



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

From Care to Connection

WHOLE PERSON HEALING

ANNUAL REPORT FY2025



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

Vision Statement:

To become an exceptional community health provider that addresses health care inequities, closes gaps in life expectancy, and pursues social justice.

Mission Statement:

To serve as a center of excellence that provides high quality and accessible health care and social services that achieve health equity, social justice, and the economic well-being of our diverse patient populations.

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Message from the President & CEO

At Whittier Street Health Center, we believe that health is not merely the absence of disease – it is the presence of well-being in every dimension of life. Our commitment to whole person care is rooted in a philosophy that recognizes the interconnection of physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health. This holistic approach guides every facet of our work, from clinical services to community outreach, and reflects our steadfast dedication to health equity and social justice.

Whole person care is a devoted practice. It means placing patients at the center of their care. It means building integrated care teams that include medical providers, behavioral health specialists, social workers, and support systems. It means connecting people to food, transportation, and employment resources. It means offering services that affirm dignity, foster resilience, and restore hope. When patients feel seen, heard, and valued, lives become more balanced, and trust in the care system deepens.

In 2025, our efforts to expand access and heighten impact have taken robust new steps. We expanded our **Health on Wheels Program** with the launch of a **Mobile Dental and Vision Health Van**, a powerful example of whole person care in action. This much-needed addition to our fleet of mobile vans – now totaling five – is improving outcomes in underserved populations by bringing essential services directly to patients who face transportation barriers, endure long waiting lists, and struggle with chronic conditions that disproportionately affect low-income communities.

We also expanded our **Mobile Infectious Diseases Outreach Program**, linking individuals affected by HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases to comprehensive care. Our Community Health Workers play a vital role in reducing stigma and connecting patients to lifesaving services, including increased access to PrEP education and HIV testing.

This year, we enhanced our **Medical Group Visits**. Led by Whittier providers, these visits promote long-term wellness through chronic disease management for conditions including kidney health, heart disease, diabetes, HIV, and hypertension.

In response to a critical need we further strengthened our **Community Outreach Programs** for a broader reach to hotspots, schools, homeless shelters, and public housing developments.

This year, we proudly launched our **Neurodevelopmental Disorder Program** to support our patients and students in the Boston Public Schools, ensuring children with complex developmental challenges receive the compassionate, coordinated care and resources they need to thrive.

We are proud of the work conducted through our **Center for Health Equity Research**. This vital initiative leads clinical trials and research projects focused on kidney disease, breast cancer, dementia, hypertension, and diabetes in a continuing effort to close gaps in care and improve outcomes for historically marginalized populations.

A steadfast commitment to maternal health is demonstrated through our **Moms Do Care Program**, which provides behavioral health, case management, and peer support services for pregnant and parenting women with a history of substance abuse.

Anchored by a mentoring and clinical rotation program, our **Workforce Development** strategy provides immersive training and professional development opportunities for students and emerging nurse practitioners. This initiative cultivates the next generation of healthcare providers.

Through our **Behavioral Health Services Department**, patients now have expanded access to therapy and psychiatry, integrating trauma-informed care and culturally responsive support into each individual's wellness plan.



*Frederica M. Williams, President & CEO,
Whittier Street Health Center*

We continue to address food insecurity through our **Food Pantry and Prescription for Health Program**, offering pantry services, medically tailored meals, and food referrals to patients facing hunger and chronic illness.

Our many **Specialized Health Programs**, including Cancer Survivorship Support, Centering Pregnancy Program, Veteran's Clinic, Post-Prison Release/Re-Entry Program, Anti-Violence Programming, and Whittier Youth Services Enrichment Program, remain integral to our commitment to holistic community-centered care and our mission to reduce disparities across Boston's diverse populations – even in the face of recent funding cuts.

Decreased funding and the burgeoning need for the services we provide daily make your support more critical than ever. We are deeply grateful to our past and present donors; your generosity fuels our mission and uplifts our community. In that spirit of appreciation, we invite you to stand with us again – or for the first time – so we can continue the vital work we were meant to do.

As you read this report, you'll get a glimpse at some of the many services and programs Whittier offers in support of our consistently growing number of patients. You will see how Whittier Street Health Center continues to innovate, advocate, and lead with compassion. Every program, every partnership, and every patient story reflects our belief that true wellness comes from treating the whole person – and that everyone deserves the opportunity to heal, to thrive, and to live a life of meaning and connection.

With gratitude,



FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS

President & CEO

Whittier Street Health Center

Message from the Board

As we reflect on this past year and its challenges, the Board of Directors takes pride in Whittier Street Health Center's unwavering commitment to health equity, innovation, and compassionate care – remaining as a beacon of hope and healing for the communities we serve.

In 2025, Whittier expanded access to critical care, launched new community wellness initiatives, and deepened its partnerships. From mobile units to behavioral health outreach, the Center continues to meet people where they are, treating all with dignity, respect, and quality of care.

We are deeply grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners. Your support fuels our mission and empowers us to deliver culturally responsive and comprehensive health services.

As a Board, we remain dedicated to strong governance, fiscal stewardship, strategic growth and advocating for policies that promote health equity – regardless of circumstance.

Thank you for standing with Whittier Street Health Center as we continue to build a healthier future, one that is rooted in compassion, equality, and justice.

With appreciation,

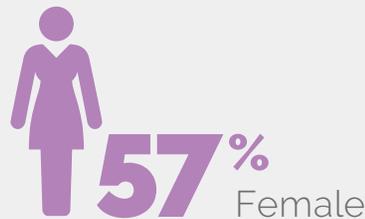
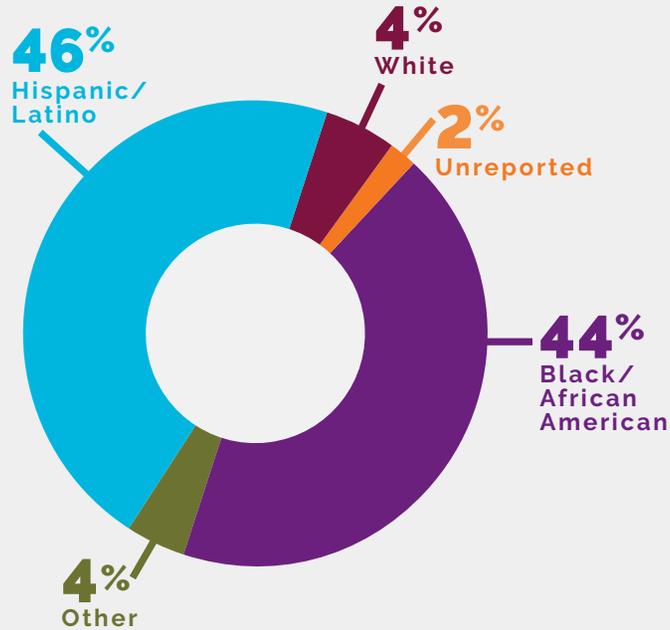
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Patients and Impact

Who We Care For

We serve a diverse patient population:



18% of our patients are uninsured

82% live in public housing

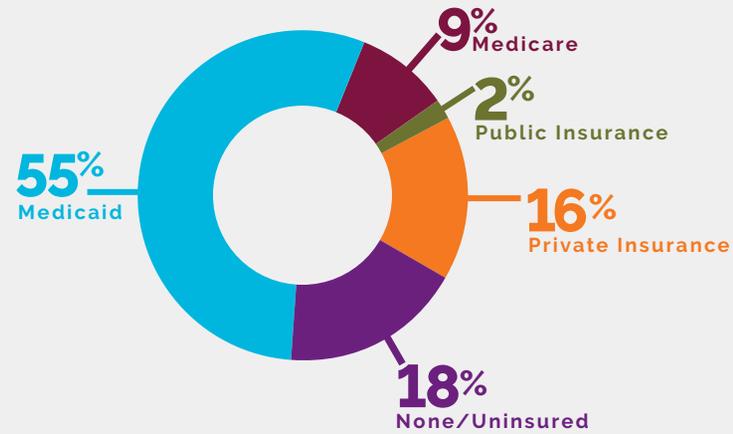
92% of patients with known income live at or below the Federal Poverty Level.

In FY2025, Whittier provided
\$2,898,240
in free health care



100%
of social services
were provided
free of charge

Patient Insurance Sources:



More than
30,000
outreach visits for **18,112** people

Expanding Access

Launching Whittier's Mobile Dental and Vision Care Clinic



In response to overwhelming demand and persistent barriers to care, Whittier Street Health Center this year expanded its Health on Wheels Program to include a new **Mobile Dental and Vision Clinic** – an innovative extension of our commitment to equitable, community-based health services.

The need is urgent. Despite expanding our main facility to include 14 dental rooms, our six-month dental appointment schedule fills within a week of opening. Over 2,000 patients of all ages remain on a waitlist for dental care, and another 1,000 are waiting for vision services.

Previous attempts to deliver dental and vision care via our mobile vans were limited to oral health screenings due to space constraints and lack of equipment. Vision screenings had also been unavailable, as our optometrists are needed at our main site.

The new mobile clinic, housed in a fully equipped wheelchair-accessible 2024 Ford E-450 van, features two dental rooms and a dedicated space for eye exams. Dental services include routine cleanings, fluoride treatments, X-rays, cavity fillings, extractions, and dental implants. More complex procedures, such as dentures, crowns, and root canals, will continue to be provided at our main facility. Mobile vision services encompass annual exams for adults and children, including dilated exams for high-risk populations and screenings for chronic eye diseases.

