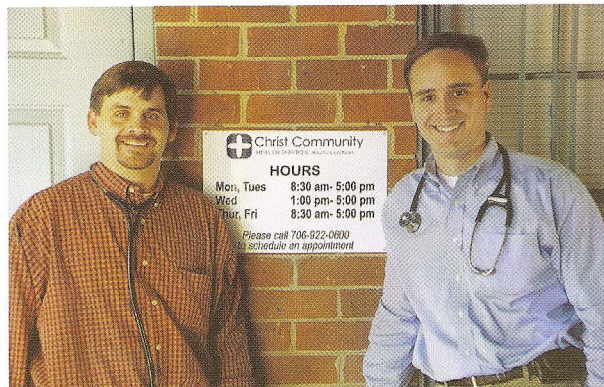


Taking It on Faith

Christ Community Health Service continues to grow with help from others



PHYSICIANS GRANT SCARBOROUGH AND ROBERT CAMPBELL are humbly grateful for every penny donated to Christ Community Health. The clinic's co-founders know they would not have been able to operate the past three years without the generosity of local businesses, organizations, churches and individuals.

But it was one of the first donations that really made the difference.

"Clay Boardman donated the Widow's Home to us before we ever moved into this current facility," Dr. Scarborough said. The clinic is currently located in a former University Hospital warehouse at 1226 D'Antignac St. that was completely renovated for the clinic's use.

It was the donation of the Widow's Home at 124 Greene St. that helped guide the plan Drs. Scarborough and Campbell had for the eventual expansion of Christ Community Health Services.

"Our initial goal was to move in to the University facility and build up the clientele enough to support the Widow's Home at some time," Dr. Scarborough said. "We moved in just next door with four exams rooms thinking we'd be quite comfortable there for two to three years. The truth of the matter is that we surpassed that pretty quickly."

More than 75,000 uninsured people live between Augusta and Aiken and once word got out that Christ Community offered health care on a sliding scale dependent on a person's ability to pay - even those without insurance - the doors were metaphorically thrown wide open.

"It's been amazing how God has orchestrated the people who have come to us, the resources that have come to us - whether it's the small things like

a countertop or a coffee pot to larger things like a copier - every little provision has been a surprise," Dr. Campbell said. "Three years and more than 19,500 patient encounters later, it's still awe inspiring that we continue to have exactly what we need to care for the next patient to come through the door."

That amazing growth has continued as Christ Community Health broke ground in August for the renovation of the Widow's Home. The first-floor expansion will include 12 exam rooms, a patient waiting room, nurses' station, lab and administrative offices and is expected to be completed around June 2011.

As the community has rallied around the clinic, the physicians noted that, for the most part, their patients have rallied as well.

"I'll tell patients, there are a lot of folks in this community who are working very hard to make this kind of care available," Dr. Campbell said. "It gives people a new perspective on University Hospital when they realize just how generous University has been to the community and how hard the executive and clinical staff works to make care available to everybody regardless of cost."

Christ Community Health isn't resting on its laurels as its staff continues to seek out new ways to help the Augusta area and provide the best health care services they can to those who need it most.

The clinic recently completed the application process to be named a Federally Qualified Health Center, which would help expand the clinic's services to more people.

"It will make it easier for us to expand, bring more physicians in and see more patients, which is the bottom line to try and take care of those who might fall through the gap," Dr. Scarborough said.

To do that, the physicians hit the road, going out to provide health education and screenings to those who might not come to the clinic.

All of these projects, all of the planning, mean long hours for Drs. Scarborough and Campbell, but the pair said it's all worth it at the end of the day.

"We really have to be out there fighting for our patients - to get them what they need, even if it's just a coat or a birthday cake or a prescription," Dr. Scarborough said. "So at the end of the day, sometimes I'm tired from fighting, but at the same time, I know we're on a mission and it keeps us willing to fight that much harder for the next patient to come through the door." ♦

For more information about Christ Community Clinic or to donate to the facility, log on to www.christcommunityaugusta.org or call 706/396-1462 .