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NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 2019

Exalta Health reflects the spirit of Christ by providing compassionate, accessible healthcare.

2060 Division Ave S, Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
phone 616.475.8446 fax 616.475.1272  
[exaltahealth.org](http://exaltahealth.org)



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**SAVE THE DATE**

**16 Annual Luncheon**  
**OCTOBER 16, 2019**  
**Prince Conference Center**  
1800 East Beltline Ave SE. Grand Rapids, MI. 49546

**Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Legacy Challenge**

**12:00 pm-1:00 pm**  
**Register on-line at:**  
[www.exaltahealth.org/events/annual-luncheon](http://www.exaltahealth.org/events/annual-luncheon)

**WHEN GOD SHOWS UP**

It was Tuesday morning and there was much to do to prepare for the Thursday open house to celebrate expansion into pediatrics. What weighed most heavily on Thressa, the Executive Assistant, was the appearance of the outside of the building. Spring rains had inspired the weeds to grow like... well, weeds. With time running out, Thressa had no idea where to find the help she needed to pull the weeds. The task seemed so daunting that she didn't even know for what to pray. On her drive to work the whispered words to God were, "please, just take care of it."

About 30 minutes after Thressa arrived at work, Monse, the receptionist, called saying "people from Ada Bible Church are here," and there in the lobby waiting to be assigned a volunteer task for the morning were 12 volunteers from the church. A tentative six month old arrangement had been forgotten, and it seemed like the newly assigned weed pullers had just magically shown up.

Last summer on a Monday morning I was staring at a \$31,000 payroll and over \$8,000 in bills due by the end of the week. As happens most summers the bank account was trending dangerously close to zero. Not aware of any big gifts scheduled to come in, I reviewed what I would need to do to tap into our line of credit at the bank. As this was not something I wanted to do, I procrastinated and went home discouraged.

The next day I knew I'd need to get the credit line but again put it off for the morning. We had been praying about our financial situation as a staff so Thressa was aware of the challenge we faced. In the early

afternoon she came into my office and said, "Look at what just showed up in the mail." That's when I saw the envelope in her hand, an envelope containing a check for \$40,000 from "Anonymous."

"Daniel" shared over time with the chaplain his struggle with anger, betrayal, failure, and grief, wondering if God had abandoned him. The ending of first his marriage and then another relationship caused a spiral into depression and out-of-control drinking. Daniel knew his alcohol use could neither heal his pain nor fill his emptiness. He wanted to find God but wasn't sure how to do so. He was feeling all alone.

Two weeks later, Daniel came back to Exalta Health with a story to tell – a near-death experience, several days in the hospital, an experience of God's saving grace. God spared his life and was beginning to break his bondage to alcohol. In his most alone moment when he was most desperate, Daniel experienced God showing up.

When God shows up, whether through volunteers, anonymous donors, or the chaplain, work gets done, bills are paid, and lives are restored. At Exalta Health staff and volunteers have experienced God showing up in many ways and at times we don't expect.

Maybe it is not God showing up. Maybe we are opening our eyes and seeing God who is always there.

**Bill Paxton,**  
*Exalta Health President*

## SERVICE CORNER

### The Land of Opportunity



Jose was concerned.

He came to Grand Rapids to escape the extreme difficulties of raising a family in his country of origin looking for opportunity for a better life for his children. That is the American dream after all. Working as a roofing assistant in the booming Grand Rapids housing market was a job, but the cash payments for long hours barely supported his family of five. And now he was worried about the mouth pain with which two of his children were struggling. Without health insurance how could he pay for dental care for his children?

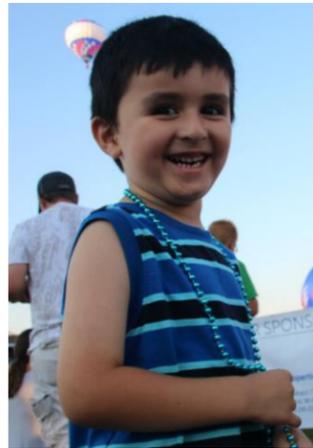
And then he heard about the "Dia de Dental Gratis" at Exalta Health.

Could quality dental care really be "free" even in this land of opportunity?

When Jose brought Ana, 6 years old, and Mateo, 3, to the Free Dental Day, extensive issues were discovered with his children's teeth. Working through a bi-lingual dental hygienist, Jose learned that two of Ana's baby teeth had rotted so badly they needed to be removed while X-rays showed that both children had many cavities. While a volunteer dentist was able to remove Ana's teeth that day, both children had too many cavities to treat that morning. They would need to establish a dental home to receive proper care.

Exalta Health's AmeriCorps Member, Rosa, worked with the family to see if the children qualified for Healthy Kids Dental insurance.

