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Guide to Good Health

2021 Annual Healthcare Guide

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- ▶ **PROFILES OF ORGANIZATIONS WHO PROVIDE SERVICES TO SENIORS, THE DISABLED AND SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN**

**Dunlap Family Outpatient Center
Opens at St. Clair Health**

**New Cutting Edge Heart Procedure
Available at Washington Health System**

Myths about Dental Implants

**Sports Medicine and Joint
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Welcome Dr. Derrick Fluhme**

COVID-19 Latest Updates



**Healthcare Directory, Senior Resources
Resources for Children & Adults With Special Needs**

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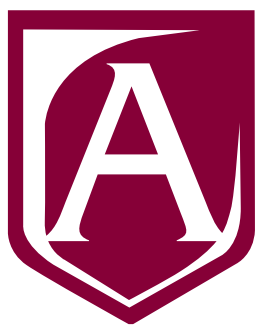


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Western Pennsylvania Guide to Healthy Eats

Shopping with Food Allergies in Mind



By Co+Op, welcome to the table

For many shoppers, checking food labels for nutritional content, dietary value, and health-conscious ingredients has become a routine. But for the estimated 12 million Americans who suffer from food allergies, reading labels to distinguish "good foods" from "bad foods" can be a frustrating experience.

Not to worry—though the different types of food allergies are many, the most common are surprisingly easy to accommodate by shopping at the co-op:

- **Wheat allergy** sufferers should steer clear of ingredients like flour, bran, wheat germ, and modified food starch. But bread isn't off the menu altogether—breads baked with spelt or kamut are okay. And substitutions like rye crackers, puffed rice cereals, and quinoa pastas are all readily available at the co-op.

- **Corn allergy** sufferers might be the most worthy of sympathy—it can be extremely difficult to avoid the ubiquitous ingredient on today's market shelves. Keep an eye out for maltodextrose, dextrose, and high-fructose corn syrup, as well as cornmeal and corn oil, and look for substitutions like vegetable oil, rice syrup, honey, and wheat-based tortillas and chips.

- A **gluten allergy**, also known as celiac disease, is a reaction to the proteins found in high levels of wheat. Gluten-free eaters will find a variety of allergy-friendly foods at the co-op, including gluten-free cookies, cereals, snack chips, and baking mixes. White and brown rice, corn, and potato are also gluten-free staples.

- Those with **dairy allergies** find that the proteins in milk and whey cause respiratory symptoms and even skin irritation. Digestive disturbances often indicate intolerance to lactose, or milk sugars. Look for dairy-free alternatives to yogurt, cheese, beverages, and other foods at your co-op, and pass up anything that contains caseinate, lactose, lactalbumin, non-fat dry milk, milk solids, or whey.

- **Nut allergy** sufferers should read labels carefully for the presence of peanuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil (which often sneaks into processed foods), as well as any specific nut to which they are allergic.

Luckily, the FDA requires food producers to clearly state on food labels the sources of allergy-triggering ingredients, either in parentheses after the ingredient name ("flour (wheat)") or in a disclaimer next to the ingredient list ("Contains wheat").

By keeping a close eye on your food labels and experimenting with creative substitutions, you're sure to create a diet that's less about avoiding the source of your allergy and more about enjoying all its delicious alternatives.

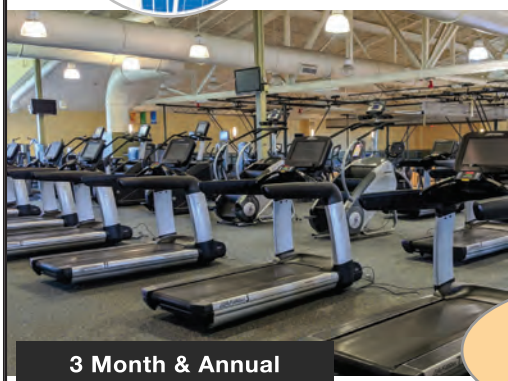
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> East End Food Co-op is the last natural foods Co-op left in Pittsburgh from those original, back-to-nature stores. The Co-op offers all of the products of a full-service grocery store, but with a natural and local touch. For more information, visit www.eastendfood.coop.



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Two New WIC Programs Authorized Grocery Stores in Allegheny County

The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is pleased to announce the addition of two more grocery stores in Allegheny County that have become WIC authorized vendors as of March 15, 2021.

The Giant Eagle Bridgeville at 1025 Washington Pike, Bridgeville, in the Chartiers Valley Shopping Center and Giant Eagle Gibsonia at 400 Northtowne Square, Gibsonia, on Route 8, are now authorized to accept the new eWIC EBT cards for the purchase of WIC allowable foods and infant formulas.

There are now 81 WIC authorized grocery stores in Allegheny County. For a full listing, visit the ACHD website at www.achd.net/wic. Registered users can also the WIC Shopper App at www.EBTshopper.com to plan your shopping trip. It is available in nine (9) different languages.

The WIC Program is a nutrition and supplemental foods program for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, for up to one year of postpartum, women up to six month postpartum who are not breastfeeding, and infants and children under five years old.

WIC Eligibility is based on income and

nutritional risk. Residents must also meet WIC income guidelines, which are 185% of the poverty level set by the federal government and is based on household size. They must also have a medical or nutritional risk which is determined at the WIC certification appointment. There are many qualifying risks. Some examples include anemia, underweight, overweight, premature baby, and pregnancy complications. WIC participants receive nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support and food benefits redeemable at participating grocery stores. The WIC Program also offers an interactive, virtual kitchen classroom for those who are looking to learn more about foods that will be sustainable, nutritious and available options that can find in the grocery store.



