



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

Connections



2821 South Walden • Seattle, WA 98144 • 206-725-2800 • www.wacenter.com

Fun is Part of Our Mission!

WCC's Annual Barbecue is always held in conjunction with United Way's Day of Caring. In 2011 we had the pleasure of hosting volunteers from the Bank of America.



Welcome to Lena Spohn, RN, Our New Director of Nursing and a Great Addition to the Team!

With Heartfelt Thanks

Now a tradition at Washington Care Center, our Thanksgiving Reception continues to be a time of celebration for our families and residents. It is truly a facility effort with all of the departments contributing to a successful experience for all involved. The Recreational Therapy department provides the necessary leadership by organizing the event, but it takes everyone's contribution to create the magic, including our participating family members! The kitchen provided an amazing buffet, with the ever-favorite chocolate fountain. The business office, social workers (including interns) and admissions staff were greeters and assisted with serving. Housekeeping and Maintenance staff provided the set-up, and served as clean-up crew, with help from Marsha and Marilen, and abundant gratitude to all

the Nursing team who made sure people were ready and escorted to this special event.

< Edita S. and her daughter, Edith



^ Harpist Jini O'Flynn



^ WCC resident Rosa A. (center) with long-time family friends Sandy (left) and Pat (right).



What a turnout!

Management Team

Scott Hale
Executive Director

Helen Sikov
Administrator

Gary Engelmann
Controller

Oretis Moore
Director of Nursing Services

Karen Aguilar
Director of Social Services

Flavia Lagrange
Director of Admissions and Marketing

Lori Graham
Dietician

Ruben Santiago
Maintenance Director

Richard Lowery
Director of Housekeeping/
Laundry

Sharon Nienow
Health Information Services
Director

Lora Ray
Therapeutic Recreation
Director

Jan Ramirez
Rehabilitation Manager

Kathleen Mulron
Business Office Manager

Bill Hodgins
Dietary Manager

Cold Weather, New Year, Yum...

Now's a perfect time to enjoy the season's signature beverage, **eggnog**. Here's a low-fat version we think you'll enjoy.

- ½ cup egg substitute
- 2 cups skim milk
- ½ cup fat-free creamer
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. nutmeg or cinnamon
- Optional: 2 tsp. rum extract



Pour ingredients into a container, mixing until thickened. Cover eggnog and allow to chill for at least two hours. Top each glass of eggnog with a sprinkle of nutmeg or cinnamon.

Serves 3. Per serving: 191 calories. 0.3 g fat (0.2 g saturated fat), 3.7mg cholesterol, 162 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrates, 10 g protein

Enjoy!

Living Our Mission

By Helen Sikov

Washington Care Center employees were concerned about the drought in Africa this past year, so as people tossed their pennies and dollars in a collection box at Reception, we were able to supplement their gifts and send a generous donation to UNICEF.

It can be difficult to give to all the many worthy groups and organizations to help people locally and globally, but our mission includes being a good neighbor, so we try to do our part despite our own non-profit status. Recently we made a significant donation to Senior Services to aid our elders in the community through the many wonderful programs they offer. We look forward to sponsoring the Health Fair that West Seattle Senior Center will be offering in February.

Throughout the year there are other events that we attend to provide support of families and older adults, primarily in our local community. We recognize the importance of helping each other out, especially during times of economic hardships for so many. I appreciate all those who have given with kindness and generosity throughout the year.

Giving From The Heart

By Helen Sikov

As a non-profit, Washington Care Center relies on the kindness and generosity of our community to support innovative programs and enhance the environment for our residents, both short- and long-term. Some families who have recently donated have allowed me to recognize them, and I am more than grateful for the opportunity to do so!

The Brandelise family and friends collected funds to purchase a Wii game and begin our library on the third floor, which we have named in honor of Tony and Jeanette Brandelise. Tony was actually the husband of Jeannette, who resides on Third Floor, but he was such a regular visitor he became part of our WCC family. It was such an honor to be able to remember him in this way.

The Hildegard Abrahamson family and friends gave money for more games that will enrich the Activity program. Hildegard especially loved Scrabble, and I would find her playing every Sunday with her daughter in the 2 West Dining Room. A lovely gesture in memory of someone we all cared for very much.

