



# ARLINGTON FREE CLINIC

Arlington, Virginia

While Congress battles over the future of healthcare reform and the Affordable Care Act, healthcare providers are focusing their budgets and brainpower on the medical home model and ***improving patient health through preventative measures and wellness.***

For the residents and local communities of Virginia, the prognosis was grim. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that an estimated 1,025,400 Virginians were uninsured for all of 2008. According to the Virginia Health Care Foundation, in 2007, Virginia ranked 48th among all states and the District of Columbia in Medicaid coverage of low-income adults between ages 19-64, making

Virginia the third –highest state in uninsured citizens. While disparities in income and access to healthcare were increasing, the gap between the haves and have-nots was as well. ***The need for affordable access to healthcare was clear.*** Solutions to increase access to high-quality care impacted not only the health of Virginia's residents but also the fiber of the state's communities.

Free clinics serve as a medical safety net for hundreds of thousands of Americans providing services for such as annual examinations, dental care and mental health care. 70% of free clinics run solely on private funding.

# PREFACE

The state of healthcare and why it matters.



The Arlington Free Clinic (AFC) is a private, non-profit, community-based organization that provides medical care at no charge to low-income, uninsured persons through the use of volunteers and other health providers.

AFC opened their doors in 1993 realizing a need in Arlington: ***although adjacent to the most wealthy counties in the nation, individuals were struggling to find affordable healthcare.*** The Clinic is dedicated to the South Arlington Neighborhood, moving into leased space at Columbia Pike and South Walter Reed Drive. As Arlington County pressed for improvements to the neighborhood, AFC's home was purchased by a developer for a large condominium, mixed-use retail space.

For the next few years, AFC provided care a few miles away. Returning to the original location, the Clinic now feels right at home under the condo buildings, next to restaurants, across from a historic neighborhood cinema

and near elementary schools. ***53% of AFC's patients reside in the same zip code*** as the Clinic and commute by foot or one of the many bus routes in the neighborhood.

The design process to get AFC back into their historic home was shaped through research that included interviews, questionnaires, observation and day-light studies. All the aspects of the project focused on creating a ***healing environment that was affordable and maintainable.***

Furthermore, the 8,600 SF of space needed to satisfy three entities: delivering patient care, organizing 500 volunteers and fundraising millions.

A simple flower provided the organizational concept, transforming the clinic spatial paradigm. The concept illustrated the importance of a stable core and the beauty in the organic nature of the petals. This "core" engaged the four essential elements of AFC: ***welcome, support, community and treat.***



