

## UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

**September 22, 10am-1pm**

- Health Screenings & Flu Shots
- Bike Collection

**October 23, 10am-1pm**

- Health Screenings & Flu Shots

Events will take place  
at The Free Clinics,  
841 Case St., Hendersonville



## WHAT ELSE ARE WE UP TO? **Bikes for Life**

Because transportation is a tremendous barrier for 1/3 of our vulnerable patients, they proposed and helped shepherd a bike rehabilitation program. TFC invites donations of used bikes and works with individual volunteers; bike shops like The Hub and The Bicycle Company; and now the Bicycle Mechanics class at BRCC to rehabilitate the bikes and get them road-ready.



Thanks to the support of the Blue Ridge Bicycle Club, patients are sized for the right bike and given safety and basic maintenance instructions. They are also provided a helmet and lock. Since our first take-back in November 2016, TFC has given away almost 40 bikes to our vulnerable patients.

Would you like to help us address the critical transportation barrier our patients face? Our next Bike Take-Back will be Friday 22 September from 10am - 1pm.



841 Case St.  
Hendersonville, NC  
28792

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Fall 2017

**Community Impact Focus:**  
*Behavioral Health*



## A Message from Our Executive Director: *Judith Long*

Welcome to the first edition of our printed newsletter. After venturing to an electronic version for the past two years, TFC is returning to a quarterly, printed format. This move enables us to better tell our story, and the story of TFC's local role in addressing the very same healthcare issues and challenges we face as a nation and state.

Our first issue looks at TFC's role in addressing the critical Behavioral Health challenges in our community. The state of NC ratified House Bill 381 on Mental Health System Reform in October 2001. Since then, we have lived with consistent "reform," with new system changes, new local management entities or managed care organizations, and new payment reforms introduced every year.

As a healthcare leader whose job it is to stay abreast of system changes that impact our vulnerable neighbors, I struggle to keep up. And I find our patients rarely understand the system that is supposed to serve them. That is why it is crucial that we provide accessible behavioral health services and, more importantly, why we have a dedicated half-time nurse to walk along-side our vulnerable neighbors in navigating this exceedingly complex system.

TFC entered into the field of mental health in December 2006, when we opened our psychiatric clinic in direct response to the closure of a prior organization, Mountain Laurel. An amazing team of psychiatrists and nurses and other mental health professionals taught us how to operate a psychiatric program, for which we won a state award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC Foundation. We began hosting a Mental Health Roundtable of adult services providers in 2007 and continue to host this vital monthly forum. We initiated counseling services in the aftermath of the recession of 2008, to assist folks in dealing with the anxiety and stress of that time.

As you may read in the local papers, mental health is still being reformed; there are additional budget cuts this year. Our work with behavioral health continues to be a critical dimension of our care.

Thank you—our volunteers, donors, friends, partners, and advocates. Thank you for enabling every dimension of our care especially our behavioral health care. Thank you for your support! Thank you for your time, commitment, expertise, and passion! Thank you for trusting us to be the vehicle through which you help ensure that our community truly cares for all our neighbors! And, if you are so moved, please do consider this as an invitation to deepen your engagement by volunteering today.

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## TFC's Behavioral Health Results for 2016-2017

**417**

Unduplicated Behavioral Health Patients

**142**

Psychiatric Clinic Visits

**485**

Psychiatric Case Management & Care Navigation Support

**196**

Counseling Appointments

**5745**

Psychiatric Medication Prescriptions

**1306**

Bridges to Health Group Visits

**2769**

Bridges to Health Case Management Support

**\$1,870,953**

value of Psychiatric medications dispensed

## What TFC patients say about why they visited us for Behavioral Health Support:

*"I have no money, no work, and I feel too sick to get out of bed. Does anyone even care?"*

*"I have tried so many times, and I still can't get it straight. I really want to be clean, but I don't see a way clear. Where do I go?"*

*"My family says my medications don't work and they can't stand me anymore. I have no doctor, no money, I can barely buy food. Where do I go?"*

*"I just want to die."*

## What Behavioral Health Services Does The Free Clinics Offer?

### Psychiatric Clinic

An innovative, award-winning program that offers an evening clinic three times each month during which patients meet one-on-one with a volunteer psychiatrist for an assessment and to discuss treatment plans and medications.

### Psychiatric Case Management & Care Navigation

Our part-time dedicated psychiatric nurse assists patients and/or family members to navigate the complexities of the behavioral health system, helping patients get the care they need and offering supportive connection and care.

### Counseling

We have a team of licensed volunteer therapists at our facility and a team of therapists who will see patients in their offices; most patients receive 4-6 sessions of counseling and are then referred, if needed, to long-term outpatient behavioral health services in Henderson or Polk Counties.

### Psychiatric Medications

Our Community Pharmacy and Medi-Find Prescription Assistance Program help ensure that patients have the medications they need to become/remain productive members of our community.

### Bridges to Health

Our innovative, award-winning project provides an alternative medical home for patients with complex medical needs as well as behavioral health concerns; Bridges offers integrated group medical visits with a doctor, nurse, behavioral health provider, occupational therapist, and patient health advocate; patients receive group support, intensive case management, and whole-person care by a dedicated clinical team.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Ricardo Bierrenbach, MD

The last of the founding team of psychiatrists who started our clinic in December 2006, Dr. Bierrenbach has been volunteering monthly to care for neighbors in need of mental health support for almost 11 years. He is a model of compassionate care who takes the time to truly listen to patients and engage deeply in their concerns.

