



**American Hospital
Association®**

NEWS RELEASE

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AHA HONORS FOUR HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON (April 4, 2014) – The American Hospital Association (AHA) will honor four hospital volunteer programs with its Hospital Awards for Volunteer Excellence (HAVE). The AHA HAVE Awards Program is in its 31st year and highlights the extraordinary efforts of volunteers and volunteer programs and the positive impact their contributions have on the patients, hospitals, health systems and communities they serve.

The winners fall into four categories: community service programs; community outreach and/or collaboration programs; fundraising programs; and in-service hospital volunteer programs. Recipients of this year’s prestigious award hail from Wisconsin, Arkansas, Michigan and Maine. Representatives from these winning programs will receive their awards at the HAVE Awards Breakfast on Monday, May 5, during the AHA Annual Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The 2014 HAVE winners are:

Community Service Programs

“Mercy Hospital Pet Peace of Mind Program for Hospice Patients”
Mercy Health System - Janesville, Wisc.

The Mercy Hospice Care Pet Peace of Mind® program supports hospice patients by stabilizing and supporting their relationships with their pets in the midst of coping with a hospice diagnosis,

thereby allowing hospice staff to better manage patients' care. The program helps to reduce the financial burden of residual medical, living and prescription drug expenses that hospice doesn't cover.

The program's focus is to preserve the relationship between the patients and their pets. Volunteer staff provide services that support the patients and ease their concerns, including completing daily care chores (walking dogs, cleaning litter boxes, etc.), providing financial assistance with pet food or medication, assisting with routine veterinary care, boarding or pet sitting if a patient is hospitalized or transferred to an inpatient facility, arranging visits and providing placement for pets after the patient's death.

The Pet Peace of Mind program is a proven resource that offers relief during a difficult period in the patient's life. The program accepts dogs, cats, birds, fish – virtually any legal pet. The program currently has nine volunteers trained to work with the pets. Services and care offered varies based on the needs of hospice patients and their pets. One example is a request from a patient who wanted to give his wife a puppy so she would not be alone after he passed. Another patient was bed-ridden and required support house-breaking a puppy. All efforts help the organization achieve its goal to recognize and actively support the relationship among patients and their pets during the patients' time in hospice. Pet Peace of Mind is a national program developed by Banfield Charitable Trust.

Community Outreach and/or Collaboration

“Operation Sock-It-To-Me”

Northwest Medical Center Bentonville - Bentonville, Ark.

Operation “Sock-It-To-Me” is a sock drive for needy children in Benton County, Ark. The impetus for the program was a first-hand experience of one of the hospital auxiliary members who shared how important something as small as a pair of socks can be to a child. The auxiliary wanted to implement this program to reach beyond the hospital walls and touch the community in a tangible way.

Operation “Sock-It-To-Me” volunteers placed a large baby crib in the hospital cafeteria decorated with red, black and white ribbon, which served as the collection point for all socks. Decorated boxes were placed in work areas throughout the hospital to make it easier for each department to participate. Each week, socks from the boxes were placed in the crib. All the employees and visitors watched as the number of sock donations flourished.

Operation “Sock-It-To-Me” was advertised in the local newspapers and on the radio, prompting two local Arvest Bank branches and the Christian Women’s Club of Bella Vista to also participate and support the campaign. The goal was to collect 1,000 pairs of socks to donate to five local charities. The volunteers exceeded their goal and collected 1,960 pairs of socks. The success of the program is a great tribute to the hospital employees and the communities in Northwest Arkansas, but most of all to the dedication and hard work of all 120 hospital volunteers.

Fundraising Programs

“Women Working Wonders”

Sparrow Hospital - Lansing, Mich.

Women Working Wonders (W3) is a volunteer group dedicated to improving health care services for women in the Mid-Michigan region. The goal of the group is to help Sparrow Hospital become the region’s premier advocate for women’s health by developing the financial resources to provide women the best education and preventive medicine possible. To date, the outcome of its efforts has exceeded \$1 million in funds raised to support women’s health services.

W3 provided a gift of \$350,000 to purchase two pieces of equipment to help in the detection and treatment of breast cancer. The items included a state-of-the-art Sterotactic Breast biopsy machine and a MicroSelection HDR V2.

Through the development of two signature events – the 5K/0K Run/Walk/Revitalize event and Dapper Dads – W3 volunteers have been able to engage local businesses to participate and garner their support, even during tough economic challenges.

For the Dapper Dads fundraising event, the volunteers recruit highly visible local gentlemen to serve as “Dapper Dads.” The Dapper Dad securing the greatest number of \$5 votes is declared the winner; the top thirteen vote getters are awarded their own month in the Dapper Dads Calendar the following year. The event typically generates more than \$100,000 each year.

In-Service Hospital Volunteer Programs

“Brain Injury Voices”

New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland - Portland, Maine

Brain Injury Voices is an innovative volunteer group meeting, held at the New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland (NERH-P), whose mission is threefold – to educate medical professionals about brain injury from the survivor point of view, to advocate for the importance of brain injury rehabilitation services and to support other survivors through peer mentoring.

Brain Injury Voices grew out of the NERH-P brain injury support group in April 2010 as a way for former patients to “pay it forward” and make a difference. Since that time, they have volunteered almost 5,000 hours as educators, advocates and mentors, affecting hundreds of NERH-P patients. All 12 members of Brain Injury Voices team are brain injury survivors who cope daily with the many symptoms of brain injury.

As educators, members of the Brain Injury Voices team give regular “lunch-n-learn” presentations to staff at NERH-P. Each spring, Brain Injury Voices organizes and delivers an evening educational workshop for patients and families focused on strategies for living successfully with brain injury. This proved so successful that it was expanded into a daylong conference.

As advocates, Brain Injury Voices’ members want both state and national policymakers and the general public to recognize that although rehabilitation services like those provided by NERH-P are costly and time intensive, they are crucial for survivors’ recovery process and can change lives. They regularly present to the state Acquired Brain Injury Advisory Council.

As peer mentors, members of Brain Injury Voices meet with both inpatients and outpatients at NERH-P and use their personal experiences as survivors to validate, motivate and inspire. They have a unique and valuable authority: the authority that comes from having “lived it.” Mentors encourage patients to try new strategies and invest in their therapy.

About the American Hospital Association

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which include nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks and other providers of care. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information visit the website at www.aha.org.

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