# INTRO

To the Arlington Free Clinic and their Community

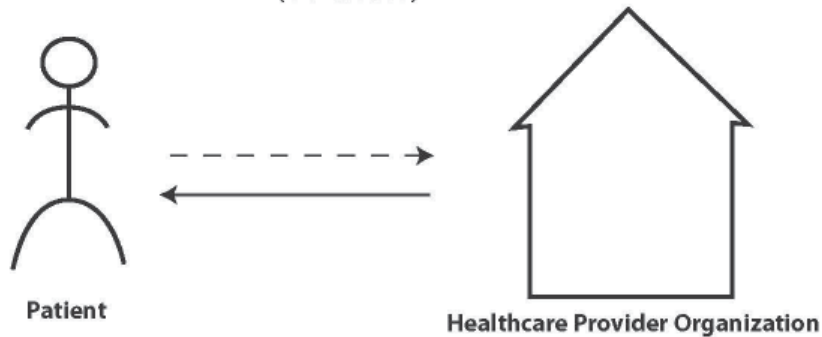


# Exercising 'Health Design Leadership' to Cultivate a More 'Generative Space':

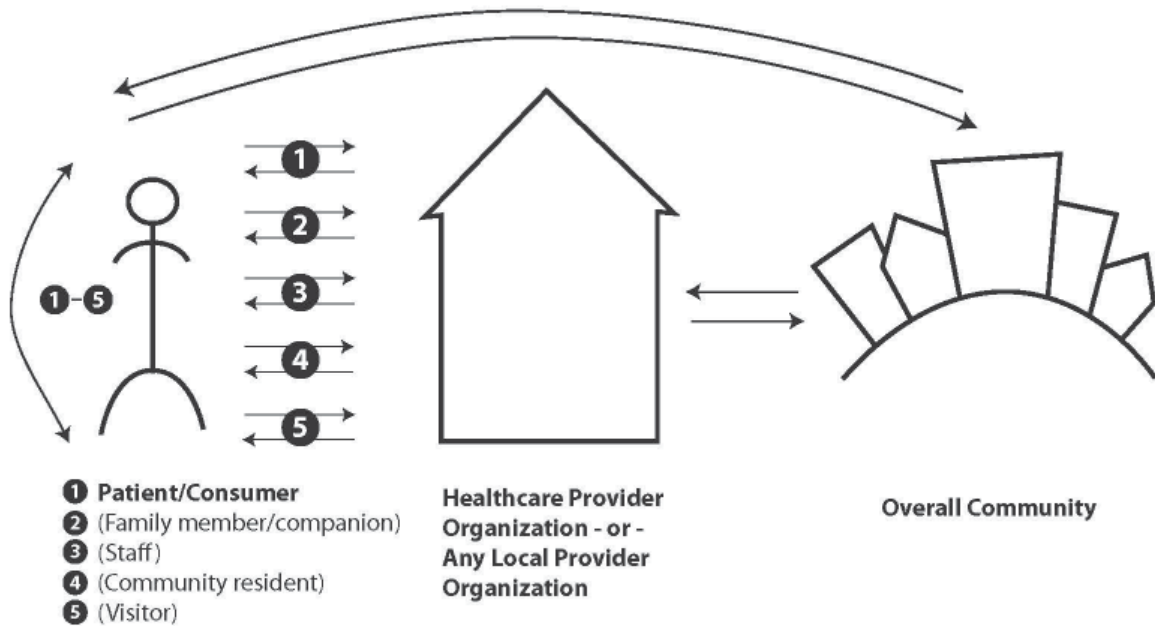
Toward a Care-Centered Model of Whole-Community Health, Healthcare, and Quality of Life

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**The Status Quo: Instrumental Transactions**  
(1+ arrow)



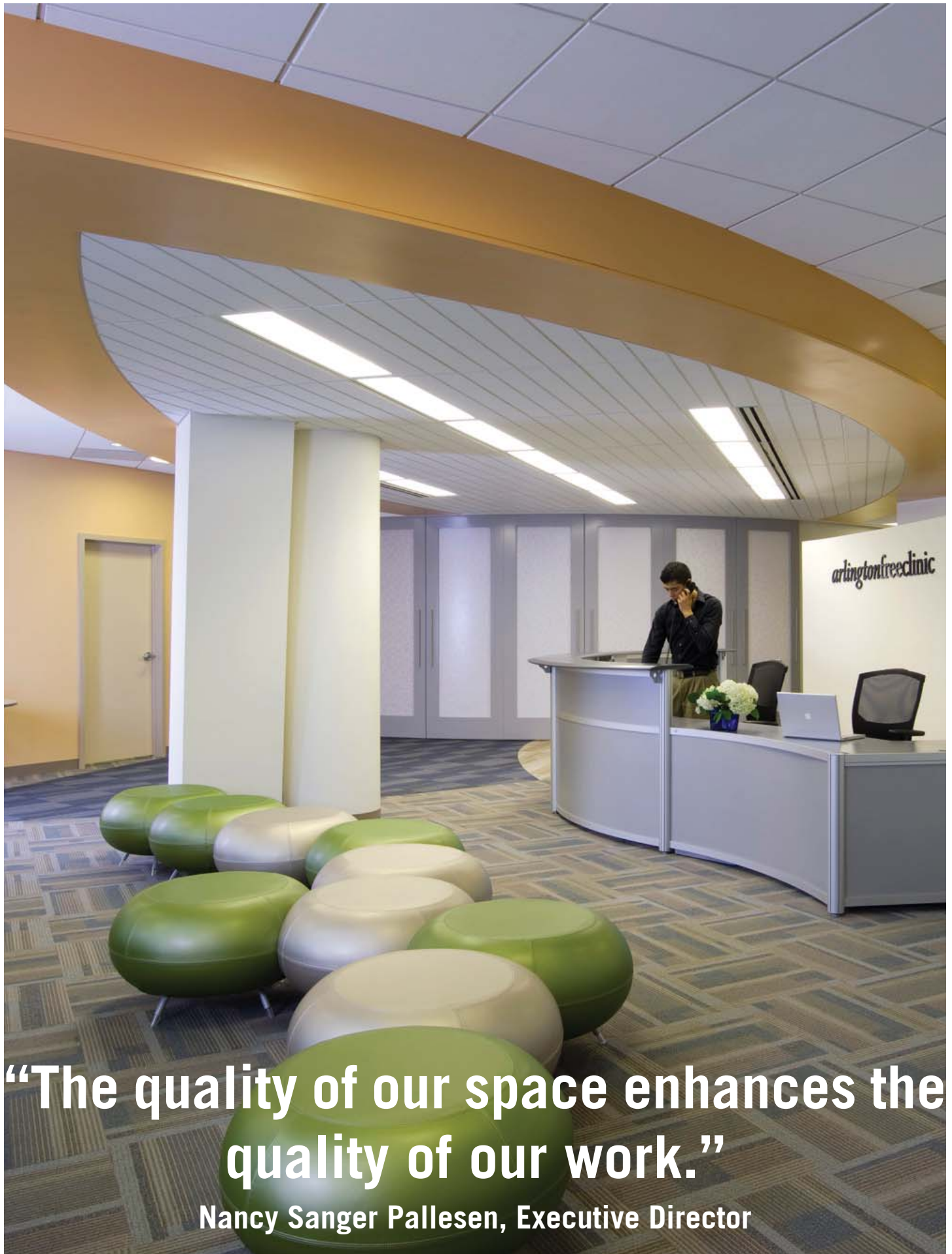
**The New Paradigm: A Place to Flourish**  
(15+ arrows)



