

Kindness through care.
Compassion for **humanity**.
Empowering individuals.
Exceeding **expectations**.

This is our **story**.

REFLECTING ON OUR 2010 PLANETREE JOURNEY



teamwork



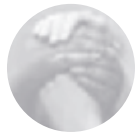
compassion



integrity



respect



accountability

Our Mission Together with our physicians, we provide a broad range of high-quality health and wellness services focused on the needs of our communities.

Our Vision To be the recognized regional center for health.

Stamford Hospital is a 305-bed, not-for-profit community teaching hospital serving Stamford and our surrounding communities for more than 100 years. We provide access to the latest technology with a compassionate, patient-centered care approach. Our areas of expertise include: cancer care, heart services, orthopedics and women's health. Stamford Hospital is an affiliate of the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System and a major teaching affiliate of the Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons. In support of our mission, Stamford Hospital has a long tradition of community education and outreach.

While putting patients first is central to the Planetree philosophy, it is also our number one priority. This patient-centered approach truly helps to set us apart and provides a strong foundation for all we do. Additionally, it offers ongoing opportunities to show kindness and compassion to others, empower individuals to participate in their healthcare and ultimately to exceed patient expectations over and over again.

I am extremely proud of the advances we have made to transform the culture at Stamford Hospital. Our collective effort to create a culture that is thriving and positive for employees fosters the optimal environment for patient care and satisfaction.

This year's 2011 Culture Book demonstrates your dedication to our patients, appreciation for your colleagues and how you live our values each and every day. Whether your thoughts are here or remain in your heart, your work is part of our story and for that I am very grateful.



Brian Grissler
President & Chief Executive Officer





Creating a healing environment...empowering patients through education...and caring for the caregiver...These are just three of the core components of the Planetree philosophy that are evident in our everyday practices at Stamford Hospital.

We truly believe that, as long as we continue to remain committed to improving the patient experience and creating a better work environment for all employees, we will succeed in being the employer of choice.

This year's Culture Book focuses on our Planetree journey. It includes stories about personal experiences, Planetree retreats and committee participation, as well as extraordinary examples of the compassionate care that is provided to our patients and their families. Individually and collectively they demonstrate how our culture has evolved over the last seven years through the application of patient and employee-centered initiatives.

We are extremely proud to lead this initiative for the Hospital and to have your ongoing dedication to our efforts, especially as we strive to achieve an even higher level of excellence in patient-centered designation from Planetree.

Deborah Fedeli
Director of Patient-Centered Services

Darryl R. McCormick
Sr. Vice President, Talent & Culture

🌀 human interaction 🌀

“It was scary and lonely being in the hospital and your team was there with their wonderful smiles and concern for my comfort. They made me feel better.”



human interaction

Human beings caring for other human beings, creating a healing environment for patients, families, and staff members.

Wendy Blatt, RN, CNOR & Cecil Chan, RN, CNOR

Operating Room

Planetree is a philosophy of patient-centered care. It believes in a holistic approach to healthcare and involves mental, emotional, spiritual, social and physical healing. It holds kindness and compassion as important aspects of caregiving and emphasizes that families, friends and loved ones play an important role in the healing process.

Stamford Hospital is home to a diverse culture and individualized patient care is important. The Planetree philosophy teaches us that doing what is right for

the patient and their families always comes first. Living the Planetree philosophy is not about renovating our facility to make it look like a five-star hotel, but instead creating a place that is welcoming and nourishing to each individual spirit. It is about making the Hospital a place that warms our heart.

Human interaction is an important element of Planetree. It is about human beings caring for one another and supports the idea of caring relationships among patients, families, employees

and volunteers by emphasizing self-awareness and personal accountability. As such, the Planetree philosophy is a healing partnership between the patient, family and surgical team and focuses on the idea of a relationship-centered caring environment. It involves showing kindness and compassion, not just to the patient and the family, but also within the surgical team.

We have been employed at Stamford Hospital for eight years and regularly work with orthopedic surgeons and

neurosurgeons. They, too, have embraced the relationship-centered philosophy of Planetree, empathizing with their patients and always showing appreciation for our hard work and dedication.

Social support, loving relationships and a strong family support system are vital to good health and wellness. Having both come from close-knit, nurturing families, empathizing with patients comes naturally to us. We customize the way we care for our patients based on their needs. We have both been patients in the operating room, which has opened our minds to how our patients feel, especially the level of anxiety they can experience.

We understand that family members get anxious, too, and sitting in the ICU waiting room seems endless to them. One evening we were called in to do an anterior cervical fusion. The patient and family were Hispanic, and no one spoke a word of English. We asked for an interpreter and a nurse assistant who was very willing to help came right away. It was comforting to see the

patient and family members feel secure in expressing their concerns to the surgical team. Spine cases are usually complex procedures that require a lot of time. Nonetheless, the spine team took the time to regularly update family members and the relief on their faces was amazing.

Caring for a patient does not end when they leave the O.R. suite. We visit them post-operatively, whether they are on the floor or in the ICU. Some of them remember us and others do not. We introduce ourselves again as the nurses who were with them during the procedure. It warms our hearts to see them smile.

The Planetree philosophy of patient-centered care is a way of life we have embraced as O.R. nurses. We are happy that we belong to an organization that is Planetree!





Growing up, my father always said to my siblings and me that the little things, regardless of how small they may seem at the time, truly matter. When I walk through our Hospital—the Tully Health Center, 1351 Washington Boulevard or the main campus—I inevitably see a patient or visitor being assisted, it reaffirms the wisdom of those words. From physicians to nurses, facilities to dietary, receptionists to the CEO, without question and without hesitation the Stamford Hospital community is here to serve. When I think of our Planetree affiliation, I’m reminded of just how special Stamford Hospital is and what the Hospital means to our community and our patients.

