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Photo: J. Downs

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## Our Mission

To improve the health of our patients and community by providing high quality, cost-effective, culturally sensitive, patient-centered health care.

## When Our Patients Need Cancer Care

Receiving a diagnosis of cancer is frightening and the care can be complex, debilitating and expensive. At Marin Community Clinics, we don't provide diagnostic workups or treatment for cancer, so we work with our partners in the medical community to ensure that our patients receive the best possible – and prompt – care. It works!

### One woman's story

San Rafael resident and Brazilian native **Patricia Lopes'** journey with breast cancer began in December 2014 when she felt a lump in her breast during a self-exam. A Clinics patient for over 22 years, she immediately went to see nurse practitioner **Anne Reppun, RN, NP**, who ordered a mammogram at Marin General Hospital's (MGH) Breast Health Center.

*"I wasn't scared or nervous," reports Patricia, age 51. "I had been healthy my whole life, and a few years ago had a suspicious lump that turned out to be just a cyst. So I thought I would be fine."*

### Unexpected Diagnosis

But this time, a needle biopsy indicated that she did indeed have breast cancer. Patricia's case was a bit unusual. Some years earlier, she had gotten silicone implants - but they needed to be removed so that the breast surgeon, **Leah Kelley, MD**, could access the tumor. *"Ironically, the implants saved my life,"* says Patricia. (It turned out that the lump she had felt was not a tumor at all, but a problem with the silicone – but if she hadn't felt that "lump," the cancer might not have been detected.)



Photo: Stuart Lirette

Breast cancer patient Patricia Lopes – healthy and thriving - at the Civic Center Lagoon

The team surgery proceeded at MGH, with plastic surgeon **Kashayar Mohebali, MD** first removing the implants, followed by Dr. Kelley performing a lumpectomy and removing the lymph nodes, and concluding with Dr. Mohebali reconstructing her breasts.

Because the cancer had spread, chemotherapy and radiation therapy were needed. That's when Marin Cancer Care stepped in. **Jennifer Lucas, MD** oversaw three months of concentrated chemotherapy and **Francine Halberg, MD** oversaw radiation treatment. *"Surprisingly, I tolerated both of these really well,"* reports Patricia. *"I did lose all my hair, but it has grown back – nice and curly. I'm feeling great!"*

### Positive attitude/lots of support made a big difference

*"When I first received the cancer diagnosis, I was shocked,"* explains Patricia. *"Both my cousin and my grandfather died of cancer, so I thought I was going to die."*

Patricia's Story– continued on page 5

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# Partnerships – We Couldn't Do without Them!

By Linda Tavaszi, PhD, CEO



Photo: Stuart Lirette

Marin County is making great strides in closing the gap between people who have easy access to quality health care and those who don't. But we need to do more.

Partnerships, where we work together to solve problems and provide services, have become essential if we are to further improve the health of the overall community. And they can make a real difference in the lives of individual patients.

**“Partnerships have become essential if we are to further improve the health of the community.”**

**—Linda Tavaszi, PhD, CEO**

Marin Community Clinics is a case in point. Over the past few years, we have been able to see more patients, grow our services, and attain strong financial health. We haven't done this alone. Partnerships at many levels have been key – community physicians, hospitals, educational institutions, city and county governments, public schools, food banks, businesses, other non-profit service organizations, volunteers, funders, donors...and the list goes on.

## Partnership Highlights

### University of California

It's not every community clinic that is blessed with having internationally-known dental, nursing or optometry schools close by. Marin Community Clinics is fortunate to have partnerships with three schools associated with the University of California.

Each year, we serve as a clinical training site for approximately 35 nurse practitioner, midwifery, optometry, medical, and dental

students. In turn, the students provide care to our patients under the guidance and supervision of our clinicians. It's truly a “win-win” - future clinicians train in a real-life environment; we are able to see more patients; and, both our staff and patients benefit from the latest knowledge coming from the university setting.

### San Francisco/Marin Food Bank & Extrafood.org

Despite the overall wealth in Marin, there are many who cannot afford to put healthy food on the table, resulting in a host of potential health problems.

Once a week, at both our Novato and San Rafael Clinics, we host free Community Health Hubs. Hundreds of people attend each session and hundreds of pounds of fresh produce and other nutritious



Photo: MCC Staff

Our partnerships help feed hundreds every month.

food are generously delivered by the SF/Marin Food Bank and Extrafood.org. In addition, participants receive nutrition education, screenings for chronic disease, and participate in Zumba dancing to demonstrate the importance of exercise. It's been a great success.

