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St. Elizabeth Medical Center Celebrates Sesquicentennial

By Sandra Fentiman

Each year, the St. Elizabeth Medical Center (SEMC) staff celebrates its origins, which began on December 12, 1866 with Mother Bernardina Dorn and other Sisters of St. Francis. A Mass is held in the Saint Marianne Cope Chapel at SEMC to celebrate the anniversary, which is a milestone this year at 150 years. The service is followed by the presentation of two awards – one to an employee and another to a community organization or individual. This year’s Mass will be held on Monday, December 12 at noon, with the awards presentation following the Mass.

The Founder’s Day Committee is seeking nominations for the Mother Bernardina Award, which is presented to a chosen employee. This award recognizes significant contributions by an employee who exemplifies our mission, vision and philosophy. Criteria are:
• Commitment to the mission
• Commitment to his/her specific job
• Dependability
• Community service
• Identified intangible reasons (other evidence of strong character).

The award is open to nominations by and for any employee of the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS). Established in 1994, it is named after the Franciscan Sister, Mother Bernardina, who founded St. Elizabeth and began caring for patients in a donated house on Columbia Street in Utica in late 1866.

To nominate an employee, please fill out the form online at www.surveymonkey.com/r/mb-noms-2016 by Monday, November 28. Previous winners of the Mother Bernardina Award are listed on the MVHS intranet.

In addition, a mural of historical highlights at SEMC was installed in the hallway opposite the St. Elizabeth Campus cafeteria in October. Although not every major event could be included, the timeline shows some of the many accomplishments of the Sisters of St. Francis, employees, medical staff, students, residents and volunteers over the past century and a half.

Some SEMC historical items will also be displayed in the SEMC Cafeteria Conference Room from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. from December 12 to 16. All are welcome to come see items related to the Sisters’ legacy that are usually preserved in storage.
Digital technology is the new standard of care for early breast cancer detection. The MVHS Imaging Center, located in the Utica Business Park, now offers life-saving 3D mammograms, or breast tomosynthesis, right here in Utica. MVHS uses GE SenoClaire 3D Breast Tomosynthesis Imaging, which means that patients no longer need to travel outside our area for access to this advanced technology.

Breast tomosynthesis uses a low-dose, short x-ray sweep to project images that are processed electronically to reconstruct a 3D representation of the entire breast. This technology can detect small cancers that digital mammograms may miss and is beneficial to younger women and women with dense breast tissue.

In 2015, the Imaging Center performed more than 14,500 mammograms. Approximately twenty-seven percent of those patients have dense breast tissue. While this technology is not recommended for all patients, it can provide life-saving information for women with dense breast tissue.

“A 3D mammography machine greatly benefits our community,” said Laura Borgos, MD, FACS, breast surgeon and director of the Breast Program at MVHS. “It has been shown to increase detection of small tumors and provide better imaging for women with dense breast tissue. It is quickly becoming the standard in mammography.”

The Imaging Center offers our patients access to board-certified radiologists and registered and certified mammography and ultrasound technologists. Our radiologists have undergone specialized training in advanced breast imaging.

“This technology offers our patients a more sensitive and more specific screening for breast cancer, and enables us to improve upon the care that we offer to the women of our community,” said Dr. Nancy Shaheen, a radiologist at the Imaging Center.

The new technology is funded, in part, through the generosity of individuals, organizations and businesses in the community. Contributions to the 2016 Stomp Out Cancer Telethon and proceeds from the MVHS Foundation Golf event also supported the purchase of the machine.

The Imaging Center is designated by the American College of Radiology (ACR) as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. The ACR bases this designation on several factors, which include the passing of a rigorous breast imaging accreditation program. The Imaging Center partners with the MVHS Cancer Center to provide care and services to patients diagnosed with breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the number one cancer treated at the MVHS Cancer Center. Thanks to the generosity of our community over the past three years, we have been able to purchase a new CT scanner and a new Varian Edge linear accelerator to provide the most up-to-date care for patients who are newly diagnosed.

