

Press Release: for use ASAP!

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RE: **Free the Clinic SCRABBLE® Tournament on 1/30/10 & the Clinic's Capital Campaign Kickoff**

Date: January 6, 2010

The Iowa City Free Medical Clinic and Dick Parrott Free Dental Clinic will kick off its Capital Campaign with the Free the Clinic SCRABBLE® Tournament on Saturday, January 30, 2010 from 1:00 - 5:30 p.m. at Old Brick, 26 E. Market St., Iowa City. "This is a fun way to beat the 'winter blues' and raise money for a great cause," said Clinic Co-Director Sandy Pickup. SCRABBLE® players at all levels, ages 8 and up, can register at the Clinic's website [www.freemedicalclinic.org] for either the individual competition or the team (up to four players) competition. Walk-in registration is available as long as openings remain. There will be door prizes, treats, and drinks, as well as other games to play. Players that collect pledges of \$50 or more will get a t-shirt and a chance to win additional prizes. The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 4th Edition, will be used to decide challenges. This is not a traditional or official SCRABBLE® tournament; instead, it's a fun way to raise money for the Clinic. To help with the tournament, call Clinic board member Pat Weir at 354-6652, and to donate SCRABBLE® games for the tournament, drop them off at the Clinic at 2440 Towncrest Drive, Iowa City, on or before January 23, 2010. Old Brick has generously donated the space for the tournament.

In July 2009, the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic and Dick Parrott Free Dental Clinic, a non-profit organization funded by United Way, Johnson County, Iowa City, Coralville, and grants and private gifts, purchased its current facility at 2440 Towncrest Drive, Iowa City, with the help of a \$90,772 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the City of Iowa City. The Clinic's mortgage debt is currently about \$250,000. Clinic staff, volunteers, and board members are committed to paying off the mortgage debt as quickly as possible to free more resources for direct patient care. Clinic Board Chair Christopher Smith explains, "With the CDBG money, the fantastic location of the clinic, and a building that works very well for us, this was an opportunity we couldn't pass up. By retiring the mortgage, we can allocate more resources to providing high quality healthcare to those who truly need it." In April 2006, the Clinic moved from the Wesley House to the Towncrest facility, leasing it for several years before making the decision to purchase. The current clinic facility is accessible to patients, is on the bus line, and has the space necessary to serve the community.

Over the last year, there has been a lot of media attention focused on federal health care reform efforts and the millions of uninsured Americans who have little or no access to health care. Since 1971, the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic has struggled to address this problem for many people in Johnson County and the surrounding area. In 1997, the Dick Parrot Free Dental Clinic was added to the Clinic's services. In fiscal year 2009, the Clinic helped 2,669 patients over the course of 6,354 clinic visits. Some patients needed urgent attention, e.g., an injury, a dental condition, an infection, or the flu; while others had ongoing, chronic illnesses, e.g., diabetes and hypertension. Clinic patients all have one thing in common: they need help and simply cannot afford the cost of treatment. Clinic staff report that over the past year, people are coming into the Clinic sicker and presenting with more chronic problems. The Clinic relies on a small but committed staff, along with many volunteers from the community, to provide services to patients.

Dedicated doctors, dentists, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacy and lab technicians, dental assistants, students, and many others donate their time to make the Clinic work effectively for those patients who would not otherwise have access to health and dental care.

Contact the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic and Dick Parrott Free Dental Clinic, 2440 Towncrest Drive, Iowa City, IA, at 319-337-4459, or visit the website at www.freemedicalclinic.org to learn more about the Clinic, review the wish list, check on volunteer needs, and make a donation via PayPal. Donations are always needed and appreciated, and they are tax deductible. The Clinic is a non-profit organization funded by United Way, Johnson County, Iowa City, Coralville, grants, and private gifts.