

The Pulse

of The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

RESTORING HEALTH & RESTORING LIVES • DECEMBER 2018

Teacher or Doctor?

by Dr. Paul Lorentsen

Not all of us realized it when we entered medical school, but in many ways, doctors work in the field of education. I'm not sure how many of us would survive as teachers in the public school system, but we nevertheless find ourselves being called to duty as educators in the exam room. Maybe you might describe our role differently, but on a daily basis we are educating, training, correcting, even giving homework and then praising a job well done. When a large family accompanies the patient, sometimes we are even doing classroom management, as young kids are grabbing expensive medical equipment and tapping on the keys of the exam room computer while we attempt to interview and examine our patients.

Our highly trained volunteer physician had attempted to educate her patient in the care of his diabetes, but he didn't seem interested. In spite of advice, he had continued his usual diet, had gained weight, had blood sugars that were poorly controlled, and struggled with pain. It didn't seem to be simply a knowledge deficiency; instead it just appeared that he didn't care. Nevertheless, the doctor persisted in her efforts to train and encourage the patient, but rather than send him out the door with a firm handshake and a few words of motivation, she bowed her head with him and prayed for him.

I saw him for his next visit and as I read his chart, I wasn't sure I had the correct patient. The chart described an unmotivated, poorly controlled diabetic, but in my exam

room he was an engaged, eager patient with excellent recent blood sugar readings. He had lost 18 pounds, and his blood pressure was well controlled. Not only had his testing improved, but also he felt better, and his joint pains had resolved. As I listened further, he described the excellent care he had received from the previous physician, and then shared the key difference maker; she had prayed over him. Since that prayer, he had found the strength to make changes in his life he had been previously unable to make. He had known what to do, but could not find it in himself to take the difficult steps he needed to make. But since the prayer, he had been spending daily time with God, and through regular prayer he had been able to accomplish what had previously been unattainable.

Was I surprised by this? The teacher in me probably was. I had seen too many "failing" students in the past. Why would this "underachieving student" suddenly get an A in self-care? But the Christ follower in me shouldn't have been surprised. On our own energy and will power, we are limited in our ability to persist in doing what is good. But we know that "they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31) Praise God that in Him we have hope for change!



Current Clinic Stats

	Patient Visits	Volunteers	Hours	Turn Aways
August	842	139	1037.0	77
September	770	124	981.8	54
October	854	131	1005.1	37

The Need

by Gary Flooster, Executive Director

There is a tremendous need for health-care among the uninsured, underserved community. For whom the Clinic does provide care, their gratefulness is overwhelming. Yet, there are many whom are not seen simply because we lack adequate capacity.

The Clinic is dependent on volunteers, many of whom have similar commitments as Dr. Kutler who wrote of her experience as a Clinic volunteer in this issue of the PULSE. Many others are committed warriors who pray fervently and constantly over all aspects of the Clinic. Still others glorify God with faithful commitments to financially support the Clinic.

As you celebrate the birth of our Savior this year, we make a simple, direct plea for a gift in support of the Clinic's ministry of providing whole person healthcare to the uninsured working poor while sharing the Love and Gospel of Christ.

Please join our efforts! We cannot minister without your support.



Proverbs 19:17 says, "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done."

Volunteer Corner: Why I do what I do.

by Mary Jo Kutler, Volunteer

"Mom, why don't you just go and stop making excuses?"

I had toyed with volunteering at The Neighborhood Christian Clinic on Thursday nights for several months. God was getting my attention. I had peripherally followed the development of TNCC. I received information regarding the clinic's mission of how physicians and volunteers were serving the underserved in Phoenix. I thought, "This is like being on mission in my own backyard, I should volunteer." I had Thursday afternoons off so it seemed it would fit easily into my schedule. However, as each month passed, I made more excuses why I couldn't go. I would rationalize, "The clinic is designed for adults, they really don't need a pediatrician," or "I'm working so many hours, my children are so young and I'm already too committed...I'm too tired." Yet there was a tug on my heart telling me this was something I need to do. God was calling me.

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It was the first time in my life that I understood the concept of hearing the voice of God. I was listening to that still small voice.

I had just opened my private pediatric practice and was scheduled to be off a four day weekend. Coincidentally, there was a Medical Evangelism Teaching Strategy (METS) conference scheduled at the same time.



I told my family I could go because I already had arranged coverage for my practice. I also told them I wasn't sure if I should go to this conference because I had taken the weekend off specifically to spend with my family. My husband reminded me we already had day care set up and there was no need to worry about the time I would be away. My (7 year old) daughter boldly spoke up and told me to stop making excuses and to stop defending myself. It was humbling.

I went to the conference and learned the importance of why we do what we do. I learned how to pray with patients and how to take a spiritual history. It was a skill that improve over the next 20+ years, but I never realized the importance of that day in my kitchen when my daughter called me out for 'excuse making.' At that time, the clinic was a food pantry by day and a medical clinic by night. I worked in a small room with simple supplies surrounded by a large curtain to ensure patient privacy. God used me to minister to pediatric patients developing a small following of patients needing care each month.

A new clinic was built and I faithfully came every month traveling from the East

Valley. I was shocked that the administrators would continue a pediatric clinic because, to my knowledge, there were not many pediatric providers volunteering. I felt they were holding a pediatric clinic just for me and I didn't understand why they didn't close it down. I went each month ultimately developing a small group of patients who would return for various reasons.

I grew spiritually and used skills I learned at the METS conference both in my private practice as well as at TNCC. I enjoyed my time at the clinic and (because I hate to drive), I always asked one or two other volunteers to come with me to help. We would be greeted with smiles from compassionate staff and everyone enjoyed ministering.

Often, I was tired at the end of my work day and secretly didn't want to make the trip for still more patient care yet God sustained me and before I knew it, I became acutely aware of why I was there on any particular day.

It may have been an ability to solve a slight medical problem, or arrange for a pediatric patient to receive specialized care by the extended volunteers in the community. Many times it was not a medical problem at all; the family simply needed prayer for an unrelated issue. After each visit, I would drive home with my friend and we would review the evening.

We were always aware of how God's fingerprints were all over the clinic, the patients and the volunteers. We provided a service but that was the cover story. We were sharing the Truth of The Gospel. We actively prayed with patients and saw



God's healing power at work. Over the years, a small food pantry morphed into what we now know as the Neighborhood Christian Clinic which provides quality medical and dental care as well as spiritual care. And (which, in my personal growth is probably first and foremost), the clinic equips volunteers to share the Gospel in healthcare settings. It is a skill a child can learn but it takes boldness to put into effect. I know why I do what I do.

God calls us to pray; at the clinic I learned the power of prayer and how God hears and answers the simplest of prayers. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 1 John 5:14"

God calls us to share the Gospel and the clinic has taught me how to do this over time. I learned the process of building relationships with my patients and that God is faithful. "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.' Mark 16:15"

God calls us to give; there are many ways you can give. Whether you volunteer, pray or give financially, God will bless you. God has blessed me through my support of the Clinic and for that I am grateful.



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Thinking About Your Legacy?

Join others who have already decided to help secure the Clinic's future of *Restoring Health & Restoring Lives* for the uninsured and underserved through their estate plan. Interested? Please contact the Clinic or the Arizona Community Foundation at 602 381-1400 or 800 222-8221.

Have a Used Car?

Want to donate it to the Clinic? Give us a call at 602 254-0445 or e-mail gplooster@tnccclinic.org. We will arrange for pick up and handle all the paper work. It's a great way to support the Clinic and receive a tax deduction.



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