

Our Blessing — A Mother's Story

Eric is our first and only child. He was born March 18th, 2023, weighing 7 pounds and 7 ounces. We thought he was a perfectly healthy baby.

At 3 weeks old, we noticed he had nystagmus (uncontrollable eye movements) and contacted his primary care doctor. He said some children develop it and are otherwise healthy. But for some, it indicates something deeper. He encouraged us to make an appointment at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh and to watch Eric's milestones closely. If he missed any, we should consider further testing.

At the age of 4 months, we took Eric to pediatric ophthalmology at UPMC Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh where they used special machines to read his eyes. They saw the nystagmus and found that he was extremely farsighted. They ordered glasses for Eric, and at 5 months old, he started wearing them. We immediately saw a dramatic difference in his sight.

The UPMC doctors wanted us to have an EEG (electroencephalogram) to evaluate brain function and also encouraged genetic testing. The EEG was done when Eric was 9 months old and the results came back normal. We pushed off the genetic testing.

Eric was our chubby, happy, little guy who met all his milestones until he was a year old. He didn't start walking independently. We started with early intervention in-home therapy. He received physical, occupational, and speech therapies, and responded well to all. However, at 2 years of age, Eric was still not walking independently. We decided to go ahead with further testing.

First, we met with a neurologist, and he referred us to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh where Eric had a brain and spine MRI done. Six weeks later, we met with the neurologist again. He talked to us about the MRI results, saying that Eric's spine looked normal and the brain itself looked normal. But

because the myelin sheath that covers the brain looked abnormal, he wanted us to go ahead with genetic testing for more clear answers.

The neurologist noted that the radiologist that read the MRI before him felt Eric had HLD2 (hypomyelinating leukodystrophy 2), a genetic disease of the central nervous system. But after evaluating Eric for a few minutes, the neurologist said there was no way he could have that.

A few weeks prior, a friend of mine asked me if we had ever heard of DDC Clinic. We had heard of it, but had never paid much attention to it. We decided to contact them about pricing for genetic tests and were pleased to discover they were more affordable than the Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh.

A few weeks after we got Eric's MRI results, we met with Dr. Wang and his team at DDC Clinic. We were instantly impressed with the clinic and the services they offer. Everyone was kind and the atmosphere was relaxed. A few weeks later, we returned to get our genetic test results. And yes, Eric did have HLD2! It was a shock to us, and it took a while for the reality to sink in.

We believe God has great plans for Eric; he has been a huge blessing and inspiration to us. He has some physical challenges such as walking independently and some mild body tremors. Otherwise, he's doing well.



Eric at his family's farm





DDC Clinic – Center for Special Needs Children is a non-profit primary care and research facility serving patients with complex medical needs. Based in Middlefield, Ohio, and with a satellite location in Titusville, Pennsylvania, our clinic has been recognized internationally for our state-of-the-art genetic research impacting broad-based health concerns such as heart disease, cancer and neurological disorders.

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for people with special needs caused by rare genetic disorders. Founded in 1998 by five local Amish families committed to helping tomorrow's special children, we now serve over 2,500 patient families in 35 states and several foreign countries.

Our clinic is a unique collaboration of the Amish and non-Amish communities, dedicated doctors and researchers all working together to find answers for parents and treatments for children. The clinic was built on the 'medical home' concept defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics. We provide comprehensive and personalized medical care for special children with over 270 rare conditions.

Our in-house certified clinical genetics laboratory provides rapid, high quality and affordable testing. We conduct patient centered research – always seeking faster diagnoses, better understanding and improved treatments for our children.

We offer personalized education and support services for patient families. No family is ever turned away based on ability to pay.

DDC Clinic is a gathering place; a place of love, compassion and caring; a place where people take the time to listen and share; a place of faith and hope.

You Make Our Mission Possible



"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth." — Song of Solomon 2:11-12

Maybe the rain isn't over yet, but winter has passed and flowers are blooming! For most people, spring is a cheerful time when God's majesty is so visible and awesome.

Since our last newsletter, we have much to share about our continuing and growing work with rare genetic disorders.

In January, Dr. Hill from Cleveland Clinic started the adult cardiology clinic at our Middlefield location. With both adult and pediatric cardiology services now in place, we provide echocardiograms, EKGs, electronic heart monitoring, and follow-up care for families with genetic heart conditions — at lower prices than any for-profit medical institute can offer.

Joining DDC Clinic in April were Physician Assistant Andrew Gonzalez and Genetic Counselor Mollie Cochran. We're excited to welcome them to assist our medical team with both pediatric and adult patients.

