PENN PRESBYTERIAN MEDICAL CENTER

PRESBY BULLETIN

JULY/AUGUST 2021

West Philly Wheels:
PPMC Trauma Outfits West Philadelphia Youth with Donated Bikes

IN THIS ISSUE

Penn Medicine CAREs
PennMedicine.org/Community

In partnership with Community Relations Manager Laura Lombardo, who runs the Penn Medicine CAREs grant program, Jackson spread the word among Penn Medicine employees, and spent months picking up and transporting bikes. VeloJawn, a local bike shop, provided repairs to all the bikes to ensure they were safe for new recipients to ride.

In addition to a new bike, kids from the West Philadelphia community received a helmet donated by the Pennsylvania Division of the American Trauma Society, and a lock. They also received bike safety training from Philadelphia Police’s Bike Patrol.

After bikes were collected, the 16th Police District worked with community partners — such as schools and churches — to get the word out. Each recipient was chosen based on their height and available bikes, to ensure a perfect fit.

Naomi, 8, received her first bike without training wheels, and a pink helmet. “I’m most excited about the basket and the bell,” she noted, referring to the accessories that adorned her new bike. Her father, Chris, learned about the donation event from their neighbor, a teacher.

David, 10, said he is most excited to ride his new green bike up hills in his neighborhood. His mother, Lowell, first heard about the bike donations from her pastor. “This is great because while I want David to be able to have a bike to ride, he outgrows the bikes I get him so fast I can’t keep up!” she said.

“It’s important for Penn Medicine to not only serve patients, but also our community,” Lombardo said. “We’re proud to support our employees’ passion for giving back to our neighbors, especially after such a difficult past year.”

In addition to bikes, volunteers also collected monetary donations from Penn Medicine staff to pay for locks and repairs. The remaining funds were donated to Neighborhood Bike Works, a local organization dedicated to providing equitable access to bicycling and bike repair through education, recreation, leadership, and career-building opportunities.

This was the first bike donation event by Penn Medicine and the 16th Police District.
PRESBYTERIAN LEADERSHIP
Honor COVID-19 Patients, Staff
WITH Memorial Service

For over a year, staff at Presbyterian have worked tirelessly to treat patients with COVID-19. A great many patients recovered and were able to leave the hospital, but many unfortunately did not. While any loss is difficult to bear, COVID-19 had a tremendous and unusual impact on everyone in the community, including PPMC staff and the families of those who were sick.

PPMC leadership organized a memorial service and candle lighting ceremony in June 2021 to remember the patients who did not survive COVID-19, as well as to honor the staff for their dedication and work through such a challenging time. Bereaved families were mailed invitations to view the service through a secure video link.

“This pandemic placed a burden on everyone and it demanded something from everyone,” said Michele Volpe, FACHE, CEO of PPMC, in opening remarks. “Limiting in-person visitation was devastating to patients, to providers, to families,” she noted, acknowledging how staff stepped up to take the place of patients’ loved ones, making them feel connected and cared for.

Remarks were also given by Michael Posenmeh, MD, chief medical officer at PPMC; Respiratory Therapists Tracey James and Guilbert Eusebio; and Chaplain Josh Edgar. All highlighted the hardship faced by patients, families, and staff, and the unique ways staff comforted patients and did their best to keep patients connected with loved ones.

Compelled by a nurse Becky Aker on a harp, James Ballinghoff, MSN, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, chief nursing officer, invited nurse managers from each unit that treated COVID-19 patients to light a candle in memory of those lost.

A tree has been planted in Penn Presbyterian Park on Powelton Avenue in remembrance of those who died from COVID-19. A plaque will read:

Dedicated in honor to those who have suffered under the burden of COVID-19, to those whose illness exceeded all that medicine could bring to bear, and to those who worked tirelessly to affirm personal connection and provide health and healing throughout the pandemic.

“I join with our entire staff in offering our condolences,” Volpe concluded. “We remember and honor your loved ones.”

A SOURCE OF ANSWERS & CARING ASSISTANCE

A spring night in the Emergency Department took a sudden turn when three gunshot victims were brought in with little notice. Unfortunately, two of the victims were a father and his six-year-old son.

Without thinking, ED Tech and Patient Advocate Amelia Thoroughgood jumped into action, suited up to enter the trauma bay, and made it to his bedside. In the midst of loud voices, sirens, alarms, and surrounded by faces covered in masks, goggles, and gowns, the terrified boy started screaming for his mother.

Thoroughgood took his hand. “Don’t look at them. Look at me! I will be your momma until she can be here with you. I will keep you safe,” she assured him. She stayed with the little boy, holding his hand, and comforting him throughout his time in the trauma bay and escorting him to the OR.

“Being the mother of 7 kids, it didn’t even cross my mind to do anything different in this situation. I can only imagine the fear and worry of that mom, and am glad I could give her some comfort knowing her son was looked out for during the scariest moment of his life,” she said. “This little boy was in the midst of the most terrifying night of his life, and he was amazingly strong. There are always the few cases that pull at your heartstrings more than others, and this little boy, his strength that night and throughout his recovery will continue to pull at mine.”

Jumping into the role of mom is something Thoroughgood does often, said her nurse manager Leighann Mazzone, MSN, RN, CEN. “Amelia is the mother hen of the Emergency Department. This situation truly showed the depth of the love and compassion that she exemplifies daily.” She added, “Amelia’s strong and calming presence was a balm for everyone around her that night, anchoring us while we fought to focus on caring for our injured patients.”

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 SHARE PROGRAM.

PMX MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN PATIENT AND FAMILY EXPERIENCE.

Our Shining STARS

With every loss is a story. Stories of love, support, and healing. A young boy of seven is a hero for his momma. And many others, too. Stories that inspire. Stories that transform.

Every month, PPMC staff members who embody Service, Teamwork, Achievement, and Respect, are named Presby STARS. In addition to earning recognition from their colleagues, these outstanding all-stars also receive a certificate from CEO Michele Volpe and a $100 award.

Patient care associate Jennifer Masters has been a member of the PAC 5 team for a short time, but she has already established herself as a “conscientious, thorough, friendly, and accountable” STAR. When one of her nursing colleagues was struggling with a patient who refused to eat, for example, Masters stepped in to help. The patient had a traumatic brain injury, and his inability to get enough oral nutrition was prolonging his need for a nasogastric tube. With humor, patience, and encouragement, she helped the patient feel comfortable enough to eat his entire meal.

April Dengler, RN, a nurse in the Emergency Department, is also dedicated to ensuring patients feel seen and valued. When a young woman came into the ED with an abscess due to substance use, she initially wasn’t interested in further opioid use disorder treatment. However, Dengler’s compassion ultimately encouraged her to pursue outpatient services and to take subsoxone. When the patient shared her concerns that she had lost her ID and couldn’t fully pay for her medications, Dengler accompanied her to the pharmacy to ensure she got the medications she needed, even paying for an antibiotic out of her own pocket. As her coworker noted, “When the patient left, she was crying and smiling” and “felt more empowered” because of the overwhelming, nonjudgmental support offered by Dengler and the team.

Thank you to all of our STARS for your unwavering commitment and compassion. You are an inspiration to your patients, colleagues, and community!