

# GENNESARET FREE CLINIC

Volunteer Medical Services for the Homeless

"And all those who touched Him were healed." Mark 6:56

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## A Special Thanks

The past months have been busy ones for GFC workers. With many new services, internal changes, and new programs we are all dealing with future shock. The TB Screening was really an all effort for GFC and its amazing how our volunteers came through. Lots of planning and phone calls on the part of Nancy Gregori and Sue Schneider deserve special recognition. It is apparent that there are many, many persons in our community who are concerned about the homeless and their medical needs and are willing to give of themselves to help. Again, thanks to all who have been giving of time and talents to help with GFC and the recent TB screening.

We would also like to acknowledge the following for helping with the incentive package for the TB screening: Hooks Drugs, State Department of Health, Johnson and Johnson Products, Mc Neil Pharmaceuticals, General Hotels Corp. ( Holiday Inn Hotels), Dr and Mrs. Don Schauwecker, and several private individuals.

## TB Screening Follow-up

A tremendous effort was put forward to provide tuberculosis screening and immunization for influenza, tetanus, and diphtheria. No one would have believed the work it took to get medical attention to the entire homeless population at one time. But with 170+ well-trained volunteers full of enthusiasm it worked. We tested and treated about 250

homeless persons and found around 25 persons who had contracted tuberculosis. Most of these persons were begun on medication; one person was felt too contagious to return to the shelter and was hospitalized. The screening and immunization process focused the attention of the community on homelessness with wide spread media coverage; hopefully events like this can turn the hearts of the average citizen favorably toward those in need. The program also brought much attention to GFC and several new persons signed up to help. The added exposure of our Clinic may also help in future projects.

We had hoped to screen upwards of 1000 persons with this program. Some expressed disappointment that more did not take advantage of this offering. Perhaps the weather was too warm to have many person come off the streets or there was not enough publicity or the incentive packages were not attractive enough. Possibly, the struggle of living on the streets or out of a shelter is at fault. When every day is literally a matter of survival with not much to look forward to, concern for health matters of some future time become secondary to just getting through the day. Also the pain of a needle can assume magical proportions to those not familiar with medical procedures. It is a sobering thought to contemplate the fears and stresses of being homeless and dependent on others. How much more we need to be aware of the concerns and circumstances of those we serve.

## Announcements

Donna O'Donnell has taken over stocking the medication and supply cabinets in the five shelters GFC serves. Perhaps you have already noticed the difference; sorry for the confusion and shortages that have recently been all too common. Now, Donna is asking for all GFC teams to keep track of medications and supplies used and to note this on the inventory sheets provided at each medication area. This way Donna and her friends will be able to quickly restock the cabinets.

Lighthouse Missions has rebuilt their entire facility and will reopen in early December. GFC will be there to see to the medical needs of the men and women too; see your schedules.

As part of a more organized GFC and because of requirements from our incorporation, officers were elected by the steering committee: First officer, Jim Trippi, M.D., Second officer Phil Price, Attorney at Law, Secretary Debby Holdorf, Treasurer Nancy Gregori. In 1990, we hope that the steering committee will be more active as a board of directors. As such, we are in need of leadership persons who are willing to attend 4 yearly meetings and follow through with implementing ideas. Especially needed are persons familiar community services and organizational management. If you feel called to this service or know of others who might fill this role, please contact Dr. Jim Trippi at 924-5444.

In a related issue, we are quickly approaching our second anniversary meeting. It will be on February 8, at 4-5:30 pm at the Governor's Residence! Save that date on your calendar and do not miss your chance to start the third year of GFC. Pertinent to this point, our third year will also need a goal. The first year goal of serving and continuing to grow was a resounding success. The second year goal of

providing appropriate medical facilities at the shelters continues to take shape with all the shelters having medical rooms, exam equipment, medication /supply cabinets, and now dental equipment (will be available in 3 of our shelters). Consider if you will what our collective goal for the third year might be. Let your imagination run wild, pray about it, and most of all ask God to guide our efforts. Some ideas already mentioned include starting a nurse(practioner)-run clinic, becoming financially independent, developing a mobile clinic for out-reach to homeless (not in shelters), or having a conference on homeless medical care. Your ideas are welcome.

## Stories...

+ Recently, A GFC doctor could not find some materials present at the shelter she worked at. For the next scheduled visit she brought them from her office supplies. Furthermore, she is negotiating with sales people to receive material for blood testing diabetics.

+ Persons in the community beginning to formulate plans to start another shelter, are calling us for services because of our reputation for good care and compassion.

+ In October, A GFC doctor did not find the medications available in the supply cabinet his patient needed. Because the patient did not have the means to pay for a prescription drug, the doctor took the patient in his car to a nearby pharmacy and purchased the medication.

+ After an article about GFC appeared in the Indianapolis Star, fifteen persons called to volunteer and help the homeless. A few said they could not volunteer their time, but wondered if we could accept donations for medical purchases.

+ As you celebrate the Christmas story, may the Spirit of Peace be born again in you.