InterFaith Opens Healthy Lifestyle Classroom

Last fall, InterFaith was named the recipient of the $350,000 Humana Communities Benefit charitable grant, funded by the Humana Foundation. The purpose of the grant was to create a Healthy Lifestyle Classroom for low-income patients in our community.

The Healthy Lifestyle Classroom would take an existing room previously used for storage and renovate it into a multi-purpose setting with the capabilities to teach patients how to cook healthy meals, learn about local resources for affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, provide peer-to-peer support groups and execute wellness classes. Before construction could begin, however, we had to digitize and shred the over 5,000 paper medical charts that resided in the space. Humana employees graciously helped with this effort, even using their employee-sponsored volunteer hours to come to the clinic to box and move charts.

Thanks to a distinguished project team including architect Dan Brewer and David Smith of Johnson & Galvon Construction, construction began in March and stayed on-time and on-budget. Drywall went up, floors went down, cabinets went in, and equipment was ordered. InterFaith even hosted an open house “kitchen shower” event, where community members donated over $1,000 in kitchen supplies to outfit the new space.

InterFaith’s Healthy Lifestyle Classroom held its first class on July 26 – a healthy cooking class led by nutritionist and educator Penn Grove. Seven patients attended the first class, where they learned about choosing healthy ingredients on a budget and cooking methods that help them manage chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

“With more than 99% of InterFaith’s patients suffering from one or more chronic conditions, patient education and mentorship is critical,” said Melissa Knight, executive director of InterFaith Health Clinic. “The Humana Communities Benefit grant will enable us to provide a fully equipped space for patient education and wellness classes, which will combat these serious illnesses that plague so many individuals.”

A grand-opening event was held on Tuesday, August 16th, and was attended by Humana representatives, InterFaith staff and volunteers, patients, and community members, with live media coverage provided by WATE Channel 6. Registered Dietitian Elizabeth Hall conducted a live cooking demonstration, and attendees had the chance to tour the new facility and hear about class offerings. “We’re currently offering cooking classes to teach our patients suffering from chronic disease how to cook healthy meals on a budget, and we hope to add exercise classes and wellness classes soon,” said Debbie Valentine,
Healthy Lifestyle Classroom (continued)

Development Director at InterFaith.
“I was able to attend the first cooking class they had and I learned so much,” said Sandy Wells, an InterFaith patient. “I love how InterFaith doesn’t just provide medical care but tries to keep us healthier in other ways too, and I’m excited to see what other classes they offer,” Wells said.

For updates on class offerings and Healthy Lifestyle Classroom news, visit our website at www.interfaithhealthclinic.org.

WALK-IN CLINIC EXPANDED HOURS:
Monday - Thursday 5 pm - 8 pm
- for patients ages 12 and up
- Monday through Thursday evenings from 5 pm - 8 pm
- treatment for minor injury or illness
- $35 base fee with small fees for add-ons (tests, etc.)
- no appointment necessary
- do not have to be an InterFaith patient to receive care

InterFaith is currently averaging 100 new patient applications per month. When someone is accepted to be a patient, our staff calls them to make a first appointment. At that time, the patient is told to bring $50 to their first appointment to be on the safe side, not knowing whether bloodwork or other tests will be done. A couple of months ago, Bethany O’Banion came in for her new patient appointment. She hadn’t been to the doctor in six years because she couldn’t afford it. She was very glad to be here! But when she checked out and was told that she only owed $19.83 she burst into tears! She told the front office staff that she’d brought the $50 but she really needed it for other things. She continued telling them how thankful she was that she found InterFaith. InterFaith’s front office staff was so moved that they all cried and “group hugged.” They couldn't stop talking about Bethany; she made their day!

This is who InterFaith is. We provide comprehensive healthcare to those who wouldn’t have it otherwise, for a shockingly low price thanks to our generous donors. We are as blessed to be here as Bethany O’Banion was last month. Thank you for helping people like Bethany find health care they can afford.

InterFaith’s Healthy Lifestyle Classroom is OPEN!!!

This facility receives funding from the state of Tennessee.