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A Thanksgiving Note from Pat Dennison, Clinic Administrator: I just recently returned from the very first Volunteers in Medicine Alliance Conference held in Washington D.C. It was a tremendous gathering of over 100 individuals who are working in 58 clinics throughout the United States. It was a wonderful opportunity to network and compare our practices to see where we could improve our operations.

We were treated to four excellent speakers: Bill Shore, the Director and Founder of Share our Strength, an organization that deals with reducing worldwide childhood hunger; Edward O'Neil, the Founder and President of Omni Med, an organization promoting Global Medical Service and the author of *Awakening Hippocrates: A Primer on Health, Poverty and Global Service*; and Dr. John Castaldo and Dr. Lawrence Levitt, both M.D.'s who have co-authored "The Man with the Iron Tattoo and Other True Tales of Uncommon Wisdom". Their emphasis is on the 3C's for the treatment of our patients...Caring, Comforting and Communicating. Dr. Castaldo urged us to "suffer with our patients" as they endure the difficulties of life and disease.

I returned to the clinic fully refreshed and ever more committed to providing the best medical care that we can provide to VIM's patients. I continue to be most thankful for the support of an ever-working diligent board and am so grateful for the committed, dedicated work of our volunteers and our staff. A big THANK YOU to all as we enter this most blessed time of year.

As this past year has quickly gone by, we look to our successes and our failures and know that He is looking over us and will provide the guidance to move forward. Thank you again for all of your support and prayers as we enter into 2008.

A Thanksgiving Note from Marilyn Fore, RN, Volunteer Coordinator. 2007: A Life-Changing Year for one of our patients. January 2007 found Joseph, 27 years old, sitting in a wheelchair at Siskin Hospital with little movement on his left side and little hope of walking again. His limitations were from several strokes that he had just had. From his wheelchair he tossed a small stress ball to his 4-year old son with his good hand. He almost slid out of the wheelchair and realized he did not have much of a life to look forward to. When he went home he cried a lot and felt depressed. He could not work and lost his insurance. His wife lost her employment shortly after his illness and they did not know where to turn.

During 2006 they had both made good money and spent it without concern. They ate a lot of rich foods and did not exercise, so Joseph had gained up to 394 pounds. He stated that he especially enjoyed mayonnaise on and in everything. He had not been looking ahead or concerned about the future.

Now at home in his wheelchair and feeling overwhelmed, Joseph remembered that three years earlier he had heard about a group starting a new free clinic for people without insurance. He had no idea if it had started or what the name would be. His wife, Penny, happened to go to the library from her new

You have caught the vision with us. Thank you for caring for "the least of these."

employment and noticed the name on the building next door, "Volunteers In Medicine". When she returned home, she called the clinic and before long Joseph was given an appointment.

Joseph came to the clinic in his wheelchair looking for any help he might be given. He was very surprised to be seen by the doctor and also referred to a Dietician and a Physical Therapist. When he came to see the Dietician, he was pleased to find Jamie, the same dietician that he had seen at Siskin Hospital. She worked with him in a very caring, patient way. He had been eating about 4000 calories a day and she dropped him to 1600 to start with. She also showed him how to use everyday foods that were not expensive or hard to find. Jamie explained the portion size to him and encouraged him to drink more water between meals to reduce his hunger. They worked on a plan that he found very workable and with which he was able to stay. He was also seeing, Randy, our physical therapist and some of the students. Joseph said they were so encouraging and gave him hope that he would walk again if he would work hard. He was comfortable at the clinic and felt the caring attitude of the volunteers and staff.

2007 has been a long hard year but also rewarding! Joseph found out about the YMCA special membership for hardship situations. He was able to join, and with the diet change, Physical Therapy and good medical care, he lost 37lbs. in one month. He made progress and was able to get out of the wheelchair. With the improved diet, he had less discomfort and could exercise more. He had visits with Cristin, the nurse practitioner, as well as other physicians that took time and encouraged him. He was on a roll!

When Joseph and his wife Penny walked into the clinic yesterday, I could hardly believe it was the same couple. They were smiling and looked good!! You would never know from looking at Joseph that he had three strokes earlier in the year. I asked them if they would

come and talk with me. They were happy to share with me their story. When I asked if I could share their story with others, they quickly agreed. Joseph said, "I want to encourage others. I have shared my lifestyle with many that have seen my change. I tell them it is not a 'diet,' but it is a way of living that has made the difference." Penny said they have had a very reduced income this year that forced them to learn how to budget carefully. They are now excited about looking at their future! Joseph has a goal of being below 300 lbs. by the beginning of the year. He is planning to look for work at that time said that he feels stronger and has a much clearer mind than he did before the strokes.

Joseph and Penny said that they have a "NEW LIFE". They thank the Lord for directing them to the VIM clinic where they were given hope and coached toward a more wholesome life. I thanked them for sharing with me and told them that this is the reason why we, staff and volunteers, are here. We want the Lord to use us in some way to help you, our neighbor, to experience a more complete life in Him.

I'm sharing this with you, our volunteers, to remind you that your many hours of hard work are definitely making a difference. You are a blessing to our community. It is a real privilege to work beside you.

May you each find joy and peace in our Lord during this wonderful season!

IF YOU HAVE AN IRA and are over 70 1/2 you can make a contribution to VIM during 2007 and never be taxed on the withdrawal. Special tax legislation allows this but it must be done no later than Dec 31, 2007. This is an income tax break for individuals who do not itemize deductions or their income is high and deductions are phased out. For details on how you can contribute, call Vance Fry at **344 8103** or Ken Blankenship at **209 6355**.

Your gift will allow the Clinic to help those who cannot afford health care.