

Health, Hope & Opportunity



2019 SPRING
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Cherry Health Vision patient Juelz Garcia is happy and healthy today.

Comfort and Care for Every Family

by Karina Montoya, Mother of Cherry Health Patient

Sometimes, when people think of public health centers, they think the care is something “less than” because it is more affordable and intended to offer “something better than nothing.”

Cherry Health changed my mind.

When my youngest son, Juelz, had a large growth on his eyelid, I acted quickly. As a working mother who has long days away from her kids, I wanted to get him to the doctor when I could. That meant after hours on a Saturday night – the Emergency Department (ED).

I got to the ED with my 13-month-old who had been confused by his blocked vision and had been rubbing his tiny face on the carpet to relieve the irritation. I did not find the answer I needed.

One staff member thought it was a sty; easy to fix with drops. The next said it could be more serious and even mentioned surgery, where Juelz would have to go to the hospital, be put under and need weeks of recovery.

I left terrified, with a prescription for eyedrops that cost \$95 (almost a full day’s wage!) and a referral to a pediatric ophthalmologist at a large health care system.

On Monday, I talked to Dr. Annah Fox, an Optometrist at Cherry Health’s Grand Rapids Lion’s Club Vision Clinic, and she offered another way. She asked me to bring Juelz in as soon as I could, which happened to be only a day later – the next time I was scheduled for a half-day at work.

Dr. Fox took her time with Juelz and me, gently checking the growth and answering all my questions. Right away, she let me know that he would not need surgery and that the problem could be fixed with a \$5 prescription for an oral antibiotic that could be filled at the pharmacy on site! I was so relieved; I almost cried.

In a few days, the growth disappeared and Juelz was back to his energetic, playful self. Just ask his siblings!

Advanced Retinal Imaging Services Arrive in Rural Center

Of Cherry Health's thousands of vision patients, 1,127 are seen at Montcalm Area Health Center (MAHC) – most of which are receiving *medical eye exams*. A *routine eye exam* checks vision, screens for eye diseases, and updates eyeglass prescriptions. A *medical eye exam* produces a medical diagnosis that requires treatment with medication and/or close monitoring and management by an optometrist, such as conjunctivitis, dry eye, glaucoma or cataracts, to mention a few.

Through donor support to Cherry Health Foundation, patients at MAHC and surrounding areas will now have access to an essential component of these medical eye exams – a digital retinal camera with Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT).

Digital retinal imaging uses high-resolution imaging systems to take pictures of the eye's interior. This equipment is vital to the standard of care and used daily. Adding OCT to retinal camera technology offers a much higher level of detail which will change the way Cherry Health can analyze certain eye conditions including diabetes, macular degeneration, glaucoma, retinal lesions, and macular holes.

This combination is invaluable to providing a correlation in multiple methods of examination. Offering doctors ways to find retinal disorders early is critical to preventing disease progression and vision loss.

When reviewing the images together, the doctor can point out to the patient various structures of the retina and explain treatment options for any conditions revealed by the pictures. The more patients know about eye diseases, the more likely they understand and follow the doctor's recommendations for treatment and prevention.

In addition to helping detect diseases early, these retinal images provide a historical record of changes in the eye. Images are compared side-by-side, year after year, to discover subtle changes and monitor patient health.

Prior to this addition of services, patients had to travel 37 miles to access this care! Thanks to donors to Cherry Health Foundation, health equity is offered to rural patients who would have limited or no access to these services.



The iFusion Digital Retinal/OCT camera will offer advanced digital imaging services to the vision services program at Montcalm Area Health Center.

On Thursday, May 9, Cherry Health Foundation invites you to make us stronger.

We are seeking volunteers to assist in our second annual fundraising luncheon, *Prescription: Strength*. This year's event will highlight the mental health programs of Cherry Health.

Held at Cathedral Square in downtown Grand Rapids, from 12 to 1 p.m., this event will be free to those attending, but an invitation to give will be a focus of the program.

Consider becoming a Table Host for this event by inviting seven friends new to the Cherry Health mission to learn more about the essential mental health services we provide.

Contact Margaret Smitt, Foundation Coordinator, at 616.965.8254 or margaretsmitt@cherryhealth.com to find out how to attend and host!

