



La Clínica<sup>SM</sup>

a californiahealth<sup>+</sup> center

# CONNECTION

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The mission of La Clínica de La Raza is to improve the quality of life of the diverse communities we serve by providing culturally appropriate, high quality, and accessible health care for all.

## CULTURA Y BIENESTAR

is an exciting program that employs Mental Health Specialists, Community Health Educators/Promotores and Traditional Healers to provide prevention and early intervention services to the Latino community. The goal of the program is to promote mental health and emotional well-being through education, consultation, and the practice of traditional healing methods. In our recent workshop “Caring for Families: the Seeds of Life”, traditional healer Marcela Sabin taught community members about how ancient cultures like the Maya saw the connection between life and the cycles of nature. Community members also learned about the power of intention, and how to utilize these teachings to restore balance in the lives of their families.

During the workshop, Marcela Sabin described a 52 year calendar that the Mayans used to characterize a person’s lifecycle. According to the calendar, every thirteen years of a person’s life is divided into a specific phase and has its own elemental correspondence (earth, water, air, or fire). Developing an understanding of these life phases and their respective elements, the unique challenges and opportunities present within each, can help one reconnect with the spiritual world in order to better navigate the everyday physical world. 

# DR. JIM EITEL: ON A LIFETIME OF WORKING WITH LA CLÍNICA

One of the founders of our Pediatrics program, Doctor Jim Eitel, will be retiring this year. After forty years of working with La Clínica, Dr. Jim has a unique perspective on La Clínica's history and evolution, so we sat down with him to hear the stories that only he could tell us.

**INTERVIEWER:** *How many years have you worked at La Clínica, and what was it like when you first started here?*

**JIM:** I've been here 40 years. When I started at La Clínica, it had been in existence maybe four or five years. There were two pediatricians and two family practitioners, all of whom were part-time. Myself and another pediatrician were the next set of people, and we were part-time. I'd like to set some context, because when I was in medical school, and I graduated in 1972, you could say it was Jim Crow in Chicago. There was de facto segregation. The private hospitals where I trained did not have people of color. Unless they had some exotic condition that was worthwhile to teaching, they weren't admitted to there, or they'd be transferred if they showed up in the emergency room. There were no translators.

Chicago at that time had a million Spanish-speaking people already, so a number of socially-conscious medical students started basically organizing amongst ourselves, and we did a variety of things: [distributing] leaflet[s], and picketing. We even did a one day take-over of the administration building, [in an effort to convince the administration] to advance or improve conditions. Most of the faculty supported us, which was pretty cool, but also people started free clinics.

People would get some donated medical equipment, find a donated office space, and see some patients and keep some records.

I don't know where the original [clinics] were, but it was basically a movement that spread very rapidly, because there were many medical students involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement and so on, and the Civil Rights movement...

[There were some folks] we called patient advocates, but they were people who translated, and if they were Latino and you went to one of these hospitals, not only would they translate between you and the doctor, but they would keep the doctor in line. That's why they call[ed] them patient advocates... [The patient advocates] were people from the community who understood the conditions, and if people went to the hospital, the patient advocates would go along with them and they would intercede and stick up for the patients in a way the patients might be afraid to, or might not understand. Of course, many doctors in those days were not culturally aware and might be patronizing or prejudiced in some way or another. This is where a lot of this stuff started.

**INTERVIEWER:** *What's made you stay with La Clínica all these years?*

**JIM:** I have incredible colleagues. It's a wonderful community. It's very deserving [of having] people to take care of it. It's very warm. Latino culture is very warm. For me as an Anglo, I grew up in a very different and a cold kind of culture, [so] it was very attractive. I think the fact that everybody here was coming from

really good ideals — “serve the people,” was always very important.

**INTERVIEWER:** *Can you talk about a patient or a situation where you had a really strong impact on their life, or story?*

**JIM:** Yeah. There’s one that I was thinking of. When children get leukemia, it often isn’t obvious for the first three or four visits. They just have fevers, they have this and that. It happened that I was the fourth person to see this little girl, and she had hemorrhages all over her skin and had a fever, and it was just obvious she

had leukemia. The mother already had figured it out and she was expecting she would die. I said to the mom, “The bad news is she probably has leukemia. The good news it’s there’s a very good chance we can cure it.” [The girl’s mother] was [very] relieved in that moment.

**INTERVIEWER:** *Can you talk about the idea behind the term “medical home” that was brought about by the Affordable Care Act, and what La Clínica has been doing to create that atmosphere?*

**JIM:** I think the concept is kind of [like] Kaiser, where you can get everything in one place, or if not, if you’re a

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small office, you take care of arranging everything, so the burden is not on the patient. We were doing that 35 years ago probably, and there wasn't a name for it, but for instance, we'd send a child to the orthopedist, and they'd call the orthopedist in advance or we would call them afterwards so that we knew what happened. Most people I know, when they see their... doctors, they're on their own when they see their specialists. There's no communication or anything. We would help them get into the regional center or whatever programs they might need.

