

The Undeniable Power of Hope

For many families, hope is the only thing to cling to when faced with a devastating genetic diagnosis for a child or loved one. Hope for a miracle, hope that doctors will discover a treatment or even a cure, and hope that God's love, mercy, and grace will sustain them through seasons of trial.

Hope is a precious gift. When hope is present, we find strength to take another step forward. When hope is absent, despair can quickly take its place, bringing worry, fear, loneliness, and discouragement.

Hope is not merely wishful thinking. True hope is rooted in faith and trust. We may not know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds tomorrow. Through life's burdens and uncertainties, God provides comfort and the assurance that He walks beside us in every circumstance.

At DDC Clinic, hope was present long before the clinic itself existed. Nearly 30 years ago, before DDC Clinic was more than a dream, families gathered to describe what kind of clinic they needed. They envisioned "a gathering place; a place of love, compassion and caring, where our children and family are respected; a place where people take the time to listen and share; a place of faith and hope."

What strikes us most about those words is that they were written by families who were facing immense challenges. Yet even during uncertainty, they dared to hope. They believed that someday there could be a place where children with rare disorders would receive specialized care close to home. They hoped for understanding, answers, and support. Today, because of that hope and the generosity of so many people, that vision has become a reality.

Every day at DDC Clinic, we have the privilege of witnessing hope in action. We see it in parents who continue to advocate for their children. We see it in families who encourage one another during difficult times. We see it in researchers who dedicate themselves to discovering new knowledge, and in healthcare providers who take the time to listen, care, and walk alongside those they serve.

Perhaps one of the greatest sources of hope comes from families themselves. Time and again, we see parents, grandparents, and caregivers meet challenges with remarkable faith, perseverance, and love. Their determination to provide the best possible life for their children inspires everyone around them.

Even when answers are not immediate and treatments are limited, their example reminds us that hope is not measured by circumstances alone. Hope grows through caring relationships, faithful communities, and the conviction that every child is precious.

Hope is often strengthened through community. For generations, Amish and Mennonite communities have exemplified the importance of bearing one another's burdens. When a neighbor faces hardship, others gather around to help. When a family struggles, the community offers support, encouragement, and prayer. This spirit of caring is at the heart of our clinic's mission because we believe that no family should have to face these challenges alone.

When you support DDC Clinic, whether by attending a benefit auction, participating in a fundraising event, volunteering your time, or making a financial gift, you're helping to bring hope to families. Your support helps provide medical care, answers, resources, and encouragement to those who need it most. More importantly, it helps families know that they're not alone on their journey.

Thank you for standing with us and believing in our mission. Together, we can continue to be the kind of place those families envisioned nearly three decades ago: a gathering place, a place of compassion and caring, a place where people are respected and heard, and above all, a place of faith and hope.

As we look to the future, may we never underestimate the power of hope, for often it is hope that carries a family through their darkest days and reminds them that brighter days are still ahead.





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 2,800 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.

25 Years of Compassionate Care

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

— **Romans 12:12**



Our front-page article in this issue reminded me once again why we do this work and how important DDC Clinic is to the community. I agree with the physician who said a few years ago that the Plain Communities cannot afford not to have these clinics.

Affordable care and services, education, and genetic testing are all vitally important. Yet just as important is the hope families receive from having a place to turn when facing conditions that even many large medical centers know very little about.

2026 has been an incredibly busy year for us. Along with the challenges came many blessings. In 2027, we'll celebrate DDC Clinic's 25th anniversary. From the humble beginnings of making house calls without a clinic building to the services we provide today is truly remarkable and a testimony to God's blessing.

We're planning special events throughout 2027 to mark our milestone anniversary. We hope you'll join us next year in celebration and thanks to Dr. Wang for his dedication and commitment to the community and this important work.

Many of the younger generation, myself included, were too young to be involved in the planning and groundwork that took place between 1998 when planning started and 2002, when Dr. Wang was hired. Because of the vision and sacrifice of our founders, we and future generations will continue to benefit from the hard work that established DDC Clinic. May we never take that blessing for granted.

As we close out the year, I thank each of you for your role in supporting our clinic. Our fundraisers were especially successful in 2026, and I'm truly grateful and humbled by your generosity and willingness to help.

Thank you! I hope each of you will be richly blessed.

Eli Miller
Executive Director

Understanding Genetics

The Role of Family History in Cancer Risk

By Mollie Cochran, DDC Clinic Genetic Counselor

When several of your family members have had cancer, it's natural to wonder whether there could be a connection.

