



# HELPING HANDS CLINIC

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE POOR PEOPLE IN THE LAND. THEREFORE, I COMMAND YOU TO BE OPENHANDED TOWARD YOUR BROTHERS AND TOWARD THE POOR AND NEEDY IN YOUR LAND. -DEUTERONOMY 15:11

SPRING 2009

## GREETINGS

We appreciate the beautiful spring weather with the new green growth, blue skies and gentle breezes. But it is also a season of flu, colds and allergies and our patients know that the rain, heat and bugs of the summer cannot be far behind. The activities at the Helping Hands Clinic have been growing as fast as ever.

In the first 4 months of this year we have had 655 visits with 202 different patients. We have arranged for eye exams and glasses for 20 patients and obtained emergency dental treatment for 10 others.

Our Thursday night women's program, funded by the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida, is making amazing progress as you will see. We are awaiting a decision on our Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for 2009-10 and are hoping that CHOICES and CAPP funding will be available again in the future.

The bad news is that homelessness in our area continues to grow as well. According to the 2009 county point-in-time survey there were a total of 1,624 homeless individuals counted during the census. Of these, 546 were children reported by the School Board.

During these times of economic difficulty, we anticipate that the number of unemployed and uninsured individuals will continue to increase, as will the number of homeless individuals.

Will you help us to meet increasing demands for care? We believe you will.

-Randy Stacey, Director



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## OUR CURRENT NEEDS

A current urgent need exists for the following items:

- ◆ Deodorant
- ◆ Toothpaste
- ◆ Socks
- ◆ Reading glasses
- ◆ Men's pants, T-shirts, underwear (new) & tennis shoes (all sizes)
- ◆ Women's pants & shorts (all sizes-especially sizes 12, 18 & 20-28), short-sleeve shirts (all sizes-especially 1X-3X), bras and underwear (new-especially sizes 8-10).

Items can be dropped off at the clinic on Monday evenings or at Selle Hall on Thursday evenings or brought to the church office. Arrangements can also be made for pick up by calling Martha Duffy at 372-8523 ext 17.

*Tax deductible financial donations may be made to the Helping Hands Clinic, P. O. Box 1481 Gainesville, FL 32602.*

*Other donations can be dropped off at the clinic, Monday evenings from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, or they can be picked up by calling Randy Stacey at 372-8523 ext 17.*



**We encourage you to visit our newly designed website at [www.hhcg.org](http://www.hhcg.org). You can email us your suggestions and comments or make a financial donation online using Pay Pal.**

**Special thanks to Leon Couch  
for his expert assistance with this update!**

## BLESSINGS

*A heart felt "Thank you" goes out to those who have recently supported our efforts to provide healthcare to the homeless and poor of our community.*

First Presbyterian Church

First United Methodist Church

Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity United Methodist Women

Single/Single Again at FUMC

United Methodist Women, Circle 6 at FUMC

*The Clinic is supported in part by the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida.*

GOD WANTS US  
TO BE OUR BROTHER'S  
KEEPER.

TO FEED THE HUNGRY,  
TO CLOTHE THE  
NAKED, TO SHELTER  
THE HOMELESS, TO  
INSTRUCT THE  
IGNORANT, AT A  
PERSONAL SACRIFICE IS  
WHAT GOD  
WANTS US TO DO.

WHAT WE GIVE TO  
THE POOR FOR  
CHRIST'S SAKE  
IS WHAT WE CARRY  
WITH US  
WHEN WE DIE.

AS JEAN-JACQUES  
ROUSSEAU SAID:  
"WHEN MAN DIES, HE  
CARRIES  
IN HIS CLUTCHED  
HANDS ONLY THAT  
WHICH HE HAS GIVEN  
AWAY"

## REFLECTIONS

### WORK BOOTS FOR KEVIN

Kevin's first visit to the Helping Hands Clinic was in November 2007. During that visit he sought assistance with obtaining an eye exam and glasses. He was a 45 year old African American who had been receiving follow-up at the Alachua County Health Department for hypertension and diabetes. He was unable to keep appointments because he had to "look for work" so he fell out of treatment.

In February 2008 he was hospitalized at AGH for pneumonia. His hypertension and diabetes were out of control. After a 10 day hospital stay, including ICU, he was discharged with a handful of prescriptions but had no money to fill them. He returned to Helping Hands seeking help. His blood pressure reading was 143/100 with a blood sugar reading of 229. He was unemployed, homeless and without much hope for change.

Over the next few months Kevin would appear sporadically at the clinic. Each time he was provided with a month's worth of medication but would then soon return reporting that his meds had been stolen (x3), lost (x2), left in a friend's car, left at a friend's house or accidentally thrown out. Since there were lapses between these episodes and appointments he often went without his medications. He continued with elevated BP and blood sugar readings. Attempts to get Kevin to the lab for lab work were fruitless as well since he regularly lost the lab order slip.

In November '08 a decision was made to begin providing Kevin with weekly allotments of medication. It was felt that he could manage to hang on to a week's worth and it also required him to return weekly for re-fills. He agreed to give it a try. Kevin did well with the new plan so the provider thought that it would be worth trying monthly visits again. Kevin continued to attend appointments as scheduled and during his most recent visit in May 09 he reported that he now had a girlfriend who was helping manage his diet. He had a blood sugar reading of 131 with a BP of 124/75. He looked and felt great. Just as important, Kevin has been able to remain out of the hospital for over a year.



As he was getting ready to leave he mentioned that he had a job waiting for him, doing landscaping, if he was able to find a pair of work boots. Kevin got his work boots the next night and started work the following day. We are hopeful now that he might be healthy enough to support himself in his own apartment. It may take Kevin more time to reach that goal but we will pray and encourage him to persist until he does.



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CARING FOR THE HEALTHCARE NEEDS  
OF THE HOMELESS OF GAINESVILLE

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MAILING ADDRESS: PO BOX 1481 Gainesville FL 32602-1481  
PHYSICAL ADDRESS: FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
419 NE FIRST STREET, GAINESVILLE FL 32601-5384  
352-372-8523 ext 17

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## WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM

### LADIES NIGHT INN

On Thursday evenings from 3:00-7:00 pm homeless and marginally housed women are provided with the opportunity to take a shower, change clothes and obtain personal hygiene items. They then enjoy playing cards or checkers, working with crafts, watching a movie or just talking with friends. A healthy dinner, brought in by various women from the church, is served followed by an array of services including acupuncture, social work counseling, hypnotherapy/relaxation, hair styling, and screening and referral for preventive health exams including pelvic exams and mammograms. We are hoping to recruit additional volunteers so that medical and psychiatric services can be added. Women come to the program "as they are" and are accepted and appreciated for "who they are." The program is providing structure and routine where there often is none, while offering a safe, accepting space to those who live within very complex and, at times, threatening social settings. A social network or "community" is developing which is beginning to meet their needs for connection and a sense of belonging. Expressions of higher self-esteem are being noted.



From Jan 08 to March 09 there were 88 women screened with 25 accepting a referral for an exam. From April 08 thru March 09 there were 206 service visits made by 56 different women. To realize the growth of this program one should note that we had 70 visits with 29 different women for the first 9 months when meeting bi-monthly and 136 visits with 27 new women in the first 3 months of weekly meetings. **If you are interested in volunteering as a health care provider, with meal preparation or as a clinic companion one night a month please contact Zenta Gomez, our volunteer coordinator, at 359-4032 or at [zentagomez@yahoo.com](mailto:zentagomez@yahoo.com).**