



VOLUNTEER CONNECTION

Created for the Newport Hospital Volunteers

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Volunteer Profile: Jane Lincourt, RN *by Joyce Allphin*

When Jane Lincourt first received Reiki she found herself both relaxed and centered and wanting to know more about the therapy founded in 1922 by a Japanese doctor. Reiki practitioners believe it promotes a sense of well-being, peace and security to those who receive it. Translated Rei means higher power and Ki is life force energy.

A nurse at Newport Hospital for 24 years, and the last 12 years doing home care, Jane had always wanted to help people and make them feel better. She found in Reiki “the ability to bring a person's mind/body/spirit into a kind of balance that can allow for the healing to happen.” Jane completed Reiki Level I certification at the Soul Purpose Training Center and Reiki Level II offered by Newport Hospital last fall with Anna Smith.

Since she has begun giving this therapy, she has observed that about 80% of her patients are fully asleep within minutes of her treatment. That it relieves anxiety in patients is another positive aspect of Reiki which is offered as a complementary therapy in many U. S. hospitals and worldwide. This past October, Jane notes, a staff physician requested daily Reiki sessions for a patient at Newport Hospital.



A native Newporter, Jane is making a move in the near future to Plattsburgh, New York, to be close to her married daughter and two granddaughters. Always an outdoors person with a love of fitness, she loves the beaches of Narragansett Bay and soon she will be enjoying the activities on Lake Champlain and hiking and walking along the trails in the nearby Adirondacks.

Passionate about Reiki, she plans to open her own practice in this healing art after settling in at her new home. ■

Valet Parking now offered at Newport Hospital *by Richard Allphin*

How did the free valet parking come to be? Pam McLaughlin, Administrative Director of Support Services, tells the story. Both the front desk staff and Vanderbilt outpatient staff had watched people struggle while walking up the front driveway and walkway. Some were having a hard time parking close enough to make a comfortable walk to the entrance. Some were late for appointments or were canceling appointments altogether. They brought their concerns to Pam and Hospital President, Gus Cordeiro.

In May 2012, the Hospital changed their contracted security firm to APG in Warwick. APG offers valet parking as part of their services, so Newport Hospital decided to put it in place. Newport Hospital's Lifespan partners, Miriam Hospital and

Rhode Island Hospital offer valet parking as well.

The free service is available from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If people leave after 5 p.m., the keys are left at the front desk and security fetches the car. Security no longer “patrols” the front area except for the morning and evening rush of Hospital staff.

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Do Good, Live Well *by Dennis Bristow*

We volunteer for many reasons, like giving back to the community or social networking. There is another reason to volunteer that you may not have considered: Volunteering is good for your health. Yes, studies show that volunteering provides benefits to both your mental and physical health. A report presented by The Corporation for National and Community Service, titled *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*, has established a strong relationship between volunteering and health: Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer, even when considering such factors as the health of the participants.

The many facets of being a Newport Hospital volunteer offer benefits that can be obvious or subtle, but they all clearly demonstrate what happens to us when we begin to live outside of our own wants and needs. Good things happen - it's undeniable.

As a hospital volunteer or as a volunteer anywhere in our community, you learn new skills, meet new friends, move around and stay involved.

The Corporation for National and Community Service published these findings~
Hospital volunteering:

- **Improves physical well-being.** Social interaction that volunteering entails can actually reduce heart rate and blood pressure, increase endorphin production, enhance your immune system, and buffer the impact of stress.

“Volunteering at the hospital makes me forget all my aches and pains!”

Clara Nunes, Newport Hospital Volunteer, 87 years old.

