

# The Pulse

of The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

RESTORING HEALTH & RESTORING LIVES • 4TH QUARTER 2011



## Who is My Neighbor?

Living in Central Phoenix, my home is in a diverse community. Driving to work or to school with my kids, I pass by million dollar homes as well as cramped, run-down apartment buildings. Kids are rushing down the sidewalk trying to get to school on time, and not far away, homeless people wander near the bus stops. I wonder at times who cares for those who appear to be mentally ill, and if they know where to get shelter. I wonder but I usually keep driving.

It must have been different when most people lived in small towns and knew each other's names. In a close knit neighborhood, if you met someone on the street that needed help, you probably knew them, and would be more likely to stop and provide assistance.

Not now. Chances are the person being attended to by paramedics on the bench by the grocery store is nobody I know, and besides, it's the government's job to care for the sick, right? And, I could get sued if I got involved and there was a bad outcome. Again, I keep moving.

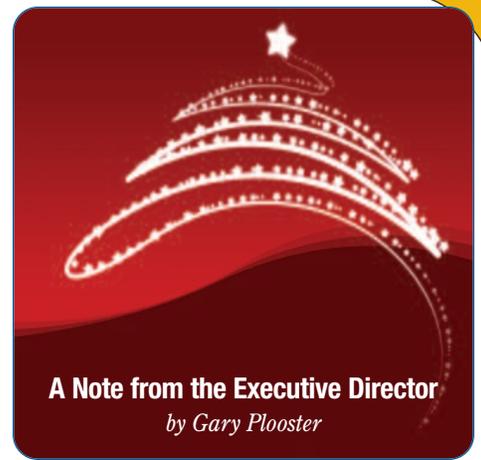
But something troubles me. I realize that God has gifted me with medical skills, and I wonder if I'm using them to the fullest extent that God would have me to. Not only do I have the ability to provide medical care, but God has placed his Spirit inside me, and he can choose to minister through me spiritually as well.

And then I reflect upon the Samaritan who stopped to assist the man who had been beaten and robbed. He lacked medical skills, but he was willing to serve. His heart broke for the injured man, leading him to bind his wounds and pay for additional care that he could not provide. He had no legal responsibility to act, but he honored God by loving his neighbor.

Personally, it's much easier for me to focus on personal holiness, stewardship, and my responsibilities to my wife and family. I enjoy the quiet life. But Isaiah had harsh words for people that attempted to please God with impressive expressions of piety and fasting, while neglecting to serve the needy. It seems that he wants us to respond to his love through heart-felt concern for those outside our homes, and to consider the poor and afflicted in our communities to be our neighbors. Zechariah echoes Isaiah's words, exhorting the people to cancel their religious festival and instead to show mercy and compassion by caring for the poor and the oppressed. Jesus himself was not impressed by the piety of the priest and the Levite that ignored the plight of the injured man in their path. In short, our God is less concerned with our religious services than he is with the way we treat our neighbor.

Yesterday in clinic, I met a young mom who lives near the clinic who is bearing the responsibilities of motherhood with minimal income or marketable skills. Under the pressures of financial strain, parenthood, minority status and inner city residency, how does she view her responsibility to her neighbor? With joy on her face, she shared how she volunteers in the food bank and also at the thrift shop. She's saying to God, "Here am I, send me."

Who is my neighbor? Maybe I'm asking the wrong question. The question didn't seem relevant for the Samaritan. Maybe even more importantly, Jesus says he himself is the neighbor that we are feeding, clothing, or providing shelter to, when we do this for the "least of these." Are the orphan, the widow, the alien and the destitute hidden from my sight, through fear or indifference? Lord, move our hearts to honor you by caring for our neighbors! - by Dr. Paul Lorentsen



### A Note from the Executive Director

by Gary Plooster

This time each year, we celebrate the fact that God loved us so much that he sent His only son into the world with a mission of redeeming us to Himself. My pastor recently reminded me that Jesus twice rendered himself vulnerable for my sake. He entered the world as a baby and like all babies he was totally dependent on others for every aspect of human need. Think about that! What an amazing thought, i.e. humanly speaking, as a baby, Jesus could not care for himself. Even more amazing, he humbled himself thusly in willing submission to his Father.

Jesus humbled himself a second time when he went to the cross. Again, he did it willingly - for your sake and mine. What an amazing love this is! If you believe in it, the question is: how do we respond? Do we simply say thanks; or, do we attempt to live our lives in such a way as to allow God's Spirit and Love to work through us.

In his heartfelt article in this issue of *The Pulse*, Paul Lorentsen shares how he contemplates his responsibility to honor God with the gifts he has been given. He writes that Isaiah did not appreciate those who were pious and fasted without serving the needy; and Paul further points out that Jesus himself was not impressed that the injured man was passed by in Luke 10.