For more information about **ACHD WIC**, including information on guidelines, appointment openings, and how to apply, call the ACHD WIC Program at **(412) 350-5801** or visit the county or state's websites: www.achd.net/wic or www.pawic.com.

The Pennsylvania WIC Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA is an equal opportunity provider.

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY PLACE AWARDS NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

The Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program in collaboration with the Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition is seeking nominations for its annual Breastfeeding Friendly Places Awards.

The awards are presented to workplaces, public places and other sites away from home that make an extra effort to help breastfeeding moms by offering a positive attitude and supportive environment.

Employers can help breastfeeding moms by offering flextime or extended paid maternity leave; a health plan with breast pump coverage; work site daycare; and provisions for breastfeeding/pumping at work.

Public places, restaurants, malls, libraries, theatres, parks, places of worship as well as sports and entertainment facilities can be supportive by providing an attractive and clean private area with comfortable seating for mothers to use when nursing and by having signage to welcome breastfeeding mothers to let them know special accommodations are available.

Breastfeeding friendly workplaces are also good for business, because breastfed babies are less likely to get sick and as a result, their moms and dads miss less work due to a child's illness.

To nominate an employer, public place or other site outside the home for the awards, visit the Breastfeeding Friendly Place Awards nomination page. Nominations will be accepted until June 4, 2021, and the awards will be announced during World Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7, 2021.

Let WIC help your children get ahead of the game.



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Ask the Doctor: Dr. Joseph Gurecka Myths about Dental Implants



For adults who have lost teeth, dental implants may well be the ideal solution. According to the American Dental Association, dental implants are an excellent long term option to restore one's smile, re-establish normal eating function and improve overall health. Implants are attractive, strong and permanent and can replace one tooth or all of them.

Here in Pittsburgh we have talked with Dr. Joseph Gurecka. With over 20 years of experience, extensive ongoing education, training and formal AAID credentialing, Dr. Gurecka is superbly qualified and passionate about the many advantages of dental implants for his patients. He likes to say that he simply helps patients find something that they lost ... their smile, but he does so with advanced, state-of-the-art dental technology.

Dr. Gurecka is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of West Virginia University and the University of Pittsburgh Dental School where he graduated with Honors. He completed a General Practice Residency at Allegheny General Hospital. He later returned to the University of Pittsburgh to attend the Katz Graduate School of Business and receive his Executive MBA with a focus on Biotechnology and Bone Tissue Engineering. Dr. Gurecka received his implant training at Augusta University and passed his clinical exams in 2019 to be recognized as an Associate Fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID). His practice, Valley Brook Dental, LLC, is located in McMurray. Dr. Gurecka stays current with developing technologies in order to offer his patients the best possible care.

For this issue of the *Guide to Good Health*, we asked Dr. Gurecka to help correct common misunderstandings about dental implants. "I often hear my patients say, 'It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be' when their treatment is completed. Sometimes I will have a new patient speak with a satisfied patient who recently had an implant; they talk about what they experienced and it makes patients feel much more comfortable with the whole concept. First hand patient testimony can really help put people at ease with proposed treatment. We encourage our patients to share their experiences and when we ask them, they are always gracious," Dr. Gurecka says.

Some common misunderstandings: "You can eat anything after you have dental implants."

Dr. Gurecka: "Once the implant has integrated to the bone, it is fixated. This is called osseointegration and it occurs over a period of 3-6 months. Once this happens the implant is ready to be restored and there are very few dietary limitations. However, we teach our patients to use common sense.

"You can tell if someone has implants."

Dr. Gurecka: "No, you cannot tell by how the person looks, speaks or chews. Implants are designed to replicate the normal teeth in shape, color and function. They look and feel natural." Many patients exclaim "I had forgotten what it was like to have a tooth in that empty space!"

Continued on following page

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All-On-4 Dental Implants

Continued from previous page.

“Dental implants affect your speech.”

Dr. Gurecka: “No, this is not usually true. During the transition from complete dentures to implants, a few people may experience some changes in how they speak, but this will often resolve in a short period of time. The biggest feedback we receive is from patients who can throw away their removable partial denture that was used to fill an empty space. They can now speak with more confidence and not worry about an appliance ‘floating’ around in their mouth.”

“Dental implants are too expensive for most people.”

Dr. Gurecka: “The cost of implants is comparable to other alternative treatments. Most people want a fixed appliance rather than dentures. If you decide to get two implants versus four crowns in a fixed bridge, the cost will be roughly comparable. We present patients with every option and the patient chooses based on their personal preferences and budget.”

“People who have TMJ and myofascial pain cannot get dental implants.”

Dr. Gurecka: “People with these conditions can get dental implants, but it depends on how severe the existing pain symptoms are and how bad the dysfunction is. We also have to make sure that the bite (occlusion) of the final restoration is carefully balanced so that it won’t aggravate their existing condition.”

“Once you get implants you never have to go to the dentist again.”

Dr. Gurecka: “You will always need dental care. You care for your implants like your teeth. You must continue to brush, floss and see the dentist. You can still get an infection called peri-implantitis which causes bone loss around the implant. Regular dental care is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle and dental implants don’t change that.”

“Implants sometimes fail and have to be re-done.”

