Volunteers and Hospital Management Partner to Enhance Patient Experience at ECH

Mariana Latham, Auxiliary Chair of the Emergency Department and Meena Ramchandani, former ECH Interim Guest Services Manager partnered to create *ED service recovery kits* to be gifted to patients who wait more than 5 hours in the ED.

Since ED visits are usually unexpected, individuals often arrive without toiletries and basic essentials. Kits include hand sanitizer, lip balm, toothpaste as well as a pen, and a pad of paper to record questions for medical staff, all neatly packaged in a clear zippered pouch.

The kit was devised through a collaborative effort at Auxiliary Volunteer Task Force meetings which are held monthly between nursing managers and Auxiliary leaders. Volunteers and staff alike put their heads together to create something useful and innovative.

Volunteers worked with hospital staff to determine when kits are appropriate and what to say to patients when giving a kit. Mariana has been actively training ED senior volunteers on the “script” and circumstances for distributing kits. Hospital staff and volunteers continue to work together to offer the best experience possible. Meena explains, “This kit is a small token of our appreciation for their patience and their choice in healthcare — our goal is to get them a room as soon as possible.”

Meena described Mariana’s efforts in saying, “the more volunteers who go in and ensure patients are well cared for, the more we can improve patient experience.”

This pilot program for the ED is just one of many innovative ways in which ECH staff and Auxiliary volunteers partner to create the very best in service at El Camino Hospital.
Maria has been a volunteer since 2006 and has served in Mother-Baby and CCU, two very different services. Maria moved from Mother-Baby, a service filled with new life and a cause for celebration, to CCU, a service that requires sensitivity and patience for families of loved ones with life threatening illnesses. Being a mom to four boys, her compassionate heart and listening ear are well received in the home as well as at ECH. She shares, “volunteering reminds me to appreciate what I have and the blessings I am given.”

Maria says, “I engage with visitors in the waiting room and judge just how to interact by watching body language – if a visitor is quiet, I respect this and instead offer something to drink or smile just to reassure them that I am there and care.”

Family members often worry, so she will often offer alternatives to sitting and suggest visitors go for a walk, sit in the meditation room adjacent to the Spiritual Care office or perhaps head to the cafeteria or Java Junction for refreshments.

Maria has been Chair of CCU for just over a year, serving as both a leader and liaison between the Auxiliary Board and the membership. In her role, she keeps existing CCU volunteers informed via email of any pending changes to the service or hospital updates and trains new volunteers joining the service.

Life Beyond Volunteering

Maria grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She moved to the Bay Area in 2006 and has two sisters. She earned a BA in Art at a college in Southern Massachusetts and worked as a graphic designer for over nine years for a small college in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Currently, in addition to volunteering at El Camino Hospital, Maria enjoys spending time with her husband and their four boys ranging in age from 13 to 19. In her free time, she enjoys painting landscapes and abstracts on canvas. Maria can also be found working in her vegetable and flower gardens or taking photos of the great outdoors.

I would like to thank Maria for sharing her experiences as a volunteer and her role as Chair of CCU.
HLRC Volunteer, Betsy Carpenter Retires After More Than 20 Years of Service

El Camino Hospital and the Health Library and Resource Center (HLRC) have been very fortunate over the past 20+ years to have had the dedication and expertise of Betsy Carpenter, advance healthcare directive volunteer counselor (AHCD) at El Camino Hospital Mountain View.

Betsy Carpenter has been assisting individuals with advance health care directives for over 21 years as an Auxiliary volunteer for the HLRC. With over 3,900 hours of volunteer service, she has educated and assisted individuals about the importance of documenting end of life decisions and with completing necessary forms for medical records and personal reference. In the event an individual becomes incapacitated, an appointed agent has the legal authority to consent, refuse consent, or withdraw consent to any medical treatment. In addition to her service at ECH, Betsy also spoke frequently to groups and was available by phone for those with immediate questions or concerns.

Betsy will retire soon and has trained Cheryl Bartholemew, former ECH Nurse, to take over her AHCD role. Judy Sack, AHCD Counselor at ECH Los Gatos serves the patients and community in the Los Gatos and surrounding areas. We are very grateful for the dedication that Betsy, Judy and Cheryl offer our patients, community and staff here at El Camino Hospital.

New Program Roams the Halls at the Mountain View Campus

The Auxiliary and Nursing Managements partnered to create a new service for patients at El Camino Hospital. The Amenities Cart was launched last month on nursing units 4A, 4B, and 2C. The cart is funded by the Auxiliary and will include an assortment of amenities and everyday items for patients who may have forgotten things at home or to keep them entertained during their stay. Some items include combs, brushes, note pads, pens and pencils, reading glasses, shower caps, crossword puzzles, and deodorant. Ideas for the cart were conceptualized from recent Auxiliary Volunteer Task Force meetings and carried out by Auxiliary leadership and volunteers from a number of services. Continued on page 4
Auxiliary Contributions to Hospital Keep Brewing

Did you know the Auxiliary has a legacy of contributing to the hospital financially as well as through its volunteer services?

That history includes over 50 years of financial contribution that exceeds $4 million given to El Camino Hospital through annual wish list items. When the new hospital opened, it took a while for the profit margin of the Java Junction to achieve the level where it was possible for the Auxiliary to benefit the hospital once more. This benefit enabled the Auxiliary to gift a shuttle cart to the hospital this year. In the future, we hope our profits will continue this legacy. In addition, some of the profits from the Java Junction are going into the Auxiliary Scholarship Fund to benefit those who seek a college education in a health related profession.

Did you know that as a Starbucks—related enterprise, the Java Junction has most of the common beverages that you would find at your local Starbucks café?

In an effort to remain competitive, it was necessary to recently raise some prices of the beverages we offer at the Java Junction due to the rising cost of coffee and coffee-related supplies. We hope members of the ECH community will continue to patronize the cart. Profits from your contributions will continue to be used to benefit the hospital and local community through the scholarship program.