



COLUMBIA ROAD HEALTH SERVICES

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Summer 2011 Newsletter

CRHS Renovates With Stimulus Funding



CRHS Health Center second floor waiting room under renovation.

Columbia Road Health Services (CRHS) was awarded \$356,672 in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to address pressing renovation needs and to expand our capacity to provide primary and preventive health services to the medically underserved in our community. In recent months these funds have helped CRHS renovate and modernize our current site in our continuing effort to deliver the highest-quality care to our patients.

Roughly \$340,000 of the competitively won funds were used to modernized CRHS' early 20th century townhouse to meet the increase in patient demand for

primary health care services.

CRHS Health Center Director Susan Riggs says the renovations have been great for the clinic because we are now able "to serve our patients in a safe, clean, and welcoming space. We urgently needed to renew many of the rooms in our old building: there were many rooms with cabinets and counters falling apart, ceiling tiles broken, old plumbing, damaged flooring, and so on." CRHS began the upgrades in 2010 by purchasing new exam tables, medical equipment, and furniture. The renovations in spring 2011 included new drywall, ceilings, paint and flooring throughout the clinic and reworking the space to

... "Renovation" continues on page 2

CRHS Welcomes Nurse Practitioner Marita Gove

CRHS is proud to welcome Marita Gove as the newest provider at our health center. Marita is a nurse practitioner who came to CRHS in July after working as a nurse practitioner at Unity's Minnesota Avenue Health Center.

Originally from Lexington, Massachusetts, Marita has a versatile background in public health, teaching, community health education, and serving the public in both medical and social services capacities. Her education includes an undergraduate degree in Child

Development and Spanish from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Science in Nursing from Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Marita is fluent in Spanish as a result of studying abroad in Santiago, Chile and teaching at a bilingual school in Copan-Ruinan, Honduras.

Marita is no stranger to our mission: when Marita was a registered nurse; she worked at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center providing critically needed primary care to the growing Latino ... "Marita" continues on page 2



New Nurse Practitioner Marita Gove came to CRHS.

Providers Trained in Reach Out and Read Workshop

CRHS staff had the privilege of attending an informative Reach Out and Read (ROR) provider training workshop led by Upper Cardozo Health Center Assistant Medical Director, Andrea Anderson, MD. Dr. Anderson directs Unity's training program on Health Literacy and Cultural Competency and is the Medical Director of the ROR program in the metro DC area.

ROR is a national program that promotes establishing the early foundations of literacy through encouragement from and distribution of free books by health care providers. The program builds on the existing structure of pediatric primary care, in which parents of young children have

regular, developmentally focused visits with a pediatrician during the first years of a child's life. Ideally, discussions about reading begin as early as during the six-month checkup.

The national ROR program places a special emphasis on children growing up in low-income communities, such as the neighborhoods surrounding CRHS. Evidence has shown that families served by ROR read together more often and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies and stronger language skills better prepared to achieve their potential.

During the training, Dr. Anderson ... "ROR" continues on page 4



CRHS Medical Assistant Brenda Medrano reads with two patients.

... "Renovation" continued from page 1 and reworking the space to make better use of the 4,000 square feet of space in the clinic.

ARRA allocated \$2 billion nationally to increase capacity at community health centers over two years, of which \$1.5 billion was dedicated to capital expenditures and \$500 million to service expansions. Five community health centers in Washington, DC received funding from ARRA, including Unity Health Care's Upper Cardozo Health Center and the building of Unity's new state-of-the-art community health center situated east of the Anacostia River.

CRHS is an invaluable resource for families in the community. With ARRA funding CRHS is doing two important things: giving patients a safer facility to provide critically needed services and giving the local economy a boost with the economic activity the project has generated. ☺

... "Marita" continued from page 1 population in Lawrence, MA. Marita is ready to respond to the needs of CRHS' culturally diverse population. She says, "I have an interest in and see the importance of family medicine as a core element of the health center. I am committed to providing culturally sensitive patient care, superb patient education, and an environment that is compassionate, understanding, and open to continuous improvement."

Marita adds, "I have met many challenges in the past and will implement effective strategies in the future to ensure CRHS remains successful in meeting our mission." She looks forward to continuing to care for patients from her former Minnesota Avenue location as well as meeting new patients within the CRHS community.