Our clinic's growth is driven by caring supporters like you. Your generous giving during our 2025 year-end fundraising campaign and at this spring's Patchwork Benefit truly humbled us. Hartville Hardware's donation of excess inventory, which was auctioned off in a December benefit auction, was equally appreciated.

Because you believe in our mission, you make it possible for us to provide lifelong care to families affected by rare genetic disorders, from GAP testing of newborns to compassionate care through childhood, adulthood, and end of life.

As a non-profit community clinic committed to finding answers for families facing devastating illnesses, our broad community support is extraordinary — and critical to our operation. Through fundraisers, benefit auctions, and incredible giving from foundations, individuals, and businesses, our clinic is blessed with an unmatched support base.

We're deeply grateful and give all the glory to God for His blessings!

Eli Miller, Executive Director

CLOSING THE GAP

A Lifetime of Compassionate, Coordinated Care

For families affected by genetic heart conditions, navigating care across a lifetime can feel fragmented. Pediatric specialists often guide children through early diagnosis and treatment, while adult providers take over later, sometimes with limited continuity or shared insight.

Our Family Heart Center is designed to close that gap, ensuring seamless, compassionate cardiac care for patients throughout their lives. Through our partnership with Cleveland Clinic pediatric cardiologist, Dr. Jeffrey Bennett, and adult cardiologist Dr. Michael Hill, families benefit from a coordinated approach that bridges childhood and adulthood.

This special collaboration allows for shared expertise, unified care plans, and a deeper understanding of how

genetic heart conditions evolve over time. Rather than transitioning between disconnected systems, our patients experience continuity of care, an approach that is especially critical for genetic heart conditions.

Our Family Heart Center provides care for entire families. Genetic heart conditions often affect multiple family members, sometimes across generations. By offering appointments that can accommodate both pediatric and adult patients, we make it possible to evaluate, diagnose, and manage care for many family members at the same time. This not only improves efficiency, but also fosters a sense of reassurance and clarity for patients and caregivers alike.

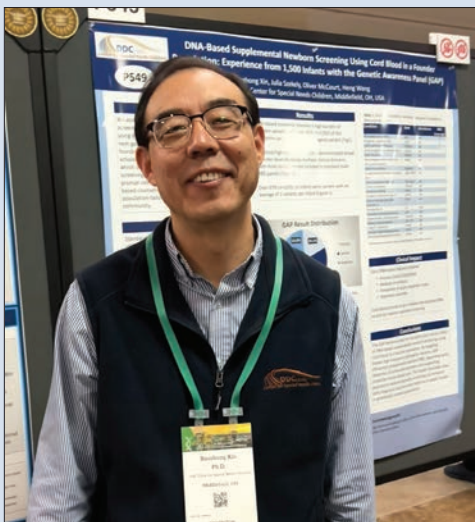
Equally important is the integration of genetic insight into cardiac care. By

working closely with our clinic's broader team, including genetic counselors and cardiac care nurses, Dr. Bennett and Dr. Hill can tailor care plans that reflect each patient's unique genetic profile. This leads to more accurate diagnoses, better-informed treatment decisions, and proactive monitoring such as echocardiograms, EKG, and electronic heart monitoring for at-risk families.

For us, closing the gap means more than coordinating appointments — it means creating a lifelong care pathway rooted in collaboration, expertise, and compassion. Every day, our Family Heart Center helps families move forward with confidence, knowing that their care team is with them every step of the way.

DDC Clinic Showcases Research at National Conference

Our clinic was in the national spotlight this spring when six of our staff members attended the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics Annual Meeting in Baltimore March 10-14.



Dr. Xin at the conference.

During the conference, four of our team members — Medical Director Dr. Heng Wang; Research and Technical Director Dr. Bao Xin; Family Nurse Practitioner Dr. Nicole Stevens; and Clinical Charge Nurse Valerie Sency — presented our work, showcasing our clinic's cutting-edge research and contributions to the field of medical genetics and rare disease care.

The four presentations, one of which won an award, focused on:

- How GAP testing uses a baby's cord blood to detect genetic conditions found in the Amish, effectively complementing standard newborn screenings and demonstrating how tailored genomic testing aids in early diagnosis. (Award winner.)
- Research related to an NALCN-related neurodevelopmental disorder in an Amish patient which

furthered our understanding of how the condition affects brain development, movement and overall health.

