Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Milwaukee

Angel of Hope Clinic provides a family feel to healthcare for the uninsured

Thomas Rivas, 56, had been trying to piece some work together after being laid off from his manufacturing job when a series of health issues beset him – including a nagging cough, high blood pressure, and the start of diabetes. With no insurance, he stopped at a community health fair, where a social worker encouraged him to go to the Angel of Hope Clinic.

The Angel of Hope Clinic is a partnership between Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Outreach Community Health Centers (a Federally Qualified Health Center) and Hope House of Milwaukee, a homeless shelter on Milwaukee’s near south side. Angel of Hope provides health care services for low-income individuals and is funded in part through the Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare Foundation for St. Francis and Franklin.

What Thomas finds comforting about Angel of Hope is the personalized attention and family-like feel he gets when he visits.

“It’s actually relaxing to come here,” Thomas said. “I used to be afraid of getting shots. I’m not afraid now. They helped me. I’m on a better diet, and I exercise. It’s a different feeling here. It’s so good.”

Nurse Practitioner Tara Seleen said patients really appreciate the care and are willing to make lifestyle changes to get healthier.

“This is my dream job,” said Tara. “I love helping people in the community.” Tara said that her patients aren’t simply looking for a handout. They truly want to improve their lives. Through the clinic’s educational approach to healthier lifestyles, Tara and the staff see many positive results. And their patients agree.

“We’re like family here,” said Thomas, who rides his bike to his clinic appointments. “They always want to know what’s going on with you how they can help.”