PRESCRIPTION: STRENGTH

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CHERRY HEALTH FOUNDATION STAFF:

Anna Goddard Clifford, CFRM, *Director of Development* Kate Klemp, *Annual Giving & Donor Relations* Margaret Smitt, *Foundation Coordinator*

Cherry Health
VISION SERVICES
2018 BY THE NUMBERS



Vision Patients at Cherry Health

- 60% Heart of the City Grand Rapids Lions Clinic (8,491 patients)
- 8% Montcalm Area Health Center (1,127 patients)
- 11% Wyoming Community Health Center (1,578 patients)
- 22% See to Succeed School-Linked Program (3,124 patients)

Vital Signs

Some highlights of care for the **14,163** vision patients of Cherry Health:



Patient Satisfaction Rate



1st & only of its kind *Community Health & Primary Care Optometry Residency* in the Midwest



Diabetes management patients



schools served in See to Succeed School Linked Program



pairs of eyeglasses for children in last school year. 316 free pairs for uninsured kids funded by Grand Rapids Lions Club.



kept vision services appointments

Join Us For a Tour



Cherry Health Foundation hosts lunch and learn tours throughout the

year at Heart of the City Health Center, 100 Cherry Street SE, Grand Rapids. Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at how your gift to the Foundation helps patients on a daily basis. We look forward to sharing stories, like those shared in this newsletter, of patients who did not have access to health care before coming to Cherry Health. All tours are held from 12-1 p.m. with lunch provided. R.S.V.P. is requested.

616.965.8254

bit.ly/cherrytour

foundation@cherryhealth.com

Cherry Health Mission

Cherry Health improves the health and wellness of individuals by providing comprehensive primary and behavioral health care while encouraging access by

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A Vision to Care For All

A message from Cherry Health CEO Tasha Blackmon

As spring draws near, I can't help but think about the amazing renewal that is to come. After a brutal winter, the shades of grey and white will begin to make way for a beautiful palette. The transitioning seasons can be likened to the changes in the healthcare environment in which we serve.

With a shift from volume to value in all areas of healthcare, better than nothing care is no longer acceptable. At Cherry Health, we've always been committed to providing quality, affordable care to all who need it. Our dedicated teams strive for care delivery excellence while partnering with patients on their quest to better health.



To achieve the goal of improved health outcomes, we have been very intentional in seeking new ways of approaching patient care. Our goal is to provide care to patients *when* they need it, *where* they need it, *how* they need it and *who* they need it by. Together with community partners, Cherry Health is working to disrupt the social determinants of health, removing barriers to care.

With sincere appreciation,

Tasha Blackmon

Giving is Contagious

At Cherry Health, we believe all of our patients deserve the best care and the utmost respect. Through Cherry Health Foundation, our community rallies behind that belief, providing essential financial support for solutions that work.



Mr. & Dr. Bradford & Andola Mathis

Project Executive, Rockford Construction & OB/GYN, Mercy Health Physician Partners

Why do you make giving to Cherry Health Foundation a priority?

We know that the impact of every dollar we contribute is significantly multiplied through the commitment, compassion, and expertise of the providers and staff at Cherry Health. The ultimate result is that patients and families have accessible, high quality, integrated, and dignified care. And as part of the Foundation's Care Team*, we're able to see how our donations directly affect patient care.

How do you choose who to invite to the Prescription: Strength Luncheon?

We choose a blend of family, friends, and usually 2-4 people who might not be as familiar with Cherry Health. Our goal for inviting people is to remind and/or inform our guest about the continued need for accessible high-quality health services. Our guests are impressed by the innovative ways Cherry Health is addressing this need. The luncheon is also exciting because we're able to be the first to hear of new roll-outs and solutions for community health.

What did you learn when attending the event?

At last year's luncheon, we were able to see the magnitude of the school health programs — over 24,000 students served! It was fascinating to hear how efficient and essential it is for students to be able to directly access needed services at school. We are intrigued to discover more about Cherry Health's Mental Health services at this year's event.

*The Foundation's Care Team are those donors giving annually \$1,000 or more. To find out more: cherryhealth.org/donate/your-impact/