Visit [www.marinclinics.org/arturos-story](http://www.marinclinics.org/arturos-story) to learn how Kaiser San Rafael is helping Arturo conquer stomach cancer

## Partnership Profile: Marin Cancer Care

In Marin, we are fortunate to have strong medical expertise in cancer diagnosis and treatment. Marin Cancer Care, Marin General Hospital, Novato Community Hospital, and Kaiser Permanente are among the dedicated cancer providers serving Marin's low-income residents.

Marin Cancer Care has been serving the community since it was founded by

**Peter Eisenberg, MD** in

1978. What began as a solo practice is now a group of nine medical oncologists/hematologists and radiation oncologists. They provide a range

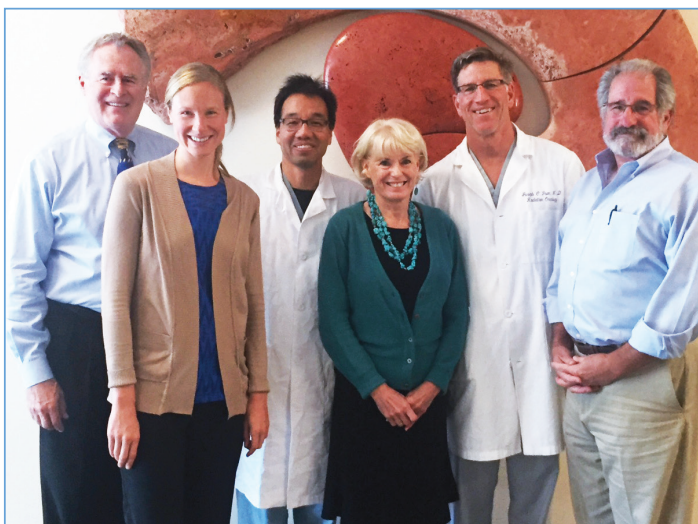
of services, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, treatments for blood disorders, end of life care, follow up care, and complementary/integrative medicine.

Nationally known for the compassionate, state-of-the art care they provide, as well as their participation in clinical trials, they have a long standing commitment to helping the medically underserved.

### Generosity at many levels

In 2015 alone, Marin Cancer Care diagnosed and/or treated 112 low-income patients. Some had insurance through Medi-Cal or the state's Partnership for Health program, and some had no insurance at all; about 50% were Marin Community Clinics patients.

Patients are referred to Marin Cancer Care by MGH, other physicians, and by Marin Community Clinics primary care physicians and specialists.



Marin Cancer Care physicians (L to R): David Gullion, MD; Kristin Anderson, MD; Lloyd Miyawaki, MD; Bobbie Head, MD; Joe Poen, MD; Peter Eisenberg, MD. (Not pictured: Jennifer Lucas, MD; Alex Metzger, MD; Francine Halberg, MD)

**“We go the extra mile because we believe that everyone deserves good care.”**

**—Peter Eisenberg, MD**

*“We will see anyone, regardless of ability to pay,” reports Dr. Eisenberg. “No one is turned away. If a patient with insurance cannot afford the \$20 co-pay*

*because she is only making \$15/hour, we don't collect it. If they don't have insurance at all and can't afford to pay for the care, we don't charge them.”*

But at Marin Cancer Care, it is about more than financial generosity. *“It's hard enough having cancer, but when you add financial problems and other life challenges, it can be even more difficult. We go the extra mile because we believe that everyone deserves good care.”*

If the patient has advanced cancer, the Marin Cancer Care physician often becomes the primary care provider, seeing the patient every few weeks. All patients are screened for the possibility of participating in new and exciting clinical trials. A social worker from MGH is available to assist; and, if language is an issue, a translator is provided.

*“We simply can't imagine not doing this,” concludes Dr. Eisenberg. “I am very*

*lucky to have been able to practice with partners who are so generous of heart and socially committed.”*

**Linda Tavaszi**, Marin Community Clinics' CEO, sums it up: *“Marin Cancer Care is a prime example of how the community has come together to serve those in need. Our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Eisenberg for the role he has played in developing cancer care in Marin, to the team at Marin Cancer Care, and to all of our medical partners who care for cancer patients.”*

## Nutritious Meals for Cancer Patients Pilot Project Launched

This fall, the Clinics and Ceres Community Project, a regional not-for-profit organization that provides free, nutritious food to those in need, launched a pilot program to serve cancer patients.



Once a week, for a three month period, a small group of Clinics patients and their families will have meals delivered to their homes by Ceres volunteers.