Dr. Gurecka: “This is rare but it can occur if there is bone loss, gum loss and infection. The implant can fail to integrate, become infected, or suffer a structural failure and need to be removed. However, the most important thing to remember is that implants have a very high success rate which is greater than 90% survival over 10 years and 50-75% over 20 years. You can have your implant(s) for a long time if you maintain them well.”

“Certain medical conditions are incompatible with dental implants”

Dr. Gurecka: “Inadequate bone or having sinuses or a nerve bundle nearby can be an obstacle to implants. In many cases this can be overcome with proper planning or advanced techniques like sinus lifts to gain bone height. There are few absolute contraindications to dental implant placement. Patient evaluation must include any history of acute cognitive decline, unfavorable patient health status, and medical conditions which may jeopardize the patient like bleeding disorders, chemotherapy, advanced diabetes, autoimmune disorders etc. The risk of dental implant failure increases with a past history of periodontal (gum) disease, bruxing (grinding your teeth), radiation therapy, and smoking! Heavy smoking affects the blood supply and causes dry mouth; it makes it more likely that a person will have tooth decay and gum disease. If a patient who smokes comes to me and wants to be considered for an implant I will recommend they follow a smoking cessation program first.”

Dr. Gurecka encourages those who are considering dental implants to explore the many benefits and improvements that they bring. “Dental implants are no longer new but are now considered a standard dental procedure. They can bring about a dramatic change to a person’s sense of self image and lifestyle, even their personality. Once they have their implants patients realize how much they had actually lost by not having the ability to smile. With implants you will eat better, feel better and smile better – and more often! Dental Implants can be done at the same time as a tooth extraction or on a site which has missing teeth for some time.”



To learn more about dental implants, visit www.valleybrookdental.com.

Email your health advice, upcoming events and news items to goodhealthmag@aol.com

Summer Camp Amid a Pandemic



This past year has been challenging for everyone and our youths’ are definitely feeling the effects of the current pandemic. It’s taken measurable tolls on children socially, physically,

emotionally and academically. Schools have been a combination of virtual and in person learning, sports and activities have been cancelled or modified and children have had to adjust to a new way of communicating with friends.

Many of our children and youth are struggling to cope. According to an NBC News study “Emergency rooms have seen a 24 percent increase in mental health-related visits from children ages 5 to 11 compared to last year. The increase among older kids is even higher — 31 percent.” The same study revealed “an estimated 17 million children are now in danger of not having enough to eat mainly because many were cut off from free school lunches.” Also, school attendance and test scores are plummeting due to quarantines and illness. Children, families and workers are exhausted and frustrated.

The nation (and the world) is looking for fun and safe solutions to help families and children. At the wellness center, we are committed to holding a Summer Camp that is dedicated to getting children active, allowing socialization and learning in an environment that is supportive. Being part of the Washington Health System the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness is committed to the highest level of health and safety standards. At camp, you and your child can expect:

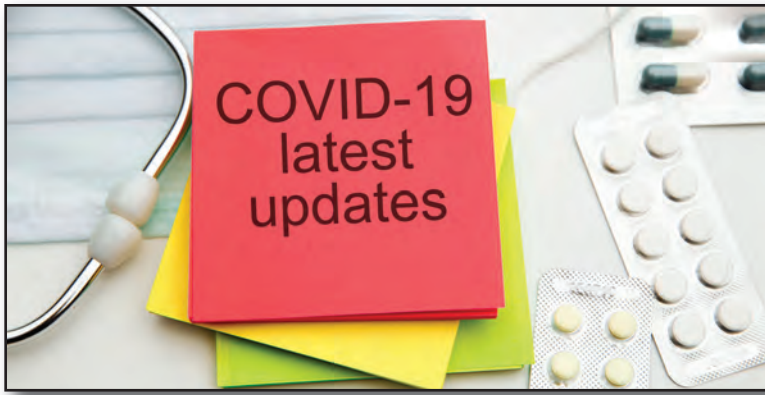
- All members, staff and program guests are required to wear masks at all times
- Counselor to student ratios should be no more than 2:15. These children will be divided by ages and will remain with the same groups each day.
- Counselors will keep daily attendance sheets and location records in the situation that a child may be exposed; all those involved may be quickly and efficiently contacted.
- All hard surfaces will be disinfected with the electrostatic sprayer. No soft goods will be used.
- All counselors will have disinfection wipes as well as wipes provided in all locations to disinfect equipment and the space before and after use. Bins will be created as “Used” and “Clean” so all staff members are able to know the difference between supplies ready to be used.
- All groups of children remain within their group of 15 and will eat in a designated spot without interference of other children at tables/chairs 6ft apart
- Most activities (including meals) held outside under the tent or on the field weather permitting.
- There should be no non-essential visitors on site, no field trips, and no visiting guest speakers. (Child drop off and pick-up will be held outside)

Summer Kids Camp June 15-August 12

Here at the Wilfred R Cameron Wellness Center, we offer a summer **Kids Camp** for children entering first grade through children entering 8th grade from June 15th – August 12th where our goal is to keep children physically and mentally active. There are a variety of registration options: 9-week full day, 9-week half days, weekly drop ins or virtual drop-ins. Full day camp is offered Tuesday and Thursday 8:30am – 5:00pm. Half day camp is offered 8:30am – 1:00pm or 12:30-5:00pm. Wednesdays are virtual learning days from 10:30-12:00pm and 1:00-2:30pm.