- Our clinic's use of therapeutic phlebotomy as a safe, effective and affordable option for managing iron overload in adults with pyruvate kinase deficiency.
- How our Family Heart Center, a community-based, culturally sensitive clinic, improves health outcomes among an at-risk, medically underserved population.

The conference provided our team with the opportunity to connect with fellow genetics professionals, share our knowledge and insights, and learn from others working to improve diagnosis, treatment, and care of genetic disorders.

Titusville Clinic — Making a Difference

"I do not know what I would have done if I didn't have DDC Clinic in Titusville to help me with my daughters. I am so thankful for the care they provide," said a mother from New York state whose children are affected with a progressive and debilitating disease.

Since opening in 2024, our satellite clinic in Titusville has provided much-needed specialty care to this mother's young daughters, as well as hundreds of families from Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, and New Jersey.

In its short history, the clinic has made a significant impact on the rural community and beyond — providing hundreds of diagnoses, helping families save thousands of dollars through tailored and affordable healthcare, and improving access to essential health resources.

"Many of our patients are navigating a challenging health journey, and many have complex medical issues," said Dr. Nicole Stevens, chief healthcare provider at our Titusville clinic. "This clinic has filled a real need for these patient families, who previously had nowhere near home to get specialized care."

Committed to excellence in healthcare, the clinic has partnered with visiting specialists from UPMC Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh and the Cleveland Clinic, engaged in research alongside prominent organizations including the National Institutes of Health, and worked with the Department of Health to expand access to preventive care resources, including free vaccinations.

Along the way, the Titusville clinic has built strong, lasting relationships with local providers and community organizations. But it's the patients who matter most.

"The most meaningful aspect of our work is caring for children with special needs — particularly those affected by rare genetic disorders," said Dr. Stevens. "It has been a privilege to work with these children, walk alongside them in their care, and witness real improvement through proper treatment."

Building upon the success of its first two years, the clinic's focus will be on continuing to grow as a trusted medical home providing expert, compassionate and affordable primary and specialty care.



Dr. Nicole Stevens and medical assistant Vanessa Duke with a young patient.

"We'll also connect patients and families with vital resources," noted Dr. Stevens. "Most importantly, we'll stay committed to strengthening our expertise and deepening our dedication to helping people of all ages affected by rare genetic disorders."

Hope Grows – And So Does Our Impact

Our 2026 Patchwork Benefit did more than break records — it brought the theme Hope Grows to life in ways that will be felt for years to come.

Held on Saturday, April 11th, with more than 270 guests in attendance, the evening raised over \$194,000, surpassing last year's record by 20%.

During one of the most powerful moments of the night, the Fund-A-Need generated more than \$71,000 to support a new echocardiogram machine for our Family Heart Center, advancing our quality of care for families with genetic heart conditions.

One of the evening's memorable highlights was the presentation of the DDC Clinic Legacy Award to longtime supporters Jim and Nancy Patterson, honoring their enduring commitment and the meaningful difference they've made in the lives of families.

This year's Patchwork Benefit reflected what makes this community so unique: generosity that leads to action, and action that leads to change.

Because of you, hope is not just growing — it's reaching further, diagnosing earlier, and changing lives every day.



Jim and Nancy Patterson accepting their award.

Thank you for being part of what comes next.

Understanding Genetics

What Does a Genetic Counselor Do?

A genetic diagnosis can bring clarity, but it can also raise new and often overwhelming questions for parents. *What does this mean for my child's future? Will this affect other family members? What steps should we take next?*

Our clinic's genetic counselor plays a vital role in helping families grappling with these uncertainties by providing knowledge, compassion and support.

Genetic counselors serve as a bridge between complex medical science and everyday understanding. They translate detailed genetic information into clear, meaningful guidance tailored to each family's situation.

Whether a diagnosis is newly identified or has been part of a

family's story for years, our genetic counselor helps families fully understand what the diagnosis means and how it may impact their lives.

Clear communication is key. Our genetic counselor meets with families to explain test results, answer questions, and discuss what to expect moving forward. This includes helping families understand inheritance patterns, the likelihood of a condition occurring in future children, and whether other relatives may be affected.

A genetic diagnosis can carry emotional weight, and families often need time and guidance to process what they've learned. By offering a compassionate, patient-centered approach, our genetic counselor helps

families feel heard, supported, and empowered to make decisions.

Working with our physicians and specialists, our genetic counselor ensures that each patient's care is coordinated and personalized.

This collaborative approach translates genetic testing results into practical care plans that improve outcomes and quality of life.