The CARITAS Project © 2010

# THE NEW PARADIGM

From the CARITAS Project



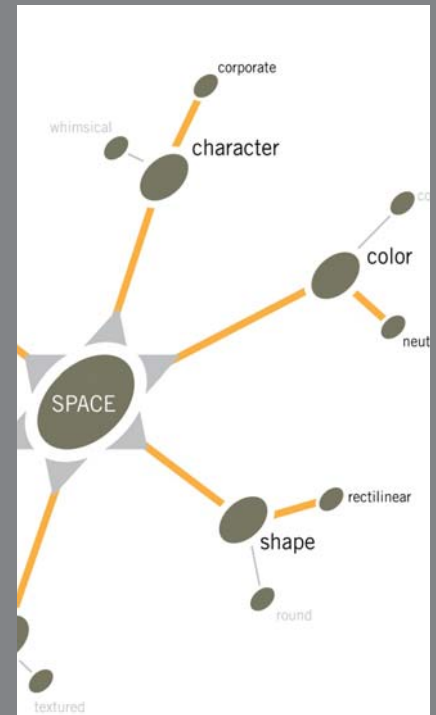
**“The quality of our space enhances the  
quality of our work.”**

**Nancy Sanger Pallesen, Executive Director**

Arlington Free Clinic serves as a medical safety net for Arlington's most vulnerable adults. With the rising costs of living in the Washington DC suburb and the current economic climate, even with employment, AFC patients are living at or below the poverty level and have no avenue to affordable health insurance or healthcare.

For many of the patients, English is not their first language; they speak a combined dozen languages, ranging from Spanish to Amharic to Mandarin. And unfortunately, can face **socioeconomic stigmas** in society. One goal of this, the first owned space by AFC, was to give patients an **oasis from disparity; a venue of dignity.**

Care was taken at the earliest planning stages to **improve a patient's flow** through the space from check-in to waiting, both which happen in open, day lit spaces) and then through efficiently organized exam rooms. A patient, no matter the physical or mental state, is always aware of where they are in the clinic and how to navigate through it. Color was instrumental in wayfinding. Exam room door colors alternate to aid in directing patients to their rooms, while an organic, colorful path is cut into the flooring to influence movement through the space.



# 1. PATIENT

Experience in the New Paradigm

During programming for the new clinic, increases in exam rooms in the new clinic allowed for more patient visits per day. Additionally, the more efficient layout of the exam corridor **reduces time spent locating people and rooms, further increasing efficiency**.

After the opening of the new space in 2009, AFC provided more than 9,000 free medical visits (up from 7,850 in 2008 at their old space). As of 2011, that number has increased to **11,000**. The number of **individuals seeking care at AFC has tripled in the last 18 months**.

AFC currently utilizes a lottery system to accept new patients who meet their eligibility requirements. Through that lottery system and referrals from their partnership with Virginia Hospital System, AFC was able to accept **493 new patients in 2011** and accommodate them comfortably in the new space. Patient number data was compiled from AFC's annual reports.

In November 2010, the article "Pre- and Post-Occupancy Evaluation of the Arlington Free

Clinic" was published in the AIA Academy Journal, authored by Dr. Mardelle Shepley, Tama Duffy Day, Jamie Huffcut and Samira Pasha.

The research evaluated the new and old clinic facilities by both staff and patients. 91 Patients and their companions participated in the pre-occupancy survey and 79 participated in the post-occupancy survey. The old clinic space was rated overall 87 (out of 100%) for appropriateness to the local community and 86% for supporting the needs of patients. However, the new space rated 97% for both **appropriateness to the local community and for supporting the needs of patients**.

Patient's agreed materials and colors helpful when trying to find their way around the clinic (4.29 out of 5.00), and 83% felt that they would describe the facility as "wow." The necessity of a "wow" factor was the direct language from Executive Director, Nancy Pallesen during the project visioning session with the design team.

