

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair and eyes, wearing a brown tank top and pearl earrings. She is smiling warmly at the camera while holding a small green plant with a white flower bud in her hands. The background is softly blurred, showing a light blue fabric. A green triangle is visible in the top right corner of the image.

A Community of Caring

Community Benefit Report 2009





At NCH, we consider it a privilege to provide care and services to all who live and work in the communities we serve.

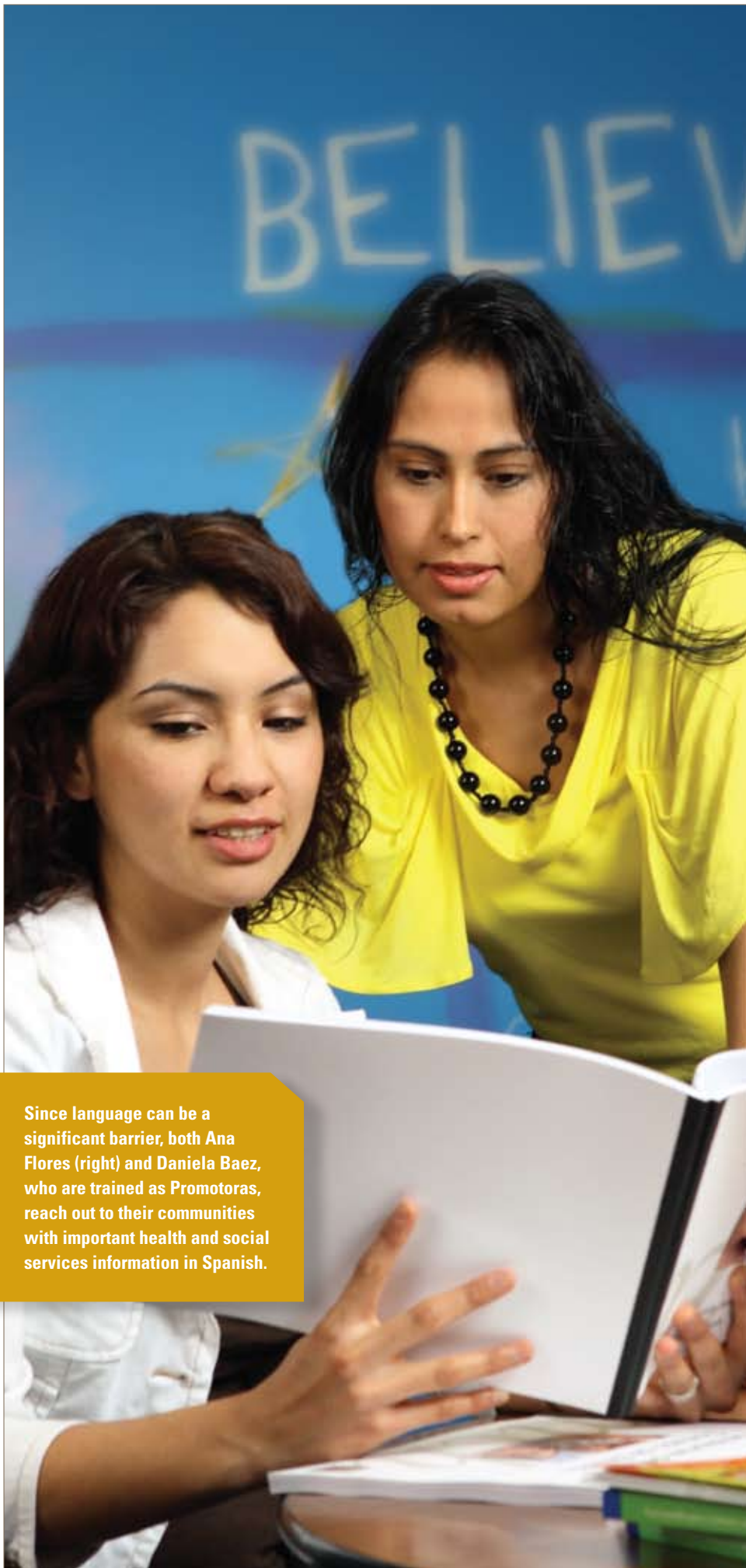
Improving the Health and Well-Being of the Community

A Community of Caring

Community can take many different forms. Our community is made up of a variety of cultures, people with diverse economic backgrounds and resources, and those with special needs. At Northwest Community Hospital (NCH), we consider it a privilege to provide care and services to all who live and work in the communities we serve. Our caring extends to women and families, the disabled, people affected by difficult economic times, and those seeking information and services to better their knowledge of wellness and preventive care.

