

# The Good Samaritan Center



"A HEALING PLACE"

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

Summer 2020

## Beauty for Ashes

By John Willome

"If it weren't for COVID-19, all we'd be talking about is what a beautiful spring it's been." I've said that sentence several times over the last three months. We've gotten an unbelievable amount of rain, everything is still green, and, outside of some spotty severe weather, it's really been amazing. I've done my best not to let my COVID-19 frustrations cause me to miss appreciating it.

But the reality is that the COVID-19 pandemic has altered all of our lives, whether we wanted it to or not.

People have lost jobs/businesses. Retirees have seen their investments disappear. For a while, we understood what it was like to deal with rationing of staple food items, cleaning products, and, of course, toilet paper.

And speaking for my wife and myself, we haven't been able to do some of the things that give us respite in times of stress like travel, eat out, or even attend church.

But that's not the end of the story. There is beauty in these ashes. That's the phrase that came to me as I thought about writing this column. It's the title of a 1996 song by Crystal Lewis based on Isaiah 61:1-3.

Here is the chorus of that song:

*He gives beauty for ashes  
Strength for fear  
Gladness for mourning  
Peace for despair*

God walks with us through the valley (Psalm 23:4). He sustains us when we humble ourselves and pray (2 Chronicles 7:14). I wrote in the spring newsletter that the Greatest Generation didn't become the way they were because of the Roaring 20s. They became the Greatest Generation because of how they responded to the 30s and the 40s.

Take heart. Press on. Persevere. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (Colossians 4:2) And don't forget that one of the best ways to take your eyes off of yourself is to love and help your neighbor.



*In keeping up with recommended health practices, we installed a new glass enclosure surrounding the Center's front desk. An intercom system was also mounted next to the outside doorbell so patients could more easily communicate with the staff inside. Above, (l to r), volunteers Woody Brandes (standing) and Jim Wilhite (seated) work with Volunteer Director Amelia Munoz.*

## A Samaritan's Story

We were able to welcome our volunteers back to the clinic on June 1. It was hard to be without them! We missed not only the work they do for us every day, but also their sweet spirits.

One of the first volunteers back was Ruthann Hoover. She is an RN who works in the medication room on Monday mornings. She also happens to be a board member, although she was a volunteer long before that.

Ruthann called our director, John Willome, aside towards the end of her shift and told him about a great phone call she had just had:

*I called a patient to let him know his medication came in, and his wife answered. She told me that they lost their insurance recently and they don't know what they would do without us. Now they are able to afford his medications, the blood work he needs, and even being able*

*to see a doctor. She was so grateful and it made me feel so good that we are able to be here for them.*

This story is rewarding on a many levels.

1. Our work made a real, material difference in a family's life. Keeping her husband healthy has ramifications not only on their income, but also how they are able to live their lives as contributing members of our community.
2. Ruthann Hoover, our volunteer/board member, experienced the joy of being part of impacting this family's life.
3. For our donors, you can know that the gifts you send us really do make a difference, and, hopefully, you that brings you a lot of joy.

Thank you for making all of this possible!

## Our Wish List:

- **\$50,000!** Looking for an *angel* (or a *host of angels*) to help us acquire a new HVAC system. (Please see page 5 for full info.)

*Please call the Center to verify whether someone has already donated this item.*

**Thank you!**

# Take Care, Be Safe, Wash Your Hands and Keep the Faith

By Carol Seminara

Earlier this spring, I penned the above catchphrase to use on all my COVID-19 correspondence. It succinctly lists what I am doing to endure these *interesting times*.

**“Take care.”** This one’s is first for a reason. If you are *running on empty*, then your ability to help others is limited. There’s a reason flight attendants tell us to put on our oxygen masks before help others.

Health experts across the spectrum agree that self-care is crucial to well-being and can increase your resilience/ability to handle stress. We all know to eat wisely (real food in moderation) and get regular exercise (2 ½ hours moderate exercise/week), but it’s just as important to do something just because it makes you happy.

Here are a few suggestions that have worked for me:

**Stay connected.** Consider scheduling regular safe-distance and/or virtual visits with family and friends. My gal-pals and I have a “bouncy talk” session on Zoom each week, and my sister and I chat on FaceTime every morning.

**Go outside.** Many of us (office-dwellers and seniors, especially) are deficient in vitamin D, which helps keep bones and teeth strong. A mere 10-15 minutes of sunshine on your arms and legs can help increase your brain’s release of serotonin, a hormone associated with improving mood. Remember sunscreen for your face, hands and tops of ears.

**Enjoy nature.** Birdsong is beautiful and it’s good for you; it can stimulate creativity and a sense of wellbeing. Looking at green space (even your lawn or a houseplant) can reduce stress, boost mood and inspire tranquility. Pets are part of the natural world, too. Their companionship can help lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

**Treat yourself.** Catching up on your favorite program or having a cookie with your afternoon cuppa (my preferred moment of bliss) is not frivolous indulgence. Moderation is the key here. Enjoy that (single) piece of (dark) chocolate and skip the guilt.

**Have quiet time.** Take some time to be still, be present, and just be. Whether you meditate, journal through the scriptures, or participate in a daily sketching practice, do something that fully engages you every day.

**“Be Safe.”** Always good advice. Current guidelines (at this writing) recommend we continue wearing masks when out among others, maintain adequate social distancing (6-feet apart), avoid being around obviously sick people and stay home if you’re feeling ill. Using sound, practical judgment in everyday matters makes good sense, but it’s even more important now. Be safe, not sorry.