**"We now offer yoga for patients in the conference space.  
The patients love it!"**

**Jody Steiner Kelly, Director of Clinical Administration**

# 1. PATIENT

**Experience in the New Paradigm**





**“Patients consider this space their medical home and they are comfortable here.”**

**Jody Steiner Kelly, Director of Clinical Administration**

Typically AFC's patients bring companions with them to clinic visits. To accommodate the guests of patients, additional waiting space was incorporated into the program and room for one to two companions was incorporated into the exam rooms.

One building restriction that challenged the design was the limited daylight. Only the south boundary of the space had windows, becoming prime real estate through planning. To enhance the waiting aspect for family and companions, who may spend the entire visit in the waiting room, the waiting function was placed along a portion of the south window storefront.

While AFC does not offer pediatric care, many children accompany their parents during visits. Furniture in the waiting room was chosen to appeal to a variety of patients and children. The "pod" seating brings a sense of playfulness into the waiting

space while ***accommodating visiting families.***

In the previously mentioned pre- and post-occupancy research, patient's companions were also invited to partake in the surveys.

When asked whether the artwork served as a pleasant distraction, participants highly agreed with a score of 4.45 out of 5.00. When asked if the clinic's interior environment was relaxing, respondents agreed positively with 4.32 out of 5.00. Placing the ***waiting along with window wall was another positive feature*** for companions who, along with patients, rated the brightness of the space 4.52.

In the old clinic space, these same features of artwork, relaxing qualities and brightness were rated significantly lower, with scores of 4.05, 3.81 and 4.11 out of 5.00, respectively.

**“Families take better care of the waiting space because the environment is nice; the staff assisting them and the space are nice.”**

**Jody Steiner Kelly, Director of Clinical Administration**

## **2. FAMILY**

**Experience in the New Paradigm**

Throughout the design process, the AFC staff was comprised of 27 full-time employees. Existing work conditions consisted of six-foot high cubicles and crowded shared offices, placed haphazardly through the clinic, hardly supporting much needed collaboration.

Consolidating the staff area and selecting layouts that promoted collaboration were priorities during design. To **improve daylight access** for staff, their workstations were placed along the south storefront.

The design prompted **culture change** by pushing private offices to the interior and placing low-height panel-based workstations along the window wall. Private offices were fitted with open doorways and exaggerated picture windows

for easy interaction with other staff and access to daylight.

The design incorporated **equal amounts of detail** in both staff and patient spaces. The use of color, floor patterning and ceiling design were utilized to create a truly cohesive space, regardless of function.

The architectural team coordinated a staff-only post-occupancy survey to investigate these design decisions as well as their interpretation of the overall clinic. **100% of respondents agreed that the new clinic space is light-filled and uplifting;** an especially welcoming thought considering the restrictions of day lighting opportunity. 75% of staff participants thought that the new space **inspired health** throughout.



# 3. STAFF

Experience in the New Paradigm

Additional research on staff opinion was conducted in the aforementioned article “Pre- and Post-Occupancy Evaluation of the Arlington Free Clinic”.

This research found of the 46 staff and volunteers only 73% felt the existing space supported staff and only 14% found the clinic design to inspire the reaction “wow”.

The post-occupancy data reported 89% of participants agreed the space supported staff and 78% agreed in a “wow” factor.

Organizational efficiency was rated 2.85 out of 5.00 in the existing space and jumped to 3.71 out of 5.00 after occupation. Existing clinic offices were rated low for spaciousness (2.52 out of 5.00) and low in quality of light (2.83). In the new space, workstations were rated higher at 3.53 and office quality of light 3.60.

*The story of one staff member, Jorge, speaks closely to the generative success of the Clinic. He began as*

*a translator in high school after his family emigrated from Bolivia. He was then brought on as staff. In 2010, he left for Medical School in hopes of returning to volunteer as a doctor.* His story can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWEZ-BPVYBw>.

Success of AFC Staff also came in the announcement of *the Executive Director, Nancy Sanger Pallesen, as a 2012 Washingtonian of the Year by Washingtonian Magazine.* The award recognized Nancy for her *commitment to public health* and steadfast efforts to create and sustain the only clinic providing free health care to low-income uninsured adults in Arlington.

Nancy quoted “My grandmother [Margaret Sanger] often said *‘we all have to take responsibility as we live our lives to help make the world a better place.’* I think she would be pleased to see the results of our [Arlington Free Clinic’s] efforts.”

**“Every Friday the staff eat lunch together in the conference space. That is one way we share what is going on.”**

**Nancy Sanger Pallesen, Executive Director**

## **3. STAFF**

**Experience in the New Paradigm**



**100 %**

**Responded that the new clinic space is light-filled and uplifting.**

**79 %**

**Thought that more community activities and education will occur as a result of the new conference space area.**

**75 %**

**Indicated that the new space inspires health.**

The immediate Clinic community truly is the patients they serve. **53% of their patient population resides in the 22204 zip code** AFC returned to in completing their new space. Equally essential to the care the clinic provides are the community donors and community volunteers.

