

A Doctor's Dream Of Children's Clinic Is Now Coming True

Pediatrician Gets Help Caring For Amish, Mennonites From Journal's Readers

By FRANK ALLEN

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LANCASTER, Pa.—Holmes Morton is well on his way to realizing an ambition that has consumed him for more than a year.

Dr. Morton, the subject of an article in The Wall Street Journal on Sept. 20, wants to start a primary-care clinic in Lancaster County for Amish and Mennonite children who suffer from rare life-threatening metabolic disorders.

After trying unsuccessfully to get clinic funds through grants from the National Institutes of Health and other organizations, the 38-year-old pediatrician applied for a second mortgage on his home. But because of responses from readers of the article, Dr. Morton didn't have to take out the loan. He has received enough support to get the clinic started and operate it for several months.

Hewlett-Packard Co. will announce today that it is donating a gas chromatograph and mass spectrometer valued at about \$82,000. Dr. Morton will use the equipment to screen blood and urine samples of newborns, make early diagnoses and assess the effectiveness of therapies.

In the meantime, 225 readers in 37 states have sent contributions to support the Clinic for Special Children Inc., the not-for-profit corporation that Dr. Morton established to manage the project. A pregnant artist in Connecticut sent a check for

\$100,000. So did an investment banker in Manhattan.

"I am a very old lady, and I remember in my childhood doctors like you whom we revered," wrote a contributor in Rhode Island who sent \$10,000. She said her gift was made "in gratitude for the loving friendship I have shared with the Amish people for many years."

A lumberyard owner in Maryland has pledged to furnish all the lumber and materials required for construction of the clinic building. An architect is donating his time to help design the facility, which will employ the same post-and-beam construction used in Amish and Mennonite barns. The search is under way for a clinic site in the midst of the farming community. Amos and Susan Miller, an Old Order Amish couple whose family suffering was described in the article, are helping to write thank-you notes to contributors.

Until the clinic is built, Lancaster General Hospital will donate office space at an affiliate health center, where Dr. Morton can put the mass spectrometer to work. David Packard, chairman of Hewlett-Packard, said he was impressed by the intensity of feeling expressed in letters and calls his company received from people urging support for Dr. Morton's project.

The donations amount to about one-fourth of what the clinic will need for a three-year operating budget. Dr. Morton wants the clinic to become self-supporting within five years, collecting modest fees for services and receiving contributions from the Amish and Mennonites, who can't obtain insurance for such complex medical problems.

"I'm told that Amish families believe these gifts and my work are answered prayers, and that is a humbling thought," Dr. Morton says. "Amish people live by their faith, so being in their prayers gives us a great responsibility. Much work remains to be done."