



WASHINGTON CARE CENTER  
*Understanding your rehabilitation and long term care needs.*

# Connections



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## A Salute to Our Social Workers

March is **National Social Work Month**, and at WCC we're celebrating our good fortune to have a phenomenal social work team: Karen Aguilar, Gregory DeKlever, MSW, Jill Bell and Kelly Green, MSW.

**Karen** has been leading our team since 2005. She also manages the MDS process for the department and oversees services on our Third Floor.

"I enjoy the variety of interactions I have with our residents and hope I'm making a real difference in their lives." We all know there's no question Karen really does make a difference!

**Gregory** works in our 2West rehabilitation center. "I especially enjoy working with residents and families, helping address both their practical and personal needs. And I like the challenge of providing assistance to caregivers in a timely manner."

**Jill** is the person everyone looks to on the First Floor when



*From left to right (back row): Kelly Green and Gregory DeKlever, (front row) Jill Bell and Karen Aguilar*



*Robert Tushin*



*Sarah Fuji*

they need someone to listen. "The WCC staff is amazing. Without their communication I couldn't do my job as well. I'm able to make a positive impact with residents and families, whether it's listening, discharge planning or troubleshooting. The staff support makes my social work experience an important part of my life."

**Kelly** has a dual role, caring for residents on 2East and assisting with a case load on 2West. According to Helen Sikov, WCC Administrator, "As a Practicum Instructor for the School of Social Work at the University of Washington, I couldn't ask for a more dedicated and focused group of professionals. They embrace the values of social work and of WCC: respect, wisdom, compassion and cooperation."

Our social workers also serve as mentors and provide task assignments when WCC has students, and this winter and spring we have two outstanding students from the graduate program at UW.

SEE **SOCIAL WORKERS** ON PAGE 2

> **SOCIAL WORKERS** FROM PAGE 1

**Sarah Fuji** recently moved to Seattle from Los Angeles to attend school and is especially interested in women's health. Her clinical practice to date has focused on young adults with eating disorders and mental health issues. "I especially appreciate the privilege of learning from residents. They offer rich insight and share a wealth of knowledge I would not have otherwise."

**Robert Tushin** has worked primarily with people in smoking cessation programs. Robert and his partner, David, have two dogs, Wyatt, a golden retriever, and Adena, a toy poodle. "The staff is friendly and supportive, and for those of you whom I consistently bug with questions, a special thank you for helping me."

**Man-Ting Lam** will join us next month for a Spring Quarter social work rotation. We're certain she'll find WCC a remarkable environment for learning.

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## Black History Month

As the newsletter goes to press, we've ended our celebration of Black History Month. Here are some of the memorable events shared by residents and staff this year:

- Audio tape of the Reverend Martin Luther King's "*I Have a Dream*" speech, followed by a performance by the WCC Spirit Choir and a Black History question and answer session.
- An "Evening of Jazz" including percussion, bass, guitar, piano, sax and two clarinet musicians playing some unforgettable blues and jazz numbers.
- Presentation/discussion by Elaine Hayes on the book written about her husband and their life, especially focusing on his role in education in the Seattle area and their journey as an African and Japanese American interracial couple during the 40s and 50s.
- 2West potluck to celebrate WCC's diversity and to reflect on the end of another year of remarkable contributions by African Americans.
- First Floor photo and history exhibit prepared by Estine Ervin and her daughter DeCarla Williams.

We celebrate WCC's diversity everyday. We appreciate the rich and welcoming environment that diversity creates for us and those we serve.

## Management Team

**Scott Hale**  
Executive Director

**Helen Sikov**  
Administrator

**Gary Engelmann**  
Controller

**Betty Rogers**  
Director of Nursing Services

**Karen Aguilar**  
Director of Social Services

**Mike Steiner**  
Director of Admissions and  
Marketing

**Lori Graham**  
Dietician

**Jerry Smith**  
Environmental Director

**Richard Lowery**  
Director of Housekeeping/  
Laundry

**Sharon Nienow**  
Health Information Services  
Director

**Lora Ray**  
Therapeutic Recreation  
Director

**Anita Lin**  
Rehabilitation Manager

**Kathleen Mulron**  
Business Office Manager

**Ruby Vergara**  
Food Service Manager

## Resident Focus on Jo'Rene Dodson

By Lora Ray, Therapeutic Recreation Director

Jo'Rene Dodson, called Jo, was born in Spokane, WA a month before the banks crashed in 1929. She was the older of two girls. Her father worked for Morrison-Knudson, a Boise-based road construction company; he specialized in securing bids for sections of future roads. His work required the family to move and Jo remembers relocating often in the first 12 years of her life.

The construction company built crude camps for the families; living quarters were often no more than a tent with a dirt floor. Jo's mother didn't mind the way of life. She was resourceful, brewing coffee and then scattering the grounds on the floor to keep the dust down. The family owned a Model T Ford which carried the family and all their possessions from one camp to another. Off they would go, with her dad's tools in the back of the Model T, the four family members up front and everything else they owned in the back seat.

