

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

Sunday, December 17, 4:00 PM

Blue Ridge Ringers Holiday Benefit Concert for The Free Clinics

\$10 recommended donation

No Reservations Needed

Hendersonville Presbyterian Church

699 Grove Street, Hendersonville

Call TFC at 828.697.8422 for more information.



Sunday, December 31

Last day for your 2017 tax-deductible charitable contribution to be postmarked. Your charitable investment in The Free Clinics improves the health of your neighbors in need as well as your whole community.

WHAT ELSE ARE WE UP TO? TFC Makes National News

The national Robert Wood Johnson Foundation presented Dr. Steven Crane with the second annual Award for Health Equity for his vision and leadership in developing Bridges to Health. Dr. Crane has served as TFC's Volunteer Medical Director since 2001 and launched Bridges to Health in 2010. Bridges is TFC's award-winning, innovative program that serves as an alternative medical home for the most clinically-complex, most vulnerable patients, often with a history of high emergency department utilization.



The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – the nation's leading philanthropy on health and health care – developed this award program to find and honor individuals who are using systems changes to advance health equity within the communities.

"We are so proud and honored to be graced by the vision, leadership, and commitment of Dr. Steve Crane," said Executive Director Judith Long. "And we celebrate this incredible award as a testament to his amazing work at TFC!"



Winter 2017
Community Impact Focus:
Tuesday Night Clinics

Nonprofit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit 36
Hendersonville, NC 28792

The Free Clinics
841 Case St.
Hendersonville, NC
28792



A Message from Our Executive Director: Judith Long

With this issue, we welcome you to a typical Tuesday night at The Free Clinics. Tuesdays are our busiest night. Every week (except some holidays), we hold our walk-in Medical Clinic, our original clinic which operates like a free urgent care staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses as well as volunteers who perform eligibility and interpretation services. Every week, our Community Pharmacy is open, staffed by volunteer pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, dispensing life-saving medications. Three Tuesdays each month, we offer our Psychiatric Clinic, offering diagnosis and medication management as well as supported entry into the complex behavioral health system. Frequently, we also offer classes or programs on Tuesday evenings—programs such as HealthWays or Smoking Cessation.

Tuesday evenings are busy and exciting times at TFC. As many as 25 volunteers can see as many as 60-70 patients on the busiest evenings. Tuesdays are that time when the very best of our community comes together. Patients come to us afraid, anxious, often desperate and volunteers are here to offer their compassion, time, and talent.

With this deeper look at a typical Tuesday evening, we hope to give you a deeper understanding of the real costs and the value of care that we are able to provide thanks to your investment. Our real costs include the purchase of some medications, basic operating costs (like lights and heat), and staff time. On a typical Tuesday evening, six or seven staff support the team of 25 volunteers. Staff help coordinate the flow of patients, ensure continuity of care, and provide ongoing case management and referral to additional services. In addition to the real costs and thanks to your support, we are able to secure donated medications, engage dedicated volunteers, and support those volunteers with donated meals.

This combination of real costs and in-kind good and services brings the best of our community to care for our neighbors in need. Tuesday evenings is the core of TFC—integrated medical and behavioral care for frightened, anxious, vulnerable persons who do not know where else to turn. THANK YOU for helping us be the community that cares... especially at those times of greatest need.

During this winter season especially, the words of my favorite e. e. cummings poem echo through my heart, "i thank you God for most this amazing day..." To which I add, I thank you God for this most amazing community, the most amazing blessings and gifts which we can and do bountifully share with our neighbors, the most amazing gift of walking with you to make a difference to so many, the most amazing present of you! Thank you for ALL you do – and all you give – to help us care for our neighbors in need and make this the most amazing community.

828.697.8422 • www.thefreeclinics.org • info@thefreeclinics.org

Tuesday Evenings at TFC

Most Tuesday evenings, TFC offers three distinct yet integrated programs: Medical Clinic, Psychiatric Clinic, and Community Pharmacy. The Medical Clinic is a “free urgent care” that utilizes a team of dedicated volunteers to care for an average of five patients per clinic who walk-in; patients also receive diagnostic testing and/or medications if necessary and case management for follow-up care and additional referrals. The Psychiatric Clinic also benefits from a team of dedicated volunteers to offer an average of six patients per clinic a psychiatric assessment, diagnosis, and appropriate medications; the clinic takes patients by appointment or walk-in. The Community Pharmacy is a part-time pharmacy with a limited list of medications (mostly to address chronic concerns like diabetes, cardiac disease, pulmonary disease, or mental health) that supports any eligible person in our community. The pharmacy fills an average of 50 prescriptions for 15-20 patients each Tuesday evening and likewise benefits from dedicated volunteers.



	<u>Actual Cost</u>	<u>Actual Value</u>
Total	\$6,420	\$15,850
Medical Clinic	\$1,970	\$2,550
Psychiatric Clinic	\$3,900	\$4,900
Community Pharmacy	\$550	\$8,400



Real costs include staff to supervise and manage, utilities, and some purchased medications and supplies.

Value of care provided is higher thanks to volunteer doctors and nurses, as well as donated medications.

A Typical Tuesday Night...

Linda Bolanos is TFC’s Clinical Assistant, and one facet of her job is managing the intake and flow of the Tuesday night clinical programs.

“Sometimes patients call before they come; sometimes they just walk-in. They arrive on foot, on the bus, thanks to a ride from a friend, or sometimes by car. They often arrive early because they want to make sure they get seen. They come with their children because they don’t have or can’t afford a babysitter.”

“Almost every person comes with a lot of anxiety and fear: “will they be able to help me?” “I’ve tried other places and been turned down.” “I don’t know where else to turn.” Often we are the place of last resort for those patients who are frustrated, scared, and anxious about their health and the cost.”

“We see between 20-30 new patients every Tuesday. Usually, they all arrive at once, so there is often a line at the window. I have to find out why they’re here—for medical or psych or pharmacy.”

“Mostly, I try to be kind, considerate, compassionate, and thoughtful, and sometimes playful. People show up stressed and worried and not knowing what to do. I watch people closely for signs and clues about what they need—whether it’s a private moment or reassurance or a smile. I want everyone to know that all are welcome and all are special and that our team of wonderful volunteers will do everything they can to take care of the folks who need us.”



Three Typical Patients

These three patients all arrived at TFC one Tuesday evening recently...

A Latina woman arrived in obvious abdominal pain, almost doubled-over. She had tried other clinics but left due to cost or lengthy wait-times. Here, she was seen quickly by the volunteer physician who assessed a possible inflamed appendix and called the local emergency department with for a direct referral. TFC’s team also made sure the patient had all the paperwork she needed, for the hospital charity care program, for access to follow-up medications, and a note for her employer so she would not lose her job.

A young man arrived very anxious and depressed. He verbalized to reception, eligibility, and the clinical team that “I don’t know what to do. I can’t do anything. I can’t get a job. I just don’t know what to do.” TFC provided the immediate care he needed, including the pharmaceuticals to assist him. We referred him for ongoing therapeutic care; we continue to provide his medications. He called recently to joyfully announce that he’d gotten a full-time job.

A young mother arrived fearful. Her daughter had juvenile diabetes and needed medications. They had recently moved from out of state but their Medicaid would take several months to transfer. The mother did not know where or how to get the crucial and costly medications necessary to keep her daughter alive and healthy. Because our mission is to bridge gaps in care for vulnerable persons, we cleared the mother and daughter through eligibility, transferred the prescriptions from out-of-state, and will provide the life-saving medications for the short-term until the family’s Medicaid is transferred.