—Christopher J. Riendeau
Stamford Health Foundation

Maureen Adams

Case Management

On a day like any other at Stamford Hospital, a 38-year-old male patient was brought in by EMS. The ambulance run sheet stated, “patient found by police at train station, incoherent, unresponsive, no identification—John Doe.” John Doe was admitted to the ICU in critical condition.

Figuring out who John Doe was took several long months and the unmistakable demonstration of every one of our Hospital values. Each staff member who encountered the patient grew to care for him and wanted to help solve the mystery.

We eventually learned that John Doe had made his way to America from South Africa, pursuing a dream to follow God and be a preacher in New York City. He had arrived in Stamford after taking a Metro North train from Grand Central Station.

Unfortunately, John Doe had contracted AIDS and had gone undiagnosed to the point that he became seriously ill and developed AIDS dementia, preventing him from remembering much of his past.

At one point he remembered he had come from South Africa and recalled the phone number of his wife's employer. With this limited information we contacted the employer who was able to identify him and offered to relay a message to the patient's wife. With a positive ID, we contacted the South African Embassy and established the required documentation to allow him to return home to his family, who were distraught after losing contact with him for more than eight months. I will never forget the cries of joy as I spoke to his wife and their two sons.

I believe God was looking out for John Doe and brought him to Stamford Hospital knowing that we are an organization that lives the values of compassion, integrity, respect, accountability and teamwork and that we would not turn away from helping him.

A truly remarkable story, this is just one of many that occur every day at Stamford Hospital.

On a recent winter evening, the NICU/Nursery ran out of a certain type and size of diaper. Kathy LiVolsi had worked all day and was nearing her home in northern Connecticut that evening when she received a call from her staff. Knowing there was no chance of having enough diapers to last until the morning, she changed course in order to personally purchase some. One particular store was sold out so she went across town to another only to find the same dilemma. Her strong commitment to putting patients first led her to yet a third store where she found and purchased the necessary items. Naturally, the items were packaged and tagged so upon arriving home, she opened each and washed them all so they would be ready for the next day. With her arrival the next morning, there were enough diapers and patients knew nothing of the shortage. Without her strong commitment, this instance would have had an entirely different outcome. Thank you, Kathy, for always putting our patients first.

—Harold Jacobson
Nursing Administration



Kathy Schlosser

Patient Access Business Services

I am blessed to have just celebrated 15 years of employment. I could not have reached this goal if not for Stamford Hospital.

As an employee, I have utilized many of the programs and services the Hospital offers, and have received nothing but the very best service and care. For starters, both of my sons were born here, and my family members and I have received excellent treatment as patients on more than one occasion. As a nine-year cancer survivor, I am compelled to acknowledge the compassion I received from the

Hospital and from those at the Bennett Cancer Center. The human touch was everywhere in my care.

In June 2010, I unfortunately fractured both of my legs and was wheelchair bound. Every staff member who worked with me, from the Admitting Department to my physicians, and from Immediate Care to our Darien Campus, was without question, fabulous. Due to their compassion and dedication to my care, I didn't miss a single day of work. Also, my co-workers showed so much compassion for my circumstance that it humbled me.

Stamford Hospital continues to help me. I have been able to shed 40 pounds and gain a lot of needed muscle since teaming up with Health & Fitness Institute (HFI). The Win to Lose Program has made me so much healthier, with special thanks to HFI trainer Chris Tapia.

There are always so many programs offered to us employees. It is truly amazing!

Whenever my family or I are patients here, we receive nothing but the best service. I never hesitate in recommending Stamford Hospital for medical care to anyone. It is the best!



Kathleen Silard, RN

Administration

I always look forward to being the Vice President who speaks at new employee orientation about our mission, vision and strategy. I enjoy seeing the new employees' faces and hearing their stories. It reminds me why all of us selected careers in healthcare—to give our very best professional and personal self to our patients each and every day.

The best part of new employee orientation is speaking about our values and asking why our newcomers chose Stamford Hospital.

I hear our stories about how our values of

teaMwork
compAssion
inteGrity
accountabiliTy
respeCt

drew them here, inspired them and gave them hope to be part of a culture that really does make a difference.

Every day we receive patient testimonials that say things like:

“My caregivers were friendly, professional and experts in their field.”

“You have some ‘stars’ there at Stamford Hospital—they are thoughtful, understanding and calm.”

“I was treated with extraordinary care and compassion.”

“It was scary and lonely being in the hospital and your team was there with their wonderful smiles and concern for my comfort. They made me feel better.”

As you can see, we all have many reasons to be proud of Stamford Hospital. Through your practice and human interactions you are the main ingredient in our journey to becoming a patient-focused hospital that lives the Planetree philosophy of care.

Thank you for your passion and enthusiasm—you are making a difference. Keep living our values and you will do MAGICAL things for our patients.

David Sack

Radiology

This year was one that made me realize life is short and every day is special. While our staff is ultimately caring and compassionate, unfortunately not everyone realizes what a patient goes through after prolonged intubation.

Sometimes it is the simple things that make all the difference, which is what I learned after being intubated for 12 days. Generally, a patient’s muscles become completely atrophied following intubation, making it impossible to stand up.