Why have multiple people in our family been affected? Could my children be at risk? Is there anything we can do to manage this risk?

For some families, hereditary cancer genetic testing can help provide answers to these questions and offer information that may be useful to the health of the entire family.

Are Cancers Hereditary?

Most cancers are not caused by a genetic change that a person was born with. About 5-10% of cancers are hereditary, meaning they are related to a genetic change that can be passed from parents to children. Some families may see several relatives with cancer because of a combination of shared genetic and environmental factors, such as higher rates of skin cancer among family members who primarily work outdoors. However, having several family members with cancer does not necessarily mean there is a hereditary cancer condition.

Certain family patterns may suggest that hereditary cancer genetic testing could be helpful. These can include several close relatives with similar cancers, cancer occurring across multiple generations, or certain cancers diagnosed at a younger age, such as before age 50.

These are not perfect rules for identifying hereditary cancer conditions, and every family is different. A genetic counselor can help look at the bigger picture, including which relatives have had

cancer, what types of cancer they had, and the ages at which they were diagnosed.

Identifying Hereditary Cancer Risk

When a hereditary cancer risk is identified, testing may provide helpful information for the future. Results can help guide cancer screening, identify ways to reduce cancer risk, and sometimes guide treatment for someone who has already been diagnosed with cancer.

Testing can also provide information that may be important for children, siblings, and other relatives.

For example, a genetic condition known as Lynch syndrome can increase the risk for several types of cancer, particularly colon and uterine cancer.

When both parents have Lynch syndrome, they each were born with a change in one copy of a Lynch syndrome gene. In this situation, there's a 25% chance with each pregnancy to have a child who inherits the change in both copies of the gene and has a condition called constitutional mismatch repair deficiency (CMMRD).

CMMRD is associated with a much higher risk of developing certain cancers at younger ages. For individuals with Lynch syndrome and CMMRD, earlier and more frequent screening, including procedures such as colonoscopy when appropriate, can help detect cancer at an earlier stage and improve the chance of long-term survival. These are examples of the types of information that can make

hereditary cancer testing helpful not only for one individual, but for other members of a family as well.

Genetic Counselors Provide Help and Support

Hereditary cancer testing is not currently part of our Amish Genetic Awareness Panel. However, our team can often arrange testing through outside laboratories at low or reduced cost for patients without health insurance.

If you have questions about cancer in your family, call DDC Clinic. As a genetic counselor, I can help you understand your family history, learn what options may be available, and determine whether hereditary cancer genetic testing may be right for you.

The greater purpose of hereditary cancer genetic testing is to provide information that can help you make choices about your health that are right for you. For some people, that may mean making healthy lifestyle changes or having cancer screenings more often.

Choosing whether or not to pursue genetic testing is a personal decision, just as it is with genetic testing for inherited heart disease risk. It's important to consider your own priorities and values as you make that decision.

As DDC Clinic's Genetic Counselor, I take the time to get to know my patients and their families and talk through these considerations with them, so that we can make a plan that feels right for each individual's personal healthcare journey.

Expansion of Lab Services Made Possible by State Funding

We're pleased to report that our clinic was awarded \$100,000 through Ohio's Fiscal Years 2027-2028 Capital Budget which was signed into law this past summer by Governor Mike DeWine.

The funding will support our Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory and Family Heart Center, enabling us to expand our laboratory capabilities, advance our cardiogenetic services and enhance our ability to diagnose inherited heart conditions.

"We're grateful to Governor DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for this important investment in rare genetic disease diagnosis," said Dr. Heng Wang, DDC Clinic Medical Director. "Demand for our specialized genetic and cardiogenetic services continues to grow. This funding will help us to treat more patients, provide earlier and more accurate diagnoses, and improve outcomes for individuals affected by rare genetic disorders."

State Senator Sandra O'Brien (R-Ashtabula) championed DDC Clinic's inclusion in Ohio's Fiscal Years 2027-2028 Capital Budget. "It is my hope that the funds received for DDC Clinic for Special Needs Children will help discover new ways to improve the lives of Ohio's young people," said Senator O'Brien.



Educating Families. Increasing Understanding.

When a loved one is diagnosed with a rare genetic condition, one of the greatest challenges is often finding reliable information and people who understand the journey. Because these conditions are uncommon, many families never meet another family facing the same diagnosis. In addition, teachers, healthcare providers, and community caregivers also have limited opportunities to learn about these disorders.

