

PRESBYBULLETIN

PENN PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER

AUGUST 2019

Wharton Student Trades

HOSPITAL GOWN for GRADUATION GOWN

May 8 started off normally for Carlie, a senior at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She'd met with her mentor in Center City to finish a project, but her mind was focused on the future: in two weeks, she'd be a college graduate about to begin her career at a local start-up. The future seemed bright — until everything went dark. Though she can't remember the accident, as Carlie and her friend left Trader Joe's with their lunches, they were struck by an SUV. Her friend fortunately only suffered minor injuries, but Carlie — unconscious on the pavement — was rushed to Penn Presbyterian Medical Center's Trauma Center.

Stabilizing a Swollen Brain

Carlie's visual, verbal, and motor responses indicated she had a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), and a CAT scan quickly confirmed that she was experiencing a bleed on the right side of her brain with swelling and elevated intracranial pressure. To allow her swollen brain to expand, **H. Isaac Chen, MD**, an assistant professor of Neurosurgery, and Neurosurgery resident **Sophie Su, MD**, performed a decompressive hemicraniectomy, removing an index-card-sized portion of Carlie's skull.

For 16 days, she was closely monitored in the neuro intensive care unit. Everyone was hopeful, but there was no way to anticipate whether her brain's wiring had been damaged. Incredibly, within days of coming off the ventilator, she was walking and talking. "I had a really hard time understanding what reality was. I hallucinated an entirely different reason for being there," Carlie said. "But everyone has really funny stories — apparently at one point I started speaking Spanish to my nurses."

"This case really shows the importance having a Level I Trauma Center that runs like a well-oiled machine; everyone knew what needed to be done, communicated with each other, and provided excellent care," Chen said. "This could've been a tragedy, but there were no major complications or obstacles."

Wharton's vice dean, **Lori Rosenkopf**, conferred Carlie's degree while she was in a medically induced coma, so after regaining consciousness, Carlie thanked her via email. A few days later, Rosenkopf arrived for a visit — with a cap, gown, and diploma in hand. "I was so upset that I'd missed graduation, so it was amazing to have that closure," Carlie said.



Small Steps, Both Physical and Emotional

Carlie was transferred to the Penn Medicine Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine (Penn Rehab) on May 24, where she stayed for another two weeks. Every day, her physical and cognitive abilities improved — walking turned into walking while holding a conversation, for example — and **Stephen Hampton, MD**, an assistant professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, noted that the pace of her recovery was remarkable.

"Carlie's care team worked together every step of the way to optimize her outcome — from the first responders who took her to PPMC, to the PPMC team who cared for her and comforted her family, to the neuro-rehabilitation team who helped her regain skills she had lost," Hampton said. "In a short time, Carlie was walking around the unit and asking insightful questions about her recovery. The rate of improvement is often out of our control, but her progress was excellent. She persevered."

Penn Rehab also linked Carlie with the resources she needed to come to terms with her 'new normal.' **Kelli Williams, PhD**, director of Neuropsychology, was vital in this emotional healing process. "She anticipated that it would be a lot to digest, and she was really consistent in checking in with me," Carlie said. "Even since leaving Penn, I've talked to her. She made it clear that she's still here for me if I need to work through my thoughts or emotions. That's been a huge help."

On the Road to Recovery

After Carlie was discharged from Penn Rehab, she returned to the Midwest with her family. While she spends weekends at home in Wisconsin, she and her parents make weekly treks to Chicago to spend eight-hour days in another rehab that specializes in TBIs — days she describes as "interesting but difficult." Though extreme fatigue still poses an issue, she has already noticed improvements in her endurance. Carlie also receives daily organizational and short-term memory tasks. "They'll give me a sentence, then have me alphabetize the words and recite it backwards — which I guarantee would've been difficult before the accident too," she said with a laugh.

Her laughter is incredible given the circumstances, but it underscores her insistence on pulling through this experience without losing herself along the way. With the support of her parents, boyfriend, and care teams in Philadelphia and Chicago, she has made significant strides, and her thoughts have returned to the future.

