

# THE BRIDGE

Connecting the Fair Haven Community

Spring 2006

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

# Our Three Ladies of Mercy

Deep faith and compassion guide Ana, Mari and Marisel in their challenging healthcare careers.

**THEY EACH GO TO WORK KNOWING THAT THEY HAVE A DEMANDING JOB TO DO.** Yet all three agree it is a job they look forward to doing. Ana Colón, Mari Montosa, and Marisel Regueiro work at Fair Haven Community Health Center where they find reward in helping people. They don't always see a person who is at their very best. Mostly these women work aiding people who are sick or injured, and interact with colleagues who are often under the sort of stress and pressure that comes with the job. These three hard-working and dedicated ladies—members of the St. James' community—all believe it is their deep faith in God that gets them through the toughest times.

According to Ana Colón, who has been a health care provider for fourteen years, “It makes a big difference in your life if you truly want to go to your job each day!” Ana recently began a nursing job at Fair Haven Community Health Center (FHCHC) and she really loves her job, her colleagues, the clinic and—most importantly—her patients. She cautions that it is not necessarily an easy job at times, but knows she is up to the challenge. The reality is that Ana faces life squarely in the face whenever she is taking care of people who come to the local clinic about their health issues. Ana firmly believes that she “could not do it without God” in her life. Ana Colón is similarly guided in her family life by her deep faith as she asks for God's direction in balancing her career with the care of her husband and three children.

Mari Montosa and Marisel Regueiro—Ana's colleagues at FHCHC and friends through the St. James' congregation—also feel strongly about how much reward they feel in their professional lives. Mari and Marisel know each other, as well, from the laboratory where they both perform their skilled work in ways such as conducting clinical tests, taking specimens from patients, and gathering health data. Both agree with Ana that they have gained much strength and wisdom from their faith. Mari confesses that she is more sympathetic with her patients adding, “I can really relate more to their needs and to them as people.”

Marisel shares that feeling of sympathy, as well. As a Cuba immigrant, Marisel particularly loves being able to work with people of differing cultures and feels a special sense of usefulness in sharing her bi-lingual skills at her job. Marisel came to the United States over ten years ago when she moved here together with her father-in-law, husband, and young daughters in 1995. She did not speak English when she first arrived here and so has unique insight into the challenge of

immersing into a new culture and learning the language, not to mention the health care schooling she completed. With her impressive fluency in English, she is there to help fellow Hispanics make their way through what can be, for non-English speakers especially, a medical maze.

When Mari Montosa was in high school here in Fair Haven, she first explored a career in helping people when she took a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) program. She also took courses in Home Care and Phlebotomy—which is the primary work she performs these days when she works at the lab at the main Grand Avenue location. Two and one half days each week, Mari also works at one of FHCHC's school-based clinics located at the John S. Martinez School on James Street. As the small clinic's office manager, Mari handles all of the office responsibilities in addition to checking the vital statistics—height, weight, temperature and so on—of the young preschoolers enrolled in this Head Start program. When kids get sick, the nurse refers them to “Ms. Montosa.” She can especially relate to the young children she sees at the school clinic being the mother of a four year old boy who keeps her quite engaged!

**“Our job doesn't end until the last patient leaves.”**

Certainly, two of the qualities that these three outgoing, affable women all possess are their willingness to work hard and a determination to reach their goals—thus making the world just a little bit better place one person or patient at a time. Ana spent a good deal of her youth in Fair Haven after her family emigrated from Puerto Rico at the time she was twelve—eventually ending-up in the neighborhood. She has a memory of a much smaller FHCHC from her childhood and admits to a long ambition to work there. Ana knowingly smiles, explaining how she “did it the hard way” recalling her days some time ago at Wilbur Cross in a CNA program, but seeing her dream of finally finishing her LPN degree. Mari and Marisel have worked equally hard to be very good at what they do, relying on their faith to reach their personal goals.

These three special women perform precious work—possessing the qualities that define mercy: compassion, kindness, sympathy, understanding, and forgiveness. “Our job doesn't end until the last patient leaves,” explains Ana. So some days turn out longer than others...



Showing their winning smiles, Ana Colón, Mari Montosa, and Marisel Regueiro (left to right) take time from their busy routines for a photo in the main waiting area at Fair Haven Community Health Center.

### † St. James' Response Card **Please, let us hear from you!**

- I would like to make the following comments on this issue of *The Bridge*:
- I would like to request prayers from the church for the following:

- I would like a pastoral visit from the church.