Jo remembers spending a lot of time outside during her early childhood. She enjoyed collecting wild buttercups, listening to the crickets down by the canals and wondering "why tadpoles grew legs at such strange times."

She went to school mostly in one-room school houses in Montana, Idaho, Colorado, Nebraska, Washington and Oregon. Sometimes the different grades were separated by blankets hanging from the ceilings. Initially she had problems in

school because of poor eyesight. At the age of eight she received a pair of eye glasses and was amazed at all she was seeing for the first time!

In the 4th grade Jo became a voracious reader and hasn't stopped reading since. She says her love of reading comes from her mother, who read stories to Jo and her sister every night. In her room at WCC she is surrounded by books of all kinds. She has even donated some of her collection to other residents. Jo says, "Reading is so terribly important; it increases your vocabulary and gives you a better idea of what's going on. If you don't believe me, try reading *Pride and Prejudice*." She praises Jane Austen, the author, for being "so precise in her words" in this well-known novel.

Jo has done some traveling over the years, and has special memories of a trip to New York City where she saw Judy Garland perform at the Palace Theatre. The songs *Little Hobo* and *Somewhere over the Rainbow* brought tears to her eyes. A trip to visit her father in Canada is remembered for the scary plane ride and trolling for salmon with her dad in nearby lakes.

She attended two years of college at Central Washington University and the University of Washington. Jo worked in bookkeeping, clerking and accounts payable/receivable. Asked what advice she'd give to an 18-year-old high school graduate, she replied, "Save your money for your old age. You're going to need every damn dime."



Jo Dodson, WCC resident

## March—National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month and the 2009 theme is *“Eat Right.”* The focus of the campaign is the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The federal government has even updated the Food Guide Pyramid originally introduced in 1992. The update emphasizes the need for a more individualized approach to improving diet and lifestyle. You can see the new food pyramid at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

At WCC, we understand the importance of food not only in the healing process but also in living an enjoyable life. We use a collaborative approach, bringing in the expertise of the patient’s doctor, the WCC dietician and food manager, nursing staff and also speech therapist. Each patient has unique and individualized nutrition needs as well as particular food preferences.

Illness and/or injury and a stay in the hospital often results in physical changes requiring diet restrictions or modifications, like new food textures. According to Ruby Vergara, Dietary Services Manager, “The diet restrictions and food modifications are part of the patient’s care plan and designed to help the healing process. We pay close attention to the doctor’s orders and work hard to combine medically appropriate diets with pleasing taste and presentation.”

At WCC, patients and residents are offered a variety of diet options: an Eastern and Western menu daily, a daily alternate to the Eastern and Western menus and a select menu. All patients and residents have menu options. “Our first consideration,” says Ruby, “is the health and well-being of each resident.”

## Kudos to Our Medical Director

Congratulations are in order to our Medical Director, Sabine vonPreyss-Friedman, M.D., who is a national finalist for “Medical Director of the Year”! We wish her the best and believe her to clearly be deserving of this prestigious award. The annual award recognizes one individual whose vision, passion, leadership, knowledge and commitment succeed in taking patient care to high levels of quality, excellence and innovation. The award will be presented at the 2009 American Medical Director Association meeting in March.



*Dr. vonPreyss-Friedman, WCC Medical Director*

Dr. vonPreyss-Friedman provides oversight to medical practice at WCC and plays an integral and active role in our quality assurance and systems management. We value her expertise and are delighted she is a finalist.

### Giving Back

Washington Care Center is pleased to be able to contribute to important community organizations:

*The Mary Mahoney Nurse Scholarship Program*

*Sponsorship at the annual Senior Services Breakfast*

*ElderPlace “Cooking with Class” annual fundraising cook-off*

*Rainier Chamber of Commerce annual dinner and auction to support high school scholarships*

## 2008 Recap—and a Look Forward

By Helen Sikov

It's a New Year! This was to be my January "Happy New Year" and recap of 2008 successes and here it is March already—and as of this writing it's still snowing in Seattle!

Just as we began our strategic planning for 2009, as life goes in the world of long-term care, we were surprised with our annual DSHS survey much earlier than anticipated. In addition, preparing for harsh economic challenges has demanded our attention, due in part to our reliance on state and federal funding.

The good news is that our survey clearly demonstrated our residents are receiving quality care from our skilled interdisciplinary team. Although not the deficiency-free survey we had worked for, we welcome the opportunity to improve and the documentation areas we need to work on are being addressed.

The not-so-good news is that despite the evidence that federal dollars would be available to support our residents on Medicaid in skilled nursing facilities, our state legislature has cut funding. Every family, resident and employee needs to be concerned with this agenda. Payments are already less than costs for those who rely on Medicaid, and independent non-profits like WCC are usually the hardest hit. The reality is that we still have



Helen Sikov, Administrator

to pay our mortgage, utilities, etc., so any cut comes directly out of resident services. At WCC we're fortunate to have reserve funds that must be spent on building improvements, so we will be able to continue to upgrade as necessary.

