



AmeriCares Free Clinics

Providing quality health care to the uninsured

FALL /WINTER 2010

Honoring Quest Diagnostics for 15 Years of Free Services

Donated Laboratory Services Valued at More Than \$2,700,000

As the first AmeriCares Free Clinic was opening in 1994 in Norwalk, Karen Gottlieb, then the director of the new clinic, remembers worrying about the quantity and variety of laboratory tests that would be needed to run a quality outpatient program. Although some basic testing was made available through Norwalk Hospital, it did not represent the scope of testing needed by the volunteer medical staff. She remembers a critical contact she made with a volunteer who was assisting with the start-up plans. The volunteer had retired from Quest Diagnostics and suggested Karen speak to her former employer about donating “some” lab tests.

Amazingly, and within only a few short weeks, an unlimited and full range of laboratory tests were made available to the Norwalk clinic through a generous donation from Quest Diagnostics. “We are treated like any customer,” said Barbara McCabe, NP, current director of the Norwalk clinic. “Testing is done promptly and all supplies are provided to us. It just doesn’t get any better than that – we are so grateful to Quest Diagnostics for making this possible for our clinic patients,” she added. “They are a valued partner in our community with a strong commitment to patient health.”

According to Dr. Frank Bia, medical director for AmeriCares, “It would be impossible to care for the many complicated cases

we see without open access to laboratory testing. Whether making a diagnosis, monitoring glucose levels in our 350 diabetic patients, or adjusting medications for optimal outcomes, laboratory testing is critical to the practice of quality medicine.”

Quest Diagnostics’ generosity to AmeriCares was extended to include our Bridgeport clinic in 2003. Last year, Quest Diagnostics introduced Care360, its web-based physician connectivity solution available to all clients. Cathy Sheehan, RN, clinic director of Bridgeport, says the ability to access results through this system greatly expedites her work and allows her to follow trends in various blood tests for patients.

In addition, the Quest Diagnostics Foundation has provided funding for the past few years to cover flu vaccines for our most at-risk patients. And during one holiday season, instead of sending traditional trays of cookies to clients, Quest notified them that a donation was made to support the AmeriCares Free Clinics.

Quest Diagnostics is the world’s leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services that patients and their doctors need to make better health care decisions. The company provides services to nearly half the physicians and hospitals in the U.S. Its web-based Care360 physician solutions are used by more than 160,000 physicians nationwide.

Michele McHugh, managing director of Quest Diagnostics in Wallingford, Connecticut, says that providing these services is an example of the company’s commitment to have a positive impact in the communities where its employees and patients live and work. “We applaud the mission of the AmeriCares Free Clinics program to provide quality health care to uninsured residents in a setting where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. And we echo that goal in our effort to provide patients of the clinics with the laboratory services they need to manage their health.”

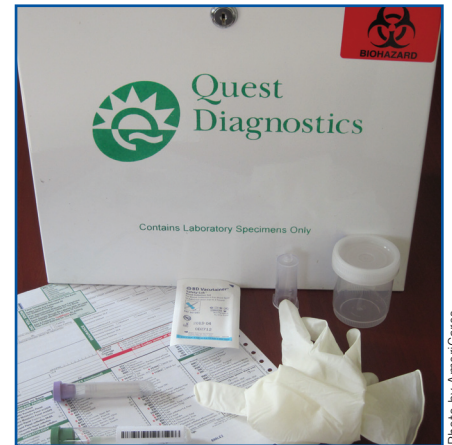


Photo by AmeriCares



Managing Director Michele McHugh and Sales Director Ronald Coursey of Quest Diagnostics in Wallingford, CT



Won't you consider giving the gift of health this holiday season?
To donate, go to www.AmeriCaresFreeClinics.org



Karen's Corner

Dear Friends,

As has been our approach over the last few years, we are consistently looking for ways to do more with less. Ways to improve the lives of our patients, ways to recruit more volunteers, and yes, of course, ways to attract more funding.

This year instead of sending out a separate annual appeal mailing, we have included a giving envelope with this newsletter. Less mail for you and more time for us to concentrate on our patients and volunteers.

