



Audra Nolan

Audra Nolan, Customer Service Award Winner

Even during a hospitalization (perhaps particularly during a hospitalization), meal time brightens the day. And at Newport Hospital, Audra Nolan brightens meal time.

Nolan has worked at the hospital for 10 years, and in her current position, as a dietetic assistant, for six years. She handles staff requests for patient trays, guest meals, comfort carts and food for meetings, all with efficiency and professionalism. Her coworkers comment on her friendly manner, even temperament and lovely phone etiquette.

Nolan is also the voice that patients in isolation hear when they make their menu selections. Since these patients cannot have a paper menu delivered to them, Nolan helps them order their meals by phone.

"I've listened to her," says Pamela McLaughlin, administrative director of support services. "She is extremely patient, very respectful, and helpful. She reads every item on every menu to every patient she calls. Audra understands that she's not just filling out a menu. Allowing the patients to make their own choices gives them the feeling of control and it can be very comforting in an environment they aren't familiar with."

Nolan's nomination for this month's customer service award also cites her helpful demeanor, good communication skills and willing attitude. As McLaughlin sums it up: "Audra is just awesome."

A reception in Nolan's honor was held on December 13 in the Hill Courtyard.

A Little Help for Our Friends

Newport Hospital's deep ties to the local community are always evident, but never more so than during the holiday season. This year, as in years past, hospital staff members have been busy organizing various events to benefit local families and children.

Last month, the hospital food drive, organized by the Reward and Recognition Team, collected almost 1,800 food items for delivery to the Martin Luther King Community Center before Thanksgiving. This month, human resources representative Diane Carruba organized a "Breakfast with Santa" buffet at the Naval Station Newport, featuring activities such as face painting and cookie decorating. The event drew almost 100 adults and more than 50 children, and collected eight bags of toys which were delivered to the East Bay Community Action Program.

Finally, Dottie Berube, chair of the Reward and Recognition Team, created a Giving Tree in the hospital's front lobby, featuring children's names and gift wishes from the Martin Luther King Center. All this month, hospital employees have been choosing wish ornaments and purchasing the desired gifts, to be delivered to kids at the center before Christmas.



The faces behind the Newport Hospital Food Drive



HARI Honors Former Employee

The Hospital Association of Rhode Island held its annual “Hospital Heroes” award ceremony on December 1 to recognize member hospitals’ employees of the year. Newport Hospital’s honoree was Judi Smith, RN, who recently retired after 47 years at the hospital. Her award stated, in part, “Judi epitomizes the concept of teamwork...truly an ambassador of Newport Hospital...is renowned for her energy and involvement in the community.”

Smith graduated from the Newport Hospital School of Nursing and has worked at the hospital her entire career. Although she retired this year, she remains a steadfast volunteer with the hospital and with many community service programs in Newport County.



Newport Hospital President and CEO August B. Cordeiro with Judi Smith

“Ban the Bags” to Encourage Breastfeeding

Newport Hospital recently joined others at the state house for a “Ban the Bags” celebration as Rhode Island became the first state in the country to stop hospital distribution of gift bags from baby formula companies.

In most hospitals, a new mother leaves with a bag of sample-size products for herself and her infant. Those samples include baby formula and coupons to buy additional formula. As a Baby Friendly designated birthing center, Newport Hospital years ago removed all formula-related items before giving the bags to new mothers. Other Rhode Island birthing hospitals have now followed suit, and the hope is that this trend will work its way around the country.

Breastfeeding is encouraged not only at the 200 or so Baby Friendly hospitals in America, but also by physicians, midwives, doulas and other experts because of its health advantages to both mother and infant.



From left: Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts; RI Dept. of Health Director Michael Fine, MD; Newport Hospital vice president for nursing and patient care services Paula Gillette, MSN, RN; Newport Hospital lactation consultant Vicki Schmidt, RN; Newport Hospital assistant nurse manager, birthing center, Debra Venancio, RN; Rhode Island First Lady Stephanie Chafee; and “Ban the Bags” campaign chair Marsha Walker