

PRESS RELEASE

Florida Medical Clinic Foundation of Caring
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**For Immediate Release
Migrant Worker's**

October 19, 2006

Dear Editor:

It is encouraging to see the spirit of volunteerism, and especially heartwarming to see it in your own community. I am writing to highlight such work.

Within our community, there are a group of hard-working laborers who work long days in the hot sun, in an effort to ensure our society has fresh produce on the table. The health risks are high, the labor intensive and the work often thankless. An estimated 8 million people – many of them, immigrant United Farm Workers, spend grueling hours picking fruits and vegetables. Florida, with its legendary strawberry and citrus crops, is no exception. These farm workers have a list of needs ranging from basic health care to rudimentary, yet essential long-sleeved clothing to protect them from the blazing sun and damaging pesticides. Each winter, Pasco County alone is home to more than 10,000 migrant workers, making their well-being a community issue.

To help fill community needs, the Florida Medical Clinic started the *Foundation of Caring*, one year ago. From providing funds for a water cooler at the Lacochee Boys and Girls Club, to supporting a new facility for victims of abuse, to an arts program for cancer survivors, our employees and medical practitioner's understand the significance of nurturing the community. Recently, we organized a clothing and household appliance drive for the farm workers of Pasco County, in an effort to reach beyond our walls. For us, it's a passion.

In the words of Robert F. Kennedy, "Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against an injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope." That is exactly what happened in Dade City, Fla., several weeks ago.

The volunteer response to the clothing giveaway is a testament to the fact that community spirit is alive and well. There are pastors and church groups to thank for helping get the word out to the farm workers about the event at Resurrection Park, Sept 23, 2006. There's unwavering collaboration led by Margarita Romo, Executive Director, Farm Workers Self-Help, Inc. in Dade City, Fla. Waste Management of Pasco County, offered boxes to transport clothes allowing us to maintain cleanliness and safety in transport. Lynn Storer at U-Haul at Autoland in Zephyrhills provided a truck, a handful of dedicated students at St. Leo University pitched in, as did employees from the Florida Medical Clinic. Working in unison, the group showed that we can all make a difference, even in a busy society.

Employees and medical staff at the Florida Medical Clinic reached into their closets and their hearts to assure dozens of farm worker families had baby clothes, blankets, clothing and shoes. It took a Herculean community effort as the logistics involved in collecting 50,000 lbs. of clothes and appliances from five separate offices in two different counties posed challenges. But if you could see the faces of children when they learned they could have as many books to take home as they want, you would know something is right in Pasco County.

To those who pitched in selflessly, we say thank you. To those who might want to join us in the future, visit us on the web at www.floridamedicalclinicfoundation.com or call us at: 813.783.9932 or consider volunteering to do something in our community.

It's the right thing to do.

Sheri Schwab
President, Florida Medical Clinic
Foundation of Caring