



# From *the* Heart

Primary Healthcare for the Working Uninsured

Summer 2008

## Meet Our Patients

### Connie & Curtis Mathews

In 2005, Curtis Mathews started a new job that didn't include medical benefits for himself or his wife, Connie. "Curtis is a welder and fabricator, always has been," says Connie, a Nashville native who has worked as a server at Sylvan Park Restaurant for several years. Wondering what they would do for health care, Connie saw an ad on TV for Bridges to Care and decided to sign up. She chose Faith Family off the list of providers and made appointments for physicals for them both.

"Curtis doesn't like doctors, but he liked Dr. Henderson right away," says Connie. From the first visit, Dr. Henderson began helping Curtis, a diabetic, get on track with managing his blood sugar and diet. Connie met with Traci Warner, FNP, who has been her main caregiver ever since. "She's my doctor and she's my friend, too," says Connie. "That's how we feel about the people there; they are like family to us."

*"We couldn't ask for better people to take care of us and our health."*

*Connie and Curtis Mathews*

The Mathews' ties to Faith Family became even stronger after a serious illness struck Curtis last winter. In February, Curtis was working outside in the cold and later began coughing and experiencing chest pain. "We thought it was the flu," says Connie. They made an appointment to see Dr. Henderson, who determined that Curtis had pneumonia and sent him to the ER at Baptist Hospital. Connie remembers that Dr. Henderson called ahead and had people waiting for them in the parking lot to help them inside. "Curtis was really sick," she explains. "Within 30 minutes they told us his kidneys had shut down and they weren't sure he was going to be ok."

Connie endured a week of not knowing whether Curtis would recover. "There were a lot of prayers," she recalls. "Everybody at Faith Family was praying for us." She remembers with gratitude the way Dr. Henderson and Traci stayed in frequent touch, calling or visiting regularly while Curtis was in intensive care. After being admitted to the hospital on February 20<sup>th</sup>, Curtis was finally released on March 26<sup>th</sup>.



Connie & Curtis Mathews

Since his hospital experience, Curtis and Connie are more vigilant than ever at managing his diabetes, monitoring his blood sugar daily and making sure he's eating well. "It doesn't matter that I don't have insurance, I've got them," she says. "Dr. Henderson is the best doctor I've ever met and Curtis feels the same way." 🏠

### Rosa & Danilo Alduendo

"I feel like I owe everything to Faith Family," says Rosa Alduenda. Rosa and her husband Danilo are originally from Mexico and have lived in Nashville since 1993. It was one of their ten children, Margarita, who first introduced them to the Clinic. Now in their early 70's, Rosa and Danilo have been Faith Family patients for five years. During that time, each of them has had serious health problems.

"Before we found Faith Family, we were struggling to take care of ourselves," Rosa remembers. "We weren't getting answers at other clinics." In 2005, Faith Family staff referred Rosa to a specialist after noticing abnormal kidney function; she was diagnosed with lupus nephritis. "They sent me to a wonderful specialist, for this I've been very blessed," says Rosa. "Thanks to the Clinic, I'm still alive," she adds. Together with her specialist, Rosa's caregivers at Faith Family work to manage her chronic illness.

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From the desk of **Dr. Henderson**, *Medical Director*

Recently I decided to attack some long overdue yard work. For too long, I had viewed my back yard as a “natural” ecological site. So I chopped and I hacked, I mowed and I sweated. Once the mission was accomplished, and the poison ivy in full retreat, I could barely move. My knees complained bitterly, my muscles sounded the alarm – lactic acid buildup.

And then I thought of “Bob.” He had presented to Faith Family just the week before as a new patient - then his world turned upside down. An uninsured construction worker, he had decided four months ago to turn over a new leaf and stop drinking. Since then he had progressively felt “worse and worse.” Pale as the proverbial rider, it was obvious he was profoundly anemic. Centennial Hospital lab (what a blessing for the ranks of the uninsured we serve) soon had our answer – acute leukemia was ravaging his bone marrow and left him with just a fourth of the blood he should have had. We quickly arranged for him to be admitted to Baptist (another huge blessing!) to the care of the oncologist/hematologist. After a six unit blood transfusion, he drawled, “Yeah doc, they’ve told me, at best, I have a 50/50 chance.” So we prayed for healing, and I hoped that in the not too distant future he would be ‘enjoying’ the misery of weekend yard work.

During the nearly seven years we have served the uninsured at Faith Family, the demand for our ministry has constantly grown. We often find ourselves stretched to capacity, yet honored every day to meet and serve people like Bob. Thanks to all of you for helping us provide the best of medical care to Bob and so many others.

*In Him,*



Letter From **Laura Hobson**, *Executive Director*

Dear Friends,

The first half of 2008 has been exciting for the staff of Faith Family. In May, we had our first staff retreat at the Christian Retreat Center in Franklin. We spent the morning discussing communication styles and our vision for the Clinic and in the afternoon participated in team building activities. The time away was great fun and a rare opportunity to step away from the work we do to reflect and rest together.

