

Vital Signs

Health Care Is A Right, Not A Privilege

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Nationally Recognized Speaker Comes to The Free Clinic

The Free Clinic and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) have collaborated on several events during the past year; the most recent, a presentation by Gary Bailey, President of NASW. Before his presentation at The Free Clinic, Bailey was acknowledged and spoke briefly on WCPN's Ideastream. Bailey's discussion of the ways all citizens can take part in social justice reiterated The Free Clinic's slogan that "Health care is a right, not a privilege."

Mr. Bailey described the role social workers play in providing essential care to those in need and in ensuring that fundamental human rights are upheld. In our local community, social workers educate children, provide counseling, and advocate for the rights of all to live and work in peace. By teaching others how to work in multicultural environments, social workers advance the cause of social justice, bringing us closer to communities that are able to address and meet the basic needs of all, especially the most vulnerable.

A native of Cleveland, Bailey is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the Simmons College School of Social Work in Boston, Massachusetts. He was formerly the Executive Director of the Boston-based Parents' and Children's Services of the Children's Mission, Inc, an organization dedicated to the well-being of children, families, and communities. Throughout his career, he has worked in the areas of diversity initiatives, family counseling, elder care, and AIDS counseling.



From left to right: J. Richard Romaniuk, Region III Director Ohio Chapter of the NASW; Gerald Strom, 1st Vice President of Ohio Chapter of the NASW; Dr. Gary Bailey, President of the NASW; C. Elaine Stepp, Executive Director, Ohio Chapter of the NASW; Dr. Louis Weigle, candidate for Future Region III Director, Ohio Chapter of the NASW

Education is an important part of our Mission and becomes most effective when it is engaged on many levels, from patients to professionals working within our community. By hosting prominent speakers to our Community Room such as Mr. Bailey, The Free Clinic is able to provide educational seminars to professionals who in turn can better help the community.

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Volunteer News

Volunteers and prospective volunteers – Happy New Year! 2005 is off to a great start in making strides towards expanding programs and volunteer services at The Free Clinic. We are revamping our patient education programs for HIV Services, Women's Clinic, and Teen Clinic. In addition, we have begun a geriatric clinic and will also soon provide hearing tests, thanks to two new volunteer specialty physicians in the Medical clinic.

Volunteer training is continual and we look forward to bringing many more new faces and talents aboard in 2005! We are currently seeking volunteers for the following positions:

- Syringe Exchange Program worker
- Pharmacy Technician
- Clerical Assistant
- HIV Outreach Educator
- Laboratory Technician

We always welcome licensed professional volunteers – **practitioners, phlebotomists, therapists, psychiatrists, and counselors** – to help us come closer to meeting the community demand! As cuts are made in the State's Medicaid system and more patients will seek out our services, we are especially interested in bringing *ophthalmology* or *optometry services* to The Free Clinic. If you can spare just two hours of your time each month, you can make a huge difference in upholding the mission of The Free Clinic!

Please contact Melissa at (216) 707-3412 or mghoston@thefreeclinic.org to learn more about joining our extraordinary volunteer staff. Feel free to visit the "join up" section of our Web site, www.thefreeclinic.org, for a full list of volunteer opportunities and the downloadable volunteer application.



Volunteer Spotlight



Vicki Miller

In each newsletter, we will honor one volunteer for his/her contributions to The Free Clinic. To kick off the Volunteer Spotlight, we wish to recognize Vicki Miller, a very special lady who has tirelessly contributed her time, energy, and spirit to The Free Clinic for more than 25 years! Vicki's volunteering began as a cook for The Free Clinic's Safe Space, a shelter designed to support runaway teens and children from broken homes. Safe Space participants would look forward to Vicki's homemade Italian dishes every Monday evening, and they enjoyed not only her spaghetti and lasagna, but her cheerful and energetic personality, as well. When Safe Space closed its doors in 1998, Vicki continued to serve The Free Clinic

by helping out with administrative tasks in the medical department. In 2001, Vicki was honored with The Free Clinic's Volunteer of the Year award. Today, she continues to serve the HIV Services and Medical departments with clerical and assembly tasks.

