Just What I Wanted (Not!)

Colleagues share their worst gifts ever, page 8
What’s the Secret to Longevity?
People who have meaningful work are more fulfilled and live longer

When I sit at my desk, I can glance up at my bookshelf. One particular book always catches my eye and makes me think. It’s called “Blue Zones” and offers lessons from around the globe about how to live a longer, happier life. There are obvious tips, like eating right and getting exercise, but did you know there is a link between longevity and living a meaningful life? People who feel their life has meaning not only live longer, they also are more fulfilled.

So, how do we make sure within our workplace that colleagues have the opportunity to do meaningful work in a manner that is fulfilling? For starters, I think Mission Possible has helped create an environment of openness that allows people to do the work they feel passionate about. At each employee forum we heard stories about people at their best. Colleagues shared stories about times when they felt good about the work they do.

During a recent Connections employee orientation, I heard from a nurse who left our health network and then returned. She said she missed the teamwork found here and was delighted to come back to her unit because she feels her work in our health network is meaningful. I think that’s a big nod to our culture, which is only going to get better as we move forward with Mission Possible.

As we finish the gift-giving season and move into the new year—a time when we look at many things in our life with a fresh perspective—I’d like you to ask yourself if you find your work meaningful. If it’s not, how can you make it more meaningful? If you need to talk to your supervisor, I encourage you to do so. Together, we can make our mission possible and our work meaningful—and that’s a recipe for long-term success as individuals and an organization.

Terry Capuano, RN
Chief Operating Officer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
‘The Difference at the Door’ 3
Our expanded ED better meets patients’ needs

What’s HCAHPS? 4
Use this survey to give patients a great experience

Sign of the Times 6
New signs help people find their way

A Word From Our New Trustee 7
John Stanley joins our board

It’s the Thought That Counts 8
Colleagues share their worst gifts

Tossin’ Turkeys 10
Lining up for a gobbling gift

Get Your Grill On! 11
Mission Possible messages are on TLC

Be an Advocate 12
We’re making cancer less scary

A Guide to Our Care 13
See our new pediatric offices

What’s Happening 14
New insurance cards are coming

Service Star of the Month 15
Theresa Valentin identifies a lost elderly woman

Service Anniversaries 16
Colleagues celebrate their years of service
‘The Difference at the Door’

Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg’s expanded emergency department better meets patients’ needs

“The difference at the door” is the phrase Charlotte Buckenmyer, RN, director of emergency services at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg, uses to describe the newly expanded emergency department (ED).

The “difference” is the result of a reorganized ED and new processes implemented to better meet patients’ needs. “We’d been seeing a higher patient volume for years,” Buckenmyer says. “We had to find a way to expand the ED within our walls and improve efficiency.”

After working with a consultant, the ED chose to pilot a rapid assessment unit (RAU), a state-of-the-art model designed to meet the needs of patients with less severe medical issues. The 10-bed RAU replaces Express Care, an area where patients formerly received care for minor injuries.

Patients experiencing medical emergencies such as a heart attack or stroke receive the same high-quality care as before. But patients with less severe medical conditions, such as a cough, cut or broken bone, are now sent to the RAU rather than the ED waiting room.

In the RAU, a care team that includes a physician, nurse and registrar works together to rapidly assess a patient’s problem and determine next steps. Patients spend less time waiting, receive care faster and return home sooner.

Before the RAU opened in December, ED colleagues were extensively educated about how the new unit would work. They participated in performance improvement events to simulate how the RAU would operate with real patients. Colleagues also practiced situational decision-making and teamwork. The hard work paid off. “We saw an increase in patient satisfaction, throughput and efficiency in patient care,” Buckenmyer says.

Ultimately, patients will feel the difference when they walk through the door. “With this model, the door-to-doctor time is faster,” Buckenmyer says. “No one will sit in the waiting room.”

—Lauren Fetterman
What’s HCAHPS?

It’s a survey that can help you give patients the best hospital experience.

Your favorite things in life have something in common. They’re consistent. At your favorite restaurant, the food is always delicious. Music from your favorite artist always makes you smile. Your best friend is always there when you need him or her.

People love consistency. That’s why we must strive to always do things that give our patients the best hospital experience.

Our ability to do just that is being measured by a national standardized survey called HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems). “In the health care reform era, more attention is being given to HCAHPS,” says Anne Panik, RN, senior vice president of patient care services. “Our HCAHPS scores will have a significant impact on our health network’s reputation for service excellence and financial strength.”

