



article written for newsletter in Sept. 2002

About the Renton Clinic

In 1991, FWHC purchased the [Cedar River Clinic in Renton](#) when Dr. Baird Bardarson retired. Dr. Bardarson, a pioneer in the pro-choice movement, was one of the first doctors to provide abortion when it became legal in Washington in 1970.

(Interestingly, Renton was home to well-known activist, Dr. Franz Koomey who was the plaintiff in several cases challenging the State's anti-abortion laws. Dr. Koomey also taught Lorraine Rothman and Carol Downer about abortion procedures.)

Upon purchasing Cedar River Clinic (CRC), Diane H., who worked previously at Everett, came back as the organization's Associate Director to lead our new Renton clinic.

FWHC's larger size provided resources for more activism, education, lobbying in Olympia, and more [Women in Need](#) Funded services.

CRC became a training and research site for physicians from the University of Washington. Selected students from local technical colleges came for externships. We worked with interpreter services to train appropriate translators for our many non-English speaking clients.

In partnership with the UW, we conducted clinical studies evaluating two chemotherapy agents for medical (non-surgical) abortion. Methotrexate (MTX) abortion proved quite satisfactory in our studies. We are proud to have participated in its development giving women more choices.

Another goal for CRC, as well as our other clinics, is to provide jobs and job-training for women to expand their opportunities and give them experience working in pro-choice feminist health care.

Vasilica (Vali) is an excellent example. A few years ago, she and her family moved here from Romania where she had been a teacher. While working in housekeeping at a local motel and raising three children, Vali earned a medical assistant degree. Even then finding a job proved difficult due to the language barrier.

"It's kind of strange for me here because where I come from abortion is really free. The same doctors who do abortions also deliver babies, in the same hospitals. Here it is not free. People are afraid to say they went to, or work at, an abortion clinic. There is nothing wrong with abortion. I believe in woman's choice."

Vali feels working at CRC has changed her. "It's my dream come true to be a medical assistant and be able to help many women."

We are proud of former employees who have gone on in new careers, inside or outside the field of medicine, taking with them leadership abilities, technical skills, and political awareness developed while here.

Expansion in Renton

By 1998, Cedar River Clinic had increased from an initial staff of 10 in 1991 to more than 25 employees. We had completely outgrown our space and decided to renovate, taking over the first floor in our building. In response to client requests, we added a surgical suite for deep sedation.

For six long months, while construction was done around us, the clinic remained open serving women. The result is a beautifully updated facility, serving more women with a wider range of services.

Looking back at the changes, Diane H. remarked, "One of the most rewarding things has been to work with so many extremely talented staff members and doctors. They contribute so much of themselves, their energy, skills and knowledge. They embody a core FWHC value of woman-centered health care."

Looking ahead, Clinic Manager Sharon is excited by the recent wave of activism bringing new diverse feminists to meet the challenges ahead in abortion services.

More from the 20th Anniversary in the FWHC-WA Herstory

- [Proud to Provide Abortion](#) Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Feminist Women's Health Center in Washington
- [Self Help](#) A Revolution in Women's Health
- [Tribute to Founders](#)
- [Then & Now](#)
- [In Memoriam](#) We Honor Four Close Friends
- [Women's Health in Women's Hands](#) Highlights from 20 Years in Yakima
- [Global Activism](#) Volunteer and Staff Contributions
- [Firebombs and Violence](#) Everett Clinic Destroyed
- [Renton](#): New Clinic, More Services
- [Welcome](#) Tacoma clinic
- [The Voices of Support](#)
- [Cedar River Clinics](#)

**"If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."
- Toni Morrison**

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| CLINICS | FOR SALE | LINKS | SITE INDEX | SEARCH |

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