*“We're really excited about this program,” reports*

**Meilyn Santana, MPA**, the Clinics' Director of Outreach and Referrals. *“When someone has cancer, having a healthy diet is essential. But sometimes there just aren't the financial resources or the energy to put a healthy meal on the table. This program can really make a difference for the entire family.”*

## Helping Children and Adults with Vision Problems

### Q&A with Tonya Watson, OD, PhD, Lead Optometrist

Photo: Jocelyn Knight



Optometrist Tonya Watson examines a patient

#### Q Why is it important that vision problems be addressed?

**A** We all know the importance of having good vision, but many don't know how critical it is to identify and address vision problems early on. Children need to be evaluated for near- or farsightedness when they are young. Why?

Although nearsightedness is easily corrected, farsightedness is another story. If it is not immediately addressed, it can lead to "lazy eye." This condition is impossible to correct later in life and the child will never be able to see well (with or without glasses) if they are not treated when they are young.

Astigmatism (where the eye is not perfectly round) can also lead to "lazy eye" if eyeglasses are not prescribed. Also, adults with diabetes require frequent exams and possible treatment for a condition called diabetic retinopathy, which can lead to blindness if not treated. Eye health is important!

#### Q What services do you offer?

**A** In January 2013, we opened one of the first community clinic optometry programs in the Bay Area. As with many of the Clinics' programs, it has grown in response to community need. Today,

we operate the program five days a week at two sites – the Novato and San Rafael Campus Clinics.

The Clinics' primary care providers refer all diabetic patients to us for a dilated eye exam. They also refer adults and children who may need corrective lenses or have other eye problems. We conduct a comprehensive eye exam, determine their prescription, and make arrangements with optical labs to produce eyeglasses. Also, we are often the first to diagnose eye diseases such as cataracts; we treat some conditions ourselves and refer others out for surgeries and other procedures.

Clearly, a need is being met. Just last year, we saw 4,075 patients, 25% of whom were children. We distribute about 180 eyeglasses/month and are always busy!

#### Q How do you staff the program?

**A** MCC has a highly successful partnership with the University of California Berkeley School of Optometry. Each year, our team of four UC optometrists mentors approximately 20 fourth-year optometry interns who see patients under our supervision. It's a "win-win" for everyone – the students receive real-world training and the patients receive state-of-the-art care from one of the top optometry schools in the US.

#### Q What if a patient can't afford the care?

**A** Many of our low-income patients are now insured through Medi-Cal's Partnership Health insurance program, which pays for exams and eyeglasses (1 pair every 2 years). If a patient is uninsured and cannot afford care, exams are provided on a sliding fee discount. UC provides eyeglasses at a reduced rate (\$55 – 75); however, if the cost is still a burden, the Cahill Family Eyeglass Fund generously covers the full cost of a pair of glasses.

*Read more about the Cahill family's donation on page 6*

For more information

visit [www.marinclinics.org](http://www.marinclinics.org) or email [info@marinclinic.org](mailto:info@marinclinic.org)

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## Spotlight: Larkspur Clinic Leadership

**Diane Kha Boone** and **Xavier Perez, MD** are a “dynamic duo,” working hand-in-hand to ensure that patients at the Larkspur Clinic receive the highest possible quality care.

The Clinic, which moved from the Marin General campus in 2014, provides adult primary care; family planning and reproductive services; behavioral health and psychiatric services; and, a number of specialty medical services. It may be the smallest of the Clinics’ four primary care sites, but it’s a busy place, with an average 255 patient visits/month.

Kha Boone oversees the operations – supervising staff, monitoring patient flow, and coordinating schedules. As Site Medical Director, Dr. Perez’ primary responsibility is to ensure that the care is standardized and of the highest possible quality. He also personally cares for about 17-22 patients/day.

### A Commitment to Primary Care

Dr. Perez, who was born in Belize, shifted his career interest to medicine when he observed the substandard care his mother received when she became seriously ill during a visit to Jamaica. He obtained his medical education in the US, specializing in surgery and intensive care. But his interests began to change when he was on sabbatical in rural Iowa.

*“I saw the difference a primary care physician could make in a person’s life,” he reported. “Much of my work had focused on end of life care – often with no solutions. Working in primary care and community medicine gave me a whole new perspective. By starting the work ‘upstream,’ I was able to develop a real relationship with my patients and help them achieve healthy lives.”*

Perez, who has won numerous honors (including *Sutter Solano*

*Physician of the Year*), most recently worked as medical director of Sonoma Valley Community Health Center. He wanted to be fully imbedded in Marin, where he and his family live, and found Marin Community Clinics to be the ideal place. *“It’s a solid organization – from top to bottom. The caring is very evident.”*

### Serving as a Role Model

Kha Boone, who is first generation Laotian, wanted to work in a helping profession. *“Plus, no one in my family had worked in health care and I wanted to be a role model,”* she explained. Ten years ago, she started as a Medical Assistant, providing direct patient care. Over time, she became Assistant Clinic Manager and eventually Clinic Director.