For more information, please contact **Kids Camp** Supervisor, Mallory Vodopich at (724) 250-6282 or mvodopich@whs.org.



JUST THE FACTS

Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccine

By **Donald M. Yealy, MD**

Many questions exist about COVID-19 vaccines, and myths continue to circulate. The first step to answering questions, and dispelling myths, is understanding how the vaccines work and affect the body.

The COVID-19 vaccines currently available are mRNA vaccines, which means they do not contain live virus. Instead, these vaccines use a small instruction – the mRNA – to teach the body to respond to a part or parts of the virus. This generates an immune response, allowing the body to develop antibodies and immunity cells that recognize the virus and provide protection.

You cannot get COVID-19 from this type of vaccine – there is no virus in the vaccine.

These vaccines were produced quickly, but with excellent science and rigorous evaluation. The Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines both decrease serious COVID-19 infection rates in clinical trials by about 95% a week after the second dose. This is an impressive statistic for any vaccine.

While both vaccines have been authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, there are some caveats. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that anyone with a history of anaphylaxis or severe allergies talk with their physician before getting

the vaccines currently available, and anyone who had an anaphylactic reaction (that is, immediate severe breathing and fainting/near fainting events that needed advanced medical care) to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine should not receive the second dose. Other reactions, much more common, do not preclude you from being vaccinated.

Women who are pregnant or lactating can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, as can people who were previously infected with COVID-19; again, discuss this with your doctor first. If you had a positive COVID-19 infection and were treated with either monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait for 90 days to receive the vaccine. Otherwise, once you recover from a COVID-19 infection – or any infection – you could receive the vaccine, though your immunity is likely good.

The most common side effects are muscle aches, fatigue, soreness at the injection site, headache and fever – but these typically persist for only one to three days following vaccination.

There is no evidence of COVID-19 vaccines causing fertility problems, and serious allergic reactions are very rare. If you are concerned you may have a reaction, talk to your physician. Additionally, the COVID-19 vaccine will not alter your genetic composition.

To see an end to this pandemic, a

large percentage of the population needs to be immunized against COVID-19. Getting vaccinated achieves that much more safely than infection followed by recovery. Get vaccinated and tell all you know to do the same. The strongest immunity occurs at about seven days after receiving the second dose.

Even after vaccination, it is crucial to continue masking, distancing and hand washing as increasing numbers of people are vaccinated.

UPMC is eager to vaccinate more people in the communities we serve, and we have the infrastructure, staff and clinics to do so. When we are notified that more vaccine is on its way to support these efforts, we will engage our patients and the public, providing clear instruction on how to request vaccination.

It bears repeating that the most effective way to protect yourself from COVID-19 continues to be masking, distancing and hand-washing.



Stay informed of the status of COVID-19 vaccination at UPMC by visiting [UPMC.com/COVIDvaccine](https://www.upmc.com/COVIDvaccine) or calling **1-833-299-4359**.

Dr. Donald Yealy is UPMC's senior medical director and chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at UPMC and the University of Pittsburgh.

Promising Treatments in the COVID-19 Battle

By **Kevin Brown**

When COVID-19 appeared in early 2020, much of the media attention focused on treatment medications. There was a great deal of debate about which treatments were most effective while some were labeled as controversial or fraudulent. The debut of the COVID-19 vaccines in late 2020 eclipsed the once dominant news about treatments. However, there continues to be a great deal of activity around the development of new and promising treatments.

Early on in the pandemic, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) formed the Coronavirus Treatment Acceleration Program (CTAP) to work directly with federal health partners, academia and industry in the development of effective treatments for the virus. The goal of CTAP was “to move new treatments to patients as soon as possible, while at the same time finding out whether they are helpful or harmful,” according to the FDA. The role of the FDA is not to conduct the studies, but to

review the study designs and advise researchers. By April 2020, 72 clinical trials of potential therapies for COVID-19 were underway with FDA oversight.¹

The *New York Times* (NYT) follows COVID-19 treatments in their “Coronavirus Drug and Treatment Tracker” available online at www.nytimes.com.² According to the NYT, only one drug, remdesivir, has been approved by the FDA for use in treatment of COVID-19. Other treatments have been granted emergency use authorization by the FDA. While there are many promising therapies under study, many are in early stages of research.

Treatments are categorized in the NYT Tracker as one of the following: antiviral, immunological, anti-inflammatory, other treatments, and pseudoscience and fraud.

Antivirals work by stopping the virus from affecting our cells. Remdesivir is the most well-known of the COVID-19 antivirals currently in use. Others include favipiravir (also known as Avigan), molnupiravir, recombinant ACE-2,

ivermectin, oleandrin, lopinavir and ritonavir, hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine.

Immunologicals mimic the body's immune system to help fight infection. Included in the NYT Tracker as immunologicals are convalescent plasma, monoclonal antibodies, bamlanivimab, etesevimab, REGEN-COV, and interferons.

Anti-inflammatories fight inflammation in the body. A hallmark of COVID-19 is that it can cause insurmountable inflammatory damage, particularly to the lungs. Among the anti-inflammatories in the NYT Tracker are dexamethasone and other corticosteroids, cytokine inhibitors, blood filtration systems, stem cells, colchicine, and azithromycin.

Other treatments include prone positioning, ventilators and other respiratory support devices, anticoagulants, and vitamin and mineral supplements.

