

Esperanza Health Center



Message of HOPE

A Newsletter of Esperanza Health Center
Fall 2019

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OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN KENSINGTON

With the opening of our new health center in Kensington, a new chapter in Esperanza's history begins as we enter our fourth decade

On October 24th and 25th, current and former Esperanza staff members, friends and family, community members, government officials and partners gathered for two special occasions: our **30 Year Partnership Benefit** and the **Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for our new Kensington health center.** The gatherings were a celebration of God's faithfulness to Esperanza over the past 30 years of ministry in North Philadelphia, as we look to the future with gratitude and anticipation.

As Dr. Susan Post, executive director, shared in her remarks at the Benefit: "We are God's people, wanting to follow God where he wants to go. And, where He wants to go is this beautiful community called Kensington. It's a place some would say isn't beautiful—but, to us, because it's a place that He has sent us to, as one of our employees has said, it is our 'land of milk and honey.'" Having served thousands of patients and families for nearly 12 years at the previous Kensington site just across the street, the new health center establishes Esperanza's presence and long-term commitment to the people of Kensington.

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1989 - 2019

**Esperanza
Health Center**

Introducing our newest Esperanza Health Center primary care providers!

JENNIFER BALSAN, LCSW



Jennifer Balsan, LCSW joined Esperanza in 2019 as a behavioral health consultant. A graduate of The Pennsylvania State University, Jennifer earned her MSW degree from Bryn Mawr College and is a licensed clinical social worker. She has training in cognitive behavioral therapy through the Beck Institute and the Center for Cognitive Therapy in Philadelphia. She has a

special interest in teens and worked for many years in school settings with at-risk adolescents. When not at work, Jennifer loves being part of several ministries at her church, as well as spending time with her husband and their four children.

AMANDA DAVIS, MD



Amanda Davis, MD, pediatrician, joined Esperanza in 2019. Dr. Davis is a native New Yorker, originally from the Bronx. A *cum laude* graduate of Harvard University, she received her doctor of medicine degree from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and then completed her residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital

of Philadelphia. She enjoys cooking, travelling, singing and music composition, and is a worship team member at her church, Christ Community Church of Philadelphia. In addition to Spanish, Dr. Davis also speaks conversational French.

STACY BRIX, MSN, CRNP



Stacy Brix, MSN, CRNP joined Esperanza in 2019 as a family nurse practitioner. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the Jefferson College of Nursing at Thomas Jefferson University, where she currently serves as an adjunct faculty member in the nursing department. She is excited to provide patient-centered care at

Esperanza with a particular interest in preventative medicine and women's health issues across the lifespan. Stacy enjoys hiking, gardening and spending time with her husband and their three young children.

LISA MUTCH, LPC, MS, MA



Lisa Mutch, LPC, MS, MA, behavioral health consultant and licensed professional counselor, joined Esperanza in 2019. Lisa is a graduate of the University of Virginia and Duke University, and earned her master's degree in counseling from the Graduate School of Counseling at Biblical Theological Seminary (now Missio Seminary). Through the

love of Christ, she is passionate about walking alongside others to help them experience inner healing and transformation. Outside of work, she enjoys salsa and ballroom dancing for exercise and spending time with family and friends.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Esperanza ("hope" in Spanish) is a powerful word and intentionally a part of our name. It defines who we are and why we do what we do. When I look back at our 30 years of service in North Philadelphia, it gives me hope because of God's consistent faithfulness to us. When I see where we are today with three sites and the ability to expand our services because of the new health center in Kensington, I am hopeful. When I look to the future, I am full of hope because I know God is leading us. This issue of *Message of Hope* takes us from looking back to celebrating the present and looking ahead to the future.

One reason for this hope is the support we have been given along the way from our friends, neighbors, patients, and partners. On behalf of everyone at Esperanza, **thank you!**

Susan M Post





Above (clockwise from top left): (1) Former medical assistant, Gloria Vazquez, is recognized for her 25 years of service at Esperanza; (2 and 3) Dr. Tim Leaman, Kensington site medical director and Juan Pérez, operations director were the MCs at the Benefit and Grand Opening events; (4) Guests tour a medical hub area; (5) Cutting the ribbon are (L to R) Rev. Bonnie Camarda, State Rep. Angel Cruz, State Sen. Christine Tartaglione, Dr. Tim Leaman, Pastor Ricardo Figueroa, Dr. Susan Post, Dr. Carolyn Klaus and Councilwoman Maria Quiñones-Sánchez. Also pictured are (L to R) Jennifer Rice, Erik Davis and Sandra Collazo-Lopez, RN (all photos above and on cover page by Chris Baker Evens).

OPENING A NEW CHAPTER IN KENSINGTON (CONT.)

