

# Traditions



*A publication for  
friends and supporters of  
The Miriam Hospital  
Winter 2012/2013*

## Local Healing: Breathing Easier

One day in March 2009, Sylvester Gookin was rushed to The Miriam Hospital, struggling to breathe. The 72-year-old was admitted and wound up in our intensive care unit. He was suffering from chronic obstructive

Stabilizing Sylvester was difficult. At 400 pounds, his body was under tremendous strain, and for months, his prognosis was touch-and-go. Says Jane, Sylvester's wife, *"Anytime you have heart failure, especially for someone carrying so much extra weight, it's frightening. I didn't think I'd be able to bring Sylvester home again."*

Fortunately for the Gookins, Sylvester was in precisely the right place for his care, with a pulmonologist, Dr. Peter Karczmar, who never gave up and an intensive care team as nimble as they are talented.

Once stabilized, Sylvester had a tracheotomy tube inserted in his windpipe to help him breathe. He also needed a feeding tube as his primary source of nourishment.

As he recovered, Sylvester worked with an occupational therapist and used a special chair to leave his bed and rebuild his strength through a range of exercises that included moving about with a walker. The effects of his illness, combined with exercise and a change of diet, allowed Sylvester to lose more than 120 pounds, which was



*Sylvester and Jane Gookin*

pulmonary disease, as well as sleep apnea, which had yet to be diagnosed when he arrived. He also needed treatment for acute right-sided heart failure.

No one could have predicted that Sylvester's odyssey would span months in our care, calling on the expertise of squadrons of specialists.

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**The Miriam Hospital**  
*A Lifespan Partner*

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critical to his recovery. *"Everyone who worked with me was absolutely amazing. I couldn't be happier with how I was treated,"* he says.

After he was discharged from the hospital, Sylvester spent two months at an off-site pulmonary rehab program. Once he returned home, Karczmar enrolled Sylvester in a sleep study to monitor his blood gases and oxygen levels. Karczmar also developed exercises to strengthen Sylvester's breathing muscles.

Because his case was so complex, Sylvester returned to The Miriam in early 2010 to address a breathing setback. After a brief stay, he is now able to breathe and sleep better than he has in years—no longer needing an oxygen machine. *"I feel like I have a new life, and it's all because I had an incredible team in my court,"* Sylvester says. *"There's no doubt that Dr. Karczmar and The Miriam Hospital saved my life."*

Lung disease is a major cause of hospitalization at The Miriam. Many of the chronic issues our patients face—bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and sleep disorders—require long-term education programs for them to manage their conditions. *"We see people in very difficult circumstances and can help them make lifestyle changes that not only improve their outlook but also their life,"* says Dr. Jerry Carino, director of The Miriam's intensive care unit.

The Miriam's pulmonary physicians specialize in inpatient consultation services, outpatient clinics, rehabilitation and sleep disorder medicine. Shortness of breath is typically the main symptom on arrival and can be caused by a number of medical disorders. *"Once we have confirmed a diagnosis, we're able to create a plan that provides the best care available, which I'm proud to say is exactly what we have here at our hospital,"* says Karczmar, recently named The Charles C.J. Carpenter, MD, Outstanding Physician of the Year at The Miriam.

## Rena R. Wing, PhD, Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

Rena R. Wing, PhD, director of the Weight Control & Diabetes Research Center at The Miriam Hospital, has received a prestigious award that represents both her accomplishments and the respect of her peers. In August, Wing, a professor of psychiatry and human behavior at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Psychological Association for her pioneering work in obesity research.

*"Rena Wing is a true pioneer in the field of obesity and diabetes research, and her work has literally changed how diet, exercise and other lifestyle interventions are viewed by the medical community, particularly as they relate to weight control and diabetes,"* says Arthur Sampson, president of The Miriam Hospital. *"We congratulate her on this well-deserved honor and applaud her continued passion and dedication to reducing the incidence and impact of obesity and related diseases in our country."*

Wing's work has impacted thousands of individuals across the country who are battling obesity and coping with related health conditions. Her research has the potential to help countless individuals gain control of and manage their weight and their health for life.

*"The research I conduct is extremely fulfilling because we are not only advancing the treatment of obesity, but also helping individuals with their own weight control problems. I could not have done the research that earned this award without the contribution of my senior colleagues and, more importantly, the exciting ideas and skills of the many junior faculty I have worked with over the years."*



## Global Reach: Trading Places

Seven thousand miles away from The Miriam Hospital, medical trainees in the country of Kenya are benefiting from a partnership formed in 2001 by The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University that includes physicians from The Miriam.

The program, originally called AMPATH (the Academic Model for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS) provides an unprecedented opportunity for medical students in Kenya to advance their health care skills while building strong collaborative relationships between American and Kenyan physicians.

