

## Innovation is Changing Lives!

In the spring of 2022, we introduced you to an innovative service related to ACEs. We are excited to share some results of that innovation in this article, with more to come during our May 9 Prescription: Strength luncheon.

### What Are ACEs?

ACEs refer to Adverse Childhood Experiences. These are things like abuse, neglect or violence that happen before a child's 18th birthday and cause what is known as toxic stress. The more ACEs children experience, the more likely they are to develop chronic diseases or social/emotional problems as adults.

### What Was Our Innovation?

Thanks to donor gifts, we were able to:

- 👉 **Engage** a representative from the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Kent County to train our entire Heart of the City Health Center pediatric department in March 2022.
- 👉 **Implement** a screening process for children (newborn-18 years) who visit Heart of the City pediatrics.
- 👉 **Co-locate** someone from the CAC in Heart of the City Health Center to serve children who are identified as victims of sexual abuse.
- 👉 **Expand** our counseling department to serve children with high ACE scores.

### What Was the Result?

Our goal was to screen 200 kids in the first year. Since July of 2022, we have screened more than 700 children! Danny Rodriguez, Registered Nurse and Pediatrics Site Manager, explains why this matters. "ACEs and toxic stress are associated with a wide range of health conditions that can alter life expectancy. A lot of this is biologically embedded because it takes place at a very early stage in life. It can have a negative impact if there is no intervention." Some of those impacts include depression, anxiety, obesity, substance abuse, high-risk behaviors and more.



By screening for ACEs and offering early behavioral health intervention, we are helping to prevent extremely costly, sometimes lifelong, medical conditions. We are also literally helping to extend life. Research has shown that a high ACE score can decrease life expectancy by up to 20 years.

**"Use of this screening tool is not universal. Many private practices aren't using it. But it can change someone's life. And that's what we're trying to do ... promote a healthy person moving forward."**

— Danny Rodriguez

Learn more about ACEs, and the way our understanding of them can revolutionize our approach to human health, through this short TED Talk video.



# “Meeting People Where They Are”

Our new Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Elizabeth Warner, has a dream for Durham Senior Health Center, where we will serve people 60 and older. “We will meet older adults where they are, seeking to understand their complex medical conditions, their behavioral health needs, and what matters most to them at this time in their lives.”



The new Durham Senior Health Center opened April 3 inside Cherry Health’s Heart of the City Health Center, and it is a place where seniors can get whole-person care. What is different about it?

“First, we designed the space to be easily navigated,” says Dr. Warner. “That includes clear signage, smooth flooring, and the shortest possible distances between check-in and exam rooms.”

The space is also designed to flow services around the patient. It might be challenging for older adults to go from scale to exam room to laboratory, so the space has been redesigned. For example, the exam rooms feature exam chairs, not tables, which are easier for patients to use safely. The chairs also double as scales to get an accurate weight, and have an extendable arm to facilitate blood draws.

“We know there are barriers to health care for older adults,” continues Dr. Warner. “And quite frankly, we don’t know what all of them might be. We will learn what the barriers are for our individual patients, and then work to reduce or eliminate them. We have built a team ready to take on that challenge.”

The attitude and approach to care will be just as important as the furniture and layout. “The team in Durham Senior Health Center will listen deeply,” says Dr. Warner. “Instead of assuming, we are going to ask about each patient’s goals for health care. I learned this lesson years ago from my 92-year-old patient who had vision and mobility problems. I assumed she wanted to focus on mobility, but she corrected me. ‘My favorite thing to do is bird watch. I can watch birds from a wheelchair. I can’t watch them without my sight.’ I realized that to serve her well as a physician, I needed to know what mattered most to her, given all the functional changes happening in her life. Then I could be effective in caring and advocating for her during this season of her life.”



“The team in Durham Senior Health Center will listen deeply. Instead of assuming, we are going to ask about each patient’s goals for health care.” — Dr. Elizabeth Warner



Large, multi-lingual signs.



Smooth, hard surfaces for easy movement.

## Coordinating Care

Health care coordination can become more complicated as we age. Durham Senior Health Center will have community health workers, medical assistants, nurse care managers, behavioral health support and external resources, including specialist referrals to collaborate and serve patients. “We will model coordinated care in a strong, team-based approach,” says Dr. Warner.

“Our multidisciplinary team will also consider the patient from different views. For example, if a patient is losing weight, we can explore what might be contributing to it. Is he struggling to cook? Does she have dental issues? Is depression involved? Is her weight loss a symptom of a medical condition, such as diabetes or cancer? Regardless of the answer, we will help coordinate care so patients can access the right resources.”

