

■ *EL AVISO* ■

January 2005

A Brief History of *Las Clínicas del Norte*

Clinical service has now existed for over 30 years in this area of New Mexico, starting in El Rito with the formation of organizations which led to our three clinic system. Here is that history.

Community environment before La Clinica del Norte:

The only access to health care services at El Rito was one day a month public health clinic held at the George Martin's residence. Also there was a County employed School Nurse that would visit area school in a random basis. The whole thrust of the services were well child checks and immunizations. The nearest health care providers were in Espanola, a 32 mile distance from El Rito.

The socio-economic conditions of the early 1970's in the community of El Rito and surrounding villages were: Few residents had telephones, the main highway, now #554, was paved in the early 1960 and the Canon and Placitas roads were paved in the mid-60s. There were no first responders in the communities, and ambulance service was hazardous at best; there was no 911 service, no computers, few private automobiles owned, and abject poverty with little or no employment opportunities.

Prior to the creation of Las Clinicas del Norte local residents had no access to medical care and used traditional remedios, who usage was passed on through the generations. No prevention or early detection of health conditions were available and medical care was provided at the Espanola Hospital, usually as a last resort.

The late 1960's was a period of Chicano activism, which heighten awareness of the social consciousness of the plight of Hispanics in the USA. The civil rights march lead by Dr. Martin Luther King provoked this awareness. Locally, the Land Grant movement headed by Reyes Tijerina led to the 1968 Tierra Amarilla courthouse raid that raised national attention to the plight of NM Chicanos.

Formation of the El Rito Betterment Association:

Because of the awareness raised by the Chicano movement, a local group of community activists, lead by Manuel Baca, Pedro Vigil, Moises Archuleta, Salomon Archuleta, Juan Antonio Ocana, Tomas Marquez, Jr., Roman Lopez and Waldo Lucero and later Roberto Garcia, decided to form a community based organization that would help address the needs of community residents. In 1971 the El Rito Betterment Association was incorporated with the New Mexico State Corporation Commission and its purpose was five-fold:

1. Create a health care clinic to serve the residents of El Rito, Ojo Caliente and Abiquiu. ►

LAS CLINICAS DEL NORTE: A Community Health Center, Established in 1972

Serving the communities of Abiquiu, Ancones, Barranco, Cañon, Carson, Chili, Cañones, Cañon Plaza, Duranes, El Llanito, El Pueblo, El Rito, Gallegos, Gavilan, Ghost Ranch, La Cueva, La Madera, La Mesa, La Zorro, Las Casitas, Las Tablas, Los Pinos, Medanales, No Agua, Ojo Caliente, Olguin, Petaca, Placitas, Plaza Blanca, Rio Chama, San Miguel, Servilleta, Servilleta Plaza, Silvestres, Tierra Azul, Tres Orejas, Tres Piedras, Tusas and Vallecitos and Youngsville

- ▶ 2. Create a Senior Citizen program.
- 3. Create a Head Start program.
- 4. Create a Public Library.
- 5. Develop a community center for use by local youths.

Creation of a health care clinic:

The El Rito Betterment Association was initially directed by Susie Naranjo. In 1971 the organization acquired the use of the El Rito Elementary School to house the programs that it had envisioned. Over the next several years La Clinica del Norte evolved as a National Health Service Corp (NHSC) free standing site. This meant that medical providers that had acquired loans to educate themselves in the medical and dental fields could have their loans forgiven and a salary paid by the US Government if they worked in health care underserved areas. This is how in 1973 a Family Nurse Practitioner arrived at El Rito to provide medical services to the community. Don Hawatway was the first provider that worked at La Clinica del Norte.

While the NHSC program was valuable it had its pit falls. Most providers that participated in this program were not interested in settling in the communities where they worked. This led to constant turnover and a very unreliable source of medical providers at NHSC sites. Many times a clinic would have to close down for several months until another NHSC provider was recruited to the clinic site. Obviously, this situation led to poor continuity of care for area residents.

Because of the unstable nature of La Clinica del Norte during the formative years several larger health care entities that had formed in the area and were receiving direct federal funding attempted to take over the operation of La Clinica. They were successfully fought off by community residents who wanted to maintain autonomy and directly govern La Clinica del Norte. Centro Campesino de Salud, now Health Centers of Northern New Mexico, and Presbyterian Medical Services attempted this hostile take over. Centro Campesino de Salud however

did open a competing clinic at what is now the Community College. In the early 80's there was an agreement to have the competing clinic provide physician coverage necessary to allow the mid-level providers, Family Nurse Practitioners or Physician Assistants employed by La Clinica to practice. From 1979 to 1983 a NHSC Physician Assistant by the name of Jeff Danska provided some stability and actually helped build up a medical practice that aided in forming the present day clinic. A dental clinic was formed in 1978 which also relied on NHSC providers.

