

Justice, Peace and Health!

BY AMY ROBINSON

NEW
DEPARTMENT!

Working for justice and peace

Welcome to a new department in *Horizons*!

In each issue of *Horizons*, "Working for Justice and Peace" will highlight some aspect of how members of PW address the biblical call for justice and peace.

Every day, a choice faces each one of us—a choice that may affect the global community. We choose whether or not we will follow the biblical charge found in *Isaiah 1:17*, "learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan, plead for the widow." That choice can be costly. It takes an investment of our time, effort and money to truly work to correct oppression within our society. There are no guaranteed outcomes. At times, we wonder if the result is really worth the price we have paid for it.

Many doubts plagued Jane Jones, a member at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Olympia, Washington, as she began a new and exciting project in September of 2002. Jane learned that the social work office where she served as director was closing. Management gave her the choice between a severance package and transferring to a neighboring city. She chose to remain in Olympia and pursue an idea she had two months earlier—establish a free medical clinic in her hometown.

Jane had no experience in the health care industry and no professional contacts in Olympia. She had serious doubts about whether her project was feasible. However, Jane heard a "persistent message from God," telling her to work for people who are marginalized and pursue a more just society. Throughout this process, her church family has affirmed her and the work she has accomplished.



Toni Bailey/The Olympian

Registered nurse Judy Burchett checks the blood pressure of patient Michael Yarber, 22, while Dr. J. Ross Tanner talks with him at the Neighborhood Free Clinic in Lacey.

On March 30, 2004, the Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic (NFMC) opened. Joy and excitement is evident when Jane describes the success of this project that God has given her. Prescription drug companies, the health community and local citizens have generously donated to the project. Through these donations, NFMC opens one night a week and provides health care and prescriptions for up to 25 patients per night. They often have a one-to-one ratio of volunteers to patients. The need exists for NFMC to expand by opening another site in a different section of their city or acquiring a traveling health van.

Jane reflects "Throughout the last five months [since the clinic's steering committee was founded] amazing, miraculous things have happened to bring this ministry to where it is now. The only conclusion I can come to is that it was bound to happen, that it truly is a God thing." She feels that her faith and sense of call have been strengthened and encouraged by this

process she never would have envisioned two years ago.

As the Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic continues to serve new patients, their needs will grow. Beyond their desire to expand, the clinic currently needs funding for the prescriptions they provide. Consider sending a donation to the Neighborhood Free Medical Clinic, P.O. Box 8711, Lacey, WA 98509.

To work for justice and peace where you live, listen for the unmet needs in your community. To research the status of ministries like NFMC in your area or find out how to start one yourself, contact the National Association of Free Clinics, P.O. Box 8148, Asheville, NC 28814; 828/259-5300; info@nafclinics.org; or visit the Web site for the Free Clinic Foundation of America at www.freeclinic.net.

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