

The Free Clinic Times

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Volunteer Impact Story...

By Dr. Neil Richard, Volunteer at Columbus Free Clinic

Why are you working at the free clinic?

My son and daughter have asked this question many times over the past few years. I usually reply that I am helping people who need medical care but do not have money to pay for it. That indeed is a big reason, and probably the one that got me started when I was a resident in medical school.

At that time, there was a sign-up sheet on the door to the residents' lounge at Grant Medical Center. Each month one of us would sign up to help. It was positive peer pressure. Seeing one of my friend's names on the sheet prompted me to "show I care," so I signed up too.

That was over 10 years ago, and I still volunteer at least one Thursday a month at the Columbus Free Clinic (CFC).

CFC is organized and administered by many dedicated 1st and 2nd year medical students at OSU's College of Medicine. The clinic has offered me the opportunity to help hundreds—even a thousand by now—who otherwise would go

without medical care. It gives me a feeling that I have helped change lives for the better.

Working with the medical students has been very rewarding as well. They are getting their first opportunities to interact with patients, by volunteering at CFC. It is remarkable that they are willing to offer some of their rare free

As they grow older, I will take my children with me to volunteer at CFC, allowing them to see what we do first hand. Then hopefully they will understand how rewarding it is to help those in need.

time to help others. Teaching them some actual hands-on medicine is really a lot of fun!

The other doctors who volunteer alongside me also are part of the reward. Some of them truly are inspiring. They are working at other clinics, helping with community issues, even traveling to other countries to help people in



need. Hearing about their work makes me want to do even more.

Perhaps the biggest reason I help is at home: my children. What started as a good deed has turned into a valuable lesson for them. By volunteering at CFC, I am demonstrating to them the importance of being a dedicated, compassionate and caring human being.

As they grow older, I will take my children with me to volunteer at CFC, allowing them to see what we do first hand. Then hopefully they will understand how rewarding it is to help those in need. They will understand that doing something about problems can be more than just putting money in a can at school.

My children may not realize it yet, but the tougher question to answer is "Why AREN'T you working at a free clinic?"

Thank you to everyone who submitted volunteer impact stories. More stories about a free clinic volunteer you know, or about being a volunteer yourself, are encouraged. Please email Lynn W. Slawsky at lslawsky@ohiofreeclinics.org.

If you would like to learn more about how to volunteer, please visit our website at www.ohiofreeclinics.org.

Thank You For Completing Surveys!

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics would like to thank member free clinics for completing several surveys in the past few months. We are grateful for the time spent on them, as they help OAFC serve our members more effectively.

Back in February, our annual statistical survey was distributed to member free clinics. The results were encouraging. By utilizing over 3,600 volunteers, including nearly 1,200 physicians, OAFC member clinics provided nearly 97,000 visits in 2006. Every dollar invested in free clinics led to an average of \$7.00 worth of care, due to the use of volunteers and other cost-effective strategies.

Also in February, we asked member free clinics to complete a SurveyMonkey about program needs within each free clinic.

The responses showed interest in developing programs related to overweight/obesity, and other related diseases. Stay tuned for details about how OAFC is working to expand the Free to be Healthy Program, an overweight/obesity reduction



program piloted at four free clinics last year.

Then, in April, our Quality Improvement Committee distributed a survey to evaluate operations within free clinics. This survey is the first of many efforts through the

President's Letter

At the April Board of Directors meeting, we were asked by our facilitator, Artie Isaac, to develop an elevator pitch for our Association. Basically, that means describing what we do best in the short time it takes to ride in an elevator.

What do our patients like most about us? What do we do that no else does? What makes us different from other associations, free clinics or human beings?

Our collective responses had the makings of a well crafted message, which was timely and useful for our discussions with legislators during the first OAFC Legislative Day on April 18th. The exercise provided the ingredients for what we need to convey to state lawmakers during the biennial budget process—an urgent opportunity to tell our stories.

What do you tell someone who asks, "Just what is it that you do?"

