

Reflecting the Spirit of Christ by Providing Compassionate, Accessible Healthcare

GRATITUDE:

Ed Postma - President of Exalta Health



As with any clinic, there are happy times and sad times. We care for and about our patients. But as in any medical or dental practices, there are successes and there are problems. During Covid, for example, we saw patients who were very sick and who recovered and are thriving. We had one family of nine who all lived in the same house and all contracted Covid. Thank God, all are well. We walk with patients who suffer great family losses and haven't the means or support to overcome these losses easily. We see patients struggling with financial challenges and a lack of hope.

I suppose that starting an article in the manner that this one has been started may seem a little dark. It isn't. It's just life. So – how do we respond?

We are aware that we are fortunate people, we have been placed here on Division Avenue in Burton Heights to show God's love in a tangible way. Gratitude is our theme. We get to see miracles almost every day, so much so, that sometimes they don't seem miraculous. How can we not be grateful?

This past year, we have been able to expand our footprint by developing associations with other organizations such as the Grand Rapids Black Nurse association and the Grand Rapids African American Health Institute. We are so grateful for their partnership.

We have help from people like you in prayer, volunteering and monetary. I could do a gratitude list for this ministry that would cover this entire newsletter. But I think it probably is as important in counting our blessings, that we learn to live gratefully.

The Bible is full of instructions about living gratefully. The one that comes to mind quickly is “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” I Thessalonians 5:18. We do!

While we thank God for the good and sometimes the bad, we know if we are living gratefully, we are showing his love to those who might not otherwise see it. How can we not be grateful?

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Still time to donate!



8th Annual Luncheon Update:

When we changed our name in 2017 from Health Intervention Services, or HIS, to Exalta Health, we chose a name that echoes our commitment to lifting up health and praising God who makes this work possible.

Our annual luncheon this month exemplified those two themes. Together almost 200 people gathered at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park to celebrate the Exalta Health mission and give thanks to God.

Board member Eva Alexander first was introduced to Exalta at one of our annual luncheons and was drawn to support us with her time, talent and treasures. She spoke movingly at this year’s event about her experiences with immigration, learning a new language and navigating the U.S. healthcare system.

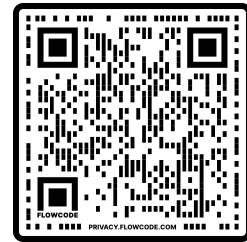
Now Executive Director at Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates, Alexander was born and raised in Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico and emigrated with her family at the age of 13.

“I don’t think people realize how difficult it is when you don’t have insurance, and it’s a choice between your health and groceries,” she said. “It’s a choice between your health and gas to get to work. It’s a choice between your health and putting food on the table for your kids.”

Exalta, she added, helps people not to have to make those hard choices. And the people who support Exalta become part of something bigger than themselves.



Scan to read the rest of the Luncheon update or visit:
exaltahealth.org/annual-luncheon



Ada Puente: Patient Story

Ada Puente became a widow on Christmas Day in 2016. Her husband, the Rev. Antonio Puente, was just 63. But Ada does not grieve as one without hope. In fact, she holds fast, she says, to the peace that passes all understanding.

Of Antonio, she says: "He was a great, Godly man, and I had a good marriage. We had a good ministry together. It's not an easy path being a minister's wife. It's not always smiles and everything is great. But together, with the Holy Spirit, we brought a lot of souls to Christ, so that's his legacy."

Ada admits that the work of ministry brings a variety of joys and concerns.



"It's definitely low income," she says with an easy laugh.

That's where Exalta Health has been a God-send for Ada.

"Oh yes," she says. "A brother from our church pointed me to Exalta, and it has been a gift from God to be an Exalta patient."

Over the last five years or so, Ada has had a variety of dental work done at Exalta, including exams, X-rays, cleanings and more.

Initially she was self pay, but then we got her connected to the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan and now most of the costs of her dental needs are covered.

"I'm very happy with Exalta," she says with a smile. "Dr. (Daniel) Armstrong is wonderful, caring and so knowledgeable. And the girls, the hygienists, are so great. I really feel safe there, and that is very important, especially for a widow. When you walk in, you feel the kindness in the building."



Staff Member Highlight:

Monse Dykema - Receptionist

Monse Dykema began working at Exalta Health in 2014 as our receptionist and continues in that role still today.

As a frontline employee -- often the first person patients see when they enter our office -- Monse plays an invaluable role in making people feel comfortable and welcomed.

She also plays an invaluable role in getting the work done! She smiles as she lists her many duties, including answering the phone, making appointments, checking insurance eligibility, processing paperwork, checking folks in and out, collecting payments and medical records and provider schedules, and more.



Still, her smile grows even wider as she reflects on how much she loves the Exalta Health atmosphere.

"Working with people from all different backgrounds gives me an opportunity to connect with so many people," she said. "Working here, it feels like a family. I'm thankful for my coworkers, for the laughs in our workspace and for the chance to connect to so many people in our community."

Monse grew up in Concepción, Chile, an old mining town founded almost 500 years ago and now the country's second-largest city. There she attended high school and college, studying Elementary Education at Universidad de Concepción, before moving to Grand Rapids almost 25 years ago.

She said that in her work at Exalta, and in all that she does, she tries to find small ways to help others, driven in that pursuit by her Christian faith.

"I try to focus on the positive side of things," she said. "I think one way you can demonstrate your love as a Christian is to be caring towards those you encounter in your work or even outside of work in your daily life. Small gestures can mean a great deal."

Board Member Highlight:

Diane Knapp - Secretary

Diane Knapp was led to Exalta Health by her daughter, a former board member. She remembers being recruited to the communications committee, and she says that introduction to the organization was an eye-opener.

"It gave me insights into the many services Exalta provides and how their story continues to grow and needs to be shared," she says.

And storytelling is near and dear to Diane's heart because of her long career in television, including her current role as Client Marketing Manager for Nexstar Media, a media company that includes local TV stations WOOD, WOTV and WXSP and digital media assets and services.

"I continue to work with local business owners and create advertising campaigns to grow their businesses," she says. "We develop marketing strategies, creative concepts and execute campaigns with video and digital production and placements. I've been able to use these services in telling the Exalta Health story!"

Born and raised in Saginaw, and a graduate of Eisenhower High School and Delta College, she came to West Michigan in 1982 and quickly settled in.

"We embraced the west side of our beautiful state almost immediately," she recalls.

Serving on the Exalta Health board, she adds, is a highlight of her career.

"I'm happy to serve and give back," she says. "Serving on the board gives me an opportunity to understand the need for health care for the under-served. Serving a Christ-based organization aligns with my beliefs. It is a blessing to do God's work and simply a joy to work with a Christian organization."

Knapp adds that she hopes telling this story encourages continued support of Exalta Health. "This is an amazing organization" she says. "Please help us continue to help others."

