

Traditions

Winter 2016



The Miriam Hospital
Lifespan. Delivering health with care.

A publication for friends and supporters of The Miriam Hospital

Cancer Survivors Day Brings Patients, Families and Caregivers Together in Celebration

In celebration of personal triumphs, The Leonard and Adele R. Decof Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at The Miriam Hospital welcomed more than 300 patients and their families to its annual Cancer Survivors Day on October 4. Held at Roger Williams Park Casino and made possible thanks to a generous gift from the Chelo family, the day focused on healthy living and celebrated the strong bonds cancer patients and families form with their caregivers—and vice versa. The day was open to the general public and drew people from across the state. Team members from the Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital and Newport Hospital Comprehensive Cancer Center sites also took part in the celebration.

"To many people, a cancer diagnosis feels like the beginning of the end, but we're here to tell them they can live their life—and live it well—beyond treatment," says Kathy Higginbotham, LICSW, a clinical social worker at The Miriam and co-chair of the event.

But adjusting to life as a cancer survivor can sometimes be challenging—and a little bit frightening.

"We have been a safety net for our patients, so when their routine changes, and they're no longer seeing their caregivers as regularly, it can be a hard transition," adds Kathy.

"This day reinforces that patients are supported by their treatment teams—even after their active treatment has ended. We want them to know we'll always be there for them."

Throughout the day, attendees took part in yoga, exercise instruction, and healthy living and nutrition workshops. Patients were also invited to add their handprints to beautiful painted murals which will hang in the Comprehensive Cancer Centers to serve as a lasting reminder of the journey each patient traveled.

Entertainment for the day was provided by the Brown Jabberwocks—Brown's oldest a cappella group—and a local band whose singer is a Hasbro Children's Hospital patient.

The Miriam extends its appreciation to Carrie Bridges Feliz, MPH, Director of Community Health Services for co-chairing Cancer Survivors Day, and to all the employees who donated their time to make the day possible by serving on the planning committee.

"Our patients live from blood work to blood work, test to test, and scan to scan," says Kathy. "Everyone has different obstacles to overcome, but this day provides hope and unity by recognizing both the emotional and physical impacts of cancer treatment—and that's a very powerful thing."



Dr. Mal Adjusted (left) and Nurse B.B., specially-trained performers with the Big Apple Clown Care Unit who bring joy to patients during hospitalization, joined Cancer Survivors Day to celebrate with patients and their families.

Perspectives From Inside Our

Entering the Emergency Department at The Miriam Hospital today, after an extensive \$8 million, two-year renovation, is like a breath of fresh air—not only for our patients but for our staff as well.

Occupying the same footprint within the hospital as the former Emergency Department, the space has been completely redesigned to improve patient care and efficiency. And as a result, our ED team is having a much improved work experience.

“Today’s ED has a much more soothing and calm environment ... one that is helpful for everyone. In the past, when you’d walk into the ED, you’d see patients on stretchers in the corridors due to lack of space, and you could just feel the stress all around you,” says Gary Bubly, MD, Medical Director of The Miriam’s Department of Emergency Medicine. He adds that walking into the new ED now, makes the two years of drilling and hammering well worth it. “It just feels better being there—as a patient, physician or staff member.”

The renovations included upgrades such as replacing curtains with walls and doors for improved patient privacy

and confidentiality; mounted computer work stations in each treatment room for electronic charting and test ordering; installation of pneumatic tubes to transport specimens to the lab; redesigning and consolidating central workstations so that all providers could work in close proximity to one another; installing a dedicated CT scanner and digital X-ray machine in the ED to save precious seconds which could mean the difference between life and death; improving the triage area and waiting room for overall patient/family experience; and consolidating all of the ED administrative offices (physician and nursing) under the ED’s roof.

“My pain level was through the roof when I arrived and they took such amazing care of me. I was in no rush to leave the ED this time and get to my room.”

