

Live Oak Clinic provides needed care

Brazosport Junior Service League ball will raise money for health center.

By **KATLYNN LANHAM**

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CLUTE — A refuge for the uninsured and chronically ill, Live Oak Clinic's goal is to help Brazoria County residents in need.

While doctors, nurses, pharmacists and many other people volunteer their time to make the Live Oak Clinic possible, they need monetary and equipment donations to provide medical care.

Each test taken or equipment used represents a cost to the clinic that cannot be covered by the \$25 fee each patient pays, Live Oak Clinic Director Mary Fuchs said.

"We can't help everyone," she said.

But the clinic can help a lot. For the past two years, Live Oak Clinic has assisted 500 people each year by opening its doors most Thursday evenings, board member Frank Mauro said.

Those helped by the clinic are uninsured, well below the poverty line and do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid, he said. The clinic offers primary care, prescriptions for medication and lab imaging services, he said.

More than 75 percent of those who use the clinic are suffering from diabetes, Mauro said.



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Rachel Wilbanks, president of the Brazosport Junior Service League, talks about how the Bargain Box is operated as she walks through the shop Tuesday in Lake Jackson. The resale shop is operated by volunteers, and profits are used to help support local charities. The Junior Service League is hosting a charity ball Saturday that will raise money for the Live Oak Clinic in Clute.

"This one night a week thing is not enough," Mauro said. "We have to turn people away every time."

One of the unique things about the clinic is it's 100 percent volunteer, he said.

"It really takes a lot of different people to orchestrate that," board member Scott Briner said.

But seeing the clinic work is a really neat thing, he said.

While the clinic could use more medical volunteers, the Junior Service League of Brazosport is helping the best way it knows: raising money.

Junior Service League is hosting a charity ball Saturday to benefit the clinic.

"It's really humbling to think that the community thinks it's a worthwhile endeavor," Fuchs said.

Money received through the Junior Service League will go toward funding tests used at the clinic, a blood pressure machine, an EKG machine and other equipment, board member Gloria Coker said.

Even with health care reform on the way, there are many people who can't afford health insur-

ance, Fuchs said.

Texas has more uninsured people than any other state, and Brazoria County is the second-highest county in Texas for the percentage of uninsured, Mauro said.

"There's lots of folks to help," he said. For a clinic that is run with donations, money always helps.

The Live Oak Clinic is at 796 S. Brazosport Blvd. To learn more about the clinic and how to donate, go to www.liveoakclinic.org.

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