

Description of the Project

Christ Clinic, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 to provide affordable health care services to uninsured and under-insured individuals and families. Services are provided from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Spokane's West Central neighborhood, located in the heart of the lowest income legislative district for all of Washington State. Our mission expanded in 1998 to include Christ Kitchen, a sister ministry that offers a nurturing environment where women in poverty can learn work skills, life skills, and how to build healthy relationships.

When Christ Clinic first opened its doors through a collaborative effort of local physicians and community residents, we expected that we would provide preventive/primary care to Spokane's uninsured as a short-term support to the region's over-taxed health care system. However, the need for services has continued to increase; our organization now provides consistent primary care to the low-income uninsured and underinsured and our facility is no longer large enough to handle the growing demand for services. With only three exam rooms, it is difficult to function efficiently when we have two clinicians – nurse practitioners and/or physicians – sharing the same space. We are turning away 10 to 20 new patient requests daily due to space limitations and we are serving the maximum number of patients possible. Many of those turned away do not receive any care at all except emergently in the local hospital emergency departments, which assume up to \$77 million in debt annually from charity care and bad debt. (Spokesman-Review, 2006).

Based upon the needs cited, a \$3 million capital campaign is currently underway to relocate our service headquarters to a site within the same neighborhood and renovate/construct facilities there to increase capacity for both Christ Clinic and Christ Kitchen. One-third of the project has been concluded – the new property houses a fast-food facility that has been converted into the permanent site for Christ Kitchen's ministry. Now, fundraising is in process for construction of a 4,800 sq. ft. medical clinic adjacent to Christ Kitchen. The expanded ministries will increase health care access for low-income uninsured and underinsured populations, provide sufficient space for coordinated efforts by mental health and primary care practitioners, and expand the number of women receiving Christ Kitchen employment and job training skills.

Mission – Our mission is to communicate God's love by ministering to and meeting the physical and spiritual needs of members of the community through the administration and delivery of excellent health care to those unable to afford such care.

Values:

- Manifest Christ's love
- Deliver capable and credible services
- Honor/respect all people
- Embrace stewardship of all resources – staff, facilities, volunteers, donors, ministry partners, and finances

Priorities 1) Provide excellence in health care; 2) Present opportunities for people to experience God's love and care in a tangible way; 3) Pursue long-term sustainability of Christ Clinic and Christ Kitchen programs; 4) Avoid discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation; and 5) Partner with local hospitals and medical personnel to ensure continuity of care for Christ Clinic patients.

People Served – The Clinic supports an active panel of nearly 4,000 low-income patients (individuals treated since 2003) who are uninsured or under-insured; many are the “working poor” who have a job but cannot afford health care services. The clinic is in the West Central neighborhood of Spokane, WA. This neighborhood is the lowest income legislative district in all of Washington State. While the majority of our patients (82%) are Spokane County residents, we offer care to anyone in need. Additionally, Christ Kitchen provides job training for up to 135 low-income women annually who are working to overcome substance abuse, destructive relationships, and physical/emotional health concerns.

Project Staff

Danielle Riggs, MSN, FNP, Clinical Director for Christ Clinic– Ms. Riggs has served as Christ Clinic’s Director over the preceding seven years. She is a graduate of the Family Nurse Practitioner program at Gonzaga University; credentialed by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners; fluent in Spanish; and has prior experience with Haitian and Mexican migrant workers. Ms. Riggs has been instrumental in the planning and development of the new clinic, identifying space and program needs.

Jan Martinez, MA, MS, Director for Christ Kitchen– Ms. Martinez began providing counseling services at Christ Clinic in 1994. Her experience with poor, disenfranchised, abused, and homeless women, led to the development of Christ Kitchen in 1998 to provide a Christ-centered work place where relational, financial, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs could be met. Ms. Martinez has been instrumental in developing the new Christ Kitchen site, and contributes to planning for the new Christ Clinic facility.

