

update

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Her shoes are going to be tough to fill



It's only 9:00 A.M., early morning for most people; a time when many of us are just getting rolling. But in the world of Mildred Guzara, R.N., B.S.Ed., operating room director, it's late.

Already she has met a dozen crises head on and resolved them. Surgeries scheduled for first thing in the morning have been postponed or cancelled because of changes in patients' conditions. Other cases, unscheduled and unexpected, have turned into priorities overnight and have been squeezed in.

Staff members who called in sick have been replaced. Supply and equipment problems have been worked out. The O.R. schedule has been reviewed and revised so many times that you need a scorecard to keep track of the players.

Suddenly the phone rings and Guzara is faced with another crisis. A surgeon indicates that he has a critical patient who won't make it if he's not in surgery within the next hour.

Though all the O.R.'s are scheduled, Guzara gets on the phone and shifts things around again. An O.R. is made available for the critical patient and another crisis is past. But Guzara knows from years of experience, that the day is still young and this won't be the last crisis she'll face. It will quickly be replaced by another, and as that one is resolved, another.

Such is the world of the O.R., Guzara's world. It is a world full of tension, stress, and crises, yet it is a world in which Guzara thrives. It is a world to which she has devoted a lifetime of service and it is a world that she will try to leave when she retires on October 9, 1983.

But anybody who knows Guzara knows that saying she will try to retire is about all you can say. After 38 years of O.R. nursing, walking away is going to be tough and even Guzara admits that she may not be able to walk away and stay away.

Saying, after a lifetime of nursing, that she may not yet have had enough is typical for Guzara. She is a five foot tall bundle of energy who believes in tackling life head on, without flinching, without hesitation.

When talking about her life and her career she voices only one regret: that she can't be around for the next 100 years or so just to see how things turn out. But when you look at Guzara's track record, you quickly realize two things. First, Guzara would not be merely standing back watching how things turn out. She would be involved, making things happen. Second, even if she lived to be 200, there still wouldn't be enough time for her to do all the things she wants to do.

Though Guzara has devoted her life to nursing and though she has excelled at it, she claims that she was one of the most unlikely nursing candidates ever to enter a nursing school. In Guzara's words, "Anybody who gets sick every time they ride on a train or who faints in church like I did is not nurse material."

But at the age of 17, with her sisters pushing her to do something productive with her life, Guzara left home for the first time and enrolled at the Temple University Hospital School of Nursing. Three years later, with her R.N. pin still shiny and new, she found herself assisting some of the most famous surgeons of the day in the Temple University Hospital O.R.

GUZARA

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Guzara recalled how she met Florence Brown, nursing consultant here at the Hospital Center, soon after she started working at Temple. Though the two eventually developed a close friendship which has lasted through all these years, things between them didn't start off very smoothly. As a matter of fact, their first meeting can only be described as typical Guzara style, a style that probably only she could pull off successfully.

The O.R. supervisor at Temple had resigned and Brown had come in from the Mayo Clinic to consider taking the position. Preceded by a reputation for being a perfectionist, she had everyone nervous. Guzara was assisting one of the surgeons in the O.R. and was wearing gloves that were two sizes too big because there were no others available.

Because the gloves were an inch or so longer than her fingers, Guzara was having a hard time threading needles fast enough to keep up with the surgeon. Suddenly she felt as if somebody was watching her so she turned around. There was Brown, taking it all in.

Later, Guzara ran into Brown and she decided her best defense was a good offense. So before Brown could say anything, Guzara asked her if she was going to take the job. Brown answered that she was and Guzara told her she better bring help along because she was going to need it.

Guzara then scampered away leaving a somewhat startled O.R. supervisor in her wake. Two years later Guzara became that help when she was promoted to the position of assistant O.R. supervisor.

Trying to describe Guzara is like trying to describe a kaleidoscope. There are just too many sides and images to keep it simple. In addition to the gutsy side that Brown saw when she and Guzara first met, Guzara also has a diplomatic side. In fact, she can match diplomatic wits with the best of them.