The message we must hammer home in our own communities, as well as at the Statehouse, is that the delivery of compassionate



and comprehensive health care is vital. Free clinics offer a peace of mind to those who need it most. The Ohio Association of Free Clinics provides a voice for the 1.4 million Ohioans who lack health care insurance.

The turnout for the Legislative Day was positive. I encourage members to continue developing and maintaining relationships with representatives and senators from your districts. Since so many Ohioans rely on free clinics for their health care, it remains imperative that we sustain and grow a healthy Association to provide help for the uninsured, and support for each member clinic.

Paul Baumgartner, President

committee, leading to more effective technical assistance to free clinics that are just starting or looking to expand and improve operations.

For more information about any of these surveys, please contact Amy Rohling McGee, Executive Director of OAFC, at 614.221.6494, or amcgee@ohiofreeclinics.org.

A Round-Up of the First O AFC Legislative Day

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics hosted its first Legislative Day in Columbus, Ohio, on April 18, 2007. Over 30 free clinic volunteers and staff attended the day-long event, representing 15 free clinics from around the state. The purpose was to inform attendees about the legislative process, and become more comfortable with carrying out lobbying efforts.

Among several speakers were Representatives Fred Strahorn of Dayton, and Jim Raussen of Cincinnati.

At the time of the O AFC Legislative Day, the state budget was being deliberated in the House Finance Committee. This timing was strong motivation to meet both with representatives and senators, to emphasize the importance of financial support from the state government to sustain free clinic operations.

"It's our job to make a compelling case for what we're doing," Amy Rohling McGee, Executive Director of O AFC, encouraged the free clinic volunteers/staff during her opening presentation about the legislative process.

Representative Strahorn described lobbying as a means of informing legislators about issues affecting their constituents. He told the audience that he and his colleagues "look to you to educate us about what matters." He encouraged Board members of free clinics to become involved in lobbying as well, remarking that "it is important to make your issues known in as great a number as possible."

John Corlett, of the Center for Community Solutions, provided an informational session on the state budget process. He also talked about the Campaign to Protect Ohio, a coalition effort in which O AFC participates. The Campaign is working to ensure that the state budget addresses the health and

human services needs of Ohio's most vulnerable citizens.

There also was a panel discussion of lobbyists. Most of the discussion focused on reinforcing the importance of free clinic volunteers/staff as advocates themselves.

Garry Beltz, a volunteer lobbyist with the American Cancer Society, congratulated attendees for coming to the Legislative Day, for "what you all are doing is very important."

Richard Lewis, of the Northeastern Ohio University College of Medicine, said "the best lobbying we can do is back in the legislators' home districts." Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, advised that these site visits offer a legislator an opportunity to see first hand what their constituents are doing to serve other constituents. Jeff Smith, of the Ohio State Medical Association, echoed these sentiments, adding that "when you do have them out to your clinic, make sure you have a specific ask, with a specific dollar amount."

Garry Beltz, a volunteer lobbyist with the American Cancer Society, congratulated attendees for coming to the Legislative Day, for "what you all are doing is very important." He also acknowledged the difficulty of meeting with legislators in person. "Meeting

with their staff is just as important."

Another topic of discussion was about thank you notes. "It should be the first thing you do after your meeting," Mr. Lewis said.

Ms. Hamler-Fugitt closed the panel discussion by encouraging free clinic volunteers/staff to "think about spending 5 percent of your time on advocacy efforts. You really will start to see some impact."

Following lunch, the group toured the Statehouse, led by Ms. McGee. Everyone who was available also sat in on a Senate Session. Others were able to meet with representatives and senators from their districts.

Several attendees of the Legislative Day commented on the valuable information contained in the binders provided to all in attendance, including tips on meeting with legislators, talking points about the state budget, and a sample thank you note. Copies of these materials were mailed to all O AFC members, to encourage those who could not attend Legislative Day to participate in advocacy as well.

