

The Pulse

of The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

RESTORING HEALTH & RESTORING LIVES • 2ND QUARTER 2011

Great Partners

By Mark and Dottie Harshbarger

There are some pairings that work well together; like coffee and cream. We would like to share with you another great pairing, i.e. The Neighborhood Christian Clinic and LIGHT Charities. You are, of course, very familiar with the Clinic's efforts to provide medical care to uninsured, working poor families. From time to time, the Clinic sees children who have surgical needs that they are simply not prepared to meet. In many of these cases, the Clinic partners with LIGHT Charities to work with the medical community in an effort to meet these needs.

LIGHT, an acronym for Love Is God's Healing Touch, was founded two years ago after a mission trip we took to Guadalajara to help expand an orphanage for homeless children. There we met little four year old Immanuel who was crippled with birth

defects and crawled on the ground by pulling himself with his arms. Six months after that



trip, we received a video of Immanuel walking through the halls of the orphanage to the cheers and tears of everyone there. This blessing was made possible through the volunteer efforts of the medical community in Guadalajara to provide the needed surgery. Now, he is a bright and happy six year old that walks and plays with his friends at the orphanage. People coming together with a love for God to make differences in children's lives touched us to the point where we said "why can't we do something like this right here in our own town."

After praying and consulting with friends, we decided to 'go for it' and started a 501c3 non-profit organization called LIGHT Charities. During the startup phase, we were encouraged to meet with a wonderful organization that is dedicated to helping the local community with its medical needs, The Neighborhood Christian Clinic. Our initial meeting was with Dr. Paul Lorentsen and Gary Plooster who were incredibly cooperative. During that meeting, both parties were extremely encouraged, decided to work together and as the saying goes, the rest is history. As an example of our great partnership and similar visions, Mark graciously accepted the Clinic's invitation to join their Board.

LIGHT Charities' plan is to identify twelve surgeons who will donate approximately one to two surgeries per year. Similarly, we partner with anesthesiologists for donation of their time as well. LIGHT has also established relationships with local hospitals that participate by charging a highly discounted rate for use of their facilities. Since inception, LIGHT Charities has been able to assist 10 families with surgeries or medical procedures; most of whom are uninsured patients of the Clinic.

As we have gotten to know each patient, we have been blessed by being able to pray with each one and sharing with them that all blessings come from our Creator and Lord and that He loves them dearly. What a joy it is to help those that God loves and to be a part of what the Clinic is doing.

Then, he said to them, *"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all - he is the greatest."* Luke 9:48



Mark Harshbarger, TNCC Board Member

Serving "The Least of These"

by Dr. Paul Lorentsen

sometimes reflect back to the days when I began to think about becoming a missionary doctor. As a young boy, I had this vision of triumphing over the trials of serving overseas in a poorly equipped medical clinic in a dusty remote village. This heroic view of what "I" was going to accomplish "for" God certainly didn't include the villagers themselves becoming the servants that would carry the ministry forward.

Now I find myself, by God's provision, at a well-equipped beautiful medical facility in the most affluent nation in the world, working with patients that have missed out on most of the affluence. Knowing this, you would expect them to be a bitter, resentful group of people, correct?

God continues to use "the least of these" to show me what it means to be a servant.

I recall the patient who sat in our waiting room for hours, hoping for a no-show so that we could fit her in for an appointment. As she sat, she could have lamented her poor fortune, having to rely on a charity clinic for healthcare. Instead, she realized that our windows could use washing. She went home and gathered up her cleaning supplies. When she came the next day seeking care once again, we were able to see her, and afterwards she beautifully washed our windows.

Another patient arrived for her shift as an interpreter on the day that her family was evicted from their home. She continues to serve faithfully, and now also does administrative support as well.

Many patients contribute financially to the clinic. It's humbling to finish praying with a patient at the end of an appointment, and have them hand me an envelope with cash that the patient's family had gathered to support the clinic.

Today, I wrote a thank-you note to a patient that had donated, and quickly looked at her medical record to remind myself who she was. A recent doctor's entry showed that her house had burned, and she had lost many personal items in the fire. Now, instead of holding on to the few resources that remained, she was donating money to our clinic.

