



# Bethesda

HEALTH CLINIC

## A HEART FOR SERVICE

When Connie Nguyen's abdominal pain persisted, she imagined the worst. Her physical symptoms added to the stress she was already feeling – raising small children, she and her husband both working hard but neither with health insurance, the recent death of both her parents. A friend told Connie about Bethesda Health Clinic, but she was hesitant.

"I didn't know anything about this place. I didn't know what it was like. I didn't know if they would accept me," she remembers. When Connie arrived at the clinic, she was crying, but within just a few minutes, she knew she was in the right place. "The volunteer at the front desk, the first face I saw, was so kind and welcoming. 'Don't worry,' the volunteer said, 'we can help you.'

And they did! When I got home, I told my husband, 'I can't believe there are people who will help us, people we don't even know!'"

Fast forward a few years, and life looks much different for Connie and her family. At Tyler Junior College and U.T. Tyler, Connie became an RN and then earned her Bachelor's degree in nursing. Now employed in the cardiac unit at UT Health East Texas, she has a good job and good health insurance. Her husband has followed her into the nursing field, recently receiving his RN and now working on his Bachelor's degree in nursing. Their busy household includes three generations, her mother and father-in-law, children ages 8 and 9, as well as Connie and her husband.



Connie loves her career in nursing, loves the opportunities it has given her to learn and grow. Working 12 hour shifts, she puts in long hours, but she has every other Tuesday off work. What does Connie do with that one precious week day all to herself while her children are in school and her husband is working? She volunteers at Bethesda! "This place is awesome for me. Really there are not words to describe how I feel about Bethesda," she says. "Nothing I can say will show how grateful I am for what Bethesda did for me. I'd rather "DO something," and the thing I can DO is volunteer."

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“This place is God’s blessing,” says Connie, her eyes brimming with tears. “I feel warmth in this place. The first time I came, I felt so awkward, but the people at Bethesda helped me feel accepted and that’s why I came back. That’s why I was healed.”

“It’s not what we say, it’s what we do,” Connie emphasizes, “We show what is important to us by sacrificing. This is my way of showing my love for Bethesda and what they do here to help so many people.”



**Connie taking care of a patient at Bethesda.**



## A NOTE FROM JOHN

**“For what we present is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”**

*2 Corinthians 4:5*

This newsletter is full of stories about people with the true hearts of a servant. Dr. John Walker has volunteered at Bethesda for more than 13 years. Carol Smith has served at Bethesda since the very beginning. Connie Nyugen is a relatively new volunteer, having first had experience at Bethesda as a patient and seeking a way to give back.

Each of these volunteers and so many others give selflessly to our ministry and those we serve.

None of them expect rewards, recognition or even gratitude for what they do. They are motivated simply to live out true servanthood the way Jesus did.

One of the blessings of Bethesda is to be surrounded every day by the humility, sacrifice and faith of our board members, staff and volunteers. We are blessed by opportunities, big and small, to reflect Jesus’s servant heart and His love for us as we care for our neighbors and minister to their needs – physical, spiritual, and emotional. We remember, every day, who is at the heart of all we do, as we remember what Jesus said, “I am among you as one who serves.” Luke 22:27



## HONORING ONE OF THE BEST

Dr. John Walker and Dr. Jan Garrett were inducted into Bethesda Health Clinic's Doctor Luke Society in February, in recognition of their long and distinguished medical careers and their heart for service.

With a great grandfather who was the first doctor in Bowie County, Texas, a father who was a family physician in a very small town in southern Illinois and a mother who was a registered nurse, perhaps Dr. John Walker was destined to be a physician. Perhaps he also inherited a physician's heart for the patients in his care. One thing is certain: Dr. Walker has a heart for medical mission work and a heart for Bethesda Health Clinic.

Experience with Mercy Ships in Honduras and Liberia gave Dr. Walker a taste of medical missions. He found that same opportunity to serve right here at home when he began volunteering with Bethesda. "This clinic is very, very needed," he says. "What they do and how they do it is top notch, a good Christian way to help those in need."

Dr. Walker began volunteering at Bethesda in January of 2006 and has since contributed

almost 700 hours of volunteer service. Now after more than four decades in the practice of orthopedics, Dr. Walker has retired and has more time to volunteer his service and give his time to Bethesda. He and others staff an orthopedic clinic once a month to which Bethesda patients are referred. "I have always loved orthopedics," Dr. Walker says. "I was drawn to it because I like the opportunity to help people get better. Most often, when patients have an orthopedic problem, there's something you can do to fix it. That was true when I was in private practice and it's true at Bethesda."

"I have a great deal of empathy for the people who come to Bethesda for care," Dr. Walker adds. "They are hard-working people who just don't have access to the care they need. When we can help them, they can get back to work. They can get back to their lives. That's very gratifying to me and very wonderful to see, and I am blessed to be able to help."

# Dr. Luke Society 2019



Laura Jones, Dr. Jan Garrett, Jennifer Deen



Jack Walker, Kelly Eltife, Dr. John Walker, Martha Walker, Kenney Walker



Drs. Larry Anderson and Sasha Vukelja, Catherine and Dr. Craig Harrison



Cherie Kelley, Julie and David Shamburger, Nathan Kelley, Susan Gibson, Don Thedford, Kathy McCabe



Doctor Luke Society Members

Front row L to R: Bill Moore, Grace English, Maxey Abernathy, Bob Rossman, Sasha Vukelja, Kerfoot Walker, Virgil Gonzalez, Clark Hampe  
Back row L to R: John English, Noah Israel, David Nichols, Larry Anderson, Jan Garrett, John Walker, Gary Gross, Don Smith, Sam Houston, Bill Starling, Todd Raabe

# 2019 Birthday Bash



Dr. Rachel DeVaney and Helen Israel



Elen Garrett and Laura Hyde



Vicki and Dr. Todd Raabe



Jill Hossley, Susan Davis, Laura Waits

A poster for 'A Night of Heroes' featuring Wonder Woman and Superman. The background is blue with a city skyline. A spotlight shines down on the characters. The text 'A NIGHT OF HEROES' is at the top, and 'BETHESDA BASH 9-21-19' is in the middle. At the bottom, it says 'Bethesda HEALTH CLINIC' and 'SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES'.