This initiative is particularly critical for our low-income patients who face disproportionate rates of diabetes and related complications such as retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts, gum disease, and tooth loss.

By increasing access to preventive dental and vision care, we aim to reduce the racial and economic health disparities, improve academic outcomes for children who struggle with undiagnosed low vision, and support overall wellness in our community.

Beyond clinical care, the Mobile Dental and Vision Care Clinic also serves as a vehicle for economic empowerment, creating jobs with meaningful wages, benefits, and wraparound support for individuals from underserved backgrounds. In its first two years, we anticipate delivering approximately 2,000 dental visits to 1,000 patients and 2,288 vision visits – bringing vital care directly to those who need it most. ■

Bridging Barriers to Dental Care

“The first thing people notice is teeth,” says **Dr. Joseph Hallack**, director of the **Oral Health Department** at Whittier Street Health Center.

“Unhealthy teeth are not just a detriment to overall health, but also to emotional well-being.”

With 36 years of experience as a dentist, Dr. Hallack has dedicated his career to improving both the physical and mental health of his patients through compassionate, comprehensive dental care. At Whittier, he leads a team committed to making oral health accessible and empowering for all. Their patient-centered, non-discriminatory approach prioritizes comfort and breaks down barriers to care.

“The main issues we see are lack of insurance and fear of dentists,” says Dr. Hallack, whose fluency in four languages connects with a diverse patient population.

While flexible payment plans and outreach programs help address financial challenges, easing patient anxiety requires a more personal touch.

“We see the anxiety in most patients – children and adults alike – so it’s up to us to make them feel relaxed enough that they continue their treatment and actually look forward to coming here,” he explains.



“We see the anxiety in most patients – children and adults alike – so it’s up to us to make them feel relaxed enough that they continue their treatment and actually look forward to coming here.”

Dr. Joseph Hallack, Director of the Oral Health Department

Dental care is a vital component to overall health. Poor oral hygiene has been linked to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory infections, pregnancy complications, and even cancer. Untreated cavities and gum disease can lead to tooth loss, impaired nutrition and speech, and diminished self-esteem.

The back log of patients waiting to be seen by the dental team at Whittier is high, says Dr. Hallack. To meet the growing demand, Whittier has expanded its dental department by adding three new dental treatment rooms for a total of 17 dental treatment rooms, and is recruiting additional dentists to help manage the long patient waiting list.

It is with great appreciation that Dr. Hallack acknowledges that the launch of Whittier's new Mobile and Vision Care Clinic has helped to offload routine services such as cleanings, fluoride treatments, X-rays, cavity fillings, extractions, and implants.

Working in concert with other departments, the oral health team ensures comprehensive patient-centered care. "We collaborate and coordinate with physicians and specialists when medical clearance is needed," Dr. Hallack says. "We want to be sure all precautions are taken before we begin treatment.

"Staying current with the fast pace of technology is a priority," says Dr. Hallack, noting that continuing education is encouraged for all dental practitioners.

The high number of patients waiting to be seen can weigh heavily on Dr. Hallack and team, but their commitment to equitable care and community health keeps them going.

Each smile restored, each patient comforted is a reminder of the impact they make daily.

"The best part of the day is seeing the expression of a patient when they look into a mirror after a cleaning or restoration," says Dr. Hallack. "It's priceless." ■

From First Visit to Family Tradition

It's been 18 years since **Tatiana Goncalves** first walked through the doors at Whittier Street Health Center, and over those nearly two decades, the care, comfort, and compassion she's received have been a cornerstone of her well-being.

"Whittier was the first clinic I went to when I moved to Boston in 2007," Tatiana recalls. Her earlier visits took place at Whittier's former location in the Ruggles area of Roxbury. "At the time I didn't have insurance, but they still saw me. That's the thing about Whittier – they will never send you away."

Tatiana has continued receiving care at Whittier ever since.

"I come here for my physicals, OB/GYN, vision care and I've had a lot of dental work done," she says. "Cleanings, fillings, two root canals, bridge work, even a half-broken tooth – everything was taken care of.

"My dentist here is so good, so gentle," says Tatiana, praising Dr. Joseph Hallack. "He's incredibly patient and always explains exactly what he's doing and why. I trust him and that's huge."

For Tatiana, Whittier Street Health Center has become a family affair of care. "My son and daughter are grown now, but they still come here," she says with a smile. "Whittier has always been part of our lives."



“That's the thing about Whittier – they will never send you away.”
Tatiana Goncalves, WSHC patient

Tatiana is passionate about the Center's role in serving minorities and underserved communities. "They help people who need it most," she emphasizes. "Without Whittier I don't know how a lot of people would get by."

Now, even with insurance and the freedom to choose other providers, Tatiana remains loyal. "The care they provide is phenomenal. I could go anywhere now but I stay with Whittier because they were there for me when no one else was." ■



NOVEMBER 21, 2025

Opening ceremony for the new dental suites in the Center for Health Equity Research and the new Mobile Dental and Vision Health Van



Honoring Our Corporate Champions



At Whittier Street Health Center, we believe that health equity is a shared responsibility – and this year we are proud to recognize two extraordinary partners who exemplify that commitment:

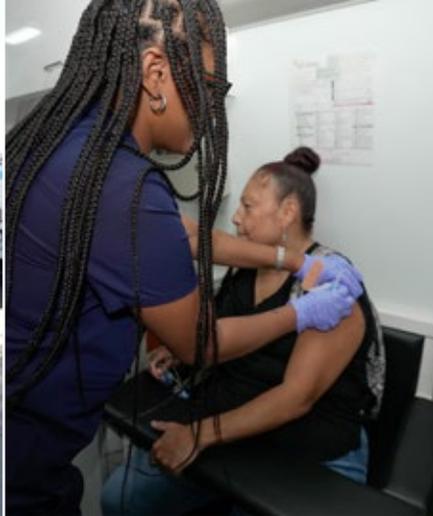
Altus Dental and **Alnylam Pharmaceuticals**.

Altus Dental has long been a strong advocate for oral health access, supporting our mission to provide comprehensive dental care to underserved communities. Their generous contributions and advocacy have helped expand preventive services, reduce disparities, and ensure that every smile has a chance to shine. Through their partnership, we have been able to reach more families and provide them the care they need and deserve.

Alnylam Pharmaceuticals, a global leader in RNAi therapeutics, continues to demonstrate what it means to be a purpose-driven company. Their support reflects a deep commitment to health innovation, community engagement, and social responsibility. Whether through philanthropic investment, employee volunteerism, or health education initiatives, their impact is directly felt in the lives of our patients.

Together, Altus Dental and Alnylam Pharmaceuticals remind us that when business and community unite, transformative change is possible. We are deeply grateful for their partnership and proud to honor them in this year's annual report. ■







Fighting Infectious Disease with Equity and Empathy

At Whittier Street Health Center, the battle against HIV and Hepatitis C is rooted in compassion, equity, and education. Through its comprehensive **Infectious Disease Program**, Whittier provides testing, treatment and prevention services to underserved communities and vulnerable populations. With a focus on early detection, linkage to care, and long-term retention, the program empowers patients to manage their health with dignity – while actively working to eliminate stigma, reduce disparities, and close gaps in access.

“Many of our patients struggle with substance abuse, homelessness, and most are challenged by social disadvantages and low income,” says **Dr. Brian Wong**, the **Lead Infectious Disease Specialist** at Whittier. “Building trust and developing relationships take time and effort from both our team and our patients. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we don’t, but we never stop trying.”

Over the years Whittier has developed a state-of-the art infectious disease program, offering in-house care at the **FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS BUILDING** on Tremont Street in Roxbury. The program extends its reach through the Community Health and Wellness

Department, which works in tandem with the Infectious Disease and Special Populations (IDSP) Outreach Team to engage individuals where they are – on the streets, in shelters, and throughout Boston’s neighborhoods.

“Navigating the system at other large medical institutions can be difficult,” says Dr. Wong. “At Whittier, patients can rely on case managers and our program nurse to guide them through the process and provide continuity in care.” He underscores the crucial role his support staff plays in the welfare of patients, saying, “they are the ones who are continuously in contact with patients, whether in the clinic or on the phone.”

Dr. Wong notes a troubling rise in newly diagnosed HIV cases, particularly among injection drug users and new immigrants. He also points to Hepatitis C and tuberculosis as persistent health challenges, emphasizing the need for outreach, education, and culturally responsive care.

As Whittier continues to broaden its reach and deepen its impact, the Infectious Disease Program stands as a testament to the Center’s commitment to provide access to care for all.

Says Dr. Wong, “We do our best for all our patients, no matter their circumstance.” ■



“Building trust and developing relationships take time and effort from both our team and our patients. Sometimes we succeed, sometimes we don’t, but we never stop trying.”

Dr. Brian Wong, Lead Infectious Disease Specialist

Where Jason Stiles Found His Way

“From the first time I walked through the doors at Whittier Street Health Center in December of 2023, I felt comfort, peace, and at ease,” says

Jason Stiles.

That sense of well-being was hard-won. At age 17, Jason was homeless and struggling with drug addiction. The next nine years were spent behind bars, during which time he was diagnosed with HIV. Chaos and crime continued to dominate his life, ultimately leading to a 25-year incarceration from 1998 to 2023.

“I became aware of Whittier through the Department of Corrections,” Jason says, adding that in addition to receiving treatment for HIV through the Infectious Disease Program, he now receives all his medical care at the Center.