When I was transferred out of the ICU, an aide, whose name I unfortunately cannot recall, did something rather unique. She used the bed as a little pool and shampooed my hair with real soap and water. Afterwards, she changed the entire bed while I was still



in it. It felt so different, seeing as I had gone almost three weeks without the ability to clean up. It may sound like a small thing, but as a patient it was most welcome.

There were other things that I noticed this time around. The transporters announced every little bump when they wheeled me down the hall and politely asked visitors to step out of the elevator if they needed it for me. The Dietary and Housekeeping staff always asked how I was feeling. It felt like I was their family member, they truly cared. Also, the physicians announced who they were and what service they were on each day they came in. Their reasoning was that patients see a lot of physicians and it is confusing to them. They even asked as they left, “Is there anything else I can do?”

My brother is a rheumatologist from University of San Francisco and said he has never seen such a well-run ICU. He was blown away by the fact that we have full-time intensives, the layout is easily navigated and the nursing expertise is the best he has seen in his career. Sometimes you may not realize how we compare, but I can say I am proud to work here and was very lucky to be a patient here as well.

While we at Stamford Hospital may be proud that we offer the most updated technologies available to provide unparalleled services, the best tool we can offer our patients is our gift of human interaction. For, in times of despair, confusion and not knowing which way is up, it is we, as employees, who are going to be the ones to provide a word of comfort or wisdom or a shoulder to cry on when patients and their families are going through their darkest moments.

It is this aspect of Planetree that means the most to me. We need to be mindful that with all of the great new findings, exciting medical breakthroughs and the newest and most advanced technology available today, it truly is us, the nurses, social workers, doctors, cafeteria workers, volunteers, maintenance crew, and so on, that provide the most basic and important of all needed services. We offer compassion and empathy from within ourselves, and are proud to be able to share it with those in need in times of crises. Being a part of that culture allows us to continue to grow and evolve as individuals, as an organization and most important of all, as caregivers.

—Steve Weinreb, LCSW
Behavioral Health



family, friends, and social support

“At our Hospital, no one is left waiting in a corner. Everyone is a valued customer, an individual, who is met with compassion and caring. I could not be more proud to be part of the Stamford Hospital family.”



family, friends, and social support

Contributes to the quality of the hospital experience by promoting caring connections between the patients and their support systems.

Kris Ruocco

Volunteer

Over a year ago, I was invited to join the Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) along with about 15 other people. We were a varied group of individuals—educators, retirees, a physician, a nurse, business people—each with a unique experience with Stamford Hospital. We had been patients or family members or both, and like me, once employed by the Hospital. While not everyone had an ideal experience (in fact, the Hospital chose some that did not), we all

believed in the organization and its caregivers, and were drawn to the challenge that we could make a difference.

Since our first meeting, our impact has grown exponentially. Multiple departments have shared vital information after hearing about our experiences and concerns, and by responding to them we have learned of the Hospital's determination to stay focused on patient-centered care. By joining Hospital committees and

bringing our experiences and voices to the table, we learn important facets of the Hospital's services and programs, and the challenges they face. As we venture through our second year with PFAC and further imbed ourselves in the organization, we continue to support our original mission: To promote our Planetree philosophy by serving as an advisory resource to the Hospital in the development of programs and policies that assure we maintain a strong focus on patient-centered care.

With the insight we have gained, you will find us ready, willing and able to embrace all aspects of the Hospital's culture and where possible, enhance and complement it. We want to put our council "on the map," and are looking forward to being embraced as sustainable shareholders of Stamford Hospital. It has been a remarkable experience to date, and can only get better.

As an employee at Stamford Hospital for nearly a decade in the 1990s, I am proud to have witnessed the changes that have been made, and in creating the council, the Administration and Medical Staff's acknowledgment that even more can be done. I also feel uniquely privileged to serve the Hospital and my community again through this position. Perhaps the most unexpected gift in joining the group, for me, is the new and lasting friendships I am enjoying. We came together for different reasons, but our focus and goals are all the same. The variety of personalities and experiences is enlightening, and the generosity of heart and determination to do right is inspiring.

As an employee at Stamford Hospital, I have experienced our culture of caring first hand. As a patient, visitor and concerned care partner with various members of my family, I have witnessed our values during every encounter. One might assume it is because I work here, but while I waited for various appointments, sitting in the Emergency Department and resting in the recovery room, I have become a "secret shopper," observing the interaction between our staff and other families and patients around me. The compassion, caring, follow-up and understanding of patient anxiety are all consistently the same. The time taken to explain to patients what to expect, the frequent checks to make sure that there are no questions or just reaching out even when there is no update, are present in every case. At our Hospital, no one is left waiting in a corner. Everyone is a valued customer, an individual, who is met with compassion and caring. I could not be more proud to be part of the Stamford Hospital family.

Thank you.

—Karen J. Lawler, MPS, RHIA
Health Information Management



Patient and Family Advisory Council

Not long ago I was walking through the outpatient chemotherapy infusion space and what I saw made me stop and smile. Inside one of our private rooms was a young mom receiving chemotherapy. Playing alongside her were her two young daughters. You may wonder why this would cause me to stop and smile. Obviously, I would prefer this scene be played out in a playground or in her living room, but if she had to be treated, I was glad she had found us. She was at the Cancer Center, in a safe environment with her little girls around her. I'm sure they were unaware of what their mom was going through, but I'm also sure it gave her comfort to know she could bring them with her.

—Liz Manfredo, MS, RD
Bennett Cancer Center

Karen Stanley

Pain and Palliative Care Services

There is always time to hear who someone is, what they have done, and what they would want. One patient had been living a relatively independent existence in a community-sponsored, extended-care facility for many years when she was admitted to the Hospital for multiple problems. As she neared her 100th birthday, her body started to fail and she became less responsive to both her family and Hospital staff.