Andy R. Lopez involvement:

In 1974 Andy R. Lopez was President of the El Rito Betterment Association until he could no longer participate because of his college commitments.

He became the Director of the clinic in December 1984. Prior to assuming this position Andy was involved with the original founders and attended many meetings held at the NM Dept. of Health and the UNM Health Science Center, helping acquire funding and personnel for the clinic.

By 1984 the clinic consisted of a full-time NHSC Physician, a medical assistant, a cashier/receptionist and Andy R. Lopez. The dental clinic was not functioning because the NHSC has not found a provider for this site. The cashier/receptionist and medical assistant would bill jointly for any services to the insurance. The annual budget was \$22,000.00.

Growth of the clinic system:

In the early 80's a couple of key events took place that helped stabilize and grow the clinic system. The New Mexico based clinics, after several years of discussion, formed what is now called the New Mexico Primary Care Association. This organization was formed to help promote the mutual interest of clinics in New Mexico and to advocate for funding to help operate these clinics. In 1983 the Association was successful in creating a funding source for NM clinics through the Rural Primary Health Care Act (RPHCA) ▶

► that would provide funding for health care services in underserved areas by paying for health care professionals. The initial appropriation was \$300,000.00. Through the middle 80's and early 90's NMPCA has been able to grow this appropriation to \$12 million statewide.

The growth in funding of the RPHCA program allowed La Clinica del Norte to obtain funding for hiring its own medical provider and thereby the dependence on the unreliable NHSC was eliminated. By 1985 the dental services were reestablished. By 1987 La Clinica was able to hire a husband and wife Family Nurse Practitioner team, Bill and Colleen Atkinson, who shared one full-time position at El Rito. With a commitment by the Atkinson's to establishing long term living in the community and the stability they brought to the provider position, our financial situation improved. The second key event was that by 1988 La Clinica became a Federally Qualified Health Center which led to 100% of cost reimbursement from Medicaid and Medicare and this also led to greater financial viability.

In 1988 an excellent dental provider, Dr. Ed Trujillo, DDS, joined the clinic system and helped develop the dental practice into one of the best in the nation. Our El Rito state-of-the-art dental clinic has been described as being in the top 3% of dental facilities in the USA, even when compared against the private sector.

In 1990 Andy R. Lopez and Bill Atkinson planned to open a clinic in Ojo Caliente in order to capitalize on using fully both medical providers (Bill and Colleen) that were settled in the area. The Ojo Caliente clinic was successfully opened in 1991.

In 1993 an application was made and a recurring federal grant was obtained to help operate the two clinic system. By 1994, with the assistance of Vigil Trujillo, President of the Abiquiu Land Grant Association that provided land to develop a clinic facility, the Abiquiu clinic became a reality.

In 1994 mental health services were added to the medical and dental services provided at La Clinica. La Clinica was a pioneer in offering mental health service in a primary care setting. Only recently have the federal and state government realized that this is a vital health component to achieving comprehensive services.

In 1997 there was a name changed from the El Rito Betterment Association (and La Clinica) to Las Clinicas del Norte.

In 1999 the new \$2 million El Rito clinic was completed and consolidated dental services moved to this facility. In 2000 the Mesa Vista School based clinic was begun.

In 2004 a \$300,000 federal grant was obtained to expand medical services at all three sites. This grant will eventually add two new providers to our staff.

Over the course of the last 20 years more than \$3.5 million dollars have been expended to create new facilities and to modernize the equipment utilized at all practice sites. Each of the clinic buildings at El Rito, Ojo Caliente and Abiquiu are new facilities with the latest computer systems including digital x-ray and electronic oral health records.

The total number of annual patients visits seen has grown from 2,300 in 1984 to 25,900 in 2003. The number of personnel has grown from 4 in 1984 to 62 in 2004. The Budget has grown from \$22,000 to \$4,200,000.00. When you consider the economic multiplier effect of \$4.2 million in the communities at two times, the effect is that \$8.4 million dollars circulates in our communities due to the funds generated by Las Clinicas.