Breast Patient Navigator Program
Korinn Chaffee, BSN, RN, OCN, CN-BN, a nationally certified breast patient navigator, guides patients through the continuum of care. She addresses the physical and psychological needs of our patients through education and support, every step of the way. This team approach ensures coordinated care through treatment and into survivorship.

Continued on page 4
Contact Precautions for MRSA and VRE Standardized Throughout MVHS

By Lindsay Mogle

The Infection Prevention Department has made some important changes to the way that it uses contact precautions at MVHS. Patients with methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) or vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE) will no longer require a private room. In addition, routine gowning and gloving to enter their patient’s room is unnecessary. These changes were implemented at the St. Luke’s Campus on August 29, 2016 and at the St. Elizabeth Campus on September 19, 2016.

“All organisms pose a threat to our patients and MVHS is changing our approach to focus on prevention strategies that will protect our patients from all pathogens, said Heather Bernard, DNP, RN, CIC, director of Infection Prevention for MVHS. “The Center for Disease Control recommends the practices that we are implementing as effective strategies in keeping our patients safe.”

Infection Prevention has determined that MVHS can use other, more effective strategies to keep patients safe from all germs, not just MRSA and VRE. The team carefully reviewed numerous studies and found that isolation precautions can discourage frequent contact between patients and their doctors and nurses. In stopping the use of contact precautions for MRSA and VRE, MVHS will improve the safety of patients with these germs.

Strategies

The strategies related to the change in contact precautions use are as follows:

1) All healthcare workers should use excellent hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Staff members should clean their hands before they enter or leave a patient room and before they examine a patient, start an IV or draw blood. Patients are encouraged to ask staff if they are unsure if their providers have cleaned their hands. It’s important for family and friend to use good hand hygiene when visiting or caring for a loved one in the hospital as well.

2) Staff members will continue to use standard precautions at all times. They must wear gowns, gloves, and sometimes masks or goggles whenever they might come in contact with blood, body fluids or non-intact skin.

3) MVHS will continue to use contact precautions for other specific germs that may be difficult to treat or are seen less frequently.

4) MVHS staff members will continue to keep each patient’s area as clean as possible using the appropriate cleaning and sanitizing products.

Life-Saving 3D Mammography continued

Continued from page 3

Breast Care Program

The MVHS Breast Care Program is the only local program that provides patients access to an interdisciplinary team approach to their breast care. Dr. Borgos joined the surgical team with Drs. Sperling, Williams and Max, and Debra Walz, AOCNP, MS, RN, STAR/C, WHNP-BC, the program’s women’s health and oncology nurse practitioner, recently earned her registered nurse first assistant certification. This allows Debra to accompany patients into the operating room and work closely alongside the surgeons performing the patient’s procedure.

The Breast Care Program offers understandable, practical advice that can help our patients navigate their diagnoses and receive the breast cancer treatment they need. The team is ready to meet with patients to evaluate abnormal mammograms, perform breast exams or evaluate risk due to family history. They can address any breast health issue, big or small.

After Breast Cancer (ABC) Support Network

The ABC Support Network, created by women who have survived breast cancer, provides education, information and emotional support for women and men who are facing biopsy, surgery or recovery from breast cancer.
MVHS employees make a difference in our organization and community by embodying the traits of service, resident and patient-centered care, integrity, respect, communication, innovation and teamwork.

To help us to achieve our mission of caring for the community, MVHS is excited to kick off this year’s Annual Employee Giving Campaign which allows our employees the opportunity to help support the organization, patients and residents in a unique way that extends beyond the high level of clinical care that we provide.

“Giving back to MVHS means everything to us,” said Kelley and Paul Bldy, MVHS employees. “We are grateful to know our gifts are helping to create a stronger healthcare organization and community. We have both seen the way philanthropy makes a positive difference to our patients and residents and are grateful to be a small part of the wonderful things being accomplished at MVHS, thanks to the generosity of others.”