A NIGHT OF  
HEROES

BETHESDA BASH  
9-21-19

Bethesda  
HEALTH CLINIC

SPONSORSHIP  
OPPORTUNITIES

# SAVE THE DATE

## EXTRAORDINARY HEROES

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Barbara Bass

Brian Brandt

Chief David Coble

The Honorable Judith Guthrie

Jordan Meads

Jerry Putman, M.D.

Ross Sheridan, Ed.D.

Chief Jimmy Toler



When you make a gift to Bethesda's endowment fund or plan a legacy gift to Bethesda Health Clinic, we welcome you to membership in the Jewel Society, a special group of people whose commitment to the mission of the clinic has led them to continue their support of Bethesda beyond their lifetime.

Named for Jewel Price, a generous supporter of Bethesda in her lifetime, and the donor of the first planned gift to Bethesda, the Jewel Society celebrates those who have made a gift to invest in Bethesda's future.

Gifts of any size are welcomed and appreciated, and will help to ensure the future of this beloved ministry.

For information contact Diane Thomason at [dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org](mailto:dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org) or call 903.526.8353 Ext. 106.

## HAVING A HEART FOR THE FUTURE

There is much to be done every day at Bethesda Health Clinic, and sometimes our focus on the every day can be overwhelming. There are patients to be seen, volunteers to recruit and support, money to be raised. There are budgets to balance, programs to coordinate, new ideas to consider, a hundred, maybe a thousand actions to be completed every day.

While the list of everyday tasks at Bethesda is huge, taking the time to step back and evaluate with a long view in mind is something we must do often. From that vantage point we know that, if this vital ministry is to thrive and continue to serve for decades to come, we must focus on the long view. Looking toward the future and assembling the resources it will take to ensure Bethesda's relevance and stability requires a big picture perspective.

The growth of Bethesda's endowment fund is key to the future of the clinic. Just as you, our friends and donors, support the current

operations of this ministry, you can support its future by contributing to the Bethesda endowment. One of the best and easiest ways to do that is to remember Bethesda when you are writing your will and planning your estate.

We ask that you prayerfully consider a way you can give to the future of Bethesda, perhaps through a bequest in your estate plans, or naming Bethesda as a beneficiary of your IRA or insurance plan. Planned gifts to the Bethesda endowment, in any amount, will ensure that Bethesda has a stable source of income to weather future changes in the healthcare environment. Planned gifts like these will ensure that Bethesda will be here to care for the whole person just as we have been for the last sixteen years.

It is important that we at Bethesda focus on the everyday demands. It is wise that we also focus on the future.

*Will you join us?*



Thank you to all of the donors who helped raise **\$53,603** for the clinic. Bethesda was the third highest in donations out of 183 agencies!



**Carol Smith**

## THE BARNABAS PROGRAM

# “WE ARE A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY FIRST AND FOREMOST.”

Sometimes things just come together, even complicated things.

And sometimes things, complicated things, are, well, complicated.

The Barnabas Program at Bethesda is one of those complicated things that has taken a while to come together.

Since the inception of Bethesda Health Clinic, we have sought the right way to come alongside patients who are seeking medical care for their physical issues, but who have spiritual issues that are troubling them, even affecting their physical well-being. Since those very early days, volunteer Carol Smith has been committed to this aspect of Bethesda's ministry. “We are a Christian ministry, first and foremost,” Carol reminds us. “We can never lose sight of that fact. We are here because we love Jesus, and we want other people to know Him. That's why we serve.”

Carol's commitment, deeply rooted in her own faith, has seen the clinic's efforts to minister to the spiritual needs of patients take many forms through the years. “More than once we created a structure that we thought would work, and it didn't. It was discouraging at times, but Dr. John English pushed and pushed, always reminding us of our bedrock commitment. I thought, ‘if John can persevere, so can I.’ I'm glad the Lord kept me in it.”

Today, the Barnabas Program is thriving, though it remains difficult work. “Our volunteers are ‘encouragers’ for our patients, both in their health and spiritual journeys. They get deeply involved with their patients, and it's often not comfortable, not pretty. We have to meet them where they are, with grace, and without judgement.”

“The name ‘Barnabas’ comes from a man described in the book of Acts, known for his graciousness in

welcoming strangers and his encouraging and supporting ways. Like the Biblical Barnabas, Barnabas volunteers pray with patients, help them find a church home, encourage them to keep their clinic appointments, whatever it takes to let them know we care about them, and God cares about them too.”

One Barnabas volunteer had this to say about his experience, “It never ceases to amaze me how much people can benefit from experiencing Jesus. The patient had suffered so much pain that he was looking and feeling hopeless. I prayed with him and asked for God's grace to shine through, and then a look of joy and peace came upon him.”

Yes, sometimes complicated things take a while to come together. When they do, it's the faith of people like Carol Smith and God working through her that finally put all the pieces in place. Amazing how that works, isn't it?

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**Bethesda**  
HEALTH CLINIC

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THE EAST TEXAS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION GIVES BACK!  
BETHESDA HEALTH CLINIC WAS A BENEFICIARY FROM  
THE TASTE OF TYLER 2019.



From left to right - Bob Westbrook, Zach Wade, Megan Riaz, Emily Wilson, Leona May and Lloyd Nichols.