His connection to Whittier runs deep. “I always say ‘In Whittier I trust,’” he smiles. “It’s been instrumental in turning my health around, medically and emotionally. I wasn’t invested in my health before, but Whittier showed me the way.”

With sobriety as his foundation, Jason proudly shares that he has been sober for the past 27 years.

Though currently unemployed, he is actively participating in a re-entry program that may lead to a new chapter – one where he helps others reclaim their lives.

To that end, Jason has completed 20 hours of recovery coaching and training. He’s also a graduate of the Tufts My Turn program, a year-long trauma-informed re-entry initiative at Tufts University that combines coursework with a Civic Studies Certificate. As a result, Jason now holds 14 credits toward his associate’s degree, which he plans to pursue at Bunker Hill Community College.

Currently living in a sober house in the greater Boston area, Jason says, “I now have stability in my life.

“It’s been a long journey,” he reflects. “Without Whittier I wouldn’t have made the same progress. I receive so much support here and am provided for in ways I never thought possible. I can’t say enough about the amazing care I receive from everyone – no question, in Whittier I trust! ■



“I wasn’t invested in my health before, but Whittier showed me the way.”

Jason Stiles, WSHC patient

Relating through Culture, Healing through Care



“I can give you guidance, but you have to do the work,” is how **Dr. Villarreal Verdecia Arturo** underscores the critical role of patient responsibility in managing diabetes. Type 2 Diabetes, most prevalent in cultures where carbohydrates are a dietary mainstay, disproportionately affects underserved communities where inadequate access to nutritious foods and preventive care intensifies the risk. Limited public transit and zoning that favors fast-food outlets deepens barriers to healthy options.

“The high cost of food is a major factor,” explains Dr. Arturo, who joined Whittier Street Health Center in 2020. “We also see patients who don’t have stable meal plans because they’re working two or three jobs to make ends meet.”

Obesity, genetics, physical inactivity, chronic stress, inadequate sleep, age, and ethnicity have been linked to diabetes, a condition that, according to state health data, ranks among the leading causes of long-term health complications.

Compounding the risk are environmental factors. Exposure to air and noise pollution, tobacco smoke, and dwellings with poorly ventilated spaces can increase the probability of diabetes.

“I speak plainly to help patients understand that managing diabetes requires a balance of diet, medication, and their commitment to better health,” says Dr. Arturo. “I emphasize that if not controlled, diabetes can lead to stroke, heart attack, or the need for dialysis.”

One of Dr. Arturo’s patients took that potential prognosis to heart, transforming her health by adhering to a structured treatment plan and shedding 40 pounds.

“I consider her a model patient,” Dr. Arturo says. “She went from having to take many medications down to one.”

Dr. Arturo emphasizes the power of culturally sensitive care – treatment that helps patients feel seen and empowered to take control of their health. He notes with a smile that many of his patients often assume his Caribbean roots are Dominican. “We may come from different countries, but our cultures are somewhat similar. That connection makes it easier for me to relate and connect to my patients and for them to relate and connect to me.” ■

“I emphasize that if not controlled, diabetes can lead to stroke, heart attack, or the need for dialysis.”

Dr. Villarreal Verdecia Arturo

From Diagnosis to Control

It's been nine years since **Melvin Mark** was first diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. Thanks to the comprehensive care and compassionate support from the medical team at Whittier Street Health Center, Melvin has not only learned how to manage his condition, but how to take responsibility for his health.

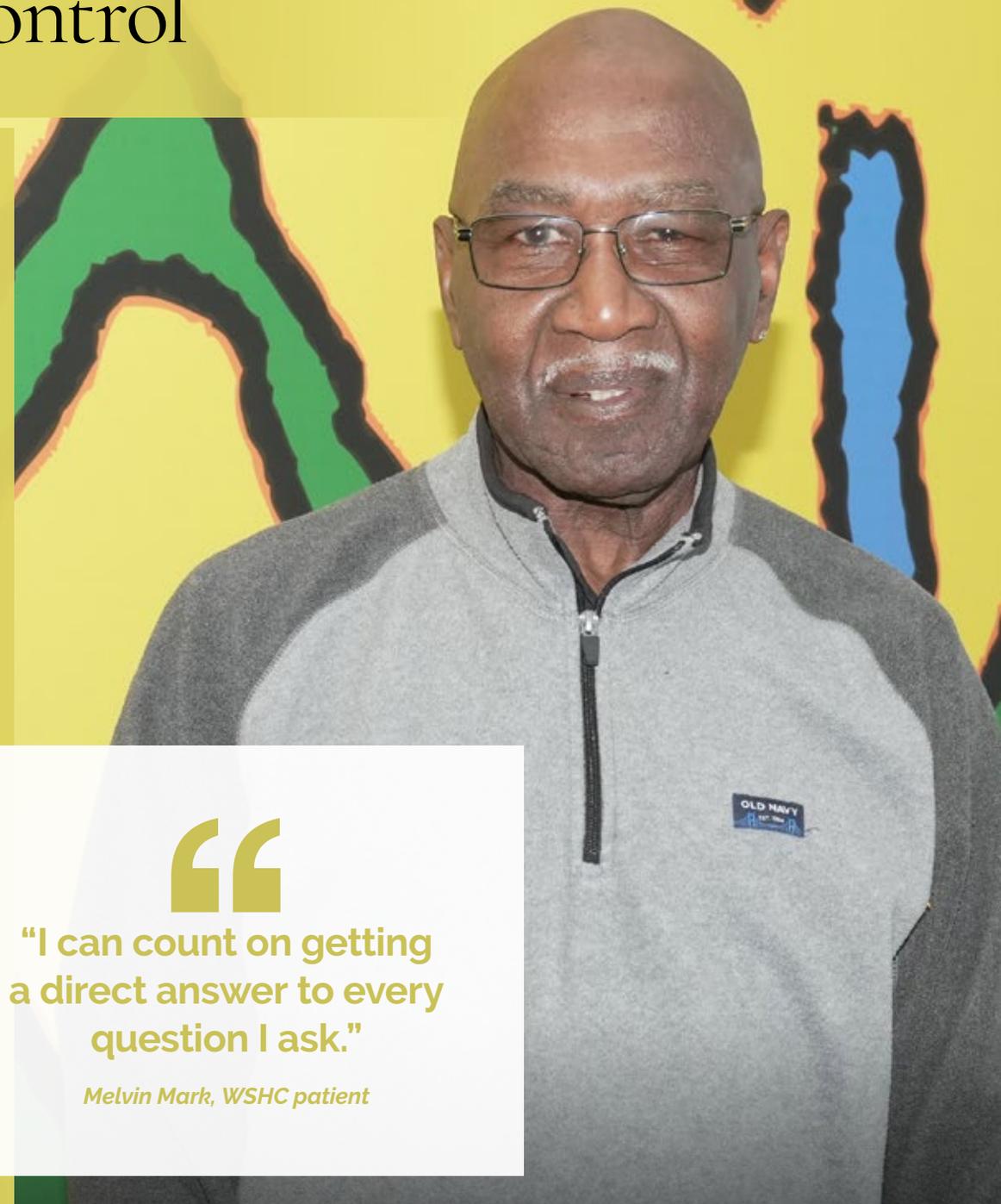
"I can't say enough good things about Dr. Arturo," Melvin shares. "He opened my eyes to how serious diabetes can be and how to take better care of myself."

Beyond prescriptive treatment, Melvin's care plan has included a healthier diet, regular exercise, and a deeper understanding of the risks associated with diabetes. Conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, retinopathy, gum disease, glaucoma, and skin infections have all been linked to Type 2 Diabetes – one of the most prevalent health issues in Boston's underserved communities.

"Today, I have my diabetes controlled and am so much better," says Melvin, with a smile, expressing gratitude to the Whittier staff. "Everyone is so encouraging and attentive. I can count on getting a direct answer to every question I ask."

Not that he doesn't trust Dr. Arturo and the team, but Melvin admits to occasionally "Googling" their advice when he gets home.

"It's always the same as what I was told at Whittier!" ■



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"I can count on getting a direct answer to every question I ask."

Melvin Mark, WSHC patient

We Come to Them: The Power of Outreach



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“These are my people.
I’m comfortable with
them and they’re
comfortable with me.”

*Michelle Jean Louis,
Community Outreach Team*

“

“It’s important that the women I see know
they have someone in their corner.”

Chanti James, Community Outreach Team



“Compassion, community, comfort – these aren't just words,” says **Michelle Jean Louis**. “They're the heartbeat of Whittier's **Outreach Program**.”

Whittier's Outreach Program is a cornerstone of its commitment to health equity. Not just a service, it's a lifeline, helping to reduce barriers and empowering individuals through services including mobile health vans, medical screenings, substance abuse assessments, and prevention counseling. The program also offers free transportation to medical appointments, translation and interpretation services, and referrals to social supports like housing, jobs, education, food, and clothing. Perhaps most importantly, it meets people where they are, both physically and emotionally.

Michelle, a frontline staff member with 15 years of healthcare experience, found her calling when she joined Whittier in 2024. “I mostly worked as a receptionist before coming to Whittier,” she says. “But being behind a desk and being out in the community are two very different things. I'm comfortable in the community. These are my people. I'm comfortable with them and they're comfortable with me.”

Mutual trust is the foundation of her work. “When we treat people with care and dignity, word spreads,” says Michelle. “That's how people find their way to us, through trust.”

