

agreed that a clinic was needed. The Mission, located on some four acres of property, is a focal point of community life in Eden Gardens. Social as well as religious events draw parishioners to the facility for wide ranging activities throughout the week.

"We situated the clinic in a single room in the back of the church, using the kitchen facilities as a patient waiting room." Dick Wheelock recalls, telling how, in 1992, the clinic's presence was a "word-of-mouth" operation.

Sunday Mass announcements included (and still do) a run-down about clinic hours, special education awareness programs, vaccinations for babies, a yearly mammogram program for women over 40 years of age as well as numerous other special programs offered by the clinic. In a short time, the clinic patient load outgrew its single-room operation. The addition of two more small rooms plus an indoor patient waiting room that also serves as the filing-administration section was eventually provided.

Thursday evenings from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9 until noon are the current scheduled hours of operation. But I noticed in visits for this story, that the medical staff, comprised of Wheelock and an all-volunteer team of area physicians, medical students from UCSD, nurses, technicians and administrative personnel remained at the clinic as long as patients were waiting to be seen.

"From the beginning, we realized the need for dispensing dignity and integrity along with medical treatments," notes Graff, explaining that the \$5 per-patient "donation" may only be a token exchange for services and payment. "But, this helps preserve the patient's dignity. Those unable to pay are treated with equal respect and medical care. All examinations, medications and related services are free. But the \$5 fee creates a fund used for the purchase of logistical needs not donated by outside sources," Graff explains, noting that the clinic's overall operations are supported by grants that he applies for and receives from a variety of institutions and non-profit organizations.

With diabetes within Hispanic communities a major concern for the medics, the clinic conducts weekly diabetic health education programs for Eden Garden families. There is an estimated population of 12,500 residents in the area, according to Graff. Ninety-five percent of those who come to the clinic are from working poor families, the majority of whom are without health coverage, he said, emphasizing that "Everyone who comes through that door is accepted." Patients on MediCare are referred to medical facilities elsewhere, it was noted. On a Saturday morning during one of my visits to the clinic, a multitude of patients, mothers with their infant children, husbands and wives, school-age youngsters, all were waiting in a patio shaded by trees. Patient loads currently are running at about 60 patients on each of the twice per-week days of operation.

One of the most redeeming qualities associated with the clinic is first, that an efficient, highly professional medical facility is maintained in close proximity to community residents. Next, that those patients seen by the clinic relieves the burden that otherwise would necessarily be cared for by public health agencies, explained Victor Tostada, another of the staff volunteers who serves as administrative director.

In an annual report issued last February, it is emphasized that "All patients, especially infants and children, are accepted regardless of race, color, origin or creed."

In its mission statement accompanying the report, it is also noted that the clinic presents "no competition with medical, dental or hospital professions, but a relief of a burden of caring for the working poor."

States Deacon Graff, "We estimate about \$600,000 yearly in services and medicines as well as specialized requirements (provided at no cost by other medical institutions) are provided for our patients free from any impact on local, state or federal government resources. Because St. Leo's Mission is the sponsoring agency, our patients accept our services as they do in all other church-sponsored benefits."

Among the clinic volunteers on duty during my visits was Dr. Marsha Blount, a resident family practice physician at Sharp's. Rounding out a full year of service, the North Carolina native and graduate of Duke University and Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, commented to me, "You learn to think on your feet here. It is hands-on experience that would otherwise be hard to gain."

Another resident physician at Sharp's, Jill Panitch, agreed with her colleague and told how second and third-year resident physicians volunteer one year of service to the clinic.

Michael Tilton, an undergraduate medical student at UCSD has been volunteering his services for the past 18 months. And fifty-year, now-retired nurse Martha Moyer, a Del Mar resident, explained between treating patients that the clinic tries to serve the working poor from Del Mar to Encinitas. She recalls in 1992 reading about the clinic that was intended to open at St. Leo's in Eden Garden. "That's how I wound up as a volunteer."

It is reflection of my limited abilities to not include in this story all of the names of clinic volunteers. The redeeming quality about their service, though, is that they serve—at no cost—because they are needed. Fulfillment, professional and personal, is their reward.

Already on the drawing board at the clinic is a 600 square-foot dental facility to be constructed by volunteer labor and funds supplied by the parish of St. James and St. Leo's Mission as well as from the Del Mar and Sunrise Rotary Club members. Three dental chairs, x-ray equipment and ancillary requirements are identified in the construction plans, according to Graff. His programs, current as well as those on the horizon, are extensive and infinite in measures of contributions to be made to community life in Eden Gardens. He manages dedication, consistent with his and Wheelock's accomplishments of the past.

I waited until now to introduce more fully Dr. Wheelock, a type-cast-physician who may've posed a half-century ago for one of artist Norman Rockwell's cover paintings for Saturday Evening Post. He reflects in his conversation and mannerisms a sense of genuine modesty, characteristic of remote regions of Arizona and the southwest where he was born and raised.

Recalling his closing years as head of the old Del Mar Clinic, Wheelock told of young doctors at the clinic approaching him on the subject of expanding the facility that he founded, keeping pace with the population growth and adding to a facility that was dedicated to serving the medical needs of families in the community. I felt the pressures but I just didn't feel comfortable with the prospects of expanding. So I retired.

But not for long. Today, after six years of building-back growth in his and Al Graff's

new clinic, there has likely been restored in the career of Dick Wheelock, a sense of picking up where he left off so many years ago, during the infancy of his Del Mar Clinic. Says his partner, "Dick Wheelock is deeply devoted to his profession and those who look to him for relief from pain. He has great empathy for his fellow human being."

Which makes this story all the more remarkable is that two individuals in totally different professions would become friends in later life, then partners in an endeavor whose function is enriched with feelings of warmth, compassion and love for those less fortunate than themselves.

ENTERPRISE ZONE/EMPOWERMENT COMMITTEES PROGRAM

HON. DONNA MC CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 8, 1999

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to authorize the Virgin Islands and the others U.S. Insular Areas to participate in the Enterprise Zone/Empowerment Communities Program.

The U.S. Virgin Islands has been an unincorporated territory of the United States for 82 years. In 2017 we will celebrate the centennial of this relationship. It is important to the People of the Virgin Islands that we begin the second one-hundred years on a sound economic footing, and as a self-sustaining, contributing member of the American Family. This bill can be the vehicle to this economic empowerment and sustainable growth and development.

Although the Virgin Islands enjoys generous business tax benefits currently, the loss of Section 936 and the coming of NAFTA create significant challenges as we strive to establish our place in the national and world economy. An empowerment zone would encourage an ongoing community planning process and provide for a local-federal partnership that is the best framework for us to move forward.

What this bill seeks to do is to develop a process for us to come together as a community and a part of the United States to address a myriad of issues that have plagued us, from land use planning, to housing, to education, to drugs and crime, and business and the economy, so that by the time we celebrate the 100 year anniversary of being a part of the American family we will do so with the pride and dignity that befits us and the ancestors on whose shoulders we move forward.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill and of its enactment into law.

TRIBUTE TO WALTER PAYTON

SPEECH OF

HON. ROGER F. WICKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 3, 1999

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of fellow Mississippian Walter Payton who died earlier this week at the age of 45. Walter Payton was born in Columbia,