

The Mendoza Family: **Finding Hope After Tragedy Strikes**

Four months into launching their dream of owning a food truck, Cristian and Yesenia Mendoza were finally finding their rhythm — late nights, loyal customers, and a growing reputation for delicious tacos, burgers, and shrimp. Then, one night while closing, everything changed in a flash.

A bucket of 350-degree fryer oil slipped from its perch, cascading down Cristian's left leg. "It all happened so fast," recalls Yesenia. "I turned around, saw the bucket slipping, and screamed his name — but it was too late."

The burns were immediate and severe. Cristian's left leg was almost entirely covered in second- and third-degree burns. The skin was gone. The pain was unbearable. "He didn't have an inch of intact skin on that leg," says Bethesda nurse Dana. "He was in extreme pain when he came in — but he was determined to heal."

At first, Cristian was treated at a local emergency room where staff cleaned and dressed his wounds. But within days, Yesenia noticed signs of infection. "He was hurting so much more," she remembers. "We couldn't sleep. I was scared he was getting worse."





A NOTE FROM JOHN

Dear Friends,

September 6 marked a milestone that fills my heart with both gratitude and awe—Bethesda's 22nd birthday!

For more than two decades, Bethesda has stood as a place of healing, hope, and compassion for our neighbors in need. When we first opened our doors in 2003, we never could have imagined the thousands of lives that would be touched, the countless families that would find care, and the ripple effect of generosity that would carry us forward year after year.

In this newsletter, you will see stories of hope—stories only made possible by you. While we often see so much brokenness in the world, it brings me great joy to witness the best of humanity shining at Bethesda—through our volunteers who give their time,

our patients who inspire us with their courage, and our donors who make it all possible.

As we embark upon Fall and a season of thanksgiving, we want you to know how deeply grateful we are for your support.

We are reminded of the words from Psalm 107:

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Our gratitude for the Lord's provision truly overflows.

Our Greater Works Campaign is underway, preparing to transform the former Hollywood Theater into Bethesda's future home that will serve more families for generations to come. The same generosity that sustained us for the past 22 years will carry us boldly into our future. Stay tuned for exciting updates on what's

ahead early next year!

On behalf of every patient who has walked through our doors, every family who has found hope in a difficult moment, and every staff member who has been blessed to serve—we thank you.

Bethesda's birthday is your celebration too.

With gratitude,

Dr. John English, CEO

Yesenia reached out to a local wound care clinic, but was devastated when she was told they couldn't see him without insurance. Yesenia felt panic setting in — until a nurse mentioned Bethesda Health Clinic. "When I called, Andy answered the phone and said, 'Yes, come in. We'll get you taken care of.' She was an angel that day."

Cristian arrived at Bethesda barely able to walk. After a short admissions process, the medical team was able to see him that same day.



The wound-care team began gentle, meticulous debridement — a process of removing dead tissue so medication can reach healthy skin. "We scrubbed and treated the burns slowly," explains

Dana. "It's painful, but necessary to help new skin grow."

Yesenia quickly became her husband's at-home nurse, carefully following every instruction. "I'm not a nurse," she says with a smile, "but Bethesda taught me everything — how to clean, how to bandage, how to help him heal. They gave us supplies, antibiotics, and hope."

Between clinic visits, work worries, and caring for their four-year-old son, Cristian Jr., life was overwhelming. "There were days he couldn't even stand," says Yesenia. "My mom had to help get him in the car to come to the clinic."

But, because of your generosity, Cristian's wounds began to close. The bright red burns faded to pink — signs of new, healthy skin. "He's healing so well," Dana says proudly. "He's about 70% healed now. If he keeps going like this, he'll be back to work soon."

That's exactly what Cristian wants. "I'm so ready to get back to cooking," he says with a laugh. "I keep telling people — I burned myself, not the food!"

Without Bethesda, Cristian and Yesenia's story might have looked very different. Severe burns can lead to infection, disability, or worse when left untreated. "We have the tools and supplies to guide healing — and the compassion to walk families through it," says Dana. "God does the miracle, but we get to help."

Today, Cristian's healing is not just physical — it's a story of faith,

perseverance, and community. "We're so thankful," says Yesenia. "Bethesda helped us in every way — emotionally, financially, and spiritually. They gave us hope when we didn't know what to do."



Soon, Cristian and Yesenia will be back crafting delicious meals at Mendoza's Food Truck. You might see them around Tyler, and we hope you'll stop by, grab a taco, and say "Hello."

It is only with your help that healing moments like this are possible. You gave the Mendozas more than just wound care, but a way to heal. "Every visit, someone encouraged us," says Yesenia. "We felt cared for. We are so grateful."



PATIENT STORY

Finding Hope Beyond Healthcare

Sometimes people come to Bethesda for help navigating life's hardest challenges. That was the case for Timothy Sparks and his wife, who had been living in a tent at Tyler State Park for over a year after losing their home in Alabama.

Timothy had lost his job because of health issues, and without steady income, they couldn't keep up with housing costs. At 70 years old, his wife was also struggling with her own health problems. They carried the heavy burden of uncertainty, unsure where to turn for stability.

When they walked through Bethesda's doors, they met our social worker, **Elizabeth Arrellano**, who took the time to truly listen to their story. She completed a full assessment of their needs and immediately connected them with resources: a disability specialist, lists of housing opportunities, and follow-up steps. Elizabeth also



made phone calls on their behalf, advocating for them to find stable housing.

One call made all the difference. A local apartment manager agreed to make an exception — moving the couple ahead on the waiting list because of their health concerns and homelessness.

Through Elizabeth, God provided a low-income senior apartment for the couple. For the first time in a long time, they will have a safe place to rest and heal.