The only lament that Andy R. Lopez has is that we have not been able to get students from the local area interested in pursuing careers in health care, such as doctors, mid-level provider, dentists, and pharmacists. These providers are in short supply and in high demand. The salaries paid these providers by Las Clinicas del Norte and other clinics range from \$70,000 to \$150,000.00.

Diabetes – You could be at risk!

Diabetes means your blood sugar (glucose) is too high. How would you know? Are you often thirsty, hungry, or tired? Do you urinate often? Do you have sores that heal slowly, tingling in your feet, or blurry eyesight? Even without these signs you could still have diabetes.

Diabetes is a serious disease. It can cause heart attack or stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or loss of feet or legs. But diabetes can be controlled. You can reduce or avoid these health problems. Take the first step. Find out if you are at high risk.

Research studies have found that lifestyle changes can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 Diabetes among high-risk adults. Lifestyle interventions included diet and moderate-intensity physical activity (such as walking for 2 ½ hours each week). In the diabetes Prevention Program, a large prevention study of people at high risk for diabetes, the development of diabetes was reduced 58% over 3 years.

Know your risk of having diabetes now. Answer these questions. For each Yes answer, add the number of points listed. All No answers are 0 points.

Question	Yes	No
Are you a woman who has had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth?	1	0
Do you have a sister or brother with diabetes?	1	0
Do you have a parent with diabetes?	1	0
Find your height on the chart. Do you weigh as much as or more than the weight listed for your height? (see chart)	5	0
Are you under 65 years old and get little or no exercise in a typical day?	5	0
Are you between 45 and 64 years old?	5	0
Are you 65 years old or older?	9	0
Add		
Your Score		

These questions are from the American Diabetes Association’s on-line “Diabetes Risk Test”

Know your Score

If you scored....	Then your risk is...
10 or more points	High for having diabetes now. Please bring this form to your health care provider soon.
3 to 9 points	Probably low for having diabetes now. Keep your risk low. If you’re overweight, lose weight. Be active most days, and don’t use tobacco. Eat low-fat meals with fruits, and vegetables, and whole-grain foods. If you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure, talk to your health care provider about your risk for diabetes

I Scored 10 or More.
How Can I Get tested for Diabetes?

At Risk Weight Chart

Height	Weight	Height	Weight
4’10	129	5’8’	177
4’11	133	5’9	182
5’0	138	5’10	188
5’1	143	5’11	193
5’3	152	6’1	204
5’4	157	6’2	210
5’5	162	6’3	216
5’6	167	6’4	221
5’7	172		

Come by Las Clinicas del Norte for a free blood glucose finger stick (screening) with one of our promotoras or health educator. We are available at all three sites.

Abiquiu Clinic	685-4479	Promotora Elaine Valdez
Ojo Caliente Clinic	583-2191	Promotora Aggie Olsen
El Rito Clinic	581-4728	Promotora Lucille Chacon

We will be offering health education programs in the future. Stay tuned!!

Announcements & News Briefs

Saying Good-by –

Michael Hill, MSW, LISW, is leaving Las Clinicas after eight years of directing the Counseling and Community Services Department.

Michael is going to continue his community development work in the African country of Malawi, where he has been volunteering each year for more than ten years now at the Malawi Children's Village, which builds a safety net for orphans. He will become the CEO charged with expanding the successful village-based orphan care model throughout southern and eastern Africa.

Las Clinicas regrets the loss of Michael Hill, whose work in developing the Counseling and Community Services is greatly appreciated. He was hired to develop a comprehensive counseling and outreach program as an integrated part of our primary health care system. Since that time CCS has become an exemplary model for community health centers. CCS philosophy has been to provide services proactively to the community through case management outreach, parenting classes, home visits, community education and school-based programs, which our multi-faceted program has accomplished. Through grants received and collaboration with other community agencies the programs have become successful and hope to add other programs, such as infant mental health and substance abuse programs into the primary health services. But Michael says his primary job and the one that was most satisfying for him was doing counseling. He admires the courage and motivation that his clients brought into his office and says he will miss this client work most of all.

Las Clinicas is proud of all the efforts on Michael's part for the CSS Department and hope to see him again. He said his wish is to come back to northern New Mexico, hopefully as a retired person. Good Luck in your new life Michael.

Patricia Brescia, MSW, LISW, will move into the Directorship of the CCS Department.