“We see it every day – unstable living conditions, lack of health insurance, food insecurity, dental problems,” she says. “And with funding cuts to key services, in particular health

insurance and food stamps, our patients are more challenged and so are we.”

Yet, the program remains resilient. Despite certain funding cuts, this robust initiative continues to deliver life-changing care, build trust, and connect individuals to critical resources.

“It's important that people see us every day in the streets, reaching out and providing,” Michelle says. “They don't have to come to us – we come to them.”

Phillip Hunt, a member of the Community Outreach Team, knows first-hand how unpredictable and rewarding his work can be.

“There is no such thing as a typical day,” says Phillip, who joined Whittier a little more than a year ago. “One minute you're with someone suffering quietly, and the next with an angry person who's lashing out. You just have to pay attention to every personality.”

While the state of body and mind may differ from patient to patient, the quality of care, compassion, and sense of dignity they receive from the outreach team is unvarying.

“We're not here to judge people,” says Phillip. “We're here to listen, show respect, and offer services to help them now and in the future.”

His outreach strategies stem around using every opportunity to develop an ongoing communication stream with as many clients as possible. “We are out at Mass and Cass weekly so we see many of the same clients,” says Phillip. “I have a genuine interest in how they're doing and I think that comes through.”

There have been success stories along the way, he says, recalling a young woman who, after weeks of encouragement, attended a recovery meeting. “There was pride in her voice when she told me. That was a good day – for me and for her.”

Being available to patients doesn't stop at the end of the workday for **Chanti James**.

“I give some my personal phone number, so they can reach out to me,” she says. “Elderly clients in particular need extra help. There have been times when I go to where they live, go to the store for them, run a couple errands.”

As a member of the Outreach Team focusing on women's health for the past seven years, Chanti meets clients where they are – in housing developments, shelters, and on the street.

“We help women who are homeless find shelter. We assist with income issues. We accompany them to the DTA (Department of Transitional Assistance) or RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) to help fill out applications. We stay with them until they get all the services they need. We're there not just because it's our job, we're there because we care.”

For Chanti, building trust is the foundation of her work.

“I try to create genuine relationships,” she says. “Everybody needs help at times. It's important that the women I see know they have someone in their corner.”

Success of the women's health outreach program, she says, is measured in lives changed.

“When they get housing. When they have income. When mothers who need to work get

childcare. Seeing the look on faces when things are coming together, it's amazing."

The **Infectious Disease and Special Populations (IDSP) Department** echoes that mission.

"We try our best every day," says **Rubes Djelyndo**, who joined Whittier recently after nearly two decades with the American Red Cross as a community care coordinator.

"Our mission is to deliver a quick, effective response, followed by targeted treatment, preventive measures, and education," says Rubes. "Our job is two-fold; to ensure that people have access to the necessary resources and support they need to combat infectious diseases and to promote health within the community."

The IDSP outreach program is designed to ensure continuous care for individuals at high risk of or living with infectious diseases. IDSP outreach workers are out in the field five days a week, offering HIV, Hepatitis C, and STI testing, distributing safe sex kits, and linking patients to care with the goal to help them navigate treatment and improve long-term health outcomes.

It is with concern that Rubes notes a rise in HIV and STI cases, especially among new arrivals to the country who lack health awareness. Despite the challenges, Rubes and the outreach team remain deeply committed to their work.

In addition to building trust, overcoming language barriers is a challenge faced by outreach workers. "People value their privacy

and we make it clear that everything is completely anonymous," says Rubes. "We all do our part together to protect our patients – and we take pride in doing it every day."

As for language? Not an issue for Rubes.

"I speak six languages," he says smiling.

Whether it's Michelle's deep community ties, Phillip's compassionate persistence, Chanti's steadfast advocacy, or Rubes's multilingual ability, Whittier's Community Outreach Team proves that care doesn't just wait behind clinic doors.

"They don't have to come to us," Michelle says. "We come to them." ■

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"Our mission is to deliver a quick, effective response, followed by targeted treatment, preventive measures, and education."

Rubes Djelyndo, Community Outreach Team



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"We're not here to judge people; we're here to listen, show respect, and offer services to help them now and in the future."

Phillip Hunt, Community Outreach Team

More Than Medicine

Whittier's Commitment to Community

The name may be Whittier Street Health Center, but no one understands better than **Rukia Ali** that the services offered go “far beyond medical.” As Outreach Program Coordinator for more than 25 years at Whittier, Rukia leads a team dedicated to bridging the gap between underserved communities and the comprehensive support they need to thrive.

Through targeted outreach, her team engages low-income, minority, and immigrant populations, educating them about the wide range of services available.

“We coordinate public housing programs, host coffee hours, and offer health screenings,” she explains. “But our unique outreach model goes further; it addresses social needs, provides legal support and includes a great deal of advocacy.”

That support often means walking alongside people – literally. It’s a model rooted in trust and presence. “We don’t just refer people to services,” Rukia says. “We accompany them to court hearings, help with health insurance applications, assist families enrolling their children in school, attend housing appointments, even go to the Social Security office. We definitely wear different hats.”

With a growing number of newly arrived families to this country seeking support, Rukia stresses the importance of cultural and linguistic competency.

“We are very mindful of how we offer services,” she says. “We listen, truly listen and through flexible programming and our bilingual staff, we’re able to help in ways that are respectful and effective.”

“The outreach program and every initiative at Whittier is a lifeline to so many,” Rukia says. “People count on us to be there – and the last thing we want is to let them down.” ■

“

“We definitely wear different hats.”

Rukia Ali, Outreach Program Coordinator





Early Intervention, Lasting Impact: A Holistic Approach to Neurodevelopmental Care

Since its launch, Whittier Street Health Center's **Neurodevelopmental Disorders Program** has served a striking number of young patients, underscoring a critical gap in care for children of color in underserved communities.

"We see children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) behavioral issues quite often and then there are other concerns that don't necessarily require medical intervention, but still require attention," says **Dr. Michael Oanea**, who joined Whittier's pediatric team in July of 2024. "For children under three, connecting families with early intervention services is essential to supporting healthy development."

After an initial evaluation, Dr. Oanea connects to targeted therapies specific to their developmental needs.

Motor difficulties, such as poor balance, delayed milestones (sitting, crawling, walking) or trouble with handwriting, often require physical and/or occupational therapies initially through school systems and subsequently via outpatient therapy, depending on severity. Communication disorders – difficulty with articulation as example – also warrant outpatient therapy.

For children with profound communication difficulties who are unable to produce intelligible speech, visual communication devices guided by a speech therapist can be transformative, according to Dr. Oanea.

Applied Behavioral Analysis, a specialized therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, addresses not only behavioral concerns, but also supports the development of social communication skills.

Profound changes are often seen in young patients diagnosed with ADHD, especially when the right medication and proper dosage are in place.

"A good number of parents tell me that, with treatment, their child's behavior – including attention span and impulse control – is like night and day," Dr. Oanea says. "He's not talking non-stop, he's not having to get out of his seat after 20 or 30 seconds, he's able to have a conversation with me. These are the cases where we see the most dramatic improvements."

Not all challenges require medical intervention. Learning disorders, for example, can be effectively addressed through appropriate supports systems within schools.

"It often takes time to see noticeable progress," Dr. Oanea explains. "But usually when I speak to parents they'll tell me that compared to a year ago, their child has made meaningful improvement."

Dr. Oanea also points to socioeconomic barriers as a major factor limiting access to care among families of vulnerable populations.

"Often, it comes down to finding time for an evaluation, registering for early intervention, and then locating a developmental specialist who can accommodate a family's schedule," he says. "That's going to be incredibly difficult for parents working multiple shifts or more than 40 hours a week."

In some cases, families may not be aware of available services or "have just gotten used to being let down by the system in various ways."

"One of the reasons I joined Whittier was because it became very clear to me that this is a place where we don't just treat medical issues," shares Dr. Oanea. "We also address the less obvious barriers that shape a child's long-term success." ■

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“A good number of parents tell me that, with treatment, their child's behavior – including attention span and impulse control – is like night and day.”

Dr. Michael Oanea, Pediatrician

Tailored Therapies, Real Progress

Pediatric Neurodevelopment at Whittier

“From initial assessment to recommended therapies and ongoing follow-up appointments, Dr. Oanea has been great,” says **Kaidy Forbes**, whose twin 10-year olds Kenneth and Kaitlyn have been under his care since the summer of 2024.

As a former primary care patient at Whittier Street Health Center, Kaidy was already familiar with the Center's reputation for comprehensive, compassionate care. “I moved out of the immediate Boston area so I go somewhere else now,” she explains. “But I knew Whittier was the right place for the twins' issues.”

Kenneth has Autism and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diagnoses made prior to his initial visit at Whittier and subsequently confirmed by Dr. Oanea. Kaitlyn's learning disorder was identified through Whittier's thorough evaluation process.

Since those assessments at Whittier, the twins have received tailored therapies, revised care plans, medication adjustments, and consistent follow-up – all in an effort to ensure they receive the proper care for their specific issues.

“Both Kenneth and Kaitlyn have made a lot of progress,” says Kaidy, with optimism in her voice. “They're happier at school and at home.”

She credits the individual therapies now in place for the positive changes, noting that Kenneth “has come a long way.”

“Dr. Oanea and the staff are always so attentive and make us feel comfortable,” says Kaidy. “It means a lot to know that we can count on Whittier to meet our needs.” ■



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“I knew Whittier was the right place for the twins' issues.”