The world of genetic testing isn't just about science — it's about people. Through expert guidance and compassionate care, our genetic counselor provides families with clarity, confidence, and hope.

We're excited to welcome our new Genetic Counselor, Mollie Cochran.

Dr. Wang Honored by GGP

Congratulations to Dr. Heng Wang, our clinic's Medical Director, who was recently honored with the 2026 Frank Samuel Distinguished Service Award.

The prestigious award, presented by Geauga Growth Partnership (GGP), recognizes individuals for their extraordinary professional achievement and deep commitment to the community.

"Dr. Wang's lifelong dedication to children, families and scientific advancement — paired with his lasting impact on Geauga County — make him an exceptional and deserving honoree," said Kimm Leininger, GGP President and CEO.

The award was formally presented to Dr. Wang at GGP's annual business meeting on April 2, marking a

milestone in his remarkable 25-year history with DDC Clinic.

"Dr. Wang's leadership and commitment to patient care have left an indelible mark on the clinic and wider community," said Eli Miller, DDC Clinic Executive Director.



Dr. Wang and his wife, Jian, with his Distinguished Service award.

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Currently, he's getting physical and occupational therapy, and we're giving him a high protein and high calorie diet. He's doing preschool work and anything a 3-year-old farm boy loves to do! He can explore the farm with his posterior walker and trike, helping with chores of his level. His determination is sky high. What Eric wants to do, he will! We're excited to see what God has in store for his life.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone at DDC Clinic for what they have done for us, and for what they do for all these special little people and their families. They are a blessing!

— Eric's mom

DDC Clinic Staff News

We're so grateful to have such an exceptionally dedicated, caring staff. From new faces to well-deserved promotions, here's the latest staff news.

OUR NEWEST PROVIDERS



Dr. Jeffrey Bennett
Pediatric Cardiologist

Since Spring 2024, our clinic has partnered with Cleveland Clinic pediatric cardiologist Dr. Bennett to provide comprehensive cardiac care to patients affected by genetic heart conditions. Dr. Bennett currently sees pediatric patients four times per month in our Family Heart Center, complementing his expert cardiac care with echocardiograms, EKGs, and electronic heart monitoring.



Andrew Gonzales, MSPAS
Physician Assistant

We welcomed our new Physician Assistant, Andrew Gonzalez, in April. Certified in the state of Ohio, Andrew has a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Mount Union. He previously worked as an EKG technician and has also completed a clinical rotation in electrophysiology. Andrew says he's thrilled to be a part of our clinic and community.



Dr. Michael Hill
Cardiologist

Also through our partnership with Cleveland Clinic, adult cardiologist Dr. Hill had delivered cardiac care in our Family Heart Center since January 2026 for our adult patients living with genetic heart conditions. His monthly schedule filled very quickly and is expected to expand later this year to meet a rising need for our specialized cardiogenetic care.



Mollie Cochran
Genetic Counselor

Mollie, who started in late April, is our new Genetic Counselor. A recent graduate of the M.S. in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling program at Thomas Jefferson University, she's excited to begin her career at our clinic. Mollie works with our patient families, providing education and support related to genetic testing results. She also works with our physicians and specialists to provide coordinated care.



Kyle Whittemore
Physician Assistant

Kyle, who came on board last year, recently traveled to Cornell University in New York for Point-of-Care Ultrasound Training at Weill Cornell Medicine, the university's medical school. During the immersive program, Kyle spent more than four hours each day performing ultrasound on live patient models, learning emerging techniques, and developing advanced skills which he has put to use in our Family Heart Center.

STAFF PROMOTIONS



Julia Szekely
Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory Manager

Julia joined our clinic in 2014 as a Laboratory Technician, was later promoted to Senior Laboratory Technologist, and was most recently elevated to Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory Manager. Over the past 12 years, Julia has made significant contributions to our clinic and our laboratory. As our laboratory manager, she oversees day-to-day laboratory operations and advance diagnostics for rare genetic diseases.



Bea Torres-Fults
Family Heart Center Coordinator

Bea, who joined us in 2022, was recently promoted to our Family Heart Center Coordinator. She was also selected by the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA) as a 2026 Annual Cardiovascular Nursing Symposium Scholarship Recipient. She attended PCNA's symposium in Scottsdale, Arizona in April, where she presented an abstract on improving access to cardiogenetic care for Anabaptist children.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Why We Give to DDC Clinic

In this article, donors Terry and Laura Holland explain why DDC Clinic matters to them.