From listening comes understanding. Careful listening has helped us to hear what our community wants, and to design and implement programs that effectively address a broad range of needs. NCH seeks input not only on what services to offer, but also how we can deliver those services in a way that best fits the unique characteristics of each community.

In the following pages, we highlight our commitment to the unique and individual voices of our community.



Since language can be a significant barrier, both Ana Flores (right) and Daniela Baez, who are trained as Promotoras, reach out to their communities with important health and social services information in Spanish.

Promotoras de Salud

Sharing Their Knowledge

THREE

SMoms worry, and Ana Flores was a worried mom. “I was concerned about my older son’s health, especially his diet, because diabetes runs in my husband’s family.”

She had plenty of reason to be worried: studies show that one in three Latino children will develop diabetes by the time they reach adulthood.

Ana went looking for answers. “That’s when I found out about Promotoras de Salud at the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC).” Promotoras de Salud – Health Promoters – is a nationally recognized model to mobilize community members for prevention, health promotion, and community building. Northwest Community Hospital, in cooperation with the POC and the American Diabetes Association, launched the program in 2007, focusing on diabetes. Since that time, the program has been expanded to include well-child topics and resources for victims of domestic violence.

Language can be a significant barrier in gaining access to health information and social services, but the Promotoras program trains women who are native speakers to deliver important information in Spanish, so those who need it can learn in a comfortable cultural atmosphere. “Promotoras reach out to the community with the same information I sought,” says Ana. “As a Promotora, I’ve brought classes to churches, schools and other community groups.”

New moms are another concern of Ana’s. “Our focus on well-child topics helps mothers to have a better relationship with their pediatrician – helping them to have the confidence to ask the right questions.” Karen Baker, director of Community Services at NCH, explains, “Promotoras can give these young moms, who often lack traditional family support, the kind of advice and support they need to take good care of their young children.”

Daniela Baez became a Promotora when the program expanded to the new Mount Prospect Community Connections Center. “So many people came to us for help when I volunteered at the police department. This program gave me a way to offer real assistance,” says Daniela.

Teen pregnancy prevention and strategies to combat domestic violence are also a major focus of the Promotoras program. Says Daniela, “So many women have these issues in their families and they don’t know what to do. We can help them by listening, talking, and offering resources.”

Both women say the Promotoras program has been a growth experience for them. Daniela is studying for her bachelor’s degree in Nursing. Ana says, “I’m thinking about becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant or a dietitian. I’m interested in a healthcare career!”

Promotoras gain confidence and leadership skills. That increase in self-confidence, along with their increased access to information and support, goes a long way to alleviating worry in the community.

Community-Based Health Clinics

reating a Medical Home

Many people show up in emergency rooms with illnesses that could have been prevented or minimized, if only they had had proper primary care. Northwest Community Hospital (NCH) is taking steps to change this through its support of community-based health clinics.

In collaboration with the ACCESS Community Health Network and the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, two clinics, ACCESS @ Northwest

Community in Arlington Heights and the Vista Health Center at the Palatine Opportunity Center (POC), provide care to the uninsured and underinsured. The clinics provide care in such specialties as pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, and pediatric ophthalmology, as well as preventive care and follow up after treatment in the emergency room.

"People need a medical home," says Randy Ball, regional manager of ACCESS Community Health Network, an organization that operates federally qualified health centers.

Randy feels having a medical home has important treatment advantages. "When the patient develops a relationship with a doctor, the doctor can be more effective at regularly managing care and monitoring medications."

"At one time," says Karen Baker, director of Community Services at NCH, "clinics served the poorest of the poor. But now we're seeing many, many people who have lost their insurance due to unemployment, or whose current employers do not provide health insurance."

