

celebrate **GIVING**

Fall 2020 | Issue 9



A WAVE OF CHANGE

New Mom Transforms Life
with Nurse-Family
Partnership[®]



aligning excellence

A MESSAGE FROM PAULA THOMAS

Greetings, friends!

In a year marked by uncertainty and turmoil, I am more grateful than ever to be anchored among our region's most skilled and compassionate caregivers. Our teams have met the challenge of COVID-19 head-on, creatively adapting their practices, advancing infection prevention measures, and seamlessly transitioning to remote work where possible.

Throughout this time, our teams have exhibited resilience and an unwavering dedication to our patients, clients, and families, as you will read throughout the stories in this issue of *Celebrate Giving*.

As part of UPMC, we have been well-prepared for our role in caring for the community, evidenced in the story of how our UPMC Home Healthcare team is providing skilled nursing care and therapy for COVID-19 patients at home and is proactively educating all patients and families. UPMC has stayed ahead of the curve, ordering personal protective equipment far in advance and providing frequent updates about clinical developments and care protocols.

Our AIDS Intervention Project secured additional funding for both short-term and long-term nutrition needs of their immune-compromised clients, and you will be inspired by the incredible transformation of Nurse-Family Partnership® graduate Katie Labus. Mentored by her encouraging nurse Lynn Watt, Katie turned her life around from someone who struggled with suicidal thoughts and drug addiction to become a loving mother to her young son..

We are also celebrating what is made possible through your generous support of the Home Nursing Agency Foundation. Donations earmarked for Family Hospice are used in part to fund the We Honor Veterans initiative, which recognizes our Family Hospice patients who served our country. This spring you rallied together as a community to help us sell out of our Mercedes Moment tickets in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we could not gather for the event to announce Gary Naugle as our 2020 winner, we applaud the impact that is made possible through your support.

We could not care for our community without you. Thank you for partnering with us to ensure our friends and neighbors can have access to the services and resources they need when it is needed most.

Sincerely,

Paula Thomas
President, UPMC Home Healthcare & Family Hospice

HEADLINES

Congratulations Lynn Watt, 2020 Cameos of Caring Awardee



Congratulations to Lynn Watt, Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) RN of Blair County, for being selected as a 2020 Cameos of Caring® awardee! The annual Cameos of Caring® event in Pittsburgh is sponsored to showcase and recognize nurses who demonstrate superior achievement in their clinical practice and decision-making skills, continue to find reward and pride in their profession, and embody the spirit of nursing.

With 23 years of nursing experience and more than a decade as a Nurse-Family Partnership nurse, Lynn delivers exceptional care for all of her clients, as shared by her supervisor Arlene Wojno in her award nomination. "Lynn's personal qualities of non-judgment, kindness, caring, dedication, warmth, sincerity, sense of humor, enthusiasm, and never-ending belief in a first-time mom's ability to succeed keep her clients engaged. All of those admirable traits combined with Lynn's professionalism, nursing expertise, and experience make her an amazing NFP RN who is making a difference in the lives of these vulnerable families and giving hope to their future."

Lynn's mentorship and support was a driving force for NFP client Katie Labus to turn her life around. Read Katie's powerful story beginning on page 4.

Congratulations Gary Naugle, 2020 Mercedes Moment Winner



Gary Naugle, formerly of Lilly, held ticket #706 and became the 2020 Mercedes Moment winner on May 19.

Mercedes Moment has been the Home Nursing Agency Foundation's signature fundraiser for 18 years. In those nearly two decades, we have never faced a situation like this year, as COVID-19 has impacted our lives in countless ways. During a global pandemic, you - our community supporters - rallied together and allowed us to sell out of 1,000 tickets! Your support raised more than \$80,000 to benefit Central Pennsylvania residents who are served by UPMC Home Healthcare, Family Hospice, and Home Nursing Agency Community Services. Thank you!

UPMC Home Healthcare of Central Pennsylvania Earns 2019 SHPBEST™ "Superior Performer" Patient Satisfaction Award



UPMC Home Healthcare of Central Pennsylvania has been recognized by Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP) as a "Superior Performer" for achieving an overall patient satisfaction score that ranked in the top 20% of all eligible SHP clients for the 2019 calendar year.

The annual SHPBEST™ award program was created to acknowledge home health agencies that consistently provide high quality service to their patients. The 2019 award recipients were determined by reviewing and ranking the overall satisfaction score for more than 3,000 home health providers.

"Our team is highly committed to providing excellent patient care," shares Laurie Karstetter, Vice President, Clinical Operations, UPMC Home Healthcare of Central Pennsylvania. "We focus on continuous performance improvement and strive to ensure that each patient has the best possible outcome. It was an honor to receive this award and know that we are among the best organizations in our field. We will continue to strive to be a leader in home and community-based care."