How to Participate
Pledge forms will be mailed to employee’s homes in November and extra forms can be found on the intranet. Please take a moment to choose where you would like your gift to make a difference and mail your pledge form back to the Foundation in the enclosed return envelope.

You can make your gift continuous by giving through payroll deduction. This means your giving will continue into future campaigns until you notify the Foundations in writing. Make a continuous pledge of $520 or more, while maintaining or increasing your current pledge, and you will receive a MVHS fleece pullover.

Thank you for making a difference.
Starfish Stories

Starfish Stories are about caregivers, protectors, companions and champions. They acknowledge special, and sometimes life-changing, moments that make a difference for our patients, residents, their families and our coworkers. The following stories are about those individuals and teams who inspire us to always do our best.

Amanda Wallis, MS, OTR/L
Outpatient Rehabilitation at the Faxton Campus

In March 2014, at 14 years of age, I was diagnosed with a low-grade astrocytoma in my cerebellum. I was rushed to a hospital in Syracuse where a shunt was placed in my head due to “extreme hydrocephalus.” The following morning, I went into surgery to have the tumor removed with my teddy bear by my side. My wonderful surgeon removed the entire tumor, and five days later the shunt was removed. I was a patient in the intensive care unit for a week. I was reunited with my puppy, Khloe, the day I went home, and it was the happiest day of my life.

After being discharged from the hospital, I felt the best that I could ever remember. Despite only having 15 percent of my balance while standing, I had never felt so ready for adventure. I had to attend outpatient rehabilitation three days a week for nine weeks, but I didn’t mind because it reminded me of the sports I loved to play and missed so much. A week after my therapy was over, I ran a 5k race with my oldest sister by my side, crossing the finish line holding hands. I ran that same race in 2015, and this year, I am dedicating my run to all who have struggled with an illness in their lives. I am running in honorable recognition of my family and friends.

On February 9th, 2015, I started working with Amanda in Outpatient Rehabilitation at the Faxton Campus. Amanda is not only a great therapist, but also a compassionate person, and I am so thankful I have gotten to know her. She never ignored any concern I had and sincerely cared about me the way that all medical professionals should care for their patients.

Sometimes there is more to recovering from cranial surgery than it may appear. Fortunately for me, I had youth in my favor, but I did not have the awareness from professionals in this area to help me progress. I don’t want someone else to have to live with post-cranial surgery problems because they are unaware of the services that are available. I am so thankful for my care at the Faxton Campus Outpatient Rehabilitation, and I want to spread the word about its services. The staff is so wonderful, and they believe that a full recovery is possible.

- Anna Owens, daughter of Geralynn Owens, nurse at the Faxton Campus

David Auh, MD; Deb Geary, LPN; Colleen Herubin; Becky Klotz and the rest of the staff at the Sister Rose Vincent Family Medicine Center

I’ve been a patient at the Sister Rose Vincent Family Medicine Center (SRVFMC) for many years, and the staff has always treated me with the greatest courtesy and conscientiousness. Over the years, I have noticed that it isn’t just me; they treat everyone this way, no matter what. I have been to other facilities and I know that the staff members at SRVFMC are unusual in that regard - other places don’t give their patients the same treatment.

I live a very simple life. I don’t have much, but people like the staff at SRVFMC make me realize that I really have everything. We’re all in this world together, and I believe that when we see other people treating each other well, we have to speak up and thank them. The staff at SRVFMC go far beyond the call of duty and deserve to be recognized and appreciated.

- Owen Smith, Utica

Stories are selected each month to be shared with the MVHS family and some will be featured in each publication. To recognize someone for going above and beyond, visit the Applause website.
In celebration of SEMC’s 150th anniversary, the MVHS Foundations proudly present the 16th annual Lights of Love Campaign. The Candle Lighting and Remembrance Service will be held on Wednesday, November 30, 2016, at 4:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Utica. Co-chairs Bunny Gottuso and Christine Abbass invite our healthcare community and the public to share in this special event at which people remember loved ones, honor individuals, say “thank you” to someone who has brightened a life through special care or service, or light a candle as a holiday gift.