The Washington State Legislature is still in session. It only takes a few minutes to contact your legislators, and they really need to hear from people who are directly affected by any Medicaid cuts.

We're still moving forward, positive attitude in hand, on our departmental strategic planning goals. Each area of operations will be evaluated to determine how we can continue to improve services with the resources we receive. We'll continue to strive to create a clean, attractive and homelike environment and we'll continue to be committed to engaging people in meaningful activities and work. We had a very successful 2008 and in 2009 we'll seek opportunities to move forward for the benefit of all we serve. I wish everyone a healthy, happy year ahead. I am grateful to be part of this wonderful community.

**How to help:** Call the Washington State Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and ask them to fully fund Medicaid.

### Rehab Quotes

What some of our Homeward Bound (short-stay rehab) patients have to say:

*"I value compassion, knowledge and the understanding of how to push to get results but not alienate the patient. Washington Center absolutely did this."*

*"I value their ability to focus on the resident and take into account what the resident would think is helpful."*



## WCC – The Rehab Learning Center

In addition to serving WCC residents, our therapy program is a learning center. According to Anita Lin, Rehab Manager, “We are sought out regularly to serve as a learning environment for students interested in physical therapy and occupational therapy.”

Michelle Pike, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, is completing her three-year doctorate program through an internship at WCC. Students are required to treat patients on a one-to-one basis, and full-time internships range



*PT student Michelle Pike and resident Mildred work together on strengthening*

from 10-20 weeks, depending on the college or university requirement.

After two months at WCC, Michelle fits right in with staff and residents, and says, “I appreciate the teamwork atmosphere at WCC and that students are considered an integral part of the team.”

WCC welcomes the opportunity to support student learning in the clinical environment and foster student interest in the health care professions (See Social Work cover story to learn more.)

### Memory Care Changes

We’ve begun informing residents, families and employees about our plan to unlock and eventually open the doors to our 2East Memory Care service area. Kelly Green, MSW, and Oretis Moore, RN, have assumed leadership roles for this transition. We will retain our memory care focus and structure on 2E, but this change will allow us to serve a more diversified resident population in the future.

We began with an assessment of how this change would impact our residents and families, and put safeguards in place to ensure residents enjoy other areas of WCC and remain safe, should they leave 2East. All 2East residents have been provided with a WanderGuard bracelet and all employees, including non-nursing staff, have been educated about safety issues and how to help when people are memory impaired.

We’ll monitor our plan and progress and if necessary implement further measures to ensure everyone’s safety. Our goal is to move slowly through this process while residents, family members and staff become accustomed to the change. Helen Sikov, Administrator, said, “I want to thank everyone for their efforts in making this a successful transition.”



*Throughout  
Every Season  
at WCC, We're  
Engaged in Life*

## **Social Connectivity—More Important than Ever!**

- ✓ A recent study from the University of Chicago shows that loneliness is a factor in reduced brain activity.
- ✓ A Harvard School of Public Health study suggests that socializing helps delay memory decline.
- ✓ New research from the American Academy of Neurology confirms that people who are socially active may be less likely to develop cognitive impairment.

There are more and more indicators that, along with staying physically active, the most important factor in healthy aging is to be involved in relationships with other people. This is crucial for physical health, emotional well-being, and even for brain health.

Some seniors tend to withdraw from their

social networks and the activities they once enjoyed, because of failing health, a decline in energy, hearing loss, or transportation problems. But staying active and involved in relationships with others increases mental alertness...improves emotional well-being...maintains a network of support...and helps older adults stay physically healthier. Yes, as we grow older it takes more effort and more planning to stay engaged in life, but the rewards are great.

At Washington Center, we're committed to creating opportunities for patients and residents to participate in activities of their choice. Whether it's a group activity like enjoying a musical performance, or one-to-one with a WCC staff member or volunteer, social connectivity is important to both healing and enjoying life.

## 2009 – A Busy Year Begins

By Lora Ray, Therapeutic Recreation Director

*Here are some highlights from a very busy January at WCC:*

- Our first collaborative activity was with **Arts in Motion**, a Non-Profit Community School of the Arts serving Seattle's Rainier Valley and surrounding area. Music students held their recital in our Third Floor dayroom, giving residents an opportunity to listen to instrumental numbers by up-and-coming talent.
- We celebrated Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the United Way of King County's "**Day of Caring.**" We were fortunate to have sixteen volunteers associated with the University of Washington join us to help decorate resident rooms.



*Arts in Motion jazz performance*



*Celebrating the inauguration of Barack Obama, the 45th President*

- For the historic inauguration of **President Barack Obama**, there was much excitement as our sensory reader, Jane Johnson, marked the occasion by reading aloud and in her own words, the significance of the day to all U.S. citizens. A beautiful cake was cut and shared. Later residents gathered to watch the recorded official proceedings, learn some new fun facts about President Obama and sing their favorite patriotic songs.



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