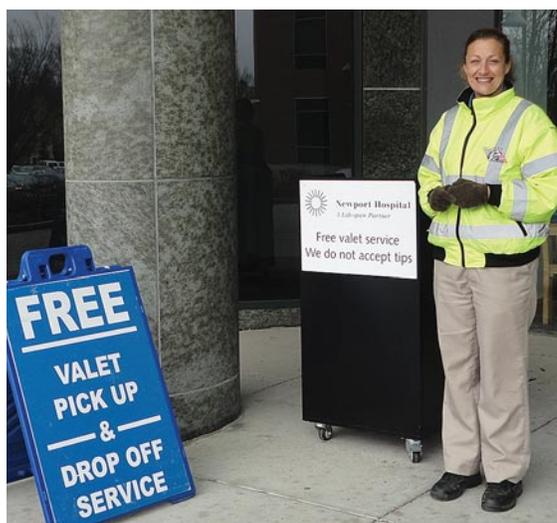
- **Volunteering raises self-confidence and self-esteem.** Evidence suggests that volunteering has a positive effect on social psychological factors. The experience of helping others can lead to a sense of greater self-worth and confidence. And volunteering can provide you with a sense of purpose, especially in tough times.

- **Encourages friendships that buffer against stress and illness.** Volunteering gives you the opportunity to meet and connect with new people, in new surroundings. It helps you build vital interpersonal ties and social networks that can combat depression and isolation.

- **Volunteering may help you live longer.** Studies show that being actively involved in ongoing volunteer work actually increases life expectancy while improving the quality of life at the same time. And the earlier you start, the better. Research tells us that those individuals who volunteer at an earlier point in their lives experience greater functional ability and better health outcomes later on in life. The bottom line is that there is a relationship between volunteering and health benefits.

Those benefits sound like win-win to me. Thanks for your service and congratulations on taking good care of yourself at the same time. ■

Note about the author ~ Dennis Bristow adds extra health benefits to his life by walking to the hospital when he volunteers and participating in the Veggie Box program!



Valet Parking *continued from page one*

The service has been an overwhelming success. Pam said that it took a while to “ramp up” but now it is handling about a thousand cars a month.

I chatted with some users of the service. Here are some comments:

“It’s been a blessing.”

“The effort to come to therapy and climb the hill was too much. Now it’s a pleasure.”

“Saved my life today because I was late for an appointment.”

“Thank God.”

Paul Nadeau, along with Karen Farias and Roger LePage, operate the service. Users have commented on their friendly manner. I tried the service today and was impressed with the convenience. Karen parked my car, returned it with a smile on her face and no dings on the car! ■

Volunteer Retreat Featured Writing & Finger Painting *by Joyce Allphin*

At the annual Volunteer Retreat hospital volunteers and staff participated in a Reflective Writing Workshop led by seasoned writer and teacher, Peggy Rambach. Her background includes writing a novel, short stories and teaching creative writing at the Suffolk County House of Corrections in Boston.

We started the day by reading a poem, and then we set out to create our own prose. Ms. Rambach explained that she presents writing as a way to help people manage complex emotions, then wasted no time having students put pen to paper. She gently encouraged students to share their writing, though it was not a requirement. The group quickly became comfortable with each other, quietly writing and reading their work for comment.

After lunch we continued our creative expression with finger painting. Christopher Silvia set up the art activity and encouraged the group to develop their writing ideas through the medium of paint and “play.”

Volunteer Kathy Bronson was urged by a friend to attend her first retreat and said, “I loved the entire day.” She was surprised how quickly her thoughts were transferred to paper and commented that the finger painting allowed her to “unleash her inner child.”

“It was a great workshop that I truly enjoyed,” said volunteer Carol Formica. She wrote about the last Christmas her family—her parents and nine siblings—spent together in New Jersey. She added “although our loved ones may not be with us any more, they are forever in our memories.” Carol said

of the workshop, “I was impressed with the talent and active involvement of the volunteers that day and their beautifully written pieces.” Carol created a Christmas tree during what she termed a “really fun art project using finger paints.”

Finally, Maria Martineau said of Peggy’s workshop, “she gave us the framework to write.” A memory from long ago prompted her to write about picking blueberries with her brother from large bushes in Cumberland. When her brother said, “Duck,” she knew that he spotted other kids looking for blueberries and didn’t want them to find their special picking spot. The memory spurred a nostalgic poem about the event.

Volunteer Director Lisa Coble commented after hearing participants’ writing read aloud, “Some great writing came out of that brief workshop. I was so impressed with Peggy Rambach’s ability to quickly teach reflective writing skills. We also had lots of fun getting our fingers into the paint!”