Unfortunately, the children did not qualify because both children were born outside of the U.S. Fortunately, Exalta Health had recently expanded its quality dental services to include children regardless of income or insurance status. Ana and Mateo were welcomed to become patients and receive quality and yet affordable care.



The family now considers Exalta Health to be their "dental home." The children have each come for two appointments and have been seen by Dr. Daniel Armstrong, Exalta Health's Dental Director, and one of the clinic's dedicated volunteer dentists, Dr. Scott Snyder. Combined, the dentists have helped Mateo with his six cavities and are working on Ana's twelve cavities to give these children healthy smiles.

**Thanks to the financial and volunteer support of the community, Jose and his family are experiencing quality, affordable dental care.**

### Expanding our Dental Reach Through Continued Collaboration



A new program is under way in collaboration with our close partner organization, Catherine's Health Center (CHC). Under the new PA 161 dental program two of Exalta Health's dental hygienists will be spending time every week at CHC located further north in the city.

The Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported tooth decay as one of the most common childhood diseases. Along with children, nearly one-third of all adults in the United States have untreated tooth decay. PA 161 programs help reduce disparities for underserved Michigan residents with

*Pictured left: Meg VandenBosch, Staff Dental Hygienist and Deb Scorr (not pictured) will spend part of their time offering a new program at our partner organization, Catherine's Health Center as part of a joint program due to launch later this month.*

barriers to oral health access by providing oral health services in non-traditional dental settings.

The goal of a PA 161 program is to identify and screen high risk population groups, provide some preventative dental care and education, and help refer patients to a local dentist for comprehensive dental care and establish a dental home. Kayla Lutz, Exalta Health's Dental Manager says, "fortunately, our patients have access to dental care right here at Exalta Health. We want to extend Exalta Health's dental reach to other areas of the underserved population here in West Michigan."

PA 161 program services include: oral assessments, dental cleanings, fluoride applications, sealants, oral health education, nutritional counseling, and referral of patients to a local dentist to establish a dental home.

The new program at Catherine's Health Center is set to start this August and will be one of less than 50 total programs in the state of Michigan and the only one in Kent County making it an extremely important asset and wonderful opportunity for our community.

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### Mel Webb: "Why I Continue to Volunteer"



Exalta Health is blessed by the support of over 200 volunteers each year who help in every aspect of the organization. One such volunteer is Mel Webb who began volunteering at Exalta Health last winter as a recent nurse practitioner graduate.

Mel started her medical journey by pursuing her nursing degree at Indiana Wesleyan University. During her senior year she did a nursing study abroad program in Zambia where she discovered that healthcare took her into the depths of the hearts and vulnerabilities of others; a rich place where the Lord can minister.

With this experience and realization of how she could use medicine to reach underserved communities, Mel came to Exalta Health. She had heard about the clinic through a member of her church who was already volunteering here but wanted to learn more. She first met with Dr. Vander Molen, Exalta Health's Medical Director, and felt blessed by hearing about her journey into medicine and desire to serve. It also encouraged Mel to make the commitment to both start her career as a nurse practitioner as well as become a part of the Exalta Health team.

As she begins her career, Mel continues to be motivated to find time to volunteer based on the knowledge that God's Spirit has placed within her - that her education, career, time, resources, and energy are not her own.

By becoming a part of the community at Exalta Health, Mel has had the privilege of walking alongside patients in pursuit of physical healing, as well as the opportunity to point them towards recognizing the true Healer.

One patient interaction that particularly touched Mel was working with a woman about the same age as her. The woman did not leave the clinic with any prescriptions, but both Mel and the patient walked away from that encounter encouraged by the same spirit. They were both filled with the hope that life will not always be this hard or this broken, and that Jesus has made that assurance known to us, his children.

## STEWARDSHIP MATTERS: Because Our Wealth Is Not Our Own

The LORD sends poverty and wealth;

he humbles and he exalts.

He raises the poor from the dust

and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

he seats them with princes

and has them inherit a throne of honor.

"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;

on them he has set the world. | Samuel 2:7 & 8

We work hard. And we are taught that our reward for working hard is a comfortable living. That is, after all, the "American Dream;" we achieve monetary success because our smarts and hard work make a difference in the land of opportunity.

However, Hannah's prayer in I Samuel tells us that our wealth is not our own. It belongs to God.

God determines who gets to sit in the place of honor with the wealthy princes of world. And if he has determined that you sit in the seat of honor, you are obligated to help "raise the poor from the dust ..."

The thing is, if you are reading this newsletter you are certainly among the wealthy of the world. And I would suspect that if you are reading this newsletter you are also helping to "lift the needy from the ash heap."

That's why stewardship matters. It is what God expects us to do with His money.

## E-NEWSLETTER



### WHEN GOD SHOWS UP

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If you prefer the electronic version instead of a mailed copy, please email Sarah at [spelman@exaltahealth.org](mailto:spelman@exaltahealth.org).

Help us save costs while saving our trees too!