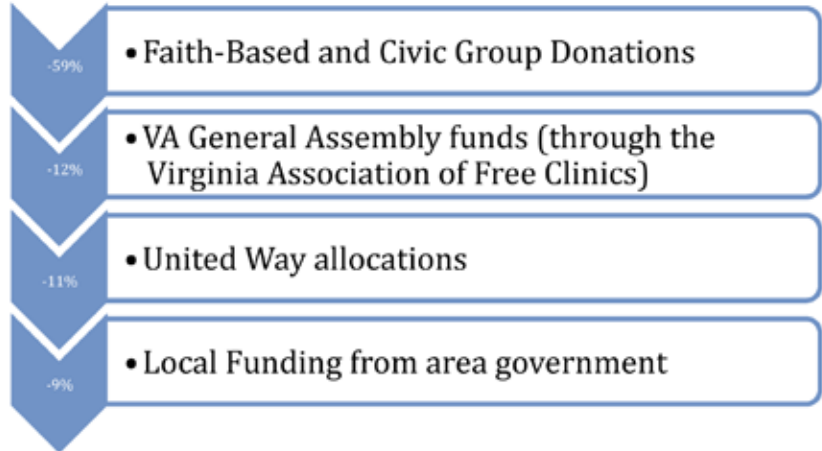




Dear Friend of the Free Clinic,

Our nation’s economic crisis and high local unemployment rate have created a “perfect storm” which plays out at the Free Clinic reception desk every day. The Free Clinic is running at full capacity, but still every month, **104 new people** enter our building in Christiansburg requesting to become Free Clinic patients. These people are not simply seeking checkups and flu shots. These are folks who have lost their jobs and with their jobs also have lost their health insurance. They find themselves looking for work, often barely scraping by. That’s when the bottom falls out and someone in their family gets sick or injured.

Unfortunately, we see this day after day at the Free Clinic. Folks delay coming in, thinking that their health condition will improve or mend itself. They are embarrassed to take charity care, and optimistic that a job will come through—one with great benefits. When they finally do walk through our door, they’re depleted and hopeless. And then we tell them about the waiting list...



You see, the Free Clinic as an organization is feeling depleted as well. Nearly every one of our funding streams—operational funds that we rely on for basic organizational expenses—are down this year from last. The graphic illustrates our predicament.

With the surge in demand and the double-digit funding cuts, our leadership has become very purposeful and strategic in moving forward. This year we have undertaken an ambitious “friend cultivation campaign” at the Free Clinic. Our goal is to more fully engage the community-at-large in our work, creating long-term champions and supporters of our mission. Our first-ever large scale benefit breakfast, *Hope for the Holidays*, will have taken place by the time you read this News Update. And, by the end of the year, nearly 300 community members will have taken a tour of the Free Clinic, getting an up-close and personal view of the inner workings of our charitable health care organization, our triumphs and our struggles.

It all comes down to this: Even though resources are tight, we want to continue to provide Hope to those that we serve—*Hope* that their health will return, *Hope* that they will be strong enough to hold a job and *Hope* that their family will be healthy and thrive.

All of us at the Free Clinic of the New River Valley thank you for joining with us in our mission of delivering *Hope* this holiday season.



Sincerely,
Michelle Brauns
Michelle Brauns, MS, APR
Executive Director

Every Gift Makes A Difference! December 2009

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

- Enclosed is my contribution to ensure vital health services to people who need it the most:
 \$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 Other: \$ _____
- I am requesting **VA State Tax Credits** for my donation of \$500 (individual) or \$889 (business) or greater.
- I wish to make a gift of stock, please contact me.
- A **Matching Gift Form** from my company is enclosed.
- * I wish to make a gift: In **Honor** of _____ In **Memory** of _____

Please notify those listed below of this donation:
 Name(s): _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Thank You!

Clinic Achieves State Accreditation

The Free Clinic achieved state accreditation from the Virginia Association of Free Clinics (VAFC) in September and received their certificate from the VAFC at the volunteer recognition event in October.