Timothy expressed his gratitude with heartfelt words:

"God got us here to meet Bethesda. He lined up everything so we could have your help to grow and have a better life. Pretty soon we will have an apartment so we can heal up, re-group medically and financially, and start a new life. Thank you, because you have taken so much off our shoulders, and you were truly a blessing."

His wife added:

"I have never seen a clinic with a counselor that helps like this. I am 70 years old, and I should have seen something like this before. This place is well organized, medically sound, and I got a social worker telling me how to do stuff. It's like being with family here—it's just wonderful."

At Bethesda, we know that healthcare is more than check-ups and prescriptions. Because of your help, we can provide dignity and hope, while walking alongside people as they find their way back to stability. Your support means the Sparks family now has the opportunity to rest, recover, and dream about their future again.



**WELCOME
TO THE
FAMILY!**



**New Smiles and
New Beginnings
at Bethesda!**

After months of searching, Bethesda is thrilled to welcome two outstanding dentists to our growing team of compassionate providers — and it's all thanks to our incredible donors and supporters. Because of you, we can now serve even more East Texans in need of affordable dental care!

Luke Dlabal, DDS



Dr. Luke Dlabal brings both skill and service to the Bethesda Dental Clinic. A proud U.S. Air Force veteran, Dr. Dlabal grew up in Lee's Summit, Missouri, and earned his dental degree from UMKC School of Dentistry in 2009. He went on to complete an Advanced Education in General Dentistry residency at the U.S. Air Force Academy before serving four years at Goodfellow Air Force Base,

caring for members of every branch of the military.

In 2014, Dr. Dlabal moved to Tyler, where he practiced privately, continually honing his craft. Outside of dentistry, he and his wife, Jess, an Australian opera singer, live on a small ranch with their two dogs. He's an avid gardener, reader, and beekeeper—proof that his care for living things extends well beyond the dental chair!

Dr. Luke is grateful for the opportunity to serve at Bethesda and looks forward to joining a team that combines faith, service, and exceptional patient care.

Jennifer George, DDS



A Houston native and proud Texas A&M University graduate, Dr. George went on to earn her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from A.T. Still University —

Missouri School of Dentistry and Oral Health.

She is dedicated to providing excellent, compassionate care and is honored to serve patients in a setting where faith and community intersect. Dr. George is excited to be part of a clinic that meets both the physical and spiritual needs of East Texans.

Together—with your support and our dedicated new providers—we're building brighter smiles and healthier futures for East Texas families.

Welcome to the team, Dr. Luke and Dr. Jennifer!

If someone you know needs affordable dental care, consider Bethesda.

To be eligible for adult dental services, patients must:

- Be uninsured
- Have a household income at or below 300% of the federal poverty level

If you know someone in need of dental care, please encourage them to call 903-596-8353.

PATIENT STORY

Miles of smiles: **Beverly Faulks**



When Beverly Faulks first walked through the doors of Bethesda Health Clinic, she was in a season of transition. “I had a stroke,” she shared. “After that, I started seeking out dental care. That’s how I found Bethesda—through Christian Women’s Job Corps.”

Beverly had spent years putting her son’s needs first. Her son, now 25, is autistic and a proud graduate of Texas A&M. “Thank God he’s grown,” Beverly said with a smile, “but now I have to put myself first.”

Finding affordable, compassionate care was a turning point. “The cost was very reasonable,” she explained. “I feel awesome now as a patient!”

Beverly admits she isn’t sure what she would have done without Bethesda. “I’d be out there lost,” she said. Instead, she has found a place where

professionalism meets kindness. “The dentists are very nice, very respectable, and professional. It’s a friendly atmosphere. They give you the price upfront and let you know what steps you need to take. The dentist is awesome!”

She especially appreciated the way staff went the extra mile to meet her needs. “I’m dealing with partial dentures at the moment, and they even brought out samples for me to see—that’s awesome! No complaints!”

What touched Beverly most, though, was the joy she encountered at Bethesda. “You all are awesome people! It’s early in the morning, and you’re bubbly and friendly. I’m not a morning person, so I thank you for all y’all are doing!”

Today, Beverly volunteers with Christian Women’s Job Corps, taking life one step at a time after her stroke. She lives in Tyler with her son and shares her story to encourage others. When asked if she would recommend Bethesda, her answer was immediate: “Yes! Because it’s reasonable, they’re nice and friendly, and it helps to come and speak with them to see what they can do for you.”

For Beverly, Bethesda isn’t just a clinic—it’s a place of hope, healing, and genuine care.



Help us reach our \$100,000 goal to support affordable healthcare for hard-working families in East Texas **On Giving Tuesday, December 2, 2025**

Here's how you can make a difference:

- 1. Give on December 2 online**
at GiveUnitedSmithCounty.org
- 2. Choose Your Impact:**
When you give, **select Bethesda Health Clinic** from the list of organizations.
- 3. Matching Power Hours:**
Matching funds of **\$25,000** will be released at **8 AM, 2 PM, and 4 PM**, with another **\$25,000 distributed randomly after the event** — meaning every gift has a chance to be matched!
- 4. Big Impact:**
Each donation can receive up to **\$2,000 in matching funds**, and each nonprofit (like us!) can earn up to **\$20,000 total**. Multiple transactions are okay!!

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 2, 2025,
and help us Give United for the health of our community!

Hosted by the United Way of Smith County.



GIVE UNITED



From left, James Sheridan, Jay Ferguson, Cruz Torres, Michelle Carr, Teresa Langley, Katy Kummerfeld, Sharon Wynne, Brandy Ziegler, Steve Fitzpatrick

The Birthday Bash was a huge success!

We raised \$500,000 for Bethesda Clinic operations and \$500,000 for our future building!

Thank you to our amazing decorators.





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