In the end, Durham Senior Health Center intends to improve health equity. “We need to cultivate humility and meet people where they are at,” asserts Dr. Warner. “For people with complex medical needs, this may be the first time they have ever been asked what they want. We are eager to provide that dignity for our patients.”

## Remembering Dr. Clyde Durham (1933-2006)



Durham Senior Health Center carries on a naming legacy that honors Dr. Clyde Durham. He had a passion for equitable health care services and worked tirelessly to provide opportunities through Cherry Health, both as a physician and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of (then) Cherry Street Health Services. We stand on his shoulders as we serve the community in this new way.

## The Fifth Facet of Health

When you think of health, you probably consider mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. But have you ever thought about how financial health connects to all of these?

Consumers Credit Union has! “For us, helping community members manage their financial health is an important service,” says Lynne Jarman-Johnson, Chief Marketing Officer. “We have classes and online resources regarding budgeting, how to build an emergency fund, getting out of debt, and much more. When people have the knowledge to keep their checkbook healthy, there’s a much greater likelihood that they will have the financial resources to help keep themselves healthy.”

As part of Consumers @Work partnership, staff, patients, guests, and the community have access to the ATM at Heart of the City Health Center. “It’s important to have access to banking,” Lynne continues. “We love our partnership with Cherry Health and embrace CEO Tasha Blackmon’s mission to make home ownership accessible to all.”

Consumers Credit Union is a true partner with Cherry Health, both in terms of their financial support and their practical resources for our patients. We sincerely thank them for helping us achieve comprehensive health in our community!

## Get Involved in the Mission!



Give online at [cherryhealth.org/donate](https://cherryhealth.org/donate).



Use the enclosed envelope.



# "This is Not Passive Health Care"

You might think of a videographer as someone with technical skills. And while that is true, the real genius of a great videographer, like Dave MacKenzie, lies in his ability to tell compelling stories.

Dave has worked with Cherry Health Foundation since 2019. He captures the heartfelt passion of our staff and compelling needs of our patients through visual stories.

"I am inspired by the work," Dave says. "When people are using health care services, they are often at a difficult point in their lives. Cherry Health offers hope and results. I see the work of the care teams, and it is so much more than a job to them. There is no insurance reimbursement code for many of the extra steps they take. They do it because they love people."

Dave recognizes and applauds the way Cherry Health supports people from all walks of life. "This is not passive health care," he asserts. "Cherry Health is in the community, rooting out the people who are in need so they can help. Their outreach is amazing."

Dave hears the stories firsthand, and he chooses to support Cherry Health with his time, treasure, and talent. He helps us share those stories by reducing his service fees,



Dave MacKenzie of Stonecrest Productions helps us share our patient stories.

and he also makes financial gifts to Cherry Health. "I want these stories to spark something in a viewer," he says. "My reward comes when someone reaches deeper and gives to support the work."

Thank you, Dave, for all of your gifts to Cherry Health! Your stories help us share our story and engage people in working towards a healthy community with us.



Enjoy a sample of Dave's work here.

  
*Celebration*  
**SAVE THE DATE!**

Plan to attend Cherry Health Celebration on  
**November 8**  
at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.  
More information at [cherryhealth.org/events](https://cherryhealth.org/events).

## Cherry Health Foundation

100 Cherry Street SE  
Grand Rapids MI 49503

### **Anna Goddard, CFRM**

Foundation Director 616.965.8217

### **Kat MacDonald**

Donor Relations & Events Manager 616.965.8267

### **Kathy Lipnicki**

Annual Giving Manager 616.965.8254

### **Angie Brown**

Foundation Coordinator 616.965.8254

### CHERRY HEALTH FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Patti Griswold – Chair  
Elizabeth Joy Fossel – Vice Chair  
Ann Liefer – Treasurer  
Jessica Payne – Secretary  
India Manns – Immediate Past Chair

Jonathan Anderson  
Wayne Bersano  
Jordoun Eatman  
Shelley Irwin  
Jessie Jones  
Lisa M. Lowery, MD

Peaches McCahill  
Alexis Reame  
Joanne Roehm  
Elizabeth Triezenberg  
Carroll Velie

To opt out of future communications, please email [foundation@cherryhealth.com](mailto:foundation@cherryhealth.com) or call 616.965.8254.