*Diane Kha Boone and Dr. Xavier Perez - the Larkspur Clinic’s “dynamic duo”*

*“I love interacting with people and feeling that I am part of a team that is providing the best possible care,”* she said. *“Our patients come from diverse backgrounds and many are unique in their own ways, so we have to ‘think outside the box.’ There is never a dull moment, and it’s a real family feeling here – for patients and staff.”*

*“I saw the difference a primary care physician could make in a person’s life,”*  
—Dr. Xavier Perez

## When Our Patients Need Cancer Care Continued from page 1

She credits her positive attitude – and the support from family, friends, and the medical profession - for getting her through the experience.

*“The Clinics staff helped me with everything -- getting a mammogram right away, coordinating the many doctors’ visits and the hospital stay, and getting me onto Medi-Cal’s special breast cancer program so that I could afford the care. Marin Cancer Care gave me knowledge – they told me what was going to happen, and why, and gave me the confidence that I would be okay.”*

She also availed herself of MGH’s acupuncture and massage services, and participated in a group



*“Everyone was respectful and responsive – and they listened.”*

nutrition program to help her lose the weight she gained during treatment.

Patricia is the sole support for her son and her mother, so when she was undergoing treatment, she continued to work as a babysitter for a local family. They were very understanding when her energy was low, and her son would assist as well. A cousin in Brazil who is an oncologist called her frequently and her boyfriend was a strong presence, playing guitar music to help her relax.

*“I’ve been blessed with good people all around me,”* she says. Her message to others: *“Never give up. Always have positive thoughts.”*

### Donor Profile: Carrying out a Mother's Legacy – the Cahill Family

Community members who donate are key to our success. Read how two generations of one family have made a difference.

Virtually every day, an adult or child coming to Marin Community Clinics' Optometry Program is diagnosed with a serious vision problem that could easily be corrected - if only they could afford eyeglasses. When brothers **Jay, Jerry** and **Ned Cahill** and their sister

**Ann Fidanque** learned about this need, they stepped up to the plate and created the Cahill Eyeglass Fund.

The Cahill family has a long history of supporting Marin

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**“Creating the Eyeglass Fund seemed a natural way to both remember our Mom and do something useful.”**

**— Jay Cahill, donor**

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Community Clinics. Their parents, **John and Peggy Cahill**, raised their family here. *“They had a special place in their hearts for Marin,”* says daughter Ann, *“and were very aware of people who were struggling with food, housing, and access to health care.”*

#### Family commitment begins with Mother's Gift

*“It all started with Mom,”* explains Jerry Cahill when recounting the family's support of the Clinics.

Peggy had been a donor to the Clinics' annual campaign for several years and became more deeply involved when plans were being made to develop the Clinics' first San Rafael site. The existing building required extensive - and expensive - renovations to convert it to medical use. A \$10 million Capital Campaign was launched and a major gift from the John and Helen (Peggy) Cahill Fund helped get it started. Jerry also got involved, serving on the Capital Campaign Committee, raising major gifts, and serving as a construction advisor. (He and his wife **Kathy King** have continued to donate to the annual campaign and other capital campaigns.)

The new clinic opened in 2008; several years later, an



Donors (L to R) Jay Cahill, Ann Fidanque, Jerry Cahill and Ned Cahill

Photo: Courtesy Cahill Family

opportunity came up to purchase the building, and Peggy once again made a major contribution. Today, the San Rafael Clinic continues to be one of Marin Community Clinics' four major sites.

#### Cahill Eyeglass Fund created

Several years ago, when Peggy died at age 96, her children wanted to honor her commitment to the Clinics and the medically uninsured.

Later in life, she had developed a number of health issues herself - including macular degeneration, which had left her legally blind. All four siblings saw the Eyeglass Fund as the perfect fit for an additional commitment. They know through their mother's experience how important it is to have good vision, and wanted to support others who needed help - even with something as seemingly simple as eyeglasses.

*“Creating the Eyeglass Fund seemed a natural way to both remember our Mom and do something useful,”* says Jay Cahill.

*It's a sweet thing for us, given Mom's own vision problems and her history with the Clinics,”* concluded Ann, *“It's a blessing to us and to others.”*

#### An exciting postscript

The Cahill Eyeglass Fund, which pays for eyeglasses when a patient cannot afford them, was originally intended to be a one-time donation. But when the Cahill family learned that the Fund was depleted after just 1.5 years, it became clear that the need was greater than anticipated.