God's word says "Even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve". Our patients are modeling a godly view of service, motivated not by the desire for personal acclaim, but out their love of the Lord.

One thing I appreciate about providers who volunteer at the Clinic is they are Christians who happen to be doctors rather than doctors who happen to be Christians; a big difference. Dr. Lorentsen infrequently accepts students or residents into the Clinic; yet he does so periodically if he believes the Clinic can make a difference in how medicine will be practiced in a student's professional career, i.e. can the Clinic have an impact in whether Christ is included in a future patient-provider setting? Tyson's story below is one of those and "speaks" to the third aspect of our mission statement – "train & equip healthcare professionals to share the Gospel and love of Jesus in their daily practice."

- Gary Plooster, Executive Director

My Experience at The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

By Tyson Lahti

From April 4th to April 29th, 2011, I had the opportunity to perform a third year medical school rotation at The Neighborhood Christian Clinic. The main reason I requested the rotation was for exposure to medicine practiced in a Christian faith-based environment. The experience was an invaluable one as TNCC had a unique freedom and intention of bringing faith into each patient interaction.

While at TNCC, I was able to see many different ailments and procedures such as knee arthritis with injections, establishing prenatal care for a newly diagnosed pregnancy and treatments for diabetes and high blood pressure. One commonality among each patient was even through their financial struggles to pay for health care, patients were given the best possible, quality treatment available and it was delivered in the most cost-effective manner. One way this was practiced was through excellent clinical skills. Accurate diagnoses were made after an in-depth interview and thorough work-up. I will take this aspect of delivering quality health care to underserved people with me as a physician.

There were excellent learning opportunities at the clinic from preceptors I had been assigned to. In particular, Dr. Lorentsen was able to spend time teaching me electrocardiogram criteria for different aspects of cardiac disease, landmarks and techniques of shoulder injections, and appropriate testing in the management of diabetes. There were also many medical residents in their peak of medical training available as preceptors. Residents were able to display a high degree of teaching along with an uncanny ability to guide and direct me as a medical student during patient encounters and in formulating treatment plans.

One day during the rotation, a young, intelligent teenage female, had entered the clinic differently than other patients before her: she was wheelchair bound. She had thin limbs from muscle wasting and contractures that prevented her from using her arms and hands to full capacity. Despite these disabilities, she was bright, smiling and pleasant. Many years before, she had a spinal condition deemed inoperable and she now required surgery for a skin condition for which she was referred to a local surgeon. An additional and significant way TNCC was able to help was through prayer. Even through the emotional burden of a big procedure adding to her chronic condition, she was able to experience Christ through a prayer which offered her hope and strength in her illness. This is the biggest lesson I learned while rotating at TNCC; after all tangible resources available to help patients are exhausted, prayer and sharing Christ transcends physical care and spiritually impacts and encourages each patient. As a future physician, I am grateful that the Lord gave this learning opportunity at TNCC allowing me to strive towards bringing the hope of Christ to patients in a time of physical and spiritual need.



Diamondbacks Grant

TNCC was recently awarded a Program Grant from the Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation during an "on-field" presentation ceremony. As part of this, the Clinic hosted a "volunteer appreciation" event by acquiring 100 tickets for the game. On Wednesday, April 13, volunteers from the Clinic enjoyed a wonderful evening of Spring baseball at the Dbacks vs. Cardinals game.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!
YOU ARE WONDERFUL!!

Cars for Christ-Based Healthcare:

We need cars; or trucks, motorhomes, etc. Call us – it's that easy!! We'll pick it up and sell it. You get the deduction and will be helping "one of the least of these." 602 254-0445

Create a Legacy: Through estate planning you can create a legacy of Christ-centered healthcare for the uninsured, working poor long into the future. Ask how at 602 254-0445 or call the AZ Community Foundation and reference the Clinic's Endowment 602 381-1400.

Clinic Stats

	Patient Visits	Volunteers	Hours
February	603	82	568.8
March	693	83	795.7
April	630	78	655.1



The Neighborhood Christian Clinic

Restoring Health & Restoring Lives

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