Vicki's commitment to The Free Clinic mission is commendable. However, her benevolence extends beyond our clinic and the greater Cleveland community. In January 2005, Vicki celebrated her 92nd birthday. Having lived through 16 presidents, "too many" wars, and innumerable societal changes (for better and worse), Vicki had but one wish before blowing out the candles on her birthday cake: "I wish that the whole world could settle down and do what's right for everyone." Her compassion radiates through her words, her smile, and her service, and we are so grateful for her dedication to The Free Clinic's volunteer team!

Free Clinic Says Goodbye to a Beloved Volunteer



Volunteers Grant Roth and Anna Lambert

The Free Clinic family will not be the same since our dear friend and long-time volunteer, Grant Roth, passed away at his home on January 9th, 2005. The son of two founders of The Free Clinic, Grant literally grew up with The Free Clinic.

Grant meant many things to many people here. He always lifted the spirits of others—one cancer survivor remembers with fondness that Grant's "jolly personality made others laugh." Other patients and

staff recall how he helped the medical assistants at every opportunity, carefully helped with mailings to the hundreds of caring donors. Even well into his illness, he continued to read the newspaper avidly and you could expect him to quiz staff on the most recent political articles and what the war in Iraq would mean to families.

Patients, staff, and volunteers truly loved Grant for his wit, his cheerful attitude, and caring heart. And, yes, Grant will remain in our hearts because he reminded each of us that every day counts. Our thoughts are with his family and the many devoted friends who tirelessly and compassionately supported him with their loving kindness.

Contributions in Grant's honor can be made to the Grant Roth Memorial Fund, c/o The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland, 12201 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106.

July 1, 2003 — June 30, 2004

Annual Report

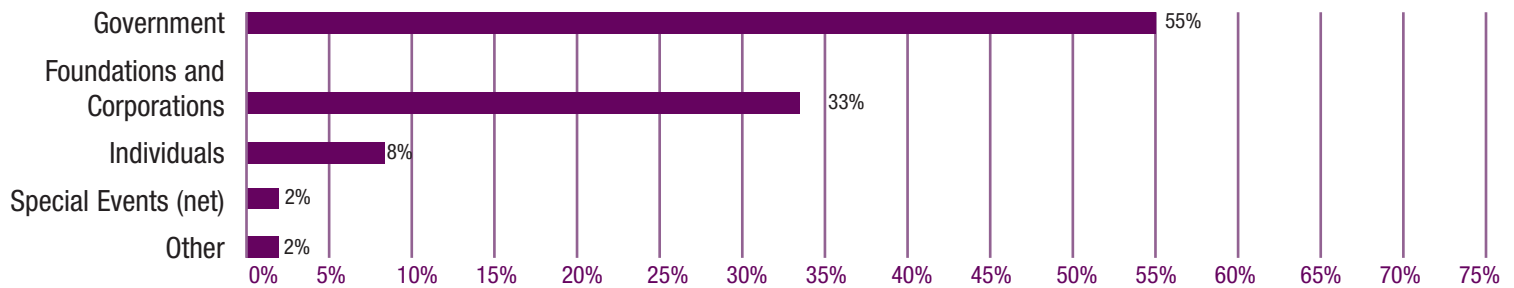


**Health care is a right,
not a privilege**

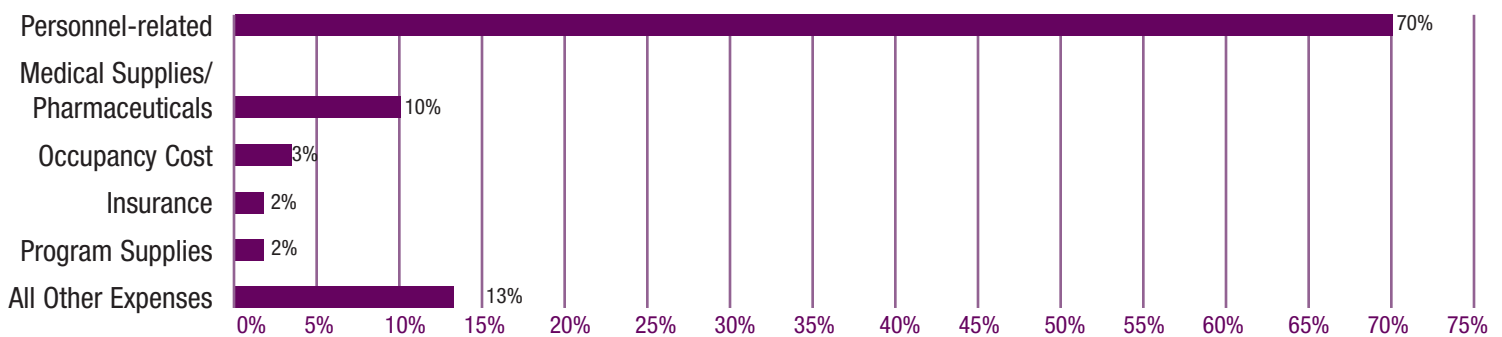
The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Financial Information – Fiscal Year 2003-2004

