



# A HEART FOR MISSIONS

When we think about the mission field, most of us think of faraway places, lands with different cultures and languages, eager for God's word. The truth is that there are many ways and many places to serve the Lord in the mission field. Missionary Ricky McClenton found his calling and his mission field right here at home in East Texas.

Feeding the homeless in Tyler and Dallas, visiting patients in nursing homes, and writing a monthly "encouragement" newsletter that goes to 500 recipients are just a few of the ways Missionary Ricky McClenton serves the Lord. With non-stop motion, enthusiasm, and deep love, Missionary Ricky ministers whenever and wherever he can, his infectious laugh and kindness full of the joy he finds in his faith and in his call to serve.

To make a living and to finance his many ministries, Missionary Ricky works as a caretaker, serving the same Tyler family for more than 30 years. He is devoted to them, and they to him for the loving care and attention he has faithfully provided for so long.

Missionary Ricky has been so busy caring for others through the years that he neglected his own health. "I was busy, busy and I just wasn't paying attention. I ate too much, and I was overweight and I just didn't feel good," he says. That's when a fellow church member told Ricky about Bethesda Health Clinic.

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“What a GODSEND they have been!” Ricky asserts. Diagnosed with diabetes, Ricky decided it was time to get a hold of himself. “I went to Weight Watchers, and I’ve lost 85 POUNDS! 85 pounds! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?” he exclaims. “My diabetes is under control now, and I FEEL LIKE A NEW PERSON!”

Missionary Ricky gives all the credit for his turnaround to the Lord – and to Bethesda Health Clinic. “I LOVE THIS PLACE” he says, practically shouting. “EVERYONE here is so NICE! There is SCRIPTURE on the walls, which encourages me every time I come. The staff and volunteers are so WELCOMING. I can’t thank them ENOUGH!”

Thanks to the help he received at Bethesda, Missionary Ricky is still in the mission field going full force, with perhaps even more contagious enthusiasm than ever before. “God has BLESSED me more than I EVER thought POSSIBLE,” he exclaims. “I give thanks to HIM and to BETHESDA HEALTH CLINIC!”

When **Ricky McClenton** was asked to be one of the “celebrity cake decorators” at Bethesda’s Birthday Bash fundraising event, he was thrilled because he had been searching for a way to give back to Bethesda. He was inspired by the different colors of M&Ms, reminding him of loving God’s people, no matter their color, size or shape.

And “GIVE BACK” Ricky did! His cake sold for \$7550 in spirited bidding at the auction, with donors competing for the privilege of owning Ricky’s cake, made in tribute to all God’s people, and made from the heart.



## Looking for the perfect gift for the person who has everything this Christmas season?

We have an exciting and meaningful opportunity for you to support Bethesda Health Clinic and bless your colleagues, friends and family at the same time!

These Christmas-themed cards feature a beautiful rendition of our “Touch of Grace” angel on the cover. Each card also has a classic message of Christmas joy inside and includes an acknowledgement, “a gift was given in your honor by \_\_\_\_\_,” with a space for your name(s) to be written.

This is a great way to support Bethesda, to help us spread the word about the clinic, and to make it easier for you to send cards this year. The suggested minimum donation per card is \$10.00 and delivery to your home or office is available upon request.

**For information contact Diane Thomason at [dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org](mailto:dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org) or 903.596.8353 Ext. 106.**

# INSPIRING OTHERS

Every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. you can find Lela Eaves in the same place at the same task, serving as an admissions team volunteer at Bethesda Health Clinic. She has been in that same place and at that same task since 2003!

Lela verifies applicant forms, makes eligibility decisions and assigns co-pays. While the mechanics of the admissions process are important to the job, it's Lela's calling and compassion for people that drive her. "Part of being a Christian is to help other people," she says. "It's what God wants us to do."

"When Beverly Castleberry recruited me to volunteer at Bethesda, I thought I wouldn't like it," says Lela, "and those early days were hard. I remember us all being in one room, separated only by flimsy partitions. But I loved being a part of Bethesda from the first day I volunteered, and here I am, fifteen years later."

Bethesda staff and volunteers call Lela "remarkable," not just for the length of her service, or her compassion and commitment, but for what she has overcome in order to



volunteer. Lela has been a double amputee for more than a year. She can no longer drive and rides a special bus to the clinic each week. "You know, the Lord has given me this work to do," Lela asserts. "I don't need to be lying in bed. I need to be doing His work."