Over the next few days she did not speak to anyone nor did she open her eyes when spoken to. She was referred to the Palliative Care Team. The team spent many hours with the patient's daughter and gently assisted her in

reviewing her mother's life events and identifying her mother's personal philosophy of living. Once the decision had been made to focus on measures to keep her mother comfortable, her loving daughter had trouble making a choice as to the best place for her mother in her final days. In the midst of these discussions, the palliative care practitioner asked the daughter about her mother's home and whether she had ever verbalized a preference to die at home. While initially reluctant to consider this option, the daughter began to consider the benefits of returning her mother to her home where her close circle of friends resided. As her mother was failing

rapidly, the decision was made, the hospice agency was notified, and this lovely patient was returned to her home with hospice care. The daughter called back to report that her mother had "woken up" the afternoon of her return. The staff dressed her in her best clothes and placed her bed in the living area of the group home. Her friends came by one-by-one to visit her. She engaged in lively conversation with every one of them and had a cup of tea at the end of the day. She recognized each of her visitors despite her dementia and remembered pertinent facts about their lives. She slept peacefully that night and died the next day.

 information & education 

“At Stamford Hospital, we are deeply blessed to have a faculty of dedicated educators who generously share their skills and clinical experiences with the students and residents whom they teach.”



information & education

Patients, families, and community members are provided with increased access to meaningful information.

Noel I. Robin, M.D.

Department of Medicine

In William Wordsworth's poignant poem, "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky..." a memorable line that subsequently follows is, "The child is father of the man." I must confess that this line has always held a fascination for me because when taken literally, it is seemingly contradictory. Surely, one literal interpretation is that in becoming an adult, childhood is supplanted. Thus, in the circle of life, the child is always antecedent to the man.

Much of my professional life at Stamford Hospital has been devoted to medical education and has involved working with residents and students, who have had the good fortune to be taught by outstanding clinicians, academicians, and mentors. In that context, there is another interpretation that is imbued with a loftier and nobler significance. Medicine, as a profession, is built upon an extraordinary infrastructure of science, yet in its practice, it is ultimately an art

form. Younger generations of physicians are imparted the tenets and teachings of physician-educators more senior to them. These young physicians will incorporate learned experiences into their own fundamental infrastructure of knowledge. Yet, their own continued growth and development will result in further augmentation and embellishment of that knowledge. In a time-honored and seamless continuum of learning, the child becomes the man.

At Stamford Hospital, we are deeply blessed to have a faculty of dedicated educators who generously share their skills and clinical experiences with the students and residents whom they teach. Their work is so laudable that Stamford Hospital has the unique distinction of being an esteemed and respected teaching campus of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. The future physicians who are taught will then become proficient in their own chosen fields of endeavor, and will, themselves, become mentors to still other generations of professional progeny. Thus, a beautiful and immutable tradition is upheld, fulfilling the timeless beauty and destiny of a most beautiful and enchanting profession.

The opportunity to facilitate the Patient Family Advisory Council is a wonderful experience. Listening to recommendations from members of the council helps us to look at processes from the patients' perspective. This group of community members provides us with ongoing feedback and suggestions with the goal of providing every patient with an outstanding experience.

Members of the council have expressed interest in becoming more involved with Hospital committees. We are engaging council members in the Patient First Council, the Patient Knowledge Committee and the Caregiver Center Implementation Committee to name a few. It is a pleasure to work with such compassionate, committed and spirited community members.

—Sarah Sanders, RN, BSN
Patient Resources





Nancy Texeira

Heart & Vascular Institute

In December 2009, while pondering my New Year's resolution for the coming year, I decided 2010 was going to be the year of "Nancy." For the past 16 years I have been fortunate enough to be living with cancer but not dying from it. This does not come without its challenges. The symptoms from the disease constantly challenge the quality of my life, particularly which foods I can and cannot eat; fatigue; pain from inflammatory arthritis; wheezing; flushing...the list is endless. It was time for me to take control of my body, my spirit and my life.

In January 2010, I was approached by my colleague, Dr. Steven Horowitz, regarding Stamford's Dean Ornish Program. Dr. Horowitz thought I could benefit from the lifestyle changes inherent to the program. I did some homework; looked at past cohorts and their success stories and decided to give it a try.

The program fee might put a strain on my finances, but how does one walk away from the opportunity to invest in the future?

Since the program started in May 2010 and with the support of 10 fellow employees in Cohort 4, the quality of my life has improved dramatically. The Ornish Program is not a diet, but a lifestyle change, and change my lifestyle (and life) it did! The usual aches and pains I had learned to live with are essentially no more. I have shed more than 30 pounds and have incorporated exercise and stress management into my daily activities. My oncologist and primary physician are astounded with the results on the scale, in my blood work and in my smile. I feel as if I have been given my life back!

This experience created new friendships with co-workers I never knew before. Eleven lives have been forever changed thanks to a culture of caring for our own.



Roy Kertilits

Volunteer

As a member of the PFAC (Patient and Family Advisory Council), I was invited to attend the 2010 Planetree Conference last October in Denver. You can't imagine how glad and delighted I was to accept.

As in many conferences, there were the prerequisite breakfasts, coffee breaks, lunches, snacks and dinners. These were the best times to meet and get to know the other Stamford Hospital associates. Beyond those social settings, there were various keynote speakers, lectures and breakout sessions.

