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Holiday Fund: Compassion in action at family health center

Gifts to the Holiday Fund benefit the Ravenswood Family Health Center and nine other community organizations.

By Kathleen Alexander, communications director, Ravenswood Family Health Center.

Juvenal comes with his parents to the Belle Haven Clinic in east Menlo Park for his 6-month well-child checkup. When asked how he is doing, his mother laughs as she watches her son chewing vigorously on a teething ring.

"He's doing great. He's happy, laughing, yelling and he cries." He is thriving.

This young family lives in Redwood City. His father just started a new job at Recology and the mom takes care of her son. They seem confident of the future, at ease with life.

Ravenswood Family Health Center's Belle Haven Clinic in Menlo Park is a peaceful oasis where you won't hear a debate about health care reform. The clinic is fulfilling its mission to guarantee access to quality health care because it is needed. There are no disqualifiers.

What strikes you at Ravenswood is that patients are being cared for by a cultural cross-section of staff that is diverse as the patients. Like other community health centers in the nation, Ravenswood operates on the premise that cultural and linguistic sensitivity matters a lot, and people are best served by people who are similar, which is why both staff and board are representative of the population served.

The majority of the people who come to Ravenswood are the working poor (85 percent live at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level that's \$23,050 for a family of four); many are recent immigrants, willing to work at low wages. They have set down roots in the dynamic, multi-ethnic communities of East Palo Alto, Belle Haven and North Fair Oaks in Redwood City.

Ravenswood Family Health Center has become the largest nonprofit organization in East Palo Alto/Belle Haven with a staff of 147. It operates two primary care medical clinics, a state-of-the-art dental clinic, a behavioral health counseling program, and a Center for Health Promotion with a Stanford Health Library and Eligibility and Enrollment services for public coverage, including Medi-Cal, and eight trained Covered California certified enrollment staff.

Ravenswood is a gateway to a family of primary care services for all ages. In 2013, more than 11,000 patients received medical, behavioral health and dental care as well as referrals for social services. It is bursting at the seams.

Now its long-planned construction of a new 38,000 square foot health center is about to break ground on January 22, with a completion date of April 2015. The new center, located at the intersection of Bay



Dr. Terri Wong attends to baby Juvenal Jr., being held by his father, Juvenal Santos.

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Road and Pulgas Avenue in East Palo Alto, will allow Ravenswood to serve 22,000 patients.

Go to ravenswoodfhc.org or call (650) 330-7418 for more information. Ravenswood Family Health Center is located at 1798A Bay Road, East Palo Alto, 94303.

[Donate online](#) to the Almanac's Holiday Fund.

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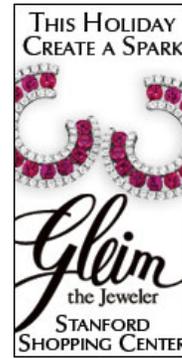
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