The words "blessed" and "blessing" come up often when Lela speaks and when people speak about Lela. "Lela has a happy heart," says Diane Thomason, Bethesda's Director of Development. "Watching her at work, always smiling and giving to others is an inspiration and blessing to all of us."

*"Bethesda is a blessing to me in so many ways," says Lela. "I am blessed to be able to serve. I am blessed by those I am able to help and by all the caring people at Bethesda."*



"Bethesda is also a blessing to our community," adds Lela, "one of the greatest blessings Tyler has. I can't think of another place that does as much for people as Bethesda does."

Thank you, Lela, for fifteen years of blessings through your service to Bethesda Health Clinic.

Standing L to R: Dexter Crosby, Denny Alden, Diane Cooper  
Seated: Lela Eaves

2018  
BETHESDA BIRTHDAY

# LA BASH

CIRQUE DU ANNIVERSAIRE



Pictured left to right: Rickey McClenton, Chris Leahy, Mike Cobb, Mike Harper, Sherri Soules, Ken Kaminski, M.D., Liz Ballard, Cathy Krafve, Aimee Massey, D.D.S.

## NOUVEAU CIRQUE



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Orbit Land Services

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Chip and Kimberly Swinney  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler

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UT Tyler  
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### SPECIAL THANKS

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Barbara Bass and Bryan Houston

### The Ultimate Party Favors:

Susan Robinson Fine Jewelry  
and The Blind Place

### Event Photography:

Donna Cummings Photography  
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# TEAM BETHESDA

*Cathy and David Krafve inspire others to give to Bethesda*

Wielding some major commitment, creativity and energy, Cathy and David Krafve found a unique way to inspire others to give to Bethesda. Cathy and David understand the need for both operating funds (money to be used for the Clinic's operations today) and endowment funds (money to be used to insure a stable future for the ministry). They saw the Bethesda Birthday Bash as a way to do both. Cathy agreed to be a celebrity cake decorator, with proceeds for her cake going to the Clinic's operations. David agreed to match the amount her cake raised, up to \$11,000, with a contribution to Bethesda's endowment fund.

Prior to "The Bash," Cathy asked her fellow members of the Bethesda Alliance to join her in creating "Team Bethesda" by making donations toward an opening bid on the birthday cake she was decorating.

At "The Bash," donation cards on each table gave guests the opportunity to also contribute any amount they wished to Cathy's "Team

Bethesda" efforts. During the evening's festivities, the cake went up for auction with fierce bidding, spurred on by the announcement of David's commitment to match the fundraising efforts. At the end of the night, Cathy and her "Team Bethesda" raised an astounding \$20,000 for the Clinic's operations, and David made his generous gift of \$11,000 to the Bethesda endowment.

With commitment, creativity and energy, Cathy and David Krafve encouraged other givers, gave generously themselves, and highlighted both the current needs of the clinic and the importance of thinking about the future. "We are so committed to Bethesda, both now and in the future," said Cathy Krafve. "We are so happy that others joined us on "Team Bethesda," and we hope to encourage others to give. You don't have to be wealthy to give to Bethesda. You just have to love its mission the way we do."

Way to go, "Team Bethesda" and your captains, Cathy and David Krafve!

Bethesda Health Clinic's  
**Jewel** SOCIETY

When you make a gift to Bethesda's endowment fund or plan a legacy gift to Bethesda Health Clinic, we welcome you to membership in the Jewel Society, a special group of people whose commitment to the mission of the clinic has led them to continue their support of Bethesda beyond their lifetime.

Named for Jewel Price, a generous supporter of Bethesda in her lifetime, and the donor of the first planned gift to Bethesda, the Jewel Society celebrates those who have made a gift to invest in Bethesda's future.

Please consider joining Cathy and David Krafve as members of the Jewel Society. Gifts of any size are welcomed and appreciated, and will help to insure the future of this beloved ministry.

For information contact Diane Thomason at [dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org](mailto:dthomason@bethesdaclinic.org) or call 903.526.8353 Ext. 106.



## A NOTE FROM JOHN

Reflections on Bethesda's first fifteen years...  
And some thoughts about the future...

As Bethesda concludes its fifteenth year of ministry, we asked Dr. John English to share his thoughts about the ways this ministry has touched him personally and share some special memories of these years.