The formation of an accreditation process for the 60 VAFC free clinics began in 2005 with the development of commonly accepted Virginia standards to ensure quality and accountability in free clinic health care provision across the state. In 2008, the first clinics were accredited and the FCNRV becomes the 13th statewide to earn accreditation.

The FCNRV chose to seek accreditation for a number of reasons:

- To help assure patients of quality of care
- To improve quality standards
- To increase credibility to community, donors and volunteers
- To increase potential for access to funding

The process involved a VAFC site team conducting a rigorous documentation review of financial, management, governance, human resource and volunteer policies and procedures as well as interviews of staff, Board and volunteers and a facility



Michelle Brauns, FCNRV Executive Director, receives the Certificate of Accreditation from Lou Markwith, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Free Clinics.

inspection. Patients can be assured they are receiving top-notch care at the Free Clinic of the New River Valley because of the strong commitment to excellence in the provision of these services!

Caring for the Unexpected

Robbie is a life-long resident of a nearby small town. He's in his mid-forties—a large man with a deep southern accent and a serious expression. He and his wife never had children and they presumed at their age that children just weren't in the cards.

Robbie originally came to the Free Clinic two years ago because of an injury to his leg that happened in a machine shop where he worked part-time. He was uninsured—his part-time job offered no health benefits and he could not afford the monthly premium to pay for insurance himself. His leg needed care and then he needed physical therapy to walk normally again. We arranged the therapy, which he received for no cost. His leg healed and we “closed the case.”

So we were surprised to see Robbie walk back into the Clinic a few months later. He complained of blurred vision and headaches. We sent him to a local optometrist-partner for an eye examination. When the optometrist looked into Robbie's eye, he sent him immediately to the hospital for evaluation of a

suspected tumor. Unfortunately, a CT scan showed a large mass and Robbie was transferred that same day to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital to remove the tumor. The tumor was benign, but it was large enough that it had already done irreparable damage to Robbie's vision and speech, and thus his ability to drive and work—it really impacted his entire existence.

During his recovery, Robbie's wife came to us with what she thought was a gall bladder attack. An ultrasound revealed that it was not a gall bladder causing her symptoms, but morning sickness! She was pregnant for the first time at age 40! She and Robbie were ecstatic and the joy of parenthood helped give Robbie the strength to get through rehabilitation and move home to prepare for the baby.

The Free Clinic was able to help both Robbie and his wife with securing important, even life saving, medical attention. Their baby boy is now approaching his first birthday. Robbie was able to obtain Medicaid coverage due to his vision and speech impairments, but his attitude is great. Although he is a different man, he is home with his baby and doing a great job at the job that means the most—that of being a father.



These are just two lives (or three, counting the baby!) that we touch every day at the Free Clinic of the New River Valley.

Health, Hope and Healing Tours

Since April, Free Clinic staff, volunteers and board members have provided one-hour formal tours several times each month to interested community members, civic groups, clubs and churches. Tour guests have been able to see first-hand the work of the Clinic and become engaged in the local dialogue on health care access.

JANUARY 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

The purpose of the tours is to raise awareness of the continued need for the Free Clinic. At a time when the economy is cutting into every category of the Clinic's resource base, the patient demand (from newly unemployed and thus newly uninsured patients) is at an all-time high.

An additional goal of the tours is to address national health care reform's effect on free clinics. We continue to be asked if we'll be closing our doors soon – this couldn't be further from the truth! Health care reform won't provide any relief until 2014 at the earliest and if reform stays on track, the entirety of it won't be felt until 2019. We know we'll be around for a long time to come!

We will resume Clinic tours in January following the holiday season. If you or a group would like to see the Free Clinic first-hand, please call us at 381-0820 and speak to Roz Nelson for available tour dates/times.



Proud To Be a United Way Partner Agency

Our Mission: The Free Clinic is committed to providing high quality health care and dental services to people who lack insurance and cannot afford healthcare

I would like:

- A tour of the Clinic
- To receive more information about your services
- To receive more information about volunteer opportunities at the Clinic