



# GIVING BACK IN **BIG WAYS**

PHILANTHROPY IN THE MEDICAL FIELD PROVIDES  
CARE TO THOSE WITHOUT ACCESS OR FUNDS

By Helen K. Kelley





When it comes to philanthropic causes, physicians are often on the front lines. Here, we feature some Atlanta doctors who are making a difference in the lives of others, both at home and across the miles.

### PROVIDING FREE CARE AND EDUCATION TO ATLANTA'S UNINSURED

When Charles E. Moore, M.D., a head and neck cancer specialist with Grady Health System, saw that many of his patients had limited treatment options because they had sought help too late, he began looking for the reasons why.

“I found that most of my patients were coming from three zip codes in medically underserved areas around Grady, and that many of them had cancers that could have been easily treated if the disease had been identified early. There was a need for education and increased awareness,” he says. “Some of my patients would come to me, asking me to visit certain areas and provide help. I knew I needed to do something for these people.”

Dr. Moore began conducting what he calls “Tupperware clinics” out of the back of his car. Armed with medical supplies, he drove out into the community, visiting nontraditional areas like homeless shelters, bridges and overpasses to talk about head and neck cancers and do screenings. There, he saw all of the additional medical needs that weren’t being addressed in people who had no access to care. He recruited colleagues to help provide primary and specialized care.

From those humble beginnings, the initiative grew – the physicians began operating out of mobile health units and then a comprehensive medical facility, the HEALing Community Center, was established. Today the Center, located in downtown Atlanta, offers free and sliding scale healthcare to the uninsured, including primary, pediatrics and specialized care, and behavioral and mental health services.

Additionally, the Center focuses on teaching people about prevention, offering health, nutrition and cooking classes, and even one-on-one health

coaching. Dr. Moore hosts a regular event called “Walk With a Doc,” in which he invites a specific community to hear a brief talk about health and then go on a one- to three-mile walk with him.

Dr. Moore says there are so many small things that make the project rewarding.

“People are so grateful for the help, and they’re hungry for the knowledge,” he says. “We help them take small steps toward improving their health and, in some aspects, their lives. We can provide them with hope that there’s a chance for something better. That’s the biggest reward.”

There is always a need for more physicians in primary care and various specializations to volunteer at the HEALing Community Center and participate in community outreach activities. For more information, call 404-564-7749 or go to [www.healingcommunities.org](http://www.healingcommunities.org).

### BRINGING HOPE TO RURAL GHANA

*“Imagine what life would be like with no access to healthcare, no hospital or doctors in your community, nowhere to turn when illness or injury strikes you or a loved one. This is a reality for the inhabitants of rural Ghana, where children and adults die of pandemic disease and disabling conditions that are both treatable and preventable.”*

This is the introduction shared on The Yonkofa Project’s website. The Yonkofa Project was born from the experiences of Dr. Gabriella Nanci and Dr.

Deborah Martin, who first traveled together to Ghana on a short-term medical mission in 2010. There, the doctors found that many of the rural villagers' diseases could be prevented with basic access to medicine and preventive care.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Nanci conceived the project and together with Dr. Martin formed a nonprofit to bring sustainable healthcare to the remote areas of this struggling country. "Yonkofa," which means "friendship" in the local Twi language, was chosen as the name. Building plans were developed, the land for the first clinic was donated, and, in the rainforest village of Yiwabra, The Yonkofa Project took root.

"There are not many hospitals in Ghana; the nearest one to Yiwabra is a regional facility located more than an hour's drive away. Getting a taxi to come to the village is almost impossible and the villagers can't afford cab fare anyway. There is such a need for primary care clinics throughout the country," Dr. Martin says. "Dr. Nanci and I wanted to take part in something that involved more than just occasional short-term medical missions to Ghana. We wanted to create a sustainable source of primary medical care."

The Yonkofa Project is not simply a philanthropic effort by American doctors. It is a growing collaboration that includes physicians, local residents, Ghana's Ministry of Health, the University of Ghana and more. The clinic in Yiwabra is well underway, with two buildings constructed from prefabricated components that often take several months to arrive via cargo containers.

"The village chiefs donated the land for the clinic, and the local villagers are doing most of the construction with supervision by a Ghanaian engineer," Dr. Martin says. "The difference in what we're doing is in the partnerships and the teamwork. We have made the connections to establish something permanent."

Dr. Martin says that the goal of the project doesn't stop with the completion of the clinic in Yiwabra.

"Our hope is to build a new clinic in a different region of Ghana each year until there is a source of primary care available to every Ghanaian citizen," she says.

Learn more about The Yonkofa Project by visiting [www.yonkofa.org](http://www.yonkofa.org). ■



## Resurgens Charitable Foundation focuses on youth health and fitness

Established 13 years ago by Resurgens Orthopaedics, the Resurgens Charitable Foundation has three major goals: making playgrounds accessible to all children, combating childhood obesity and injury prevention.

The Foundation recently reached a milestone in its philanthropic quest by surpassing the \$1 million donation mark. A portion of the funds raised has come from Resurgens' own physicians and employees, who are also passionate about the work the foundation does.

Funding has been distributed to organizations and projects that promote active and healthy lifestyles to people of all ages and ability levels.

Dr. Kay Kirkpatrick, president of the Foundation and co-president of Resurgens Orthopaedics, says the entire board and all of the Foundation's supporters view this work as essential and something that directly impacts the future of Atlanta's children.

"We are so fortunate to have a dedicated, enthusiastic team that views this work with the same importance as they do their day job. This is an investment in Atlanta's future, and something we take very seriously," she says. "The biggest reward for us is when we can see smiling faces of children who just rode down a slide or soared on a swing for the first time."

Learn more about Resurgens Charitable Foundation by visiting [www.resurgensfoundation.com](http://www.resurgensfoundation.com).