The theme of “Connections”—our nearly 50 pieces of art were submitted word out about the club. It’s a great way to share their work and get the abilities and thought this would be a coordinators of the event. “We knew so Chris Palazzolo, an Internal Medicine resident, to focus on retelling patient practice,” said Chris Palazzolo, MD, an Internal Medicine resident and one of the coordinators of the event. “We knew so many people [at PAH] who have artistic abilities and thought this would be a great way to share their work and get the word out about the club.” The whole idea behind narrative medicine is to focus on retelling patient stories and processing our experiences through the arts to better our clinical practice,” said Chris Palazzolo, MD, an Internal Medicine resident and one of the coordinators of the event. “We knew so many people [at PAH] who have artistic abilities and thought this would be a great way to share their work and get the word out about the club.”

Among the featured artists was Carmen Patrascu, MD, who received a Daisy Award for her creativity in coordinating a patient’s appointment schedule.

Another way is through efforts that help patients navigate the health system. Our nurse and patient navigators strive to connect patients to resources to guide them through their care on campus. System News includes a feature about oncology nurse navigators’ support services across UPHS, along with special recognition of PAH’s Oncology Nurse Navigator Jennifer Polo, who received a Daisy Award for her creativity in coordinating a patient’s appointment schedule.

In addition, members of the Abramson Cancer Center at PAH, at a Breast Cancer Awareness Garden Pop-Up event, strengthened connections with our community through holding conversations and offering resources on cancer screening services to promote the importance of preventative health. We encourage social connection on an internal level, with Hall-Mercer’s Intensive Case Management team fostering mental health among its team members with monthly wellness activities.

Interactions like these allow us to achieve high-quality care year after year. I thank our employees for their commitment to showing compassion and building trust—making profound connections—not only with our patients but also with each other.
TEAM APPRECIATION
WITH PLANTS AND PAINTING

The Serenity Garden at Hall-Mercer Community Mental Health Center hadn’t been utilized by staff and patients in a long time, observed Yavette Mond, MEC, who serves as an Intensive Case Management supervisor. Staff typically stayed indoors to complete their work and meet with patients, leaving the garden empty. In an effort to transform the space into a more popular spot for the Hall-Mercer community, Mond hosted an activity that not only spruced up the garden but also promoted wellness amongst her team members.

She first introduced the idea by giving sun catchers—small, reflective ornaments to hang outdoors or by a window to capture light and cast an array of colors—to her team, who expressed excitement about enhancing the garden. They were all encouraged to invite a patient who would be interested in participating, using the activity as a way to support their goals.

“One of the things we do to help patients is goal planning—that plants appeal to the five senses to promote an engaging experience in the garden, comprised of leaves with different textures and scents of basil and mint. Since 2021, Bangert has been holding similar information sessions for Behavioral Health’s sensory gardens in the Spruce building.

“My team loved it, and even had lunch there afterwards. They could’ve listened to Dan talk all day,” said Mond. “One patient didn’t want to leave. She really enjoyed just sitting there with the breeze. It was very peaceful for her.”

Mond holds activities like this with her colleagues as part of their last team meeting at the end of every month.

An Evening of Poetry, Percussion, and PREVENTATIVE HEALTH AWARENESS

In recognition of National Cancer Survivor Month in June, Pennsylvania Hospital (PAH) partnered with Penn Medicine Community Relations to host a Breast Cancer Awareness Garden Pop-Up Event, comprised of spoken word poetry, live music, and stories to promote preventative health. Attended by staff, patients, and community members in the PAH Courtyard, the event had musical performances by the Sistahs Laying Down Hands Collective, who encouraged attendees to play instruments with them, provided by the local group. In addition, the event featured a booth to connect attendees to services at the Abramson Cancer Center, such as scheduling breast cancer screenings.

As a featured speaker for the event, Susan Kruse Sullivan, CRNP, MSN, nurse practitioner in Medical Oncology, described her passion for community outreach, particularly raising awareness about screenings among underrepresented groups in medicine. Through these efforts, she has been able to learn more about common obstacles to care, such as access and fear—patients feeling unsure how to navigate the health system or nervous to start treatment.

“The most important part of my development as a nurse practitioner is how much I learn from people in the community. I’ve been involved in events like this for the past 35 years, attending church events and health fairs,” said Sullivan. “It’s meaningful to help break through some of these barriers by providing resources and making people feel more comfortable to seek out care just by having a conversation with them outside of a clinical setting.”