

# Catherine's Quarterly

Catherine's Care Center

224 Carrier NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, Phone 616 336-8800  
Providing health care in the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods

## Patient numbers outgrow capacity

### Center pins hopes on funding for a larger facility

By Bob Keveney  
Editor, Catherine's Quarterly

Since early autumn, Catherine's Care Center has been treating a record 400 patients per month, while being forced to turn away about 200 who needed medical care.

"It's not that we don't want to see them," said Karen Kaashoek, director of Catherine's Care. "We just don't have the room."

The offer of larger space for the center in the former St. Alphonsus School building holds hope that the overload situation will be relieved.

Until a few years ago, before the patient load was so high, about 20 percent of Catherine's patients had some health insurance, although not enough to adequately cover their costs.

Gradually, Catherine's Care

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### Nursing students have flu shots: they give and learn

Nearly 300 flu shots were given this season in clinics at Catherine's Care Center and the Northeast Community Ministry Supper House at Plainfield United Methodist Church. Here, Kelsi Jewell, a nursing student at Calvin College administers the vaccine to a youth. Supervising is Deb Bossenbroek, right, assistant professor of nursing at Calvin and longtime nurse practitioner at Catherine's Care. More pictures are on page 3.

**WHO** we are  
Catherine's Care Center is a medical facility dedicated to providing health care for the needy. We serve the Creston and Belknap neighborhoods of northeast Grand Rapids.

**WHAT** we do  
Catherine's Care Center offers a variety of services, including examinations, immunizations, education, testing and screening, and it is a storehouse of information on how to get what is available from the health care delivery system. Catherine's Care is dedicated to serving the families of the working poor, regardless of race, color or religion.

**WHEN** we're open  
By appointment only, 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday; Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. Call 336-8800.

**WHERE** we are  
Catherine's Care is behind the blue doors at the south end of St. Alphonsus Church. See the map on the back page.

**VISIT** our website at [www.catherinescare.org](http://www.catherinescare.org)



*Sara Lake, left, and Beth Pasikowski form a team of AmeriCorps workers assisting the health care professionals at Catherine's Care Center. Among their tasks, they organize, conduct and publicize events and help patients connect with available resources.*

## *Americorps workers make it a team effort*

Two recent college graduates, serving as AmeriCorps workers at Catherine's Care Center are making it a team effort.

This is the first job since college for Sara Lake, 22, who graduated in May from Michigan State University with a degree in interdisciplinary social sciences. She hopes to pursue a master's degree in public health after her year-long stint is completed at Catherine's Care, where she began work in August.

Beth Pasikowski, 24, served as a volunteer at Catherine's Care last January while still a student at Grand Valley State University. With her bachelor's degree in science and political science, she signed on with AmeriCorps and returned to Catherine's last fall, shortly before the birth of her son, Ronan. She plans to return to school next fall and continue studies toward a degree in nursing.

Both Sara and Beth spent time abroad in health services where they nurtured a love for the work.

Sara served a three-month internship with the National Women's Health Network.

In the summer of 2007 she spent three months in Ghana where extensive field trips involved studies of the country's history, politics and health care.

"I wanted to help other people and to combine my other interests in service as well," Sara said.

As a Rotary exchange student, Beth visited Australia for a year and later volunteered at orphanages in Peru for four months and visited four Latin American countries.

Beth is open to working in health care "internationally or domestically."

Both young women are natives of West Michigan. Beth grew up in North Park, and Sara, in Saranac.

## Funds to help women top list of new grants

Grants from funding sources, both new and established, were received by Catherine Care Center over the past few months. Also an entertainment event and a car show have helped the center as repeat benefactors.

**The WISEWOMAN Program**, sponsored by the Michigan Department of Public Health has offered to cover an estimated \$15,000 in costs for Catherine's Care to provide 115 women 40-65 with free cholesterol, blood glucose and other screenings as well as health risk assessments, lifestyle counseling and medical referrals if needed.

This program, new to Catherine's Care, aims to educate women about chronic disease risk factors and encourage healthy behaviors in diet, physical activity and smoking cessation.

**The Avon Foundation**, in its fifth year of funding programs at Catherine's Care, has given \$26,227 for education on breast cancer. It will provide screenings, mammograms and follow-up treatment.

**The Hat Trick Concert**, held Oct. 6 at the One Trick Pony restaurant in downtown Grand Rapids benefited Catherine's Care for the second

straight year. This year's event featured "The Bitteweets," a guitar and keyboard duo, who specialize in a style of urbanized folk music. The Grand Rapids Law firm of Rhoades McKee and WYCE-FM



*Chris Meyers, Hannah Prater, The Bittersweets.*

sponsors the series of concerts. Donations from passing the hat totaled \$883 for Catherine's Care.

**The Creston Car Show**, which has become an annual autumn event along Plainfield Ave. in the Creston Neighborhood, benefited Catherine's Care with a donation of \$1,875.