Gifts may be made in memory or in honor of a loved one, in celebration of a birth or special event, in recognition of a patient, in honor and acknowledgment of SEMC staff, or as a friend of the hospital. SEMC will be illuminated by holiday lights, each representing the special people acknowledged through this year’s campaign. A minimum donation of $10 per honoree is encouraged. The deadline to be recognized in this year’s Lights of Love Campaign is Friday, November 18, 2016.

Proceeds from the event will benefit SEMC. For more information, please call the Foundation Office at 315-624-5574, email asquires@mvhealthsystem.org, or you may contribute online by visiting www.stemc.org/foundation. All contributions are tax deductible.

Please print. A minimum donation of $10 per honoree is suggested.

I would like to shine a light...

☐ In honor of (living) ____________________________

☐ In memory of (deceased) _______________________________

☐ Please notify the honoree or his/her family of my gift at the address listed below.

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________ State _____ Zip ______

☐ Please check here if you do not wish to have your loved one’s name read aloud during the service.

Your name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City ________ State _____ Zip ______

Daytime phone ____________________________

Email ____________________________

I wish to donate:

☐ $10 ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $250 ☐ Other $ ______

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ AmEx

Card # ____________________________

Expiration Date ________________ CV Code __________________

☐ Payroll Deduction - I am an employee of (please check one):

☐ SEMC ☐ FSLH ☐ St. Luke’s Home ☐ VNA

☐ Senior Network Health ☐ Mohawk Valley Home Care

Employee # ____________________________

Please detach this form and mail with your payment to:

St. Elizabeth Medical Center Foundation
1676 Sunset Avenue
Utica, NY 13502

Please return the form by Friday, November 18, 2016. Checks should be made payable to: SEMC Foundation. You may also contribute online by visiting www.stemc.org/foundation. All contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support.

If you have any questions, please call the Foundation Office at 315-624-5574 or email asquires@mvhealthsystem.org.
NEWS
IN BRIEF

SEMC Trauma Center Receives Designation

The SEMC Trauma Center has been verified as a Level III Trauma Center by the Verification Review Committee (VRC), an ad hoc committee of the Committee on Trauma (COT) of the American College of Surgeons (ACS). This achievement recognizes the trauma center’s dedication to providing optimal care for injured patients.

“The recognition of our Trauma Center demonstrates the quality of our trauma program and the dedication of the trauma team,” said Tracey Barone, BSN, RN, MVHS Trauma coordinator. “Trauma is a team effort in which EMS providers, surgeons, Emergency Department (ED) staff and ancillary services work closely to ensure high quality of care for injured patients. We are proud to provide this service for our community.”

The first hours after an injury are when a trauma victim’s chances of survival are greatest and is the time when any treatment for injury will be most effective. Prompt, effective medical care becomes a critical priority.

SEMC was established as a New York State Designated Area Trauma Center in 1987 and sees an average of 700 patients treated annually through the trauma service.

Open Enrollment and Wellness Screenings Begin

Open enrollment for all MVHS employees takes place from Monday, November 7 until Friday, December 9. FSLH employees must log in to myHR to confirm or change their selections and SEMC employees must return their option form to Human Resources. Benefits information is being mailed to all benefits-eligible employees. Human Resources will also be hosting benefits fairs in the month of November to answer any questions employees may have. Visit the intranet and check Daily Ops for a complete schedule of events.

MVHS has partnered with Interactive Health to administer FREE, confidential health screenings for benefits-eligible employees to assess their health status. Participants will be asked to provide a brief medical history and schedule an appointment for a blood draw – all done on site at a MVHS campus. To register, please visit excellusbcbs.com/blue4u or call 866-270-5441.

