

# The Good Samaritan Center

"A HEALING PLACE"



Providing a safe, Christ-centered environment that gives our patients quality, coordinated, and affordable health care.

Fall 2019

## Thank You, First Responders

By John Wilmore

Earlier this summer, our community health worker, Delia, was having the monthly food truck that comes from the Central Texas Food Bank in Austin to deliver free food to individuals and families. While she was walking around, she observed a young person exhibiting some self-destructive behavior. Delia called 911 for assistance, and the first person on the scene was a police officer. Eventually, EMS came and transported the person to Hill Country Memorial.

First responders are the backbone of our communities. Our ability to react to a crisis is often built on a foundation of trained, front-line professionals like these. And that includes not only the fire, law enforcement and EMS first responders, but those in the hospitals as well. When the steps are done, we need them.

In my 14-plus years here at the Center, we have had to call 911 several times. Sometimes it was for someone who had been caught in a danger to themselves or others. Sometimes it was for an ambulance. Thankfully, we've never had to call for a fire.

Three years ago, Officer Chris Ayala and a couple of sheriff's deputies came to our clinic and spent the day conducting an active shooter training with our staff and volunteers. They taught us what to do if a dangerous person entered the Center or presented a threat to us. This is a service they offer free of charge to any business that wants this training. In fact, they encourage these training sessions so laws might be passed down the road. That's such a gift to our community.

These women and men help save lives every day. If you have an opportunity, find a way to reach out and show them your appreciation for their service. Take time to hear headquarters. Buy them a meal when you see them in a restaurant. And pray for them. They (and their families) need our prayers.



GOC's staff doctor Dr. Tara Celly (left) and Executive Director John Wilmore (right) demonstrate how to give a ceremonial check to a local attorney. It contained a check from the estate of a longtime donor who passed away a few months before. It was for \$1,000, much more than she had been able to donate during her lifetime. I was incredibly touched.

## A Samaritan's Story

"When COVID-19 hit, we had to figure out our role in helping our patients during the pandemic. Would we need to participate in providing testing for our patients? Who would pay for our patients' tests? How would we handle it if someone came to us already infected? How would we treat this disease?"

Eventually, we worked out a practical plan and also confirmed our primary role was to ensure our patients had the medications and supplies they needed. Hill Country Memorial (HCM) provided great leadership in the area of testing. We could send patients to there to be tested, and there was funding for those who were uninsured. Thanks to successfully flattening the curve, we went the first few months at the Center without having any of our patients hospitalized. But in late June, we had our first patient call saying they had just been discharged from HCM with COVID-19.

The patient had a list of specific medications and equipment needs (including a nebulator for breathing); they could not afford. Working with HCM, our staff doctor confirmed the medication list. We were able to provide the patient with a list containing all equipment and all her \$14 worth of the medications they needed!

Since then, we have helped several patients in a similar way. As soon as they are diagnosed and share symptoms, we help them acquire the equipment and medications as little as we can. We have also been providing patients with a pulse oximeter so they can monitor their blood oxygen level. The ability to measure your oxygen level is one of the key ways of knowing if you are in respiratory danger after having acquired the virus.

Thank you to each and every one of you who reached out at the time the pandemic hit with special donations. We have been saved there. Thanks, also, to those who continue to reach out. Fighting the disease is a warzone, not a game. Your acts of generosity and loving your neighbor are quite inspiring.

## One Last Gift

By John Wilmore

I called this year. I received an envelope from a local attorney. It contained a check from the estate of a longtime donor who passed away a few months before. It was for \$1,000, much more than she had been able to donate during her lifetime. I was incredibly touched.

I received the part of her will that pertained to us and found that she had donated eight months to each receive \$1,000 upon her death. I thought about how much joy she must have had when she gave these instructions to her attorney and the joy the other seven organizations had, too. I did, when they opened their envelopes.

In 2019, I changed my own will to include the Good Samaritan Center and a nonprofit in which I used to work. It brought me joy. It's a simple change. I encourage everyone to consider. Maybe the beneficiary will be our patients and the work we do with them. Maybe the focus will be an food insecurity, children, domestic violence or meeting basic needs. Whatever it may be, this is a simple way to go on spreading joy and making a difference in a lot of lives.