

catching up with

AMANDA MISSEY

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Amanda Missey has spent her entire adulthood giving back. After 18 years with the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, where she launched signature programs like Bergen LEADS, she joined the Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative (BVMI). We recently caught up with Missey to talk about BVMI's new home, pivoting during COVID, and becoming a grandma.

A NEW CHALLENGE

In 2014, I left the Volunteer Center to become President and CEO of BVMI, a nonprofit health care center in Hackensack that provides free health care to low-income, working adults in Bergen County who don't have health insurance. In the nine years since, BVMI has grown to become the medical home for nearly 1,000 hardworking patients who receive high-quality health care, mental health support and case management services provided by volunteers and a small staff.

A NEW HOME FOR BVMI

Anyone who's been in Hackensack lately knows that the city is slowly being reimaged. Not long after I arrived at BVMI, our building was sold to make way for apartments, so we had to find a new home. I spent the better part of two years looking for a suitable location and then overseeing the fundraising, design and construction of the beautiful new Lynn Diamond Healthcare Center, designed to convey BVMI's culture of caring to patients, volunteers and staff.

COVID-19

When COVID forced the closure of the health care center in March 2020, we had 1,500 patients — many working in jobs that put them at risk — who needed access to health care and information. The BVMI team of staff and volunteers responded by creating a telehealth program in less than four weeks. Throughout the pandemic, BVMI provided lifesaving health care, and provided case management services to help patients obtain food, rent, utility assistance and other critical resources.

PARTNERING TO SERVE MORE PEOPLE

BVMI is now in the midst of planning for a second health care center, which will be located in Garfield, a very medically-underserved community. BVMI@Unity Health will be part of a unique



ALWAYS ENGAGED (From top) Amanda Missey at the BVMI Gala; in the March 2013 issue of (201); with her grandson, Connor.



collaborative of nonprofits called Unity Health Partnership, which will provide a full range of services to people living in southwestern Bergen County. BVMI@Unity Health will open sometime in early 2024.

BOARD SERVICE

I'm active on a number of boards, including the Meadowlands Chamber, Bergen County Workforce Development Board, Johnson Public Library and, most recently, the National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics, representing more than 1,200 free and charitable clinics all over the country.

A GROWING FAMILY

In December of 2019, my daughter married a farmer, and we became part of an extended family that owns and operates two farms in New Jersey. And last September, I became a grandma. Connor James Von Thun is a sixth-generation farmer and can't decide what he likes better: the flowers in the greenhouse, the baby goats or riding with Grandpa Bobby on the tractor.

PANDEMIC PUPPY

In September of 2020, my husband and I adopted a Treeing Walker Coonhound from South Carolina named Roscoe. After almost three years, he and his feline siblings have learned to coexist peacefully, and we're getting lots of steps in every day. He's a lot noisier than the kids ever were! ■
— JORAM MUSHINSKE

COURTESY OF AMANDA MISSEY