- I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the ministry of St. James' Church in Fair Haven. Enclosed is a check for the following amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

**Please clip and mail to:** St. James' Church, 62 East Grand Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513  
(Or, better yet, drop it by the church office anytime.) **Thank you!**



marchaprilmay

HISTORICAL HAVEN

YALE AND NEW HAVEN: 200 YEARS OF INNOVATION IN HEALTHCARE

When the Connecticut General Assembly established the Medical Institution of Yale College in 1810, it was destined to become one of the world's great establishments for the training of health practitioners. Now nearly 200 years later, Yale's venerable program—the sixth-oldest medical school in the United States—has been responsible for producing some of the best minds in the field. After the General Hospital Society of Connecticut received its charter in 1826, New Haven was on its way to becoming a renowned center for the advancement of health and medicine. This charter created Connecticut's first general hospital—known today as Yale-New Haven—one of the earliest “voluntary hospitals” in the country.

The now archaic term “voluntary hospital” refers to a nineteenth century English model of hospitals—supported by donations, attending physicians served without pay in the hospital on a rotating basis giving care to persons of lesser financial means. They worked free as a form of charity and for the experience. It also offered a hands-on opportunity for teaching medical students. Wealthier patients could afford to stay at home during illness. As hospitals evolved into advanced institutions for treatment and the modern hospital concept emerged, the rich went to hospitals as well. Until the time a hospital actually offered more than the level of treatment a private physician could provide outside, these hospitals really served as institutions to deal with the problems of the poor and sick. In addition, as a busy port town, New Haven's first general hospital served, in its earlier days, greatly in the care of sailors.



This newly chartered General Hospital Society also began its affiliation with Yale's medical school that same year—a relationship that continues to this day. Funds raised helped build a new 13-bed hospital, called the State Hospital, which opened in 1833 on a seven-acre plot of land between Cedar and Howard Streets. A few years later, in 1844, the hospital's name changed to New Haven Hospital.

In the fall of 1862, at the height of the Civil War, the directors of the hospital leased the building to the U.S. government for use as a military hospital. The military built temporary quarters in order to accommodate as many as 1,500 patients. Renamed during the war as the Knight U.S. Army General Hospital—after Jonathan Knight, president of the hospital board and a medical professor at Yale College—25,340 soldiers were treated until the facility reverted back to a general hospital in 1865 after the end of the conflict.

The hospital would continue to evolve and change names over the next 150 years, and be the site of numerous innovations and historic firsts in healthcare and medicine. Among some of Yale-New Haven Hospital's notable and fascinating achievements include the first artificial heart pump, first U.S. hospital to introduce natural childbirth as a general service, first successful clinical use of penicillin in the U.S, first ever use of chemotherapy as a cancer treatment, and first U.S. hospital to allow healthy newborns to stay in the same room with their mothers.

The following sources were the basis for this article: Yale-New Haven Hospital website: <http://www.ynhh.org/general/history/history.html>  
New Haven's Hospitals Exhibit website: <http://info.med.yale.edu/library/exhibits/hospitals>

RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

Helping Keep the Fair Haven Community Healthy

When it began as a small clinic back in August 1971, it was hard for its founders to imagine the growth that the Fair Haven Community Health Center would witness in nearly 35 years of serving the local community. At that time it was called Fair Haven Clinic—open only two evenings a week in a neighborhood elementary school and offering about 500 visits per year.



Five years later, in 1976, the clinic acquired the old Victorian house at 374 Grand Avenue that still serves as the main building. It has since expanded into two adjacent buildings at their primary facility, created a satellite clinic at the Bella Vista Elderly Housing Complex, and opened four school-based health centers throughout Fair Haven. Today, FHCHC employs more than 130 staff, including doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, clinical assistants, social service workers, and other support staff who provide primary health care, counseling, nutrition and other specialty services. Serving a population that is 70% Latino, 16% African American and 14% Caucasian, the staff sees 12,000 adults and children annually.

According to executive director Katrina Clark, who has steered FHCHC for the past 32 years, the primary mission of the clinic is to provide innovative, comprehensive primary healthcare to the residents of Fair Haven and enlist support for health and safety issues locally.