Kaidy Forbes, WSHC patient

Moms Do Care: Rebuilding Lives, Restoring Families



Jessica Gonzalez has always felt called to serve. As a behavioral health high-risk case manager with Whittier Street Health Center's Moms Do Care program, she's found her purpose in helping women navigate recovery and reclaim their lives.

"I've always had a passion to serve the community, help others, and be part of an organization that makes a true impact," she says.

Jessica joined Whittier in 2023, bringing with her a rich background in education and healthcare. A graduate of Wheelock College, she's worked as a personal care assistant, guidance counselor, pre-school teacher, program coordinator, and an advocacy support specialist. Yet, it wasn't until Jessica joined Whittier that she felt professionally fulfilled.

"I realized my purpose was here," she reflects.

That purpose found its perfect match in the Moms Do Care program – a free, voluntary, and anonymous initiative supporting women who are pregnant, postpartum, or parenting young children while navigating substance use recovery and in particular Opioid Use Disorder. Services include medication-assisted treatment, behavioral health support, safety and nurturing groups, childcare and transportation assistance, and peer recovery coaching.

"We reach out, both internally and externally, to enroll moms," says Jessica, noting that service plans are individualized based on "the mom's need."

Each plan is developed in collaboration with program participants, honoring their unique recovery journey.

"We're here to provide the right tools and support as they go through the process of healing and recovery," says Jessica. "We want to lead them to success and help them build the skills to maintain recovery."

Since its launch in 2019, Moms Do Care has grown steadily, due to increased outreach and rising community need.

Jessica manages data input and reporting for the program, tracking enrollment, demographics, and discharge trends.

"We're out in the community, collaborating with other agencies and clinicians – all in an effort to let these moms know that we're here, ready to provide resources and support."

One of the program's most vital features is its anonymity.

"We offer a safe space where these women can be honest without fear," says Jessica, adding that many participants have experienced trauma and stigma. "The room is always closed off – they know what they share stays in the room."

Moms Do Care "fits authentically" with Whittier's integrated model of care, says Jessica.

"It's about treating the whole person. During intake we make the moms aware of all our services offered – medical, behavioral, nutrition, dental, vision, social services, even gym membership – and they take good advantage of what we offer."

Support extends to their children, as well.

"If they're low on diapers, formula, clothing – any essentials a child may need – we have them covered."

Jessica pointed to major depressive disorder as the most common behavioral health challenge facing participants. Many moms are separated from their children, turned away from other healthcare providers, and battling isolation.

"It's no wonder that this diagnosis is so prevalent," she says.

Reuniting families is at the heart of the Moms Do Care program.

"For moms not currently with their child, it's about doing the work to heal so they can be reunited," says Jessica. "The program is essential for the family as a whole. It's about re-establishing identity. It's about being treated with dignity and respect. It's about doing the work to heal and recover. It's about saving lives." ■



"We offer a safe space where they can be honest without fear."

Jessica Gonzalez, Behavioral Health High-Risk Case Manager

A Year of Transformation

Recovery Rooted in Compassion

It's been a year or so since **Erica Bettencourt** completed the Moms Do Care program, but the lessons she learned and the support she received continue to shape her life.

"It taught me patience – with my child and myself – and made me a better mother and a stronger person," says Erica, who joined the program while undergoing treatment from addiction at the Behavioral Health Network in Dorchester (now located in Hyde Park), a center dedicated to helping women with children.

At the time, Erica's daughter was not quite two years old. "Being a mom was still very new to me and at the same time I was struggling with addiction problems," she recalls. "At first I didn't understand how much of an impact Moms Do Care could have, but it turned out to basically make my recovery."

When she entered the program, Erica was determined "to do what I had to do to get to where I needed to be. I had made a mess of my life and knew I had to get better – for myself and my daughter." Once a supportive relationship with program facilitator Jessica Gonzalez was established, "everything came into perspective."

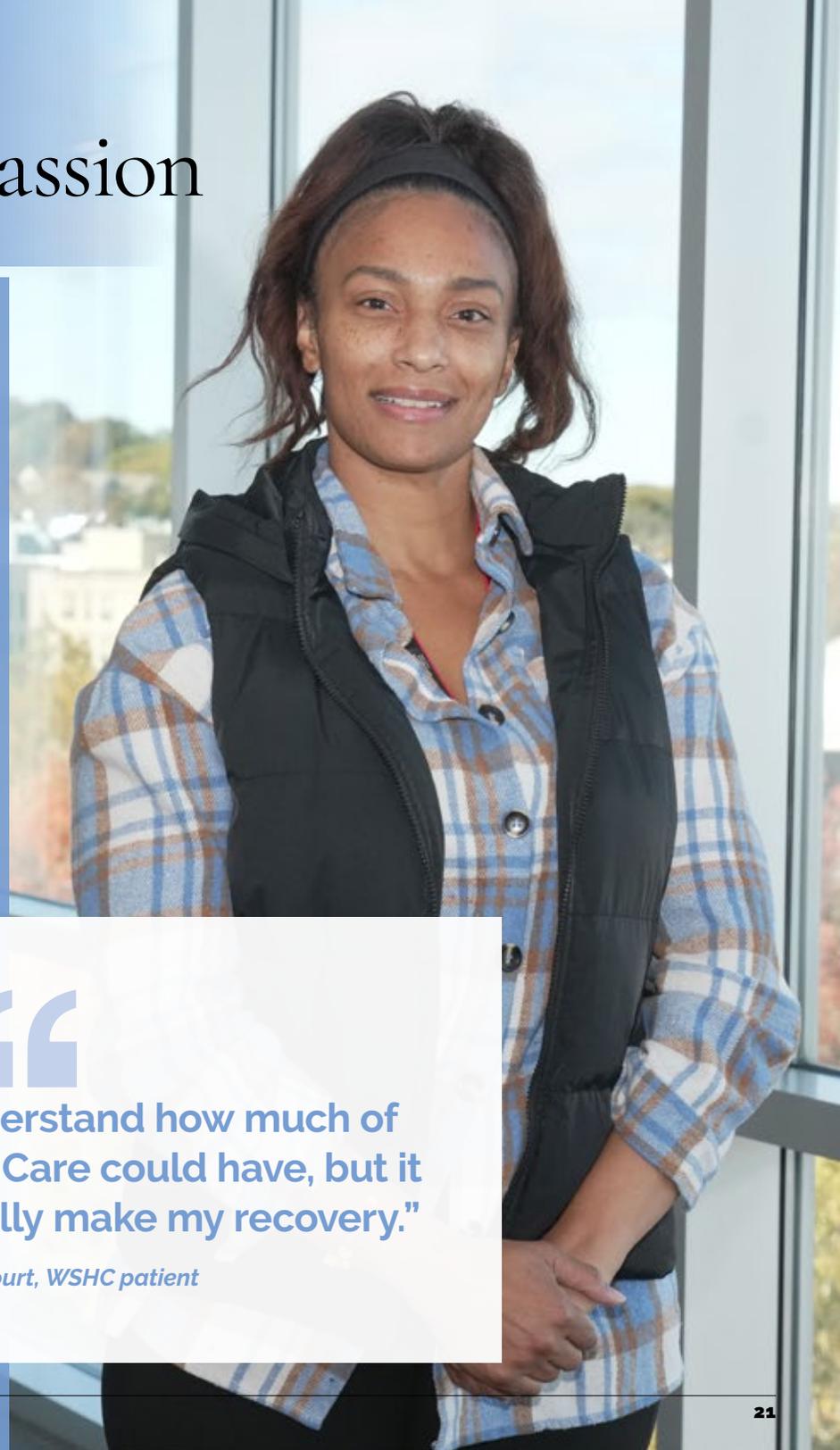
Describing the program as "non-judgmental and comforting," Erica still checks in with Jessica about once a month. "Jessica truly cares. She's so down

to earth, you can feel comfort just being around her."

Judgement, disapproval, and negativity have no place in Moms Do Care. Instead, the program offers a safe haven built on honesty, compassion, understanding, and empathy.

"My confidence as a person and a parent has done a 360," Erica says. "I'm in a good place now because of the hard work I put in and the support I received. Moms Do Care and Jessica have forever changed my life."

Her advice to other moms facing similar struggles? "Don't be afraid to take that first step and ask for help. You're not alone. Help is there – you just have to look." ■



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“At first I didn't understand how much of an impact Moms Do Care could have, but it turned out to basically make my recovery.”

Erica Bettencourt, WSHC patient

The Power of Mentorship: Building Confidence, Compassion and Clinical Excellence



It may be defined as a relationship formed to encourage growth and development, but mentoring in the workplace, says **Chigoziri "Chichi" Ojuka**, is also about collaboration and trust.

"I view mentorship as guidance, partnership, and emotional support," says Chichi. "I strive to be a visible and approachable resource, creating an environment where new nurse practitioners feel comfortable asking questions, and even discussing mistakes they've made. It's about building confidence as they grow into competent providers."

As part of Whittier's **Workforce Development** strategy, the mentoring and clinical rotation program offers hands-on training and professional development opportunities for students and emerging healthcare professionals.

Through this initiative, nurse practitioner students gain exposure to real-world clinical settings while receiving personalized guidance from seasoned providers, like Chichi.

"Mentoring has allowed me to give back to the same community that helped shape my career," she says, reflecting on her professional journey that began in 2013 as a Regis College student, completing her clinical rotation at Whittier.

