

Mission Initiates *Common Ground*



(From Left to Right) Charlotte Gibson and Julia Gutierrez have been paired through the Mission's *Common Ground* program, an effort in offering side-by-side support for patients with chronic illnesses. The two are shown here with Dr. Mary Klein during their first meeting.

Friends of the Medical Care Mission are invited to learn about and become part of *Common Ground*, a side-by-side support program.

Drs. Mary Klein, Molly Graham, Darrold Stoebner and George Woodward are working with Rev. Amy Wilson, Director of Spiritual Wellness, to match patients who have diabetes with members of congregations of faith who also have diabetes.

The program will be built around shared experience and an effort to bear with one another in learning how to manage an illness that affects every aspect of life and every member of each family.

"*Common Ground* is an effort to put people in a position to develop relationships, to learn from each other and to realize the benefits of community," Amy said. "We're asking people to talk about what they know, to share a little bit of

their experience, to reach out to each other and get to know one another."

The program will include group meetings and meetings of each pair to discuss diet, exercise, medication, follow-up appointments and other issues of physical and spiritual health.

A few members from various congregations have agreed to be involved in the pilot group, and preliminary meetings have begun. Others who are interested are invited to contact Amy by phone at 325-676-3104, Ext. 113 or by e-mail at amy@medicalcaremission.org.

Check us out Online!

The Mission's WordPress blog is now easily accessible from the web site! You may view articles and videos by going to www.medicalcaremission.org and clicking on "News" and/or "Articles." Be sure to post a comment! Also, the Mission has its own Facebook page, so log in and become a fan to view the photos. And follow us on Twitter! These social networking outlets give you several ways to join the conversation about local health care and the efforts the Mission is making to serve the community.



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Heartbeat

Fall/Winter 2009



The Presbyterian Medical Care Mission exists to provide, in a Christian setting, quality health care to persons in the Abilene area.

Staff Volunteers at Clinic with Dr. Oz



Elia Cano, medical assistant, draws lab work for one of the 1,700 patients who sought medical attention at the TCARE clinic in Houston on September 26, 2009.

When more than 1,700 patients came through a free, one-day clinic in Houston, 15 volunteers associated with the Medical Care Mission were there to help. The clinic, known as the Texas Clinics Are Responding Event, or TCARE, was organized by the Lone Star Association of Charitable Clinics (LSACC), the National Association of Free Clinics (NAFC) and *the Dr. Oz Show*. TCARE put the spotlight on the work that the Medical Care Mission and other charitable clinics do every day to offer health care to the uninsured and under-insured in this country.

More than 700 volunteers, including 60-plus physicians, donated their time. Those associated with the Mission include Dr. Fred White, a founding board member, and Drs. Darrold Stoebner and George Woodward, who serve full-time at the clinic. Executive Director J. Scott Golding, vice president of LSACC's board of directors, served as a member of

—see *TCARE* on page 4

Medical Clinic Opens on Pine Street

On June 29, the medical clinic opened in its new location at 1857 Pine Street, after being closed for two weeks to allow for the transition.

Carl Scarborough was the first patient to be seen at the new clinic, which is three times as large as the previous medical facility at 302 Medical Drive. Carl and his wife, Kathy, live in Trent and were referred to the Mission a year ago, after Carl had a cyst removed at the hospital in Sweetwater.

Now Carl comes to the Mission regularly so Dr. Stoebner may help him manage his diabetes. The Scarboroughs say they are happy with the level of care they receive and are glad that the Mission now has more room so that more patients may be seen each day.

—see *MOVE* on page 4



Carl Scarborough, shown above with his wife, Kathy, and at left with Dr. Darrold Stoebner, was the first patient to be seen at the medical clinic's new facility, which is located at 1857 Pine Street.



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from the Executive Director

Yes, you read the front of this edition of the *Heartbeat* correctly. This is the Fall/Winter edition, and another year is almost behind us.

I must say that this 26th year of serving our patients has been one of our most exciting years in so many ways.

First, our move to 1857 Pine Street was an unexpected blessing that has allowed us to expand our capacity to see patients and utilize additional volunteers while providing much-needed space.

