

Lifespan's Spectrum ERG Participates in PrideFest



Volunteers provided free health assessments and information about Lifespan to attendees at PrideFest.

The 37th Annual Rhode Island PrideFest was held in Providence on Saturday, June 15. The event celebrates the culture, diversity and contributions of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Rhode Island. The celebration is organized by Rhode Island Pride, which advocates for equal rights and opportunities for LGBT individuals. This was the ninth consecutive year that Spectrum, Lifespan's LGBT Employee Resource Group, has participated in the event. Organizers included Laurie Sawyer, Judy Kaye, Dianne Pickett and Janis Furlong.

On Saturday afternoon, hundreds of booths, run by organizations and companies that support the LGBT community, lined South Water Street. About 25 Lifespan employees, assisted by their families, provided information to the public.

The Immunology Clinic of The Miriam Hospital provided information about health and HIV prevention, and four employees of Lifespan's Community Health Services provided free body fat analysis/body mass index assessments. In addi- ▶▶



Lifespan promoted sun safety, via a "spin the wheel" game, at PrideFest.

▶▶ tion, a "spin the wheel" game was offered, testing participants' knowledge of sun-safety; as prizes, players



A Lifespan volunteer administers a body fat analysis at PrideFest.

received heart-shaped packets of flower seeds, printed with "Planting the Seeds of LGBT Health Equality." Stroke assessment was provided by Caryn Amadee, from the Rhode Island Hospital Stroke Center.

On Saturday evening, members of Spectrum, as well as friends and family members, gathered at 7 PM on Fountain Street to prepare for the nighttime parade. Marching along a half-mile route through downtown,

behind a Lifespan banner, the contingent of approximately 30 individuals carried signs for Lifespan's hospitals and was frequently greeted with cheers from viewers who lined the streets.

The Lifespan contingent was competing in the category of "best walking group," and included several individuals who — even though



Volunteers from the Immunology Clinic of The Miriam Hospital passed out information about preventing HIV infection.



Preparing for the PrideFest parade.

they could not walk — rode in wheelchairs. One of the wheelchair riders was Tom Frenze, decked out in a wedding dress, in celebration of the recent passage of marriage equality legislation in Rhode Island.

Laurie Sawyer, chair of Spectrum, said, "It's been weeks of work, supported by Brandon Melton [senior vice president, Human Services] that have led up to this, and we've got a wonderfully diverse group of all ages here tonight."

The group turned out to be even more diverse than Laurie had anticipated. Cyndie Wilmot, chief human resources officer, said, "I saw a gentleman standing at the assigned Lifespan station for the beginning of the parade, and asked him if he was part of the Lifespan Group. He said that he was from the ▶▶



Brandon Melton, senior vice president, Lifespan Human Resources, pushes Tom Frenze's wheelchair at the PrideFest parade.



Lifespan's marching contingent in the PrideFest parade.



- ▶▶ Middle East, and was in town for an educational conference, and asked what the parade was for. I explained that Pride is an annual event but that this year we were also celebrating passage of legislation that allows same sex couples to marry. I told him about Lifespan and our hospitals, and asked if he would like to join our marching group. He didn't hesitate — he said that he thought that it would be fun. He was amazed at the number of people who cheered for Lifespan, and thanked me over and over, saying that he really enjoyed the experience!" ■

Diverse Matters

As we head into what is starting out as a hot summer, this issue covers some hot topics at Lifespan.

- ▶ Spectrum, our LGBT employee resource group, celebrated its ninth year of participation in the annual PrideFest events. This year was cause for major celebration, due to the recently enacted Rhode Island marriage equality legislation, and its ramifications for Lifespan employees and patients.

- ▶ Lifespan is vigilant about ensuring that all of our patients are treated with sensitivity to their unique needs, including religious beliefs. In this issue, we highlight our services that take into account Jehovah's Witnesses' need for alternatives to blood transfusion. Read more on page 4.

- ▶ Lifespan's Community Health Services is helping to keep Rhode Islanders well. See pages 5 and 6 to learn about some of the programs offered to the public.

