



The Breathing Association is Working for You.

At The Breathing Association, our goal is to help everyone "breathe easier." Founded in 1906 by Carrie Nelson Black, The Breathing Association has a long history of educating and serving the community through prevention of lung health disease and the promotion of better lung health. Founded as The Columbus Tuberculosis Society, The Breathing Association has expanded its scope of services as new lung health concerns have arisen. Today, The Breathing Association provides support, lung therapy, tobacco cessation services, tobacco prevention programs, and health education for people with asthma and chronic pulmonary lung disease. We address the causes and irritants of lung health disease by advocating for clean indoor air and clean outdoor air. We also provide heating and cooling assistance and medical supplies.

A Century of Service

In 1906, The Breathing Association reached out to the less fortunate who were more vulnerable to tuberculosis. Early budget items included milk and eggs for the patients who had the best chances of survival. Medical supplies were provided, as were hooded woolen coats for the children in the Open Air School. Nurses went into Columbus homes to improve the sanitary conditions to prevent the spread of tuberculosis. A free TB Dispensary provided medical care. Children were protected in the Nightingale Cottage.

In the early years, isolation, rest, and open air treatment with prolonged periods of fresh air, regardless of the weather, were the only "cures". Separate tent colonies for women and men removed the infected person from society, giving them a chance to heal and protecting others from the infection. Isolation was lonely. Known as "consumption" or the "white plague", those with TB had to be separated from loved ones. There were no medications. Many died.

Then the Benjamin Franklin Tuberculosis Sanatorium was built, giving TB patients housed medical care. At first only stethoscopes could be used for diagnosis; known as "stethoscopic clinics." In the 1930's x-rays were developed.

X-rays became the tool The Breathing Association used to help the community. Free x-rays in the

cruisers on the street and tuberculin skin tests for school children were offered to everyone.

With the advent of antibiotics in the 1950's, most tuberculosis was rendered non-infectious within 2-3 days. As the disease came under control, rates decreased. Tuberculosis sanatoriums closed and by the early 1970's medical care transitioned to the general hospital.

Unfortunately, as TB waned, new lung health concerns began with accelerating rates of emphysema, lung cancer, and chronic bronchitis. The popular trend of tobacco use in the 1920's, 30's, and 40's had accumulated the "pack years" (packs of cigarettes/year smoked) to begin to take its toll. Death rates increased as victims of nicotine syrup laced tobacco, hooked by "cool advertising" began to succumb.

The Breathing Association programs shifted in response to these killer diseases. Tobacco prevention and cessation programs began. Pulmonary rehabilitation programs were initiated.

The 1980's brought increasing cases of asthma and sudden asthma death. Another challenge presented to the Association, in large part due to outdoor air pollution and dirty indoor air. Inner city homes had additional problems with cockroaches and dust mites; major contributors to asthma.

In response, the Association initiated air quality advocacy within the region. Outreach workers visited homes for environmental assessments and corrective actions for better health.

Today, the programs of The Breathing Association remain true to its roots, following the legacy of Founder, Carrie Nelson Black.

Direct client services are provided in homes and clinics. Targeted programs reach out to those in poverty. Medical supplies, prescription medications, and assistance paying for home heating and cooling through the Home Energy Assistance Program for healthy living are offered. And yes, coats, gloves and hats are available for those who have none. The next vision is to have a free lung health medical clinic for everyone who cannot pay.

The Breathing Association is proud of its rich heritage. We are optimistic and energized to provide the second century of service to the community. With it, we pledge to continue the high standards of excellence achieved in the first 100 years.



Rebecca Nelson,
Chairman of the Board



Marie E. Collart,
President and CEO