This move is a making a true difference. Our patients appreciate the beautiful facility and the conveniences of being closer to other medical services. Plus, the ability to seamlessly add to our ministry patients who were previously seeking primary care in the Hendrick Trauma Center is saving our patients and the entire healthcare system valuable dollars.

Additionally, some of you know that 15 members of the staff and volunteers from the Mission went to Houston on September 26 to participate in a one-day clinic sponsored by Dr. Mehmet Oz. The event was a wonderful opportunity to bond as staff, to provide crucial care to more than 1,700 patients, to participate in the largest non-disaster related one-day medical event in American history and to bring attention to the work that the staff and volunteers of 1,200 clinics across the nation like ours do every day to meet the needs of people in our communities.

While viewing the event as it aired on October 15, we were all struck by the fact that the heart-wrenching stories highlighted on that day were no different than the hurting patients we see each and every day here at the Mission. It reminded all of our staff and board what a joy it is to provide hope and healing to our patients.

What you probably didn't know is that the because of our supporters, the Medical Care Mission is in the top 5 percent of charitable clinics across the nation in terms of budget and number of patients served each year. And I want to personally thank you for allowing us to be a national leader in the effort to care for this country's uninsured.

Last year, America's charitable clinics served 4,000,000 patients who had fallen through the ever-growing gap in our nation's healthcare system. In 2010, that number is expected to shockingly double to 8,000,000.

What this means for the Mission and our efforts to provide care to hurting families in the Big Country is that we must rapidly prepare to meet these increasing demands.

These demands bring with them challenges of raising funds for tangible needs such as supplies for daily office visits and lab work. But more important is our crucial need to add a third full-time provider to our staff. With the increase in patients that is being projected nationally and with our daily pressure to see more and more patients here each week, we know that the time to respond is now.

The relief of the patients we help tells the story of how valuable these supplies and the time of our staff and volunteers really are, but I wish you could see the faces of the patients who are being turned away each week because we don't have the staff and resources to add them to our program. It is heartbreaking because their pain is real and immediate, and we want to help them in a timely manner.

Still, I believe we can and we will meet the growing need with the help of our faithful supporters as awareness of the increase in demand for care at the Mission continues to grow. We have been entrusted with the care of our neighbors, and I am grateful to all of you who rise to the challenge to help us at the Mission keep pace with the need. Please continue to pray for and support this ministry of healing as we meet the demands of today and prepare to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Memorial & Honor Gifts

Received May 12 Through September 30, 2009

Gifts to the Medical Care Mission in memory or honor of a loved one offer a lasting tribute and sustain this ministry of healing. Upon receipt of the gift, the Mission's staff will send notification to the honoree's family. Please send your memorial and honor gifts to:

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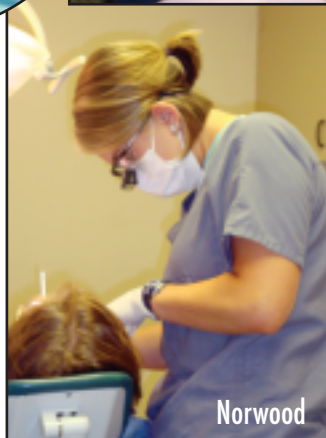
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Baylor Students Serve at Dental Clinic



Dakota Davis (left) and Leslie Norwood, fourth-year students from Baylor College of Dentistry, served at the Mission for one week as part of the Community Preceptor Program. Not shown are students Clarissa Esparaza and Heather Brown.



Four dental students from Baylor College of Dentistry have completed one-week rotations at the Medical Care Mission's dental clinic this summer as a part of the Community Preceptor Program.

"All of the students have been remarkably trained," said Dr. Gene Shelhamer, D.D.S., who has been appointed as a preceptor faculty member by the College of Dentistry while students are serving at the Mission. "We have been very impressed with their skills and demeanor and chair-side manner."

Heather Brown and Clarissa Esparaza treated patients at the clinic July 20-24, and Dakota Davis and Leslie Norwood served at the Mission August 10-14. The students selected the Mission as their site.