We are proud to report that health care services delivered and coordinated through our program were valued at more than \$5.2 million last fiscal year. With a budget of \$1.3 million, that means every dollar donated provided \$3.70 worth of health care. But a dollar value alone cannot measure the incredible savings, both in suffering and in uncompensated care, that are realized by keeping patients with chronic diseases healthy, and by intervening early to prevent minor health problems from becoming more serious.

As you read about Luz, our patient in profile, you will learn firsthand the dire straits our patients find themselves in and the far-reaching efforts of our clinic staff to resolve complex medical issues. We share with our longstanding partners in the medical community a common goal of keeping low income, uninsured area residents out of the hospital and able to take care of their families. With our dedicated volunteers, donated medical services from local hospitals and Quest Diagnostics, and financial support from the community, we expect to meet the new challenges presented by health care reform and remain a mainstay of care for those who need us.

Last, we are pleased to announce the return of the Imagine Cocktail Party scheduled for next spring. The party will feature a wine tasting, fewer but more high-end silent auction items, the ever-popular restaurant raffle and live entertainment. This is the only time we get to see our individual donors face-to-face and we are excited about strengthening relationships and welcoming new donors to the clinic program.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season and thanking you in advance for allowing us to do what we can to help our neighbors in need.

With gratitude,

Karen Gottlieb, RN, MBA
Executive Director, AmeriCares Free Clinics

Dr. Joanna Vincent Retiring



Photo by Michael Sojtronski

Dr. Vincent examining a patient at the Danbury clinic

“She is the best doctor I ever had.”

In English, Spanish or Portuguese, it sounds different but means the same thing. This is the response the staff at Boehringer Ingelheim AmeriCares Free Clinic of Danbury receives when patients are told their doctor, Joanna Vincent, is retiring. After more than 2,000 hours of volunteering, Dr. Vincent will be leaving the clinic.

“Joanna has left a profound impact on the patients and families of those she saw. Joanna treats the whole patient – body, mind and spirit. We are going to miss her and her legacy here will never be forgotten,” said Dina Valenti, RN, Danbury clinic director.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

New Volunteers

Mark Anderson, MD
Bridgeport

Alison Martin, RN
Norwalk

Keely Papay, RN
Bridgeport

Luisa Ramirez
Norwalk

Luis Rivera
Bridgeport

Donna Rossi, LPN
Bridgeport

Lori Snow
Stamford

Jeannine Staltaro, RD
Bridgeport

Joanna Villaluz, RN
Bridgeport

Retiring

Claire Kirby, RN
Danbury

Dominick Sorge, MD
Bridgeport

Harold Steinberg, MD
Norwalk

Joanna Vincent, MD
Danbury

In Memoriam

Laurie Burns
September 2010

Bertram Grossman, MD
January 2010

Nital Patel
July 2010

Drs. Clift and Lockwood Named Co-Medical Directors at Bridgeport Clinic

We are pleased to announce the appointment of co-medical directors at our Weisman AmeriCares Free Clinic of Bridgeport. Monica Lockwood, MD, board certified in internal medicine, and George Clift, MD, board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology, will serve in this volunteer capacity as advocates for the free clinic program.

“Drs. Lockwood and Clift bring years of experience to our clinic and are important ties to our major hospital partners, St. Vincent’s Medical Center and Bridgeport Hospital. They will be a voice for the free clinic at both hospitals which will help tremendously in raising our visibility in volunteer recruitment and advocacy issues,” Karen Gottlieb, executive director of AmeriCares Free Clinics said.

In addition to seeing patients, they will be responsible for actively recruiting medical staff volunteers, serving as liaisons to the hospitals and the medical community at-large, and will consult on policy and operational issues for the clinic.

Dr. Lockwood has been on staff as a volunteer for the AmeriCares Free Clinic since 2003 and also volunteers at the St. Vincent’s Family Health Center in Bridgeport. Dr. Clift has volunteered at the clinic since 2009 and was the past Chief of Endocrinology at Bridgeport Hospital. He is currently retired and runs the monthly endocrine specialty program at the clinic.

Helping Teens Get “Healthy in a Hurry”

AmeriCares Volunteer Runs Health Workshops for Teens

As a summer intern with the AmeriCares Free Clinic of Norwalk, Hadley Brighton recognized that obesity and an increased risk for diabetes were significant problems confronting many young patients at the AmeriCares Free Clinics. As a result, Hadley established “Healthy in a Hurry,” a two-week program aimed at educating teens and providing information to help them lead healthier lives.

