New eCards Deliver Speedy Greetings

Sending a get-well card to a patient at Mercy Hospital can now be as easy as a click on your computer. Catholic Health has recently introduced eCards, on-line greeting cards that can be accessed by visiting the Catholic Health website at www.chsbuffalo.org.

“It’s a free and convenient way to deliver quick greetings to loved ones, especially for those who live out of town and can’t get to the hospital for a visit,” said Kathy Guest, executive assistant to Mercy COO Nils Gunnersen and acting Coordinator of Mercy Hospital’s eCard program. “The on-line greeting can usually get to the patient on the same day it is e-mailed, usually within hours.”

As coordinator, Guest receives the greeting request via e-mail from the CHS webmaster. She then prints out the card on a color printer and attaches the accompanying e-mail message. It is then hand delivered to the patient by the nurse manager.

Launched in June 2008, Catholic Health hospitals were the first Buffalo area health providers to offer this free and innovative service to communicate with hospital patients.

Well-wishers can customize the greet-

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LOVE Award Goes to Anne Beecroft

Congratulations go out to Anne Beecroft, R.N., (center holding certificate) Mercy’s 2nd Quarter L.O.V.E. Award winner. In above photo, Anne is surrounded by her co-workers at the Mercy OB/GYN Center. She was nominated for going above and beyond the call of duty when she guided Kevin Mast through a difficult breech delivery over the phone in May. Co-workers who witnessed Anne’s outstanding actions noted how calm and professional she remained throughout the phone call. Mast and his wife Daisy named their baby daughter Channah because it contained the name Ann in it and means “a favored grace from God.”

Minimally Invasive Thoracic Aneurysm Surgery Performed at Mercy Hospital

The first endovascular thoracic aneurysm surgery at Mercy Hospital was recently performed by John Bell-Thomson, M.D., Chairman of Mercy’s Cardiothoracic Surgery Department. Assisting in the surgery was Paul Anain, M.D., a Vascular Surgeon at Sisters of Charity Hospital who first performed the surgical procedure in 2005.

Thanks to leading edge technology, endovascular surgery for thoracic aneurysms provides a minimally-invasive approach to treatment versus the traditional open-chest surgery. The endovascular procedure offers many advantages for the patient including less pain and risk for complications, a shorter hospital stay, and faster recovery.

“The standard procedure is a very invasive operation with the patient experiencing 7 to 8 hours in the operating room, 7 to 8 days in intensive care following the surgery and another 4 to 5 days in recovery at the hospital before returning home,” explained Dr. Bell-Thomson. “Using the endovascular surgical technique, the patient can be discharged from the hospital just two days after the procedure is done.”

A thoracic aortic aneurysm is an abnormal bulge in a weakened wall of the aorta in the chest area. The standard surgical treatment for thoracic aneurysms is open-chest aneurysm repair. However, utilizing the latest technology, surgeons have been able to treat some thoracic aneurysms with a minimally-invasive surgical technique that uses a gortex-lined stent to repair the aneurysm.

“This new procedure exemplifies how modern technology can be applied to a life threatening disease resulting in faster recovery and increased safety for the patient,” Dr. Bell-Thomson said.

The Associate Council Update

The Associate Council continues to meet monthly to discuss ways to improve the workplace environment at Mercy Hospital. It is our goal in Mercy’s Journey to Greatness to become the Workplace Community of Choice in Western New York.

The Smoking Committee announced the results from a recent associate survey that shows the majority of respondents would like the hospital to move to a smoke-free campus. Committee members are carefully reviewing some ideas and necessary actions that could gradually phase in a smoke-free campus.

The Communications Committee was pleased to announce that the new communications kiosk is up and running in the cafeteria.

eCard Greetings

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ing card with their own personalized messages and can choose from eleven professional photos to design their card. Comforting images of puppies and kittens to serene landscapes enhance the eCards to bring smiles and words of encouragement to patients.

After clicking on the eCard tab on the website, senders need to enter the patient’s name and room number (if known), along with their e-mail address. The eCard program operates weekdays, Monday through Friday.

“We are pleased to offer this new service to our patients,” said Janet Overdorf, Ph.D., R.D., Mercy’s Senior Director of Satellites and Hospitality. “...eCards give anyone with access to a computer the opportunity to send a speedy message to one of our Mercy patients with a click of a mouse.”
New Hospice Care Unit to be Named in Memory of Maureen Rago

Maureen. My daughter and son-in-law, who does promotions for Harley Davidson, came up with the idea for the ride. We also coordinated the benefit event for those people who wanted to participate but don’t ride motorcycles.”

Currently a two-bed unit, the Mercy hospice care unit is undergoing renovation and expansion over the next three months. When completed, the specially designed unit will feature four private rooms, a semi-private room and a family room. Each room is enhanced with new furniture and amenities that lend to a warm environment for hospice care.

“We are looking forward to the dedication of the new unit and seeing Maureen’s name inscribed on the entrance door for all to see for years to come,” Pitz said. “It is comforting for us to know that we will be helping families like us who needed to cope with terminal illness and the loss of a loved one.”

The motorcycle ride and benefit event which followed at the Ironworkers Hall Local #6 in West Seneca on September 16, 2007 raised over $28,000. The event committee included Maureen’s husband Frank Rago and her son, Frank Rago III; her daughter Hilary Smith and husband Dan; Kathy and Ed Pitz; Debbie, Ralph and Lauren Pignataro; Lisa Pitz and Rich Croland; and Maureen Myers.

“People just came out in droves to honor her memory,” said Pitz. “It was a complete success with nearly 100 motorcycle riders and more than 400 people attending the benefit.”