Welcome

Tamara Singleton, MD, has joined Las Clinicas again in a part-time position. She now works Thursday and Friday in Ojo Caliente and may work additional days in Abiquiu in the near future. Dr. Singleton worked for Las Clinicas in 2001 and with her specialty in family practice, is a great addition to the clinic.

A new provider in Ojo Caliente is family practice nurse **J. Rolando Flores**, MSN, FNP. Rolando Flores received his degree in Pennsylvania from the University of Pittsburgh in 1999 and worked recently in Albuquerque at Health Essentials Inc. and UNM Hospital. He will be at Ojo Caliente Monday through Thursdays. Welcome to both our new providers in Ojo.

⊗ Community Events ⊗

Contact Person, Joan Tollefson, Editor, 581-9103 or 581-4728

Las Clinicas 24-hour Emergency Number – 1-888-678-6160

El Rito

Las Clinicas del Norte Board Meeting – every 3rd Monday, 6 pm, El Rito clinic Community Room

El Rito Library – Tues, Wed, Thurs, 11 am – 6 pm, and Sat, 11 am – 3 pm.

El Rito Library Board Mtgs. – every 2nd Wed, 6:30 pm at Library

AA Meetings El Rito – Tues, & Thurs, 7:30pm – 8:30pm, at Catholic Parish Hall, open discussion. Contact Ed S. 581-4559

New-AA mtg. – Sun, 5pm, El Rito Library

El Rito Fire Dept. Mtgs. – every 2nd Wednesday, 7 pm, at the El Rito Fire Station, open to the public

Tutoring – El Rito Save the Children Ctr, call for info. 581-4516

Recycling El Rito – every 4th Saturday, 9 am – 2 pm, behind Martins Store Gas Station

Abiquiu

Recycling Abiquiu – 4th Sunday every month, 9 am-2 pm, Abiquiu Las Clinicas clinic parking lot

Abiquiu Fire Dept. Mtg. – every 2nd Thursday, 7 pm at Fire Department.

Al-Anon Meetings Abiquiu – Monday, 5:30-6:30 pm, Abiquiu clinic, contact numbers, 581-4471 or 685-4503

New – Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings Abiquiu – Friday, 12 Noon, St. Thomas Parish Hall

Abiquiu Library – Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, 12:30 pm – 6 pm and Sunday, 9 am – 12 noon, located on the Plaza

World Peace Meditation – 1st Sunday each month, Jan 2, 10-11am, at River Spirit Yoga Center. For location, call 685-4549

Ojo Caliente

Ojo Caliente Fire Dept. Mtg. – every 1st Wednesday, 7 pm, Ojo Caliente Fire Dept.

EL RITO LIBRARY

Ph. 581-4608

Your Local Resource for Books-Videos-Computers-
Books on Tape- Literacy for all ages

Our new winter hours are: Tuesday , Wednesday,
Thursday, 10 am - 5 pm Saturday 11 am – 3 pm

EL LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The El Rito Library would like to greet our newest Board Member, **Terry Moffitt**. Terry is a 35 year resident of El Rito and supports the mission of the library. Thank you and welcome, Terry!

December 2004 marked the end of **Tracy McBride's** term as President of the El Rito Library Board. We would like to enthusiastically thank Tracy for the outstanding job in furthering the progress of the Library and making it a vital entity in the community. Tracy will remain on the Board and will chair the Development Committee.

John Caster who joined the El Rito Library Board in July of 2004 is the new President. John will assume his new duties on January 1, 2005. Thank you and good luck John!

PIG-NIC EVENT

The Pig-Nic event held on December 5, 2004 was a great success! Thank you to **Mickey Simmons** (Board Member) for the mouth-watering roasted pig. Thank you also to the following people who provided food for this event: **Mickey Simmons, Bob Snow, Lynn Nequin, Donald Martinez, Tracy McBride, Elsie Archuleta, Marbella Martinez, Esperanza Gonzales, Kathleen Ellsworth, Joan McClelland, Sue Habegger, Cilla Mays and Suzie Frost.**

NORTHWEST ROOM RENOVATION

The West Room is almost complete. Mud plastering was done by **Sabra Moore** who did a fantastic and beautiful job. *Thanks You* to our

many volunteers: **Tracy McBride, Bob Snow, Jim Harford, Anugraha Norstegaard, Pat Frazier, Steve Williams, Ernest Carlen, Dave Chavez, Roger Mignon, John O'Brian, Steven Williams, Toshiko, and Quentin Wilson, with the Adobe Class of Northern New Mexico Community College.** Also, this could not have been done without the professional help of **Geoff Griego** (plumbing), and **Tony Valdez** (electricity). All your work is much appreciated.