Also in May, Dr. Henderson, Traci Warner, FNP, Liz Adams, FNP, Carolyn Pratt, PA and I attended the Christian Community Health Fellowship Conference (CCHF) at Belmont University. CCHF is a national network of Christian health professionals concerned about the health care needs of impoverished communities in the United States. We met people from all over the country doing work similar to that of Faith Family. It was inspiring to see how God is working in so many communities (as far away as Alaska!) to meet the health needs of the uninsured.

Last but not least, we have been in the process of updating our lobby area with donated carpet and chairs. Please feel free to drop in to see the new look, and stop by my office to say hello.

As we continue to look for ways to increase awareness of Faith Family, I invite you to contact me if you have ideas about how to share the story of what is happening here at the Clinic. We are always interested in acquiring new patients and new donors, and are especially focused on increasing awareness within the church community.

Thank you for your support of our ministry.

Blessings,



# Staff Spotlight

## Sheree Keith, Office Coordinator

Sheree has been with Faith Family since the very beginning. "I started in September 2001, before we had furniture," she remembers. "It was just Dr. Henderson, myself and three other staff, starting from scratch." As Office Coordinator, she continues to play an important role behind the scenes every day.

Before Faith Family entered her life, Sheree was a stay-at-home mom for 22 years, raising five children. After divorcing in 1997, she found herself on the job market with, she believed, few marketable skills. She held a series of administrative jobs, often without the benefit of health insurance.

*"I've never worked in a place before where there's such a spirit of love and dedication."*

"When I look back, God was opening and closing doors," says Sheree. "I needed to learn people skills and recognize I was good at organization and administration." It was a painful time for her and her family, but God's provision and a supportive group of friends and family kept pushing her forward.

While taking a social services class at Volunteer State, Sheree realized that not only did she have a knack for administrative



work, she had a heart for people. "It wasn't going to be enough for me to just make a paycheck anymore," she says. "I started searching and praying for the next thing. One day I picked up the paper

and read about two doctors looking for people to work in a new clinic. What touched my heart was that they wanted people who desired to make a positive difference in the lives of others. That's what had been done for me, and my heart jumped at the chance to start doing that for others."

One thing Sheree loves about her job is the opportunity to get to know patients. Her duties include scheduling new patient visits and connecting patients to specialist care when required. She loves helping Faith Family's clients receive the care they need and watching them start to take their health care seriously once they realize preventative care is available. "It's not unusual for a patient to be crying as they check out, saying they've never been to a place where people cared so much," Sheree says, with tears in her own eyes. "It's a privilege to work here, to know every day that you're using your skills to serve people."

## In Remembrance

### Albert Menefee

Albert Menefee was a successful Nashville businessman and committed supporter of Faith Family who passed away late in 2007. Albert had a special interest in helping working people receive quality health care. Upon learning about Faith Family's mission, he took the Clinic under his wing. Over the years of his acquaintance with Dr. Henderson, he and his family foundation made many significant gifts to support Faith Family's work.

After Albert's death, the Menefee family graciously offered his motorized wheelchair to the Clinic as a gift in kind. The wheelchair has transformed everyday life for one of our patients (see "Meet Our Patients," page 5). We are extremely grateful for Albert's support of our Clinic and patients during his lifetime, and for his family's continued interest in helping the patients of Faith Family.



### Bill Youree

Faith Family Medical Clinic lost a dear friend when Bill Youree passed away in April of this year. Bill was a respected Nashville health care executive who used his considerable business skills to get the Clinic running from the ground up. He warmly welcomed Dr. Henderson to Nashville upon his arrival in 2001

and was always there to "shoulder the load," according to Dr. Henderson, getting involved in the nitty gritty of everything from developing the business plan to hiring staff to working with vendors to furnish the facility.

Bill's passion for the concept of affordable health care for the working poor was so strong that he donated all his time for a period of two years to establishing Faith Family, using his home as the office and involving his wife Cyndee, a local radiologist, and sons as volunteers. After playing such an instrumental role in the beginning of the Clinic, Bill continued to serve on the Board of Directors for many years.

"Bill was invaluable to us and to this place," says Dr. Henderson. "He cared about people and saw his work with Faith Family as a way to give back to his community." His example and support will be remembered and missed.

## In Her Words

### Traci Warner,

*Family Nurse Practitioner*

All of us will die someday. Considering such a disheartening statistic, one might wonder what draws a person to work in healthcare at all, or specifically a clinic like Faith Family. Yet I can honestly assert that after five years of working in the field of medicine, I truly love and enjoy my job.