Within the existing clinic space, volunteers were honored through individual Polaroid portraits numbering over 500 and displayed on cork boards within the staff and volunteer lounge. These impressive volunteers of nurses, translators, administrative staff, doctors and pharmacists and their staggering numbers required prominent display in the new space. And what better way to **honor volunteers than through volunteer hours?**

Through Perkins+Will's **Social Responsibility Initiative** of allocating billable time to **pro-bono work**, Perkins+Will and Bognet Construction employees transformed a main clinic corridor into a **showcase honoring AFC's volunteers**. From floor to ceiling, magnetically-mounted photos of the clinic's volunteers capture the community support that is at the clinic's heart.

As previously mentioned, no space in the clinic was

designed in a "back of house" manner; including the staff and volunteer lounge space. The design incorporated color and a fanciful, functional art installation of floral coat hooks within the lounge space.

In 2008, AFC praised 631 volunteers in the clinic with a total hourly value of just under \$800,000. After opening the new space in 2009, volunteers increased to 698 with a value of \$816,000. **Two years later, the numbers have grown to 720 volunteers and over \$1 Million in the value of donated hours.**

This growth is evident in the new space, as the white volunteer corridor wall is quickly filled by new smiling volunteer portraits. Volunteer numbers were obtained from Arlington Free Clinic annual reports.

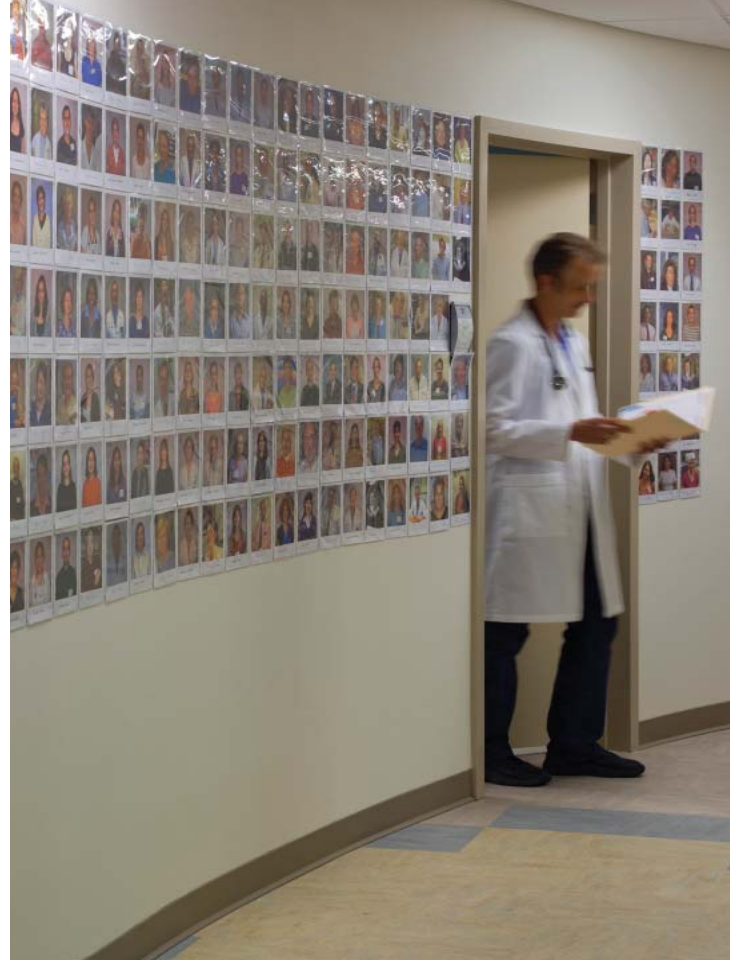
AFC volunteers continue to gain recognition in the community as well. Recently the long-time physical therapist volunteer received the Molina Healthcare Community Champion award for selfless dedication to improving the quality of life in the community they serve. The volunteer therapist logged 2,300 hours of service at the Clinic since beginning in 2003.

**“A new board member has established new criteria for our Physical Therapy Program. To support the program, therapists from this board member's for profit therapy practice volunteer with us!”**

**Jody Steiner Kelly, Director of Clinical Administration**

# 4. COMMUNITY

**Experience in the New Paradigm**



Arlington Free Clinic is a free clinic **built entirely from donations**. Their programs do not receive federal funding. Donors are acknowledged prominently in the waiting area as well as through print in newsletters and annual reports. AFC hosts annual galas to thank donors and fundraise. All of the organizational work is completed by a **100% volunteer committee**. Each year, the artful themed invitation is printed as a poster and displayed within the staff work space at the clinic.