It was at the first of these breakout sessions that, when I introduced myself before asking a question, I was greeted by a round of applause. It seemed I had

identified myself as the only PFAC volunteer in attendance at the entire conference, amongst all the doctors, nurses, department heads and other caregivers. Who knew?

It was fascinating to me that by the end of the four days, other attendees were seeking me out to ask questions about our PFAC. I only hope that I was able to answer them with candor and grace to properly reflect the job that we on the Council have tried to establish and maintain.

This year's Planetree Conference is to be held in Nashville. Do I dare hope to receive another invitation to attend or do I graciously decline and let someone else have the opportunity to see Planetree in action?





Donna Saymon

Patient-Centered Services

During my seven-year-career at Stamford Hospital, I have had the pleasure of introducing the Planetree philosophy to our staff through new employee orientation retreats and, more recently, through the staff renewal retreats. It is a rare gift in life when both your personal and professional beliefs align so well that at the end of the day you feel like you have made a true contribution to the lives of those around you. Stamford Hospital and Planetree continually give me that gift, that sense of fulfillment.



Planetree reminds us that “we are all caregivers” and we don’t have to look far for opportunities that will touch the lives of those around us in a profound way. It could be through an act as simple as greeting a visitor in the halls and taking them to their destination or helping to remedy a financial issue with a patient who understands a limited amount of English. When I clip on my Stamford Hospital ID badge, it gives me the courage to be the best person possible. I no longer act solely for myself but more for others and for my community. I never tire of sharing the inspirational foundation of patient-centered care with others and I am proud that we are a part of the Planetree Alliance.

🌀 nutritional & nurturing aspects of food 🌀

“We put a cloth on the table and set it with an ice bucket that held chilled sparkling cider, two fluted champagne glasses, and a beautiful cake.”



nutritional & nurturing aspects of food

Choice and personalized service, in combination with sound nutrition practices, add pleasure, comfort, and familiarity.

Karen Travali

Food and Nutrition

We received a phone call from a nurse on the maternity unit stating that she had a patient who recently suffered a loss and was experiencing severe depression. The patient's mother was with her day and night, as she was very concerned about her daughter and son-in-law's emotional state. The nurse went on to say it was the couple's anniversary and the patient's mother had asked if the Hospital could do something special in order to help take their minds off things.

I went up to meet with the patient's mother to ask what she had in mind and she suggested a cake. I thought this was a simple enough request and returned downstairs to the kitchen to meet with my managers and Chef to see what we had available in-house.

Retail Manager John Cukale and I brought a rolling table up to the maternity unit and set it up in a small room that was not being used. We put a cloth on the table and set it with an ice bucket that held chilled sparkling

cider, two fluted champagne glasses, a beautiful cake we got in from our local bakery and china and silver service. The patient's mother was blown away. She couldn't thank us enough and the patient and her husband were able to enjoy their special occasion. The patient's mother came down to the kitchen the following day to thank us again.

 architectural & interior design 

“Being a Planetree hospital gave us roots and wings to translate Planetree values and principals into a very tangible healing environment.”



architectural & interior design

The Planetree design considers the patients' wellbeing. The hospital is welcoming and accessible, providing clearly marked signs for direction, comfortable and familiar rooms, and designs that engage the senses and break down barriers.

Cathy Dolan

Facilities Management

"We shape our buildings and afterwards they shape us."—Winston Churchill

I joined Stamford Hospital seven years ago, as it was just beginning to embark on the Planetree initiative. It was my job, along with several other teams of people, to support and implement the strategies that adhere to the Planetree guiding principals on facility improvements.

Being a Planetree hospital gave us roots and wings to translate Planetree values and principals into a very tangible healing environment. It has

also acted as an umbrella, as I strongly believe that combining integrated medicine and green healthcare is the future of our industry. I use much of what I learned in graduate school to enhance the design and heighten the use of our senses to bring the natural world into our projects.

I have always been passionate about taking care of the planet and find several daily challenges associated with integrating environmental awareness into the programming and operation of our buildings. Three years ago I was

asked to co-chair the Green Committee and I am fortunate to work with many passionate and talented people who share the same philosophy. We have since worked hard to initiate several programs. As we move toward building a LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) facility, the importance of all the work being done by the Green Committee to help transform our culture into an eco-culture cannot be overstated. This journey is happening right before your eyes and Planetree is the root that nourishes our vision.

“For the next several days, ‘dog walking’ became part of the child’s care plan to aid in his recovery, and ultimately his discharge.”



arts & entertainment

Music, artwork, theater, crafts, and clowns offer engagement and enjoyment to enhance the clinical environment.

Kathy LiVolsi, RNC

Maternal Child Health

The patient was a very sick three-year-old little boy on the in-patient Pediatric Unit, who had just undergone bowel surgery. He was afraid of walking and moving post-operatively because he was frightened of the pain. The staff did everything they could to cajole him to walk, including tempting him with a trip to David's Treasure Tree for a new toy on each trip, but even that wasn't enough to get the boy up and out of bed.

The interdisciplinary care team huddled to decide how to proceed with this child's care. We were so fortunate that one of our dogs appeared on the unit from the pet therapy program. He was brought in to visit the child, who immediately lit up and became very engaged with the friendly pet. The boy was asked if he wanted to help "walk" the dog in the hallway, and to everyone's amazement, he did. Though he walked gingerly and cautiously, he went the

length of the hallway on his first trip. For the next several days, 'dog walking' became part of the child's care plan to aid in his recovery, and ultimately his discharge.

We witnessed first-hand how pet therapy offers an additional healing option that proves therapeutic, even with the smallest of patients.