"This unexpectedly changed my course in life. That has been hard to deal with," Carlie said. "But I'm really excited to move back to Philly, see my friends, start my job, and live independently without people helping me shower or making my meals. All of that is driving me to make it through this adversity, through my recovery, and back to my life."



VANTAGEPOINT

MICHELE VOLPE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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From renovations at Pennsylvania Hospital, to Chester County Hospital's expansion, to the topping off of the Pavilion, innovative building projects are in progress across the health system — and Penn Presbyterian Medical Center is no exception.

PPMC is proud to continue making significant investments that allow us to better support our patients and staff and expand our services. Hopefully, you have had the chance to explore our new Wellness Garden, which was completed earlier this summer and offers a place to relax and recharge. You have likely also noticed that the construction of our new Radiation-Oncology suite is well underway. This state-of-the-art building will include a linear accelerator, joining

our existing infusion services to create a comprehensive, convenient hub for our cancer patients. The second floor will also include four additional operating rooms. We anticipate that the construction will be completed by February 2020, with occupancy soon to follow.

Other changes on the horizon include relocating the observation unit to a pre-fabricated structure, moving the pre/post-cardiac cath unit to the original observation space, then renovating the newly empty space and adding 12 beds. We have also acquired a new location at 4040 Market Street with plans to transfer the outpatient behavioral health unit there by the end of this year.

But this is just the beginning. Throughout the summer, PPMC's campus master

planning group will be identifying short-term opportunities for improvement, working with architects to determine long-term building plans and cost estimates, and considering ways to create patient-centered building adjacencies. Later this month, an interdisciplinary "vision" group will begin reimagining PPMC's campus, sketching out plans to expand our services, and investigating how we can better interface with the community.

Renovation, construction, and expansion take time, but PPMC is actively working to fulfill the needs of today's patients, while anticipating the needs of patients we'll serve in a decade. As our campus continues to evolve, I look forward to sharing additional updates with you. Thank you for your patience and dedication as we make PPMC the best it can be.

REMEMBERING A *Remarkable* VOLUNTEER

Every week day for over a year, **LaGina Rene Bines** made it her mission to create a welcoming and comforting environment at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center. Bines, who passed away earlier this summer, was the smiling face that warmly greeted patients and visitors, and the encouraging team player who started the day by wishing staff a good morning and ended her shift with hugs and high-fives.

“She was one of our best volunteers and in a lot of ways became my assistant,” said **Naimah Cann**, Volunteer Services coordinator. “She was always there to help, always ready to make the day the best it could be, and always the first to sign up for events. All of my volunteers are wonderful, but we’re really feeling this void.”

Born on Christmas, Bines fittingly established herself as “a gift” to PPMC’s volunteer program, and her compassion earned her special recognition during this year’s Volunteer Appreciation Week. In addition to visiting patient rooms with the HeArt Cart, Bines went above and beyond her typical volunteer duties by bringing food to patients in the ED waiting room, designing signs to promote the volunteer program, and planning events. Her unexpected passing came not long after a pilot program that she designed had been approved — “uplifting spirits” and boosting patients’ self-esteem by filing their nails, brushing and braiding their hair, and helping them feel less like a patient and more like themselves.

Her dedication did not go unnoticed by patients, staff, or fellow volunteers — including Isaac, one of the Presby Pooches. While she never had a dog, Bines enthusiastically took on the role of party planner to celebrate Isaac’s birthday and to show appreciation of his



service to the hospital. “It turned out to be one of the best parties that we’ve ever had,” Cann said. “It might sound silly to some that she put in this much effort into a dog’s birthday, but it meant something to her because Isaac was her teammate.” While Bines was unable to see the party come to fruition, her presence was felt in everything that she had lovingly prepared, from the balloons to the birthday card.

Bines was committed to helping others feel seen and supported, whether by being a “beacon of light” for lonely patients at PPMC, providing meals to homeless individuals in her community, or staffing Penn Medicine CAREs outreach events. Her legacy lives on, as her example inspired more than a dozen people from her church, apartment building, and community to sign up as PPMC volunteers.

