



## **Erik was at a breaking point before he found Bethesda Clinic.**

Erik Vargas was just a young adolescent when he experienced extreme, unimaginable trauma. His abusive father attempted to end the life of his mother while Erik was asleep. Waking up to the police in his home, and seeing his father taken to jail, this tragic experience was just the start of a lifetime of mental issues. After spending two years in protective custody with his mother, he still felt hopeless.

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Dr. John English, CEO

# A NOTE FROM JOHN

We recently had the opportunity to share the Bethesda story at an event focused on generosity.

Dr. Todd Raabe, Diane Thomason and I were able to reflect on the goodness of God, the community, and all the amazing miracles that made Bethesda Clinic possible.

As we grow, it is inspiring to see the multitude of generosity flow from you, our giving supporters and volunteers.

Last quarter we saw an increase in patients across all groups – adults and pediatrics – as well as an increase in volunteers.

***It is evident that God continues to bless the ministry of Bethesda by bringing the right people here at just the right time.***

We are thankful that you are a part of our story. God is using your faithfulness and generosity to bless families you may

never know. Throughout this newsletter are stories of just a few families and volunteers that are part of our story.

In this time of Thanksgiving, let us rejoice in God's blessings and in the story of Bethesda.



**Thank you to our amazing cake decorators for a magical "Once Upon a Time" Bethesda Birthday Bash. Together, we raised over \$800,000 to support critical healthcare needs for local families.** From left: Wendy Bratteli, Shannon Glenney, Julie Phillely, Lee Gibson, Joshua Johnson, Jim Nipp, Heivy Palofox, Priscilla Palomares, Melchor Palomares, Megan Tarrant, Tom Trimble



Continued from cover

As an adult, Erik sought treatment, but without insurance, it seemed like a dead-end path. He struggled with his weight and with bi-polar disorder. He could only sleep 3-4 hours a night.

But with your help, Erik found Bethesda.


"I came to Bethesda on the recommendation of a friend," Erik recalled. "I told her, 'Hey, this is a last-ditch effort. If this doesn't work, I am going to shoot myself.' It was a do-or-die situation."

At his first appointment, he broke down and was brutally honest with the provider. He shared his trauma and thoughts of suicide, hoping for one last chance at a healthy life.

With your help, Erik was immediately placed on medication, and then continued to come to Bethesda to see the counselor.

"I was in a fist fight for my life, and the medication helped me get a leg up on how I was feeling," he explained. "I took it and ran."

Erik had always been a fan of exercise and physical activity, but that alone wasn't enough to help him climb out of depression. He went from working out with the thoughts of helping him to end his life, to working out to become stronger and extend his life.



"Within the first three months of being on medication, my suicide ideation dropped from every day to maybe once a week," he said. "Everybody in my life noticed a change and improvement. Today, I am so far removed from the way I was before, it is hard to believe that I was even that person."

Erik is from Kilgore and works as a sub-contractor for a flooring company.

"I take more pride in my work now," he said. "Even when I get bad news, I know I am going to be ok."

Without your help and support of Bethesda, Erik would not have been able to afford treatment. Without insurance, cash-pay prices to see a doctor and a counselor were out of the question for him.

**"I really give a lot of my success to Bethesda, because the people here literally gave me my life back and I am happy to be alive now. People see me as a positive person and a happy person, and I didn't think that was possible. Everything is wonderful and I actually feel emotion now. Before I got help, I was literally numb."**

*Erik is a different person, alive and well, because of you!*

# DENTAL DAY!

With your help, we provided a FREE dental day for clients from Rahab's Retreat and Ranch, helping them with critical dental care needs. Spearheaded by Dr. David Nichols, volunteer dentists and assistants worked to give these ladies a new smile and ease any dental pain they may be experiencing.

Dr. Nichols, founder of the Bethesda Dental Clinic, believes in offering people hope and healing through dental work, and shares Christ with each patient he serves.

***Because these women are all in a rehabilitation program, and have no income, your support is crucial to providing dental care.***



***Thank you!***  
For helping us make this amazing experience possible!

## PATIENT STORY

### Kristian Caviness from Mineola, 31 years old

Kristian was in and out of addiction for 10 years and wanted to make a change. But she knew she couldn't do it alone.

The addiction caused her teeth to suffer, and she had ongoing anxiety about losing her front tooth.

At Bethesda, Kristian was able to get the decaying front tooth extracted and replaced with a "partial," allowing her to finally smile again and feel confident.

"I feel a lot more confident and love smiling in the mirror; I feel like a whole new person," Kristian said. "I was beginning to

not want to smile when I talk to others, and I worried about how I would get a job."

Kristian has been successful in the Rahab's program for 10 months and is set to graduate in January, and start her first semester in college. She plans on staying at Rahab's, where she lives with her child, for the extended-stay program.

"Bethesda was absolutely amazing, and I would never be able to afford this without them."

***Thank you!***  
**FOR GIVING KRISTIAN  
RENEWED HOPE FOR  
THE FUTURE.**



***Rahab's Retreat & Ranch is a voluntary, faith-based program serving victims of sex trafficking and women formerly in the sex industry free of charge. Women who have been physically, emotionally and sexually abused as well as those coming from jail will find a safe haven at Rahab's Retreat & Ranch.***





Dr. Adrienne Carmack wanted to do more with her skills as a urologist and Bethesda seemed like the perfect fit.

She worked as a full-time surgeon until 2020, when she transitioned to working for a medical device company, which has allowed her to spend more time with her children.

"Bethesda is unlike any other clinic I have ever been a part of," she said. "No patient will fall through the cracks because Bethesda offers a wide variety of specialty services, and the highest quality of care for their patients.

Each patient is treated with respect, and they have continuity of care that cannot be found at other small clinics."

Dr. Carmack works from home and loves her job, but also loves being able to give back to the community through her skills. She dedicates extra time by making the trek from Longview to care for Bethesda patients.

On her first trip to Bethesda to learn more about volunteering, her daily bible study just so happened to be covering the Pool of Bethesda! She knew that was a good sign, which gave her even more comfort about volunteering.

She continues, "Bethesda patients are some of the most hard-working people in our community, however they are not provided with the health insurance that they need. These patients typically go to the ER for any type of illness which is expensive and un-sustainable."

Since 2022, Dr. Carmack has served 119 hours at Bethesda, seeing patients who would never be able to afford to see a urologist without insurance.

***We are so grateful to Dr. Carmack for her love for our patients and willingness to use the skills God gave her to help others.***



Dr. Carmack and her children.



United Way of  
Smith County

**12.03.24**

Join us this Giving Tuesday for the 5th annual Tyler Gives! This online event raises funds for dozens of essential Smith County nonprofits.

**100% stays local!**

The first **\$50,000** in donations will be matched starting at 8 a.m., and another **\$25,000** will be matched starting at 2 p.m. on December 3rd!

[TYLERGIVES.ORG](https://tylergives.org)



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For information on sponsorships, please contact  
Megan Riaz at [mriaz@bethesdaclinic.org](mailto:mriaz@bethesdaclinic.org).

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**April 1, 2025**  
Willow Brook Country Club

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Co-Chairs:  
Maddie Turman and Kylie Brooks





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