Speaking of practicing medicine, Marita says, "It's a privilege

to serve people." She talks of caring for patients as though the appointment is an opportunity to catch up with an old friend. "We talk about [the patient's] health, their family, how things have been going." Then she provides the patient with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

According to Medical Director Dr. Rona Schwartz, Marita Gove is a great fit for CRHS's practice. "Marita brings years of experience and a great approach to medicine. She'll fit right in with the other providers, whose primary focus is always on what's best for the patients." CRHS is overjoyed to have Marita join our dedicated team. ☺

CRHS Takes Aim At Childhood Obesity with We Can!

CRHS has joined the growing national movement to improve the health outlook of our nation's youth by preventing obesity in our own community. On March 1, 2011, CRHS kicked off the We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) national education program that is designed to give parents, caregivers, and entire communities a way to help children stay at a healthy weight.

CRHS' We Can! program is an interactive education program that uses a family approach to promote healthy weight and an active lifestyle for kids and parents. In a fun environment, both kids and parents learn skills to make healthy food choices, become more physically active, and reduce recreational screen time. This program meets the first three Wednesdays of each month and uses active games and interactive lessons to help kids make healthy choices. Separately, parents get tips, tools, and information on what changes are worth making and how to accomplish them.

In April 2008, Unity Health Care's Upper Cardozo Health Clinic unveiled its We Can! program to the predominantly Latino neighborhood of Columbia Heights. The Latino community is a group at high risk for obesity and related health problems such as diabetes. CRHS saw a continuing need to fill this void among its own Latino patients and has followed in the footsteps of Upper Cardozo Health Clinic and adopted its own We Can! Program to speak to the community in a language that its members would understand, both literally and figuratively.

Bill Jordan, a CRHS nurse practitioner, works one-on-one with families at each We Can! program session. "The staff of CRHS understands the challenges facing busy parents and families today, and we offer a wide variety of programs and services to help you and your family get well, be well, and stay well. My goal is to make positive changes in our families, and we have!" says Bill. "Every family has made

significant behavior changes and food choices--one family no longer drinks soda and has started exercising at the park every evening."

On a recent field trip to the local supermarket, patients learned how to read food labels and make healthy decisions when shopping for their families. "The We Can! Program is truly unique," says Bill. "It's essentially a one-stop resource for parents to help children maintain a healthy weight." 🗣️



We Can! program participants during a session held outdoors.

Meet Karla*

Karla came to Columbia Road Health Services (CRHS) for the first time in 2011. Karla and her husband have four children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old. Karla is the sole wage earner for her family and suffers from seasonal allergies that at times aggravate her asthma so badly that she cannot work.

When her condition would become severe, she would go to the emergency room for treatment and

would receive a small supply of allergy medications. Since Karla was uninsured, the hospital referred Karla to CRHS for follow-up care. After understanding that she would qualify for our sliding fee scale program, she began to come in for regular medical services at CRHS. and I was able to help Karla obtain health insurance.

Moreover, Karla feels much better because she no longer has to miss work and her allergies have subsided. CRHS providers also helped to enroll Karla's two

eldest children in the CRHS We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) program, which will help give Karla's whole family the tools to foster a healthy, active lifestyle that will prevent health problems later in life. 🗣️

-Mirna Jimenez
CRHS Case Manager

*In order to maintain confidentiality, this patient's name and certain other identifying details have been changed

... "ROR" continued from page 2

emphasized that "literacy promotion must be a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading." Dr. Anderson added that for many families, especially for those living in poverty, these medical visits are the earliest, and possibly the only, regular contacts with a child development professional.

The presentation taught CRHS staff that this dialogue between patient and health care professional provides key literacy knowledge and access to resources for the whole family. The American Academy of Pediatrics endorses ROR as a model for anticipatory guidance for physicians to convey to parents the why and how to share books with children. With the help of ROR, CRHS will continue supporting the well-rounded development of the children of our community to help launch them into a bright future. ♻️



We Can! program participants learn how to read Nutrition Facts labels as they shop.

CRHS Nurses Celebrate Nurses Week at Eastern Market

Members from CRHS celebrated Nurses Week by participating in a commemoration ceremony hosted by Unity Health Care on May 3, 2011 that honored the life and work of Florence Nightingale.

Every year Unity Health Care shows appreciation with a Nurses Week celebration to say thank you for the hard work and remember where the journey began. This year, nurses from

CRHS and all of Unity Health Care celebrated the event with a lot of laughter, food, and formal recognition to nursing staff for their service and commitment throughout the year.

Sixteen nurses and other medical support staff from CRHS attended the Unity-wide ceremony, held at the historic Eastern Market North Hall. "It was exciting to be able to participate in such a great event with other hard-working clinicians" said Medical Assistant Wendy Vargas. ♻️



Nurses and clinicians from CRHS celebrated Nurses Week at Eastern Market.

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