



## **Katherine Finnegan Walker, LICSW, Customer Service Award Winner**

As a clinical social worker at Newport Hospital, Katherine Finnegan Walker often deals with patients and families in crisis. Yet she is always calm and caring, and her gentle, yet professional demeanor puts everyone at ease. As one colleague writes, “Katherine treats all her clients with respect and without judgment. Some days she is pulled in many different directions but she always responds with a smile on her face.”

Finnegan Walker has been at Newport Hospital, in her current position, since 2007. Her expert clinical skills, commitment to her work and depth of knowledge about services that could benefit her clients has made her a valued and respected figure, both among colleagues and the community at large.

“Katherine is compassionate, empathetic, and always maintains an objective attitude, even in the most difficult and challenging situations,” says Andrea Ripa, director of case management. “In addition, it is not unusual for her to extend her skills beyond the doors of Newport Hospital. She has been known to purchase things on her own for patients and find creative ways to obtain necessary equipment, vouchers, etc. to help those in need.”

Ripa adds: “I have come to admire and greatly respect her keen clinical skills and devotion to a very challenging profession.”

A reception will be held in Finnegan Walker’s honor on June 20 at 2 p.m.

## **Vanderbilt Rehab Shows Off New Space and Programs**

This month the Vanderbilt Rehab outpatient department hosted an open house to show off its newly renovated space to hospital colleagues. To accommodate new outpatient rehab programs, offices have been transformed to spacious gym-like areas where therapists can work with patients.

The renovations began last summer, so Vanderbilt outpatient staff members have been eager for the project’s completion. No additional space was planned: the footprint of the department remains the same, but the change is dramatic.

Five stations were set up so visitors could walk through, stop at each station, and hear Vanderbilt Rehab staff explain the use of that area. From the first station in the ortho gym, through the pediatric area and occupational therapy room, to the neuro gym and cardiac rehab space, visitors were welcomed and offered a chance to participate in a raffle. An array of fruits, pastries and punch was set up for guests at the tour’s end.



Equipment used in one of the large new rooms





Sue Martens, PTA, and Patrick McCormick, PT, discuss the uses of gym equipment on the site of former physician offices.

Two new rehabilitation programs were launched in the renovated space during the first week of May: pulmonary rehab and the STAR program for cancer rehab. Pulmonologist Yassin Hmadeh, MD, is the medical director of the pulmonary rehab program and says the program's goal is to improve the well-being of patients with chronic breathing problems. "Our multidisciplinary program involves a long-term commitment from the patient and a team of health care providers," he says. "When a patient joins our program, the rehab team creates a plan that's tailored to the individual patient's abilities and needs." The program includes both exercise and education components, so patients can better understand their disease and how to use specific techniques to improve their breathing.

Exercise physiologist and cardiac and pulmonary rehab coordinator Sam Baldwin says pulmonary rehab is a crucial service for Newport County residents whose lives have been affected by chronic lung disease. "The chronic fatigue, dependence on oxygen and the persistent shortness of breath caused by lung disease debilitates those who are afflicted," he says. "Pulmonary rehabilitation decreases fatigue and breathlessness, improves the participants' ability to perform daily activities, and improves overall quality of life."

Vanderbilt Rehab also recently obtained certification to offer cancer rehabilitation. Fortunately, the creator of the STAR (Survivorship Training and Rehabilitation) program for cancer rehab was able to be at Newport Hospital for the program launch. She spoke at grand rounds of her own experience as a cancer survivor, stressing the need for a program where patients can learn to manage the effects of cancer treatment. Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation can rid the body of cancer, but the patient often feels unwell for many months after treatment. Lymphedema, neuropathy,

fatigue and other after-effects are common. The STAR program is a multidisciplinary approach to help patients recover their pre-cancer health through physical conditioning and therapies, social and psychological support, and nutrition, working in conjunction with medical treatment.

The Vanderbilt Rehab renovations were a gift from Jennifer and Peter Capodilupo and the Gudoian family, in support of launching the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program.



Joanne St. Laurent, OTR/L, Susan Bowen Powers, OTR/L, and Pam Reo, OTR/L



The newly expanded cardiac rehabilitation area

## Newport Nursing News

Congratulations to **Stephanie Baranosky**, formerly a CNA in the emergency department, who has completed nursing school at CCRI and has also passed her boards, becoming the newest RN in the department.