This year, they generously decided to add to the Fund each year for another five years. As a result, close to 1,000 more low-income residents will receive eyeglasses.

Our heartfelt thanks to the Cahill family for the difference they are making in people's lives!

*See page 4 to learn more about the Clinics' Optometry Program*

**To make a donation, email [gifts@marinclinics.org](mailto:gifts@marinclinics.org) or call 415-526-8527.**

## Why Give to Marin Community Clinics?

*A Special Message from John E. Boland, III, DDS, MSD, Board Chair*

Photo: Stuart Lirette



Charitable contributions are critical to both current services and the long-term sustainability of Marin Community Clinics. We recognize that making a philanthropic contribution is a deeply personal action, so connecting with an organization like ours on a personal level is essential. We encourage every donor

or prospective donor to tour the Clinics and witness just how truly unique we are.

**“We encourage every donor or prospective donor to tour the Clinics and witness just how truly unique we are.”**

**—John Boland, DDS, Board Chair**

Making a gift to Marin Community Clinics is an investment in success. It is an investment in an organization that is not only committed to a healthy community, but to growing and changing to meet community needs. We are proud to be a bridge to compassionate, quality care that many members of our community might not receive if we did not exist.

### How can you help?

- ✓ We gratefully accept standard cash, check, and credit card donations to sustain our “Margin of Excellence” through new equipment or programs and to serve the otherwise uninsured.
- ✓ Contact us with donations of books (both Spanish and English), blankets, clothes, and other lightly used items that some of our patients could utilize.
- ✓ We actively seek and welcome Planned Gifts to our Endowment or Reserve Fund. Through our Legacy Circle, we honor our thoughtful and generous supporters who wish to have their legacies transcend generations.

*For more information about our programs and services, to make a donation, or to discuss a Planned Gift, contact a member of our Development Department. Call 415-798-3169, email us at [gifts@marinclinics.org](mailto:gifts@marinclinics.org), or visit us at [www.marinclinics.org/support-us](http://www.marinclinics.org/support-us).*

## Going the Extra Mile: Clinic Staff Help Patient Fulfill a Wish

**Maria** is a 63 year old Clinics patient with a severe, life-threatening lung disease. This spring, she told **Cara Gutterman, RN, NP**, her nurse practitioner, that she had one last wish – to travel to El Salvador to visit her son. She had not seen him for 21 years.

But there was a problem. A recent medical test indicated that she couldn't breathe at high altitudes, so it would be impossible to travel by air without an oxygen tank. That's when the staff stepped in. **Stephanie Orozco, RN**, our Director of Nursing, reached out to Medicare to see if they would cover the costs of the \$2,000 machine, but coverage was denied. So Stephanie turned to **Hannah Bickhoff**, Patient Care Navigator, to explore options for support from various community partner organizations. Hannah filled out applications and made numerous telephone calls – with success!

Canal Alliance and Marin Advocates Network donated funds to cover the majority of the costs, and we made up the difference. Our staff obtained the machine for Maria and she was on her way to El Salvador – safe and sound.

Earlier this summer, Maria returned from her long trip, with wonderful stories about her son as well as her grandson, whom she had met for the first time. She told us how grateful she was and that whatever happens with her health, she is content!

I'm so proud of the commitment the staff makes to our patients. Maria's story is just one of many examples where our staff go “above and beyond” to make a difference in their lives.

**Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH**, Chief Medical Officer



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## Marin Community Clinics Receives Spirit of Marin Award



Every year, each chamber of commerce in Marin County selects a Business of the Year to recognize at the Bank of Marin’s Spirit of Marin event. This year’s event – held on September 23 – had special meaning for the board and staff of Marin Community Clinics: we were selected by the Hispanic

Chamber of Marin as its honoree for the investment we make in the community.

*“We were thrilled to nominate the Clinics for this award,” says **Cecilia Zamora**, Chamber President. “It plays a special role in serving immigrant families; provides high quality, culturally-sensitive care; and, continues to expand its services. We also wanted to acknowledge the extraordinary vision of its leader, CEO Linda Tavaszi.”*

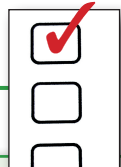
Our thanks and appreciation to the Hispanic Chamber for this wonderful recognition! A high percentage of our patients are Hispanic, many of whom have special challenges navigating the health care system due to language barriers, income level, or lack of transportation. It is our honor to serve them and we take great pride in the care we provide to them - and all of our patients.



Photo: MCC Staff

Members of the Clinics' Board of Directors and Executive Team gather to celebrate the Spirit of Marin award

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