At DDC Clinic, we believe that knowledge is one of the most powerful tools we can share. While our team provides medical care and genetic services, we also work to close the gap between families, healthcare professionals, educators, and researchers through outreach and education.

Our clinic's disease-specific gatherings bring together families from across the country who are affected by the same rare genetic condition. Parents share experiences, children make new friends, and families find encouragement from others who truly understand their daily challenges and triumphs.

Earlier this year, our Physician Assistant Kyle Whittemore attended the GM3 family gathering in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Families came from several states to learn from one another, connect with specialists, and build relationships within the GM3 community.

Dr. Wang, our clinic's Medical Director, has participated in gatherings focused on Byler disease, most recently at UPMC Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh and a gathering in Chicago. These events provided an opportunity not only to share medical knowledge, but also to listen and learn from the families themselves.

Education is equally important for those who care for individuals with special

needs. Earlier this fall, our clinic hosted a conference for midwives, providing practical education on genetics, inherited conditions, and the unique healthcare needs of Plain communities. By sharing knowledge with healthcare providers, we hope to improve understanding, strengthen partnerships, and support better outcomes for families.

Our outreach also extends into the classroom. This past summer, our clinic welcomed teachers from local Amish special needs schools for a day of learning and discussion. Educators spent time with clinic staff, learning about genetic conditions commonly seen in our region and discussing ways to better support the children in their classrooms. These conversations bridge the gap between medical knowledge and everyday educational experiences, ensuring that students receive informed and compassionate support both at school and at home.

The impact of our efforts reaches far beyond a single conference or gathering. Every teacher who gains a deeper understanding of a student's needs can make a difference in that child's future. Every midwife who recognizes a genetic concern can help connect a family with the resources they need. Every family that meets others sharing the same diagnosis finds reassurance that they're not alone.

Closing the gap is about more than sharing information. It's about building relationships, creating understanding, and bringing people together. Whether through family gatherings, educational conferences, or community partnerships, we remain committed to ensuring that individuals and families affected by rare genetic conditions have access to the knowledge, support, and connections they need to thrive.

Strengthening Collaborations. Advancing Patient Care.

Advancing care for rare diseases requires collaboration between physicians, researchers, and other medical professionals. This past summer, we participated in two important conferences that showcased our clinic's work and expanded our growing network of partnerships.

Improving the Health of Plain Communities

In July, five DDC Clinic team members traveled to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to participate in the *Plain Community Health Consortium's 12th Annual Translational Medicine in the Plain Populations Conference*.

The conference brought together top physicians, researchers, nurses, genetic specialists, and healthcare organizations dedicated to improving the health of Amish, Mennonite, and other Plain communities across North America.

During the conference, Valerie Sency, RN, presented *"Therapeutic Phlebotomy in the Management of Iron Overload*

in Pyruvate Kinase Deficiency: A Safe Alternative to Lowering Ferritin Levels," as part of a panel focused on clinical advances in the care of rare genetic disorders. Her presentation highlighted our clinic's expertise and commitment to advancing research, sharing knowledge, and improving patient outcomes.

Furthering Byler Disease Research

Our clinic's medical director, Dr. Heng Wang, joined leading physicians, researchers, patients, and advocacy leaders at the *PFIC Family & Scientific Conference* in Chicago this past July.

As a newly selected member of the Steering Committee of the Patient-Centered PFIC Network Research Consortium, Dr. Wang worked with fellow healthcare professionals from across the country to establish research priorities and improve care for patients with Progressive Familial Intrahepatic Cholestasis (PFIC), a group of rare inherited liver disorders that includes Byler disease.



Dr. Bao Xin, Dr. Heng Wang, nurse Valerie Sency, lab manager Julia Szekely and Dr. Nicole Stevens at the Translational Medicine in the Plain Populations Conference.

In addition to helping guide the consortium's research agenda, Dr. Wang met with prominent researchers from the University Medical Center Groningen in the Netherlands and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to explore new opportunities for collaborations focused on Byler disease research.

Dr. Wang has always been a firm believer in the power of collaboration between scientific peers.

"Collaboration is essential to advancing rare disease research," said Dr. Wang. "By working together with leading experts from around the world, we can build on our collective knowledge and move closer to better treatments and, ultimately, healthier lives for our patients."

Thanks for Supporting Our Auctions

We're pleased to report that our 2026 auction season was another huge success, raising the critical funds our clinic needs to provide specialized care to children and adults.