NEW ARRIVALS

Books: Secrets from a Healthy Asian Kitchen/Ying Chang Compestine; Noodles/The Essential Kitchen/Vicki Linley; The Elegant Taste of Thailand/Cha Am Cuisine/Sisamon Kongpan; Frida Kahlo/Salomon Grimberg; The Hidden Messages in Water/Masaru Emoto; The Known World/Edward P. Jones; The Bookseller of Kabul/Asne Seierstad; The Best American Short Stories 2004/Lorrie Moore; Absolute Friends/John LeCarre; The Murder Room/PD James; The Kite Runner/Khaled Hosseini; Ski Pioneers: Ernie Blake, His Friends, and the Making of Taos Ski Valley/Rick Richards; Dreams From My Father/Barack Obama; The Devil in the White City/Larson, Erik; The Cave/Jose Saramago; The Lovely Bones/Alice Sebold; On the Trail: The Life and Tales of "Lead Steer" Potter/Burroughs, Jean; (YB)T-Witches: The Power of Two/Gilmore & Reisfeld; (YB) The Babysitters Club: The Truth About Stacy/Ann Martin; (YB) Animorphs: The Arrival/K A. Applegate.

ALMOST 100 DONATED BOOKS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE COLLECTION.

Children's: Curious Cat Walk; and The Tale of Dog Giovanni

Audios: The Golden Compass/Philip Pullman; The Sunday Philosophy Club/Alexander McCall Smith; and Tears of the Giraffe/Alexander McCall Smith.

Videos: Prime Suspect: The Lost Child; Touching Evil 3; Masterpiece Theatre - Touching Evil; Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless

Mind; Top Secret!; The Full Monty; Tin Men; and The Legend of Frank Woods.

ABIQUIU PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ph: 685-4884

The Abiquiu Public Library supports community functions in many ways especially during Pueblo traditions such as annual celebrations of patron saints' feast days. The most recent was the **Santo Thomas Fiesta** on November 27th and 28th. Our own Board President, Dexter Trujillo, made the Rio Grande Sun headlines along with six girls and two boys of this area, praying, dancing and singing with the beat of the drum. They all did really well and enjoyed carrying on the traditions of our ancestors. The drums used were made by Wayne Brewster and youth in the drum making class and sounded really great. A display of beautifully-colored photos is currently in the library.

Invest in Children 2005: Think about where the children in our communities will be in the future? What do we want for them? Strong, bright and fullness of great things with happiness! Our library would like to keep having programs to broaden young minds. Our tutoring program keeps them thinking and learning; the art programs bring out their hidden talents and our summer reading programs keep their imaginations strong and vibrant. **We now invite you to talk to us about assisting high school students search and apply for scholarships beginning in January.** Many do not know what is available or how to obtain it. Please put some investment in **local** aspects of our future. Donate to the endowment match in order to secure children's programs in the Abiquiu Public Library-**perpetually!**

Thanks to Raymond Ortiz Networking for technology planning and also LCDN-Andy

Lopez, John Ussary, their team and Phillip Trujillo for fast wireless connections and countless hours!

Delilah Trujillo, who is an after school tutor in our library and attends Coronado High School, was one of more than 200 girls who ran in the Miss Jr. Teen New Mexico where she placed **Top Ten!**. It was an interview process where casual wear and formal wear were judged in every aspect after participating in model training sessions. She gives appreciation and a big "Thank You" to her sponsors. This made her eligible to compete next year in Florida along with all the other States' finalists for scholarship awards. Congratulations Delilah-You did Great!

Last month, **Judge Marlo Martinez** and his wife **Valerie** made some special time to be in our library in order to offer information on Probate to the public. They have mentioned a return in the near future, if requested. Thank You, Judge Martinez and Valerie.

We'd also like to offer basic conversational Spanish again in our library and ask that you call us with your shared interests. The instructor will be Victoria Garcia, through collaboration with the NNMCC-Community Outreach Courses. We need ten registrations in order to begin. This also stands true for the computer confidence classes in Internet, Excel and Microsoft Word. We hope to begin evening classes in January and continue through late May 2005. Sign up-Now!

Please welcome **Monica Garcia** as Literacy Coordinator and remember to volunteer for January certification to tutor English as a second language and supplemental reading for adults.

Sabra Moore donated 11 petroglyph prints to Luciente. With \$100 donation you get to select a free print!