—Carol, patient

Ashley McAuslin, who has been a nurse in The Miriam’s ED for eight years and now works as a charge nurse, says the renovations have definitely made an important difference for the nursing staff. “It makes our work lives so much easier. We have everything we need in each room so we don’t have to move carts from place to place. It may seem like a small thing, but if you have everything where you need it,

when you need it, it really helps you do your job better. And that makes it better for our patients.”



New Emergency Department



Carol, a patient who came to our ED by ambulance in late August with a severe hip fracture, had firsthand experience in both the old Emergency Department and the new. “I’ve been there twice now and the first time, about three years ago, I felt like I had no privacy at all and it was very noisy. The nurses and technicians were all very nice, but it just wasn’t a pleasant place to be, especially when you’re frightened and in pain. And it seemed like I was asked the same questions over and over, by every person who came into my little cube. I couldn’t wait to get moved to my room when I was admitted” shared Carol recently. “But this time, I was brought into a beautiful, private, large space where everything was efficiently stored, no one was frantically running around looking for supplies, the charting was done right by my bed and everyone who tended to me had the answers right at their fingertips. My pain level was through the roof when I arrived and they took such amazing care of me. I was in no rush to leave the ED this time and get to my room.”

Denise Brennan, Nursing Director of Emergency Services, notes that patients often comment on the feeling of the new ED. “They say ‘it doesn’t feel like an emergency room; it’s warmer than that.’ They comment on ‘how beautiful it is,’ and how ‘soothing and calming’ it is,” Denise adds. “We

are very fortunate to have such a supportive community and are thankful to all the donors who have helped make this possible.”

Carol added, “I think it’s important to say that renovation or no renovation, the one thing that didn’t change in The Miriam’s ED was how I was treated as a patient. You truly feel like everyone is there just for you, no matter how busy it gets. That’s why The Miriam will always be my hospital.”



In Gratitude

Dear Mr. Arthur J. Sampson.

I am a part-time resident of Providence who, together with my husband Paul, uses the services of The Miriam with some frequency, between June and mid-October. We feel we cannot let another year go by without expressing our gratitude and admiration for the unique standards of care at the hospital.

I'll begin with your nursing staff, which in my experience is without parallel. I'm especially grateful to the wonderfully competent team in the cancer treatment center located in the Fain Building. I would single out for special commendation Kristen Auricchio, an outstandingly caring, meticulous, and intelligent nurse. I can't say enough about what makes this young woman stand out. Her manner, depth of knowledge and style of care has made a great difference in my life.

My husband and I have also experienced the uniformly excellent staff in your emergency room and in the hospital itself. Paul was a patient for five days last year, recovering from pneumonia, and there was not one nurse or staff member that failed to provide him with the highest level of care and comfort.

Finally, we owe an unpayable debt of gratitude to the medical teams that keep us going, headed by Dr. Fred Schiffman and including Dr. Rochelle Strenger and Dr. Jodi Layton.

We congratulate the hospital for the management skills that you must obviously apply to assemble and encourage a staff of such consistent excellence.

Most Sincerely Yours,

Estelle and Paul Berg

SAVE THE DATE • APRIL 16, 2016 • 6 pm

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Cranston, Rhode Island

Age of **AQUARIUS**

THE MIRIAM HOSPITAL GALA & AUCTION

Presenting Sponsors:



Mark your calendar to join gala chairs **Susan and John Froehlich, MD** and travel back in time for a fabulous **Age of Aquarius** celebration to benefit The Miriam Fund for a New Generation and The Cancer Patient Assistance Program. An evening sure to delight all the senses - have a blast while dining on some out-of-sight culinary creations by Russell Morin Fine Catering, bidding on a righteous selection of auction items presented by professional auctioneer Paul Zekos of The Zekos Group and grooving to the hip sounds of World Premier Band. **For more information, please call (401) 793-2014 or visit giving.lifespan.org/TMH-Gala.**