And it was this side that was keenly tested when she came here before the Hospital Center opened to set up an O.R. The facility was still just a hole in the ground. Staff hadn't been hired yet. Administratively things were still being pieced together. Controversy and conflict surrounded the development of the hospital.



Guzara with pictures of her "other family"

Amid all of this, Guzara had to work with the surgeons, most of whom she didn't know, and set up the kind of facility they wanted while staying within some very tight budget limits. With a lot of patience, a great deal of tact, determination, and her willingness to study issues and make difficult decisions, Guzara put together one of the best O.R.'s anywhere.

Then there is the daring side of Guzara. In 1962 she decided she needed a change, "A new stimulus," as she puts it. And that's exactly what she got. She took over for a year and a half as the O.R. supervisor of the Nemazee Hospital in Shiraz, Iran.

In a country with very different customs, a difficult language, and totally isolated from her home, she described the experience as, "Intriguing, horrible, and fabulous all at the same time." While she was there she had to face down a snake that decided the O.R. would make a nice home and a soldier who was about to shoot a stray dog she had adopted.

With her typical efficiency she dispatched the snake to a more permanent resting place. With a lot of nerve, she placed herself between her dog and the soldier with the loaded aimed rifle and told him to get lost. Would she go back and do it again? "Without a second thought."

Then there is the soft, compassionate, caring side of Guzara. She still keeps in touch with the family in Poland that her parents left to come to America. Appalled by the conditions under which they have to live, she still sends them clothing and whatever other help she can after all these years.

But the family related to her by blood is not her only family. There is also her hospital family, those people with whom she works. One window in her office is covered with photos of "her children," the children of the O.R. staff members. They all know her, they all come to visit her, and they will all miss her.

How do you describe someone like Guzara? Perhaps the best description is that she is one of those people who if you're lucky you will get to meet once or twice in a lifetime. Why is she leaving? According to Guzara, "I have always known when it was right for me to do the things I've done. The time is now right for me to go, to step aside. It is no more or less complicated than that."

Guzara may think she is leaving but as Richard Fleming, president of the Hospital Center board, commented at her retirement dinner, "Guzara may be retiring but she will never leave. She put a lot of herself into that O.R. and as long as the hospital is here, she will be a part of it."

Millie, we thank you, we honor you, we will miss you, but we don't say goodbye to you.

The United Way: Who needs it?

It's 4:00 A.M. and the night is quiet. But at 4:01 A.M. sparks from a furnace ignite natural gas which has leaked from a basement supply pipe and three explosions shatter the night. Instantly, 10 families, a total of 52 people, are left homeless. They need help and help is there.

Randy, a typical eight year old, is excited. One of his friends has a box of firecrackers brought back from summer vacation and after school they're going to try them out. In a field behind the school, a fuse is lit, a can is placed over the firecracker, and two young boys stand close so they can see the can take off. But the can doesn't take off, it explodes. In an instant Randy is blinded for life. He and his family are going to need help adjusting to his new life and help is there.

Four year old Sharon is bored playing in her room so she wanders down the hallway to the bathroom. Tired of being sick she reasons she will feel better faster if she takes more of the pills her mother has been giving her one at a time. From a perch on the sink she pulls a pill bottle from the medicine cabinet. But, it's the wrong bottle and the handful of pills she swallows won't make her well. Minutes later Sharon's mother hears a thud and finds her unconscious. She needs help and help is there.

Who needs the United Way? We all do. Each of these examples highlights people, people who could just as easily have been any one of us, people who suddenly and unexpectedly needed help. And because of the United Way, help was there.

Who among us can be sure they will never become the victim of a disaster and need help from the American Red Cross? Who can be sure disease or injury will never rob them or their family members of their eyesight making the services of the Blind Association necessary? Who can be sure they will never need to call the Lehigh Valley Poison Center for help?