SUPPORT LOCAL PATIENTS & FAMILIES

You can make a difference for residents of our Central PA region who receive UPMC Home Healthcare, Family Hospice, or other services by making a donation to the Home Nursing Agency Foundation.

Return the enclosed envelope with your donation, or give online at HomeNursingAgency.com. You can also call the Foundation hotline at 1-855-GIVE-HNA to donate by credit card.

For more information about ways you can help, please contact Kim Hesel, Director of Development/Marketing Communications, 814-947-7024 or khesel@homenursingagency.com.

The official registration and financial information of the Home Nursing Agency Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please contact the Home Nursing Agency Foundation at 1-800-992-2554.

giving new life



NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP® HELPS NEW MOM EMBRACE SECOND CHANCE

Living with a drug addiction for 13 years, imprisoned multiple times, and facing a warrant for her arrest, Katie Labus had every intention of taking her life in early 2018.

Then a positive pregnancy test result changed her life forever.

“After I took that test, I knew failure wasn’t an option for me,” Katie says. “I wasn’t living for myself anymore.”

Once she came to this realization, Katie began Subutex treatments to avoid withdrawal and enrolled in Nurse-Family Partnership® with nurse home visitor Lynn Watt as her mentor and greatest cheerleader. Lynn began visiting Katie regularly at her home (one room rented out in a shared house) to support her in having the healthiest pregnancy possible for the son she was carrying.

“It was like a switch flipped in her brain, and she wanted to do everything she could to be a good mom,” Lynn shares. As Katie’s due date drew closer, she was arrested on outstanding charges and braced herself for the outcome she feared most – giving birth in jail and losing her son. With professional letters of reference testifying to the positive changes in her life, her case was dropped.

“It was a divine hand of intervention,” Katie says gratefully. “That’s why I named my son Gabriel. He’s the angel who saved my life.”

After giving birth to Gabriel on August 7, 2018, Katie relied on Lynn to see her through the challenges of being a first-time mom and doing the hard work of creating a new life for herself.

“From day one, I trusted my son in her arms,” Katie says of Lynn. “I never had to worry because she was there. I could reach out to her at any time with questions.” Lynn provided information about mental and physical health, walking alongside Katie through recovery after two surgeries and Gabriel’s hospitalization with a respiratory virus. Throughout the ups and downs of Katie’s pregnancy and Gabriel’s first two years of life, Lynn was there to educate and encourage. Part of that journey was finding different ways to cope with stress, as drugs had been her escape.

“Lynn stayed calm, cool, and collected. She was a center for me. She saw us grow,” Katie says. “I’ve never felt judged by her. No matter what story I told her about my life or my past, she’s always accepted me for where I am at now, and that meant so much to me.”

Being part of Katie’s growth was more than just a success story for Lynn. She found herself in awe of this young woman who was charting a new path with one positive change at a time – going to church, eating healthier, exercising, getting certified as a Recovery Specialist, doing things for others, and “one countless thing after another.”

“I feel so humbled and inspired by the lessons she taught me,” Lynn says. “She has perseverance and a willingness

to change to make a better life for herself and her son. That’s why I call her a rock star.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person visits, Lynn remained in contact with Katie through Facetime, checking on Gabriel’s progress and her well-being. On Gabriel’s second birthday, they celebrated his growth as a happy and healthy toddler, as well as Katie’s graduation from Nurse-Family Partnership.

“I have every single piece of paper Lynn ever gave me,” Katie shares. She’ll use these records to fill Gabriel’s baby book with the measurements of his growth, logged by Lynn’s consistent presence. The markers of Katie’s development are not so easily recorded, but they are evident in the changed trajectory of her life. She was reminded of this when she recently applied for a new job and was asked for references.

“Professional references...two years ago I had none,” she reflects. “But now I have people like Lynn behind me.”

For more information about NFP, visit NurseFamilyPartnership.org or call 1-800-315-4358.

Cover: Nurse-Family Partnership nurse Lynn Watt received a warm welcome when she made a socially distanced visit to check on her recent graduate Katie Labus and her son Gabriel. Inside: With COVID-19 limiting in-person visits for Nurse-Family Partnership, nurse Lynn Watt connected with Katie virtually until Katie graduated the program when her son Gabriel turned two.



“After I took that test, I knew failure wasn’t an option for me. I wasn’t living for myself anymore.”

Katie Labus, Nurse-Family Partnership Graduate

giving nutrition

AIDS Intervention Project Introduces Healthy Eating Initiatives

Proper nutrition supports overall health and helps maintain the immune system. According to the National Institute of Health, this is especially important for people with HIV/AIDS, which attacks and destroys the immune system and makes it harder for the body to fight off infections.

