



LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN
HEALTH CENTER

Loving God. Loving People.



2022 SPRING NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends of LCHC,

I am so blessed and humbled to serve as the new CEO of Lawndale Christian Health Center. To serve in a community where my family has deep roots is a dream come true. The Brooks family came to North Lawndale in the early 1950s and have lived here since. As a child, I witnessed firsthand the start and expansion of Lawndale Christian Health.


I officially began my role as CEO on January 3rd at the peak of the Omicron wave. We had about 25 percent of our workforce out due to COVID. Many of us were in disbelief that we were back to closed buildings and telehealth visits. But faithfully, day by day, the staff who were able showed up and cared for our patients and community, following our mission 'to show and share the love of Jesus by promoting wellness and providing quality, affordable healthcare for Lawndale and the neighboring communities.'

This calling to lead LCHC is a huge responsibility. It begins with a focus on caring for our staff and patients, but our approach to health must incorporate more than just medical care. I also want us to go deeper in our community by partnering with other organizations in addressing health disparities and social determinants of health. This is how we grow in our love for God and our love for the people of Lawndale.

When I started this job, my wife, Jackie, gave me a congratulatory gift of a small statue. The statue is of a man dunking a basketball while standing on a person's shoulders — who is standing on the shoulders of yet another person. I know that I stand on the shoulders of many who have come before me, as well as the people who work alongside me now and the many people who support LCHC with their prayers and donations. We are better together.



James Brooks
CEO, Lawndale Christian Health Center



"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble." (Ecc 4:9-12)

Linking Neighbors | Green Tomato Cafe

On the West Side of Chicago, historic Ogden Avenue separates North Lawndale from Little Village, the two neighborhoods that most of LCHC's patients call home. As people make their way by car, bus, bicycle, or foot along this corridor of Ogden Avenue, they see LCHC's main campus of buildings lining either side of the street. The area is a nexus where two communities become one. It's the perfect setting for a gathering place like the Green Tomato Café (GTC).

In 2013 when the Green Tomato Café opened, Lincoln Chandler was starting his own business as a consultant and mathematician. He needed a place to work whenever he wasn't meeting with clients. "I'm from Lawndale," Lincoln said, "but I never really knew all that was going on here because I'd be at work all day. When I found out about the Green Tomato, I was so excited because it was in the neighborhood. It quickly became my quasi-office."

The café was opened with a vision to be a safe, welcoming meeting place for the community. Located inside LCHC's Health & Fitness Center, the Green Tomato shares the building with LCHC's pediatric clinic, women's health clinic, Fitness Center, and Conference Center. Lincoln remembers a Starbucks that used to be on Roosevelt Road. "It was primarily frequented by people who worked in the community but didn't live here, which is not sustainable," he said. "The Health & Fitness Center is serving people in the community every day through its integrated functions, so the café becomes a natural place for neighbors to congregate and get to know each other."



In his years of working from the Green Tomato, Lincoln has become something of an advocate for both the GTC and other community assets on the West Side. When possible, he has clients and friends meet him at the café to see all the area has to offer. As awareness of these services grows, the GTC continues to be a hub for connection, sharing of ideas, and of course delicious food made locally with love.

Family Medicine Residency |

A New Chapter at LCHC

LCHC is ecstatic to welcome its very first cohort of talented Family Medicine Residents to its Teaching Health Center (THC) program! Being one of just a few THC programs in the State of Illinois, the new Lawndale Family Medicine Residency (FMR) is designed to care for the marginalized with the love of Jesus and equip family physicians with a skillset to pursue health equity for all communities.

The three-year Family Medicine Residency will begin training these six residents in July 2022 to provide preventive care, chronic disease management, substance use disorder treatment, health care for people experiencing homelessness, and more. Within the faith and mission-focused program, residents will also be supported in their spiritual wellbeing as they foster their passion for sharing the love of Jesus through healthcare.

The hope for the Lawndale FMR is that the Lawndale community — and other designated medically underserved communities — will gain even more physicians who are well equipped to care for patients in this context. The program also hopes to support diversity in the medical field, where currently just 7% of medical residents are African American and 6% are Hispanic or Latino/a. As a teaching health center, LCHC continues to develop clear training pathways within the organization for all roles, so that each staff member can envision a long career path caring for patients in Lawndale.