Total Revenue by Source* \$2,976,461



Total Expenses* \$2,583,804



* Figures do not include the estimated \$915,000 that we received in volunteer services.

Client Services

Visits

Adult Medical	19,559
Mental Health/Intake	8,001
HIV Testing	4,177
Adult Dental	3,736
Substance Abuse Treatment	3,471
HIV Treatment	3,136
Teen Medical	1,982

Total Client Services 44,062

Other Services

Prescriptions	11,116
Laboratory Services	8,684
Syringe Exchanges	106,674
Community Education Events	23

Total Other Services 126,497

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland Board of Trustees and Officers January 2005

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Corporate Compensation

We would like to thank all our volunteers and funders who help us provide the needed Medical, Dental, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment, HIV/AIDS services to the forgotten faces in the Greater Cleveland Community. Your ongoing contributions to our mission allow us to provide the crucial health care services this community needs.



The Free Clinic Upgrades to a New Database

The Free Clinic has started the challenging process of installing its first patient management information system to help manage patient history, set appointments, and manage various other aspects of the Clinic electronically. The new system replaces a number of (paper) appointment books, a successful, but now overwhelmed, homegrown database system and a number of other sources of data.

Implementation will occur in two phases. The first phase, appointment scheduling, is on target and began on January 4th. During the second phase, (expected to be completed no later than March 31, 2005), we will start:

- tracking prescription medication
- laboratory module implementation
- implementing activity reporting using standard medical coding.

This patient management system will provide The Free Clinic a number of opportunities to ensure and even enhance the quality of care rendered to patients. Just as important, it will collect information crucial to The Free Clinic's efforts to advocate for the needs of patients underserved or cast out by the "traditional health care system." For the first time in its history, The Free Clinic will be able to explain what is happening to its patients, in the "language" used by health care professionals. We are excited at the numerous opportunities we believe this will bring to the organization and the patients we serve.

The new database system, developed by Ahlers & Associates of Waco, Texas, is in use by over 500 clinics nationwide. The project's cost has been totally funded through the generosity of the Abington Foundation, the Renner Foundation and the O'Neill Foundation.

What's Happening in the SAT Department?

The Substance Abuse Treatment (SAT) program is growing with innovative treatment concepts. Our primary purpose continues to be to engage our clients in a safe environment that will allow them to gain the necessary coping skills to live a drug-free lifestyle. In general, group formats seem to show a high success rate when battling addiction. In a group setting, individuals learn to share their experiences and seek support from each other.

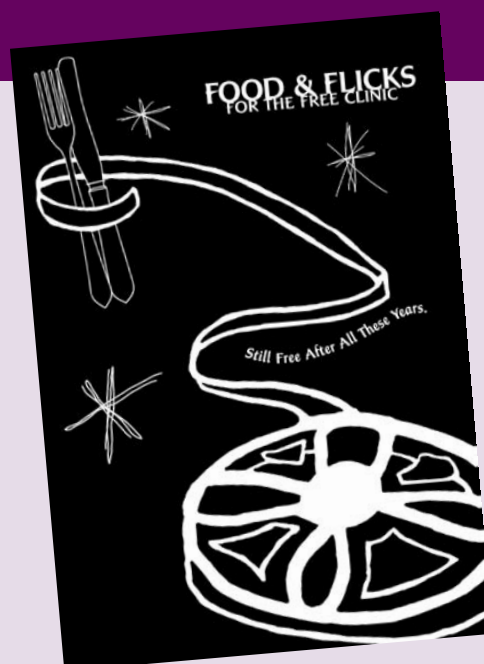
Our clients enter the program with many issues and barriers that stifle their growth. Some of the issues are gender-specific and are difficult to address in a "coed" environment. In response to this issue, the evening SAT program has developed a male- and female-only component on Wednesday evenings.