We extend a warm thank you to our hardworking friends in the communities of Shiloh, Ohio; Middlefield, Ohio; and Spartansburg, Pennsylvania for hosting these auctions and for their donations of goods, time and labor. And we also thank our loyal supporters who came to the auctions and bid so generously.

"These three benefit auctions play a huge role in helping to sustain our clinic's mission, bringing in as much as 25% of our annual budget," said Eli Miller, DDC Clinic Executive Director. "The success of these auctions is due in large part to the caring community members who host and participate in

these events. We're truly blessed and humbled by the continued support of so many."

This year's benefit auctions offered an enjoyable family outing, providing a day of food, fun and fellowship. Attendees bid on a wide array of items including handmade quilts, maple syrup, handcrafted furniture, tools, horses, and buggies. The Middlefield auction, the largest and longest-running of the three, also featured several big-ticket items including a set of custom kitchen cabinets and countertops, a timber frame pavilion, and an outbuilding to be constructed on the winning bidder's site.

Next year's auctions will be held in July and August. Details to come early next year.

DDC CLINIC FEATURED ON SPECTRUM NEWS

Cable news television channel, Spectrum News Ohio, visited Middlefield this past summer to learn about DDC Clinic's unique work and the individuals and families we serve.

The segment, which aired on August 9 throughout Ohio, showed how our work in specialized care, advanced diagnostics, and rare disease research is making an impact both close to home and around the world. DDC Clinic Executive Director Eli Miller, Medical Director Dr. Heng Wang, and Laboratory Director Dr. Baozhong (Bao) Xin were interviewed for the story.

"Many people in Northeast Ohio still don't know that there's a world-class medical center right here in rural Middlefield, Ohio," said Eli Miller. "We're grateful to Spectrum News for introducing more Ohioans to DDC Clinic and educating them about our mission and our daily work to improve the lives of children and adults affected by rare genetic disorders."

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Watching DDC Clinic's Impact Grow



In this article, longtime donors Don and Janet Daut talk about why they support our mission.

We moved to the Cleveland area in 2009 when Don joined a company supplying biotech research customers. The parent company, based in California, was an early innovator in gene sequencing — the process of determining the genetic code of DNA molecules — and had recently acquired USB, a Cleveland-based business.

About a year after our arrival, the USB team heard about a small clinic in Middlefield that was establishing a genetics lab to provide diagnostics for patients with rare genetic disorders. As professionals in the field, we were instantly intrigued by a gene sequencing lab right in our backyard.

Soon after, we arranged a tour and were deeply impressed by what we saw. We were inspired not only by the cutting-edge genetic research and diagnostic insights being delivered to families, but also by the comprehensive, compassionate patient care provided by Dr. Wang and the medical team. Furthermore, we admired DDC Clinic's forward-thinking strategy to share their findings with the global medical community.

Our initial tour sparked our multi-faceted, long-term support for DDC Clinic. The USB employee activity committee formally adopted the clinic, volunteering at the annual Patchwork Benefit, sponsoring tables, and staffing raffle and silent auction areas. Simultaneously, our personal journey as lifelong donors began.

In 2012, Don was honored to join DDC Clinic's dedicated and talented Board of Directors. He has thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with his Amish and Yankee board colleagues, donating his time and expertise to champion the clinic's vital mission.

As donors, it has been incredibly satisfying to watch DDC Clinic grow. Recent milestones highlight this incredible momentum, including expanding rapid diagnostic capabilities through the GAP panel, extending patient-focused care to the new Titusville office, broadening services via the Family Heart Center for both children and adults, and launching numerous collaborations with global research partners.

We're proud to stand behind DDC Clinic. It's truly remarkable to see the profound, positive difference this clinic achieves for patients, families, and the wider understanding of rare genetic disorders.



Titusville Clinic Receives Donation from Crawford Gives

Thanks to many caring donors, our Titusville Clinic recently received a generous gift from Crawford Gives, an annual community fundraiser presented by the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Crawford Gives supports nonprofits in Crawford County — home to DDC Clinic's Titusville branch. Dubbed a "celebration of local impact," this year's three-day giving event, held August 19-21, provided an opportunity for neighbors, businesses and supporters to donate to the organizations they care most about, including our Titusville Clinic.

