

## Community Health Worker Stories

### **Bridging a Cultural Gap...**

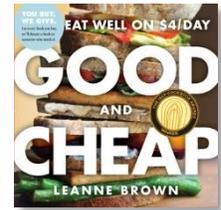
Manny\* had not worked for many years due to chronic arthritis, diabetes, and high blood pressure. After he was referred to a Community Health Worker, they met and speaking in Spanish the CHW learned about Manny's need for food and concerns about paying bills. He said he did not have a doctor and was not taking medication for his diabetes. The CHW got him an appointment at a Health Center and helped him get food stamps. Manny had no idea how serious his uncontrolled diabetes was, nor how to manage it. The CHW and a health educator helped Manny learn about diabetes and set goals for his health. In a short time, he started taking his medication, eating well and his glucose level improved.

### **A patient No Longer Alone...**

Mike\* was 43 years old, mentally disable, a diabetic and a patient at Maliheh Clinic for four years. He worked part-time, but only for two hours a day due to his hypertensive disorder. A physician referred Mike to a Community Health Worker hoping to find him a therapy support group to minimize his anxiety. "I noticed Mike came to the clinic alone," said CHW Tetea Wolffinden. "So I asked if he had anyone to help him." He said, "My mother takes me to the bus." She explained the UTA service for impaired individuals. They worked on the application together, and in less than a month, Mike received a UTA bus pass. "Then, I started the process for Disability Medicaid," said Tetea. She said a month later, Mike went into her office "with a smile on his face showing me the Medicaid card he had just received." Today, Mike doesn't go to the free clinic anymore. He has a primary care provider, neurologist and therapist.

### **Resolving Needs With a Cookbook...**

Lourdes Rangel and Laura Ceron are Community Health Workers at the Neighborhood Clinic. They have been successful in assessing patient social needs, providing education and developing plans that address those needs. Laura and Lourdes received many patient requests for information about how to make healthy snacks and affordable



meals for families, so they researched recipes and found a bilingual book called *Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4 a Day*. Thanks to grant funding and additional support from Access Wireless Marketing, the CHWs provided books to their patients and conducted a "Healthy Mamas" cooking demonstration.



### **Overcoming Challenges...**

Eight months after her first appointment with a Community Health Worker, Susan\* seems like a new person. She has a steady income, is proud of her job, and for the first time in six years has a relationship with her daughter. Susan is confident and not afraid to face life. When she first talked with the CHW, Susan was fragile, scared and distraught. She was far away from family and friends, isolated with an abusive husband. He was a long-haul trucker gone for a week or two at a time and Susan would be left with only \$5 a week for food. She weighed a mere 90 pounds. The CHW accompanied Susan that same day to a food bank. She helped Susan find a job, as well as safe and stable housing. Susan excelled at work, got a raise, and applied for classes at Salt Lake Community College. Susan is now independently moving forward toward a healthier future.

\* Patient name changed to protect privacy.



## Testimonials

*“As a Community Health Worker, I have gratitude for what I’ve learned in this position and I know that we are here to help, to find ways and to fight for their health, overcoming barriers and all those things that they are not able to do alone.”*

- Tetea Woffinden, AUCH CHW

*“The providers at Neighborhood Clinic love having the support of the CHW. We had a patient who was diagnosed with breast cancer and Lourdes [Rangel] was able to accompany her to the appointments, and help support and explain the process to the patient. Another positive outcome was a home visit with a diabetic patient who could not get her HgbA1c down. The patient was telling the provider one thing, but during a home visit Lourdes was able to discover things that could help the patient bring down the results of their HgbA1c and also enlighten the provider about why the patient was struggling.”*

-- Melissa Tonelli, Director, Neighborhood Clinic

*“The CHW’s are a joy to have in our clinic. It feels so good to be able to pass a patient with real needs into the hands of someone I know will walk them through a very complicated system so they can get the help they need.”*

--Jeanie Ashby, Executive Director, Maliheh Clinic

*“This isn’t a job. It is a dedication.”*

- Yeny Arones, AUCH CHW