The group provides both didactic (educational) and informal discussion. Didactic sessions include handouts, written assignments, reading, discussion, lecture, film presentations, outside speaker presentation on relevant health and other recovery issues. Informal discussion provides members complete freedom to express themselves about issues that threaten their sobriety and personal recovery.

Our women's group has had regular and consistent attendance of 8-12 women weekly. In a female-only environment, women are more likely to discuss issues such as domestic violence, rape and abuse, topics that they would feel uncomfortable discussing in the presence of men. Group members also develop skills that enable them to reach out for support from other women in the recovery community.

The clients in the men's group view themselves as a "brotherhood" and support each other's recovery and life goals that lead to one's maximum potential. The bonding brought about by the "brotherhood concept" initiated by previous groups continues to be shared by each of its present members and fosters increased recovery efforts. What started as a general group session has become a close-knit peer support group.

Addiction is difficult to break; saying "just don't do it" is usually not enough. Many personal and emotional problems are also tied in to why the person started using and abusing a specific drug. In order to help our patients reach recovery and lead a drug-free healthy and happy life, we are always striving to provide the support and help these people need to break the addiction.



Save the Date!

**The Free Medical Clinic
of Greater Cleveland**

Annual Event

Food & Flicks

**June 12, 2005
5:30 p.m.**

From the Waiting Room

I have actually heard some in our community argue that “our state virtually has universal health care under Medicaid.” From my vantage point, I couldn’t agree more. We do have “virtual” universal health care access in this state – it’s “virtual” because *we delude ourselves that everyone is covered*. Medicaid access is far from being a reality for many. **And the number of our relatives, friends and neighbors who lose access to health care is growing daily.**

Here are the facts. Medicaid is the nation’s largest public health program. It enrolls an average of 14 million adults, the majority of whom are low-income working parents, including approximately 5 million seniors, and more than 8 million adults with disabilities. However, the administration and cost of the program are shared between the federal government and the states. When a state has less money to spend, it has leeway to change the rules of eligibility and coverage.

And that is what is happening nationwide. In 35 states, including Ohio, Medicaid services have been reduced or eliminated. In 32 states, including Ohio, requirements for patients to “spend down” their income on health care to a certain limit and patient co-payments for services have increased, essentially putting health care financially out of reach for far too many Medicaid eligible patients. For those who are counted among the working poor, a vast majority “make too much.” They fall through the cracks and are not eligible for this entitlement. These Americans are truly forced to choose between food and health care.



Of the 43 million Americans who lack health insurance, many are unable to obtain necessary medical care unless they can access a free clinic or community health center.

It is unlikely that the hundreds of thousands of uninsured in Northeast Ohio have access to a regular doctor, obtain needed care, or receive timely preventive and routine care. For those who do not have access to a free clinic or a community center, the serious consequences of not obtaining such care means that the entry point to the health care system is the emergency rooms of hospitals. These individuals are sicker when they are diagnosed and are more likely to be hospitalized for their multiple, chronic conditions.

Even those who have insurance may lack coverage in certain areas or not covered at all in others. The uncertainty that accompanies being underinsured, like being uninsured, takes a toll on individuals and families. Medical bills accumulate quickly. Stress is ever present when an individual does not know when another health care crisis might occur or how much they will have to pay for associated costs. Approximately 600,000 Americans who filed for bankruptcy did so because of costly medical bills and problems arising from serious illness or injury. Over 21 million Americans report that they are unable to pay their medical bills, with 7 million reluctant to answer their phones as they are repeatedly called by collection agencies about

unpaid medical bills. Fear of unpaid bills is a major reason why even insured persons resist obtaining preventive health care.

And so our belief in “virtual health care access” is a significant contributor to a **\$2 trillion annual bill** for health care, the greatest amount of any country in the world. Money wasted on superhuman medical efforts usurps money for preventive care and leads to higher insurance premiums for all. Money spent on health care results in fewer resources that can be spent on other social goods or on supporting the economy. We are all negatively affected.

I have heard many express despair over the recent elections and their potential consequences for ensuring true universal access to health care. I say in response: the facts are piling up, the statistics are piling up, and sooner or later, the public will realize that our “virtual” universal health care access is not “actual.” The issue of universal access goes beyond labels like “Republican” or “Democrat,” “liberal” or “conservative.”

