

# The Pulse

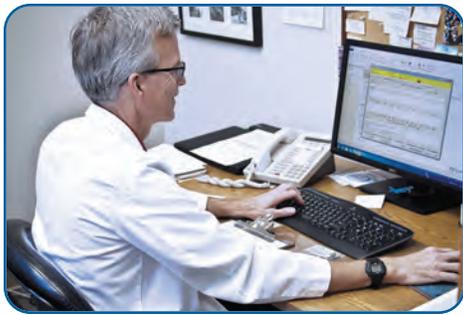
of The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

RESTORING HEALTH & RESTORING LIVES • DECEMBER 2017

## “Count it all Joy”

by Dr. Paul Lorentsen

**A**s I walked past the exam room and glimpsed at my next patient, who I will call Lupe, I wondered why she was scheduled to return so soon after the visit she had just a few weeks ago. The nurse indicated that she was here for a follow up appointment, but a quick review of her medical record didn't mention anything about a rapid follow up visit, and I began to assume that someone had made a scheduling error. Aware that many of our patients must take the city bus or find a friend to drive them to their appointments, I prepared to apologize for the unnecessary appointment. After a few minutes with Lupe, I realized that no apology would be necessary.



She had needed a biopsy of her thyroid gland, and had been working through the financial arrangements at the hospital prior to having the procedure. Now completed, Lupe proudly showed me the needle marks in her neck where the specialist had taken the specimens. Knowing that these biopsies are necessary to assess for cancer but are usually benign, I asked her how much she

had been charged. To my surprise, she had been charged a modest amount of money, and she thanked God that they were allowing her to make payments. I stepped away to remotely access her records at the hospital and returned to share the good news that the biopsy specimens were benign. Lupe wept with joy and praised God for the good news. I was relieved to hear the results, but dismayed that they still planned to take her to surgery to remove her entire thyroid gland; a surgery that would be very expensive. To my surprise, Lupe began praising God once again. Her husband had told her that they would proceed with the surgery in spite of its expense, because her life was worth much more than the amount the hospital was asking them to pay!

### *But she didn't stop there.*

Beaming, Lupe shared they would have money to pay for this, because just last month they had completed a long series of payments for dental work that she had required. She could have bemoaned the fact that they were finally out from under an oppressive debt only to take on another major expense, but she chose to see the timing as a blessing from God that allowed them to make payments for her needed thyroid surgery.

*continued on back*



## Reflections on Year One.

by Dr. Andrew Wong

**H**aving been on staff a little over a year, I was asked to reflect on my time here thus far. I previously shared briefly my background and testimony on how God has used my calling in medicine as a means to live out the Gospel among the urban inner-city poor. Being on staff has been more than just having a job, more than just practicing medicine and more than just doing something “good.” My job as a physician is just one part of the bigger ministry to which God has called me. Like those we serve, we too are broken and sinful; with the joys and blessings of ministry come many challenges and growing pains. I've been challenged and have learned a lot about my sinful nature and how difficult it is to leave selfish ambitions at the altar. Despite those things, God is still working through my time here and I wanted to share a few thoughts through the story of one patient.

### Ministry & Medicine.

The patient, whom I'll refer to as Jose, was born in Mexico where he had very limited prior medical care. He came to the Clinic the first time with knee & ankle pain & swelling. He has had this multiple times before receiving various treatments in Mexico, but this episode was particularly bad; he had been unable to keep a job in part due to this recurrent problem. The short of the medical side of his story is that he had untreated gout. Thanks to God's provision through Clinic donors, we had the procedural supplies, ultrasound machine & medications necessary to correctly diagnose & treat Jose.

Within a few months, his pain had diminished significantly and he was able to go back to work. A few more months later, he shared that he will soon have insurance and it may be his last visit with us. Unsuccessfully trying to hold back tears, Jose shared through an interpreter his gratitude for our care, particularly when he was not able

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### Current Clinic Stats

	Patient Visits	Volunteers	Hours	Turn Aways
August	903	85	845.5	120
September	851	80	720.8	63
October	844	83	895.3	92

### Arizona Tax Credits

	Individual	Couple
Charitable Credit	\$ 400	\$ 800
Private School	\$ 1,089	\$ 2,177
Public School	\$ 200	\$ 400
Combined Total	\$ 1,689	\$ 3,377

Redirect your state income tax at literally no financial cost to you!

“Give without giving!”