To learn more about the Fair Haven Community Health Center, please call: 203-777-7411 or visit their website: <http://www.fhchc.org>

Pastoral Reflections

Jesus on His Own Terms



BY THE REV. GEOFF LITTLE  
PASTOR, ST. JAMES' CHURCH

This issue's focus on health and healing leads me to write something about Jesus the healer. The stories of Jesus' healings are some of the best known and beloved in the New Testament: the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' robe, the paralytic lowered through the roof by his friends, and Lazarus raised from the dead.

What is interesting, however, is how often Jesus is found in the Gospels all but running away from opportunities to exercise his healing ministry. In one instance, after a particularly successful campaign of miraculous healing in the city of Capernaum, Jesus' disciples excitedly approach him the next day to let him know “everyone is looking for you (i.e., for more healing).” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages so I can preach there also” (Mark 1:37-38).

In another place, Jesus instructs a man just healed of leprosy not to tell anyone about him. The man cannot resist

and tells everyone that Jesus had cleansed him of his terrible disease. As a result, crowds of people looked for him for healing, but, the passage says, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16).

How can we explain Jesus' reticence to offer his healing powers to as many people as possible? It can hardly be lack of compassion. Jesus was one who touched lepers when nobody else dared to get near them. At the risk of getting seriously injured, Jesus traveled to remote places to help care for the afflicted.

A better explanation is that Jesus was being careful not to limit himself to a healing-only ministry. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ was not sent into the world to be just a healer, or a teacher, or a spiritual guru. He came to save us. This is where I hang out my own John 3:16 sign: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

How do you think of Jesus? He does heal. Nearly every Sunday at St. James' Church we have testimonies of Jesus healing someone. However, we must remember his acts of physical healing are designed to show us something more. His power as healer reveals his trustworthiness to be Lord, governor, director of our whole lives. This is what Jesus wants to be for us: Lord, and nothing less. This is approaching Jesus on his own terms.

Family Matters

Finding Help with Your Medical Bills

BY BLANCA R. LITTLE  
TEEN MINISTRY DIRECTOR  
ST. JAMES CHURCH

Recently, during a Sunday service at St. James', one church member offered a testimony about God's help in resolving her large medical bills after an operation. As a Peruvian woman adjusting to life in the U.S., she is among the many who do not know of available resources. She found that by consulting with the staff of St. Raphael's Hospital she was able to receive the aid she needed.

Her story raises the issue of options we have when we find ourselves with medical bills we are unable to pay.

With regard to insurance, approximately 6% of Connecticut residents—or 196,000 people—are without health care. State assistance is available. The most important program to mention is HUSKY (Healthcare for Uninsured Kids) which provides free insurance for children in low-income families. To find out more about state-funded programs visit the Office of Healthcare Access on the web at [www.ct.gov/ohca/site](http://www.ct.gov/ohca/site).

What about hospital bills? Many patients do not realize that both St. Raphael's and Yale-New Haven Hospital receive government and private funds to assist patients without adequate insurance coverage. To access these funds it is simply a matter of going to the hospital with the bills and proof of income.

For information about family programs at St. James', please call the church at (203) 467-6958 or send email to: [office@stjamesnewhaven.org](mailto:office@stjamesnewhaven.org)



Created for the Fair Haven community by



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THE BRIDGE SPRING 2006

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COMMUNITY AND CHURCH CALENDAR SPRING 2006

Service every 1st Sunday  
10 AM: Sermon and Holy Communion, bilingual.  
Community lunch following the service.

Services every 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays  
10 AM: Sermon and Holy Communion, English language.  
12 NOON: Sermon and Holy Communion, Spanish language.  
Sunday school for children and teens during both services.

St. James' Literacy Program: Saturdays, 2-4 PM, at the Church. September-June for kids ages 5-8. Call Blanca Little, 203-467-6083.

Alzheimer's Support Group: Every 1st Wed., 6 PM, The Mary Wade Home, 118 Clinton Ave. Light dinner and respite care provided. Call Rosanne Mondrone, 203-562-7222

Homebuyer Education Workshops: Mutual Housing of South Central CT, 235 Grand Ave. March 4, April 1 (Spanish), March 18, April 22 (English), 9 AM-5 PM. Call Magda Natal, 203-562-4514 x25.

Mary Wade Golf Fundraiser: Wallingford Country Club, May 22. Call Rosanne Mondrone, 203-562-7222.

This publication is made possible by a grant from the Church Missions Publishing Company of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, which seeks to promote the Gospel through the entire Anglican Communion, and which respects the dignity of every human being.