### How has your ministry at the clinic changed you personally?

I have learned to pray expectantly and wait on God for the answers. This work has definitely tested my faith in a mighty way. It has also allowed me to interact with some wonderful people who serve at the clinic, whose example of "faith in action" I wouldn't have the chance to meet otherwise. They are my heroes.

### What are you most grateful for?

I am most grateful for the example of others. The dedicated board members from the early days just wouldn't give up and persevered to lay a strong foundation for the clinic to build on. There are dedicated volunteers who have served this ministry, quietly and mostly anonymously, for so many years. The medical community has been incredibly supportive, as has the faith community. Our staff is phenomenal! I am grateful to the patients who trust us daily with their medical care and who work so hard to improve their health. They are our reason, our hope and our lodestar.

### What have you been most surprised by?

The joy! Our patients have so many challenges, but when they share their determination, their inner joy and their connection with God, it is a gift and a surprise!

The adaptability! Everyone who works at the clinic or who volunteers has faced challenges and changes and has had to go to "Plan B" more than once, sometimes to "Plan C", or to "Plan T"! They've done it with grace and enthusiasm and dedication.

The helping spirit of our nonprofit community! The nonprofits in our community share a great working relationship, and many times it has taken all of us to help a Bethesda patient overcome their obstacles.

### Is there one special patient... or one special moment... that stands out in your memory?

I will never forget the opening day of the clinic, even though I wasn't there. Grace was volunteering as the medical director, and I was home with our kids. After spending two- plus years planning the clinic, I couldn't wait to get the report from Grace on how the day was going. I had only one question for her. "Do you see the handprints of God?" And she said, "Yes!" I still see those handprints. Every day.

I remember the first Dia de las Madres when there were hundreds of women lined up for services an hour before we opened the door!

I remember volunteer Dr. John Walker coming out of a patient's room and stating that the patient needed surgery. "We have to help this guy," he said. That's the same sentiment we still hear every day. At Bethesda, we have to help. With God's help, it's what we do.

# A HISTORY LESSON... WORTH THE RISK



John Minton and Tracy Crawford

In the early days of Bethesda Health Clinic there were many obstacles to overcome: Makeshift exam rooms. Sporadic volunteer schedules. Not enough money for supplies or meds.

A big obstacle was how to overcome the concern of some physicians that they could not “afford” to volunteer. They had the heart to serve, but many were retired and no longer had malpractice insurance. What would happen if a patient sued them or the clinic? Were their “good hearts” willing to take that risk?

Jerry Caddy was a member of the Clinic’s Advisory Board when the question of malpractice insurance came up. He contacted John Minton and Tracy Crawford, both members of First Baptist Church, and senior partners of two of the most respected law firms in the community.

In pondering the question, both Mr. Minton and Mr. Crawford saw in Bethesda a charitable organization, working hard to take care of people. Bethesda had few assets of its own and the physicians were willing to work as volunteers. The chance of a patient suing was unlikely; yet it was worrisome.

Mr. Minton and Mr. Crawford approached their respective law firms and both agreed that they would donate legal services in the unlikely event that the physicians were sued. Though both now downplay their contribution. (“We weren’t really doing anything,” they both say), at the time their affirmation had significant meaning. Two of the biggest law firms in Tyler believed in Bethesda Health Clinic and were willing to stand behind it. The memorandum of understanding they signed fifteen years ago still stands.

“This was a way we could contribute,” says Mr. Minton, “and we all believed in the mission of Bethesda. We still do.” “What I liked then and I like now is that the patients at Bethesda pay something for their care. That gives them ownership and they appreciate that.”

Throughout Bethesda’s history, the right people have stepped up at the right time, time and time again, offering just what was needed to move the Clinic forward. John Minton and Tracy Crawford were two of those people, doing their part to help this work, God’s work, serve His people.

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## CHECK PRESENTATION FROM THE BETHESDA ALLIANCE FOR FUNDS RAISED AT THE BETHESDA BIRTHDAY BASH.

Special thanks to lead sponsor John Soules Foods, Bash Chair Gina Butler, Alliance President Virginia Finklea, and members of the Bethesda Alliance!



Back row, left to right:  
John Soules Sr., Shane Butler, Gina Butler, Ann Hossley, Floy Haddox, Debbie Brattlof, Diane Thomason

Front row, left to right:  
Judy Soules, Virginia Finklea, Wanda Reding, Laura Houston