

Special People Create a Special Place of Healing

It takes a lot of special people to make Bradley Hospital the special place of healing it is. Today we celebrate just a few of them—Chris, Marcelle, Tony, and Kayla. Each has been here for many years and has left an indelible mark on hundreds of patients, families, and colleagues.

Like everyone who works at Bradley, they are committed to our mission of *Delivering health with care*, doing the best they possibly can for those caught in the grip of mental illness.



Meet Christine Brown

Chris, as everyone at Bradley calls her, is our family and community liaison program manager. But she doesn't see her position at Bradley as a job; instead, it's a labor of love and the fulfillment of a destiny.

"Bradley advertised for a patient advocate position in the newspaper many, many moons ago," she recalls, "and one of the requirements was that applicants must be the parent or

sibling of a child with special needs. I was the guardian of my brother Michael at the time, who sustained lifelong health complications from a bike accident he had when he was seven—the same age, I learned, that Emma Pendleton Bradley was when she was stricken with encephalitis. Like Michael, Emma had multiple disabilities and battled with seizures and a host of developmental issues. Hearing that history and knowing firsthand the level of care these kids need made me think, 'Wow, this job has my name on it.' So, Bradley has been very meaningful to me right off the bat."

Chris has been in this role for 30 years and has never looked back. She has dedicated her life to connecting patients and families with vital resources and providing them with the tools and information they need to navigate the health care system. In addition to helping with immediate concerns—like securing food, clothing, or housing for those in need—Chris represents Bradley on various advisory boards and facilitates education, support, and advocacy groups that focus on community, care, and mental health issues.

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Meet Marcelle Confident, RN

Marcelle understands that parents often face unbelievable obstacles as they try to do the best for their children.

Marcelle has been at Bradley for 11 years. She is the program nurse in Bradley's Pediatric Partial Hospital Program, a family-based day treatment program for children from infancy through age seven. The main goal of the program is to help kids who are battling serious emotional, behavioral, feeding, sleeping or relationship problems remain safely at home while intensely working on problem solving during the day. One of the many ways Marcelle keeps care plans on track is by talking with families to understand what their life is like outside of Bradley—and if there are major stressors impacting them, to try and help alleviate them. The needs of the children are often sensitive and personal in nature, but Marcelle has a soft touch and a very caring and understanding heart.

Whether it's getting a gas card for a mom or dad so they can afford to keep driving their child to and from the program or packing up an extra leftover lunch or two at the end of the day to make sure there is food on the table for patients at home that night, Marcelle understands that parents often face unbelievable obstacles as they try to do the best for their children. "These families are going through so much—on top of trying to get help for their child," she points out. "If their basic needs aren't being met, it could prevent them from taking part in our program and getting the treatment they need. So, trying to help them is the least I can do."

Meet Anthony DeVargas

Tony has been a security officer at Bradley for 12 years. Among other things, he conducts floor rounds, responds to code alerts, and coordinates parking and shuttle transportation. But what Tony really considers to be his primary duty here isn't listed in his job description. "First and foremost, you have to care," he says. "Coming to Bradley can be stressful for families, and I'm one of the first faces they see when they arrive. So, I try to be as helpful as I can and get them in a better mood."

Tony's upbeat personality endears him to patients and families, and the little things he does every day helps to create an even more welcoming environment for them. He was recently observed sitting in a waiting room reading a children's book to a four-year-old little girl while her mother was meeting with a clinician to discuss an emergency safety evaluation. Any setting under these circumstances would be stressful for both children and parents alike. But as the four-year-old listened to Tony's voice, she visibly began to relax. "I have girls," he says, "and I thought about what my daughters would need in a situation like that. And then I just did it." This small act of kindness made a big difference, and it wasn't an isolated incident. Whether he's wiping snow off a visitor's vehicle, telling a joke, or listening to a parent or patient share a tough story on a tough day, Tony is committed to Bradley and to raising the spirits of those in our care.



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Meet Kayla Montella

Kayla is the supervisor of outpatient services and has been at Bradley for six years. “The doctors and support staff are so kind and compassionate and there is such a strong sense of community and family here,” she explains. But, Kayla adds, there’s something else everyone shares, and that’s the emotional toll of being so deeply invested. “I don’t think we ever fully unplug from our jobs,” Kayla says. “Our patients and families are always in our hearts and minds, and we bring that home with us. I know I frequently have ‘shower moments’ where I’m thinking about a patient who had a bad day or a family who’s going through a difficult time. It can be tough. We all feel that way—we want to help and as a result, we lean on each other for support.”

Like her peers, Kayla is always willing to go above and beyond. She recently helped a long-term patient who was living in a Bradley residence transition to her first-ever apartment. The patient didn’t own a thing to bring to her new home, but thanks to the generosity and coordination skills of Kayla and other staff at Bradley, that wasn’t a problem. Together, the Bradley team dropped off everything and anything they could think of to help a young woman set up her first apartment: pots, pans, bedding, towels . . . even professional clothing to wear on job interviews. “She’s turning 19 soon,” Kayla adds, “and will be coming to Bradley so we can celebrate her birthday together. That makes me so happy.”



Kayla is always willing to go above and beyond.



L-R: Marcelle Confident, RN, Christine Brown, Kayla Montella and Anthony DeVargas



Words of Gratitude

Thank you for the guidance, support, leadership, and education you have given us over the last 18 weeks. This program has been a precious gift to our family and your dedication to us has been a HUGE part of that. Words on paper fall so short in expressing our gratitude to you. You are a wonderful blessing to our family.

— Grateful Mindful Teen patient mother

Your Legacy Could Free the Future

Leave a legacy that will make an important impact on pediatric mental health far into the future. A planned gift to Bradley Hospital will do just that.

With a variety of options from bequests to charitable gift annuities that provide you income while you're alive, planned gifts have an impact that go far beyond today. To learn more about including Bradley Hospital in your estate plans, contact Anne Smith at (401) 432-1451 or asmith18@Lifespan.org.



Free the Future, a publication of the Bradley Hospital Foundation, is published for the friends and supporters of Bradley Hospital. For more information, please contact the Development Office at 401-432-1451.

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