**Presby Honors Its Longest-Serving Employees**

Penn Presbyterian Medical Center (PPMC) recently recognized four staff members with 40- and 45-year work anniversaries as part of a superhero-themed Employee Recognition Week. Their colleagues and supervisors shared recollections and messages of gratitude for their service.

**Eric Smith, RTR, ARRT**
Radiology Tech

“You brighten our day with your smiling and your humming and all your little songs … The way you interact with patients has taught me a lot about patient care. It’s just been such a pleasure to work with you. You have the best heart of anybody I’ve ever met.”

— Nicole Wright
Radiology Tech

**Barbara Oakes, RN**
Nursing Administrative Coordinator, Patient Progression

“The thing that’s most remarkable about Barb is that she comes to work every day with the same enthusiasm as if it was her first day. She’s always willing to try new workflows or anything that could help improve our patients’ experience here at PPMC. I take that back – the most remarkable thing about Barb is her amazing cakes that she takes the time to make for everybody’s birthday!”

— Susan Chonko, RN, MSN
Clinical Director, Patient Progression

**David Scott**
Respiratory Care Equipment Tech

“I look at you as a ninja with superhero powers who can push a loaded equipment cart, while grabbing a few oxygen tanks behind you, and wheeling a ventilator alongside, all in a single bound. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. We really enjoy having you as a member of our team.”

— Jeanine Blockus, RRT
Clinical Supervisor, Respiratory Care

**Diane Andrews, RN**
Nursing/OR

“Think of all those patients whose lives you’ve changed, all those nurses who you’ve trained and mentored to be half as good as you … all those friends you made here … and mostly, all the surgeons whose lives you made better in your preparation as we came through those OR doors at 7:30 in the morning. You have made me a better surgeon, but as my friend you have also made me a better person, a better son, and a better husband. I love you and hope you last another 20 years while I’m around.”

— Skandan Shanmugan, MD
Associate Professor, Perelman School of Medicine, Section Chief of Colorectal Surgery at PPMC

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The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may have canceled plans for an in-person service anniversary celebration for a second year, but the PPMC Employee Recognition Committee found other ways to honor their colleagues. More than 340 employees with 5-to-45-year service anniversaries were recognized in a superhero-themed week of activities, culminating in a virtual ceremony with remarks by remarks by Dwaine Duckett, senior vice president and chief human resources officer for the University of Pennsylvania Health System. The longest-serving employees also had their favorite meals featured at the Arwood Cafe.

“The virtual and socially distanced activities have allowed us to share more of the celebration with our staff as a whole, instead of one event for the honorees,” said Human Resources Manager Zane Cole, MBA.

Tan’Nette Grandberry, a unit secretary in the Endoscopy unit, has served on the employee recognition committee for five years. Before the pandemic, the committee would spend months planning the annual party, with drinks named for the longest-serving employees or a fun green screen to take photos in front of. She had looked forward to attending this year as a 10-year honoree herself, but was grateful that hospital leaders supported the committee’s creative alternatives.

“There are some institutions that don’t celebrate their people, period, and we know that us trying to do things virtually is appreciated,” Grandberry said.

At this time last year, COVID-19 was at its peak, and we were taking every measure to keep our staff safe from the virus as we waited to receive the first vaccines.

This year, we’re sharpening our focus on another on-the-job safety issue that demands our highest attention: Violence and aggression at work.

We were all shaken by the recent shooting, at another Philadelphia hospital, of a nursing assistant by a coworker. While tragedies of that scale are thankfully rare, across the city, state, and country, hospital staff are experiencing unprecedented levels of physical aggression, verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation.

Throughout the country, health care workers are at an increased risk for abuse compared with other industries. There is an increased risk for abuse compared with other industries. There is a direct relationship between exposure to violence and job burnout.

No health care worker should feel that violence is just part of the job. We are committed to your safety at every level.

At the state level, Governor Wolf signed legislation in 2020 allowing medical professionals to omit their last name from workplace photo identification badges as a protection against harassment. But there’s much more to be done. We need more regulations and consequences for abusive behavior.

I am also collaborating with my colleagues across Pennsylvania to spotlight this issue within the context of workforce development in my capacity as chair of the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania’s (HAP) board of directors.

Within Penn Medicine, prioritising safety in the workplace is one of the elements of our culture that we’ve focused on under Project Vital Advantage, the system-wide initiative to ensure we remain the very best place to work.

Here at PPMC, workplace safety has been and continues to be a priority. In the coming year, we will further our efforts with an advanced violence and aggression taskforce chaired by Clinical Director Lisa Triantos, MSN, RN, CEN, NE-BC, and Suzanne Smith, MED, CPXP, director of Patient Experience, with Chief Nursing Officer/Associate Executive Director James Ballinghoff, MSN, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, and Chief Medical Officer Michael Posencheg, MD serving as executive sponsors. It will build on work done before the pandemic by PPMC’s interdisciplinary security task force, which implemented several new safety policies, including a limit on the number of nighttime visitors per patient and a new visitor control system that tracks who is in the building at night and the duration of their stay.

Our new group will evaluate a host of security enhancements that can be implemented in the near term. These may include changes in how we equip our security guards, more metal detectors, and/or staff duress buttons for all units, among other possibilities. We realize that visible reminders of safety risks such as these may cause some initial discomfort, but we are committed to considering all available options to keep our staff safe.

This is work that needs to be continually embedded in what we do at Presbyterian, and we’re going to do it with all of you. Ensuring the safety of our staff is a top institutional priority.

Penn Medicine

DIFFERENCE MAKERS

SHOWING UP EVERY DAY

Nurses know they can always count on PPMC social worker Larry Wisdom to come to a patient’s bedside or answer a question, even if it’s past his work hours. One evening, Nga Hoang, a patient who was discharged but their clothes had been torn on their way to the hospital and they had no family to ask for spare clothes. When Hoang couldn’t find any, she knew who to call, even though the patient wasn’t one of Wisdom’s.

Wisdom had left for the day and was about 30 minutes away, but he told Hoang without hesitation that he’d return to provide the patient with a pair of sweats from the Case Management Office.

“My passion is supporting people,” Wisdom said. “I knew Nga had other patients, so why not just drive back, take care of the patient, and put the finishing touches on her case?”

Wisdom was one of PPMC employees recognized in this year’s Patient Advocacy Awards.

“I was absolutely amazed at his compassion and selflessness and the ability to continue to show up in his role every day and even beyond his work,” Hoang said.

AT PENN MEDICINE, WE ALL ASPIRE TO BE DIFFERENCE MAKERS WHO REPRESENT THE PENN MEDICINE EXPERIENCE (PMX) IN ACTION.

PMX SETS A CONSISTENT STANDARD ACROSS ALL OF OUR ENTITIES AND WORK LOCATIONS TO MAKE EVERY TOUCHPOINT AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ENDURING CONNECTIONS WITH PATIENTS, FAMILIES, VISITORS AND COLLEAGUES, WHICH IS A FOUNDATIONAL PART OF THE UPHS SUCCESS STORIES PROGRAM.

DO YOU HAVE A DIFFERENCE MAKER ON YOUR TEAM? IF SO, LET US KNOW! EMAIL DAPHNE.SASHIN@PENNMEDICINE.UPENN.EDU.

Penn Medicine

VANTAGE POINT

MICHELE VOLPE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

At the time of this writing, the 3910 building was gutted as the first step in the demolition process to make way for the new parking garage.

"The future is coming," Russell said. "We know there will be some short-term pain, but the long-term prognosis for the organization will be significant."