"I was a student here and experienced my own evolution," says Chichi, who became a member of the Whittier clinical staff in 2014 and is currently the Director of the Satellite Clinic. "At the same time, mentoring pushes me to stay current and contributes to my professional development."

Now, a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with a Post-Master's Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, she brings a dual lens of clinical expertise and emotional intelligence to her role as mentor.

Over time, Whittier's mentoring program has evolved to align with the Center's mission to address health and social disparity in underserved communities.

"We have become more intentional about cultural competency by tailoring mentorship to reflect the realities of our diverse patient populations," Chichi says. "Our emphasis extends beyond clinical and includes awareness of the social, cultural, and economic factors that help shape health outcomes."

To that end, the mentoring program integrates cultural competency training, communication workshops, community engagement activities, and clinical shadowing across a wide spectrum of patient cases.

Mentoring new nurse practitioners also plays a role in advancing Whittier's workforce development strategy. By embedding structured mentorship into clinical training, the program helps cultivate a skilled, confident workforce in line with the Center's evolving needs and community-focused mission.

As a powerful example, Chichi shared a compelling story of mentorship in action.

One young woman began her career at Whittier as a registered nurse and later transitioned into the role of nurse practitioner. At first, she struggled with the fast pace and complexity of providing care in a community health setting. But through steady mentorship, consistent support and thoughtful coaching, she grew in confidence and clinical skill, forging deep, lasting relationships with her patients. Today, she is a trusted provider whose compassionate care regularly inspires heartfelt gratitude from patients.

"To me, this story is powerful because it shows that mentorship isn't just about professional development – it's also about elevating the quality of care and deepening the trust we build with our patients," says Chichi.

Asked what being a mentor means to her, Chichi reflectively replies, "Knowing that I'm helping to train the next generation of skilled providers to carry our mission forward." ■

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I strive to be a visible and approachable resource, creating an environment where new nurse practitioners feel comfortable asking questions, and even discussing mistakes they've made. It's about building confidence as they grow into competent providers.”

*Dr. Chigoziri Ojuka, DNP, APRN,
FNP-C, PMHNP-BC
Director, Satellite Clinic*

Guided to Grow

Shaping Futures through Mentorship

“I just knew I wouldn’t have the same experiences or opportunities anywhere else,” says Nurse Practitioner **Gabriel “Gabby” Okeke**, reflecting on her decision to join Whittier Street Health Center in June of 2024 after completing a one-year mentorship with Chichi Ojuka.

With a background as a medical-surgical nurse at Boston Medical Center and experience at an eating disorder treatment center in Dedham, Gabby enrolled in the Fellowship Program at UMass-Boston to “grow and learn in my career.”

“At the time, I was completing a two-year master’s program in nursing, specializing as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences,” Gabby explains. “But something was missing – two years just wasn’t enough. I needed more hands-on training.”

The Fellowship Program gave Gabby the chance to connect with seasoned healthcare professionals and deepen her clinical experience.

“I chose Whittier for my clinical rotation and immediately felt supported and encouraged,” she says, expressing deep gratitude for her mentor.

“Chichi was amazing. Her guidance was invaluable, especially in challenging situations with complex patients. I was given a lot of independence, but she was always

available if I had questions – it was the perfect balance of autonomy and support.”

Gabby credits the program with uplifting her and expanding her clinical knowledge, noting that constructive feedback contributed greatly to her professional growth.

“It’s wonderful to receive positive comments, but I want to know when I’m doing something wrong. I want to learn from my mistakes.”

After completing her mentorship and clinical rotation, Gabby was offered a position at Whittier, one she accepted without hesitation, drawn to the Center’s collaborative and team-based culture.

“The staff here is incredible,” says Gabby, now a member of Whittier’s Department of Behavioral Health. “To have social workers, therapists, and case managers all working together – it’s a true team environment. This is where I’m meant to be.” ■



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“I chose Whittier for my clinical rotation and immediately felt supported and encouraged.”

Gabriel “Gabby” Okeke, WSHC Mentorship Program Participant

Advancing Mental Health Care with Compassion and Cultural Competency

Despite growing awareness of mental and behavioral health, psychiatric care continues to carry a stigma for many. "I'm not crazy is the first thing many patients say when encouraged to see a therapist," says **Stephanie Jackson-Wilson**, a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Whittier Street Health Center's **Behavioral Health Department**.

The unit provides care for individuals and families through a comprehensive integrated approach to mental health and substance abuse treatment. Services include psychiatric assessment, medication management, counseling, and therapies for conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and stress-related ailments. Stephanie joined Whittier four years ago, with a strong background in substance abuse disorder care.

"At first I thought my work here would focus on addictions, but my role has evolved," she says, adding that staying current with Continuing Education Units specific to mental health is a constant.

Among the conditions she treats most frequently are schizophrenia and psychosis, especially among college students. "The anxiety levels on college campuses skyrocketed during the COVID pandemic," she says.

The lingering effects of the pandemic – including increased depression – coupled with academic stress have contributed

to many of the mental health challenges addressed at Whittier. Treatment, Stephanie emphasizes, includes educating patients about the value of therapy.

"People want to take a pill that makes everything okay, but it's not that simple. Everybody needs someone to talk to because when you keep things bottled up and don't express your struggles, you become stuck. Those trapped feelings can present themselves in behavioral and physical health problems."

Cultural competency plays a vital role in building trust with patients. "It's helpful when someone comes in and see a face that looks like them," says Stephanie. "There's an immediate sense of mutual identity."

When asked to share a patient success story, Stephanie doesn't hesitate. "I'm working with a gentleman who couldn't be with his children because he was living in his car. He went through a lot, but with the proper treatment and encouragement, his life has turned around."

Now, the full-time dad has custody of his children and an apartment they can call home. "He still struggles with his mental health, but his life is so much more stable," says Stephanie. "He's happy with his life; when he comes in he's smiling. That's one of the rewards of my work here – seeing people get the help they need and move forward with their lives." ■



“Everyone needs somebody to talk to because when you keep things bottled up and don't express the struggles you're dealing with, you become stuck.”

Stephanie Jackson-Wilson, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

How Trust Transforms Outcomes

Familiarity and trust – a key combination to better patient outcomes, according to **Dr. Helenita Hamer**.

"This is particularly true with patients from different cultures," says Dr. Hamer, who brings more than 45 years of psychiatric expertise to her practice at Whittier Street Health Center. "When providers take the time to establish genuine relationships, patients are more likely to adhere to treatment plans."

Cultivating trust is a defining hallmark of Whittier clinicians, whose diverse cultural backgrounds and multilingual capabilities enhance accessibility to care.

"We serve people from all walks of life, guided by a mission to provide treatment regardless of their circumstances," says Dr. Hamer. For some patients, those circumstances include lack of the most basic needs – shelter, food, personal items. In those cases, patients are referred to the many services available to them at Whittier, in keeping with the Center's holistic approach to care.

"Whittier is truly unique," reflects Dr. Hamer. "Our mission centers on reaching underserved populations and creating a welcoming, comfortable, and supportive environment where every person feels valued and heard." ■



From Struggle to Strength Crystal's Journey

“**W**hen I came in I was in a deep depression,” recalls **Crystal Sneed**, reflecting on the moment about three years ago when she sought treatment at Whittier’s Behavioral Health Department.

Burdened by personal troubles, the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, and ineffective medications prescribed by a previous health care provider, Crystal was in “a dark place.” But with the compassionate care of Whittier Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Stephanie Jackson-Wilson and substance abuse disorder clinician Sheri Cleveland, she has found her way toward a brighter future.

“I have a standing Telehealth appointment every week with Miss Stephanie,” shares Crystal, whose initial assessment at Whittier confirmed her severe depression. A new medication regiment brought immediate relief. “I’ve dealt with depression since I was a little girl, and I’ve never felt as good or as strong as I do now.”

Today, Crystal turns to Whittier for all her health care needs – from vision and dental to OB/GYN services. “At Whittier, I am seen, heard, and understood,” she says.

One milestone in her journey stands out: a certificate of progress awarded by Jackson-Wilson.

“It’s for achievement in making progress and working hard on your overall mental health,” Crystal says, her voice filled with pride.

“I’ve come a long way through my own hard work and the care and support of Miss Stephanie and the staff at Whittier – I can’t say thank you enough.” ■



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“When providers take the time to establish genuine relationships, patients are more likely to adhere to treatment plans.”

*Dr. Helenita Hamer,
Psychiatrist*

“
“I’ve dealt with depression since I was a little girl, and I’ve never felt as good or as strong as I do now.”

Crystal Sneed, WSHC patient

Confronting Hunger in Our Community

"Nourish the body, nourish the soul" is so much more than a mere platitude. It comes as no surprise that studies have repeatedly confirmed the relationship between nutrition and mental health, but for many in our community, access to nutritious food is not strictly a matter of psychological well-being, but one of survival.

It is with great and growing concern that nearly 50% of Whittier's patients suffer from hunger and food insecurity. Poverty remains the leading cause of this alarming statistic, followed by lack of transportation and limited access to supermarkets or grocery stores. For residents living in these so-called "food deserts," the availability of healthy food options is restricted to convenience stores and fast food outlets.

Whittier's food pantry, now in its seventh year, provides a reliable and accessible source of food and nutrition services to help combat food inequity. Eligible patients are given a Prescription for Groceries and receive a monthly bag of items from each food group in addition to materials on nutrition.

"We welcome patients from all walks of life – immigrants, students, seniors – and many diverse cultures," says Pantry Coordinator **Joslin Bernadin**, who alongside a colleague, staffs the pantry Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. "Our mission is the same each day – to improve the quality of our patients' lives by providing access to nutritious food."