[www.TheChristianClinic.org](http://www.TheChristianClinic.org)

## Volunteer Corner: Meet Bob Raatjes

Most people look forward to Fridays because it is the end of their work week. I look forward to Fridays because I get to volunteer at the Neighborhood Christian Clinic. I am 75 years old and have had the privilege of volunteering at the Clinic for the past thirteen years. I first learned about it from a golfing friend who volunteered at the Clinic as a dentist.

I work in the medication room. It is a very well-stocked pharmacy, and patients are given whatever medications they need as part of their visit at no additional cost. Even though I do not interact directly with patients, I very much feel part of the team that is providing healthcare and medications. These medications are especially important for those who have chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart or blood pressure disease, etc.

The first bullet point of the Clinic's mission statement is clear, i.e. to provide healthcare to the uninsured, working poor. Imagine having a family income of \$25,000 per year (or less) and your employer does not provide any health insurance. After paying for rent, groceries and other necessities of life, there just isn't any money left to pay for health care. So what do you do when a family member gets sick? Either you wait it out and pray for healing; or, without the Neighborhood Christian Clinic, you go to a hospital emergency room. Sure, they must treat you but the bill often times is thousands of dollars which is not affordable either.

God is mightily at work in the Clinic. It is the most friendly place to work I could ever imagine. From the receptionist to the nurse to an interpreter and to the providers of care, every patient is greeted in the name of God with professionalism and joy.

Even though I have been a hospital administrator, volunteering in the medication room does not require a medical background. The physicians double-check all of the prescriptions before he or she dispenses them to a patient. If you can read and have minimal computer skills, you can do the job.

I look forward to training some of you on a Friday morning.



*"Joy" continued from front*

Her joy was contagious. It wasn't based on her circumstances, instead it transformed each new struggle that she faced into an opportunity to experience God. So I wasn't surprised when she pointed to the shirt she was wearing, which displayed a cleaning company's emblem. How was this a blessing? She had just been hired by this company, and after only one day of work, they had told her that she could take whatever time was necessary to have her surgery, and that her job would be waiting for her when she had recovered. This job would help pay for the surgery!

James calls on us to "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds." Isn't it interesting that God gives us the choice to choose joy rather than bitterness or despair when problems come our way? The radiance of my patient's smile and her exclamations of praise to God demonstrate the fruit of this choice! May God give us strength to see our trials in the same manner!



*"Reflections" continued from front*

to pay for a couple of his visits. He asked if he could donate to the Clinic when he had the resources. Our patients have very little and I'm always amazed at their generosity; it often reminds me of the woman with the alabaster jar.

This is one of many stories in which I've seen God provide & work at the Clinic. Isaiah 61:1-2 says we have been called "to proclaim good news to the poor...bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn." Ministry & medicine don't just meet in a Christian Clinic setting. Missional living is something we are all called to be a part of; we must all live out this calling where we live, work, study and play (Romans 10:14-15). We need more Christian physicians and believers who are willing to go to the need, to the nations for the King.



## Pharmacy Growth Blesses a Patient

by Dr. Paul Lorentsen

God knows our needs! He is powerfully providing for the medical needs of our patients. One particular patient is an older woman who began receiving care at our Clinic a few years ago. I recall how she showed up for her first visit with a stack of forms for me to sign so that she could utilize the available programs to provide her discounted medication. It turned out that we had all but one of the medications that she needed in stock, but she continued to mail in the paperwork for the one remaining medicine.

This went on for years, until one day when her medication didn't arrive in the mail. Numerous phone calls to the drug company went unanswered. The patient was also grieving the recent death of her husband, so the timing was difficult for her, and her blood pressure began to increase. Desperate, she took the city bus to Walmart, where she was asked to pay over \$100 to receive the medication. She only had \$22, and they were willing to give her a small supply for that price.

### God's Provision.

Meanwhile, our new Clinic staff physician, Dr. Andrew Wong, had been working to add certain medications to our pharmacy that he felt would improve overall patient care. When the patient returned for her appointment, I noted that her blood pressure had increased, and she shared her struggle to try to obtain the medication, including the thrilling bus ride where the woman in front of her was literally combing ticks out of her hair. I was excited to tell her the medication she was working so hard to obtain was now available to her through our Clinic at no additional charge because Dr. Wong had added it to our pharmacy! She praised God for his provision, and I was amazed at his timing! Thank you God for paying attention to each of our needs!



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*Restoring Health & Restoring Lives*

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