A touching tribute to the staff on Third Floor by the family of Altonette Thomas was very meaningful in that they too spent a great deal of time with us. Their gift to enhance dining on the floor is right in keeping with our new emphasis on serving our residents from a steam table instead of meals coming from a central kitchen. We appreciate all those who have touched our lives, and remember us in these special ways.

Special Time, Special Shoes, Special Person: An Interview with Marta Idowa, daughter of Mitzi Lee Hobbs

By Margaret Kramer

“Blue Suede Shoes,” the song made famous by Elvis Presley, always strikes a chord with Marta Idowa, daughter of Mitzi Lee Hobbs who recently became a resident at Washington Care Center.

Marta, the seventh of thirteen children, rarely had time alone with her mom, Mitzi, who was frequently with child or caring for a little one. So it was a special afternoon when, as a small girl, Marta got to accompany her mom for a walk to downtown Yakima. She had Mitzi all to herself! Along their walk Marta spotted a pair of blue suede shoes and she begged her mother for them because she thought they were so beautiful. Mitzi, who Marta describes as a “wonderful example of love,” bought the shoes for her little girl, something Marta will never forget. Marta treasure the shoes, but even more, she treasured the time she spent that afternoon with her mother, who she describes as a “very special person.”

Mitzi was born in Yakima in 1928 and lived there most of her life. Her background is multi-cultural, including a wonderful blend of Irish, Chinese, African American and Native American ancestry. Today she is in her eighties, and her bright, radiant eyes and high cheekbones remain a beautiful reflection of the heritage of our country.

When Mitzi was a child, her mother became ill and passed away at an early age, so Mitzi was raised by her aunt Martha, whom she adored. Martha treated Mitzi as a daughter and also raised Mitzi’s two younger brothers, who have since passed on. As a girl and teenager, she was a vibrant, social young woman, and also a well-regarded tennis player in high school. Soon after she graduated, Mitzi’s brother Gaylord introduced her to a young man named James Lee.

They dated, and after his discharge from the Army, they married. James was a musician, carpenter, engineer and jack-of-all-trades.

The young couple quickly started a family. James was creative, hardworking and excelled in a variety of trades, including construction and as an electrician. His work directly contributed to many of the buildings which still stand in Yakima today. He served in WWII and rose to the rank of sergeant, but when he was offered work in Alaska, he chose to remain in Yakima with his wife and family.

In addition to raising thirteen children, Mitzi worked at the Del Monte cannery, a local nursing home and a day care center. She was involved with her church, always reaching out to those less fortunate, taking up collections. “She would give her last dollar if someone was in need,” said Marta.

The siblings learned to help each other and were very family-oriented. Everyone had a role to play and the family was able to function smoothly as their parents demonstrated cooperation and responsibility. Marta pitched in by helping her younger siblings. She still dislikes ironing to this day, as that was one of her jobs. When Mitzi’s health issues flared up from time to time and she was unable to be there for her children, the family held together under the care and supervision of their dad. The thirteen children never felt they were lacking.

To most people the idea of raising such a large family seems a huge challenge, but Mitzi loved being a mother, always with a baby on her hip. On their birthdays she made sure each child was celebrated with a family dinner, ice cream and cake (her gingerbread cake was much loved). Holidays and other



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family times were big event with much food, music and people spilling out of the house. Mitzi welcomed unexpected guests and made sure they received attention or a gift. Her motto was: “There is always room for more at the table.”

Mitzi and Jim very much valued education, and most of the children went to college, several obtaining graduate degrees. “She led by example,” says Marta, who works in the office of Civil Rights for the City of Seattle. She attributes this in large part to her mother, who was an advocate for people. “She always looked at people in a positive light and would give her last dollar to someone less fortunate. Everyone who knows her loves her,” says Marta, and this includes grandchildren and great-grandchildren who now number more than sixty! Her sense of family and the way she instilled self-reliance and caring in her children has carried through to the next generations of family. She looks forward to the holidays. She told Marta to “get me a Christmas tree, that’s all I want.” Of course she’ll receive more gifts from her family.