In 2008, Arlington Free Clinic received just under \$2 Million in grants and cash contributions with another \$4 Million from in-kind donations of much needed services. Special events, including the annual gala, made up \$660,000. In FY 2011, AFC reported just under \$3 Million in cash donations with approximately \$3.7 Million from in-kind services. Additionally, the 2011 annual gala sold out for the first time in several years. Financial data provided through AFC annual reports.



# 4. COMMUNITY

Experience in the New Paradigm



From the beginning of the project, it was evident those outside the immediate community would be interested in the Clinic as a case study for the ***medical home model, community health, evidence-based design and sustainability.***

Initially in the design phase, the clinic program did not include a requirement for large gatherings. The design team explored the option of **transformational** spaces that could be “opened up” and allow large visitor events with Arlington Free Clinic staff and it quickly became a driving factor in the design.

The final design allows for visitor events in the conference, education and activity space, accessible through a series of curved, sliding and folding doors, directly off the waiting area. ***Crowds of up to 200 visitors*** are easily accommodated by rearranging mobile furniture and sliding the curved doors to the completely open.

The flexible conferencing and waiting space has now hosted several large events for AFC, including the ***grand opening in 2009*** and a ***performance by traditional Bolivian dance troupe*** in the space for patients.

**“We share the meeting space with local foundations, other not-for-profits and churches. They can utilize our space to enhance their missions.”**

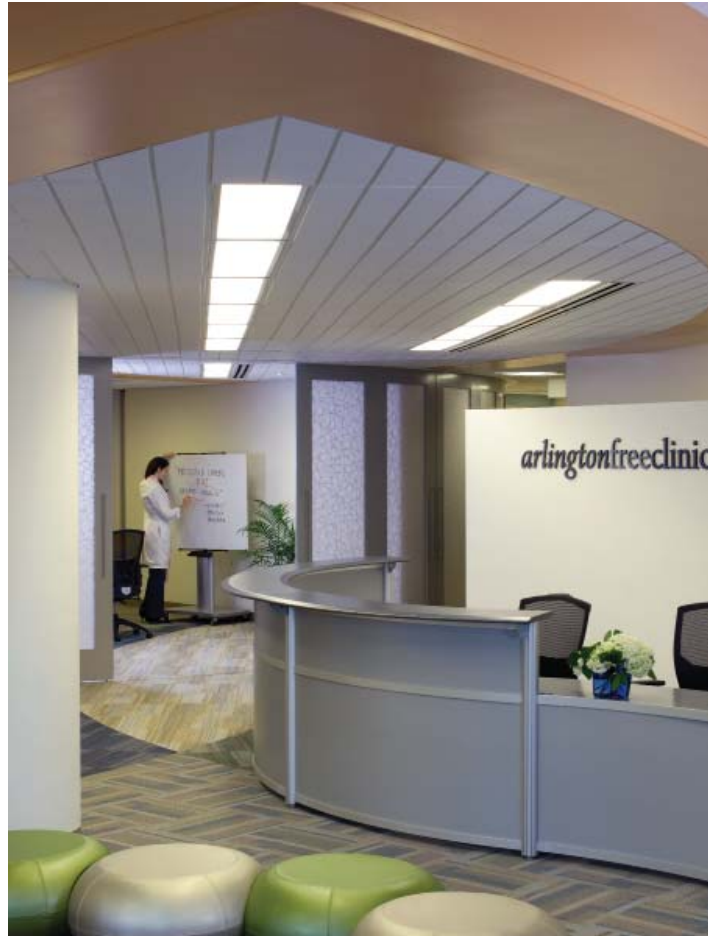
**Nancy Sanger Pallesen, Executive Director**

**“We have a new volunteer who lives in the neighborhood and heard about the Clinic when we moved back here. She walks to her ‘volunteer job’ ”.**