This Christmas, I encourage you to give glory to God while you celebrate with family, friends and loved ones. But I also challenge you to make a difference in the life of a "neighbor" and to let God's love flow through your life to the "least of these." How are you going to respond to this amazing love?

Lord, grant us humility, move our hearts and live through us not only at Christmas but all year long.

*Have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed 2012!*



## “God Has Blessed Me”

By Irene Phillips

I was born in Medan, Indonesia which was part of the Dutch East Indies; however, I basically grew up in Southern California graduating from high school in Orange County. When I was sixteen years old I accepted Christ into my life by going forward at a Billy Graham crusade. A woman who was a total stranger shared Christ with me, took the time to answer my questions, gave me a Bible, and followed up on our conversation.

As an Army wife at the age of twenty, I moved to Italy. Eventually we wound up back in North Carolina where I developed an interest in healthcare and became trained in x-ray and eventually I was cross-trained in ultrasound which I have been doing ever since.

God has blessed me with an interesting, full and meaningful life. I have three grown children; two sons in the army and a daughter along with two grandchildren.

I have been an ultra-sonographer for twenty years. It has been an incredible experience volunteering at the Clinic because it allows me to “give back” and be part of a team reaching others for Christ much like a stranger did for me so long ago.

It was exciting when the Clinic received a \$35,000 grant from the Thunderbirds for a new, state of the art ultrasound machine and even more exciting when I was asked to be a part of the selection and installation process. The new machine is as good (if not better) than any I have used in private practice. The images are the highest quality available, in color and can be transmitted via the Internet to an offsite radiologist who reads images for the Clinic at no charge. It is wonderful to be part of a team that can provide this level of quality care.

Examples of ultrasounds done by the Clinic: thyroid, abdomen, pancreas, spleen, kidney, liver, gynecological, soft tissue and cysts.

I have volunteered at the Clinic twice each month since 2006 and would encourage all those involved with healthcare to volunteer as well. It is richly rewarding and I look forward to being involved for many more years.



**Used Cars:** We sold over \$10,000 in cars!! Do you have a car you could donate? Call us – it is really easy. We will pick it up and you will be helping to provide healthcare for those to have no other means to obtain it. 602 254-0445

**The Arizona Charitable Tax Credit** What better stewardship is there than to give your tax dollars to a qualifying charity rather than to the state. Dollar for dollar, your tax liability is reduced by what you donate (with limits) to the Clinic. *Get the details on our web site!*



### The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

Restoring Health • Restoring Lives

1929 W. Fillmore St., Phoenix, AZ 85009

602.254.0445

gplooster@tnccclinic.org

www.TheChristianClinic.org

**APS Grant:** \$60,000 was granted to the Clinic by APS for solar energy which is expected to reduce our expenses by \$300 to \$400 per month. An additional benefit is five covered parking spaces! Stop by sometime and see how the Clinic is going “green.”



### Mobile Onsite Mammography

Recognizing that a large percentage of funds raised for breast cancer were directed towards research Sandra Younger, a member of Open Door Fellowship decided to make mammograms more accessible to the uninsured. She and a co-worker of Pioneer RV Park, inspired by an organization called Bras For A Cause, raised funds to provide mammograms for 18 patients of The Neighborhood Christian Clinic.

## Forgiveness

by Emily Snavelly, Nurse Practitioner

Is it safe to say we all have had struggles with forgiveness? Unforgiveness leads to physical ailments, such as headaches, neck to back tension and pain, maybe stomach upset. I’m guilty. Forgiveness is definitely not an easy topic.

### METS Conference on Forgiveness

Thankfully, this year’s METS conference in Payson offered some mind-opening, applicable approaches to incorporate a focus on forgiveness into “Whole Person Care.” Dr. David Levy offered personal and patient stories about talking to God concerning anger and forgiveness.

A patient recently came into the clinic after a three year absence. She started to have some serious physical problems and complaints. In taking her history, we discussed if something may have changed in the past six months, when most of the problems began. This led to the topic of her mother passing away four years ago, and how she is still angry; she has not been able to step into a church since her mother passed. She is angry with God; “Why did my mom have to die?” she said.

She does believe in the Creator, His Son, and the Word, but as tears flowed down her face we talked. I trust the Spirit was leading. We talked about the idea of telling God how she really feels, words she has not expressed – it’s okay to tell God you are angry; He listens and cares and wants to know how we are truly doing. Philippians tells us that in “...everything by prayer and petition...” we should be “letting God know [our] concerns.” He knows our thoughts before we think them. As this patient left, her demeanor was very different from when our encounter began. I don’t know how the Spirit will be moving in her life, but I look forward to her follow up visit and talking about it with her!



### Clinic Stats

	Patient Visits	Volunteers	Hours
September	671	77	638.1
October	641	73	627.2
November	646	78	637.2