

InnerVisions HealthCare to open second clinic in Des Moines

By Kelly Mescher Collins
Staff Writer

InnerVisions HealthCare, an unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease medical clinic in West Des Moines, is expanding and opening a second clinic on Des Moines' south side.

The goal is to have the clinic open sometime this summer.

InnerVisions, which opened its doors in 2011, offers free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds and confidential counseling for women facing an unplanned pregnancy. InnerVisions also offers adoption information, comprehensive referrals, PAP tests, sexually transmitted disease tests and sexual health education and information.

InnerVisions saw that there was a need for services on Des Moines' south side, said Theresa Welch, executive director.

"You've got Simpson College in Indianola and DMACC South at Southridge Mall, and that age range is the age we are really seeing a lot more abortion-minded patients," Welch said. "Plus, there's nothing on the south side that these people could go to other than Planned Parenthood, so we want to have this there to capture those women and offer other choices."

The InnerVisions board and staff prayed for months about finding a building that would be a suitable match. The building they found could not have been more perfect, said Bryan Gonzalez, director of development.

The space is in the same building as St. Vincent de Paul on Army Post Road.

"The way it all came about was through divine providence," Gonzalez said. "And to be able to partner with St. Vincent de Paul is pretty unique."

The clinic will be located at 520 Army Post Road where St. Vincent de Paul has its thrift store, food pantry and clothing closet. It's also located on the bus route.

"They were looking for a medical clinic and we were looking for a place with a thrift store and job placement," Gonzalez said. "God certainly had a hand in bringing those two desires together."

The new clinic will be located just 19 blocks away from Planned Parenthood.

InnerVisions launched Giving Hope, a \$700,000 capital campaign in 2018, to raise money for the renovation of the new space, medical equipment, clinic furnishings, technology, staff and marketing. At press time, they had raised about \$230,000.

The new InnerVisions South clinic will have over 5,400 square feet and offer more than three times the space currently available at InnerVisions West. The building interior will be remodeled to create a professional and welcoming atmosphere, Welch said.

InnerVisions South will have ultrasound, counseling, and exam rooms, in addition to classrooms, conference space and even a chapel. These rooms will accommodate InnerVisions' expanded outreach and support programs, such as education, coaching and mentoring for mothers, fathers and siblings.

Now is a good time to expand, Gonzalez said.

"Our patient traffic numbers have increased 75 per-

cent over the past three years," he said. "We are in a stable financial position and there's certainly a need in the community."

Gonzalez is anxious for this second clinic to open.

"What's at stake?" he said. "Lives are at stake. We know that lives are being snuffed out every single day on the south side and we feel that God has put this on our hearts to do this.... We know that there are people who don't have a place to go. That's what's driving us to wake up every day."

The clinic cares not just about the unborn, but also has a "radical dedication" to patients, Gonzalez added.

"Our nurses respond to texts, phone calls and emails 24 hours a day," he said.

They often respond right away, regardless of the day or time, and let the woman know everything is going to be ok.

"We start that rapport building at 3 in the morning or 2 p.m. on a Saturday – whatever that may be," Gonzalez said. "We start that process right away. We want people to come to us and let them know that we care about them."

They also help the women overcome the hurdles they are facing in life – whether that be finding a job or a car to help with rent or groceries.

"We want to get to know them and accompany them," Gonzalez said.

Over the past seven years, InnerVisions has helped empower nearly 750 abortion-minded women to choose parenting or adoption for their unborn babies.

Learn more about InnerVisions HealthCare at ivh-care.org.



The two executive directors, Theresa Welch of InnerVisions HealthCare and Steve Haveman of St. Vincent de Paul, pose in front of the sign for the new InnerVisions South location on Army Post Road.

March for Life

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at the Capitol One Arena, followed by a rally with a variety of speakers before the march.

Those who could not make the bus trip are invited to follow along on the Iowans for LIFE Facebook page to see photos and videos of the group's activities.

Young people from around the diocese said they were looking forward to this year's march.

Landry Cormier, a senior at St. Albert Catholic High School in Council Bluffs, will be attending his second March for Life this year.

"I feel very passionately about the issues and it's a really great experience....," Cormier said. "When I went [the last time] it was almost magic seeing the sheer amount of people who cared as much as I did, and that's why I wanted to go again."

Cormier particularly enjoyed the Mass for Life.

"It was easily the biggest Mass I had gone to, and it was also the one that people

seemed the most invested in....," Cormier added. "Everyone was there in spirit and participating and into it."

Yana Zivcak, a senior at Dowling Catholic High School and president of Dowling's Students for Life club, said she looks forward to attending her first March for Life to fight for the cause and make memories with her peers.

"I'm very passionate about life, and I believe that everyone has dignity and everyone matters, no matter who they are," Zivcak said.

Luke Posegate, a junior at Dowling, said he looks forward to attending his first march.

"I just think it's a great opportunity to be able to show in a public, outward way that there's a lot of people in our generation that care about life and I think it's important for young kids to get involved in



Photo by Kelly Mescher Collins

Students from Dowling Catholic High School marched alongside Father Chris Reising, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Perry, at the 2017 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

this."

DeWitte asks those attending the march to not let that be the only pro-life thing they do all year.

"Most importantly –

what are they going to do when they come back and how are they going to impact their community, church and school?" DeWitte said. "In what ways can they positively influence their circle of

people to the pro-life message?"

Learn more about Iowans for LIFE at IowansForLife.org.