



# The Free Clinic Times

## Free Clinic Impact Stories...

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**Joan Nerderman, O.D.**  
OSU College of Optometry The Ohio State University at the Faith Mission Eye Clinic

**Jack Newton, MD**  
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### Midlothian Free Health Clinic

*This month, we feature an article that highlights the planning and development of one of our newest clinics—Midlothian Free Health Clinic in Youngstown, Ohio. Sarah Miller is our guest writer for this article. She is a senior at Ohio Dominican University majoring in public relations.*

***"No more worries." That was a statement made on a service evaluation form from a recent patient at the new Midlothian Free Health Clinic in Youngstown, Ohio.***

One community's prayers were answered on March 23 when the Midlothian Free Clinic became the newest addition to the local health care and social service scene. After over three years of planning, researching and working, "we finally accomplished what we set out to do," said Rev. Rob Johnson of Midlothian Lutheran Ministry, and the clinic's board chairman.

The clinic, mainly run by volunteers, was created upon the faith and goodwill of two partnering Lutheran churches, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran and Christ Evangelical Lutheran. Hearing the needs of the community, and recognizing the talent within the two congregations, Rev. Johnson, retired nurse Miriam Whetstone, and other nurses, including Carol Beard who was already serving on a Health Issues Task Force, decided to donate their nursing skills - and great faith - to the community.

Miriam Whetstone, a retired nurse

of over 50 years, took the helm in making this dream become a reality. Whetstone graduated from Toledo University in 1952 with her nursing degree. The daughter of a minister, Whetstone planned to become a missionary nurse, but decided against it soon after graduation. Now in her 70's, she helps to run the Midlothian Free Health Clinic.

Other influential volunteers at the clinic include Carol Beard, nurse, and Thomas Albani, MD. Beard, a nurse for over 45 years, continues to keep her license current so that she is able to assist patients who visit Midlothian for medical attention. Dr. Albani, the current



L to R: Retired nurses Sandra Reel, Carol Beard and Miriam Whetstone.

shortages all around the state, this has become a rapidly growing population.

The Midlothian Free Health Clinic is currently equipped and able to serve common illnesses and provide basic health care. With the community's assistance, Midlothian has formed relationships with surrounding hospitals and patient care facilities that provide patients with more costly procedures such as x-rays and blood tests. The local Giant Eagle has donated their services through a prescription voucher program, so

that needed medications can be obtained at a more feasible price. Akron General and Shepard of the Valley have actively assisted the clinic in getting off the ground as well.

After the first open evening, the clinic found itself booked with appointments through May. Current volunteers and donors are working to recruit more

volunteer doctors and nurses so that the clinic may have more office hours. Until the need is met, the current volunteers work feverishly to assist all they can in the timeliest manner.

Since the time of my first interview with Midlothian Clinic leaders, they have expanded service to include HIV testing in conjunction with the Youngstown Health Department and a new mini-lab in partnership with a local health provider.



Midlothian Board Members at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

residing physician at the clinic, was very impressed with the dedication and hard work the parishioners displayed. Dr. Albani agreed to take on the role of practicing volunteer physician and is currently working to enlist fellow doctors from the community.

With the evident diversity of the community, Midlothian Free Health Clinic is able to help the working poor, homeless, and those who are unemployed or have no health insurance. With employment

# Letter from the President

Paul Baumgartner, Lorain County Free Clinic



Here is an interesting figure: \$50 million in prescription drugs will be saved statewide this year. That means \$50 million won't

end up in a landfill or down the toilet affecting our water supply. This figure is just for the State of Ohio. Furthermore, and much more importantly, these medicines are ending up in the hands of uninsured and underinsured patients. The program is not only in Ohio, but now in 35 other states.

The statewide drug repository program continues to grow. One good problem we have encountered thus far is local repositories unable to take in all the drugs available for donation due to space, inventory management and financial resources to sustain the programs. This is all the more reason to emphasize the value of partnering and collaborating with state and local agencies, as this free

clinic program demonstrates rich community benefits at their finest. With repository programs in Western Stark County, Lakewood, Sandusky, Columbus, and various other sites across the state, the program is helping reduce drug waste while also helping those who cannot afford prescriptions.