"You all are our best assets," Ms. McGee said of the O AFC members who work and volunteer at free clinics around Ohio.

Thanks to O AFC members who already had meetings with their legislators. To continue the momentum of the O AFC Legislative Day, please continue scheduling times for legislators to visit your free clinic. For more information about what you can do to speak out on behalf of free clinics, please contact Amy Rohling McGee at (614) 221-6494, or amcgee@ohiofreeclinics.org.



Crafting a Message... Ride an Elevator!

Artie Isaac is President of Young Isaac, Inc., a full-service advertising agency located in Columbus, Ohio. Recently he attended a Board meeting for the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, to lead Board members in an elevator pitch exercise. Below is an interview with Mr. Isaac, which took place following the Board meeting.

OAFC: Artie, how would you describe an "elevator pitch"?

Mr. Isaac: An elevator pitch is something to say or ask that creates interest, in the time it takes for a short elevator ride. It's what will get someone to respond with, 'Let's have lunch—I want to hear more!'

OAFC: We were pleased that you led the OAFC Board members in an elevator pitch exercise—what did you get out of it?

Mr. Isaac: Those were the most beautiful people I've ever met! The passion in

the room was very serious, and the thoughts seemed very intentional.

From what I know, both because my wife volunteers at a free clinic, and from attending your Board meeting, is that you all are doing something beyond reproach—there is no higher mission.

OAFC: What advice would you have for developing an elevator pitch?

Mr. Isaac: The first work to be done is figuring out the audience. Are they donors, clients, potential volunteers? What do you want them to do? And what is the fastest way you can say it to get them to do it?

OAFC: Once the audience is determined, what are some things to say or ask to begin an elevator pitch?

Mr. Isaac: In the case of free clinics, the pitch could begin with a question. How about 'Can you name someone

who doesn't deserve healthcare? I know of thousands who would die if my organization didn't give them free healthcare.' Or, 'Who is it with diabetes that doesn't deserve medical attention?' Or even, 'What would happen if free clinics didn't exist?'

Ultimately, the elevator pitch should be about the individual. Instead of talking in terms of an entire organization, tell a story about one individual patient whose life was saved by visiting a free clinic.

Young Isaac helps trustworthy clients sell important things. If you would like to learn more, please visit www.youngisaac.com. Artie's blog is at www.artieisaac.com.



Young Isaac

Most Giving Doesn't Necessarily Help Those in Need

A new study commissioned by Google.org and conducted by the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy argues that less than one-third of all charitable giving is directed toward the poor and others in need.

Examining the recipients of charitable giving, the study found that of the more than \$250 billion in charitable giving in 2005, less than \$78 billion targeted those in need. Just 8 percent of all donations provided food, shelter and other basic necessities, while another 23 percent provided services such as medical treatment, educational opportunities, job training initiatives and similar programs.

The study, initial results of which were published in an opinion piece in The Wall Street Journal, noted that the trend is strong even among the wealthy. For donors earning more than

\$1 million per year, just 4 percent of their overall giving went to cover basic needs and 19 percent to other programs for the poor. Only 8 percent of American giving supports international causes of any kind, according to the study.

Why the Gap?

The study puts forth two reasons to explain the disparity between what most donors often say they want to give to and what their contributions actually support.

First, donors often find it much more difficult to say no to local community causes or to requests and solicitations from friends and colleagues. Donors also may feel more secure that contributions to local causes will be used more effectively and that they can judge better how the funds are being used.

Second, many donors don't completely understand what their contributions support, especially for religious giving. While giving to religious causes is the most popular choice for contributions, the study reports that less than 20 cents of every dollar given to religious organizations fund programs for the poor and economically disadvantaged. Similarly, while healthcare and education are popular causes as well, just 10 cents per dollar is targeted on health programs for the needy and less than 9 cents per dollar is used on scholarships.

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Development Matters: Jefferson County 4th Street Health Center Annual Gala

On April 15, 2007, the Jefferson County 4th Street Health Center held its first Annual Gala. The event commemorated the center's one year anniversary. Below is an interview with the director of the clinic, Diann Schmitt.