We are together in this world, and so we must be together in the effort to assure health care for all.

Gail E. Bromley

Gail Bromley
Executive Director

Capital News

Greetings to all of you who already know me and hello to those whom I have not yet met. For those of you whose paths I have not crossed, my name is Amy Goldstein and since August, 2004 I have been the Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Planning for The Free Clinic, following a career path which has included working as a psychiatric social worker at MetroHealth and many years practicing law in both the private and public sectors. Although I currently live in Columbus, I lived in on the east side of Cleveland between 1970 and 1993 (with two years away to obtain my Master of Social Work at Columbia University) and have had the opportunity to watch The Free Clinic grow from its original home on Cornell Road to its current facility on Euclid Avenue. Suffice it to say, I am proud to be part of such a cutting edge institution at a time when access to health care has become one of the most critical issues facing our country and the Greater Cleveland community.

You will hear from me in each issue of The Free Clinic newsletter so that I can update you about significant legislative and advocacy efforts, particularly with respect to those taking place outside of Cleveland where The Free Clinic will be represented by me. This way you will be able to have a better understanding of the importance of our advocacy efforts at both the state and federal level. You will also learn how you can make a personal difference.

As the 126th General Assembly begins, the focus will be on the 2006-2007 budget for the State of Ohio. Governor Taft has released the Executive Budget. The budget in bill form will be formally introduced and followed by hearings in both the House Committee on Finance and Appropriations and the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee. House Bill 16, which is the capital budget for the 2005-2006 biennium, and which was surprisingly not passed during the 125th General Assembly, did pass in the House of Representatives this January and on January 31, 2005 was passed out of the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee. Concurrence by the House of

Representatives was unnecessary as no changes were made by the Committee and House Bill 16 has since passed by the Senate and forwarded to Governor Taft for signing. By the time you read this article the Governor may have already signed it, given the warp speed of this legislation.

I will be attending both the State of the State address and of course, many of the hearings before the House and Senate finance committees in an effort, along with many others nonprofit organizations, to fight against anticipated cuts to health care programs, including Medicaid, and to oppose efforts to repeal the temporary one-cent Ohio sales tax. In preparation and to secure our state funding, I have been meeting with representatives of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics, The Center for Community Solutions, The Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio, The Ohio Partnership for Prevention, Families USA, Have a Heart Ohio, The Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future, and others to coordinate our lobbying and advocacy activities. I have also met with the newly reconstituted Public Affairs Committee of The Free Clinic Board of Trustees being chaired by Trustee Howard Landau. The Committee members are enthusiastic about playing an active role in the health care advocacy efforts of The Free Clinic and I look forward to working with them.

On February 15, 2005, Executive Director Gail Bromley and I represented The Free Clinic during Ohio Health Day sponsored by the Ohio Health Advocacy Network (OHAN). Our involvement in this event will provide The Free Clinic with "a place at the table" to collaborate with other nonprofit organizations in response to the state budget as it impacts the health care community and our patients. On February 16th, we met with legislators from all parts of Ohio so that the voices of our Free Clinic community can be heard beyond the borders of Cuyahoga County.

Ohio Health Day will be followed by our participation in Cover the Uninsured Week that will take place throughout the United States between April 30 and May 8, 2005.

This annual event which is a project of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and which will be chaired by former Presidents Ford and Carter, is focused on raising awareness and building community interest in the issue of the growing numbers of uninsured people in our country. As the planning for this event progresses, I will let you know how The Free Clinic community can participate. Last year a kick-off press conference was held at The Free Clinic with Cuyahoga County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones leading the charge. Other Cuyahoga County events included a health and health care coverage enrollment fair, an interfaith outreach breakfast and "The Crisis of the Uninsured," a symposium on the subject of health care policy and the uninsured.

Please feel free to e-mail me at agoldstein@thefreeclinic.org to share your thoughts about public policy and advocacy issues as they impact The Free Clinic and our patients. I will also look forward to meeting many of you in person in the coming months.

Development Coordinator Joins The Free Clinic

Hello! My name is Marianna Romaniuk and I recently joined The Free Clinic as the new Development Coordinator. It is truly a privilege to work here. I have been aware of the literally life-saving role of The Free Clinic for several years. A close friend of the family was sick and had problems associated with his diabetes. Because he was on a fixed income, he, like many people in a similar situation, was in the position of going to a doctor or buying food. The Free Clinic provided him with excellent medical care and free medications. There are many stories similar to his that I have learned of since starting here.

