

Lifelines

October 2011

Kelley Torkomian, Customer Service Award Winner



Kelley Torkomian

Staffing a busy hospital is no small task: schedules are intricate, everyone's needs are pressing, and there's no room for error. But as staffing coordinator for Newport Hospital's nursing division, Kelley Torkomian makes it all move like clockwork. Nurses and managers get the assistance they need, and patients get the efficient and capable nursing care they deserve.

No matter how busy things get, Torkomian takes the time to listen to everyone, inquire after a sick child or personal issue at home, and make everyone feel heard, say her colleagues. Although her phone never stops ringing, she never gets flustered, and is unfailingly positive, professional and polite.

Her supervisor, Clinical Informatics Manager Mary Logan, cites Torkomian's "special skill for listening and caring for all callers."

Her colleagues agree. "Kelley is the epitome of grace under fire," says one. "She can multi-task like no other." Another puts it this way: "Kelley is our 'center.' We expect our staffing coordinator to be organized, efficient, make cost-effective decisions by canceling overtime and extra staff; take over 100 calls a day, listen to stories such as 'my dog ate the cat,' correct staff issues, print reports, take ED admission calls and on and on. Kelley is amazing!"

Committed to Caring for Newport Kids

Editor's note: The mentorship program at Thompson Middle School is coordinated by the school's Human Services Mall, which is fully funded by Newport Hospital.

As part of a proudly lean and efficient organization, we frequently wear more than one hat per person, and none of us has much extra time. Yet one of our busy colleagues carves out at least an hour a week for a child in the community – and has for the past five years.



Barbara Arcangeli, vice president for human resources, with Maria, whom Arcangeli has mentored for five years.

Barbara Arcangeli, Newport Hospital's vice president for human resources, is a former member of the board of a local after-school program. She felt she could make an impact as a



mentor, so she signed on with the Aquidneck Island Mentor Program, which is a branch of the Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership. The schools determine which children would most benefit from adult mentors; the partnership administration completes a background check and interview and then pairs the mentor with a child who seems to be a good match.

Arcangeli and her husband have raised two sons, so she requested a young, female student when she agreed to be a mentor at Cranston-Calvert Elementary School in Newport. Maria was in the first grade when Arcangeli became her mentor.

“Maria had the biggest smile,” Arcangeli remembers, “and was so excited to meet me. It’s easy to connect with a child who reacts that way.”

She explains that being a mentor is very different from being a tutor, although many of the children in the program have difficulty with some school subjects. “It’s not about academics,” she says. “Mentors are more like role models, helping the child grow. We’re there to discuss personal issues if the child wants to, and to be a friend and demonstrate positive behaviors and attitudes for them to model.”

An avid reader herself, Arcangeli envisioned hours spent reading with Maria, helping her open doors to other lives and worlds. It was quickly apparent, however, that Maria’s interests did not include reading. The shift wasn’t a problem, though. “We are very different people in almost every way,” Arcangeli says, “but we find commonality in the experiences of childhood and the topic of school activity, in playing games and doing crafts.”

One of the program’s primary goals is improving school attendance. Children in the program often have unstable home situations and backgrounds. Such circumstances can make learning difficult – especially without adult help and encouragement. “We talk about what’s going on in her life,” Arcangeli says, “and anything that’s bothering her. Sometimes all she needs is a good listener.”

Occasionally, outside activities, such as a Newport Gulls game, are arranged through the school for mentors and

mentees to attend together. Arcangeli has also taken Maria to other events over the years, and those must be coordinated through the child’s family. Training is provided to mentors to help them address student issues and plan mentoring activities.

Arcangeli believes that everyone can learn to mentor a child, but not everyone is ready for the intensity and duration of the relationship and the commitment it requires. Arcangeli takes very seriously the opportunity to be a positive influence in Maria’s life and will continue as her mentor as long as Maria wishes. Because Maria has just entered the sixth grade at Thompson Middle School, Arcangeli thinks the relationship may naturally draw to an end. “Kids change at this age,” she says. “Whether because of peer pressure or just the way she views herself, maybe as too adult for this, she might not want to continue for much longer. If she does, I will, too.”

Some weeks, it’s difficult to take an hour to spend at the school, but Arcangeli finds the mentoring relationship gratifying. “Even if you can impart just one lesson – kindness, fairness, making friends, applying yourself – you have helped a child,” she says. “You have given him or her a sense of importance. It might be the first time a child believes she matters to someone.”

There is always a great need for more mentors in our community’s schools. Anyone considering becoming a mentor should contact the Aquidneck Island Mentor Program for additional information.

Newport Nursing News

Congratulations to **Pat Grimes, BS, RN**, who has been appointed assistant clinical manager of the emergency department. Grimes has been on the nursing staff at Newport Hospital since 1985, primarily in the ED, and is certified in emergency room nursing through the Emergency Nurses Association. In her new role, Grimes assists in staff development and management, strategic planning for the department, patient care leadership, and quality initiatives.