**“Wash Your Hands.”** Your mother was right, regular, thorough hand washing – with soap and running water, vigorously for at least 20 seconds – is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to prevent spreading germs, even some that are resistant to antibiotics.

BTW, 20 seconds of handwashing is a lot longer than you might think. Depending on your pace, mentally singing “Happy Birthday” twice is 14-20 seconds; reciting the Lord’s Prayer takes 19 seconds - for Protestants, but only 15 for Catholics. ☺

**“Keep the Faith.”** Call it hope, confidence in the future or trust in something you can’t explicitly prove, a positive attitude may help you fight off disease. Practice gratitude for your blessings, serve others, ask for help when you need it, and, as Christian author, pastor’s wife and mother Michelle Lazurek wrote, “Pray with shameless audacity.”

In further musings, I even found a Biblical version of my catchphrase in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: “Be on guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Do everything in love.”

Sometimes, despite our best efforts to cope, we need a little help from friends. Fortunately, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission has a free, 24/7 mental health support hotline to help those experiencing anxiety, stress or emotional challenges during this pandemic. Contact the HHS hotline at: 833-986-1919.

## Three Surgeons Honored with Good Samaritan of the Year Award

*Despite canceled fundraising dinner, Drs. Andreassian, Love, and Stauffer receive awards*

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our annual Spring Fundraising Dinner, but we did not let that deter us from bestowing this year’s Good **Samaritan of the Year Award** to these three general surgeons (pictured below with executive director, John Willome). Please join us in thanking and honoring them for their dedication to the health of our community and for the care they consistently show our patients.

We would be remiss if we didn’t also express our gratitude to the more than 170 of you who made direct donations to this event, which is our second largest fundraising effort. Your selfless outpouring of support for our patients touches us deeply. Thank you.



Dr. Gregory Andreassian (right)



Dr. Lance Love (right)



Dr. Jay Stauffer (left)

**Special thanks to the following for directly donating their Underwriter’s fee to our cancelled dinner:  
Estela Avery, Cindy & Bruce Busby and Joseph Financial Partners.**

*And an additional thanks to Hill Country Titles for donating a Business Sponsorship.*

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The following is a listing of donors  
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(continued on page 4)

Every donation is precious to us, and we do our best to make certain every one is correctly listed.  
Please let us know if you see an error or if you think we've made an omission. Thank you.

## GENERAL DONATIONS, continued

(continued from page 3)

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## HVAC System Explanation (from Wish List on page 1)

Not since our initial capital campaign in 2003 have we directly come to our donors for such a large amount (\$50,000), and to be totally honest, we were worried such a request might have a negative affect on donations for our general operations.

After more than 16 years of continuous operation, eight of the Good Samaritan Center's HVAC units are failing.

The Center has nine systems. One was completely replaced and updated last year in January 2019. Efforts to patch the remaining units in the system are unsustainable. We have to replace them.

If you are comfortable helping with our big wish, please let us know.

We sincerely thank you for considering this request and for all of your support. We say it often and mean it always, we could not be here for our patients without your faithful help.



Looking like vintage sci-fi space travelers (left-to-right), Dr. Tara Cully, our staff dentist, and GSC dental assistant Norma Aguirre model the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) recommended by the American Dental Association during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Yes, I want to help!

You are welcome to help us in any way that you feel led to be involved. 70% of our budget comes from private donations so those are important to us. But we need volunteers and "Wish List" items too.

We appreciate *any way* you want to be involved. Thank you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Memoriam/Honorarium (see below left for designation, recipient and notification information)
- Wish List (see cover for list)
- Volunteer (type of activity \_\_\_\_\_)

**The Good Samaritan Center**  
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**“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man...?” Luke 10:36a**  
**How Our Volunteers Spent Their Involuntary Vacation**

Instead of profiling one volunteer, as we usually do each issue, we thought it would be fun to include as many as possible to reconnect with our friends.

Let’s see what some of our volunteers have been up to these past several weeks while on quarantine-break:



**Nancy Grimes**, front desk vol. pictured above, went fishing in her front-yard creek.

**Pam Cotten**, administrative vol., busily worked the phones for the Food Bank and helped register voters. She also said she’s grown a fondness for Thursdays when she gets to take out the garbage. “But I sometimes can’t decide what to wear.”

**Cathy Collier**, medication room vol., and her dog, Corbin, enjoyed daily walks between Cathy’s bouts of “give-away-something-everyday” and baking oatmeal everything! She’s also “reached an amiable relationship with Zoom” for all sorts of functions, personal and professional.

**Kathy Meyering**, a front desk vol., said she’s spent a lot of this period — at least four times a day — walking in the country enjoying the “panorama of springtime beauty” where “birds are always serenading, the air is cleaner and the sky bluer.”

**Judy Ryan**, med room data-entry vol., did a lot of yard work, put together a bunch of puzzles, watched too many movies and read a slew of murder mysteries.

**Bob Heinonen**, administrative vol., has completed his self-assigned list of projects and been gardening. As a board member of Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (which just received its 501(c)3 non-profit designation), he’s been participated in planning meetings for the group via Zoom.



**Pam Wilhite**, pictured above left, and **Regina Rosenwinkel**, above right, both med room vols., were spotted in San Antonio shopping for necessities together and suitably masked.