“Healthy in a Hurry,” which ran for four, one-hour sessions in July, focused on clinic patients between the ages of 12 and 16 with an elevated Body Mass Index (BMI). The first 40 minutes of each class were spent educating the teens about nutrition and the influence of television and body image on a healthy lifestyle. This was followed by 20-minute segments of movement and exercise, which showed the participants how to incorporate fun, calorie-burning activities into their days.

“We know that one in three children born since 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime. Hadley’s terrific program helped reduce the odds for these teens,” said Barbara McCabe, NP, director of the Norwalk clinic.

In order to reach her target audience, Hadley researched the clinic’s teenage patients to determine who could be helped the most by the program. She then made rounds of phone calls inviting the patients to participate.

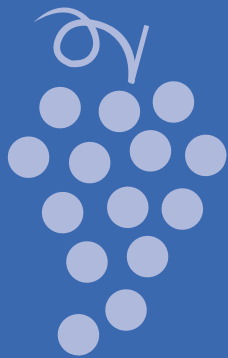
“The biggest takeaway was working with the kids. They were as supportive of me and each other as I was of them,” Hadley said. “I really wanted them to take what they learned and apply it to their lives long after the class ended.”



Photo by Chris Rowan/AmeriCares

Hadley Brighton at the Norwalk clinic

SAVE THE DATE



April 2, 2011
Imagine
Wine Tasting



The mission of AmeriCares Free Clinics is to provide quality health care to uninsured residents in a setting where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. The intention of AmeriCares Free Clinics is to help those who are making a sincere effort to help themselves and their families, but who do not have the financial resources for medical care.



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Stamford, CT 06902
1 (800) 486-HELP
www.AmeriCaresFreeClinics.org

**Weisman AmeriCares Free Clinic
of Bridgeport**

115 Highland Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604
(203) 333-9175

**Boehringer Ingelheim AmeriCares
Free Clinic of Danbury**

76 West Street
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 748-6188

AmeriCares Free Clinic of Norwalk

98 South Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
(203) 899-2493

A Patient's Story: Luz



Photo by Pamela April/AmeriCares

Luz has been coming to the AmeriCares Free Clinic in Norwalk since 2000. She had left her native country of Colombia with her young son the year before, and was living in Norwalk when a friend told her about the “clinic for people with little economic resources and no health insurance.”

She remembers her first visit to the clinic. With a history of diabetes in her family, Luz was also diagnosed with the disease

and recalls, “There was even an interpreter there to help me explain how I was feeling to the doctor. And when they gave me my medicine, they didn’t even charge me one cent! I was so grateful.” Luz has since happily come to rely on the Norwalk clinic for her ongoing diabetic care and medication.

About six years ago, Luz’s calcium levels began to rise and the clinic arranged for her to have a parathyroid scan at Norwalk Hospital. She was diagnosed with a parathyroid adenoma, a benign tumor of the parathyroid gland, which is located in the neck. Luz’s levels were followed by our volunteer endocrinologist, Dr. Ilja Hulinsky, with the additional help

of Quest Diagnostics, which provided free lab work. Her condition was stable until 2009 when her increasing calcium level led to kidney stones, subsequent pain and recurring urinary tract infections. After an examination by our volunteer nephrologist, Dr. Edward Littman, who ordered a kidney ultrasound at Norwalk Hospital, Luz found out she had developed a kidney stone. “It was as big as my fist!” she said.

The only solution for Luz was to have her parathyroid gland removed in order for her kidney stone to be treated and for her urinary tract infections to be cured. Our Norwalk clinic staff was again instrumental in helping Luz and made all the necessary arrangements for her. Luz underwent successful parathyroid surgery this past April at Yale-New Haven Hospital and in September received laser treatment for her kidney stone.

“My health since the surgery and laser procedures has been so much better. Before I had pain everywhere in my body. Now I have much more energy, and I feel happier to live. I am so thankful for the Norwalk clinic because without their help, I would not have been able to pay for such surgeries or even know where to go,” Luz said.

She added, “I know all the doctors, specialists and nurses at the clinic personally, and about how they volunteer their time. I admire their big hearts, and their spirit and enthusiasm to help the people of the community like me. Thanks to them, my health will be restored. They have helped me and so many others with their love and concern.”