

Free Clinics: Altering Destinies

The names and places may change, but often, the stories are very similar. Many times all that is needed to reshape the future of those stories is a helping hand from the angels in our midst. The impact of this assistance ripples through our communities daily.

“Our story begins when we moved to North Carolina from out of state. We moved here and Ted [Catherine’s husband] got a job and everything was going fairly well. Then he lost his job and that is when we basically lost everything. We needed some health care and we were unable to find it.”

Ted began having thoughts of suicide.

According to Catherine, “it was difficult because we had nowhere to go, everything we had was gone. We were going to be out on the street. We had no one to help us with health or any kind of issues like that. Then we found the clinic and we were happy we found the clinic because it gave us some hope.”

Catherine suffers from Diabetes, among a host of other conditions, and Ted battles with Crohn’s disease. To say they were relieved to find a free health clinic would be a monumental understatement. Both husband and wife wince at the thought of where they would be today and what shape they would be in if not for the clinic.

In describing their first encounter with the volunteer doctor at the clinic, Ted remarks, “the doctor came in and sat down and treated us like real people and the next thing you know we had this taken care of and that taken care of and he would find things we didn’t know we even had and he is getting them taken care of. Here at the clinic you are real people, you are not just some number on a chart.”

He continues by describing something that amazed him. “All of our medicines that are coming in from the [pharmaceutical] companies are free. We could not believe this at first...free medicine...that was like a Godsend because when you can’t afford to pay your rent you can’t buy medicine; we were hardly able to buy food at the time.”

Catherine is no longer a patient of the free clinic and is no longer in need of free services. Ted is still being seen at the clinic, but is in much better health today and able to continue his search for employment – hopeful to find a position with benefits. Having removed this burden from his shoulders, he is able to focus more energy into finding employment.

Catherine ends this portion of their story with a heartfelt thank you.

“I want to say thank you to those people who are helping here because without them I probably would not be here right now.”

It would not be a stretch of the imagination to state that the free clinics in North Carolina are altering the destinies of many in our state.



Catherine and Ted Witham, Patients
Roanoke Valley Medical Ministries Clinic, Roanoke Rapids, NC