Infection Prevention Director Earns Advanced Degree

Heather Bernard, DNP, RN, CIC, director of Infection Prevention for MVHS, recently earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with a focus on Infection Prevention and Environmental Safety from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. She is one of five people in the United States to receive this degree.

Bernard has worked as an infection preventionist for 14 years and has been with MVHS since 2008. Bernard said that obtaining her DNP degree was the logical path toward achieving her goals of increasing her knowledge in the discipline and acquiring leadership skills necessary to advance the practice of infection preventionists. She aspires to be a national leader in infection prevention.

Heather Bernard, DNP, RN, CIC
St. Luke’s Home Celebrates 20 Years

St. Luke’s Home at MVHS celebrated its 20th anniversary of continuing care for the community in August 2016. Celebratory events took place for residents, community members and staff, including a performance by the Barber Shop Belles, a farmer’s market, a car show and more.

St. Luke’s Home has been committed to resident care for the past 20 years, and while the healthcare environment is ever changing, the level of demonstrated dedication of the staff continues to be the primary reason for its success.

St. Luke’s Home is a 202-bed residential home for those needing skilled nursing and rehabilitation. It offers social and health services for residents, including 24-hour nursing services, rehabilitation services, including physical, occupational and speech therapies, therapeutic and social recreation, as well as pet therapy and community outings.

Faxton Urgent Care

Newly expanded and renovated!

Located at 1676 Sunset Avenue, Utica, across from Donovan Stadium.

Open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., every day.

For life’s little bumps and bruises – walk right in!

“My family and I recently moved to the area and are excited to be a part of this community. As a new provider at Faxton Urgent Care, I am confident that my experience working in a pediatric Emergency Department in Virginia helps me to care for even our smallest patients. We have a wonderful team at MVHS that strives to deliver great care every day.”

–Dr. Juleen Qandah, Faxton Urgent Care
The Mohawk Valley Health System
Reaches Next Milestone in New Hospital Process

New Cost Estimate Achieved Through Design Modifications and Efficiencies
MVHS has achieved its next milestone on the path to building the proposed new hospital in downtown Utica. Through facility and operations analysis, MVHS officials have identified potential cost reductions without impacting patient care.

The new hospital, proposed for downtown Utica, was conceived to be approximately 830,000 square feet and estimated to cost $573 million. The new cost projection is approximately $480 million for a 750,000-square-foot facility, which aligns with the project funding plan that includes bank financing, donor support, and a grant from New York State.

“Planning a project of this magnitude occurs in several stages over the course of years,” said Scott H. Perra, FACHE, president/CEO of MVHS. “In late 2014, we developed estimates based upon preliminary design concepts. We continue to perform studies and evaluations to further refine the project as we advance through the phases of the development process. This includes continuing to work with the Hamms Company, which manages projects like this one all over the country. Our revised plan includes a reduction in facility square footage, updated inventory of equipment for reuse at the new facility, and additional evaluation of services that could remain in the hospital versus those that could continue at other sites in the system.”

The reevaluated design includes a number of cost-saving adjustments, including a phased approach to inpatient bed space. The original concept included 430 inpatient beds; the revised plan is for 400 beds. Officials have carved out a 24-bed inpatient “shell” that could be finished and used at a later time, if needed. That reduction alone saves more than 15,000 square feet of new construction and adds to the overall savings.

“Our analysis has shown that the need for inpatient beds will continue to decrease,” noted Perra. “We reviewed trends of our inpatient beds for the past five years, as well as trends both statewide and nationally, to help us determine what we will need by 2022 when the new facility opens. Currently our average daily inpatient census for MVHS is 325 to 375 patients.”

Other potential cost-saving strategies include third-party ownership opportunities, such as the parking garage and separate office space for some hospital services. Third-party ownership of a multilevel parking garage provides an estimated cost savings of $27 million and the reduction of the size and construction cost of the facility provides an estimated $20 million savings. Also, additional efficiencies are continuously being identified as the hospital system’s operations plan is further refined.