✧ spirituality ✧

“Dear God,” started Rev. Ann, “bless these hands as they operate this very morning and bless the life of the person who is about to be operated upon. Amen.”



spirituality

Planetree recognizes the vital role of spirituality in healing the whole person. From chaplains to meditation programs, hospitals can provide opportunities for reflection and support of spiritual needs.

Laconia O. Therrio

Pastoral Care

Reverend Ann and I were blessing hands at what has become an annual and exciting event at Stamford Hospital. People came; mostly nurses, clinical assistants and dietary personnel. But unexpectedly, a surgeon also attended.

“Rev. Ann, I’d like to have my hands blessed. I am about to perform surgery on a patient,” he said. “Oh,” said Rev. Ann. “I’d be most happy to.”

“Dear God,” started Rev. Ann, “bless these hands as they operate this very morning and bless the life of the person who is about to be operated upon. Amen.” The doctor thanked her and he was off to the O.R.

Next up was a woman with tears in her eyes looking deeply into the eyes of Rev. Ann. “Hi,” said Rev. Ann. “And whose hands am I blessing?”

“I’m the wife of the patient that doctor is about to operate on,” the lady responded. “And I am so appreciative that he felt the need to have his hands blessed before operating on my husband.”

The doctor never knew his patient’s wife was right behind him.

It was an integration of medicine and spirit. It was a most humbling, and unexpected, blessing of the hands.

Elizabeth Tebbe

Pastoral Care

Excitement, energy and enthusiasm greeted me when I walked into the Oncology Unit to do my normal rounds. Usually quiet, peaceful and serene, the third floor buzzed with liveliness.

My interest piqued, “What’s going on?” I asked one of the nurses.

“The patient in room 5 is becoming an American citizen this morning,” she replied with a huge smile.

As a chaplain intern, I knew this patient well. Recovering from a severe fall, he had been living at Stamford Hospital for many months. Suffering with several complications, constrained to a wheelchair and restricted by isolation, the patient welcomed visits but was often down and sad. He had no family in America and no friends visited. Yet, the Hospital staff had tried to make his space as home-like as possible. Staff and volunteers ensured that books and pictures were arranged artfully around his room. When a visitor arrived, he would offer cookies or sweets from the cache of gifts that he had collected from Hospital staff. During our visits, he shared not only his feelings of loneliness and sadness, but



also those of gratitude for all the tender care that he was receiving. I worried that his long road to healing was taking its toll on his ability to remain hopeful about the future. As his health improved, the patient would frequently sit in his wheelchair at his door and engage the staff in conversation—a sight both poignant and uplifting. Everyone seemed to understand that he thirsted for human interaction, and he always received a smile, a hello and a chat from busy personnel passing by.

But today was different. An enormous crowd of doctors, nurses, transport personnel, rehabilitation staff, housekeeping, pastoral care and

many others who had been touched by his challenging circumstances gathered around his door. In the patient's isolation room, two government officials, dressed in the requisite yellow gowns and rubber gloves, prepared the patient for the ceremony. Standing outside the filled room, we were handed a giant American flag to hold as the patient repeated his oath of allegiance to the United States of America. While we sang "The Star-Spangled Banner," the patient cried and beamed with pure joy. When we finished singing, we burst into spontaneous applause, and the patient thanked everyone over and over again. More than a few eyes sparkled with tears, having witnessed one of the

most extraordinary displays of patient-focused care that a hospital could deliver. Later, he confided that the event gave him a sense of being accepted and loved.

Eventually, after a year of outstanding medical care, warm human interaction, empathic listening and social support, rigorous and effective rehabilitation and uniquely personalized attention, this patient, now an American citizen, walked out of Stamford Hospital to begin to rebuild his life. There is no doubt in my mind that he carries in his heart the extraordinary skill, care and love of the staff from the Oncology Unit at Stamford Hospital.



🌀 human touch 🌀

“I offered to give her a hand massage that may help her feel better. She accepted and as soon as I started working with her, she relaxed and stopped coughing and closed her eyes.”



human touch

Touch reduces anxiety, pain, and stress, benefiting patients, families, and staff members.

Hoda Kosseim

Volunteer

I began volunteering at Stamford Hospital a few weeks ago. I was first assigned on the floors as a nurse assistant. My job was to visit with patients, see if they needed something, make sure their water pitchers were full, and the glove containers were filled with the appropriate sizes, etc. It was then suggested that I would try the Tender Touch program (hand massage).

The following week, I shadowed a volunteer in that program and I saw how patients enjoyed and appreciated the nurturing effect of that program. It made them feel special. That same day, I asked to try it myself.

My patient was coughing, agitated and uncomfortable. She had IV ports coming out of both arms. I offered to give her a hand massage that may help

her feel better. She accepted and as soon as I started working with her, she relaxed and stopped coughing and closed her eyes. She kept repeating, "This is good, thank you."

For my first attempt at Tender Touch, it was very gratifying to feel that I did something where the patient responded immediately. I could not have asked for a more positive experience.

Stephanie Antoszewski

Volunteer

When I walked through the doors of Stamford Hospital five or six years ago, I had no idea what it was I planned to do. I knew that I wanted to volunteer in some capacity, but with no medical background, I didn't have a clue as to what it was I would be able to contribute.

My motivation for volunteering stemmed from losing my parents in the previous two years. Having spent time at their bedsides in a London hospital, it suddenly occurred to me that most patients have to spend a great deal of time alone. The doctors consult, the nurses implement and the medicine drips in, but most patients are alone for the greater part of the day.

