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For Immediate Release

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Marian Clinic Receives Large Donation From Patient's Story

(Topeka, KS.) The Marian Clinic is pleased to announce a surprise, generous gift it has received, all because a Clinic patient's story made a deep impression on a stranger in another city.

Washburn University student **Sara Engelhardt** found herself in a difficult spot last fall when she turned 23. Because of her age she was no longer eligible for health insurance under her father's policy; neither could she afford the insurance offered by her part-time employer. Then in August she noticed a large lump on the right side of her neck. She had heard about the Marian Clinic, a non-profit medical and dental clinic that accepted patients with no money and no health insurance, and decided to fill out an application.

On Friday, August 28, 2009, Engelhardt had her first appointment with the Clinic's **Dr. April Harris**. After an examination, Harris immediately ordered a referral to one of the Marian Clinic's volunteer surgeons, **Dr. Nason Lui**, who saw Engelhardt on Monday. Dr. Lui's battery of tests revealed that Engelhardt had advanced Hodgkin's Lymphoma, with cancer having spread to other parts of her body. On August 9th, just 12 days after her initial examination, Dr. Lui performed a biopsy at St. Francis Hospital and removed three lymph nodes. The Marian Clinic then referred Engelhardt to volunteer oncologist **Dr. Michael Hurwitz** to continue treatment for her condition. Now seven months and ten chemotherapy treatments later, the tumor in Engelhardt's chest has shrunk to nothing, her prognosis is excellent, and she is back enjoying life as a 23 year old student.

"I owe you guys my life," stated Engelhardt. "I'm 23 and without insurance would never have been able to afford this care. Who wants to choose between debt and death? I think that the Marian Clinic is this unknown treasure in our community and I owe them everything."

But the story doesn't end there. Engelhardt's grandparents in Abilene relayed their granddaughter's story to their friend **James Johnson, President of the Emma Balsiger Foundation, Inc.**, in Abilene. After some discussion, the

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Foundation voted to give the Marian Clinic \$50,000 to assist its work helping others like Engelhardt. A check was presented during a ceremony today at the Clinic.

Johnson explained why the Foundation elected to help the Topeka clinic. "After learning of the good works of the Marian Clinic, I investigated it further, and determined that it was indeed a very worthy object of consideration by the Emma Balsiger Foundation. I felt that this was a charitable organization that fit the aims and purposes of the Foundation. Quite frankly, I could not think of an organization that had such a needed and noble purpose. This truly fits the "friend in need" concept."

The Emma Balsiger Foundation, Inc. was created in 1971 at the request of Emma Balsiger, a single woman and lifelong resident of rural Chapman, Kansas. It was her desire to leave her considerable estate to benefit others over a period of time, with emphasis first to benefit Chapman and Abilene Kansas, then Dickinson County Kansas, then the State of Kansas. The Foundation has bequeathed gifts to libraries, hospices, hospitals, environmental considerations, and others. It is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization registered with the State of Kansas.

And as for the Marian Clinic's reaction to this surprise gift? According to **Robert Trepinski**, Executive Director of the Clinic, "Our mission is to help those who are experiencing a vulnerable time in their lives, so we are mindful to treat all our patients with dignity and respect. However it came as a surprise when this kind benefactor was moved to help us because of the care we gave Sara. We feel humbled and reinvigorated to know that the service we give to others can touch so many lives and now, because of the Foundation's gift, will touch so many more. Thank you, members of the Emma Balsiger Foundation, for your kindness. You will be in our hearts and prayers. And special thanks to all the volunteer doctors, nurses, and other health care providers such as St. Francis and Stormont Vail hospitals, for the care they donate to Marian Clinic patients such as Sara. Together we are able to provide health care, hope, and healing to many."

Since 1988, the Marian Clinic has provided a medical and dental home for those living in poverty who lack health insurance. During 2009 the Clinic treated over 5,200 patients and provided medications valued at over \$520,000. The Clinic receives much of its support through grants and charitable donations from businesses and individuals. Donations may be sent to the Marian Clinic, 1001 SW Garfield, Topeka, KS 66604, or via the website at www.marianclinic.org.

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