

Restoring Care to the Broken Health System

Logan Treats the Uninsured and Underinsured Through Partnership with CHIPS

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” — Mother Teresa

To many of us, they are nameless faces. From time to time, we are reminded of their existence and plights when local news reports tally the latest unemployment and insurance figures, making it easy to forget there are suffering people behind the mere numbers that pop up on our television screens.

In society, these men and women are defined by their struggles. But at CHIPS Health & Wellness Center in St. Louis (formerly called Community Health-In-Partnership Services) they are redefined. No longer are they classified by their finances or illnesses. Here, they are patients, individualized and characterized not by their ability to pay but by their ability to attain wellness.

Inside the modest community health center, located off North Grand Boulevard in north St. Louis, resides a significant presence: Judy Bentley, president and CEO of CHIPS. Working as a board-certified women’s health nurse practitioner, Judy and the local pastoral community gathered in the late 1980s to meet with community members and address their unmet health needs. From that meeting, Judy would spend the next 20 years serving the underserved. Equipped with little more than a vision to ensure everyone has access to affordable health care and the charitable hearts of community health and religious leaders—which for two years donated the space CHIPS currently leases from the Archdiocese of St. Louis and provided medical instruments and their time—Judy established CHIPS and quickly earned a reputation as the “Mother Teresa of St. Louis.”



Dr. Robert Andel, chiropractic care coordinator at CHIPS



Logan senior intern Ashley Eavenson adjusts a CHIPS patient.

“CHIPS is the story of many people contributing a little bit, whatever talent and time they have, and the return is tremendous,” said Judy. “The beauty of our program is that it is community based, so there are no limits to what we can do for people who are hurting. We are not about economic gains; we are about health gains, which, in turn, provide our community with economic benefits derived from a healthy and employable workforce. What we have created here is a mini-model for how the larger health care system can work.”

CHIPS operates on corporate and private funding and on the benevolence of private physicians. The services that began with just Judy and her support staff (a volunteer internist from St. John’s Mercy Health Care and a nurse) have evolved today to include dentistry, optometry, dermatology, women’s health, primary care, pediatrics, allergy and asthma care, acupuncture, and more—including chiropractic care, courtesy of Logan College of Chiropractic.

Healing Hands with Open Hearts

Dr. Linda Smith, an August 1982 Logan graduate, introduced the college to CHIPS. The one-time volunteer and current CHIPS consultant witnessed firsthand the center’s need for continuous chiropractic care.

“Following my volunteer post at CHIPS, I kept in touch with Judy who phoned me one day to say, ‘The patients are asking for chiropractic care and I need you to help me bring chiropractic back to the center,’” Dr. Smith said. “As unique as the CHIPS patients are in terms of their backgrounds and needs, in many ways they are just like my patients in West County. They need chiropractic care and appreciate the hands-on approach to health that we uniquely provide.”

After receiving Judy’s call for assistance, Dr. Smith knew exactly whom she needed to reach out to: Logan College.

“I knew Logan could provide the care these patients needed and CHIPS could provide our students with an unparalleled teaching forum,” Dr. Smith said. “Students need to treat patients with diverse health needs and backgrounds, provide community service and interact with different health care disciplines. At CHIPS, they will share patient files with MDs and other specialists, shadow non-chiropractic physicians and interact with students from local medical schools, like Washington University.”

Dr. Ralph Barrale, Logan’s vice president of chiropractic affairs, answered Dr. Smith’s call and accompanied her for a tour of the CHIPS facility. “From the moment I walked through the door, I wanted to roll up my sleeves and get to work,” said Dr. Barrale. “The teamwork, family spirit and gratitude housed inside these four walls are almost palpable.”

For Dr. Barrale and the Logan administration, the decision was simple:

