



# Bethesda

HEALTH CLINIC

## BETHESDA HEALTH CLINIC IS GRACE

**“Bethesda Health Clinic is grace. It is something I couldn’t afford, couldn’t buy, that has been given to me freely. That’s grace. That’s Bethesda Health Clinic.”**

Through grace, Jamie has found her way back to health, wholeness and her faith from a deep abyss, a well of darkness of her own making. “I made horrible choices, and almost destroyed my life with my own hands,” she confesses. Years of anorexia and addiction were destroying Jamie’s body, and lawless behavior landed her in jail – for 76 long days.

“God never leaves you. You leave Him,” Jamie asserts. While in jail, her heart opened to God once again. “I heard Him very clearly. ‘If you will be honest, I will give you grace,’ He said. He did. And He has kept His promise.”

Jamie had known about Bethesda for many years. She was a patient at the Clinic even during the dark times.

“But on my last visit, Dr. John English fired me as a patient,” she says. “He took his oath as a physician and as a believer seriously. He knew I was lying and he knew I was abusing my medication. He told me I couldn’t come back. That’s when the snowball started, the snowball that lead me to the bottom and then back up again.”

After time in jail, Jamie was court-ordered to a treatment facility, Son Shine Lighthouse, where she spent a year getting her life back on track physically, mentally and spiritually. “I began to feel God working on me. You know, God works within you, and He starts working around you, and He sets you up for where you should go next.”

As a resident of Son Shine Lighthouse, Jamie came back to Bethesda for both medical and dental care. “I had to face Dr. English again, and that was humbling, but he actually welcomed me. The heart of Bethesda is compassion. It’s not

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just the care that's given," says Jamie. "It's how you're treated when you walk through the door. It doesn't matter who you are or what you've done. God's tender, loving care and mercy are in the heart of Dr. English and every one of the volunteers and employees."

Now living on her own, Jamie has a full time job but no health insurance coverage. Bethesda is still her medical home, where she's now proudly receiving preventative care. She's learning, as she says, "to treat my body as a temple. God's kingdom lies within me. I have to take care of it!"

Jamie's new passion is helping other women see their value and find the strength and faith she has found. "God deepened my faith by breaking me to strengthen me," she asserts. "The woman of old is dead and gone, and I have confidence in who God created me to be."

Jamie has begun to publicly share her testimony and her remarkable story of recovery with an open heart and without fear or shame. She believes it will lead to something big: "You change a culture by speaking to the heart of a woman," Jamie proclaims. The pain in one woman's life, the transformation brought about by God's grace, the promise of new life found in Him, can indeed be a powerful change agent for our time.

Jamie's description of Bethesda Health Clinic simply as "grace" is perhaps the most succinct and accurate description of our ministry. Your support of this work creates a vehicle through which we can extend God's grace, welcoming Jamie and so many others who are hurt and broken, extending to them the grace we have also received and which none of us deserve. It is a great gift, unexpected, unmerited and life-changing.



## A NOTE FROM JOHN

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you.  
For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds;  
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

*Matthew 7:7-8*

These verses from Matthew have long been a favorite of mine. They speak to me about the fact that God is always here for us. We just have to ask, to seek, to knock, and He will open the door.

At Bethesda Health Clinic, we have a new, catchy phrase that we like a lot: "Here to help."

As God is always here for us, Bethesda is also here for those who seek our help. Because of you, and our loving God who blesses this work, we can open the door to health and hope. Because of you, we can say "yes" when too often the world has said "no".

This edition of our newsletter is full of stories about the ways we are "here to help." Bethesda is here to help Jamie, who shares her powerful story about her journey back to health and wholeness. We're here to help Shawanna, who is finally turning her attention to her own health after years of caring for others.

YOU are the reason Bethesda Health Clinic is "here to help." We only have the capacity to serve those who turn to us to the extent the community supports our mission. Did you know that we are serving more patients than ever before? Forty two percent more new patients than any previous year!

**Bethesda needs you now more than ever. Can we count on you to make sure that we are "here to help"?**

... We are Here to Help

# BILL AND MARIE STARLING

*“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Luke 12:48*

Dr. Bill Starling paraphrases this verse from Luke into a modern saying we have all heard: “To whom much has been given, much is required.” It’s a saying he and his wife, Marie, strive to live by and which has shaped their involvement with Bethesda Health Clinic.

“I’ve been impressed at how many physicians and nurses and lay people have invested themselves here at the Clinic,” says Bill. “But then Tyler is like that,” adds Marie. “This is a giving town. People see a need and they respond.”

“You know, fifteen years ago those who founded the clinic recognized the needs of the medically underserved, and they responded,” says Bill. “And they’ve been responding ever since.”

When Bill and Marie agreed to chair the Dr. Luke Society dinner in February, 2017, they were also responding to a need – to raise funds to support the Clinic. “What is



happening here is so worthwhile,” Bill asserts. “It takes skill and good hearts to make it all happen, but it also takes money. The Dr. Luke Society dinner is one of the ways the Clinic raises the money it needs. There are no Federal dollars here. We have to raise it all from charitable gifts.”

Sunday School teachers for 32 years, Bill and Marie know their way around the Scriptures, and they are quick to point out the only reference to Bethesda in the Bible. “It’s only mentioned once, but its meaning is very clear: House of Mercy,” says Bill.

“That’s such an apt description of Bethesda Health Clinic. It’s a house of mercy. Patients are afforded mercy by the talented, giving people at Bethesda and our ability to extend that mercy is made possible by our generous community.”

“We’ve all been given so much,” says Bill. “Some have wealth, but we have all been given the abundant grace of God, the Word of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through the mission of Bethesda, we can use whatever we have received to serve others. We can all respond.”