Those treatments labeled as pseudoscience or fraudulent are drinking or injecting bleach and disinfectants, ultraviolet light, and silver. The FDA maintains a list of

more than 140 fraudulent COVID-19 products, according to the NYT.

Many new and promising treatments for COVID-19 are being developed and studied across the United States and in other countries. It is certainly hoped that, with the use of new treatments coupled with vaccinations and continued public health measures, we will soon see the end of the pandemic once and for all.



For more information about COVID-19 and promising treatments, visit www.fda.gov or www.nytimes.com.

¹U.S. Food and Drug Administration, “The Path Forward: Coronavirus Treatment Acceleration Program”. Stephen M. Hahn, M.D., Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research and Janet Woodcock, M.D., Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, April 2020, www.fda.gov/news-events.

²New York Times, “Corona Virus Drug and Treatment Tracker”, Katherine J. Wu, Carl Zimmer and Jonathan Corum, Updated April 13, 2021, www.nytimes.com.

WE ARE CURRENTLY ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

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Dr. Michael Brown: To Improve Your Heart Health, Make Self Care a Priority

By Nancy Kennedy

Heart disease continues to be the number one cause of death for Americans, despite remarkable advances in cardiac science that have made new medications, technologies, and minimally invasive procedures available. This prevalence is partly driven by epidemic levels of obesity and Type 2 diabetes, plus tobacco use, which are risk factors for heart disease. Nearly 40% of American adults are obese and at greater risk to develop related conditions such as sleep apnea and high blood pressure – two conditions that, if untreated, can lead to heart disease.

Heart disease is not inevitable, however, and is in fact largely preventable through healthy lifestyle practices, especially exercise. Those practices are only effective when they are part of one's regular, daily routine, says Michael Brown, M.D., a board-certified interventional cardiologist and a medical director of Greater Pittsburgh

Vascular Associates, Washington, PA. "Routines start at an early age, in the teens and early twenties," he says. "Some people will remain active throughout their lives but if you don't establish regular activity as part of your life at that age, it's unlikely that you ever will."

Brown says that being active on a regular basis is more important than any specific activity or sport. "The fact that you are active, that you get outside and move and get regular cardiovascular exercise, is what matters most. But too many people failed to develop this habit at an early age and have never incorporated exercise into their daily lives."

To combat this, Brown advises his patients to make self-care a priority and carve out an hour every day to take care of your heart. "We all live by the calendar, by schedules and appointments," he explains. "We go to work on time and we're punctual when we have an appointment. But we don't put ourselves on the calendar. I encourage my



"I encourage my patients to make a regular appointment for self-care – you can use it to exercise, plan healthy meals, or go for a walk. This is every bit as important as keeping an appointment with your doctor."
-Dr. Michael Brown

patients to make a regular appointment for self-care – you can use it to exercise, plan healthy meals, or go for a walk. This is every bit as important as keeping an appointment with your doctor."

Brown believes that many people feel reluctant to spend time on themselves. "It's okay to use time on yourself. Be creative about self-care. It's an individual thing: make decisions that fit your life. It's essential that what you choose is something that you can do on a regular basis, so don't choose things that you are unlikely to sustain. Every January, we're bombarded with ads for new workout equipment, exercise programs, and gym memberships – but

you don't have to make resolutions and you don't need fancy machines. Just go for a walk regularly. Walking is one of the best forms of stress relief – it gets you moving, gets you outside, exercises your heart, lungs and legs and provides stress relief. It also helps you manage your weight."

The COVID 19 pandemic, Brown says, has forced people to make different, and often better, choices. "More people are walking around their neighborhoods. Walking helps make us healthier: we have noted fewer other infectious diseases such as flu and pneumonia, because of masks and social

Continued on following page

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New Cutting Edge Heart Procedure Available at Washington Health System

By Emily King

William Hribal was having shortness of breath and some chest pain. The 75-year-old couldn't sleep at night because of these nagging symptoms. He was also having a hard time performing everyday activities, getting winded easily. He knew it was time to see his heart doctor, Brian Staub, M.D., of Washington Health System.

"My regular heart doctor, Dr. Staub, said it was time to have the valve worked on," said Hribal. =

Hribal was not a stranger to heart issues, having had open-heart surgery to replace his mitral valve eighteen years ago. Dr. Staub had implanted a bioprosthetic valve during the procedure, a type of valve which can deteriorate over time. Dr. Staub told him that it was time for a new one.

Eighteen years is a long time in terms of medical technology and Hribal was thrilled to hear that a novel catheter-based heart valve replacement could be performed to implant a new valve inside his failing surgical valve that would not require open-heart surgery. The heart is not bypassed and never stops beating throughout the procedure. He remembered the difficult and painful recovery period

from his initial surgery, and this newer non-surgical option was an appealing alternative. Dr. Staub referred Hribal to his colleague, Dr. Rekhi Varghese, a fellow cardiologist at WHS.

"The doctor drew a diagram and explained how it would go into the first heart valve and insert the new and smaller valve into the old valve," said Hribal. "The doctor asked if I had any concerns or questions for him. He explained everything."

This transcatheter heart valve procedure is a great therapeutic option for the treatment of symptomatic heart disease due to a failing bioprosthetic mitral surgical valve in patients with prohibitive conditions or high surgical risk. The advantages are that the procedure is less invasive, requires a shorter hospital stay and offers the patient an easier recovery. Like any procedure, there are possible risks, which include groin complications and thrombus on the valve, which is why patients usually go on a blood thinner for at least six months post-surgery.

