Caridad Center: Ensuring health care for the working poor

What is Caridad Center?
Caridad, located in suburban Boynton Beach, is the largest free health clinic in Florida. It depends upon volunteer doctors and dentists to provide services to patients and their families who do not have insurance. Caridad has more than 400 volunteer doctors, dentists, and community volunteers with yearly patient visits totaling more than 26,000.

How does your agency benefit the community?
Caridad Center’s staff, community volunteers, and volunteer doctors and dentists provide free medical and dental care for the working poor in Palm Beach County. We have more than 26,000 patient visits each year from families that, otherwise, would not have anywhere else to go to receive these crucial services. In addition to health-care services, we also provide education, outreach, and other programs to help our clients improve and manage their health.

What is your agency’s focus for 2021?
This year our sole focus will be reinstating the thousands of appointments for patients that were cancelled due to the pandemic and raising funds to continue our much-needed services. As our volunteer doctors are vaccinated and return to us, we will be able to increase appointments and accept new patients.

How can the community help?
Caridad Center has been severely affected by the pandemic. When the volunteer doctors could not get vaccines, they could not work for us because of health risks, since most are retired and over age 65. This meant we had to cancel 2,000 patient appointments per month.

We were also forced to cancel our Call To The Heart Ball due to COVID-19 risks. This event brought in $500,000 to Caridad for services.

We are looking to the community to help us maintain the important medical, dental and mental health services we offer to more than 3,500 underserved members of our community. You can donate online at our website, caridad.org.

Mission
To upgrade the health, education, and living standards of underserved children and families.

Key Programs
Health care
- Medical clinic: health, labs, education, vision, chronic disease prevention and management, breast care, and mental health programs
- Dental clinic: preventive and restorative care; dental hygiene services

Education
- Tutoring program empowers elementary-school-age students
- Scholarship fund serves Caridad families
- Family health classes educate our patients
- Outreach
- Emergency and food programs serve those who need it most
- Adopt-A-Family and holiday assistance ensures community care
- Mentor initiatives pave the way for the community’s future

P.E.T. (Prevention, Education, and Treatment)
- Takes a comprehensive approach to the prevention, education, and treatment of chronic disease.
- Promotes a healthy lifestyle by giving participants the tools they need to be physically active, adopt healthy eating habits, and maintain a healthy environment for overall good health.
- Provides health screenings and education at health fairs and events to promote health awareness
- Facilitate linkages for our participants through referrals and other community resources
- Reduces the number of emergency room visits and hospitalizations

- Contributed

The Caridad Clinic in suburban Boynton Beach provides more than 26,000 patient visits per year. PHOTO PROVIDED

Laura Kallus, CEO of the Caridad Center PHOTO PROVIDED

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