The new health center, developed through the creative renovation of a 35,000 square foot, four-story former bank building that has been a landmark at the corner of Kensington & Allegheny for almost a century, will enable us to serve nearly 12,000 patients annually. All of Esperanza's integrated health services—primary medical care for adults and children, OB/GYN care, dental care, behavioral health, an on-site

medication dispensary, phlebotomy, HIV/AIDS care, Centering pregnancy groups, medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorder, diabetes care and many other services—are accessible within the new health center. On the first floor, community members and patients can visit our **Phoenix Café**, which provides an open, welcoming space to gather and enjoy the healthy breakfast and lunch menu.

Plans are now underway for the development of our **new Community Wellness Center** to be built adjacent to the health center, with projected groundbreaking in late 2020.

We're giving thanks to God for our many partners who have contributed their time, talents, resources and financial contributions, and have made our new Kensington health center a reality!

WHEN FAMILIES BECOME PART OF THE ESPERANZA FAMILY: AN INTERVIEW WITH SULIBETH

We asked one of our patients, Sulibeth (photo, left, with two of her daughters) to share her thoughts about the care that she and her family receive at Esperanza.

How did you become a patient, and how did you decide to bring your whole family here?

When I moved to Philadelphia in 2011, a friend told me about Esperanza. [Internal medicine physician] Dr. [Daria] Chacón took care of my daughter, who had a lot of complications. She understood my needs, so I decided to bring all of my kids here!

What do you like the most about your care at Esperanza?

The medical care is precise. They don't leave me hanging! They let me know what is going on with my kids and they give me support all the time, for all these years. They always follow up to see how my kids and I are doing.

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GRANT FROM JEFFERSON/LINDY FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT NEW PARENTING PROGRAM AT ESPERANZA



Pictured (L to R) at the P-CHE grant award summit held on October 4th at Thomas Jefferson University: Felicia Rinier; Del Wesley; Jennifer Acosta; Elaine Lindy; Alan Lindy; Jack Ludmir, MD; Rickie Brawer; and, Elizabeth Dale. (Photo credit: Thomas Jefferson University Photography Services).

In August, Esperanza Health Center was awarded a \$50,000 grant from **The Philadelphia Collaborative for Health Equity (P-CHE)** through Thomas Jefferson University and the Lindy Foundation, to support our new Full-Circle Parenting pilot program. The P-CHE grant program was established by Jefferson to address *social determinants of health* (socio-demographic factors that impact health outcomes) that are highly-prevalent within the Latino community of North Philadelphia, including trauma, food insecurity, housing instability and poverty. Esperanza was one of 12 P-CHE grant recipients.

The Full-Circle Parenting program will be implemented by Esperanza's Department of Community Health and Wellness. The new program will seek to address parenting stress in the 19134 zip code

(including Esperanza's Kensington community), through trauma-informed, community-driven parent support groups called *parent circles*. Our hope is that Full-Circle Parenting will lead to a reduction in the incidence of mental health issues that impact parents and their children, by addressing the root causes of chronic stress that are associated with parenting. This will be accomplished with support from Impact Services Corporation, The Simple Way, the Trauma Healing Institute and the Jefferson Department of Family and Community Medicine.

Representing Esperanza at the October 4th grantee summit were (photo above, second and third from left) Del Wesley, Director of Strategic Advancement and Jennifer Acosta, Community Health and Wellness Coordinator.

INTERVIEW WITH SULIBETH (CONT.)

How did Esperanza help you and your family in a difficult time?

When I was going through a hard time and didn't have money for my children in the wintertime, Esperanza gave me information about how to pay the rent, where to get coats, and how to keep my heat on. You are the best—for real!

How has Esperanza impacted your family?

You are more like my family than anything else. My doctor knows me, so whenever my daughter is sick a nurse calls, and the doctor sees her right away. When I was pregnant, I was very sick and in the hospital for 7 days. Dr. Chacón went to the hospital to see me. Do you know what it's like to see your own doctor at the hospital? That's one in a million!

How do you see Esperanza playing a role in the community?

I think that you have a very positive impact. You have become our primary caregivers in the community. You're always ready to give help—whatever a person needs. When Dr. Chacón sees me, she always gives me a big hug! I feel like I'm seeing part of my family. You see the smiles on my kids' faces before a visit—they say, "Oh, yeah! We're going to go see the doctor!" I would recommend Esperanza 100 percent to anyone—you're very responsible and you give great care!



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You Can Make a Difference for Those With the Greatest Needs

Through your tax-deductible gift to Esperanza Health Center you can ensure that our uninsured and under-insured patients will have full access to compassionate, excellent, attentive care—medical, dental, OB/GYN, behavioral health, social services and many other services—all part of Esperanza's comprehensive health services.

By becoming a monthly donor, your giving will have even greater impact year-round! To make an online gift or to become a monthly donor, please visit our website at: esperanzahealth.com/donate. Or, please send a check to: Esperanza Health Center, Attn: Development, 4417 N. 6th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140-2319. **Thank you!**