ACCESS @ Northwest Community, located across the street from NCH, was operating at full working capacity within its first six to eight months. In fiscal year (FY) 2009, the health center provided more than 14,000 patient visits, with that number expected to grow to 15,000 visits in FY 2010, and 18,000 in FY 2011. Obstetrics/gynecology and pediatric services have proved particularly popular, and a space expansion is in the works.

Although the number of people served is impressive, Randy comments that success is still measured in individuals. "One of our nurses recently identified developmental delays in an 8-month-old child. We were able to refer to the school system's early childhood developmental program to remediate these issues as early as possible."

The clinics are operated and staffed by each organization; however, NCH lends support by providing medical office space, an annual monetary contribution, and up to \$50,000 in supplies. Recently, ACCESS added a pediatric nurse practitioner and hopes to add a family nurse practitioner in 2011.

Karen points out, "So many people are in dire straits. Community clinics are the last line of defense and the waiting rooms are always full."



Quimbo Ching, MD, a pediatrician at ACCESS @ Northwest Community, listens to a young patient's breathing. The health center was at full working capacity within its first six to eight months of operation – with pediatrics and obstetrics/gynecology the most popular services provided.

Health & Wellness Initiative at Little City

B

ringing Care to Special Patients

SEVEN

"I didn't expect to fall in love, but I did," says Kim Hogan, RN, APN, at the Center for Health and Wellness located at the Little City Foundation (LCF)

in Palatine, a service provider and residential facility for intellectually and developmentally disabled children and adults. With the unique vision of LCF and NCH, the Center, one of the first of its kind in Illinois, opened in May 2010. Kim is spearheading the joint effort to bring a wide range of medical services to the clients. "Our patients are vulnerable and trusting, and really need on-site services," she says.

For LCF's clients, seeking medical treatment can be greatly upsetting, making this population challenging to treat in a traditional medical setting. "Change of location can be upsetting for these patients," says Kim. "Some are non-verbal, and finding out what is wrong can be challenging. They take much more time to treat and they can't advocate for themselves." Kim notes that they may find it difficult to understand what is happening to them, and may be anxious about pain. Having a treatment location they can walk to and see every day helps to calm fears.


As a nurse practitioner, Kim offers LCF clients services that previously required an emergency room or off-site doctor's office visit. "I can provide immediate care for most issues so

travel isn't necessary." In addition, Kim and LCF's five nurses also provide preventive and primary care, including chronic disease management. Nurse practitioners are required by law to have a collaborative physician, and Kim is able to consult with John McGillen, MD, director of Internal Medicine at NCH, as well as with two additional NCH physicians who make weekly visits to the campus.

Additionally, NCH supports an on-site dental clinic, an extension of its Mobile Dental Clinic program, at the Center. The dental clinic's director, Dr. Ahmed El-Maghraby, provided care to special needs patients during his hospital-based dental residency. "I grew up with a lot of poverty in the Middle East. Because of that, I find working with very needy people to be more rewarding, and I feel I can connect with them." Dr. El-Maghraby, dental program manager Nancy Colovos, and a part-time dental hygienist have begun a special desensitization program to help reduce patient stress and ensure successful treatment.

While the Center addresses immediate healthcare needs, being on-site also allows NCH and LCF to plan for preventive care, health and wellness outreach, and the management of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

Most importantly, these special patients are cared for by deeply committed clinicians. Kim says, "People here may not have family with them at a healthcare visit. But now, we're here, we're their advocate, and we're family."



At the Center for Health and Wellness, Little City clients can receive immediate care for medical issues, along with dental care, in a familiar and caring environment on their campus. Pictured left: Kim Hogan, RN, APN, on-site nurse practitioner with a Little City client.

The Cost of Caring

Our commitment to our community is far-reaching and generous. We have sought the opportunity to support a wide variety of initiatives.

Charity Care

Given the fragile nature of employment in the current economy, many patients have experienced a diminished ability to pay for the healthcare they need. Northwest Community has an established financial assistance program that calculates benefits based on both the previous year and current year's income to give the most generous assistance possible.

In fiscal year 2009, NCH served the community by providing services worth \$6.6 million in unreimbursed charity care.

Language Assistance

We provide interpretation services in 47 languages, in-person, by phone interpretation, and in sign language. In 2009, language assistance services cost \$335,000.