**Nancy Sanger Pallesen, Executive Director**

# 5. VISITORS

**Experience in the New Paradigm**



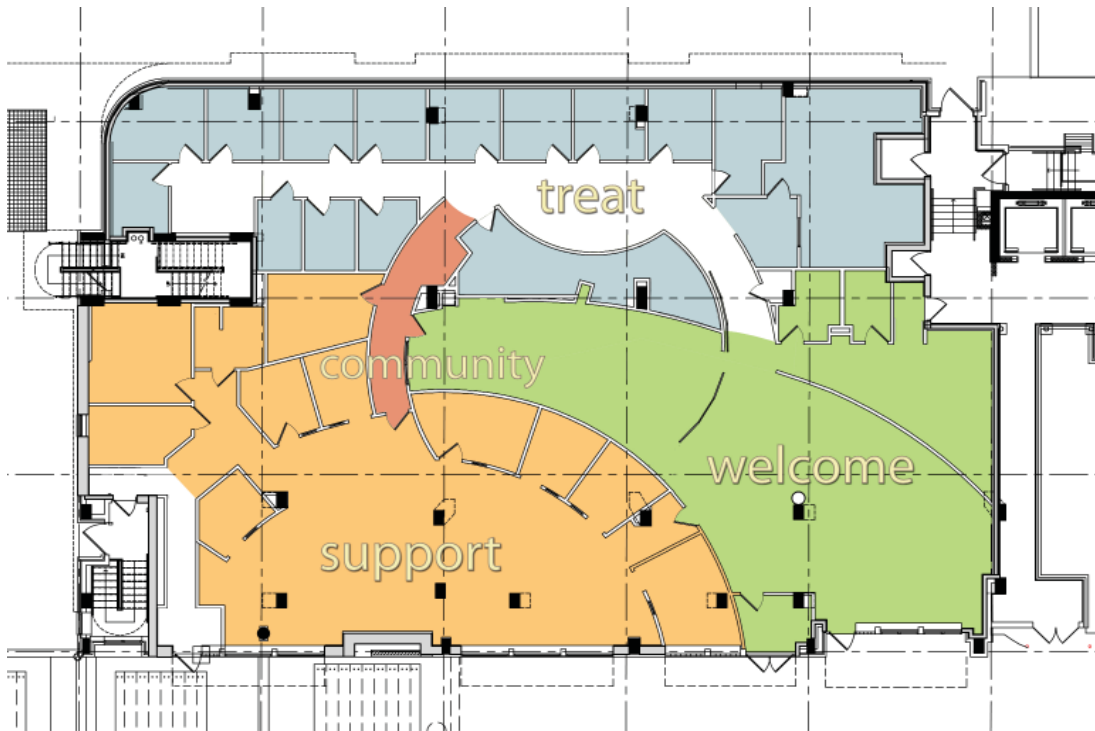
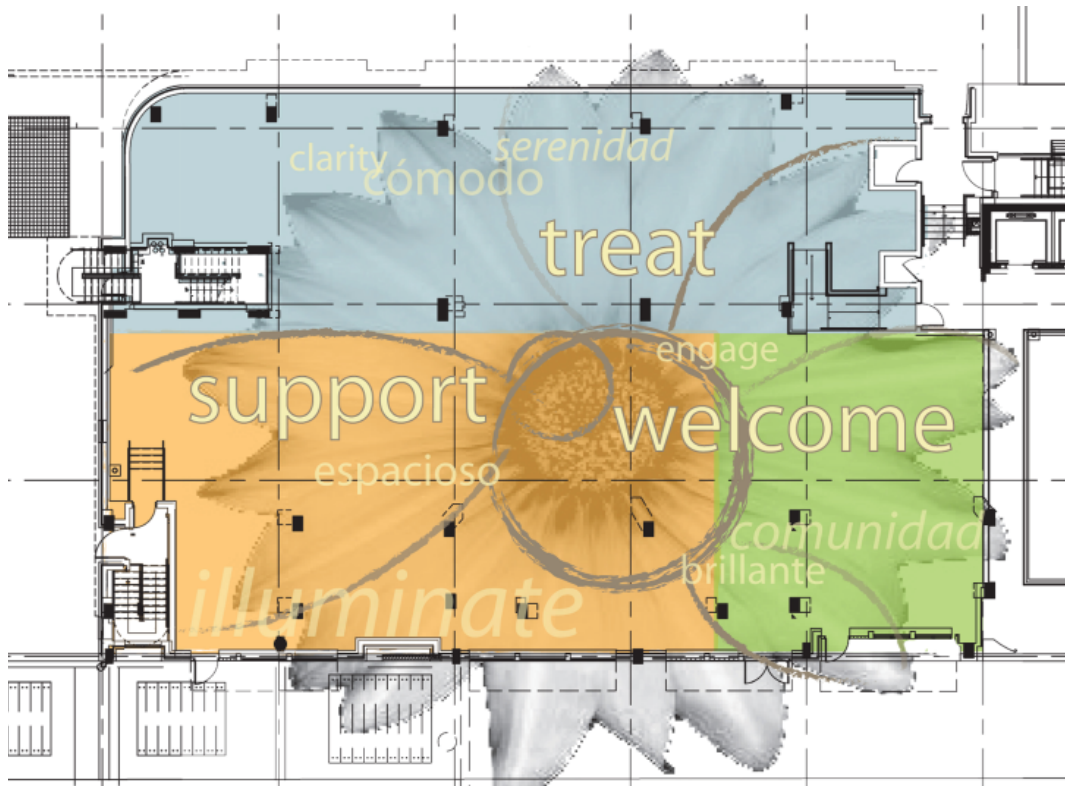
AFC incorporates sustainable features throughout providing that design can be **sustainable and affordable**, all within the mandate that project costs not exceed five percent the cost of traditional design elements. Thanks to the integrated team and early decisions, Arlington Free Clinic is the **first free clinic in the country to achieve LEED Gold certification** and the first LEED Gold certified medical facility in Arlington County.