Joslin has led the food pantry for the past three years, but her journey at Whittier began in 2020 in a different capacity.

"I started as a trainee in the Women's Health Services program," she recalls. "One day the pantry manager asked if I'd be interested in joining the pantry team. I said yes and I've been here ever since. I fell in love with this work."

Joslin's compassion shines through in the heartfelt reactions of those she serves. "I love working with people," she says. "Knowing that the work we do here provides them with the nourishment they need to thrive is very rewarding."



Expressing concern over recent funding cuts, Joslin explains that the pantry is sustained through a delicate balance of community partnerships, public funding, and philanthropic support – a balance that if disrupted could have far-reaching consequences.

"We go through ups and downs," she says. "But we do our best to make sure we provide for the people who depend on us. The need is great and we will continue to do our best to fill that need."



**Our mission is the same each day –
to improve the quality of our patients' lives
by providing access to nutritious food.**

Joslin Bernadin, Food Pantry Coordinator



In addition to the food pantry, through its Prescription for Health Program, Whittier offers the following food and nutrition services designed to support both the medical and social needs of our patients: These programs reflect our commitment to holistic care, recognizing that access to nutritious food is essential for physical and mental well-being.



Individual Counseling

Registered dietitians offer personalized nutritional assessment and guidance, especially for managing chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.



Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)

Whittier Street Health Center has a WIC office on-site at our Tremont Street address. In addition, WIC staff visits our satellite clinic on Blue Hill Avenue twice a week.



WSHC Community Garden

On Thursdays throughout the growing season, Whittier patients can attend our Garden Club from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. and receive a bag of freshly harvested produce.



Teaching Kitchen

Registered dietitians have access to our teaching kitchen where they can host cooking classes and demonstrations for patients in our Wellness, Healthy Weight, and Chronic Disease Management Programs.



Overcoming Challenges, Building Futures: Whittier's School-Based Programs

As part of its broader Community Outreach and Education Services initiative, Whittier Street Health Center's **School-Based Program** delivers vital supportive services to Boston Day and Evening Academy (BDEA), Dearborn STEM Academy, and Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School. The goal: to reduce barriers to care and boost academic success by addressing physical and emotional health issues that often disrupt learning.

With students' overall health and wellbeing as its focus, school-based services include routine and preventative care, well visits, screenings, health education, and oral and vision care, all under the supervision of Whittier's medical director and lead pediatrician. The program also provides support services at clinics located within each school.

"We deal with everything," says **Thomas Cater**, who works exclusively at the BDEA campus. "Sexually transmitted infections, emotional trauma, homelessness – we see it all."

Thomas joined Whittier in 2019 and brings a deep well of experience to his role, with degrees in criminal justice and conflict resolution and a background as a social justice coordinator and certified mediator.

"When I talk to kids, I remind them that what they're going through now is temporary – it's not forever."

Trust is the foundation of Thomas's approach.

"I'm comfortable with the kids," he says. "I don't force them to talk – I let them come to me."



"When I talk to kids, I remind them that what they're going through now is temporary – it's not forever."

*Thomas Cater,
Community Outreach and
Education Services*



In addition to an on-site health clinic and comprehensive care that includes well visits, oral health care, screenings for chronic conditions and health education, the program assists students to enroll in MassHealth and connects them to comprehensive medical and social services offered at Whittier's main health center.

"Between Whittier and the support team at BDEA and social workers, we're able to get these kids services until they graduate," says Thomas, noting that students can also shower and do laundry at the campus.

This partnership with BDEA reflects Whittier's commitment to racial and social equity by integrating health services into academic settings, helping students stay in school and thrive.

And thrive they do, says Thomas, noting that one former student is now continuing his education in Chicago while several recent graduates have gone on to college.

"Without question, the success stories are there, but we want to see more of them," he says.

What Tom would like to see less of is food insecurity among students – something he encounters every day in his work at BDEA.

"A lot of these kids come in without having breakfast," he says. In partnership with Whittier's food pantry, Thomas and other team members make it a priority to have healthy snacks on hand.

"The work we do can be emotionally draining, but it's nothing God and prayer can't fix," he says. ■

Empowered to Move Forward

Jhovanni's Journey

"I'm ready to move forward," says **Jhovanni Cameron**, and with the assistance and support of Whittier Street Health Center's school-based program, the high school senior at Boston Day and Evening Academy (BDEA) is prepared to make that move into his future.

Jhovanni has taken part in the Whittier program since his sophomore year and credits it with helping him build "good habits and self-care."

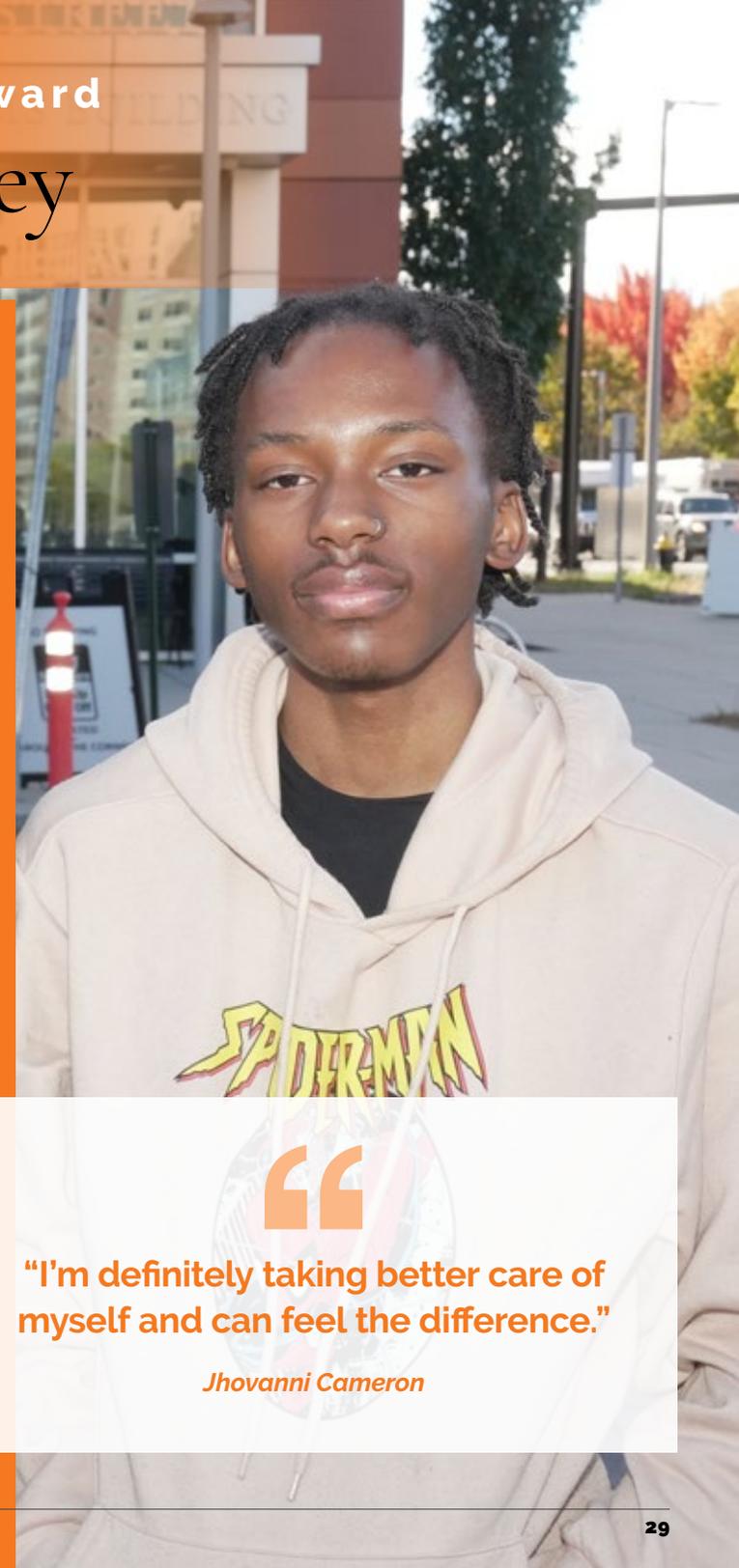
"I'm working out more often, eating healthier and in general doing okay," he shares. He especially appreciates the guidance of outreach team member Thomas Cater, who made sure Jhovanni had access to Whittier's food pantry and encouraged him to use the school gym.

"I'm definitely taking better care of myself and can feel the difference."

Jhovanni is enrolled in BDEA's work-based program, tailored to the needs of Black and Latino young men. He plans to join the IBEW Local 103 electricians' union following graduation.

"Right now, electrician is my vocational study," Jhovanni says thoughtfully. "But I'm just 17 and still figuring out what my true work passion is. What I do know is that Thomas Cater has helped me a lot – I know he wants the best for me."

Asked to describe the Whittier school-based program in a few words, Jhovanni doesn't hesitate. "Helpful, community-oriented, and reliable – it's made a real difference in my life." ■



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"I'm definitely taking better care of myself and can feel the difference."