The technology in itself is remarkable, but what is particularly impressive is that this advanced procedure is being performed at a small local hospital. Most of the



WHS Transcatheter Mitral Valve Replacement team – Brian Staub, MD, Rekhi Varghese, MD, Kim McCreary, RN

surgeons who have acquired the technology and training are at large city hospitals.

The valve itself is comprised of a cobalt-chromium frame and bovine (cow) pericardial tissue leaflets. Edwards Lifesciences makes the valve used at WHS, called the SAPIEN 3 Ultra. Edwards provides training for the physicians and a proctor oversees the first few surgeries.

On May 5th, 2020, Dr. Varghese completed the first valve-in-valve transcatheter mitral valve replacement surgery at Washington Health System on Hribal. The approximately hour-long surgery was a success and Hribal was able

to leave the hospital the next day and recover at home.

"I went in for surgery one day and out the next. Everything went great, almost unbelievable," he said. "The doctors and nurses were great."

> If you would like to learn more about valve-in-valve TMVR and find out if you are a possible candidate, please contact **Kimberly McCreary, RN, BSN**. As the Structural Heart Coordinator at WHS, she oversees the valve program and clinics and helps guide patients through the process of heart valve replacement. You can contact her directly at **(724) 229-2306**.

Improve Your Heart Health

Continued from previous page

distancing. Social distancing protects you against other communicable diseases. Another effect is that due to the restaurant shutdowns, people are eating out less and cooking at home, and that is healthier. Restaurant food has more calories, fat and salt. More people are trying to eat healthier food. In general, we should be trying to eat lean protein and lots of vegetables. We need to be careful of which carbs we choose. It's best to avoid packaged food, fast food and restaurant food and to become aware of the high salt content of many foods. You have to learn to read food labels and do this regularly. Food manufacturers and restaurants conceal the salt. It may not taste salty but if you look at the label, you'll see a very high salt content."

It's never too late to establish healthy routines, Brown says. "Dedicate time each week to self-care: exercise, healthy eating and managing stress. Keep in mind that

it's the daily, routine practices that will keep your heart healthy. Make yourself a priority."

Brown completed a fellowship in Cardiovascular Disease and Interventional Cardiology at Allegheny General Hospital and has been practicing Cardiology in the Pittsburgh, Washington and Wheeling area since completing his fellowship. His areas of expertise include complex coronary interventions, structural heart disease such as aortic stenosis, treatment of peripheral vascular disease and venous disease. He is married to Stephanie Brown, MD, an OB/GYN who practices in Upper St. Clair; they have two children.

> GPVA is part of Jefferson Cardiology Association. To contact **Jefferson Cardiology Association** and **Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Associates**, call **(412) 469-1500** or visit **www.jeffersoncardiology.com** or **www.greaterpittsburghvascular.com**.

Monongahela Valley Hospital Names New Hematology/Oncology Nurse Navigator



Michele Haftman

When people are undergoing hematology/oncology treatments and follow-up care at Monongahela Valley Hospital's Charles L. and Rose Sweeney Melenzyer Pavilion and Regional Cancer Center, they have a knowledgeable resource to help them on their journey. Michele Haftman, RN, ONC, is MVH's new Oncology Nurse Navigator. In this role, she anticipates questions before they are asked, addresses concerns and shares information patients need on their path to wellness.

A resident of Daisytown, Ms. Haftman has spent her entire nursing career at MVH and one of its predecessor hospitals — Monongahela Memorial Hospital. For 30 years, she has been an oncology-certified nurse providing compassionate care to the Hospital's radiation oncology patients. In her new role, she will provide help and guidance to patients with all cancer diagnoses.

Dunlap Family Outpatient Center Opens at St. Clair Health

Introducing

By Nancy Kennedy

St. Clair Health is preparing for the early May opening of Dunlap Family Outpatient Center, its new, modern, multimillion dollar comprehensive outpatient center adjacent to St. Clair Hospital. The facility is a six-story, 280,000 square foot building that houses a wealth of resources and services in a beautiful environment that emphasizes convenience, ease of access, comfort and an exceptional patient experience.

At Dunlap Family Outpatient Center, comprehensive diagnostic and therapeutic services, including outpatient surgery, will be provided by St. Clair's medical specialists in a spacious, state of the art building with the most up-to-date technology. Facilities will include laboratories; medical imaging; cardiac diagnostics; physical and occupational therapy and physician offices. Outpatient surgery will take place in 10 operating rooms. There are two procedure rooms and 51 pre- and post-operative rooms, and there will be a spacious endoscopy suite with six exam rooms. Other clinical programs will be featured as well.

Patients who are preparing to have surgical procedures performed at the Dunlap Family Outpatient Center will be able to have all their pre-operative testing completed in a single location: the Pre-Admission Testing Center, or PAT center. Rather than going from place to place to get bloodwork, an EKG, a chest x-ray or other pre-op testing, patients will find everything under one roof. "Our goal is to provide efficient, convenient one-stop shopping," explains Jennifer L. Petruski, M.B.A., director of medical imaging and outpatient services for St. Clair Health. "If you need more than one service, it will all be in one building. We have an online tool where you can schedule your appointment for x-ray, bloodwork or EKG. You can check in on your cell phone and bypass any lines when you arrive. You'll be taken right back."