We have lived in Geauga County for more than 35 years. Like many others, we worked outside the county and had little involvement with local entities.

Frankly, we had never heard of DDC Clinic until I participated in Leadership Geauga Class of 2020. Seeing the excellent work being done to support the Amish community triggered our initial giving.

We were subsequently invited to a donor day held at the clinic. The day included a tour of the clinic and the lab — we were certainly impressed by both the research and treatment aspects of the clinic.

We're both somewhat "science nerds" and have actively been involved in research, although not medical, in our careers. I obtained my doctorate in civil engineering from a major research university. My wife, Laura, worked as a research librarian during much of our time here in Ohio. Thus, we both have an appreciation of the hard work and dedication required to produce meaningful results.

In addition to the incredible contributions DDC Clinic is making to the wellbeing of the local Amish families suffering from genetic diseases, we're further impressed by other aspects of the work being done.

First, the research is applied immediately to patients through the treatment side of the work. Second, treatment and counseling are provided at minimal cost to patients. Third, the clinic provides assistance not only to those in Geauga County but worldwide. Finally, the clinic is making their work widely available by publishing in the appropriate journals.

As we've learned more about the clinic's activities, we've been convinced to continue our contributions and our participation with the clinic.

We donate to DDC Clinic because they have an incredibly important mission, and they carry it out extremely well.

2025 Report to the Community

Year In Review

2025 was a year of meaningful growth for our clinic. A year guided by a commitment to improve accessibility and maintain affordability.

Through new partnerships with outside specialists and respected medical institutions, we expanded our scope of services, bringing advanced specialty care directly to our patients.

We served more than 2,100 patients, seeing significant growth in patient numbers at both our Middlefield and Titusville locations. Visits to our Family Heart Center nearly tripled. Testing services grew — we performed 923 GAP tests, more than any other year. And we kept costs affordable — resulting in more than \$1.4 million in savings to the community.

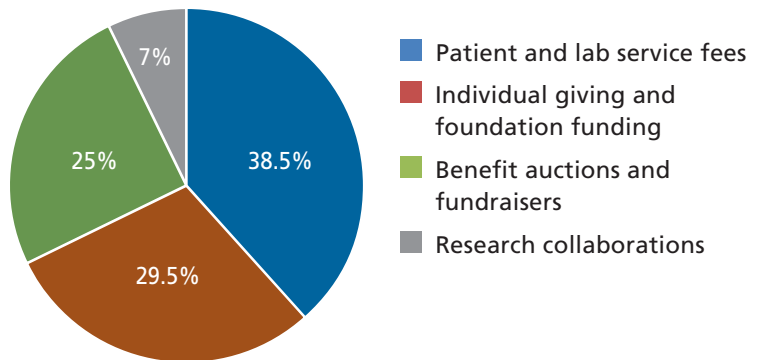
All this was possible because you supported our mission.

Your generosity fueled our growth, enabling us to deliver enhanced comprehensive care and hope for a brighter future to many more families than ever before. Thank you for believing in us.

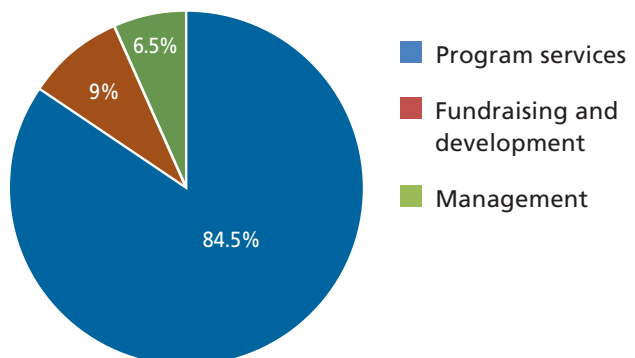
Financial Report

DDC Clinic – Center for Special Needs Children is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



To read our full 2025 Annual Report, visit ddcclinic.org/why-support-us/





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SUMMER 2026 *DDC Clinic Community Benefit Auctions*

Shiloh Mennonite
Community Benefit Auction
Saturday, July 11
Shiloh, OH

Spartansburg Benefit Auction
Friday, August 7
Spartansburg, PA

Geauga Community
Benefit Auction
Friday, August 28
Middlefield, OH

Open to all! Come for food, fellowship and fun.
Bid on a huge array of items, from the ordinary to the unique.
Your support helps to provide life-changing care for special needs children.

Learn more at ddcclinic.org/events
Auction donations welcome. To donate, call Eli Miller at 440-632-1668.