I found my way to the Volunteer Office and good fortune smiled upon me. I was welcomed, embraced, made to feel totally at home and then asked what it was I would like to do. It dawned on me that perhaps I could start out by simply visiting patients who might be somewhat lonely. I was asked which floor I would like to be on and chose Oncology since that is where my mother had been in London.

All these years later I am still on the Oncology floor. I have sat by bedsides, held hands and have been regaled by the most inspiring people I have ever had the good fortune to meet. I have been humbled by the courage and never-ending optimism of people who are just happy to have someone to help pass the time. I have been supported by a nursing staff who acknowledges that I might appear at a bedside, pull up a chair and start chatting.

Where but Stamford Hospital would a layperson like myself be embraced, encouraged and supported, because she suggested that it might be worthwhile to talk to the patients? Where but Stamford Hospital would a Volunteer Office be so open-minded? And where, but Stamford Hospital, can you witness a culture that truly demonstrates the idea that the minute you step through those swinging doors, you are part of a family. Like any family, we are not perfect, but we are a Hospital that tries, listens and puts patients first. We are a Hospital that embraces the most advanced medical techniques and always looks ahead, planning for the long term.

I realize that I have continually written "we," and that is because I feel so much a part of this family. I am always telling the patients that they are very much a part of our family and that "we" are in this together. "We" are not a business; we are, most definitely, a family. A family that truly cares.



It's been said that what we need is not a new healthcare system, but a health-caring system. Twenty-five years ago I traveled to San Francisco to visit a new 13-bed experimental unit designed to address this issue. The unit was called Planetree and I've been on their Board of Directors ever since. Medicine is best described as a combination of science and emotion. It fills me with great pride to see the evolution of care at Stamford Hospital remain true to this definition. Kindness, compassion and respect for patients and colleagues is alive, well and growing at our hospital. Whether it's simply exchanging hello's with fellow workers in the morning or hearing patients describe their extraordinary stories of caring by our staff, it is clear the spirit of Planetree is now deeply rooted in our culture. As hospitals have become more complex with competing priorities, the importance of the human touch has been questioned by some. In fact, it has never been more relevant or needed. Stamford Hospital has become a leader in creating the high-tech, high-touch hospital of the future.

—Dr. Steven Horowitz
Department of Cardiology



“The doctors have stopped all treatment,” JP continued, “and I’m sorry to say that these are her last days. She wanted to make sure that you knew the impact you’ve had on her life, and how much you’ve meant to her. She wanted to say thank you.”



complementary therapies

Expand the choices offered to patients. Aroma and pet therapy, acupuncture, and Reiki are offered in addition to clinical modalities of care.

Rita Trieger, RYT

Health and Fitness Institute

The thread of yoga had always dangled tantalizingly in my peripheral vision.

Yoga's mysterious language and rituals have intrigued me since my childhood and I occasionally dabbled in the practice as a teenager. At long last, as a wiser woman more in tune with my body, I turned my full attention onto the yogic path, thread firmly in hand.

I was hired by Stamford Hospital as a yoga teacher in 2002, at the then newly established Health and Fitness Institute (HFI) at the Tully Health Center. Most members are recommended by

doctors to help recover from injury or combat health issues. The on-the-job education I received in those first months proved to be invaluable, and I quickly gained confidence as well as a solid following.

Not long after I began teaching at HFI, the Bennett Cancer Center received a grant for what is now a very successful, integrative program, and I was recommended for the position of yoga teacher.

I was an emotional wreck during the first few weeks of the Cancer Center

class. I did my best not to react when a beautiful, 17-year-old girl showed up with no hair and a deathly pallor; or when I found out that the 70-ish-looking man with stomach cancer was actually only 50; or when a young mother sobbed uncontrollably in savasana (relaxation pose) because she didn't know how to tell her three young sons about her terrible disease.

Right around this point in time, Joan first appeared in class. She was nearing the end of her chemotherapy treatments for breast cancer, and, as a

practicing yogi for a number of years, believed that weekly class would greatly enhance her healing process.

Within a year, our weekly class had firmly established its own little yoga kula (community) with the always enthusiastic Joan serving as the backbone. For the next seven years, our Bennett Kula, as it has come to be known, flourished. Together we celebrate all of life's victories. Birthdays, holidays, retirements and new jobs were all cause for home-baked brownies, laughter and an abundance of hugs. There was plenty of comfort and love available during the difficult times too. Whoever suffered a loss or setback could be sure to find a safe haven in the nurturing space of our practice.

Occasionally, Joan would miss class for a few weeks—not because of illness (the cancer had been in remission for several years) but because she was living her life in a really large way. She would take daring trips to Alaska or spend long visits with her kids in California or Colorado, always on the prowl for an adventure. Inevitably, she would return with a great story as well as little presents.





After Joan and her daughter spent a weekend at Kripalu, a popular yoga center in Western Massachusetts, she bought me a gorgeous scarf, woven in a beautiful rich brown color with tiny embroidered green and white flowers and big enough to be a wrap or a shawl. She and her daughter had each bought themselves one and said every time we wore them, we could think about yoga and imagine feeling each other's warmth and love.

About two years ago, Joan hadn't been in class for a few months. It wasn't entirely unusual, and, as I wondered what adventurous story Joan would have to share, I noticed a voice

message from her blinking on my cell phone. As I retrieved the message I listened for Joan's cheery hello but was confused to hear a male voice instead. "Hello, Rita? This is JP, Joan's son. I hope you had a nice weekend. Mom wanted me to call to let you know..."