Pitz recalled, “We all really wanted to do something to remember Maureen. My daughter and son-in-law, who does promotions for Harley Davidson, came up with the idea for the ride. We also coordinated the benefit event for those people who wanted to participate but don’t ride motorcycles.”

Over 700 Associates Attend Safety Fair

Over 700 associates participated in Mercy Hospital’s Culture of Safety Fair held on August 13th at the hospital. The event was designed to heighten safety efforts and to educate staff on the latest information and techniques. In photo above are nurses Colleen Raczyński, R.N., and Sara Bernard, R.N.

Enjoying a Sunny Day

Mercy hosted a physicians’ luncheon on July 25th at 290 Center Road in West Seneca. Physicians and their staff with offices at the location and nearby vicinity enjoyed the summer gathering. In photo above, Physician Liaison Steve McKee, far left, chats with Dr. Timothy Gabryel, VP of Medical Affairs, and others in attendance, including Cathy Arcara, far right, administrative assistant.

New Hospice Care Unit to be Named in Memory of Maureen Rago

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Vincent Thompson has recently been named the Operations Manager for Environmental Services at Mercy Hospital. He previously served as Manager of Environmental Services at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital under Sodexo Health Care Services. An avid sports fan, Vincent resides in Buffalo with his wife and three children.

Rebecca Bean has been appointed the Cardiac Rehab Supervisor at the Mercy Cardiac Rehab and Wellness Center located at the Mercy Ambulatory Care Center (MACC) in Orchard Park. She has worked in cardiac rehab services for Catholic Health for 17 years, starting at the former OLV Hospital. She holds a B.S. degree in Cardiac Rehabilitation from Ithaca College. The mother of three children, Rebecca and her family reside in West Falls.

Mercy Hospital welcomes Magdalene Tukov, the new Nurse Educator covering the evening and night shifts. Born and raised in Cameroon, West Africa, she earned her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from the University of Buea, Cameroon and her master’s degree in Public Health (epidemiology) from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2006. She also holds a master’s degree in Adult Health Nursing from the University of Buffalo (UB) School of Nursing. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in nursing at UB School of Nursing.

Let’s just say that Brian Butler, R.N., of Mercy’s Open Heart Unit, in above photo, and fellow Mercy Associate Patricia Albrecht, R.N., of the Cardiac Care Unit didn’t have your typical day at the Erie County Fair last August.

These two Mercy fairgoers happened to be at the same time and the same place by coincidence when a state lottery worker collapsed with cardiac arrest. Brian immediately started CPR and performed chest compressions while Pat jumped in to start the breaths. Meanwhile, state troopers rushed to get a defibrillator. After three or four cycles of CPR, the defibrillator arrived and was administered. Brian proceeded with another CPR cycle before the man sat up and began to cough. He was then rushed to Mercy Hospital.

The Buffalo News reported the story which noted two civilians had come to the rescue of the gentleman. Mercy is very proud of these “two civilians” whose fast work and experience helped to save this man’s life.

Brian said he later visited the man and his family while he was a patient at Mercy. Not only did the family express their sincere thanks to Brian but the state troopers also sent him a generous gift pack for his efforts.

Claudia Moran, center, nominated her Angels of Mercy, co-workers Cheryl Carpenter, left and Carol Hageman, right, for saving her life last July when they recognized she was having a stroke. Presenting the awards were Dr. Timothy Gabryel, far left, and Mercy President and CEO C.J. Urlaub.

The Mercy Hospital Foundation began the Angel of Mercy program in early 2008 to bring recognition to Mercy associates and caregivers who do an outstanding job. To nominate and honor an Angel of Mercy, a donation can be made to the Foundation which benefits hospital programs and services. Angel of Mercy tribute forms are available throughout the hospital and offsite locations or by contacting Jennifer Merlette in the Foundation office at 828-2120. Angels added to the ranks since June 2008 include:

- Michelle Blasz, R.N. - 6 McW
- Dale Broadus - 8 McE
- Anne Marie Bugenhagen, R.N. - 6 McW
- Cheryl Carpenter - Department of Medicine
- Paul DeLellis, R.N. - Cardiac Cath Lab
- Mary Diaz, R.N. - 6 McW
- Dr. Stephen Downing
- Pat Ernst, Technician - Cardiac Cath Lab
- Nick Favata, Social Worker - MRU
- Sue Furman, R.N. - 6 McW
- Stephanie Green, Nurse Assistant - 7 McE
- Dr. Lee Guterman
- Carol Hageman - Department of Medicine
- Jeanne Hastrich, R.N. - Cardiac Surgery
- Ron Jozwiak, Program Director - MRU
- Kathy Kelly, R.N. - 7 McW
- Andy Knop, Nurse Assistant - 6 McW
- Carol Maurer, R.N. - Labor and Delivery
- Lori Miller, R.N. - Cardiac Surgery
- Rose Niemczyk, L.P.N. - MRU
- Leah Payne-Worden, R.N. - Cardiac Surgery
- Jeanette Priester, Nurse Assistant - 7 McW
- Daneen Proctor, R.N. - CCU
- Jackie Roof, Nurse Assistant - 6 McW
- Daisy Rosa, Nurse Assistant - 6 McW
- Andrew Rosenthal, CPE Student - Spiritual Care
- Holly Savage, R.N. - Emergency Room
- Barb Schaber, R.N. - 6 McW
- Chelle Shaffer, Nurse Assistant - 6 McW
- Donna Scandura, Unit Clerk - 6 McW
- Michelle Wehrfritz, Technician - Cath Lab