



SUMMER NEWSLETTER | 2017

Heading Upstream

Dr. Morgan Wills, [President & CEO](#)

This is the first newsletter bearing Siloam's new name! Not only is "Siloam Health" more concise, it also reflects a new strategic emphasis. Perhaps you've heard this parable before:

Three friends approached a river flowing toward a waterfall. Several children were in the water, struggling to stay afloat. The friends jumped in and brought them each to safety. But more children appeared, gradually overwhelming their efforts. One friend focused on the children closest to the waterfall. Another built a raft to keep more children afloat. The last suddenly turned away and started walking upstream. The others yelled, "Come back, there are more children to save!" Their friend responded, "I'm going to stop whoever is throwing these children into the water."

We see versions of this story all the time. In our broken health care system, real prevention is hard to accomplish – and pay for. Thankfully, by God's grace (and the generosity of our donors), Siloam's team of whole-person caregivers can address the emotional, social, and spiritual factors that affect our patients. We go "upstream" every day, without leaving the exam room. But there are limits to what we can do within our walls. That's why we're taking the "upstream medicine" approach even further – and demonstrating that Siloam Health is much more than just a clinic!

Of course, you may be wondering how President Trump's executive actions to curb refugee resettlement will impact this emphasis at Siloam, and I encourage you to visit our website for more information. No doubt some of our programs and tactics will need to adapt, and there will be a critical need for increased donor support. However, it's clear that the foreign-born will continue to be with us long-term. And we're convinced that upstream approaches to health care are vital for all patients, no matter where they're from.

Why should Siloam care so much about what happens beyond our doors? Simply put, we view health care ministry for the underserved as a catalyst for the flourishing of a whole, new Nashville. Our Gale Lane facility makes a great base to help patients on the cusp of the "waterfall." But we also, like Jesus, are committed to practicing *upstream*. Won't you join us? ■

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Community Health Outreach

Siloam's ministry is about so much more than clinical medicine, which is why we want to broaden the impact of our whole-person approach to care. Community Health Outreach (CHO) is our newest initiative, and thanks in large part to Director Amy Richardson, it's already making waves.

CHO works by connecting directly with Nashville's underserved populations, allowing them to determine their most prominent health care needs, and using community members as health care guides. Siloam has partnered with four refugee and immigrant populations – Bhutanese, Burmese, Egyptian, and Hispanic – and connected with ethnic churches in each community to serve as the hub of our outreach. Not only are churches natural gathering places, they also serve as trusted community institutions.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) may be the most essential component of Siloam's outreach initiative. CHWs are community members who work with Siloam so that they can better serve the needs of their community. Each population has two CHWs who receive training on a variety of health care topics. By collaborating with both CHWs and church leadership, Siloam can support large community events, like health assessments or flu clinics, small group education sessions, and one-on-one care.





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Bridging the Cultural Divide

While working with each population, Amy is constantly navigating unique learning styles and cultural differences. “It’s definitely been a learning curve for me,” she acknowledges, “but it’s why I think CHWs are so successful. Because we’re using individuals from these communities, they’re really able to help bridge the gap we have between the health care system and the communities.”

That’s why CHWs are so vital to CHO’s success. Not only are these dedicated individuals bilingual, their cultural knowledge allows Siloam to better understand the strengths and barriers within each community. CHWs are eagerly welcomed into the homes and personal lives of others – whether someone needs assistance filling out an insurance form or has questions about their recent clinic visit. CHWs will walk alongside their fellow community members to help with any health care need.

What Success Looks Like

Naturally, we hope Siloam’s outreach leads to improved health outcomes for each ethnic community, but we also hope to see these populations take health care into their own hands – and that’s already starting to happen.

Ahmi, a CHW and young Burmese mother, was educating fellow mothers on how their children could receive dental care through their insurance. The women were completely unaware, and so they spread the word throughout the Burmese community. Ahmi worked with a Siloam nurse to find a dentist who was accepting new patients. After scheduling their appointments, Ahmi and the other Burmese women gathered together to practice filling out patient forms and make sure they had all the right information. These mothers took ownership of their children’s health care, shared their new knowledge with the community, and supported one another through the process.

For Amy, this story directly reflects her long-term hopes for CHO. “I want to see members of these minority communities become our future health care leaders. I think that when a patient sees someone who looks like them, who shares their language and their culture, they’re more likely to engage in their own care.” With this outreach initiative already making an impact, we can hardly imagine how far CHO’s arms might reach. In a sense, Siloam is helping to change the face of health care, and we hope to witness these effects stretch far across the many diverse communities in Nashville, and beyond. ■

Volunteer Spotlight

Steve and Janice Minucci

As Refugee Health Literacy volunteers, Steve and Janice Minucci go into the homes of new refugee families and provide them with basic health information. Here's what they had to say about their experience:

What has surprised you about your volunteer service?

Janice: What's surprised me is how connected you feel to these families after just spending an hour with them, and how it's hard to leave them. These people stay on your mind. They are so special.

Steve: And the kids are just dying to go to school. A lot of the times we get very frustrated because the paperwork goes so slowly.

Janice: If there were something that we could change, it would be the pace at which refugees are able to get into school and work. They're so grateful to be here, and they're just ready to contribute.

What might you say to someone who is unsure about interacting with refugees?

Janice: Go work with refugees, and it will totally change your perspective.

Steve: They've all been screened, they came here legally, and they've gone through so much. Just spend time with them. It doesn't take long to see that they're great people.

Janice: You just need to look at every person the way that God sees them. We're all here because



our families came to this country and started a life. You need to look back at your own history, too, because you're going to find that there was a family member of yours that came just like these refugees.

How has this experience changed you? What have you learned?

Janice: We do a lot of learning alongside these families. We've learned a lot about their lives and their struggles. We have so much respect for these families.

Steve: It's made us humble and more sympathetic. We always ask these families how we can pray for them, and we welcome them, saying, "We're so glad you've come to our country. You can achieve this goal of finding a place here with your family." It's overall been a really fun thing for us, and we wish there were more opportunities to do this.

Janice: People should know that it is really empowering to get out of your comfort zone. The blessings are so much greater than what you can give. ■