“I had the opportunity to work with someone who had really dedicated their life to changing others’ lives,” Cann said. “She touched so many hearts and made such an impact on the staff, on our patients, on the community. You meet a lot of wonderful volunteers, but LaGina set the bar really high.”

PPMC HONORED for RAPID STROKE RESPONSE

PPMC is proud to have once again earned the Get with the Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus award from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, as well as “Elite” status on the Target: Stroke Honor Roll.

To qualify for this advanced recognition, PPMC was required to maintain at least 85 percent compliance for at least two years in each of the seven Stroke Achievement Measures, including accelerating response times, offering smoking cessation counseling, providing early antithrombotic therapy, and prescribing statin medications at discharge. At least 75 percent compliance was also necessary for five or more Stroke Quality Measures, and Presby secured a place on the Honor Roll by reducing door-to-needle times.

Led by **Christina Blum, MD**, director of Stroke Services, and **Karrima Owens, MSN, ACNS-BC**, Stroke Program Coordinator, PPMC’s Stroke Team is committed to providing patients with rapid, evidence-based care. Continuously meeting these nationally recognized guidelines underscores the hospital’s dedication to refining processes, developing protocols, and always striving for improved treatment and better patient outcomes. Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death and the top cause of long-term disability in the United States, but while more than 795,000 Americans experience a stroke every year, PPMC is making efforts to strike back.



PPMC Plants Seeds of SELF-CARE & WELLNESS

When PPMC began construction on the Radiation-Oncology building, the Flick Family Serenity Garden was removed to make space, leaving the hospital without a green space that offered an escape from hospital’s hustle and bustle. But Presby’s leaders, including **Alyson Cole**, associate executive director and chief experience officer, quickly developed a plan to reinvest the performance-based funds awarded to the hospital’s behavioral health program back into a space that everyone on campus could enjoy.

Located between the Atwood Café and Scheie, the new Wellness Garden is the beautiful result of a collaborative development process. “This wouldn’t have been possible without our partners at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), who transformed this space into an urban pop-up oasis,” Cole said. The multi-use, all-season garden invites individuals to “sit in quiet contemplation on the Adirondack chairs, engage with others around the fitness loop, or just admire the flowers — living symbols of hope and new beginnings.”

The creation of the garden specifically took into account the needs of the patients in

the Wright-Saunders 4 inpatient substance use program. Designing a tobacco-free recreational environment that replaced the former smoking shelter with lawn games, therapeutic planting beds, and an exercise loop provides additional support to patients in recovery. “Total recovery isn’t just about letting go of things that aren’t good for you,” **Julie Dees, MA, LPC**, director of Behavioral Health Services, explained. “It’s just as much about incorporating new habits and activities that are good for you and contribute to your total wellness. That is what we envisioned this space being for our patients, their families, and our staff.”

For patients and visitors, the space offers a comforting atmosphere that can help them forget about appointments, treatments, and insurance stresses for a while. Staff members can also take a step back and re-energize in the fresh air — and perhaps enjoy a game of Connect Four.

PPMC celebrated the garden’s opening with a week of activities designed to get staff members into the sunshine. Hospital chef **Joe Pontillo** led a healthy

cooking demo, and managers participated in a lunch and learn focused on engaging teams through wellness. Pepe, an adorable Labrador puppy, took a break from his service training at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center to share smiles and snuggles, and a DIY succulent gardening workshop led by PHS taught staff how to bring a bit of the garden inside. Staff also tested out the circuit training loops developed by Good Shepherd Penn Partners therapists **Ali Ladak, Loren Slater, and Betsy Reilly**, in a competitive “Lap-a-Thon.” Staff logged more than 1,400 laps (92 miles), and the top five participants — **Advertus Gizze, CNA, Diana Estriplet, Kristin Ascitutto, RN, Anna Strong, RN, and Kim Calhoun, RN** — brought glory to their departments and were awarded Fitbits.

Be sure to take some time to check out the new green space. It may just become your go-to lunch (or lounge) spot!

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