“Thank you again for inviting me to be a presenter at the volunteer retreat. The experience was an absolute pleasure. The participants were so warm and welcoming, so enthusiastic and eager to contribute, but that is in their nature, why they do what they do at the hospital, isn’t it! I’ve no doubt they will find a way to integrate what they did today with other aspects of their lives. It was fun talking to you too, and I’ve Christopher to thank for giving me the chance to fingerpaint! I’m glad I stayed to do it”
Peggy Rambach, Retreat Facilitator ■

Photos – Top left: Carol Formica, enjoying the finger painting activity. Bottom left: Anna Smith with Retreat Presenter, Peggy Rambach. Bottom right: Jean Wilson (right) with staff Bethany Deidrich (left) finger painting.



HCAHPS and the Volunteer *by Ron Barr*

First of all, what is HCAHPS? Yes, it is another clumsy government acronym, and it stands for Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. But believe it or not the title does tell the story, and the story from the volunteer's point of view is an important one. Nearly one billion dollars in government payments to hospitals will be based in part on patient satisfaction, and much of this is determined by a 27-question survey administered to patients shortly after discharge. Nearly 4000 hospitals in the USA are participating, including of course your Newport Hospital. The surveys are conducted by approved independent vendors, in our case a national company, Press Ganey.

Hospitals with high scores will get a bonus payment, and those with low scores will have a financial penalty. The program is all part of a much broader "pay for performance" system built into the Affordable Care Act which compares clinical procedures and patient outcomes. The results, and comparisons to other hospitals throughout the country, are publicly reported on the Hospital Care website*. This valuable resource allows consumers to quickly review patient experience offering how responsive hospital staff (and volunteers) are to patients' needs, how well staff manage pain, how well they communicate with the patient, and whether key information is provided at discharge. Survey questions address cleanliness and quietness of patients' rooms, standard of care and whether or not they would recommend the hospital to family or friends. The published results are based on four consecutive quarters of patient surveys.

So where does the volunteer fit into all this?

To find out, I met with David Harriman, the director of Performance Evaluation and Improvement for Newport Hospital. He shared that Newport Hospital currently scored slightly above the national average, but David thinks there is plenty of room for improvement and added that "volunteers have a very important part to play in their interaction with patients."

For example, patients have many fears when hospitalized. One fear is the spread of infection. Volunteers and staff must perform hand hygiene when visiting with patients. When you use the Purell upon entering and exiting the room, the patient observes that you care about preventing the spread of infection. To convey your concern for a patient's comfort, speak with patients at their eye level, not from "above." Listen without judgment, and then bring any concerns to the staff who are qualified to respond to the patient's needs. You can also reinforce the availability of social workers, spiritual care advisers and the complimentary services request line offerings.

Timely response to call lights is one of the questions addressed on the survey. If you see a patient's call light awaiting a response that is delayed, tell the patient you'll check on it and return to reassure them as soon as you can.

Try to be aware of the patient's surroundings – are they comfortable in their bed? If not, tell the nurse. Should you see a bottle of pills by their bed, tell the nurse. The chances are they shouldn't be there. As you move about the hospital there are many small ways to improve the patient's experience. Walk people to their destinations, pick up any litter you see, make sure waiting areas are tidy, greet patients you pass with a smile and where appropriate with an offer of help. **Remember you can and do make a difference! ■**

"HCAHPS is a game changer. Anyone can get on the CMS website hospital compare and see how hospitals are performing nationwide. It is the first time consumers have a standard way to compare hospitals (apples to apples). Consumers have choices and HCHAPS is a decision making tool."
Anastasia Luby, Project Coordinator, Lifespan Survey Center

"The Customer Service Coordinating Team meets monthly to review patient satisfaction data and take a leadership role in customer service initiatives. For the past 12 years I have served on the coordinating team to represent the role volunteers play in the 'patient experience'. Every interaction you have with a patient or family member leaves a lasting impression. It is exciting to always strive to improve customer service through the dedicated efforts of our staff and volunteers".