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*“It was shocking to see so many sick patients in such deplorable conditions—sometimes two and three to a hospital bed.”*

Dr. James Myers

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In the past decade, the program has expanded beyond HIV/AIDS treatment to become a comprehensive care program that focuses on a broad spectrum of internal medicine, helping to reverse the negative health effects of poverty. One of the main focuses is tuberculosis, a leading cause of death in people with HIV infection. It primarily affects the lungs. TB is a disease of poverty affecting mainly young adults.

The driving forces behind the program were Dr. James Myers and Dr. Charles Sherman, two of its co-founders. Both doctors are pulmonologists who practice at The Miriam. The current director of the Kenyan project is Dr. E. Jane Carter, also a pulmonologist by training. Carter is the director of the new RISE TB clinic at The Miriam.

A major component the program offers is exchange opportunities; welcoming students from Kenya’s Moi University School of Medicine to learn and share at The Miriam while providing Brown medical students a chance to learn and share in Kenya. The learning extends far beyond textbooks and the science of medicine.

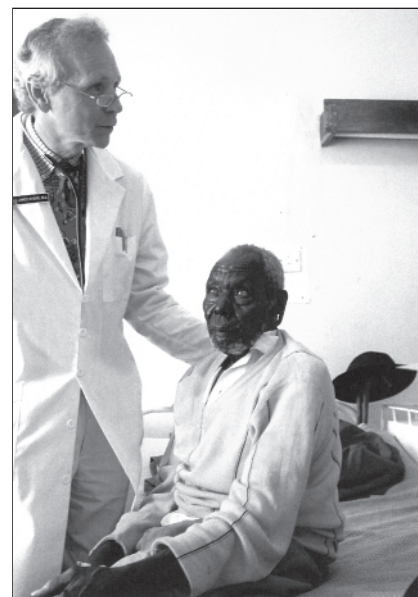
*“We welcome up to six students each year, and always receive those at the top of their class. The Kenyan students become integral members of our teams to follow up with patients, present cases, accompany the daily rounds and work with electronic health records, which is an area very new to them,” says Myers. “Everyone from both teams feels enriched by the experience, and our Kenyan counterparts arrive back home with practical expertise they can put to use almost immediately. It’s a spectacular cross-cultural experience.”*

Teaching and providing opportunity and access where it might not otherwise exist are important parts of what The Miriam is all about. Along with welcoming the exchange students, the hospital provides them housing and sponsors fundraising events that help the program grow.

The first time Myers traveled to Kenya was in 1998. *“It was shocking to see so many sick patients in such deplorable conditions—sometimes two and three to a hospital bed. It is definitely humbling. It also gives you a better perspective of our lives here.”*

Most importantly, the program is having a profound impact. Renamed The Academic Model for the Pathway to Health, the program has enrolled 100,000 patients with HIV/AIDS and screened more than 65,000 people for contagious tuberculosis. The Kenyan students have gone on to treat more than 150,000 patients in 60 clinics across Kenya. There has been a drop in the percentage of the population living with AIDS in Kenya, and diabetes care there has been revolutionized with the use of cell phone monitoring and intervention. No longer are diabetes, HIV and tuberculosis automatic diagnoses of death; instead they are, thankfully, now diseases for which care is available and managed.

*Kenyan doctors at The Miriam*



*Dr. James Myers with Kenyan patient*





## Would You Like to Honor a Caring Heart?

Have you or a loved one received exceptional care from the expert professionals at The Miriam? If so, and you wish to share your experience, please take a moment to express your gratitude by nominating a caregiver to receive The Miriam Caring Hearts honor.

The Caring Hearts program was created to recognize and celebrate the skills, dedication and compassion of caregivers at The Miriam. This is the perfect opportunity to express your appreciation for someone special—a nurse, physician, team or anyone at our hospital—who has gone “above and beyond” for you or your loved one.

Here are some kind words that grateful patients have shared with us about their outstanding caregivers:

*“Dr. John Tarro, Jr., was a very capable communicator, and his talented hand resulted in a very positive surgical result even though the procedure evolved to be more complicated than originally thought. His straightforward but very human contact with me post-surgery was more than I ever hoped to expect. He thoughtfully and efficiently responded to my list of questions. He truly exceeds the definition of ‘caring professional.’”*

*“Dr. Douglas Burt is the most wonderful, compassionate and caring physician that both my husband and I are fortunate to have. His skills as a cardiologist are superb. He has saved my life.”*

If you would like to recognize someone on our staff or make a special gift in their honor, please contact Nicole Purcell at 401-792-2152 or [npurcell@lifespan.org](mailto:npurcell@lifespan.org). We are grateful for your support of The Miriam Hospital.



# SAVE THE DATE MAY 4, 2013

THE MIRIAM HOSPITAL



Gala  
& Auction

Ride the Wave to the Beach Party of the Year!

Join event chairs  
**Mitzi and Bob Berkelhammer**

**Saturday, May 4, 2013 • 6:30 p.m.**  
**The Rhode Island Convention Center**  
**Providence, Rhode Island**

For more information please  
call 401-793-2152  
or visit [MiriamHospital.org](http://MiriamHospital.org).