Sounds like a winner. Speaking of which, the board members and attendees at O AFC Legislative Day recently presented Ohio Senator Kirk Schuring an award for helping the uninsured get the prescriptions they need (in many cases, lifesaving drugs) through drug repositories. Senator Schuring sponsored legislation that allows hospitals and long term care facilities donate unused medications to repositories and pharmacies within free clinics to help the uninsured. On hand to help present the award was another winner; Garry Beltz.

"We're very happy to give Senator Schuring this much-deserved award for his commitment and leadership on behalf of Ohioans

who need prescription assistance," commented Marjorie Frazier, Executive Director of the O AFC.

**The legislation, 'Karon's Law' was named after Karon Beltz who died from breast cancer in 1999. After her death, her husband Garry Beltz, of Canton, attempted to donate her unused prescriptions. After being told that it was illegal to donate unused drugs, Garry teamed with Senator Schuring to change the law that would ultimately end up helping thousands of people. The law has since moved into thirty five other states across the country.**

The change in legislation is a fine example of harnessing ones' passion and using it to enact change for the benefit of others. Both individuals deserve a standing ovation as they continue to believe in the work of free clinics in such uncertain times.

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## Q&A on New O AFC Resource: Cancer Information Service

### **Q. What is the purpose of the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service?**

**A.** The National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Nation's lead agency for cancer research, established the Cancer Information Service (CIS) in 1975 to educate people about cancer prevention, risk factors, early detection, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and research. The CIS is an essential part of NCI's cancer prevention and control efforts.

To provide information about cancer to patients and their families, physicians and other health professionals, and the public, the CIS has a three-pronged approach:

- Information specialists answer questions about cancer by telephone, TTY, instant messaging, and e-mail. They can provide printed and electronic NCI publications
- The Partnership Program reaches those who may have limited access to health information

- The Research Program helps researchers advance health communication practices

In addition to the telephone service (1-800-4-CANCER) that answers questions about cancer, the CIS also operates the NCI's Smoking Quitline (1-877-44U-QUIT) to help smokers quit. Both telephone services offer recorded messages on a variety of topics.

### **Q. How can I get NCI publications to distribute in my clinic?**

**A.** You may order NCI publications from the CIS by telephone (1-800-4-CANCER) or on the NCI's Web site at <http://www.cancer.gov/publications> on the Internet. You can read many NCI publications online and can print them out.

**We hope you'll take advantage of this valuable resource!**

# Ohio Free Clinics Ninth Annual Conference

The theme of this year's conference is: *Equipped to Heal*. We are excited for another year of quality learning and networking opportunities this fall. The conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Conference Center in Dublin, Ohio on October 12-14, 2008.



**Please take a look at the following opportunities for involvement with our annual conference:**

## CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Consider sharing your expertise by submitting a proposal for presenting a seminar or poster display at this year's conference. We are looking for presentations that will improve knowledge, enhance skills and highlight successful programs and practices. Submissions can be in any area related to providing care for uninsured populations. The 2008 Call for Presentations can be found at [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org).

## SPONSOR AND EXHIBITOR OPPORTUNITIES

We have several opportunities for conference sponsors and exhibitors. Each supporter will receive a core benefits package, as well as a broad range of increased exposure depending on involvement. The Sponsor and Exhibitor packet can also be found at [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org).

## AWARDS

### ***Champion of Free Clinics Award***

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- This award was created to honor individuals whose dedication to, and achievements in, serving the healthcare needs of the poor and uninsured, provide outstanding service and leadership models.
- To nominate a candidate, go to [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org) and click on Annual Conferences.

### ***Free Clinic Partnership Award***

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- This award will honor a corporation or business (both for profit and nonprofit) that has significantly contributed to either the Ohio Association of Free Clinics or to specific free clinics.
- The nomination form can be found at [www.ohiofreeclinics.org](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org) in the Annual Conferences section.

# Board Member Practices What She Teaches

**O**AFC Board Member, Dr. Joan Nerderman, of the Ohio State University College of Optometry oversees two outreach clinic programs in Columbus through which students rotate during their educational experience. Nearly 350 clinic days per year are staffed by Dr. Nerderman, OSU faculty, and students to provide eye care for those who lack coverage for these services. Over the last seven years they have provided over 1,000 visits per year at Faith Mission alone.

