LETTER FROM THE CEO

The word “Lawndale” is deeply meaningful to our organization. Lawndale is the name given to the community where the health center was birthed and the leading word of our corporate name. We place a high value on being part of the communities where we serve. My wife, Kathryn, and I have lived, worshiped, and worked in Lawndale for 17 years. Many of our staff members live in the neighborhoods where we serve.

In our faith language we call this being incarnational. As we seek to follow Jesus, we recognize that Jesus came and dwelt among us. We love John 1:14 that says, “the Word became flesh.” Jesus connected to our experience. Jesus understood the value of empathy. He walked in our shoes.

For LCHC, this means that our health centers are deeply rooted in the communities we serve. We want to be connected. We recognize that our success is all about relationships. In this newsletter you’ll hear about how these relationships impact the lives of both patients and staff – from a patient who has trusted us with her medical care for decades to staff members inspired to help their neighbors after overcoming personal challenges.

This winter we celebrated the grand opening of our newest clinic in Garfield Park. As we grow, our focus remains the same – building relationships with the communities we serve. After 30 years, we recognize that Lawndale is not just the borders of our neighborhood – it’s the people, the values, and the mission. We are thankful for the opportunity to bring “Lawndale” to our neighbors by providing quality, affordable medical care.

Bruce Miller
CEO Lawndale Christian Health Center
LCHC’s Green Tomato Café not only provides healthy food for the community—it gives a chance for inspirational people like Arnold Smith to build healthier lives for themselves. As a former transitional housing resident, Arnold knew that he wanted to make more of his life and worked persistently to find resources to change his life and overcome poverty and homelessness.

His determination paid off when he was hired by Inspiration Kitchens, a local nonprofit that partners with individuals experiencing homelessness to provide opportunities to work in the food service industry. Noted for his hard work and determination, Arnold was encouraged to apply to the Green Tomato Café.

Now employed by the Green Tomato Café for almost a year, Arnold feels a deep sense of pride in his work. “I like that feeling of making a difference. All I wanted to do once I turned things around in my own life was—instead of being noted for all the wrong things—being noted for what’s good and what’s positive. Lawndale gives me the opportunity to do that.”

Arnold’s inspirational story was recently featured on a special episode of “Chicago’s Best” that showcased his testimony and wonderful cooking skills. When asked what he likes best about his job, he replied, “I can come in with a smile on my face and actually enjoy what I’m doing. I get to meet people from various levels, all of them sharing the same goal in mind—helping people, loving people.”

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Hortencia, long-time resident of South Lawndale and patient of Lawndale Christian Health Center, marveled at our beautiful buildings during a recent visit. She jokes that she’s lived in the Lawndale neighborhood for so long she can’t remember the exact number of years - but fondly remembers when LCHC was one small clinic on Ogden Avenue. Though she may have stopped counting the years, Hortencia says the beautiful buildings remind her of our impact over thirty years of serving her community.

As a young woman, Hortencia chose to dedicate her life to working and taking care of her family. Like many patients, Hortencia knows a limited amount of English. She is grateful for a bilingual staff and interpreter services that help her access the care she needs – whether a dental visit for a painful tooth, an annual eye exam, or her regular appointments with her primary care doctor. She appreciates our commitment to our diverse community – providing a space where everyone feels welcome.

Beautiful buildings and bilingual services notwithstanding, Hortencia’s decidedly favorite part of LCHC is the friendly staff she sees at every visit. “I feel blessed to have such caring and loving providers in my community,” she shared. As we continue to grow, our mission remains focused on loving and caring for neighbors like Hortencia - building the relationships, facilities, and services our patients need to receive quality, affordable healthcare.
A COMMITTED LIFE

The staff of Lawndale Christian Health Center is committed to building a healthier community and impacting the lives of our neighbors. As Leigh Batts, Assistant Director of Lawndale Christian Fitness Center said, “Our goal is to love and help transform people’s lives.”

As a talented young student, Leigh worked tirelessly to pursue his dream of transformational leadership, attending two different graduate schools. His career plans were interrupted when he suffered a ruptured Achilles in 2011 – requiring months of recovery and rehabilitation. A year later, Leigh’s sister tragically passed away while still in high school.

Far from being crushed by adversity, Leigh drew inspiration from tragedy. He used his passion for ministry, athletic ability, and impressive education credentials to help transform lives. He began reaching out to community members to start the Lawndale Men’s and Women’s Basketball Leagues. Soon, basketball games grew into a community movement - helping open doors of opportunity for young people in the neighborhood.

“I care about making an impact. One thing I want is for people to say that while I was here I tried to love others and that I lived a committed life,” he shared. Leigh’s impact in Lawndale is evident. His work transforming the lives of young men and women echoes what started thirty years ago when the clinic doors first opened.
On a cold and sunny January morning, we opened the doors of our newest health center - a 10 exam room clinic in Garfield Park. Breakthrough Urban Ministries, an established Chicago nonprofit, invited us to partner in their new building because there was a felt need for access to medical care among the neighbors they serve.

The grand opening event was full of excitement as over 700 community members and partners came out to see the final transformation of 13 empty lots to a beautiful building representing hope for a healthier future.

Our Breakthrough Clinic will allow us to care for an additional 6,000 patients every year, expanding access to the quality healthcare we provide into Garfield Park on Chicago’s west side. We’re excited to offer our newest community the services that our patients have relied on for over 30 years.

As at our other clinic site locations, healthcare services include adult health, children’s health, women’s healthcare and prenatal care, behavioral health and even an on-site lab.

Prior to the Breakthrough Clinic opening, many Garfield Park residents had to travel significant distances on public transportation to obtain quality healthcare. As one of our patients commented touring the new clinic, “I’m so happy you’re here! I live just down the street. This is so much closer to home.”