Stay cool, and happy reading! ■

*Gertrude F. Jones
Vice President
Community Relations*



Jehovah's Witnesses and Patient Care at Lifespan

It is generally known that Jehovah's Witnesses do not accept blood transfusions. It may not be as well known what Lifespan hospitals do to accommodate the religious beliefs of patients who are Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses started piloting hospital liaison committees (HLCs) across the country in 1980, and Providence was chosen as one of the first eight sites. HLCs educate providers about how to ensure quality medical care within the religious parameters of Jehovah's Witnesses. They also work with patients and families to help them make informed decisions about religiously permitted treatment options.

Rhode Island Hospital has a strong relationship with the local HLC, which is voluntarily staffed by seven Jehovah's Witnesses ministers. The HLC maintains a list of doctors who have indicated that they will treat Jehovah's Witnesses without administering blood transfusions; there are at least 100 individuals on the Rhode Island list. Doctors both on and off the list can access medical consultants who have expertise in handling a specific medical pro-

cedure without using transfusions. Thus, patients and their healthcare providers have ample resources for navigating the medical and spiritual needs of such a patient.

Some members of the public have the misperception that Jehovah's Witnesses are "willing to let their children die," rather than receive a blood transfusion. Parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses have been subject to accusations of neglect. Today there is more awareness and understanding of the issue, and there is no question that Jehovah's Witnesses want the best medical treatment possible for their children.

The HLC in Rhode Island has a good working relationship with the State's Department of Children, Youth and Families. If, in an extreme case, a doctor insists that a child must receive a blood transfusion, and requests a court order, the judge's decision would be honored.

Because human blood is difficult to match with a patient (compatibility, possibility of rejection), has a limited shelf life, can become contaminated and is costly (one pint costs hundreds of dollars), the U.S. Department of Defense has invested

Many patients who are not Jehovah's Witnesses opt for transfusion-free medical care because this approach is associated with improved outcomes and faster recovery times.

— *Kevin Wright*
program manager
of RIH's department of
transfusion-free medicine

in developing alternatives to human blood that can be administered to save lives. There are also strategies to reduce or avert the need for blood transfusion. For example, doctors can utilize a recombinant form of erythropoietin, which is a naturally occurring hormone that stimulates red blood cell production.

RIH has its own department of transfusion-free medicine and surgery. Program Manager Kevin Wright says, "With an increasingly informed public, many patients who are not Jehovah's Witnesses opt for transfusion-free medical care because evidence has shown that this approach is associated with improved outcomes and faster recovery times." Insurance companies are on board, as well, because transfusion-free procedures can result in shorter hospital stays. It is worth noting that no blood-related death has occurred in Rhode Island in the past 10 years.

To learn more about transfusion-free medicine and surgery at Rhode Island Hospital, call Kevin Wright at 401-440-4550 or send an e-mail to transfreemed@lifespan.org. ■

Community Health Services in the Schools

On June 7, Lifespan Community Health Services (CHS) participated in a health fair at Northern Lincoln Elementary School in Manville. The school serves many lower-income families who may not otherwise have resources to learn valuable health information.

Lifespan underwrote the cost of providing MEGA Heart — an inflatable model of a heart that was walked through by about 500 students, parents and teachers, who learned about the circulatory system and associated diseases. After exiting the model, students were treated to a puppet presentation about healthy eating. Marianne Stepanian, cardiac project coordinator for CHS, taught “hands only”



Students enjoyed learning about heart health by exploring a giant inflatable model.



Learning “hands only” CPR.

CPR to 120 students and parents, and seven CPR Anytime Kits were distributed to families.

On June 8, Rhode Island Hospital and CHS worked together to host a safety fair, in honor of RIH's 150th anniversary, at the Carl G. Lauro Elementary School on the west side of Providence. The school serves approximately 900 students in grades K-5; it is the largest elementary school in Rhode Island.

Many Lifespan departments, from Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro

Children's Hospital, The Miriam Hospital and Bradley Hospital participated in the event. Departments included the Injury Prevention Center, Working Healthy, RIH Epidemiology & Infection Control, Draw-A-Breath Asthma Program, LifePACT Critical Care Transport, RI Burn Center at RIH, RIH Pharmacy, RIH Nutrition, RIH Emergency Preparedness and TMH Cardiac Fitness Center. Over 300 students, parents and family members attended the event and learned about measures that they



can take to ensure that their families stay safe.