MEET THE RESIDENTS

Courtney Hatcher, MD



Nick Eckert, MD



"During residency, I envision a trusting, respectful relationship with my colleagues at LCHC. This connection will allow me to grow, learn, and creatively energize the community through faith-based medical care for the underserved. I am eager to embark on the next chapter of my life and hope to positively impact my newly adopted Lawndale family."

"It is an absolute honor to have the opportunity to learn from and alongside faculty, staff, and co-residents who have given their lives to this mission. I look forward to my patients being my neighbors and my teachers. To be a small part of their stories will be a true privilege."

Edward Akinyemi, MD



"I am so excited to be a part of the Inaugural Class of the Lawndale FMR! My hope is that I am able to meet people where they are at with the love of Jesus. I truly believe that Jesus is the hope for humanity and I am glad that through this residency, I can demonstrate His compassion with every person who walks through the doors of Lawndale Christian Health Center."

MEET THE RESIDENTS

Oluwaseun Durojaye, MD



"Simply stated, my passion is to give back to the communities that have given me so much. Without my community, I would have never been able to get where I am today. I am the little black girl who became her wildest dreams. I am excited to learn how to serve my community without hiding my passion for God."

Joyce Idehen, MD



"I'm so ecstatic to have matched at LCHC!

My passions within medicine include preventative care, mental health, women's health, and research on racial disparities. I get to fulfill my dreams here by caring for the underserved, providing primary care, researching, and understanding the complexities of racial health disparities, and learning what it means to express my faith in the field of medicine. I get to empower my patients and focus on the marginalized people the medical system often neglects."

Daniel Tzou, MD



"I am so excited to be a member of the inaugural Lawndale FMR class. My greatest passion in medicine is to give selflessly to serve my patients, to join them in their stories and help meet them where they are. I hope to continue growing and cultivating my passion for pediatric care, psychiatry, and behavioral health. I see no better place to do so than in the loving Lawndale community."

Making Space for Better Care | Renovating Farragut

When LCHC opened its third clinic location inside Farragut Career Academy in 2002, it was like the original vision for the health center had come full circle. The high school students from Lawndale Community Church who helped found LCHC were attending Farragut in the 1980s when they set out to meet the needs of their community – beginning with the need for accessible healthcare.

The school-based health center has been vital to bringing quality care to both students and community members in Little Village, but the physical space has struggled to accommodate its 4,000 patients and staff team. In response to this need, LCHC began renovations in 2021. Patricia Botello, Lab Assistant at Farragut, shares how the lab had been operating in cramped quarters. "There wasn't much to give the patient privacy while they were getting a shot or having blood drawn. The lab space was shared with Medical Assistants, and the vitals stations had to be in the hallway in front of the lab. We made do with what we had."

"Before the renovations, Farragut didn't have the same feel as the other LCHC buildings. It felt outdated and there were very few windows to let in natural light," Patricia shared. Now, the waiting room has tripled in size and gained bright, natural light from new windows. The lab increased by 140 square feet and has space for work stations, privacy for patients, and a better layout for the lab workflow. All throughout the clinic, improvements have been made to lighting, staff areas, offices, storage space, and modernizing the interior.

Before construction, if a Farragut student had an appointment, they would be visible to anyone in the waiting room while they registered for their appointment. Maritza Moreno, Site Manager for the Farragut clinic, shared how that affected the students: "They might see someone who knows them that could tell their family that they were there. In some cases, that prevented students from reaching out to be evaluated for certain needs." Now, there is a separate waiting area for students only. "This respects their privacy and gives them the ability to trust that they could come here," Maritza says.

As with every building LCHC has renovated, the focus on beauty and light aims to reflect the value and dignity of each person who enters. As Patricia puts it, "The welcoming space shows our patients that they deserve the best."



Above: New lab space



Below: Old waiting room - student entrance in the back to the left



Above: New waiting room

This project was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$100,000 with 78% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).