- Bicycle storage racks, a changing room and shower were provided to promote biking to work.
- AFC implemented a new Car Pooling Program for their staff encouraging sharing transportation
- Water use was reduced by 31.58% through the use of low flow fixtures, flush control valves and motion sensor faucets.
- 100% of new appliances meet Energy Star qualifications, Lighting Power was reduced by more than 20%, and all HVAC equipment exceeds the ASHRAE 90.1 Standard for Energy Efficiency.
- 85.51% of all construction waste was recycled
- Of all construction materials and furniture specified, 79.86% were regionally manufactured (within 500 miles); reducing transportation and shipping effects on the environment.
- 51.24% of all new wood used on the project was provided through FSC Certified resources; supporting sustainable forestry.
- Only low VOC products were used.
- Staff were provided with individual task lighting to adjust their environment to specific task needs.
- AFC implemented a Sustainable Building Education Outreach and Signage Program. There are 25 signage plaques describing sustainable components within the Clinic in both English and Spanish.
- AFC contracted with an organization practicing Green Housekeeping barring harmful chemicals for maintenance of the facility.



# 5. VISITORS

Experience in the New Paradigm



# PLANS

Conceptual Diagram and Parti



**Hours prior to the grand opening of the Clinic in 2009, an AFC patient was overheard holding the door open for another patient and stating:**

**“Welcome to the Arlington Free Clinic. This is a place for healing.”**

## PROJECT DETAILS

**Project:** Arlington Free Clinic  
**Location:** The Halstead Building  
2921 South 11th Street  
Arlington, VA 22204  
703.979.1425 x 120  
**Client:** Nancy Sanger Pallesen  
Executive Director  
**Completion:** June 2009  
**Square Footage:** 8,600  
**LEED Certification:** LEED CI Gold

## PROJECT TEAM

**Architect and Interior Design:**  
Perkins+Will / [www.perkinswill.com](http://www.perkinswill.com)

**Engineers:**  
Integral / [www.integralpe.com](http://www.integralpe.com)

**General Contractor:**  
Bognet Construction Associates, Inc. /  
[www.bognetconstruction.com](http://www.bognetconstruction.com)

**Client Advisor**  
Silverwood Companies /  
[www.silverwoodcompaines.com](http://www.silverwoodcompaines.com)

**Furniture Dealer:**  
Washington Workplace /  
[www.washingtonworkplace.com](http://www.washingtonworkplace.com)

**Logo and Graphic Designer:**  
Rachel Conrad Design

**Client Project Manager:**  
The Magellan Group

**Relocation and Technology Coordinator:**  
Relo-Strategy / [www.relostrategy.com](http://www.relostrategy.com)

**Wall Mural Artist:**  
Jane McElvany Coonce / [www.jmcelvany.com](http://www.jmcelvany.com)

**Photographic Art:**  
Rick Miller / Kalpana Kuttaiah

**Architectural Photography:**  
Ken Hayden Photography / [www.kenhayden.com](http://www.kenhayden.com)

## AWARDS & PUBLICATIONS

Top 10 LEED Projects, Interiors & Sources,  
Arlington Free Clinic, Oct./Nov. 2011

Special Merit Award, Sustainability, Arlington  
Free Clinic, IIDA Mid-Atlantic Chapter, April  
2010

Silver Award, Healthcare, Arlington Free  
Clinic, IIDA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Premier  
Awards, April 2010

Published Project, "Staying Alive," Arlington  
Free Clinic, Interior Design, March 2010.

Co-author, "Pre and Post Occupancy  
Evaluation of the Arlington Free Clinic,"  
Academy Journal, AIA, Academy of  
Architecture for Health, 12th Edition, Nov.  
2010

Published Project, "Redefining Success:  
The Arlington Free Clinic," Arlington Free  
Clinic, Facility Care, May 2010

First Place, Sustainable Design, Arlington  
Free Clinic, Washington Business Journal  
Green Business Practices Award, Oct. 2009

Presidential Citation for Sustainable Design,  
Arlington Free Clinic, AIA Washington, DC  
Chapter, Oct. 2009

Team Award, Arlington Free Clinic,  
Healthcare Facilities Symposium & Expo  
Distinction Awards, Chicago, IL, Sept. 2009

First Place, Healthcare Design, Arlington  
Free Clinic, ASID Washington, DC Chapter  
Celebrate Design Awards, Sept. 2009