Many safety topics were covered, such as medication safety and emergency preparedness in the home, sun safety, burn protection and hand hygiene. The LifePACT Critical Care Transport Team provided tours of an ambulance and taught hands-only CPR. The Injury Prevention Center provided children's car-seat inspections, and found cars that had inadequate or improperly installed seats. They provided a car seat to families that needed one.

The event reminded everyone of Lifespan's commitment to the well-being of the community, and the employees' willingness to give back to the community. ■

CHS Provides TDAP Immunization

On June 1 and 2, Lifespan's Community Health Services participated in the Rhode Island Mission of Mercy (RIMOM) Free Dental Clinic, at Community College of Rhode



Island, in Lincoln, to provide free tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (TDAP) immunization to those who cannot afford care. Patients received a health and dental evaluation, and were provided treatment on a first-come, first-served basis.

Over 360 dental and medical professional volunteers, together with over 225 community volunteers, donated their time, talent and clinical expertise to provide 929 patients with 3,845 dental procedures valued at over \$525,000. Community Health Services provided over 340 TDAP immunizations. ■

CHS Sponsors Defibrillator Program

According to the American Heart Association, 89 percent of people who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest die because they don't receive immediate CPR. Early use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) is considered to be one of the most critical links in the chain of survival for a victim of sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are lightweight, sturdy and easy to use.

Lifespan Community Health Services and Community Training

Center has received 50 AED devices, and is coordinating a free program to distribute them and to provide life-saving education to municipalities and organizations that host large numbers of citizens.

To learn if your city, town or organization is eligible to receive an AED and training, please contact Marianne Stepanian, RN, cardiac project coordinator for Lifespan Community Health Services, at MStepanian@lifespan.org. ■

Lifespan Sponsors RIYP Meeting

Lifespan sponsored the monthly general meeting of Rhode Island Young Professionals (RIYP) on May 2. Brandon Melton, senior vice president of Human Resources, made welcoming remarks. Judy Kaye, diversity/EEO coordinator, talked about careers at Lifespan, and the ways that the two organizations could support each other's missions.

Lifespan has been a supporter of RIYP for many years, and has provided professional development programs for members of the organization. Established in 2002, RIYP is an auxiliary of the Urban League of Rhode Island, and one of nearly 50 active National Urban League Young Professional chapters in cities throughout the United States.

RIYP provides members with networking activities, workshops and resources that foster personal

and professional development, while developing and implementing services, programs and projects to empower and enrich Rhode Island's communities. According to Ms. Kaye, "We hope to develop a more strategic recruiting relationship with RIYP. Their members are predominantly people of color with education and experience in a wide variety of professional fields. They have family, friends, co-workers, classmates and other contacts who could also be a source of talent for Lifespan."

As a RIYP sponsor, Lifespan is allotted nine free memberships in the organization. There are still a few memberships available; if you are a Lifespan employee and would like to become involved with RIYP, contact Gertrude F. Jones at gjones@lifespan.org. For more info about RIYP, go to riyp.org. ■

Free Skin Cancer Screenings Offered

Lifespan Community Health Services is collaborating with several organizations to provide free skin cancer screenings this summer. Consultation and referral will be provided by the Comprehensive Cancer Center

of Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital, and University Dermatology.

For specific dates and times, see Calendar of Events on page 8. ■

Lifespan Supports Eleventh Annual Sister Hat Tea

In 1981, representatives from 14 states and the District of Columbia founded the National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW). They responded to the New York coalition's call to develop a leadership forum for professional black women from the public and private sectors.

Today, the national movement has garnered more than 6,000 members, with 60 chapters in 25 states and the District of Columbia. The Rhode Island Chapter was founded in 2001 by 25 dedicated women, and is a working volunteer organization. Members are dedicated to advocating for the education of young black women through leadership and community.

On June 9, the Rhode Island Chapter held its Eleventh Annual Sister Hat Tea at the Providence Convention Center. Gertrude F. Jones, vice president, Community Relations, Lifespan, delivered the welcome and closing remarks as president of the Rhode Island Chapter.

The Sister Hat Tea is a celebration and recognition of community leaders who have made significant contributions to our state and local

communities. The proceeds of the event go to support varied programming which includes...

► The LEAD Mentoring Program, a highly successful after-school leadership development program for black females that provides guidance, mentoring, educational and cultural opportunities to girls in grades six through 12.

