checked at Catherine's.

From the director: Staff is energized by clinic's mission

By Karen Kaashoek
CHC Executive Director

"When you're up to your eyeballs in alligators, it's hard to remember that your mission is to drain the swamp."

Some weeks, it seems that the alligators are too abundant and too close. Life brings crises into the lives of valued staff members and volunteers. Deadlines for critical projects loom. New opportunities emerge and shouldn't be ignored or even deferred.

Meanwhile, there are people in the waiting room and on the phone lines in need of care. Add in the wonderful, exciting happenings that call for attention, or at least our presence, and the days can seem very short.

None of this, however, is complaining. We are energized by the opportunities as well as the demands because, behind everything that happens, we have a shared passion for our mission. Every day, I am amazed and impressed as staff members and volunteers set their personal lives aside to greet patients, provide medical care, complete referrals, perform testing, offer encouragement, and do whatever is needed to help.

It is truly heartwarming, and I wish you could experience what I do. Perhaps you do, as your support, kind words, gifts and prayers are a key to energizing us as well. And that wouldn't be possible unless you have some idea of what we do and the circumstances in which we work. Thank you very much!

Patient seeks *Open Door*, finds *Quality Care*

Health care at Catherine's
is 'a blessing all around'

By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper
AmeriCorps VISTA member

Eulalee was spending time with family in Michigan, away from her home in Jamaica, when elevated blood pressure and blood sugar levels landed her in a hospital emergency room. In need of a health care provider, and without health insurance, Eulalee found Catherine's, "a godsend," she said, "a blessing all around."

At home in Jamaica, Eulalee did not have

a provider, either, and she was taking discontinued medications. Now, Eulalee has medicine that will treat her health concerns.

At home, Eulalee did not have access to women's health services. At Catherine's, Eulalee received her first pap smear in 10 years, as well as a mammogram, ultrasound, and biopsy — all of which, she was happy to say, came back with good results.

Thanks to your support, Eulalee had an *Open Door* to turn to when she needed help, but more than that, she found *Quality Care*: "Nobody acted like we were a burden," she said. "Deb [my nurse practitioner] made me feel important."

Breaking bad habits: It's possible!

By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper
AmeriCorps VISTA member

“Old habits are hard to break.”

That may be generally true, but mix in scarce resources, little motivation and limited knowledge, and the odds become truly unfavorable. But they are not impossible.

Emphasizing each patient's active participation in his or her own health management, Catherine's has identified behaviors that can substantially reduce health risks and their costs, improve patient's lives, and reduce down time. And it's working!

In a recent sample of 106 patients, more than 44 percent reported exercising more often each week. Those who responded said they added exercise on more than two days per week. More than 33 percent reported reducing their smoking — a truly hard habit to break.

Catherine's is happy to share the good news and looks forward to sharing more, almost as much as the clinic enjoys celebrating with patients who make gains in their health.



Out in the field: Participants of Catherine's community gardening program visit New City Urban Farm to learn how to better care for their plants.

Grant improves technology

By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper
AmeriCorps VISTA member

In late 2012, friends of Catherine's voted online, helping the health center secure a grant from Trivalent Group through its CompassionIT program. The clinic is happy to confirm the work is in progress

With the funding, the technology capacity will improve significantly, and Catherine's will be able to participate even more fully with the network of medical care providers. In addition, the safety and confidentiality of patients' health care information will be even more secure, yet accessible to providers when needed.

The assessment by Trivalent engineers confirmed what the clinic already knew: The system, though designed and tended carefully by experts, was dated and simply lacked the capabilities to keep pace with current and emerging standards.

With Trivalent in the lead, several of their business partners contributed expertise and



Out with the old: One look at the clinic's server convinced Trivalent of the need for improvement.

components that will provide Catherine's with a technology system to meet the needs of the growing clinic. Joining to help move this important project forward, Nokomis Foundation honored the health center with a new grant to help with the cost of infrastructure, including underground construction for cable installation.

Giving opportunity

While Catherine's is not a United Way agency, it is easy to designate your United Way payroll gifts 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. Please feel free to pass the word to friends and family, along with the assurance that all gifts will be put to immediate use to provide health care for people in need. We would be pleased if you let us know your plans by returning the enclosed gift envelope with a note that says "United Way Gift." Thank you!

Clinic has a role in Medicaid expansion

Catherine's Health Center trained to help people seeking health coverage

By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper
AmeriCorps VISTA member

While many details of Michigan's Medicaid expansion plan await clarification, Catherine's is again stepping up to improve knowledge and access to health care information.

Through a partnership with Michigan

Consumers for Healthcare, the health center is approved as a Navigator agency. That means Catherine's has trained personnel available to offer public education, outreach, and application support to people looking for health coverage.

Uninsured people — and those who purchase insurance on their own, including self-employed people — will receive fair and impartial information and services to help guide them through the application process.

As a Navigator agency, Catherine's is committed to providing accurate, unbiased

information, to offering assistance in completing applications, to helping purchasers make changes to their account when their circumstances change, and to referring consumers to the right party when they have complaints, questions or grievances.