That’s why colleagues from our Patient-Centered Experience and Patient Satisfaction Improvement Council are teaming up to focus on HCAHPS. “Foremost, we’ll work to give our patients an even better hospital experience because it’s the right thing to do,” says our senior vice president of operations and HCAHPS project co-leader Jim Geiger. “If we do that, rising scores will follow.” Using the survey as a guide, you can help give our patients the best possible experience.

Here’s what you need to know about HCAHPS.

“Always” is what matters

The 27-question survey asks patients about:

1. Communication with nurses
2. Communication with doctors
3. Responsiveness of hospital staff
4. Pain management
5. Communication about medicines
6. Discharge information
7. Cleanliness and quietness of the environment

Examples of questions are: “How often did nurses listen carefully to you?” and “How often were your room and bathroom kept clean?” Patients can choose from four answers—always, usually, sometimes or never. HCAHPS only reports the percentage of people who answered “always.”

HCAHPS also reports the percentage of patients who:

- Say they were given information about what to do during their recovery at home
- Would recommend the hospital
- Rate the hospital as a 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest)
Scores have an impact

Our current scores and those going forward will affect how we’re reimbursed for care beginning in 2013. In other words, if our HCAHPS scores are high, we’ll receive a higher reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid for the services we provide. However, if our scores are low, we’ll be reimbursed less, even though we provided the same care.

HCAHPS also gives potential patients an easy way to compare hospitals locally, regionally and nationally to determine where they want to receive care. All they need to do is visit hospitalcompare.hhs.gov to see how a hospital measures up.

Our plan

We’re forming seven teams to address each of the categories listed on page 4. “Each team will examine the things we currently do for patients, discover new things we can do and encourage colleagues to practice them consistently,” Geiger says. “We’ll then examine our scores to determine how we’re giving our patients and families the best possible hospital experience and where there is opportunity for improvement.”

We have a head start

We already have several tools in place to give patients the best experience. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Patient Benefit</th>
<th>HCAHPS Category Impacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDET</td>
<td>Relieves anxiety</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROADMAP</td>
<td>Keeps patients informed about their care</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise Reduction Project</td>
<td>Helps patients sleep and recover</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach Back</td>
<td>Educates patients about how to care for themselves</td>
<td>Discharge information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Rounding</td>
<td>Enhances patient safety and satisfaction</td>
<td>Responsiveness of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reframing and Conversation</td>
<td>Helps us make our mission possible</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Want to read the questions on an HCAHPS survey?
Visit hcahpsonline.org and click “Survey Instruments.”

—Rick Martuscelli
Have you ever tried to tell someone how to find a destination within the hospital, only to get mixed up yourself? At our vast campuses, finding your way can be difficult. That’s why we’re testing new signs to determine if they make it easier for people to find their way. “A way-finding design consultant, with assistance from our navigation committee and our Patient-Centered Experience (PCE) team, came up with the system,” says facilities and construction’s Brenda Rocchino.

News signs are currently helping patients navigate two specific routes inside Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest and Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg. The feedback patients provide on questionnaires will help us determine their effectiveness.

Here are the things you should know about our new signs:

• **Color-coded for convenience.** Patients and visitors say they don’t know where one building ends and another begins. That’s why the elevators in Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest and Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg will be color-coded, like at Lehigh Valley Hospital–17th Street.

• **Destinations are limited.** To keep it simple, only destinations that are important to patients and visitors will be listed on signs. Protocols are being developed, and all requests for departments to be included on public signs will be reviewed by the navigation committee before being added. We’re also developing tear-off sheets that give patients directions to difficult-to-find destinations.

• **They’re cost-effective and easy to change.** New signs are paper-based and fit into the old aluminum frames. Their color makes them stand out so patients can easily find and read them. When a sign needs to be changed, a new insert can be printed and replaced quickly.

• **More signs are coming.** After we compile feedback from patients, colleagues and PCE Advisory Council members, we’ll make necessary changes and begin to install new signs in our hospitals. We’ll provide education to ensure colleagues use the correct terminology when giving directions, and we’ll make sure terminology is consistent on our website, tear-off sheets and anywhere patients receive directions.

—Matthew Burns
A Word From Our New Trustee

John Stanley shares his passion for joining our board

In 1988, John Stanley left his successful employment law practice and moved to our area with his wife, Karen, to raise a family. “We decided we could have it all in the Lehigh Valley,” Stanley says. Good schools, the arts and a close proximity to large cities attracted them here, but Lehigh Valley Health Network is one of the things that kept them here.