Each of these agencies is there to help any of us in a time of need. And they, along with 31 other local helping agencies, are able to be there in these tough economic times because of the funds they receive from the United Way.

Where do those funds come from? They come from us and other contributors like us. So while it is true that the United Way is there for all of us, it is also true that it, along with the agencies it supports, are there because of all of us.

Now more than ever

Imagine picking up the newspaper one morning and seeing a headline like, "Hospital Center Closing - 2,000 Face Lay Off." We're lucky, that has never happened here.

But during the past year, thousands of our neighbors throughout the Lehigh Valley were not so lucky. They awakened to exactly that kind of nightmare.

Amid glowing economic reports, it's easy for us to miss some important facts. The fact is that the national economic recovery has had little impact locally. The fact is that local unemployment rates remain at near record levels. The fact is that as unemployment rates have remained high, more and more people have had to turn to a variety of service agencies for help.

At the same time, the service agencies are facing their own crises. Money to support their services is getting tough to find. Local, state, and federal governments are cutting back on the funds they make available to service agencies as they try to balance their budgets. Private foundations are being buried under requests for help. Businesses and individuals who in the past donated to these agencies directly or through the United Way can no longer give. Business is too slow and many of

these contributors are no longer working.

Something has to give. Hopefully it will be us and others like us who are working. Now, more than ever, the survival of many of these agencies and the services they provide depends on us.

The campaign

At a staff meeting on September 27, Ellwyn D. Spiker, administrator, and Gale Schmidt Hodavance, director of public relations and development, officially launched the Hospital Center's 1983 United Way campaign. And their message, as they announced the 1983 campaign goals, was that what we do really makes a difference.

There are a lot of people out there who need our help. We didn't create the problem and fortunately we're not a part of it. But each of us is in a position to be a part of the solution by contributing to the campaign.

Both Spiker and Hodavance thanked all members of the Hospital Center family for helping to meet and exceed the hospital's 1982 campaign goals. But they both stressed that the problems to which we responded last year are still there.

As a result, it's just as important that we come through this year. For 1983 we hope to raise at least \$27,000 with at least 56% of our employees contributing. Last year we raised a total of \$23,480, exceeding our goal by nearly \$3,500, with 51% of our employees contributing. Hopefully in 1983 we can exceed our goals again.

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Campaign (continued from Page 3)

As was the case last year, you can contribute to the campaign in a number of ways. You can make an outright donation in the form of cash or a check. You can sign a pledge card and request that any amount you want be taken out of your pay over the next year. Or, you can request that any amount you wish be taken out of your pay for one, two, or any other number of pay periods.

In addition to deciding how and how much to contribute, you can also decide where your contribution will go. You can request that your contribution go only to a certain member agency of the United Way in Lehigh County. You can request that your contribution go only to a certain member agency of the United Way in another county. Or, you can request that your contribution go to the general United Way fund in Lehigh County or in any other county.

Finally, campaign awards will again be given out to cost centers in which all employees contribute and to cost centers that reach their dollar goals. An award will also be given to the cost center with the greatest increase in the number of its employees who contribute and to the

cost center with the greatest increase in the total number of dollars raised.

If you have any questions about the 1983 United Way campaign, talk to your department head or call Rich Cutshall in public relations (3084).

Eating well pays dividends

In addition to benefiting their health, two Hospital Center employees have found that eating well can also have other advantages. On August 31 Susanne Scholz, L.P.N., 5B, became \$50.00 richer when she was picked as the first winner in the Wellness Center's cafeteria coupon contest. The prize for the first month's drawing was a \$50.00 savings bond.

On September 30, it was Kathleen Miller, physical therapy aide, physical medicine, who walked away with the prize. Her winnings? A Wellness Center tote bag.

According to Ed Leifer, food service director, the contest has been a huge success. More than 3,000 wellness entree coupons were given out in the first month alone. And it looks like the number of coupons given out in the second month was even higher.

So bon appetite and good luck.

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