For patients with cancer, Dunlap Family Outpatient Center will provide greatly improved access to the services they need. With the relocation of medical oncology from

St. Clair Outpatient Center – Village Square to the top floor of Dunlap Family Outpatient Center, the three cancer treatment services – medical oncology, surgical oncology and radiation therapy – will be united on the main campus. Radiation oncology will remain in its current location in the Hospital, just next door. Patients receiving chemotherapy infusions will be treated in the new infusion center, which has been designed to provide comfort and privacy in a bright, aerie-like setting with beautiful views through tall windows.

On the first floor, there is a Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy where patients and families can fill prescriptions immediately and avoid having to make a stop on the way home following a procedure. The Walgreens Pharmacy staff will even deliver medications directly to the patient at their bedside post-operatively through a Meds-to-Beds program that includes patient education about the medications.


Amenities at Dunlap Family Outpatient Center include Café Kara, serving beverages and chef-prepared offerings; underground parking; and valet service. State of the art architectural features provide appealing aesthetics, include a light-filled two story atrium with multiple seating options. The environment was thoughtfully designed to minimize stress for patients and families, with input from St. Clair staff.

The Dunlap Family Outpatient Center was designed by IKM, Inc. architects. It represents the Hospital's largest expansion of its main campus in four decades. The name of the new building honors Edward B. Dunlap, Jr., his wife Anna and their family. The Dunlaps are long-

time benefactors of St. Clair and they have generously provided funding for the building's construction with the largest donation in St. Clair's history. Edward Dunlap is the founder and chairman of the CentiMark Corporation, based in Canonsburg, Washington County, and a proprietor of Pittsburgh's legendary LeMont restaurant on Mt. Washington. As chairman of St. Clair Health's Groundbreaking Growth Campaign, Mr. Dunlap spearheaded a capital campaign to raise funds for the construction of the new outpatient center and an accompanying utility building.

The trend in the healthcare industry, Petruski says, is that imaging and ambulatory surgery are moving out of hospitals. "Most care is being provided in an outpatient setting and this will increase in the years ahead. At Dunlap Family Outpatient Center, you'll be in and out faster and receive the exact same excellent quality of care as you'd find at the Hospital."

Alan G. Yeasted, M.D., F.A.C.P., senior vice president and chief medical officer emeritus, St. Clair Health, says the opening of Dunlap Family Outpatient Center will be transformative for St. Clair. "From my standpoint, the Dunlap Family Outpatient Center will be an extremely valuable asset to the community. It adds space, enables expansion of services, fosters collaboration, and promotes a sense of community. We are very pleased with the facility and grateful to the donors who have made this possible. All credit goes to the community, who really came out in support of this project."

 To learn more about **Dunlap Family Outpatient Center**, visit www.stclair.org.

"If you need more than one service, it will all be in one building. We have an online tool where you can schedule your appointment for x-ray, bloodwork or EKG. You can check in on your cell phone and bypass any lines when you arrive. You'll be taken right back."

-Jennifer L. Petruski, M.B.A., director of medical imaging and outpatient services for St. Clair Health



**St. Clair
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Ask The Experts

Health Enhancing Thermography

Is a thermal scan different than a mammogram or ultrasound?

A thermal scan is different than other diagnostic tests, such as a mammogram or ultrasound. Thermal scans are a test of what is occurring at the cellular level. Thermal screening or thermography looks for physiological changes in our bodies by analyzing temperature and vascular patterns. Other diagnostic tests, such as a mammogram, ultrasound or MRI, look for a structure that is present in the body – like a tumor.

Everyone has their own unique thermal pattern. Changes to these patterns can indicate early stage abnormalities that accompany breast pathology, whether it is cancer, fibrocystic disease, an infection or a vascular disease. This is why it is important to keep a close eye on subtle changes to the temperature and patterns that are unique to us.

Thermograms (the medical image that is produced) can aid your doctor in planning accordingly and developing a program to further diagnose and/or moni-

tor your health. Thermography screenings are a great preventive screening tool to add to your health plan. Not only are they radiation-free, compression-free, and have no adverse effects, the test is something you can schedule on your own. You can then provide the results to your physician.

If you are looking for a safe proactive screening tool to monitor your health or to receive a screening before you are eligible for standard diagnostic testing, thermography is an option to explore.

Utilizing a combination of diagnostic tools increases your chance of detecting abnormalities at an earlier stage. These methods include:

- ▶ Annual breast thermography screening for women of all ages
- ▶ Mammography when considered appropriate by a physician
- ▶ A regular breast examination by a health professional
- ▶ Monthly breast self-examination
- ▶ Personal awareness for changes in the breasts
- ▶ Readiness to discuss quickly any changes in breast health with a doctor

These guidelines should be considered along with your background and medical history.

(2015). Early Detection Guidelines. Retrieved from http://www.thermologyonline.org/Breast/breast_thermography_detection.htm

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Don't Miss Your Shot to Fight the Flu!



By **Shelby Bell**

The flu affects millions of adults and children each year. Some people can get very sick and go to the hospital, and some may die. Thankfully, staying proactive and receiving a yearly flu shot is the best way to stay healthy and protect those around you. With both the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and influenza viruses currently circulating, getting your flu vaccine this year is more important than ever. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone older than 6 months of age receive a yearly flu shot. Visit your Primary Care Physician, your local pharmacy, or the Allegheny County Health Department Immunization Clinic in downtown Pittsburgh to get your flu shot today.