Now Stanley is giving back to the health network. He’s the newest member of our Board of Trustees, and he brings a wealth of professional experience. As the senior vice president and general counsel for Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., he oversees the company’s law group and corporate relations department. “I’m excited to learn more about the complexity of operating a health network,” Stanley says, “and to share the skills I use at Air Products.”

While his background is in law, Stanley’s interest in health care comes from his youth. His uncle was an internist. “He would tell me that care is not just a word,” Stanley says. “When it was time for him to retire and sell his practice, he would sell it only to a doctor who shared his care philosophy—that patients are the most important thing.”

When Stanley came to Air Products, he learned about Leonard Parker Pool—the modern founder of our health network. Pool’s message resonated with him. “He believed he had an obligation to make this community a better place,” Stanley says.

Now in his role on the board, Stanley will provide oversight for an organization in which “care is not just a word.” The health network, he says, “is like an old-time family practice placed into the modern world.”

It’s why Stanley still knows he and his family can have it all in the Lehigh Valley. While raising three children, the Stanleys have experienced the quality and compassion of our care on numerous occasions. “Doctors and nurses spend time with you, listen to you and make you feel comfortable,” Stanley says. “You feel like the people of Lehigh Valley Health Network are part of your family.”

—Rick Martuscelli
It’s the Thought That Counts
Colleagues share stories of the worst gifts they’ve received (and given)

Everyone loves getting a gift. But have you ever opened a present only to find the oddest, most thoughtless item inside? Maybe it made you laugh or think to yourself, “What was he thinking?!?” Here, colleagues share stories about the craziest gift they’ve received or given.

ONE UGLY BALL

As a child, it took Briana Kish and her family hours to decorate their home for the holidays. Begrudgingly, family tradition required them to display the most unattractive decoration they owned—a Styrofoam ball adorned with plastic holly leaves, red bows and brown spiky balls atop a red glass pedestal. As it progressively lost its ornaments, it earned the affectionate nickname “The Ball of Ugly.” I’m sure it was nice, but time wasn’t kind,” says Kish, an emergency medicine department administrative secretary. “It was kicked, used as a soccer ball by the dogs and played with by the cats.” To continue the tradition, her parents gave Kish her very own Ball of Ugly. “I still giggle when I picture my parents making it,” Kish says. “Someday, I’ll continue this tradition with my children.”

TWO PARTRIDGES IN A PEAR TREE

It was a sad Christmas for the sister of Sonia Dominguez, a patient accounting customer service representative. Her pet parakeets recently had died. Dominguez and her family knew how to cheer her up, but it didn’t seem that way at first. Everyone gave the sister bird toys and food as gifts. “As she opened her presents, she began to cry silently,” Dominguez recalls. “Then her weeping got louder and finally she yelled, ‘Don’t you guys know my birds died?’ We acted completely surprised.” The family then called one of her brothers into the living room, who presented the grieving sister with two new birds. She was overjoyed. “We laugh for hours remembering that Christmas,” Dominguez says.

LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK
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One that no one will laugh (or cry) about for years to come? Check out the auxiliary gift shops at all three hospital campuses for a great selection of gifts all year long.

Renee Shelly, an administrative secretary in perioperative services, was thrilled to receive a snowman from her best friend. When she brought it home, however, her husband noticed it had been cracked and glued together. Although her friend didn’t notice the snowman was broken when she bought it, Shelly has teased her about the gift ever since. “I make sure to give my friend something broken every year. One year it was a porcelain figurine, another it was nylon cooking utensils that were melted out of shape,” she says. “The fun will continue for years.”

Waste reduction specialist Linda Zengen was engaged to be married for just a few months before her bridal shower and wedding. One shower gift stands out. Her aunt misinterpreted the short engagement and gave her a bassinet and baby clothes. “She thought I was expecting a baby, but I wasn’t,” Zengen recalls. “I thought my mom was going to have a heart attack, and my dad passed out.” Her fiancé, now her husband, was quick to ask if she had something to tell him. “I was never so embarrassed,” Zengen says.