*We asked Joan to tell us more about her work and the types of care she and students provide in the clinics by way of observations and case examples. Below are stories from her work at Faith Mission, a homeless shelter supported by Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio. Patients are often working and have no other source of eye care coverage. She writes...*

I am not so naive to think that glasses can change a person's life. I do know that glasses can help you fill out a job application or drive to that new job. We regularly provide magnifiers like those that could be found at a drug store to tide patients over until their prescription glasses come in. Oftentimes, that is enough to get them reading again.

"A 38-year old man came to our clinic for a routine eye examination. We found that his eyes were able to see 20/20 with glasses but that there was a growth in his left eye. I hated to break the news to him, as he was already in a treatment program and I was afraid this may cause some alcoholic relapse. Instead, he took the news that he had a melanoma (a type of cancer) and that his eye had to be removed to prevent spread, and turned it in to a positive for his life. He was able to be fit with a very natural looking prosthesis at the Ohio State University College of Optometry at a very reduced price, and also did some job training to understand his limitations at suddenly loosing binocular vision."

"Another patient, George, lost his job and family ties due to alcohol addiction. When he came to see us at Faith Mission his only complaint was blurred near vision, so we just figured a stronger prescription would work. During the course of his exam, though, things just didn't look right. We could only correct him to 20/25, the nerves were a little pale and on a screening field he had bi-temporal visual loss. So here he was, staying at the homeless shelter, and I needed to get him to see an ophthalmologist about a possible brain tumor. I worried where he would stay when they removed the large benign pituitary tumor, but his family rallied behind him. His wife decided to give him another chance and his missionary parents reunited with him from Africa in support. He has now fully recovered and even had full visual fields when I rechecked him! George is working at OSU and we occasionally see each other. Yes, our routine exam at the OSU Outreach clinic

at Faith Mission found the tumor, but it was George who found the positive in the situation and turned things around in his life."

Joan mentions that "weekly during the course of eye examinations, we see signs of diabetes and hypertension in the retina of our patients' eyes. We try to treat not only the patients' eyes, but also refer them to the Faith Mission health clinic or to another of the seven Columbus-area Free Clinics for more comprehensive health care. I can then refer them to an organization to help them get a prescription filled or get a referral to another doctor. It truly is a community effort."

Dr. Nerderman is a proponent of regular eye exams for a variety of reasons—both clinical and social. She believes domestic abuse is an all-too-common phenomenon in many of the clinics in which she supervises students and she teaches them how to be open to the possibility of

these problems with patients while sensitively addressing their needs.

"A woman came to our clinic with very red eyes and mucus drainage. She was staying at Nancy's Place - another shelter in Columbus. When I looked at her eyes they weren't just red, as you think bloodshot, but she actually had broken blood vessels and hemorrhages on the sclera (whites of the eyes) and bruising around the eyes. Everywhere she went in the exam rooms her

husband followed closely behind. I suspected that she was a victim of domestic abuse but couldn't get her alone to ask. I treated a discharge with antibiotic drops and that improved but it was taking a while for the redness to subside. If it was viral conjunctivitis all the women in the shelter could possibly get it. Eventually I got her alone, and she vehemently denied spousal abuse. I want to believe her about the abuse, as over the course of several weeks her eyes cleared and the problems have not returned. I'm thankful that no one else caught the highly contagious conjunctivitis."

"We get to see first hand the signs of ocular trauma and what years of neglect of glaucoma, diabetes, and hypertension can do to the eyes. Our students learn to appreciate the skill they have to offer to those who cannot afford to pay for eye care, and that the rewards are incredible. I will be unable to do this forever, and hope to instill in a few of them the desire to continue to help this population after graduation. I am very proud of each of them, and grateful to the OSU College of Optometry, Faith Mission, and Select Optical for continuing their support to make this happen."

In coming issues, we will be highlighting other of our clinics' university affiliations and student training experiences.



# Recent Awards and Achievements



## Columbus Rotary Honors Free Clinic Director

It was Joyce Bourgault's work to create the

Helping Hands Health and Wellness Center, a Northland-area free clinic, that resulted in her being chosen for a 2008 Columbus Rotary Service Above Self Award.