# Doctor Luke Society... 2017



Marilyn Richey, Eleanor Cameron



Noah and Helen Israel



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Su Holder, Mary Irwin



Scott and Robyn Lieberman



Charles and Maureen Stone



Elmer and Betsy Ellis, Bill Moore



Derrith Bondurant, LaVerne Gollob,  
Catherine Harrison



Lindsey and Vicki Bradley, Steven Keur

... We are Here to Help



## FRESH 15 EVENT BENEFITS BETHESDA

On a brisk March Saturday morning, runners and walkers participating in the 4th annual FRESH 15 Road Race did their part to support health and wellness programs at Bethesda Health Clinic.

"We are proud to award FRESH 15 funding to groups that exemplify the strength it takes to support every sense of the term 'family' – passion, hope, dignity, belonging and protection – all of which are vital to building lives that truly make a difference," said Trent Brookshire, executive sponsor for the event. "We are proud to have raised over \$500,000 in the past four years for deserving charity partners, and we take great pride in the fact that every single penny from registration goes directly back into our community."

"Bethesda Health Clinic was honored to be a partner with Brookshire's in the FRESH 15 race again this year. Both of our organizations are supported by the community and both emphasize the need for a healthy lifestyle. The

FRESH 15 team put on a first class event, and we were proud to be chosen as a beneficiary. Bethesda has been awarded \$40,000 and the proceeds will go towards equipping our dental clinic with items needed to help decrease the wait time for our patients and keep up with the tremendous growth we are experiencing in this area," said John English, M.D.

More than 4500 runners from all over Texas and beyond competed in the 15k, 5k and 1k kids' races. Bethesda Clinic was blessed to be one of the charitable organizations benefiting from the race proceeds.



# SHAWANNA



*“Bethesda is an anointed place, a God-sent place.”*

“I had been praying and praying, and finally I asked God, ‘are you getting my messages?’ because nothing was happening. Then Donnie Gaines called me to her office at Bethesda and said Bethesda was going to help me get my teeth fixed. I thought it was a joke. Things don’t hardly ever happen good for me.”

But Shawanna was wrong. Something very good indeed was about to happen for her. Bethesda has a special “patient adoption fund,” accessible only at the recommendation of one of the dentists and available to be used when a patient’s situation requires going ‘above and beyond’ to help them. Dr. Holland recommended Shawanna, and using the patient adoption funds, Bethesda was going to extract all her diseased and damaged teeth and create dentures for her.

As a single mother, caring for her own elderly mother and her three children, one of whom is disabled, Shawanna had no time or resources to care for herself, and she hadn’t been to the dentist in a long, long time. Finally, awake night after night because of the pain, she knew she couldn’t wait any longer. There was still one more obstacle – an enormous fear of the dentist which caused her to have panic attacks.

“I was breathing hard and praying and praying when I sat down in the dentist’s chair at Bethesda, and you know what the dentist said?” Shawanna asks. “He said, ‘do you want us to pray for you?’ PRAY for me! YES! I knew I was in the right place and all my fear and anxiety went away.”

New teeth are a new beginning for Shawanna. “I’m going to have teeth in my mouth,” she says, “First my teeth. Then lose weight. I’m going to be too cute!”

To Shawanna, Bethesda is an anointed place, a God-sent place. “I’ve been through a storm and back again, and I kept asking God ‘why’? But God knew what He was doing. He sent me through that storm and to Bethesda. When bad things happen, God is getting you ready for a blessing, and for me that blessing is Bethesda. If you hear of a lady in the church house who can’t stop shoutin,’ that’s me!”

... We are Here to Help



Vera Moore, John English, Kristen Seeber and Patty Steelman

Many women like Shawanna shoulder big burdens and big responsibilities. The pressing priorities of caring for others, financial insecurity, even abuse, become the focus of their lives, causing them to neglect their own health and well-being.

At Bethesda Health Clinic, the Women's Advocacy Initiative helps patients address these "life stressors" and begin to deal with them, while at the same time working to improve their physical health.

"Advocacy is so important at Bethesda," says Donnie Gaines, Patient Advocate Coordinator. "Yes, Bethesda is a medical and dental clinic, but we can't deal with physical health alone. There are mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects to healing people. If you're worried about feeding your babies at the end of the month, you're probably not going to focus on monitoring your blood pressure. If we can find resources to help a woman deal

## WOMEN'S ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

with her family's food insecurity, then she can start paying attention to her blood pressure. That's good for her and good for her family."

A grant from the Women's Fund of Smith County will more than double the Clinic's ability to help women in need. Shuna Mast, a full time patient advocate, has joined Donnie on the staff.

"As social workers, we look at the patient as a whole, and work with them to develop a plan," she says. "When people are facing multiple crises, they don't know where to start. We help them put things into perspective. What can we focus on first? Just one thing at a time."

"We listen a lot," adds Donnie. "That's part of their healing too. Sometimes a patient will say, 'no one has ever really listened to me before'. It may take an hour, but we listen. That's just what we do."



*Masquerade with Us*  
**BETHESDA BIRTHDAY BASH**  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16  
VILLA DI FELICITA  
2017

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THANK YOU TO EVERYONE  
WHO DONATED!

## AVCO Roofing Hosts Donation Drive for Hangers of Hope



In February, AVCO Roofing organized a donation drive in the Hollytree community and filled three trailers with donations for Hangers of Hope. All proceeds of the thrift store go back to the clinic and provide the additional resources needed to greatly expand Bethesda's services. We are very grateful to both AVCO Roofing and to all of the members of the Hollytree community who donated items in support of Hangers of Hope and Bethesda Health Clinic.