Joan's cancer had come back, this time attacking her chest wall. Repeated treatments in many different variations of "chemo cocktails" had not been successful, and edema—swelling that's caused by trapped fluid in the body's tissue—had made its way into her torso, making both breathing and moving difficult.

"The doctors have stopped all treatment," JP continued, "and I'm sorry to say that these are her last days. She wanted to make sure that you knew the impact you've had on her life, and how much you've meant to her. She wanted to say thank you."

Saddened and stunned, I shut off my phone and stepped out into the chilly night. I looked up into the sky, and wondered that somehow, the stars were shining. I whispered, "Thank you too, Joan," and felt overwhelming love and comfort as I wrapped the many silken threads of my richly beautiful, brown, flowered shawl around my shaking shoulders.

“As a nurse and as someone involved in taking our message of health and wellness into the community, I see firsthand how events like these are much more than educational tools. They really can (and do) save lives.”



healthy communities

Expand the boundaries of healthcare: Working with schools, senior centers, churches, and other community partners, organizations are redefining healthcare to include the health and wellness of the larger community.

Mary Judge, RN

Community and Health Education

I am extremely proud of the way that Stamford Hospital expands the boundaries of healthcare by bringing its services right into the community. This is important as we are able to reach individuals of varying demographics, in convenient settings and often identify health risks or problems that might otherwise go undetected. Here are just a few recent examples.

One of the many health fairs last year was held at CTE, Inc. in Stamford, whose mission is to counter the basic causes of poverty in the greater Stamford area. It was a very successful event, attended by more than 500

people. One gentleman who approached our screening table knew he was diabetic and had been on medication; however he hadn't taken it in awhile because he couldn't afford it. When we tested him, his blood sugar was so high that we drove him to the Immediate Care Center for consultation. They were able to provide him with medication to have him feeling back to normal again.

In a similar yet different scenario, we conducted screenings at a corporate health fair at Stat Oil in Stamford. One of the managers there had his blood pressure taken and it was extremely high. I recommended that he come

back in a half-hour and a second check yielded the same information. I advised him to see his primary care physician immediately. Though he was not aware of his condition, he discovered that he did have a problem and is now on blood pressure medication.

As a nurse and as someone involved in taking our message of health and wellness into the community, I see firsthand how events like these are much more than educational tools. They really can (and do) save lives.



special awards

Employee of the Year Recognizes an employee who always puts the patient first and consistently exceeds at living Stamford Hospital's values of compassion, accountability, respect, integrity and teamwork in everything they do.

Spirit of Planetree—Caregiver Award Recognizes that a caregiver (staff member, physician, volunteer, or any member of the organization family) has a unique opportunity to positively influence the way healthcare is delivered by personalizing and humanizing the healthcare experience and demonstrating a commitment to the Planetree model of patient-centered care.

Spirit of Planetree—Physician Champion Recognizes a physician who champions the Planetree model of patient-centered care by personalizing and humanizing the healthcare experience, and whose actions demonstrate him or her to be a role model for other medical staff members.



2010 Employee of the Year, Sheila Liongson



2010 Spirit of Planetree Caregiver, Martin Burke, RN, and Physician Champion, Michael Parry, MD

2010 employees of the month

Back (left to right) Denise Tobin, Genny Saladores, RN, Glessie Brown, Carlos Alvarez, Rita Bellantoni, Meghan Flynn, Lynda Mezansky, Benjamin Espiritu, RN, Erin Benoit, RN, Belinda Haygood, Sheila Liongson, RN, Jose Velez



physician recognition award

The Physician Recognition Award is bestowed quarterly to the physician who has served as a role model to other staff members by demonstrating an ongoing commitment to the Planetree philosophy of patient-centered care and the Hospital's values. Fellow physicians and hospital staff nominate candidates for this award. The 2010 honorees are as follows:



1Q10 RECIPIENT:

Sanford L. Swidler, MD

Department of Pediatrics, Stamford Hospital
Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics,
Columbia University College of Physicians
and Surgeons

Fellow of the American Academy of
Pediatrics



2Q10 RECIPIENT:

Harvey L. Hecht, MD

Department of Radiology, Stamford Hospital
Associate Clinical Professor of Radiology,
Columbia University College of Physicians
and Surgeons



3Q10 RECIPIENT:

Rudolph Taddonio, MD

Chief of Orthopedic Surgery, Stamford Hospital
Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery
and Neurosurgery, New York Medical
College

Director of Scoliosis Surgery and the
Orthopaedic Director of Spinal Surgery,
New York Medical College
Assistant Clinical Professor of Surgery,
Columbia University College of Physicians
and Surgeons



4Q10 RECIPIENT:

Michael Parry, MD

Director of Infectious Disease Microbiology,
Stamford Hospital
Professor of Clinical Medicine, Columbia
University College of Physicians and
Surgeons

We Believe that we are human beings, caring for other human beings. We Believe we are all caregivers. We Believe caregiving is best achieved through kindness and compassion. We Believe safe, accessible, high-quality care is fundamental to patient-centered care. We Believe in a holistic approach to meeting people's needs of body, mind and spirit. We Believe families, friends and loved ones are vital to the healing process. We Believe access to understandable health information can empower individuals to participate in their healthcare. We Believe the opportunity for individuals to make personal choices related to their care is essential. We Believe physical environments can enhance healing, health and wellbeing. We Believe illness can be a transformational experience for patients, families and caregivers.





30 Shelburne Road
Stamford, CT 06904
203-276-1000



As a Planetree hospital, we are committed to personalizing, humanizing and demystifying the healthcare experience for patients and their families. Our approach is holistic and encourages healing in all dimensions—mind, body and spirit.