



COLUMBIA ROAD HEALTH SERVICES

Providing quality and affordable health care to the poor and uninsured of Washington, DC since 1979

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Dear Friends,

Throughout the years, Columbia Road Health Services (CRHS) has cared for many children who have suffered from abuse. For these children, CRHS has been a place of safety, hope, and healing.

Erica* is a teenage girl who has been a patient at CRHS for the past five years. In July, Erica came to us for her well child check-up. While speaking with her CRHS physician, Erica divulged that her home life was troubled: she lived with her mother and was being physically and mentally abused by her mother's boyfriend. Erica struggled with spiraling depression, which led to a recent suicide attempt, and frequently displayed aggressive behavior in school, where her grades had plummeted.

Upon hearing this, the CRHS physician immediately made arrangements for Erica to see the CRHS mental health counselor Debra Vekstein. In addition to spending time listening and talking with Erica, Debra recommended that Erica attend three weeks of therapy with her biological father, who agreed to be Erica's primary caretaker. Additionally, Erica continued to meet daily with Debra for several weeks to address Erica's depression and aggression. Debra also reported the abusive situation in Erica's former home to the appropriate authorities where she is now receiving additional support.

Erica now reports a new outlook on life: her depression has improved significantly and she is less aggressive. On a follow-up medical visit to her CRHS physician, Erica explained that the counseling services she received at CRHS provided a safe place to focus on healing, to reflect on her new behavior, and to set new goals for her life. We have high hopes for Erica's future as she adjusts to living with her father and puts renewed energy into her schoolwork. We will continue to support Erica's progress as she returns to CRHS for medical, counseling, and social services.

Erica's story is repeated in the lives of many young girls in our community. At CRHS, we strive to provide our patients with a safe and compassionate environment where healing can take place. Thanks to the support of donors, we are able to provide patients with case management and mental health counseling. **We sincerely appreciate your continued support for CRHS, which is critical for helping people like Erica. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Janelle Goetcheus

Founding Medical Director, CRHS

Chief Medical Officer, Unity Health Care



Well-child exams provide an important opportunity to assess children's development progress. Above, proud parents smile with their newborn at her first well-child exam.

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



Columbia Road Health Services: A Unity Health Care Center