First and foremost, I have started to realize and understand the joys of serving Christ in this setting. I know that God has called me to this ministry, and He desires for me to see each patient as He sees him or her – as one created in His image, one He loves. If I spend my day only focusing on uncontrolled hypertension, patient noncompliance, unsightly foot ulcers, or mounds of paperwork, I likely would experience burn-out and negativism. Instead, I try to delight in the gifts God has given to me to be able to examine the retina, palpate an abdomen, devise a plan of care, and even scribble out a prescription. I find joy in listening to the life stories my patients disclose to me. I celebrate with them when they reach their weight loss goals or finally stop smoking. I am honored to be able to pray with my patients or share a passage of Scripture. Mostly, though, I enjoy being a part of their lives – focusing on the whole person – the person God desires them to be.

Countless passages and verses in the Bible point to the fact that God desires for us to be well – in mind, body, and spirit. Only a right relationship with the Creator of the universe, the Creator of each of us, can truly bring about physical,



Traci Warner examines a young patient

mental, emotional, and spiritual healing. That is why I am a part of this work at Faith Family Medical Clinic. I have the opportunity every day to share Christ with my patients, sometimes in a very overt way (such as through word or deed) and sometimes in a very subtle way (through the ministry of presence). I can only hope and pray that I continue to be sensitive to the call God has given me to care for the men, women, and children who walk through our doors.

*Traci Warner has been a Family Nurse Practitioner at FFMC for the past 3 ½ years. She currently lives in Nashville with five other nurses and thoroughly enjoys her job. She is single and content but thinks she'd make a pretty good wife and mother.*

## Faith in Action

### Katie Regan, *Volunteer*

Katie's connection to Faith Family started about five years ago, after she read an article in the newspaper about the Clinic. The article struck a chord; with more than 20 years experience as a physical therapist at Vanderbilt, Katie had been looking for a way to give back now that her children were nearly grown and she had some extra time. She called the Clinic and soon was working with patients as a volunteer physical therapist.

Katie has faithfully served at Faith Family ever since, spending one morning a week evaluating patients and designing individualized home exercise programs. "They are a wonderful group of people," she says of her clients. "They want to get better, because they have to work, and they are grateful for every bit of care they receive here." Katie also counts working with the staff as a part of what draws her to the work. "It's



Katie Regan works with a physical therapy patient

so rewarding to get to work with these people and these patients," she explains. "It's really been a gift to me."



## Meet our Patients cont'd

Danilo's medical problems started a year and a half ago when he was working in his garage and moved a heavy piece of equipment. He felt pain in his back and by the next day, was unable to stand or walk. Faith Family staff stood by Danilo and his family as he was admitted to two hospitals and eventually told he had an abscess on his spine. Even after surgery to remove the abscess, Danilo's health continued to decline as he experienced a series of infections and eventually had to undergo a colostomy. He never regained his ability to walk. Danilo returned home to the joy of his family in late summer 2007.

*"The clinic and the whole staff  
have been a blessing to our family."*

*Rosa and Danilo Alduenda*

"Rosa's my companion, she takes care of me," Danilo says of his wife of almost 53 years. Indeed, Rosa, who works as a childcare provider part-time, has been Danilo's primary caregiver ever since he came home. As they adjusted to his new limitations, Danilo started to hope for a motorized wheelchair. "I remember saying around Christmas last year that maybe God would send one," says Danilo. That same month, the Menefee family made a donation to the Clinic: a motorized wheelchair that had formerly belonged to Albert Menefee, a strong supporter of the Clinic who passed away late last year. Faith Family staff thought immediately of Danilo. The motorized chair has significantly improved Danilo's quality of life, giving him a greater degree of



**Rosa & Danilo Alduendo**

independence. "We are very, very grateful to the Menefee family," says Danilo, "and to God, who brought us to Faith Family and to everyone at the Clinic. They have helped us in every way they could." 🏠



## Mission Statement

*We seek to reclaim the Biblical and historical commitment  
of the people of faith to care for the poor who are sick.*

The Clinic provides quality, affordable healthcare and health education to the growing number of low income, uninsured working people of Nashville who do not have access to primary medical care.

## Faith Family *by the Numbers*

**January 1<sup>st</sup> - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008**

New patients enrolled: **966**

Total # patient visits: **6,530**

Average number of patients seen daily: **51.5**

Referrals to specialists: **724**

***We need your donations so we can  
continue to provide affordable  
healthcare to the working uninsured.***

Please send a check in the enclosed envelope or mail to:

**FFMC**

**326 21st Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37203**

## *Wish List & Volunteer Needs*

- Office supplies especially copy paper, large paper clips, 3x3 post-it notes, 3x5 post-it notes, legal pads, pens, paper napkins
- Jugs of liquid soap and hand sanitizer
- Band-aids (especially for children, with pictures)
- Digital camera
- Children's books (in English and Spanish)
- Bibles – English, Spanish, Arabic

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

We are looking for volunteers who would commit one day a week (or more!) for 1 ½ - 3 hours to return patient calls, make appointments, file, insert dictation in charts, etc.

If you can help, please contact our Office Coordinator, Sheree Keith at [skeith@faithmedical.org](mailto:skeith@faithmedical.org) or at **341-0808**.



**FAITH FAMILY  
MEDICAL CLINIC**

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