Mitzi has been at Washington Center for about eight months. The staff and other residents have grown to love her. She lived with family members until a few months ago when she suffered severe health issues and required 24-hour care. Jim remains in Yakima with another adult child, but has been brought to visit since the move. Marta and other family members are always there. Even her granddaughter’s little dog, Isabelle, is a frequent visitor; protective and loyal, sleeping on Mitzi’s bed with her.

Mitzi is talking now and enjoying life again. She jokes around with staff and her children. She still enjoys dressing up for dinner (with family’s help) complete with earrings and necklace, hair and make-up just as she did in the past. On Sundays, family members come to attend the worship service at Washington Center with her, and throughout the week she has many visitors.

Her inner beauty is what makes Mitzi so special, and the family’s goal is that she feels loved, safe and secure, and that the love she has given over her life be reflected back to her. She wants her children to know that she loves them all and has forgiven all those who have done anything to her because everyone is the Lord’s, he will repay. Mitzi simply holds no animosity for anyone, she just wants her family to come together and love each other.

Caregiving From Afar

There are an estimated seven million long-distance caregivers in the United States. Although many miles can add difficulty to caring for an aging parent or loved one, you can still make a big difference.

Emotional support

Schedule regular phone calls and use e-mail to share news, fun, and information. Give the person something to look forward to.

Detective work

Your loved one may sound fine on the phone, but how do you know? Ask questions like, “What’s for dinner?” rather than “Are you eating well?” If your loved one’s answer is “a box of crackers,” he or she may need more day-to-day care, or an extended visit. Simple conversational questions can give you better insight into the person’s state of well-being.

Project management

If you feel comfortable as a medical advocate, you could handle your loved one’s care, interpret doctors’ orders, or manage a professional caregiver. If you’re knowledgeable with numbers, take on finance and insurance issues. Hold a family meeting and divide responsibilities and finances. Using your skills on a specific set of long-distance tasks can help both the one needing care and other caregivers.



Source: National Institute on Aging

Administrator's Message

December is always an ideal time to reflect on the year's accomplishments, and envision the future. For the past several years, our Washington Care Center management team has taken a day-long Leadership Retreat. Part of the day is devoted to leadership dialogues, the other part to strategic planning. The team has an opportunity to hear from each other their departments' priorities and the areas needing team focus.



Helen Sikov, Administrator

As the year progressed, we experienced budget decisions that severely affected healthcare reimbursement, and numerous demands/challenges imposed on us from external factors or mandates. These changes were dramatic and not considered in our original strategic planning. We needed to regroup, re-establish our goals, and the direction our facility should take in the coming months. I am grateful for the thoughtfulness and concerted efforts of all our team, not just the management, as we have had to refocus our energies. Transformation has required creativity, changes in programs and assignments and a lot of new learning. Considering the increased clinical complexity of the patients we have been admitting, everyone has had to increase their knowledge and skills to optimize patient outcomes and reduce hospitalizations. We have been very successful in significantly reducing hospitalizations (well below the national average) and meeting our patients' needs for post-acute care. Achieving these goals additionally required that we manage our resources wisely, which ulti-

mately assists the entire healthcare continuum. As a facility that has always been advanced in the area of technology we were in an excellent position to take on new software that will be compatible with our outside partners, allow us to complete the added required assessments to meet regulatory compliance, and monitor quality indicators even more closely. Changing systems is always daunting, but the staff took the positive steps necessary to move forward.

Every department has been impacted by government decisions on the State and Federal levels. The increasing regulatory expectations in the midst of budget cuts and shifts in spending priorities have simply meant we have to do things differently while continuing to honor our commitment to Washington Care Center's mission and values. Our leadership has deemed it vital to serve the community's changing needs for post-acute care and rehabilitation, while honoring people's need for long-term options following a post-acute stay, no matter what their ethnic or religious affiliation. Our mission includes being a center of excellence for teaching and innovation that will be maintained through current and additional partnerships that are mutually rewarding. WCC plans to remain a strong community that welcomes family involvement, behaves as a good neighbor, and employs a staff of professionals with high standards of excellence. At the end of the day we know we have made a meaningful difference in people's lives, it is gratifying work, and we even have fun!