O AFC: How did the idea for a Gala develop?

Ms. Schmitt: The idea came from one of our board members. The main objective was to raise money, but we had other objectives as well. One was to bring awareness

to the community about health care. Another was to involve boys and girls from our local high school. They were called "junior ambassadors," and each raised \$250 for our health center.

O AFC: By selling tickets to the Gala?

Ms. Schmitt: Actually, they all did their own fundraisers, such as a marathon, a car wash, and a pizza rally. At our Gala they were recognized for this involvement with the community.

O AFC: What else happened during the Gala?

Ms. Schmitt: We also honored Dr. Frank Petrola, for his service with our clinic, and the Scarpone family, for donating the

Left to right: Marilyn Scarpone, Dr. Frank Petrola, and Justin Scarpone were honored at the Gala.

building in which the health center currently operates.

After dinner, we hosted a live auction. We also had a 50-50 raffle, and live music throughout the evening.

O AFC: How much were the tickets, and how much did you raise altogether?

Ms. Schmitt: Tickets were \$30 per person. We raised over \$48,000, with all events combined, including the junior ambassadors' fundraising.

O AFC: Wow! What all went into preparing for the Gala?

Ms. Schmitt: Our Board found two very dedicated co-chairs, who organized five sub-committees of other volunteers to help with planning. We really weren't able to

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Customer Service Matters: How to Make Waiting Time More Enjoyable For Patients

By Susan Keane Baker

Waiting takes time. Therefore, when your patients have to wait, make the experience as pleasant as possible:

- Provide reception activities such as: A minimum of eight different magazines, reflecting the interests of your patients. Crossword puzzle pads. Etch-a-sketches. A telephone for local calls.
- Offer a library of consumer health books. A local bookstore may provide the library for you in exchange for having the store's business cards and a sign saying that any of the books can be ordered by phone.
- Provide reception distractions, such as: Art exhibits by children. "Words of wisdom" exhibits by older Americans.
- A gallery of positive patient comments - have glass cut to fit over your tables and insert the comments between the table and the glass. Be sure to obtain patient permission first!

- A "wall of honor" of staff members with their comments about what they like to do in their spare time; why they came to work at this organization, etc.
- Indirect care responsibilities, such as charting and telephone calls, should be done out of the view of waiting patients if at all possible.
- Even if patients have waited during prior visits, a sincere apology for a wait is helpful when employees are perceived to be doing everything they can to be responsive to the patient quickly.



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Source: www.susanbaker.com.*



Ohio Association of Free Clinics

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www.preventblindness.org

July 1 - 31

UV Safety Month
www.aao.org

August 1 - 31

National Immunization
Awareness Month
www.cdc.gov/nip/

October 7-9

OAFAC Eighth
Annual Conference



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start planning until late fall, so we only had a few months to plan it.

OAFAC: Did the planning committee handle publicity?

Ms. Schmitt: Yes. We had a local newspaper follow the whole event, from the beginning planning talks, through the event itself. We also got Comcast to post PSAs on our local CNN channel.

OAFAC: What was the biggest challenge your clinic faced in planning the Gala?

Ms. Schmitt: There was a lot of compromising among the planning committee. But, whatever challenges they encountered, they overcame and finished the job.

OAFAC: How would you advise other free clinics wanting to do a similar fundraiser?

Ms. Schmitt: Organize people who have passion, energy, and experience. Set

your goals ahead of time. The first time is never easy but having a board that is enthused about the idea helps.

OAFAC: Would you do it again?

Ms. Schmitt: Yes. We are already talking about the planning committee for next year.

OAFAC: Can other free clinics contact you for more information?

Ms. Schmitt: Sure. They can email me at Dsschmitt@aol.com.

If you have a great development idea that should be featured in upcoming Development Matters, please contact

Lynn W. Slawsky at 614.221.6494, or Islawsky@ohiofreeclinics.org.