Stroke Center colleague Lynette Dondero, RN, laughs when she thinks about the gift her uncle gave her—an automatic shower cleaner. “Nothing says Christmas like a gizmo to spray chemicals all over your shower in a disorganized fashion,” she jokes, while recognizing it’s the thought that counts. She just hopes it wasn’t a hint to clean her bathroom. “I like to think of myself as a neat person,” she says. In the true spirit of giving, Dondero passed the gadget on to her sister-in-law.

A collector of snowmen, Renee Shelly, an administrative secretary in perioperative services, was thrilled to receive a snowman from her best friend. When she brought it home, however, her husband noticed it had been cracked and glued together. Although her friend didn’t notice the snowman was broken when she bought it, Shelly has teased her about the gift ever since. “I make sure to give my friend something broken every year. One year it was a porcelain figurine, another it was nylon cooking utensils that were melted out of shape,” she says. “The fun will continue for years.”

—Amy Koch
Tossin’ Turkeys

Thousands of colleagues gobble up their holiday gift

In appreciation for the hard work you do to continuously make our mission possible, you received an unexpected gift this year—a certificate for a free Jaindl turkey. Just before Thanksgiving, turkeys were distributed at each hospital campus and Lehigh Valley Health Network–Mack Boulevard. Here are snapshots of the “turkey toss” and some of the colleagues who appreciated the gift.

A  In the queue
People lined up in their cars while volunteer “turkey tossers” from marketing and public affairs, development and security delivered the free birds right to colleagues’ vehicles so they wouldn’t have to brave the cold and rain.

B  All smiles
About 4,000 turkeys, each packaged in a “Happy Holidays” box, were distributed during the two-day “turkey toss.” More than 3,000 certificates were redeemed at the Jaindl Farms store.

C  A perfect fit
Each turkey weighed 12-14 pounds, large enough to feed a family and fit snugly into the side compartment of a motorcycle.

D  Stacks of thanks
Our president and chief executive officer, Ron Swinfard, MD, who sent a holiday card to each colleague’s home containing the turkey certificate, received hundreds of “thank you” cards and letters in return. He keeps them in a binder and shares it during meetings to show the kindness of colleagues.

E  Turkey time
Visit Mission Central to see photos and a video of the “turkey toss” and hear colleagues explain why they’re so thankful this year. To find the videos and photos, click “Turkey” under “Keywords.”

Didn’t get your turkey?
You can use your certificate at the Jaindl Farms store (3150 Coffeetown Road, Orefield) for $25 worth of merchandise.
Get Your Grill On!
New experience on The Learning Curve reinforces key Mission Possible messages

Steve, Ming and their pals invite you to join them at a backyard barbecue this winter. But don’t worry about catching a cold. The barbecue will actually take place on your computer screen when you participate in “10 Friends, a Grill and a Mission,” a new interactive learning experience coming to The Learning Curve in January.

The goal is to help colleagues better understand the challenges we face and skills we can use to continue to make our mission possible—now and in the future. Why a barbecue? “We wanted to share these messages in a fun and unique way,” says senior eLearning designer Laura Berger, a member of the division of education team that created the experience. Participants learn by observing a group of cartoon characters informally chatting, which mirrors the conversation theme introduced at this year’s employee forums.

What’s on the ‘menu’?
“10 Friends, a Grill and a Mission” isn’t a course, workshop or test. Once you arrive at the barbecue, you’ll hear the characters—representing both our health network and the community—discuss a “menu” of important topics, including:

**Tomorrow’s Forecast** → Learn about the potential impact of health care reform and expected reimbursement changes, as well as quality measures we’ll use to continue providing superior patient care.

**Show and Tell** → Hear explanations and examples of seeing possibilities and building relationships, two skills introduced at employee forums.

**Tool Time** → Find out how tools such as reframing, SPPI and visibility walls work together to support our mission and keep our health network strong and vibrant.

You’ll also participate in a number of fun exercises and games that reinforce the information the characters share.

A tasty bonus
Departments and units with 100 percent participation in the experience will receive a group celebration meal. It’s an “only while supplies last” promotion, so be on the lookout for the start date—and get your grill on together!