Blair Strong, JD, Board President– Mr. Strong is a partner with Paine Hamblen LLP, the largest locally owned law firm in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho; his practice specializes in government regulation of public utilities, energy, corporate and natural resources matters. He has been active in leadership in Spokane’s First Presbyterian Church, political and local service organizations, all of which contribute to his leadership of the Christ Clinic/Christ Kitchen capital development effort.

R. Scott Rodin, Ph.D., Rodin Consulting, Inc.– Dr. Rodin has been in Christian not-for-profit leadership for 23 years. He heads his own consulting firm and is the President of the Christian Stewardship Association. Dr. Rodin has served as fund raising counsel to over 100 organizations in the U.S. and Great Britain including Christian colleges, seminaries, schools, churches and para-church ministries. His expertise is in the areas of leadership, fund raising, strategic planning, board development and organizational effectiveness.

Bill Bouten, Bouten Construction– Bouten Construction was founded in 1944 and has built numerous healthcare facilities throughout Eastern Washington. Mr. Bouten has been with the Company for 25 years and has served as president since 1996. He will serve as the general contractor for the new clinic where he will work with the project team to insure the building is designed and built within budget.

Project Significance

The larger Christ Clinic facility and the corresponding increase in staff (both paid and volunteer) is a significant step in growth for this organization; however, it’s a step that will increase availability of primary care to the uninsured and under-insured in our community. Enhanced primary care for both groups will in turn decrease the inappropriate use of emergency rooms for basic health services, a premise that is supported by our diagnostic, physician, and hospital partners. We also hope to decrease morbidity (amputations, blindness, kidney failure, liver failure, stroke, heart attacks) in the long run because when we serve patients with chronic illness (i.e. diabetes and hypertension) early-on in their diagnosis, they live longer, healthier lives. This approach also decreases “downstream medical costs”

which are passed from hospital to consumer via increased health care costs and higher insurance premiums. And finally, providing health care to those unable to otherwise access it should increase the general health of our community and decrease the downward slope that occurs when the uninsured or under-insured encounter a tragic health incident for themselves or their children.

History

Christ Clinic opened its doors in May of 1991 to serve God and demonstrate the love of Christ through the practice of medicine. We exist to provide quality health care to low-income persons who have limited or no medical insurance and would otherwise be unable to receive primary, preventive health care. Our services began as the vision of four dedicated physicians who recognized that rising health care costs were driving uninsured individuals and families to use the emergency room for *any* acute health related need. The resulting critical care fees were passed along to the consumer, resulting in higher overall medical costs that crippled the financial future of many patients. Of greater concern, the uninsured had no means to access basic health care. Whether it was prenatal care for a pregnant woman, chronic ear infections in a school-age child, or diabetes in an elder adult, the uninsured were missing the routine care essential to long-term health. The physicians decided to establish a clinic specifically to serve those who had no other source of primary health care.

In the preceding 16 years, health care has been provided from a 1,350 sq. ft. facility adjacent Westminster Presbyterian Church. The facility features a reception desk and small waiting room, three exam rooms, and a half-size office for the Clinic Director. Services are delivered by a team of 10 volunteer physicians and a staff nurse practitioner (at 50% salary); three clinicians are Spanish speaking to serve a growing Hispanic population. Alliances with regional hospitals and other professional medical personnel foster quality care and provide the physical resources essential to the successful provision of services. Medical services provided from the Clinic include:

- Acute and chronic primary care for men, women, and children
- Simple diagnostic tests
- Medication assistance
- Immunizations
- Sports physicals

In 1998, Christ Clinic expanded its mission to include a job-training project called Christ Kitchen. Christ Kitchen's mission is to enable women trapped in poverty to improve, renew, heal, and maintain spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health. In order to meet this mission, Christ Kitchen provides work, job training, Bible study, discipleship, support and fellowship for homeless women, women recovering from abuse, addiction, or destructive relationships, and those in various life transitions. Through the production and sales of various dried food mixes this ministry enables women to fellowship, to learn to work, to become employable, to experience a sense of accomplishment and eventually, to support themselves and their families without reliance on government programs or destructive relationships.