

Community Health Outreach: Dentists and Doctors For Those In Need

Community Health Outreach (CHO) was founded in 1988 as an outreach ministry for St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Jacksonville. This organization is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to the Christian principles of feeding the hungry, healing the sick and clothing the needy. When CHO first opened, they operated out of portable buildings that are now located behind the main building.

In 2015, through an influx of monetary support from the church and local Rotary Clubs, CHO was able to build its main building – a new medical facility named Healing Hands Dental and Medical Ministry of Community Health Outreach – where visitors find a large full-service dental facility that is located on the entire left half of the building. The dental facility is state-of-the-art, in partnership with the Sontag Foundation and the Sulzbacher Center, and dentists and orthodontists are available for persons in need.

In addition, there are medical doctors available for those in need who have medical issues. These services are provided in 6 medical exam rooms in the main building.

Today, Leadership Jacksonville local legend Laurie Price runs this organization as its Interim Director, with a small board of area leaders. Currently, there is a mental health counselor on-site, as well as a program entitled “Baby Luv” and a large food pantry. The organization is now conducting a national search for a permanent Executive Director.

“Baby Luv” is a pregnancy counseling service that is available to mothers who meet 200% or below of the current poverty guidelines. They are open on Monday-Wednesday-Saturday from 10am to 12pm.

The “Lord's Pantry” is available to those who meet 120% and below poverty guidelines. This food pantry provides more than 60,000 meals per year to residents of Duval County. The pantry on the Timuquana Road campus is open on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 10 am to 12 pm. A second location at Lake Shores Baptist Church is open on Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 12pm. “Lord's Pantry” clients are eligible to receive up to twelve bags of food at any time during calendar year.

According to CHO board member The Rev. James Barnhill, Rector of St. Philips Episcopal Church, “There is a strong correlation between nutritional consciousness and the ability of children to prosper. The ‘Lord's Pantry’ provides such hope to these children and families.”

CHO also has a community garden on site, which is watered by a volunteer daily. Mr. Smith, another volunteer, manages the garden. Currently, CHO is gearing up for classes on how to prepare and can fresh food.

Volunteers are always welcome! CHO very much needs health-care professionals who provide primary care who would like to join this ministry.

Community Health Outreach, trade name of Westjax Outreach, is a non-profit community-based organization primarily serving Duval County residents through a Ministry started by St. Peter's Episcopal Church that seeks to fulfill Matthew 25:35-36, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me". These ministries offer the following services to individuals who meet the eligible criteria: emergency dental and primary care services for uninsured residents of Duval County through the Healing Hands Dental and Medical Clinic, free pregnancy testing and counseling, and newborn and infant services through Baby Luv, and free food assistance through The Lord's Pantry. These services are given to the members of the community who need it most. For more information, visit www.chojax.org.