—Gerard Migliore

Continue learning through Mission Central
To further boost your Mission Possible skills and understanding, check out the helpful articles and other educational resources on Mission Central, the intranet’s new interactive website. You also can watch videos of colleagues, join discussions and share your opinions. Content is added several times per week, so check back often. To get started, visit the intranet and click on the conversation bubbles in the upper right corner—or visit lvhn.org/conversations from any network computer.
BE AN ADVOCATE

She’s an Advocate

Purchasing coordinator Kathy Sam (right), was overjoyed when her daughter, Jill, announced she was pregnant with Sam’s first grandchild. Sam then doled out her first piece of parenting advice—turn to OB/GYN Associates, an LVPG practice, for prenatal care. A patient of the practice herself, Sam felt the high-quality care the practice provides was what her daughter needed. “The staff spend a lot of time with you, and everyone there genuinely cares,” Sam says. Jill took her mother’s advice and delivered a healthy baby girl, Georgia, at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest in October. Georgia is the fifth generation in Sam’s family to be born at Lehigh Valley Health Network, showing that advocacy can happen even in your own family.

Making Cancer Less Scary

We talked to our community members about cancer in focus groups, and they told us how fearful they are of the disease and described cancer as a monster. In November, we launched a new advertising campaign for our cancer services that shows how Lehigh Valley Health Network can make cancer less scary. That’s because we have nationally recognized specialists, the latest diagnostic technology, the most advanced revolutionary therapies, access to research, medicines that target genes that cause cancer, robotic surgery capabilities and a support team that guides patients every step of the way. You’ll see and hear the campaign on television, radio and billboard.

The Wall

What our fans are saying

Connie Eddy wrote on Nov. 13:
I have to post a thumbs-up for my family doc at LVH–Cedar Crest. Dr. Winas and his colleagues at internal medicine are the best! I never feel rushed or like they don’t have time for my questions. Wouldn’t change for the world. Thanks to all.

Donna Hosfeld wrote on Nov. 3:
Thank you for a wonderful team of folks in your GI/endoscopy center! Everyone made a stressful day very easy…don’t remember all the names, but thanks to all. And make sure whoever is in charge of ordering the Lorna Doone cookies never replaces them with another cookie!

Kathryn McCourry wrote on Oct. 24:
LVH NICU is amazing. Thank you for taking such great care of my little boy!
Visit Mission Central every “Facebook Friday” to read what our fans are saying.

The Buzz in Our Community

• In recognition of the trauma care their son received here, the Becker family of Lynbrook, N.Y., made a gift to the Hackerman-Patz House, which included the donation of an engraved bench. 69 News (WFMZ-TV), Service Electric TV-2 News, The Morning Call, The Express-Times and the Pocono Record covered the unveiling.

• Covering the opening of Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg’s expanded emergency department and its new rapid assessment unit were 69 News (WFMZ-TV), Service Electric TV-2 News, The Morning Call and The Express-Times.

• 69 News (WFMZ-TV), The Morning Call, the Patch online newspapers, East Penn weekly publications and WLEV, Cat Country, WAEB and B-104, promoted and highlighted our free drive-through flu shot clinics at Dorney Park and Coca-Cola Park.

• Eileen Wasson, RN, and Angela Strauss, RN, of the trauma-neuro intensive care unit were featured on 69 News (WFMZ-TV) and Service Electric TV-2 News for writing a children’s book called “Mommies and Daddies Are Nurses.”

• The Morning Call and The Express-Times featured Robert Motley, MD, for being named the new president-elect of our medical staff.

—Matthew Burns

Are you an advocate for our health network?
If so, call 484-884-0806 or e-mail Lauren_L.Fetterman@lvhn.org and share your story in CheckUp.

Join the Conversation

facebook.com/lvhealthnetwork

Read and View Our News
Go to lvhn.org/news to see news clips (updated monthly).

Stay Informed at LVH.com
Under “Network News,” click on the stories that interest you (updated monthly).

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A Guide to Our Care

Same Pediatric Care, New Location

To enhance the integration of pediatric services, several pediatric specialties have relocated within the health network. Pediatric neurology, pulmonology and gastroenterology have moved from Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg to Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest to be closer to the inpatient pediatric units, the pediatric intensive care unit and the Children’s ER. Pediatric surgery will move in January. Their new offices are located in the 1210 building, suites 2400, 2700 and 1100. The relocation of these pediatric specialists will allow for the expansion of our cancer program at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Muhlenberg.

Help for a Failing Heart

We’ll soon be the first hospital in the area to provide life-sustaining technology that helps patients in the late stages of heart failure. A ventricular assist device (VAD) is a mechanical pump that is implanted to help a failing heart effectively pump blood throughout the body. The VAD can help a patient survive outside of the hospital until a donor heart becomes available for transplant. Our newest cardiothoracic surgeon, Timothy Misselbeck, MD, is fellowship-trained in the implantation of VADs.