Over the past 15 years of working with HIV/AIDS clients, Jerry Rice, Home Nursing Agency AIDS Intervention Project (AIP) Manager, has recognized these clients face various hurdles to following a healthy diet. With a grant from the Family Health Council, Jerry and his team are taking steps to help clients overcome those challenges.

“There seems to be a barrier between theory and practical application,” Jerry says. “Clients may meet with a nutritionist once or twice, but they aren’t learning how to make healthy eating a part of their lives. Some people want to eat healthier but don’t know how to prepare foods or can’t afford it, especially when they are trying to figure out how to pay their rent and other bills.”

Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist Katherine Haar joined the AIP team this year and set her sights on teaching clients through interactive nutrition classes at the AIP office in Altoona. Starting with nutrition basics, she is working through a comprehensive curriculum of food how-to’s: read labels, grocery shop, and prepare healthy foods. At each class, clients will get to sample a healthy recipe and take home the ingredients they need to execute the dish themselves. In time, there will be a working kitchen for clients to practice cooking and gain confidence for what they can do at home.

“So far the clients have been engaged,” Katherine reports. “They shared recipes, what foods they eat, and tips on cooking for one. My goal is to

provide evidence-based information in a way that is accessible to our clients. We want to empower them to improve their nutritional status, which will in turn improve their health outcomes.”

AIP was the first AIDS service provider in the South Central PA region to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic with efforts to limit clients’ risk. Grocery shopping poses a heightened risk for immune-compromised people like those who are HIV positive. Knowing this, Jerry and his team used additional Family Health Council funds to provide more than 6,000 meals and essential dairy products to clients from March to July. Pre-made meals were delivered directly to clients, and dairy products were picked up at the AIP office or delivered to clients’ doorsteps.

“We wanted to make every effort to help our clients stay home and reduce their risk,” Jerry explains. Now that restrictions have lightened, in-person offerings such as support groups have resumed with pre-screening and social distancing protocols in place.

The first of its kind in Pennsylvania, AIP has been serving residents of Bedford, Blair, Fulton, and Huntingdon counties who are HIV positive since 1986. AIP case management staff assess client needs and recommend appropriate care. Financial assistance, support groups, transportation, check-in visits, and supportive phone calls are provided.

For more information about AIDS Intervention Project, visit HomeNursingAgency.com or call 814-944-2982.

Photo: Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist Katherine Harr conducted a realistic run-through with her colleagues before the first nutrition class for AIDS Intervention Project clients, complete with a recipe for sampling and education.



“We want to empower clients to improve their nutritional status, which will in turn improve their health outcomes.”

Katherine Harr, AIDS Intervention Project Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist

giving honor

FAMILY HOSPICE RECOGNIZES VETERANS

Our nation's veterans deserve the highest recognition for their selfless service to our country. Oftentimes though, these special individuals are not fully honored until after they have passed away.

Family Hospice wants to change that pattern and is committed to recognizing patients who have served in any branch of the military. Support of the Home Nursing Agency Foundation allows the purchase of an American flag throw and pin, which are presented to our Family Hospice veterans, along with a special certificate.

Many Family Hospice veterans, like John Snyder, Everett Miller, and Andrew Black (pictured with Family Hospice Social Worker Kelly Cherry). These simple items become treasured keepsakes for loved ones in the years to come.

To learn more about Family Hospice care, please call 1-800-445-6262 or visit FamilyHospicePA.org. You can support the work of the Home Nursing Agency Foundation by returning the enclosed envelope with your donation or making a gift online at HomeNursingAgency.com.





UPMC HOME HEALTHCARE HEROES RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

In March 2020 as most people were hunkered down at home with normal life and work routines suspended and the uncertainty of COVID-19 looming, UPMC Home Healthcare heroes continued their essential work, stepping over the threshold of the unknown to support patients' return to health in their own homes.

The pandemic created new challenges in the logistics of treating patients, especially those positive for COVID-19. UPMC Home Healthcare leaders and staff responded quickly by securing personal protective equipment (PPE) and forming a taskforce of nurses and therapists willing to see COVID-19 patients.

"Accepting risk is part of nursing and what we do every day, but it takes a really special nurse or therapist to volunteer for this," shares Gretchen White, Clinician Fellow. "As a supervisor, I was preparing someone who really wanted to be part of this effort. There are a lot of uncertainties with COVID-19, but UPMC communicated well from leadership down. I felt well-prepared when the time came."

Sr. Professional Staff Nurse Michelle Jaso was one of the heroes to step up and volunteer for the taskforce, serving as the case manager for the region's first COVID-19 home health patient.

"One of the most challenging things was donning the protective gear," Michelle says. "It was early April when we started seeing him, and it was still cold, rainy, and snowy. I had to don (PPE) outside and hope that nothing blew away!"

Armed with extensive and disposable PPE – a gown, multiple pairs of gloves, safety goggles, and an N-95 mask, Michelle had to work creatively to document the patient's information while following the safety protocol of bringing no equipment into the patient's home.