► Conferences and workshops, such as the recent financial literacy conference held in March at the Community College of Rhode Island. As a result of the conference, 51 women will participate in additional

financial literacy trainings through a partnership with the Rhode Island Treasurer's office.

► Scholarship dinners, political candidate forums, art exhibitions and many other noteworthy programs and events.

To learn more about the Rhode Island Chapter of NCBW, go to ncbwri.org. ■



Gertrude F. Jones, vice president, Community Relations, Lifespan, delivers welcoming remarks at the Eleventh Annual Sister Hat Tea.



Eleanor Borge, above, left, of Lifespan's Benefits Department, was among the attendees.



TAAC Conference August 2-4

The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) has announced that its next National Open Dialogue will be held in Providence, August 2-4. TAAC was founded in 1985 "to convene artists and cultural workers reflective of our pluralistic society, and to inform and advocate for democratic cultural policies."

Open Dialogue is a biennial symposium of local, regional and national leaders that will focus on significant and pivotal people, places and policies impacting cultural democracy in America. Through panels, keynote presentations, interviews, performances, interactive sessions, community experiences and animated conversations, the conference will explore TAAC's four foundational pillars: equal participation in policymaking, equitable funding for all cultural institutions, elevation in multicultural leadership, and essential networks that impact cultural policy.

For more info, contact Simone Spruce-Torres at 401-222-1794, or write to ritaaceventcoordinator@gmail.com or visit the TAAC website at taac.com. ■

Calendar of Events

► through December 31
Tues. - Fri., 1 pm - 4 pm
Sat., 10 am - 4 pm
Sing for Your Supper: Black Song and Food in Rhode Island
John Brown House Museum
52 Power Street, Providence
Rhode Island's Black Heritage Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society have partnered to bring stories of the state's African American community to the John Brown Museum. The inaugural exhibit, "Sing for Your Supper," combines elements from an exhibit



Sissieretta Jones, 1899 poster.

staged at the Culinary Arts Museum in 2011 with a look at the life of Providence's Sissieretta Jones, the first world-renowned black opera singer and diva extraordinaire. Adults, \$10; students and seniors, \$8; children 7 - 17, \$6; children under 7 and RIHS members, free. For more information, go to rihs.org/museums_jbh.html.

► July 27 - 28, 10 am - 5 pm
13th Annual Cultural Survival Bazaar
3852 Main Road, Tiverton
A sensory celebration of the music, food, art and crafts of indigenous groups from around the world. Free admission. For more information, go to bit.ly/1bJfQ8a.

► July 28, noon - 2 pm
Free Skin Cancer Screening
Roger W. Wheeler Beach
100 Sand Hill Cove, Narragansett

► August 9, noon - 2 pm
Free Skin Cancer Screening
Easton's Beach (First Beach)
Memorial Boulevard, Newport

► August 16, noon - 2 pm
Free Skin Cancer Screening
East Matunuck Beach
950 Succotash Road, South Kingstown

► August 16 - 18: Fri., 5 pm - 10 pm;
Sat., noon - 10 pm; Sun., noon - 9 pm
86th Annual Greek Festival
97 Walcott Street, Pawtucket
Traditional Greek foods, music and dancing. For more information, go to <http://assumptionri.org/GreekFestRI>.



Yarina will perform indigenous music and dances from Ecuador at the 13th Annual Cultural Survival Bazaar, Tiverton, July 27 and 28.

► August 18, 1:30 pm - 4 pm
How to Tie a Bow Tie & Other Useful Tips for Young Black Men
101 Dyer Street, Providence
Join Richard Rose, Esq., and other mentors, as they teach skills to get ahead in life, from tying a bow tie to shaking hands. Receive a bow tie and see the history of men's fashion in the RISD exhibit "Artist, Rebel, Dandy." Free. Enrollment is limited. To register, call 401-421-0606 or write to rickman@rickmangroup.com.

► August 18, 10 am
Puerto Rican Cultural Festival & Parade
Begins on Broad Street, Providence, and ends at Roger Williams Park, site of the all-day festival.

► August 23, noon - 2 pm
Free Skin Cancer Screening
Atlantic Beach (Second Beach)
Memorial Boulevard, Middletown ■