



LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN
HEALTH CENTER
Loving God. Loving People.

Summer 2017

Welcome to the Summer 2017 Lawndale Newsletter

Your support of Lawndale Christian Health Center makes the following stories possible. Thank you.



Supporting a Stronger Lawndale Community

Growing up on the West Side of Chicago, James Diggs cultivated a strong dedication to his community. After graduating from Grambling State University in Louisiana, Diggs moved back to North Lawndale. “It was definitely a conscious choice for me to come back and live on the West Side. Even though I had a mom that kept me out of as much trouble as she could, I saw a lot of bad things happen in my neighborhood,” he shares. “But there are a lot of good people and organizations like LCHC here that are working to make it better and that makes it worth staying to see the neighborhood change.”

James and his fiancée had considered moving away from the West Side after the birth of their daughter, but decided to stay. “Lawndale is our community and we want to teach our daughter the value of working to build a community. I wanted to work with young men of color who are facing the same challenges I did. It is hard work, but it’s worth it to see a young man move his life in a positive direction.” James is “seriously health conscious,” and relies on a daily morning workout at Lawndale Christian Fitness Center to keep him motivated and energized for his work as a youth mentor. “Every morning I’m at the Fitness Center. It’s where I train for races and kick it with the fellas that have been there with me on my health journey,” he shares.

One of the first races James completed was the Lawndale 5K. “A few years back my brother called me up about an hour before the race to tell me he had signed me up,” he recalls. “I had been out late but I went anyway. Now I have been running in the Lawndale 5K ever since!” LCHC’s Fitness Center and 5K are building a stronger community for James and many others. The Lawndale 5K has grown into a whole family affair as a healthy way for them to connect with each other and their neighborhood. “Everyone gets involved - my siblings, mom, fiancée, daughter and even some cousins and my uncle who is a marathon runner. We’re all involved in the Lawndale 5K to support our community.”



Living a Mission of Service

Dr. Michael Sethi's compassion and heart for helping others is a part of his life's mission of service. Although he's been a physician at LCHC for just one year, his connection with Lawndale began halfway around the world many years before. Dr. Sethi spent several years serving internationally, including teaching English at an orphanage in India and working on a tuberculosis project in central Afghanistan. While in Afghanistan, Dr. Sethi met Dr. Jerry Umanos and Rob Werner, two former LCHC employees. After sharing his interest in medicine, they encouraged him to pursue this calling and check out Lawndale Christian Health Center.

When his service in Afghanistan was ending, he took their advice and began exploring a career in medicine. He connected with Dr. Wayne Detmer, LCHC's Chief Clinical Officer of Operations, and began a student internship with him. With the support of Dr. Detmer and the inspiration from Dr. Umanos, he began medical school and studied to become a pediatrician. Now a full-time LCHC pediatrician, Dr. Sethi's experiences abroad have helped him to understand that a child's health is deeply connected to the well-being of their family and community. "There's a lot of joy in caring for kids and working in the community. LCHC mission of service and community make it a great place to work. There's strong sense of family here. I felt that even in my internship – it's one of the reasons I came back after graduation."

Michael and his wife Bethany have three young daughters, which helps him connect with other parents as he provides care for their children. "I'm inspired each day by the parents of my patients – especially the young patients with complex health care needs. The knowledge parents possess to advocate for their children inspires and motivates me. They are their children's first caregivers and sacrifice so much to meet the needs of their children." In addition to father and doctor, Dr. Sethi is an avid musician and enjoys cooking at home with his family and taking his children on food tasting adventures inspired by his international experience.



Pathway to Health and Fellowship for Seniors

When it comes to healthcare options for seniors, Lawndale Christian Health Center knows there is a need for more robust care for the growing population of older community residents throughout the West Side. For seniors, maintaining health and accessing care can be complicated and challenging. For over 30 years, LCHC has provided primary care to seniors but has recently expanded to providing wrap-around and support services to help keep seniors healthy as they age. From free socialization programs to highly-integrated primary care and case management, LCHC works hard to ensure that every senior has a pathway towards long-term health.

Each Thursday and Friday, Richard Juarez Sr., LCHC's Director of Long-Term Services and Supports, leads a special senior program with activities, food, and education sessions. "The program is set up to be holistic to meet not just the social needs, but to encourage our seniors' overall well-being," says Richard. Local seniors love it. "I finally came last week and just fell in love with the program. I really like that it's right in my area. This is my place now," says one participant.

LCHC continues to expand opportunities for seniors to stay engaged with their neighbors and live a healthy lifestyle. In addition to socialization, clinical staff are working to improve personalized care plans that identify each senior's health needs. LCHC provides transportation to seniors facing accessibility challenges and healthy food 'prescriptions' through our new VeggieRx program. Through the Fitness Center, LCHC offers daily exercises like Silver Sneakers group fitness classes that are designed specifically for those aged 60 and older. And, of course, we continue to offer seniors the same high quality primary medical care they've come to know and trust. Soon, LCHC will begin construction on a brand-new Adult Community Center on Ogden Avenue that can provide full-time care for up to 150 seniors and individuals with disabilities. Look for this Community Center to open in the Fall of 2018!