I came to The Free Clinic after working at the Cleveland Bar Association for over three years. I am also finishing my Master of Public Administration, Nonprofit Specialization degree. When I first entered the development world, I came across many misconceptions about my position.

Many people saw my job in fundraising as “selling the organization” or “begging.” (This was actually the first thing my grandmother in Poland thought when I tried explaining my new position to her!) I don’t see myself as a sales person—and hardly a “beggar!” I see my role here as someone who introduces new friends to each other. Have you ever said to someone: “You *have to* meet this friend of mine?” Well, that’s what I do. It’s just that I introduce a person to a building, a program and the idea that everyone deserves proper health care. I can’t imagine a more rewarding job than this!

If you would like to support The Free Clinic or have any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding our fundraising activities, please feel free to contact me at (216) 707-3405 or by email at mromaniuk@thefreeclinic.org.

Development Corner

Increase Your Giving Power

Do you want to increase your support of The Free Clinic but are already giving as much as you can? Matched giving may be the answer you are looking for. Many employers match a certain percentage of their employee’s gifts to specified nonprofit organizations. Often times, companies show support for the organizations to which their employees make charitable donations.

To find out if your employer has a matched giving program, just contact your Human Resources Department for information on how you can sign up for their program. And if The Free Clinic is not on your company’s list, we want to know.

If you have any questions concerning matched giving or development at The Free Clinic, please feel free to contact Marianna Romaniuk, Development Coordinator at (216) 707-3405 or mromaniuk@thefreeclinic.org.

Number of Diabetic Patients on the Rise

Diabetes is reaching epidemic proportions. An estimated 19 million American adults are affected by this disease, with about 30% of the cases undiagnosed. In the past year, The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland has seen a 21.9% increase in the number of diabetic patients. Oftentimes, these patients have been without proper treatment because they cannot afford to visit a doctor and/or purchase their medications.

The management and treatment of diabetes is an ongoing and challenging process; diabetes is a chronic condition that requires many changes in a person’s lifestyle in order to properly manage it. Severe complications such as blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage are some of the significant issues that confront the patient with diabetes. Education, diet, and

exercise are key components in attempting to avoid or lessen these complications.

Recognizing that education is one of the most important aspects of aiding patients, our staff provides individual education to patients that are diagnosed with diabetes. Also, to better manage their care, patients are provided with individual dietary counseling and are asked to keep a dietary journal.

Recently, Jonah Stulburg, a public health graduate student and now a medical student at Case Western Reserve University, completed a research project gathering information here at The Free Clinic about diabetic patients and their needs. Mr. Stulburg plans to present his results to The Free Clinic staff, identifying issues that patients feel impair their access and/or ability to cope with their disease. We hope to be

able to use this information to institute and redefine our methods for aiding our clients with diabetes.

The Free Clinic has also partnered with other local health agencies to create what is known as the Safety Net Providers Strategic Alliance. This group is concerned with diabetes and its impact on individuals as well as the community. The goals are to involve the medical community by sharing and collecting data, obtaining funding, providing a sustainable structure, advocating on all government levels, and standardizing care among these various local health institutions.

Empowerment is the key to patients managing their disease. The Free Clinic is committed to an ongoing process of identifying and aiding patients through various means to provide healthier outcomes.



The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland
12201 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106
www.thefreeclinic.org

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Mission Statement

The mission of The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland is to provide quality healthcare and related services free of charge to those who lack appropriate alternatives, and to advocate for policy changes that make healthcare available to all.

HELP KEEP THE FREE IN THE FREE MEDICAL CLINIC

Please complete this form and mail to:

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland
12201 Euclid Avenue,
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Gift Amount _____ Check enclosed. (Please make all checks payable to The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland.)

Please charge my credit card MasterCard VISA

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Pledge Amount _____ I will fulfill my pledge in _____ installments beginning _____.
(Please fulfill pledges by June 30, 2004)

- I am making a gift of securities I have included The Free Medical Clinic in my will
 Please contact me about planned giving opportunities My employer matches gifts. Enclosed is a matching gift form.

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please list my name as follows in donor recognition materials _____