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**For Further Information Contact:**

Lora M. Thompson, LMT Productions  
216-376-9384  
Melissa Ghoston, The Free Clinic  
216-707-3438

For Immediate Release



**The Free Medical Clinic  
of Greater Cleveland**

*Health care is a right, not a privilege.*

**The Free Clinic Celebrates 40th Anniversary**

Cleveland, Ohio, September 13, 2010 – The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland has grown from a telephone hotline into one of the largest free clinics in the country over the last four decades. To mark this milestone, The Free Clinic will hold its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on October 17 at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

The Free Clinic is one of the oldest free clinics in the United States and the largest in Ohio. A group of nurses, concerned about the health and welfare of young adults, initially established the volunteer-run Together Hotline in 1969. In a matter of months, the hotline grew into a clinic to serve the health needs of the greater community. The Free Clinic was incorporated in 1970.

Two of the clinic's longtime-supporters and current Board Members, Gordon S. Friedman and Margo Roth, fondly remember its early beginnings. "The ambiance of the clinic was greatly influenced by music, in particular rock and roll," said Friedman. The décor was hippie-like and The Free Clinic provided a non-judgmental atmosphere that made people comfortable, he added. Friedman, an attorney, provided early input with the clinic's planning in late 1969.

Roth, as well as her family, have been an integral part of the clinic. Both she and her husband Bob have served as Board Members and early supporters. She originally provided pregnancy counseling and he helped institute a clinic pharmacy. Bob's brother David served as the Executive Director of the clinic for nearly a decade. It was definitely a family affair as her mother-in-law even helped out with fundraising. "We used to have an annual movie night at the Cedar-Lee Theater where we sold home made foods to raise funds for the clinic," she said.

The Free Clinic has grown from a small clinic, based in a rented house, to one occupying a new 34,000 square foot building. It has 52 employees and over 350 active volunteers. Located in University Circle, it is equipped with 18 exam rooms, 5 dental chairs, 3 group therapy rooms, a modern laboratory, and an expanded pharmacy.

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1671 Edgefield Rd., Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124  
email: [lmtproductions1@yahoo.com](mailto:lmtproductions1@yahoo.com)  
[www.lmtproductions.com](http://www.lmtproductions.com)  
216-376-9384

A large variety of services are provided by The Free Clinic. Medical services are its cornerstone. These services include: treatment for diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and other chronic conditions. The clinic also provides acute care and patient education.

Volunteer-driven specialty services include: neurology, dermatology, podiatry, rheumatology, ophthalmology and physical therapy. In addition, the clinic provides: dental restorative and extraction services; substance abuse treatment; mental health counseling and psychiatry; as well as HIV prevention programming, testing, and treatment. The clinic also provides the harm-reduction Syringe Exchange Program.

A guiding principal and motto of The Free Clinic is “Health care is a right, not a privilege,” said Danny R. Williams, the clinic’s Executive Director. The Free Clinic serves around 10,000 patients annually. Approximately 99% of the clinic’s patients are below 200% of the poverty level and 93% are without medical insurance. Over 40% of our patients are working in full- or part-time jobs that do not provide health care coverage.

“We know there are many more people who need our services, especially now in these tough economic times. We have some very dedicated volunteer doctors but we need many more. The volunteer program, valued at \$1.1 million annually, is essential in sustaining The Free Clinic,” added Williams.

The Free Clinic is highly respected as a valued training site for approximately 25 programs in medicine, mental health, social work, nursing, pharmacy and dentistry. It also continues to receive exceptional marks for its sound fiscal management. It recently earned its third consecutive 4-star rating for its ability to efficiently manage and grow its finances according to Charity Navigator, a national charity evaluator.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will host The Free Clinic’s 40th Anniversary Celebration on October 17 at 6:30 pm. This fundraiser will include live entertainment, dancing, a raffle and food stations. Individual tickets are \$150. Various levels of sponsorship are available as well by calling 216-707-3418. Tickets can also be ordered from the clinic’s web site. Proceeds will benefit The Free Clinic’s General Operating and Endowment funds.

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland provides quality health care and related services free of charge to those who lack appropriate alternatives. It also advocates for policy changes to make health care available to all. The Free Clinic is a non-profit 501(C) (3) organization. For more information, visit our website at [www.thefreeclinic.org](http://www.thefreeclinic.org).