"I knew it was an area where many people needed to be served," Norwood said. "So many people don't have access to care, and this is the only place they can go, the only way to take care of their oral health. Also, the Mission's staff was happy to welcome us and willing to work with

Baylor." Norwood encouraged her classmate, Davis, to join her at the Mission.

"This experience has opened my eyes and makes me want to make sure I'm involved in some kind of clinic like this in future," Davis said. "I realize the importance of helping the under-served."

Lou Ann Stevens, the dental clinic's program director, said the students' attention to the overall well-being of the patients has been matched by their skill in providing dental care.

"They are all really go-getters," she said. "They are very knowledgeable and have done a phenomenal job."

All of the students are in their fourth year, which is a requirement for the preceptor program. The program's purpose includes providing an orientation to community dental practice, primarily focusing on private practice in non-urban settings. After the rotations have been completed, the students and the preceptors will evaluate the experience.

Three Join Medical Clinic's Staff

(From Left to Right) Molly Graham, Pharm. D., joined the staff in July. Dr. Graham also serves as assistant professor at Texas Tech's Health Sciences Center. Linda Brookreson began serving as the Mission's appointment clerk in May, and Josie Pineda, LVN, joined the staff in June. Please look forward to reading more about Molly, Linda and Josie in future editions of the *Heartbeat*.



staff perspective: **Tami Sooter**

senior medical assistant



Tami Sooter, Senior Medical Assistant, was born and raised in Abilene and has served at the Medical Care Mission for 10 years. Even before that, she served as an intern at the Mission while she was earning her medical assistant's certificate from Cisco Junior College. Tami and her husband, Thomas, have one son, Grant. The Sooters are members of Holy Family Catholic Church.

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of messages from the Mission's staff members as they describe what it means to care for the whole person.

As an intern, I was able to learn about the Patient Assistance Program, and now that is what I spend much of my time coordinating at the Mission. Through this program, our patients are able to receive a three-month's supply of their medications for conditions such as depression, hypertension and diabetes for \$3 per prescription. We work with more than a dozen major pharmaceutical companies to make that happen.

I enjoy this part of our program because we're doing our patients a great service. They often come to me as new patients with a list of six or seven medications they should be taking but can't afford to fill. Some of them take their medication every other day at best, just to make it last longer. When we tell them that we can save them hundreds of dollars and still make sure they have access to the medication they need, many of them can't believe it. They're so grateful and say that the Mission is a blessing.

It's a blessing for me, too. It is a perk of my job to be able to look in the eyes of people who are not feeling well and who are thinking there's no way they can afford the medication they need and say, "I can help you." It takes a ton of paperwork, but it is all worth it. It also takes time to communicate the needs of our patients to the pharmaceutical companies.

For example, one of our patients needs to take twice the amount of insulin that is usually granted by the pharmaceutical companies for the purposes of the Patient Assistance Program. That means that it would still cost her \$1,000 for a six-week supply after receiving help from our program. There is no way she could pay that amount, so I knew she would be forced to go without the insulin that she needed. I wrote a letter to the company, explaining the situation. I trust that we will be able to make sure this patient receives what she needs; it just takes a little time and effort to make sure the companies know what is going on in the clinics, especially as more and more people need help.

The rest of the staff and I are grateful to be here to help in any way we can.

TCARE, continued from page 1

the core committee that coordinated the event with *the Dr. Oz Show*. Coverage of the event was presented on the *Dr. Oz Show* on October 15, 2009. Photos are posted on the Mission's Facebook page, and articles and videos are available on the blog (<http://medicalcaremission.org/postcategory/news/>).

MOVE, continued from page 1

"We like the personal care we receive here," Kathy said. "We hope more physicians and nurses will be able to come to the Mission and help keep up with the increase in patients we have witnessed since we've been coming here." The Mission's dental clinic remains at 294 Medical Drive and will move into the building at 302 at a later date. Long-term plans for the Mission include building a facility atop the hill on highway 80, where the dental facility now exists, and housing both facilities under one roof.