## Some things to watch for

Palmer Health Fair, May 3, offers displays, lectures and classes on health related topics and products. As the time approaches, watch for more details on our website:

**www.Catherinescare.org**

With enough snow on the ground to mess up a good walk in the park, why not try a walk in a school's corridors? It's a great way to meet neighbors while getting in that needed exercise. The program is now in operation at Kent Hills Elementary School. Check out the details on our website: **www.Catherinescare.org**



....but it all can be soooo rewarding

*Student nurses from Calvin College learn how to administer flu shots at a Supper Club. The instruction, above, can be very serious...below very precise...*



*...The process calls for a gentle touch and extreme care in a challenging moment...*



## **Patient overload pins hopes on funding for larger facility**

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accepted more patients with no health insurance, and had to refuse service to those who had partial coverage. Catherine's Care did this in the belief that it was easier for people with some insurance to find care elsewhere, while the uninsured had fewer options, if any.

That trend continues. This fall, the total patient load has consisted almost entirely of the uninsured.

Catherine's Care has about 1,300 square feet of space. Crowded into it are a receptionist's office, a waiting room, two examination rooms, a restroom, a tiny office and a hallway that doubles as workspace for the medical staff. Some additional "backroom space" is available for storing medical supplies.

"If we had more room, we could get more volunteers and see more patients," Kaashoek said.

The previous edition of this newsletter

detailed the offer from St. Alphonsus Parish to allow the center to move from the lower level of the church into space in the former parish school facility. St. Alphonsus School, and the schools of three other neighboring parishes, were merged in September into the newly formed All Saints Academy.

The fund-raising campaign to finance the renovation of six classrooms to house Catherine's Care will follow the results of a feasibility study expected to be completed soon. Cost estimates for the renovation have been placed at approximately \$1,300,000, based on preliminary architectural analysis.

Catherine's Care, while broadly supported by St. Alphonsus Parish, is a separate entity from the parish and has its own governing board. As an independent organization, fund raising for Catherine's Care will take place on its own, apart from any parish capital improvement campaign.

As our country and especially our state head deeper into recession, all of us are faced with certain priorities that must be addressed.

Kaashoek stresses that health care should be high on the list of needs, even when it seems less than urgent.

Other losses, like a house, a car or an investment can be brought back over time, she says. Ignoring health care, on the other hand, can lead a worker from *unemployed* to *unemployable* — a dangerous scenario she has seen repeatedly:

"People lose their jobs, then they lose their health care. If they can't take care of small problems (like medications and checkups and dangerous symptoms), they lose their health *and* lose their chances for future jobs.

"When you lose your health but recover your job, you still might not be able to regain your health," she says. "When health is gone, it's gone."



# We need your help to finance our work

Some stories in this newsletter tell of grants Catherine's Care Center has received.

While these grants are vital in fulfilling the center's mission, they draw an incomplete picture of its overall financial needs.

Most of them pay for specific programs or for new equipment or medical supplies. Such grants form a contractual agreement by which money is provided to Catherine's Care, and in return, Catherine's Care provides services for the needy.

Such grants do not cover all general operating costs. To make ends meet, Catherine's Care relies partly on voluntary help, but it also faces payroll obligations and other expenses.

Patients are asked to make a small contribution toward the cost of the services they receive. However, these payments fall far short of covering the costs of their treatment.

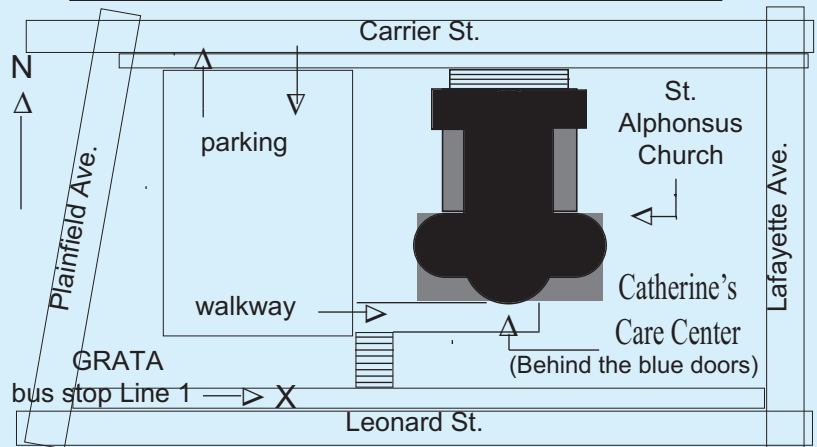
The vital lifeblood of our mission is the help we get from people who believe in what we do. Please keep us in mind.

Catherine's Care qualifies for tax-deductible donations under the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions can be sent to:

**Catherine's Care Center,  
224 Carrier St. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505**

**Thank you for your support**

## Catherine's is behind the big blue doors



**Catherine's Care Center is hard to miss.**  
As you go west on Leonard, down the hill past Lafayette, look up to the right. Catherine's Care is behind the blue doors at the south end of St. Alphonsus Church. The church fronts on Carrier St. The parking lot is west of the church. Call 336-8800.

*Catherine's Care Center  
is your neighborhood  
working together  
for a healthier you*



**Catherine's Care Center**  
224 Carrier NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

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