Government-sponsored Healthcare

With an aging population come more chronic conditions and multiple health problems. Reimbursement by Medicare and Medicaid programs is far lower than the actual cost of care. Northwest Community has therefore absorbed the excess cost of caring for these patients in the amount of \$73.6 million: unreimbursed Medicare costs of \$52 million, and Medicaid costs of \$21.6 million.

Donations

We strongly support our community and the organizations that serve it. In 2009, NCH made donations of \$289,000 to our community partners. We helped more than 50 agencies, with individual donations ranging from \$250 to \$35,000.

Volunteer Services

We could not effectively pursue our mission without the sustaining service of the over 850 individuals who contributed 117,000 hours of volunteer time in 2009. Although their service is priceless, at the Hospital's minimum wage, their efforts contributed a worth of \$1.1 million to our community.

Education

• NCH assists in educational initiatives for a variety of health-care providers. In support of the Northwest Community Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System, we offer training for emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency communications registered nurses, and trauma nurses. In addition, we provided education, distribution and administration oversight for the H1N1 vaccine program, and assisted community agencies in conducting mass casualty drills to improve emergency response preparedness. For all 2009 EMS Resource Hospital activities, the net cost was \$268,000.

• Our High School Shadowing Program helped eight students from District 214 explore jobs in healthcare and refine their career goals. Students had the opportunity for one-on-one shadowing experiences in 24 different departments of NCH. The program cost \$7,300.

• Northwest Community invested \$9,000 (half the cost) in two classes from Harper College to improve the English skills of Northwest Community employees. Staff spent 965 hours in training.

• Our commitment to professional education is demonstrated by our nursing staff that volunteers its time and expertise to serve as clinical preceptors for more than 300 nursing students rotating through NCH during the year. We also provide clinical rotations for Lab, Pharmacy and Radiological Technology students, as well as internships for pre-college students exploring healthcare fields. Costs of these programs were \$295,000 in 2009.

Research

Northwest Community is committed to bringing patients the best options in prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Our Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews all proposed research protocols and provides oversight for clinical trials. Direct support for the IRB was \$28,000.

Subsidized Health Services & Other Community Benefits

NCH supports many community-based health and dental clinics, and services for special needs populations. In fiscal year 2009, the cost of programs and services provided was \$1.3 million. Some of these services include: ACCESS @ Northwest Community, a federally qualified health center (\$170,000); the Vista Health Center of Cook County (\$140,000); and the Mobile Dental Clinic (\$160,000), including the partnership with Little City Foundation. For more than 10 years, NCH operated a free clinic at the Police Neighborhood Resource Center in Rolling Meadows. However, with the opening of ACCESS, patients were transitioned to the new clinic. Total cost for the remaining months of operation in 2009 was \$51,000.

• In 2009, we provided \$73,000 in services at the Northwest Community Adult Day Center. Clients were provided social, recreational and intellectual activities as well as medical services. NCH also supported a Senior Services Department designed to improve care for older patients, and Healthy Aging programs that reach out to the community. These services cost \$265,000 in 2009.

• HealthConnection at NCH provides callers with information and referrals on over 1,000 medical staff members, and access to resources available from NCH's community education, support group and health screening programs. HealthConnection's services cost \$492,000 in 2009.

• Northwest Community funded the Illinois Poison Center for \$20,000. IPC offers poison prevention advice and treatment recommendations on a toll-free hotline, and fields nearly 100,000 calls per year.

Our Commitment to Community Benefit

Charity Care (unreimbursed)	\$ 6,600,000
Language Assistance Services	\$ 335,000
Government-sponsored <i>Healthcare</i> (excess cost over reimbursement)	\$ 73,600,000
<i>Medicare</i>	\$ 52,000,000
<i>Medicaid</i>	\$ 21,600,000
Donations	\$ 289,000
Volunteers	\$ 1,147,000
Education	\$ 570,000
Research	\$ 28,000
Subsidized Health Services & Other Community Benefits	\$ 2,412,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 84,981,000

Mission:

We exist to provide quality, compassionate healthcare services to the people of the northwest community.

Northwest Community is a charitable organization and provides financial assistance to those who are eligible. For more information, please call 847.618.4542 or visit nch.org.

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