Do You Need a Mammogram?

Mammography is the best way to find breast cancer when it is most curable. Some controversy exists regarding the age to start screening, and how often. However, our specialists agree with the American Cancer Society that women should begin yearly mammograms starting at age 40 or earlier if at high risk. Our Breast Health Services colleagues use state-of-the-art digital equipment operated by caring, certified technologists. If you or someone you know has been putting off getting a mammogram, call Breast Health Services at 610-402-2791 to schedule an appointment.

LVPG Docs Challenge Community

Did you know our Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) physicians post healthy challenges on our health network’s Facebook page? Dubbed the “Wednesday Challenge,” they ask community members to do things like take the stairs instead of the elevator and drink water instead of soda. Have a challenge you’d like to share? Log onto the health network’s Facebook page (facebook.com/lvhealthnetwork).

Understanding Emotions After Delivery

If you know someone who feels let down following the birth of a new baby, tell her she is not alone. Attending our postpartum support group meetings may help. Our group consists of women who share stories of joy, sadness and loneliness after delivery. Meetings are offered three times a month at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest and Lehigh Valley Hospital–17th Street. Walk-ins are welcome but registration is preferred by calling 610-402-CARE.
**New Cards and Phone Numbers**

All colleagues covered by Choice Plus will be receiving new identification cards in their home mail. They reflect changes you may have made to your plan during open enrollment, and contain contact information for two departments that have moved to Mack Boulevard:

- **Spectrum Administrators**  
  (484-884-0410 or 800-925-8459)

- **Health services**  
  (484-884-0417 or 866-293-5452)

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**PRIDE in Our People**

**Volunteer Vaccinators**

Showing their passion for better medicine, more than 600 colleagues, friends and family members volunteered at our annual drive-through flu shot clinics. They vaccinated 5,976 people at Dorney Park and 4,662 people at Coca-Cola Park for free. Although food donations were optional, community members donated a total of 10,680 pounds of food to the AIDS Activities Office, Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank, Allentown Rescue Mission and Second Harvest Food Bank.

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**A Peek Inside**

Melanie Harrington of Philadelphia (right) was among the many community members who experienced the Surgery Education Center with the help of resident Ramon Garza, MD (left), during the 2011 Lehigh Valley Health Network Community Annual Meeting and Health Expo. The event, called “A Symphony of Care,” celebrated our successes in fiscal year 2011, offered a glimpse into the future, and also spotlighted Snow World, virtual reality technology that helps comfort burn patients during bandage changes. You can see portions of the Annual Meeting presentation by president and chief executive officer Ron Swinford, MD, on the Mission Central section of the intranet.

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**Recognized for Safe Care**

We are one of only 27 health care facilities nationwide to receive the National Award to Recognize Achievements in Preventing and Reducing Healthcare-Associated Infections sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Critical Care Societies Collaborative. Judith Jacobi, PharmD, past president of the Society of Critical Care Medicine, presented the award to (clockwise from left) Cindy Umbrell, RN, Anthony Ardire, MD, David Pucklavage, William Bond, MD, Andrew Miller, DO, Valerie Rupp, RN, and Amy Smith, PhD.
Late one afternoon, Children’s Clinic colleagues found an elderly woman attempting to enter the back door of the Lehigh Valley Hospital–17th Street operating room. She had no hospital identification, and due to a language barrier, colleagues couldn’t communicate with her. Medical assistant Theresa Valentin was determined to find out who she was and get her help.

Valentin took her into an exam room and called an interpreter. After 45 minutes and input from numerous interpreters, it was determined the woman spoke an odd dialect of Cantonese. With help from the interpreter and by using hand gestures, Valentin received permission from the woman to look in her purse for identification. She found an insurance card that contained her name, Yin, and her doctor’s phone number. Valentin called, got Yin’s address and found out she had no emergent health issues.

When Yin asked for a bowl of rice, Valentin had security escort her to the cafeteria. On her way, another security officer, Victoria Fitzpatrick, recognized Yin and suggested they take her to a neighborhood Chinese restaurant. There, she was quickly identified. Allentown police were called and were able to contact a family member. Hours after Yin was found, her thankful family arrived to pick her up.

“People like Terry, who are willing to go the extra mile, make real care happen at our health network,” says Children’s Clinic associate director Lee Seckinger. “I am proud to work on her team and honored to have been a small part in this beautiful story of tenderness and compassion.”

—Matthew Burns
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