Property Appraisal Update

The appraisal process of the downtown properties, which began in September, is nearly complete. The three firms conducting the appraisal are CNY Appraisal Associates; Emminger, Newton, Pigeon & Magyar Inc. and Goodman-Marks Associates, Inc.

“We anticipate we will complete the process in December,” noted Robert S. Scholefield, MS, RN, executive vice president/chief operating officer for MVHS. “We are working with Mohawk Valley EDGE, which is the entity that has retained the appraisal firms and is assisting MVHS in the valuation process. EDGE will also assist us in the formulation of our acquisition strategy.”

The appraised property areas include several city blocks south of the Utica Memorial Auditorium, bounded by Oriskany Street to the north, properties abutting Columbia Street to the south and Broadway to the east as well as State Route 12 to the west.

“The offers that will follow the appraisal process are contingent on New York State (NYS) approval of a Certificate of Need (CON) for the new hospital,” stated Scholefield. “This is a complex project with multiple steps and approvals that need to happen in tandem with each other. If offers can be made in the first six months of 2017, then construction could begin in 2018.”

Selection Process for Architectural and Engineering Firm and Construction Manager

Officials from MVHS have also issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to architects, engineers and construction managers for the design and construction of the new hospital.

“We have sent the information to 14 architects, 11 engineers and seven construction management firms, all of which have extensive experience in healthcare projects that are the size, scope and complexity of the proposed MVHS project,” said Scholefield. “We anticipate that this next phase will take several months to finalize as we meet with the companies best suited for this complex and exciting project. More than half of the firms we have contacted have offices in New York State. Our goal throughout the project is to use, whenever possible, resources from our region. Several of the companies we have spoken with make it a practice to subcontract with local companies.”

Next Steps

Planning and design for the hospital begins once the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) finalizes the disposition of the $300 million in New York State funding. At that time, MVHS will engage the construction manager and architectural and engineering firms to begin the design of the new facility. That process is estimated to take 16 to 20 months.

“Once we receive the notification from the NYSDOH, we can begin to fully develop the hospital concept,” commented Perra. “At that time, we will have more information to share with our community and will set up opportunities to meet with area residents about a new medical future for them and their families. Their input will be valuable as we begin to work on the design and layout of the new healthcare campus.”

Employees Ask Questions About New Hospital

This summer, Scott Perra, president/CEO, and Bob Scholefield, executive vice president/COO, hosted a series of employee forums to provide updates on the new hospital and answer questions. To read the questions and answers from the forums, visit the MVHS intranet.
Upcoming Events

November 24  Thanksgiving Meal for MVHS Employees Working on the Holiday

November 30  Lights of Love Candle Lighting and Remembrance Service

December 11  Children's Holiday Party Hart's Hill Inn 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. More details coming soon!

December 12  SEMC Founder's Day

Please visit the intranet for a complete list of upcoming events at MVHS.

Staff Announcements
July - October 2016

Medical Staff
Ramesh Cherukuri, MD - Neurophysiologist
William Gaetano, MD, MPH - Urgent Care
Teresa Martorella, MD - Pediatrician
Colleen Smith, FNP-C - Primary Care
Amanda Stewart, FNP-BC - Hospitalist

Christy Rice, RN - Assistant Clinical Coordinator for the Stroke Program
Lisa Rocci, RN - Manager of Nursing Supervisors and Transfer Center
Evelyn Salgado-Parrilla, DMD - Assistant Director of Dental Services
Ajla Sinanovic, BS, RN - Nurse Manager of 3C
Tanya Streeter, RN - Nurse Manager of the Cath Lab
Lisa Volo, CPRP, CCEP, MHFA - DSRIP Coordinator

Directors & Managers
Sally Davidson, RN - Nurse Manager of the ICU at SEMC
Christine Grabski, BS, RN - Nurse Manager of AC 1
Diane Potter, MS, RN - Nurse Manager of IRU

Visit the MVHS intranet for more details.