**INTERVIEWER:** *What would you say to a doctor who's thinking about working at La Clínica but is unsure?*

**JIM:** I would leave salary out of it... I'd say you won't find a better group of colleagues, you won't find a better culture, and a more wonderful set of families to work with.

**INTERVIEWER:** *If there was a lifelong lesson that you have learned from being here all these years, what do you think that would be?*

**JIM:** Never stop learning. I'll give a couple of examples. I started using subjunctive in Spanish before I knew

what it was, but I knew that it sounded different. I would ask people, "What do you mean when you say (speaking in a foreign language)?" In my curiosity, I would move up a notch in my language capacity, or I would ask somebody, "What's the respectful way to say this?" or I would notice somebody say something in a way that I hadn't heard before or didn't understand. I guess the life lesson is that there's a lot of things you don't know, especially culturally, and it's important to keep asking and noticing.

**INTERVIEWER:** *What role does La Clínica play in helping these folks to get into the system in a way that's better for them, and ultimately better for the community, in that it saves the community money by not having these folks end up in emergency rooms?*

**JIM:** The patients we have at La Clínica are working-class people, but they're not unionized or they wouldn't be here. They have few protections in their work. Awful lot of women work in cleaning buildings, house cleaning. A lot of the men do that. The men do construction, they do labor. I've seen more than a few men with evidence of accidents or their backs went out lifting the wrong thing or got their hand burned in asphalt doing roofing.

I think every step of the way, this attitude that you educate, certainly providers are always educating. If it comes about issues to access, the providers do some of that, or our social workers do, or the people that handle referrals. It's just taken for granted that education is a big part of our job. We do expect that to help people when they need to access the hospital, for example, but we'll also contact a hospital to ease the way for patients a lot of the time.

**INTERVIEWER:** *How do you feel about retiring? Are you looking forward to getting a well-deserved rest?*

**JIM:** I'm looking forward to a little less pressure to get up in the morning for the morning clinics I have. I'm really going to miss people. Since I don't have kids, this is my family. I'm going to miss my colleagues and patients. For that reason, I'm going to do a good amount of substituting. On the other hand, I'm going to really appreciate the free time to do a lot of other things. 

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: LA CLÍNICA DENTAL

With so much need for La Clínica's services, bringing top-quality care to our patients requires building relationships. In the late 1970's, La Clínica Dental started a modest partnership that would grow into something much bigger.

Working initially with UCSF's Orthodontics program, we welcomed in skilled pre-doctoral students and residents to work side-by-side with experienced La Clínica professionals. The students deepened their education while providing important services. They also experienced being part of the team at a community health center, a kind of work that might never have been on their radar before. Many of them have gone on to work for La Clínica, turning an educational experience into a full-time commitment to working where they are most needed.

Over the last 30 years, our partnerships have greatly expanded. We now work with nearly 20 educational programs to bring in skilled students in everything from dental hygiene to prosthodontics. This expands the number of services we can provide, including a number of specialty services that would normally be out of reach to many La Clínica patients. Partnering with educational institutions also keeps us on the cutting edge, as we stay in touch with a steady flow of new skills and knowledge. Working together has proven to be a win for La Clínica, a win for students, and most importantly, a win for our patients.



## POST GRADUATE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

- UCSF Orthodontics @ Fruitvale
- UOP Endodontics @ Fruitvale
- UOP Prosthodontics @Fruitvale
- UCSF Pedodontics @Children's Hospital of Oakland
- NYU/Lutheran/UCSF AEGD (advanced education) @ Pittsburg Dental
- Pre Graduate Dental Student Programs
- UCSF @ TV Dental
- UOP @ Fruitvale
- SEARCH (or other Dental Schools including University of Illinois, ASDOH)

## DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENT PROGRAM

- Chabot, Carrington College, Diablo Valley College

## DENTAL ASSISTING STUDENT PROGRAM

- College of Alameda, Spanish-speaking Unity Council, Mt. Diablo Adult Education, East Bay Regional Outreach Program, Carrington College



# All that Jazz ( & sushi! )

This year marked our 45th Anniversary and celebration of work in the community.

For the past several years this event has taken place at Yoshi's Jazz Club & Japanese Restaurant in Oakland, a lively ambiance for our employees, donors, and community members to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of La Clínica de La Raza. The event is an opportunity for friends of La Clínica de La Raza to learn about the highlights and successes of our year as well as new projects and programs.

This year, we chose to highlight our dental clinic at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland and the great work being done there with children who have special healthcare needs. Through the support and generous investments of our guests and sponsors, we were able to raise \$83,170 at the event alone and \$310,870 overall.

We thank all of our sponsors and everyone who helped to make the evening such a great success. 

“La Clínica staff was wonderful! Food, beverage and service was exceptional. A fun evening!”



Caption



“La Clínica’s All that Jazz event provides great entertainment and delicious food, while also inspiring guests because it brings together people who are committed to advancing the health of our communities. As a repeat guest, I look forward to it all year!”

—Diana Camacho



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