

Hobe Sound...

Reflections

Serving the communities of:

Hobe Sound Golf Club, The Arbors, Heritage Ridge and the Preserve, Loblolly, Marina Bay Club, Bahia Sound, Eaglewood, Lost Lake, Medalist, Pine Lake Gardens, The Sanctuary, Governor's Landing and the homes on Jupiter Island

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W. Trent Steele: Attorney With A Heart



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Photo by Irwin H. Spivak

By Irwin H. Spivak

Does a lawyer with a social conscience sound like an oxymoron? W. Trent Steele practices real estate law, estate planning and probate law in Hobe Sound and fits this unlikely mold. He is completing his third year as volunteer chairing a 12-person local Citizens Committee to build a community health center in Palm Beach County which will aid the uninsured.

Forty-eight-year-old Steele considers working with the FoundCare Foundation one of the most important projects he has ever tackled. "I spend some time every single day of my work week on one aspect or another of the project. It will be a 28,000-square-foot facility that will offer adult and pediatric care, a dental center and a pharmacy ... all under one roof. Our mission is to generate community support and financial resources for Palm Beach County's first private, not-for-profit comprehensive community health center for uninsured and underserved families."

Because of Hurricane Wilma, construction costs have risen

to an estimated \$7 million from the original \$4.5 million budgeted. Their first partner, The Quantum Foundation, donated seed money; and a second partner, who will actually run the center, is Florida Community Health Centers Inc (FCHC). "In 2000, I was on the Board of the Comprehensive AIDS Program of Palm Beach County. We only provided case management for HIV patients. Quantum and FCHC approached us about creating this partnership to go beyond providing assistance just for those with HIV, but for all people, regardless of ability to pay."

Palm Beach County has one of the highest uninsured populations in the state of Florida. It is hoped that the program will expand services throughout all of Palm Beach County. They expect to open next year at 2330 S. Congress Ave. in Palm Springs. A Florida health insurance study found that more than 27 percent of residents in proximity to the new facility are uninsured, compared to about 19 percent in the

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rest of the county. "Early on, we had a problem raising money because many people were not familiar with this innovative approach to health care. But now that word has gotten out about this unique program, the response has increased exponentially."

Steele was born in Virginia and received his law degree with honors from the University of Miami and opened his own practice in 1988 in West Palm Beach, relocating to Hobe Sound 18 years later. "Most of my life has been spent in Florida, and I love Hobe Sound. I offer my clients the security of knowing that I am there to represent them from beginning to end. I help them buy or sell their homes, appeal their property tax bills, update their wills, and negotiate with building contractors when they renovate. I try to be a comprehensive provider of protection for individuals and small businesses." Steele has also worked with VSA arts, providing assistance to people with disabilities. "I am proud that I established the first art gallery and gift shop featuring works by these folks. It's important to me to help others who often can't help themselves. When we finally complete FoundCare, it will be one of the crowning achievements of my life."

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