"We still needed to record their vitals, but how do you remember all of that?" she recalls thinking. Some brainstorming led her to write down the vitals on a notepad that could be left in the home and take a photo with her phone, which was double-bagged in Ziploc baggies. She could remove the outermost bag from her

Along with the plan to care for COVID-19 patients, UPMC Home Healthcare staff changed their approach for seeing all patients. This includes screening patients before going out and upon arrival at the home, providing education about COVID-19 prevention, and sanitizing even more than usual.

"We teach patients how to keep themselves safe and protected. We provide high-quality care no matter what."

Michelle Jaso, UPMC Home Healthcare Sr. Professional Staff Nurse

phone when she took off the rest of her PPE outside the patient's home and disposed of everything in a bag she requested that patient place on his porch.

"The whole logistics of it is really challenging," Michelle says. "It's something I've had to be much more thoughtful about because of the high infectious quality." With the logistics ironed out, Michelle was able to focus on caring for her patient, whose COVID-19 diagnosis led to swelling of the brain and needing oxygen.

"He never had been on oxygen before, and when I first saw him, he had really terrible memory because of the brain swelling," Michelle explains. "I saw him several times in person and had several telephone visits, so it was a hybrid approach. By the time of discharge, his family said he was back to his normal baseline."

"Most of our patients are compromised," Michelle explains. "We teach them how to keep themselves safe and protected. We provide high-quality care no matter what."

Embracing "no matter what" – even during a global pandemic, Michelle and her fellow UPMC Home Healthcare heroes remain committed to providing the best care wherever patients call home. To learn more about UPMC Home Healthcare of Central Pennsylvania, call 1-800-445-6262 or visit UPMCHomeHealthCare.com.

giving thanks

RECOGNIZING OUR SUPPORTERS

The generosity of community partners – individuals, businesses, local governments, and organizations – helps to ensure that our mission of providing care and services for those in need will continue. Every dollar matters. Every gift has a story. The following donations of more than \$25 were received January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020.

We apologize for any errors or omissions to this list. Every effort is made to assure that proper information is recorded. Please call the Home Nursing Agency Foundation at 1-855-GIVE-HNA to make us aware of any corrections or changes.

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Colerain Township
Curtin Township
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Ehrenfeld Borough
Freedom Township
Liberty Township
Montgomery Township
Morris Township
Napier Township
North Woodbury Township
Shade Gap Borough
Snyder Township
West Providence Township

BUSINESSES/ ORGANIZATIONS

The Bruno and Lena DeGoli
Family Foundation
Bumgardner and Flasher Oil, Inc.
Centre Foundation
Juniata Valley School District
Manor Hill Charge Methodist Churches
Mill Creek United Methodist Church
Lee Initiatives Health and Wellness
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Mid-Atlantic Community, Inc.
Truist/Frontstream
United Way of Bedford County
United Way of Blair County
United Way of Huntingdon County
United Way of the Laurel Highlands
United Way of Allegheny County
Wise Owl Camping Club



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giving remembrance

LIGHTS OF LOVE ALLOWS YOU TO SHINE A LIGHT FOR OTHERS

As the holidays approach, our thoughts turn to those we love – our family and friends whose presence adds to the joy of the season and those who are gone from our sight but whose lives have left an imprint on our hearts.

Since 2011, the Home Nursing Agency Foundation has presented Lights of Love, a tribute event that invites you to “shine your own special light” in honor or memory of someone dear to you.

Trees will be lit in Altoona and Ebensburg with white lights to represent our Family Hospice program and blue lights to represent Grief Services for children, adults, and families. The trees will be lit November 23rd and will remain lit through January 8th. All proceeds from Lights of Love benefit Family Hospice and Grief Services.

You are invited to write a personal dedication in memory or honor of your loved one. The dedication will be featured on an interactive tree representing the county of your choice. Make your donation and dedication online at HomeNursingAgency.com. With a gift of \$100 or more, you can receive a beveled glass star Lights of Love ornament.

This year, we will be airing a Virtual Tree Lighting Ceremony sponsored by the UPMC Health Plan and UPMC Altoona. Watch our Facebook page for more details.

“To the most wonderful mom and grandma - we miss your love, compassion, kindness, and witty ways every single day! Keep watching over us from above.”

“Although it has been seven years already, we still miss you and think about you every day. We have our Christmas decorations up like you used to put up. I miss you, wish you were here. I know someday I will meet you again. Love, wife & family”

Celebrate Giving is a bi-annual publication of the Home Nursing Agency Foundation.

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UPMC shall accept referrals and provide services to all persons in need in its defined service area regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, creed, limited English proficiency, handicap or disability, ability to pay, ancestry, sexual orientation, diagnosis, infectious disease, or DNR status, if applicable.