The entire Navigator program is funded through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Catherine's is excited about this new role and looks forward to providing the assistance that will help people make their own informed decisions. Watch for more details about this program on the clinic's website this fall.

Together we can!

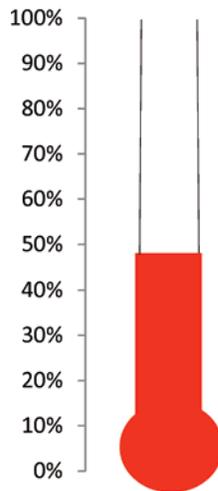
By Ron Rozema
CHC Development Director

A pastor friend of Catherine's inspired us with the words, "Together we can ..." — a theme he picked up on a recent mission trip.

Not long after that, a patient shared the happy story of her return to health, adding, "I just don't know where I'd be without Catherine's Health Center!"

It struck me again: Together, we are meeting the needs of real people! So, do you need some fresh ideas on how we can come together to provide Open Doors and Quality Care?

1. Call us to arrange a before or after-hours tour.
2. Invite us to tell your church or small group about our work.
3. Include us in your prayers.
4. Become a monthly donor and touch many lives.



5. Use the gift envelope to send us a message, a question or a gift.

6. Tell a friend about Catherine's and why you support the mission.

7. Consider increasing your gift to make a greater impact.

8. Include Catherine's in your will or estate plan to help beyond your lifetime.

9. Honor a friend or family member with your gift.

10. Commit to multiple-year gifts to help over time.

Thank you for improving the health of our community

through your support!

Do you have friends or family who may be interested in Catherine's? Watch for our new, forwardable email messages.

Do we have your current email address? If not, let us know with a message at rozema@catherineshc.org.

Thank you!



Heirloom-ready: You could win this beautiful quilt in a raffle for Catherine's Health Center.

Scrappy stars quilt to benefit health center

Jenny Lynn, talented quilter, accountant, and friend of Catherine's, is donating a new quilt to benefit the work of Catherine's Health Center.

This is the fourth time Jenny has graciously donated her work to us, and it's a real beauty!

Tickets, priced at \$2 each or 3 for \$5, are available from any staff member or volunteer.

Gifts from retirement plans

For donors 70½ or older, the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 allows gifts to qualified charities from retirement plans prior to year-end 2013. While simple to arrange, these gifts can take a little time, so act soon. Contact Catherine's Health Center or visit the IRS website through this link, <http://bit.ly/giving13>, for more information.

Meet another clinic team member

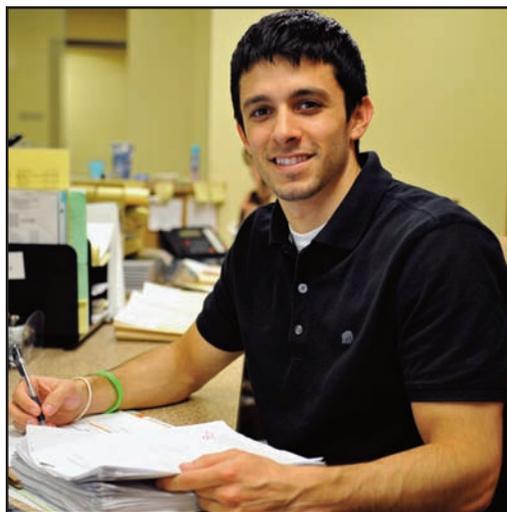
Clinical supervisor
chose Catherine's
'to make a difference'

By Lyndi Weener-Kuiper
AmeriCorps VISTA member

An exceptional group of talented people form the core of Catherine's health care team. At the hub of the clinic, Mark Contreras, clinical supervisor, oversees and coordinates all aspects of the patient care experience.

The youngest of three sons, Contreras was influenced by his mother's career as a nurse. Although she now has advancing Alzheimer's disease, her role as a people helper spoke to her son, shaping his involvement with the Academy for Health Careers and leading to Grand Valley State University's Kirkhof School of Nursing.

While there, Contreras launched an online business selling used electronic devices. Success led to a business opportunity with a large company and, although the compensation was hard to beat, he found it was not ultimately satisfying.



"I wanted to utilize my education and the skills that I worked so hard to obtain," Contreras said. "I wanted to make a difference and impact people's lives in a meaningful way."

Returning to West Michigan from his native Jackson, Contreras passed his nursing board exam on the first attempt and began his employment search. He found Catherine's and began volunteering in early 2012. Five months later, he was hired when the lead nurse position opened.

Contreras said he has found

the satisfaction he was looking for, finds his own values lined up well with Catherine's, and now thinks about how to prepare himself to do the most good for the clinic's patients over the long haul.

As a first-time homeowner, Contreras is enjoying personalizing his new place, sometimes with the help of his father, who has become his mother's main caregiver. Away from work, Contreras enjoys sports and exercise, including soccer with a recreational co-ed team.

Using his skills: Mark Contreras, a registered nurse, says Catherine's values line up well with his own.

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

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www.CatherinesHC.org



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Grand Rapids, MI 49505
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Thank you for your support