The creation of this free clinic is a reality today due to the efforts of Joyce and a group of concerned individuals in the Northland area. She was at the forefront in 2006 when negotiations and planning began. From that early dream, Helping Hands exists today as a place where the uninsured can go and receive basic medical care, necessary medications, specialty clinic referrals, spiritual guidance and social services.

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## Award Honors Viola Startzman Free Clinic Founder

Viola Startzman, MD of Wooster, Ohio was a recipient of the 2008 Jack B. McConnell, MD Award for Excellence in Volunteerism. Presented by the American Medical Association (AMA) Foundation, the award is given to senior domestic physicians for commitment to volunteer medical care to those without access to health care in the U.S. The AMA Foundation presents the award in association with the Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative.

Viola Startzman, MD, a 93 year old physician, has helped the underserved throughout her career. Through her determination and organization, the Healthcare 2000 Community Clinic opened in 1995,

and in 2000 was renamed the Viola Startzman Free Clinic, providing quality medical and dental care to low income, uninsured residents of Wayne County, Ohio. In 2004, Dr. Startzman purchased and donated the Clinic's medical building. She has organized physicians and nurses to provide services, worked on legal matters and raised funds for the Clinic. Last year, the Clinic provided nearly 10,000 patient visits.

"Throughout her career and in a quiet, unassuming way, Dr. Startzman has placed a priority on caring for the underserved in society," said AMA Foundation president Barbara Rockett, MD. "Through perseverance and personal sacrifice, she started a free clinic in Wooster, Ohio, which serves the neediest of patients in that community. She is truly selfless."

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## Summa Cardiologist Receives American Heart Association Honor

OPEN M (Summit County) Medical Director Dr. Roger Chaffee of Cardiology Consultants was give the Heart Champion Award by the American Heart Association in February. The award specifically recognized Dr. Chaffee for his cardiovascular care in the area and his work at the OPEN M Free Medical Clinic.

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## Free Clinic Director Joins NAFC Board

Congratulations to Danny Williams, Executive Director of the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland, who was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Free Clinics.



## Physicians Free Clinic Medical Director Honored by Jefferson Awards

The Jefferson Awards were established in 1972 to encourage and honor individuals for their achievements and contributions through public and community service.



Dr. Edward Bope established the Columbus Medical Association Physicians Free Clinic in Columbus in

1993. He strives to fight the health care crisis in central Ohio one patient at a time and to teach future physicians to do the same. For these, and many more reasons, Dr. Bope was a 2008 recipient of the Jefferson Award.

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## Madison County Volunteers Receive Award

On February 28th, the London Rotary Club honored four Madison County Health Partners volunteers for exemplifying the motto, 'Service Above Self' in their daily lives. Volunteers Rev. Gordon and Ruthanne Johnson and Dr. and Mrs. George Anderson received Service Above Self awards for their work on behalf of the uninsured in Madison County.

## We're updating our database!

If your contact information has changed or you no longer wish to receive the OAFc newsletter, please contact Laura Pridgeon at 614-221-6494 or lpridgeon@ohiofreeclinics.org. Thanks!



**Ohio Association of Free Clinics**

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**Dates To Remember:**

**August:**  
Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

**October 12-14, 2008:**  
Ninth Annual OAFc Conference

[www.ohiofreeclinics.org/annualconference](http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org/annualconference)



## OAFc Annual Survey Results 'At A Glance'

**Clinic Information**

38 Member Clinics serving 51 Counties

**Patient Information**

Total Patients 40,199  
Total Visits 103,976

**Client Distribution**

Men (16,222) 38%  
Women (21,279) 55%  
Children (2,698) 7%

**Type of Services**

Primary Care 72%  
Specialty Care 13%  
Mental Health Care 9%  
Dental Care 6%

**Funding Sources**

Local Foundations 27%  
Local Government 14%  
Individual Donors 13%

State Government 9%  
United Way 6%  
Special Events 6%  
Other 25%

**Prescription Information**

Prescriptions Dispensed 232,942  
Value of Prescriptions \$15,040,347

**Service Value**

For every \$1.00 invested in free clinics,  
\$7.75 is provided in care

**Total Value of Health Care Provided**

\$70,977,060

**Thank you to all clinic directors and staff for your work on the 2007 Annual Statistical Survey. We appreciate all that you do!**