Jhovanni Cameron

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\$500 – \$999

Alexandra DaRosa
Christine Carmody
Heather Nelson
Jim Lee
Joan Reede
Joanne K. Hilferty
Megan Menner
Nikki and Mark Feldman
Raymond F. Wise
Tropical Foods

\$100 – \$499

Alicia Andre
Aneesha Rao
Angel Simpson
Bithiah Carter
Carmen Fields
Cora Wright
Ebi Okara
Erin Engstrom
Erin Enyyson
Eva Clark
Everest Onuoha
Habib Sioufi
Janine Taylor
Jennifer Hagen
Jennifer Willcox
Kathleen Mullally
Keena Banda
Kristen Rupert
Linda Button
Mark Benton
Mary L. Dunleavy
Michelle Prior
Monica Johnson
Namita Gupta
Neville Wedderburn
Norma Frye
Owen Orakwue
Raymond Francois
Robert Edwards
Romina Wilmot
Sandra King
Stephen J. Jansen
Suzie McGlone
Tashara Jones
Zheni Valcheva

WSHC DONOR

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

JOSEPH R. PERRONI

President and CEO of Altus Dental Insurance Company

“Our organization has always been focused on fulfilling a mission to provide affordable, comprehensive dental care with exceptional customer service,” says **Joseph Perroni**, President and CEO of Altus Dental Insurance Company, a leading provider of dental and vision insurance serving more than 400,000 members across New England. “But we also recognize the huge unmet need among underserved populations and spend a lot of time trying to find pathways to care for these folks.”

One such pathway has led to a partnership with Whittier Street Health Center, an affiliation that Perroni says is “in the beginning stages of what we hope to be a long-term relationship.”

As one of Whittier’s leading donors, Altus Dental helped fund the recent expansion of the Center’s dental department – a strategic investment that directly increases the clinic’s capacity to deliver high-quality, affordable oral health care to more patients.

“This partnership aligns perfectly with our mission and strengthens Whittier’s ability to reach those who might otherwise go without proper

treatment,” says Perroni. “Our goal is to help residents in Boston and surrounding communities who struggle to access care.”

When Perroni met Frederica Williams and witnessed Whittier’s commitment to delivering equitable health care to all, the decision to form a partnership was natural and immediate.

“We’re proud of our association with such a high-profile and high-impact organization and to have the opportunity to help close existing disparities in lack of access,” says Perroni, identifying Whittier as a proven model of success delivering health and ancillary services to those who need it most.

Saying that “giving back” is an integral part of company culture at Altus Dental, Perroni notes that the necessity for private sector partnerships with nonprofit organizations cannot be overstated.

“The need is not going away,” he says. “I hope more members of the business community will seek out partnerships like the one we have with Whittier Street Health Center.

“Being a good corporate citizen is a cornerstone of our culture at



“Being a good corporate citizen is a cornerstone of our culture at Altus Dental. We’re fortunate to be doing well as an organization, but with that comes a responsibility to give back and help make our communities a better place for everybody.”

*Joseph R. Perroni,
President and CEO of Altus
Dental Insurance Company*

Altus Dental,” Perroni continues thoughtfully. “We’re fortunate to be doing well as an organization, but with that comes a responsibility to give back and help make our communities a better place for everybody.”

YEAR IN REVIEW Recognition



The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has recognized Whittier Street Health Center's clinics as a Patient-Centered Medical Home and Recognized with Distinction in Behavioral Health Integration.



TOP 100 WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

Frederica M. Williams
President & CEO

Top 100 Women-Led Businesses
by Women's Edge and the Boston
Globe Magazine,
for twelfth consecutive year

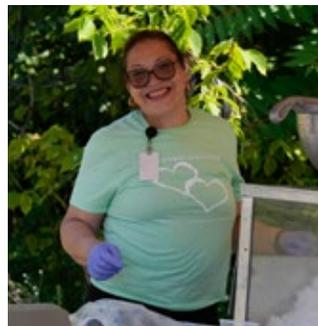
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

PRESIDENT'S AWARD RECIPIENT

Eleanor Curtis

MEDICAL RECORDS COORDINATOR

Eleanor Curtis has been a dedicated part of the *Whittier Street Health Center* team since 2008, serving as the Medical Records Coordinator. With over 15 years of experience in clinical documentation processes, Eleanor brings exceptional attention to detail, organizational excellence, and a deep understanding of health information management to the role. In her time with us, she has streamlined record-keeping processes, ensured the accuracy and security of sensitive data, and supported both staff and patients with timely and thorough documentation. Eleanor's commitment to confidentiality and compliance plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity of our medical records and upholding the highest standards of patient care.



YEAR IN REVIEW

Financial Report

Quality health care is a human right, the foundation for economic opportunity, and the result of investments by funders and generous supporters. Bolstered by strong financial performance and continued viability, Whittier will continue mobilizing for health equity and social justice.

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

Current	\$ 33,911,534
Fixed Assets	\$ 27,103,207
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 61,014,741

LIABILITIES

Current	\$ 5,779,924
Long term	\$ 3,949,976
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 9,729,900

NET ASSETS

\$ 51,284,841

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$ 61,014,741

Statement of Activities

REVENUE

Patient Services Revenue	\$ 17,028,550
Grants and Contracts	\$ 11,766,128
Fundraising and Contributions	\$ 1,064,970
Other	\$ 5,017,749
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 34,877,397

EXPENSES

Clinical Programs	\$ 26,113,906
Administration and Finance	\$ 5,153,217
Facilities	\$ 2,921,148
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 34,188,271

NET OPERATING INCOME/(LOSS)

\$ 689,126

NET NON-OPERATING INCOME/(LOSS)

\$ 1,823,413

CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

\$ 2,512,539

LEADERSHIP

President & CEO

FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS, MBA

President's Advisory Council

MR. JOHN JENKINS

President, West Insurance Agency

DR. GENE LINDSEY

CEO Emeritus, Atrius Health

J. DOUGLAS DIXON

Managing Director, Commercial Banking, Santander

STEVE ROTMAN

Head of People, B-Flexion Life Sciences., Karyopharm Therapeutics Inc.

SANDRA KING

Principal, Founder, STKing Associates LLC

FRANK DOYLE

President & CEO, Connell Limited Partnership

TOM MAY

Chairman Emeritus, Eversource Energy

ROBERT MAHONEY, CHAIR

CEO, Corporate Consulting LLC

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Director, SVB, A division of First Citizens Bank

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Pastor

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WSHC Patient

ANGEL SIMPSON

Retired Math and Science Teacher, Boston Public Schools

DR. EVEREST ONUOHA

Professor: Developmental Education Programs, English Composition & Literature, Developmental Reading & Writing, Critical Thinking & Writing. Roxbury Community College

ASHVEENA (ASH) GAJEELEE

Founder and CEO, Veritas Quest LLC

MS. MONICA JOHNSON

Boston Public Schools Teacher/Lawyer/Patient

Executive Team

JIM LEE

Senior Vice President & CFO

STEPHEN WRIGHT, MD, MBA

Medical Director

DR. JOSEPH HALLAK

Director of Oral Health Services

CHRISTINE PAJARILLO, LICSW

Vice President, Programs & Social Services

CRUZ MARTINEZ, MHA

Senior Director of Operations

MICHAEL NDUNGU

Chief Information Officer

CREDITS

Content:
Writer:
Design and Printing:
Photography:

PRESIDENT & CEO'S OFFICE

PRfirst
CHIARELLA DESIGN
CHRIS ADUAMA

YEAR IN REVIEW

Signature Events

Whittier's Toast of **Kevin B. Churchwell, MD** President and CEO of Boston Children's Hospital



Women for Whittier Holiday Tea



25th Annual Men's Health Summit



Hispanic Heritage Celebration



YEAR IN REVIEW

Community and Health Events

November 2024

- Slice of Thanks
- Turkey Giveaway



February 2025

- Black History Month Celebration/ Annual Meeting
- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



December 2024

- Senior Holiday Celebration
- Women for Whittier Holiday Tea
- World AIDS Day
- Clean Teeth for Tots



March 2025

- National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



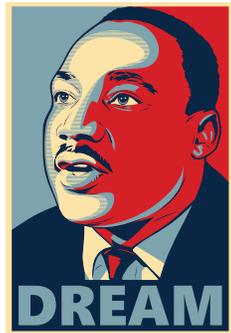
April 2025

- Toast of Kevin B. Churchwell
- National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- Alcohol Awareness Month Event



January 2025

- Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service



May 2025

- Mother's Day Event
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration



June 2025

- Employee Town Hall Meeting
- Year End Meeting
- Men's Health Summit
- National HIV Testing Day



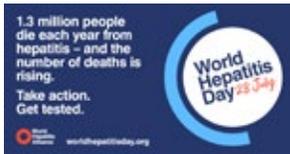
August 2025

- National Health Center Week
- Back to School BBQ
- Caribbean Festival



July 2025

- World Hepatitis Day



September 2025

- It Takes a Village
- National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



October 2025

- Hispanic Heritage Celebration
- National Latinx AIDS
- Boo to Bad Health
- Day of Giving





WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER

Comprehensive. Compassionate. Community.

Whittier Street Health Center
FREDERICA M. WILLIAMS BUILDING
1290 Tremont Street
Roxbury, MA 02120
(617) 427-1000

Whittier Street Health Center
SATELLITE CLINIC
278 Blue Hill Avenue
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 858-2550

www.wshc.org

Do you believe in health equity and racial justice for every resident of Boston?
Then please support our work!

GIVE
BY MAIL:

Whittier Street Health Center
Frederica M. Williams Building
1290 Tremont Street, Roxbury, MA 02120

GIVE
ONLINE



Follow us on social media.
Read our online blog and CEO memos.