Lisa Coble, Director of Volunteer Services

Employee Health Services – Keeping Us Safe! *by Joyce Allphin*

A small yet very important department at Newport Hospital is Employee Health Services. Nurse coordinators Nancy Costello and Meg Edward oversee the department and ensure that hospital employees, students, contract workers, and patients, as well as volunteers, are kept healthy and safe.

EHS oversees annual PPD's, conducts new hire health screenings, and maintains immunization records for all staff and volunteers. Nancy Costello explained a major campaign coordinated by her department is the annual influenza (flu) clinics. The clinics are offered a month prior to the seasonal occurrence of the flu and rely heavily on volunteer support. In October 2012 the nurses vaccinated 284 Newport Hospital staff and volunteers. Many praise the convenience of going to work and getting the vaccine there rather than making a doctor's appointment or standing in line at a drug store.

The CDC (Center for Disease Control) in Atlanta predicted that 2012-2013 would see a worse than average flu season. And in fact all states but two, Hawaii and Tennessee, have reported widespread activity of influenza. High fever, aches and pain and also exhaustion are all symptomatic of the flu, which at its worst can lead to pneumonia and death.

Hospital workers including volunteers and students are required to have an annual TB (tuberculosis) test. A contagious disease, TB is diagnosed by a test called PPD, which stands for Purified Protein Derivative. A shot of PPD is administered just under the skin and the recipient is sent home. After 48-72 hours he or she returns and the nurse coordinator examines the arm for induration which is a "bump" where the PPD was placed. The bump is measured and if it is in a certain range may be deemed positive and is dealt with accordingly. A negative reaction means that no tuberculosis is indicated.

The RI Department of Health has recently mandated that all hospital personnel (paid and volunteer) get the TDaP vaccine. The vaccine provides protection against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Tetanus is caused by bacteria in the soil and is acquired through a cut, wound or puncture. The toxins of this disease can cause muscle spasms and breathing difficulties as well as paralysis. Tetanus

vaccine is the only vaccine that prevents a disease not passed from person to person.

Diphtheria's toxins can hurt the heart, kidneys and nervous system. It can cause abnormal heart rhythm and even heart failure. It is caused by bacteria, which are also the cause of pertussis, which has toxins that damage the lungs through severe and sometimes prolonged coughing. It is highly contagious and spread by coughing and sneezing. Vaccination was thought to have eradicated pertussis in the last part of the 20th century, but this disease has made an unwelcome comeback in recent years.

The many responsibilities of Employee Health Services include those cited above, but they also manage cases where an employee is injured on the job, starting by assisting in the filling out of an incident report and even the scheduling of doctor's appointments. Infection control as well as safety in the workplace is also part of this department's overall responsibilities.

Please call Occupational Health at 845-1245 to make an appointment for your TDaP vaccine if you have not had one in the past 12 months. Additionally, Nancy and Meg are a resource for any questions you may have about immunizations or the spread of infection. ■

"We would like to thank the volunteers for their cooperation and compliance with annual PPD's and the flu vaccine program" Meg Edwards, RN



Volunteers who have signed up for the Farm Fresh Rhode Island delivery of fresh, locally raised foodstuff are getting a healthy boost to their diet. Every other week, even through the winter, I'm enjoying hydroponic greens, winter squash, fruits, potatoes, honey, cabbage, kale, herbs, and much more.
Dennis Bristow, NH Volunteer.



In October 2012 Anna Smith, Reiki Master and Newport Hospital volunteer taught Reiki Level II training at Sachuest Point. The 12 participants developed their knowledge of Reiki practices, shared stories over lunch and deepened their commitment to offering Reiki to patients at Newport Hospital. ■

*Photo: Left to Right
Standing – Linda Craig-Aguiar, Barbara Carnes, Anna Smith,
Becky Pulley, Ann Marie Bernardi, Agnieszka Nevarez,
Maria Martineau, Kimberly Kusic
Sitting – Edwina Cloherty, Marlo Lawrence, Jane Lincourt*

Volunteer Services
Newport Hospital
11 Friendship Street,
Newport, RI 02840