"This is the first year that our clinic has participated in this event, and we're so thankful for this show of community support," said Dr. Nicole Stevens, Family Nurse Practitioner and primary healthcare provider at our Titusville branch. "The dollars we received through Crawford Gives will directly benefit our clinic's day-to-day operations, enabling us to provide the highly specialized care our patients need."

Although recently established, our Titusville Clinic has already made a significant impact on the rural community and beyond. Since opening in 2024, the clinic has served hundreds of patient families from Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia and New Jersey.

Beyond patient care, education plays an important role at the clinic. Dr. Stevens, joined by DDC Clinic Executive Director Eli Miller, recently welcomed families from the Titusville region for an informational gathering to increase awareness of rare genetic diseases. Guests learned about DDC Clinic's specialized care, available resources, and the continued growth of our Titusville location. More educational programs like these are being planned.

"Every day our connection to the people of Titusville becomes stronger. Our roots in the community grow deeper," said Dr. Stevens. "It's good to know that we're making a real difference here, and that more and more families are putting their trust in us."

Online Giving Has Never Been Easier

Supporting DDC Clinic's life-changing work is now easier and more convenient than ever. Our **newly upgraded online giving platform** provides a streamlined, user-friendly donation experience designed to make charitable giving simple, secure, and accessible for every supporter.

Whether you want to make a one-time gift, set up a recurring monthly donation, or recommend a grant through your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), our enhanced platform offers flexible giving options to match your preferences. Our improved system allows you to complete your gift quickly and confidently while staying connected to the mission you care about most.

Every contribution, regardless of size, makes a meaningful difference. Your donations help support groundbreaking research, advanced diagnostic services, and compassionate, patient-centered care for children and adults affected by rare genetic disorders. Your gifts also enable us to pursue new discoveries, expand access to specialized healthcare services, and provide hope to families facing challenging medical conditions.

When you give to DDC Clinic, you become an important partner in advancing scientific knowledge, improving lives, and helping individuals with rare genetic conditions receive the care and support they need. Your generosity fuels progress, strengthens families, and ensures that innovative research and exceptional clinical care can continue for years to come.

We invite you to visit ddclclinic.org/make-a-donation to experience the ease of our new platform.

Together, we're making a lasting impact and bringing hope to those who need it most. Thank you for your partnership, compassion, and commitment to the patients and families we serve.



VISIT OUR ONLINE
DONATION PAGE.

MORE WAYS TO GIVE

There's more than one way to support our clinic, and no matter how you give, your donation makes a real impact. Here are some other ways you can give.



Planned Giving – Wills and Trusts

Leave a lasting legacy by giving to DDC Clinic through your will or trust. Your thoughtfulness will ensure life-changing care for tomorrow's special children. Consult with your attorney to make your bequest.



Gifts of Securities

Support our clinic through gifts of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Your gift will help to sustain our mission, bringing relief to children and hope to their families. To make arrangements, consult with your financial advisor.



Memorial or Honor Gifts

Celebrate the life of a loved one who has passed or honor a living person by donating to our clinic in their name. Your generosity can create a brighter, healthier future for a special needs child.



Matching Gifts

Ask if your company has a matching gift program for charitable contributions. If so, your employer will match the amount of your donation, making your gift go twice as far.

DDC Clinic – Center for Special Needs Children is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the IRS.

RURAL OHIO. GLOBAL IMPACT.

A Conversation with Dr. Heng Wang

Thursday, November 12, 2026 | 5:30-7:30 p.m.

THE HIVE & HONEY HILL | 8200 EAST WASHINGTON ST. | CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO

If you or someone you know would like to learn more about DDC Clinic's work, please join us for an evening of conversation, cocktails, and hors d'oeuvres, featuring our Medical Director, Dr. Heng Wang. Guests will learn about our specialized care, advanced diagnostics, and groundbreaking research.

Please tell your friends, family and colleagues who are new to DDC Clinic about this special opportunity to discover how our small clinic impacts families around the world.

Space is limited. RSVP by October 30th at 440-632-1668.



Dr. Heng Wang
M.D., Ph.D.



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*Join us as we celebrate
DDC Clinic's 25th
anniversary in 2027!*

Enhancing the quality of life for people with special needs caused by rare genetic disorders.

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GIVING TUESDAY

December 1, 2026

*For nearly 25 years, we've
provided children like Daniel
with life-changing medical care.*

On this Giving Tuesday, will you please
make a donation to DDC Clinic to help a
special needs child?

To make a gift, use the donation envelope
inside, visit ddcclinic.org or call
440-632-1668.