Geriatricians – A Rare Breed

By Flavia Lagrange, Admissions

Washington Care Center is extremely fortunate and honored to have an exclusive partnership with Swedish Family Medicine. WCC is the only skilled nursing facility in the area that Swedish Family Medicine chose to partner with. At this point, you must be wondering, what is Swedish Family Medicine?

Swedish Family Medicine is a medical clinic just across the street from Swedish First Hill Hospital on the corner of Madison and Broadway. A special division of this clinic is called the “Geriatrics Consultation Clinic.” This division is dedicated to treating the geriatric population. The clinic also has a division called the “Geriatric Hospital Service;” this team follows older adult patients in the hospital. This is such a specialized area of medicine that other physicians around town come to them for consults.

Geriatricians are physicians who specialize in the diseases, debilities and care of older adults, including the physical processes and problems that may go along with aging. They are a rare breed. According to the American Geriatrics Society, there is currently one geriatrician for every 2,699 Americans 75 or older. That ratio is expected to drop to one geriatrician for every 5,549 older Americans by 2030. The lack of doctors going into geriatrics has been making news both locally and nationally for years. Why? Why do physicians, who will be an aged, older adult themselves one day and are not immune to mortality, choose not to get into geriatrics?

Dr. Carroll Haymon, MD, who heads the clinic and the program shared the reasons with me. She leads groups of medical students who have chosen to do one additional year of a Geriatric Fellowship, which is not required. Geriatric Fellows graduated from med school, finished their residency, achieved board certification in family medicine, and then chose to complete an extra year of training in Geri-

atrics, which includes nursing home care.

Dr. Haymon shared that some medical students have a fear and misunderstanding about the geriatric population and feel that it can be overwhelming. In addition, medical students have incurred a large amount of debt, and racking up another year of debt can be daunting, especially since medical schools are getting more and more expensive. Dr. Haymon said, “The [medical world] is skewed to highly reward the specialties that do high tech medicine and procedures.” The geriatric specialty focuses on relationships with patients: “high touch,” not “high tech.” She also shared that people follow the money. Geriatrics is the lowest paid specialty, but in her eyes, offers the highest job satisfaction.

I asked Dr. Haymon if physicians who did not choose to go through a geriatric fellowship find themselves at a bit of a disadvantage. She said yes, as “that has the potential to be very frustrating, trying to treat a 90-year-old in the same manner they treat a 40-year-old.”

Dr. Haymon tries to meet a lot of medical students going through their residency to spread the word that geriatrics is a very satisfying field, and that training early in their careers gives them the tools to be successful in taking care of the geriatric population, and can be very gratifying. She said that everyone who practices medicine is going to be taking care of older adults anyway, and since they are going to be doing it, they might as well be good at it. She feels it is very important for physicians to understand care and treatment “from cradle to grave.”

We are thankful for crusaders like Dr. Haymon who advocate for our aging population. In this youth-oriented society, that is highly refreshing. You can find Dr. Haymon and her team of Geriatric fellows rounding at WCC on Fridays.

A Healing Garden and Home Depot

By Helen Sikov

Washington Care Center has some wonderful outside spaces, and one of our graduate Social Work interns envisioned an area for resident community and healing. Janet Salisbury wrote a grant that resulted in a positive response from Home Depot, one of our community partners in Southeast Seattle. We were all so appreciative of this effort on the part of one of our students, a lasting gift that keeps on giving, and a reminder of her presence here!

Janet thought that the \$2500 amount would be just a beginning. In fact it was an amazing beginning. She underestimated the talent of our Maintenance team and our natural ability to make money stretch as a non-profit. Our beginning could definitely be expanded on throughout our campus, and the patio that was transformed will be a work in seasonal progress.



Janet provided ideas for flowerbeds and plants, as well as a design for the patio. Ruben and Chao built and stained four large beautifully crafted planting boxes. They purchased evergreen plants that were recommended for the colder weather, and will be filled with color in the spring. Additional bulbs and seeds requested by our residents were purchased for the coming seasons. Residents, despite the cold, went out with Rosie, DeCarla, Chao, Ruben, and Jose to participate in the first planting. We hope to obtain more seating in the area and expand on the concept of a healing garden. I really didn't choose the patio, but I was certainly pleased to have it outside my office!



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