

“Heart of Malta” 2020 Honoree: Medical Volunteer Bradford Wilkinson, MD Malta Volunteer Since 2006

It was an article in *The Hartford Courant* in 2006 that first caught the eye of Dr. Bradford Wilkinson, a longtime family practitioner in Durham, CT.

He was intrigued by what he read about this new non-profit in Hartford – the Malta House of Care Mobile Medical Clinic – and its mission to provide free primary care to uninsured adults.

The prior year, Dr. Wilkinson had traveled to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, volunteering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and was transformed by the experience. “That was an epiphanal event in my professional life,” he said. “After that, I was searching for a way to use my skills in a more productive, powerful, and rewarding way. I found it at Malta.”



Beginning in 2006, Dr. Wilkinson volunteered one day per week on the van. When he retired from private practice in 2012, he stepped it up to three days per week. Last year, he cut back to one day per week again – but that’s only because he and his wife Mary moved to Wellesley, MA!

He’s donated thousands of hours of time, treating thousands of sick and scared patients with respect and compassion and extraordinary professional attention, each one made to feel special and important. His value to Malta – and to the people whose lives he’s changed and, in many cases, saved – is incalculable.

And yet he insists that *he* is the one who benefits most from his role as a medical volunteer at Malta.

“Working at the Malta House of Care Mobile Medical Clinic is the most rewarding thing I have done in 35+ years of practicing medicine,” he said. “Seeing the collective happiness, relief, and gratitude on the faces of thousands of patients I have attended when they realize that finally they have found a place where they are not scorned or ignored but rather treated with dignity, warmth, and concern is a magical experience.

“And, to work shoulder-to-shoulder

with, and be inspired by, dozens of like-minded volunteer professionals who so freely give of their time, expertise, and humanity is an inexpressible joy,” he added.

Dr. Wilkinson and his wife are very generous with gifts of treasure, as well: They have made numerous financial donations both personally and through The Stare Fund, a family foundation started by Mrs. Wilkinson’s father.

In his “spare” time, Dr. Wilkinson co-founded Health Horizons International, a small non-governmental organization with about 20 employees on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. He has made more than two dozen medical mission trips there over the past 10 years, bringing primary care and capacity building to impoverished villages in that region. He was Vice Chair of its Board of Directors from 2009-17.

“My association with Malta has been the pinnacle of my professional life, as it represents all the values that drove me into medicine in the first place many decades ago,” Dr. Wilkinson said. “To serve as a volunteer for an organization whose sole purpose is to help alleviate the suffering and injustice of inadequate healthcare of those most vulnerable and powerless in our society embodies the highest calling of medicine.”

Every day, and in every way, Dr. Brad Wilkinson embodies the values of the mission of Malta House of Care, and we are humbled, grateful, and proud to honor him with the “Heart of Malta” award for 2020.