▶ For answers to frequently asked questions about the flu and the vaccine, visit AlleghenyCounty.us/Influenza or contact us at **(412) 578-8062**.

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Sports Medicine and Joint Replacement Specialists Welcome Derrick Fluhme, MD

Introducing

By Nancy Kennedy

Derrick L. Fluhme, M.D., a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist, has recently formed a partnership with Gregory Habib, D.O., in a new practice called Sports Medicine and Joint Replacement Specialists. The practice, with locations in Mt. Lebanon and Greensburg, will focus on total knee and hip replacement surgery; arthroscopic surgery of the knee and shoulder; and care of adults with sports-related injuries and problems of the musculoskeletal system. Dr. Fluhme practiced with South Hills Orthopedic Surgical Associates for 16 years.

Dr. Fluhme performs state-of-the-art orthopedic surgery at St. Clair Hospital, Advanced Surgical Hospital in Washington, and Radiance Surgery Center in Bridgeville. He says that total joint replacement surgery has evolved tremendously, especially in the



“You might assume that we see mostly young athletes but in fact the majority of our patients are ages 40 to 90. I still want that to be our focus. We see patients who are living healthy active lives into their 80’s and even beyond.”

Dr. Derrick L. Fluhme

management of post-operative pain. “For knee replacement especially, the entire peri-operative experience has changed,” he says. “We provide much more patient education and preparation, including classes and interventions to minimize discomfort, and this makes a significantly better patient experience. To reduce pain we use a cryotherapy technique called Iovera, which is performed with a hand-held instrument and can be done in the office setting, taking about 15 minutes. We use it two

weeks pre-operatively in an effort to reduce pain post-operatively. Iovera numbs the sensory nerves around the knee, essentially freezing them. It gradually thaws post-operatively, over a period of several months. Iovera decreases pain but maintains function.”

Pre-op preparation for joint replacement includes optimizing the patient medically, getting them into the healthiest condition possible, Dr. Fluhme says. “The pre-op screening process can reveal medical problems such as diabetes, obesity or a heart condition that must be under control before surgery can be safely performed. This optimization process reduces the complication rate and risk of re-admission and shortens length of stay. It improves outcomes and facilitates rehabilitation.”

Sports medicine is the heart of their practice, and both Dr. Fluhme and Dr. Habib are themselves athletes and sports enthusiasts. “You might assume that we see mostly young athletes but in fact the majority of our patients are ages 40 to 90. I still want that to be our focus. We see patients who are living healthy active lives into their 80’s and even beyond. Every day, I see competitive athletes in their 70’s. It’s all in your mind. Body follows mindset.”

Quality of life is the guiding principle that drives Dr. Fluhme’s commitment to excellence in the care of his patients. “Quality of life is defined by each individual,” he says. “My role is to understand what my patients define as quality of life for themselves. For one patient, that might mean traveling; another might feel that playing golf with friends is important. I do my best to help my patients attain and maintain the quality of life they aspire to. I ask, ‘What can I do to help you achieve your goals?’ We go through every option and determine how to best reach their goals,

whether through medication, physical therapy, steroid injections, biologic injections such as PRP and/or stem cells, or surgery.

“Surgery is always the last option; nine out of ten patients won’t need surgery and can be treated conservatively. If we determine that you do need surgery, we have state-of-the-art technology. Many problems can be treated with minimally invasive technology. The goal is always to focus on what matters most: excellent patient care.”

Dr. Fluhme’s decision to make this transition in his professional life came about in the summer of 2020, when the COVID 19 pandemic left him and many of his fellow physicians with reduced schedules.

“Due to the pandemic, I had spare time last summer and an unexpected opportunity to consider my situation. I know that a lot of doctors spent the ‘COVID time’ reflecting. I thought about my practice and asked myself ‘How can I have a more effective practice model?’ I decided to simplify and scale back – to hit refresh. I have a smaller practice now with one partner, and for me that’s an effective and efficient model. Most importantly, this model is better for my patients. I believe that a smaller practice enhances the doctor-patient relationship. That’s more satisfying for me.”

Fluhme believes that his own quality of life has improved as well as that of his patients. “I have balance in my life now. I coach my boys, Milan and D’Angelo, and have more time with them and my wife Tiffany.”

Fluhme is a Pittsburgh native who grew up in Pleasant Hills and attended Thomas Jefferson High School. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame, and earned a master’s degree in physiology and his M.D. degree from Georgetown University. He completed his residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and a fellowship in sports medicine at the Kerlan Jobe Orthopedic Clinic in Los Angeles.

> To learn more about **Sports Medicine and Joint Replacement Specialists**, visit www.drgreghabib.com.

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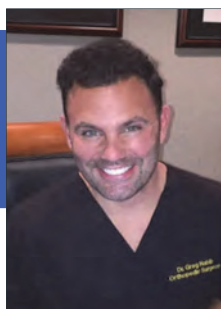
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John Wells from Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh on Medicare



ABOUT THE EXPERT: John Wells is president of Medicare Specialists of Pittsburgh, an Independent Insurance Agency representing many different companies for your insurance needs. Medicare Specialists carefully selected its carriers in order to provide clients with the best level of service, price and coverage. For more information, visit www.medipgh.com.

What are some of the primary concerns of clients?

Due to Covid-19, many people are still concerned about reviewing their plans in person. Our approach is to be exceptionally flexible. We could meet in person, here at the office, or even in someone's home if they are uncomfortable meeting in restaurants or coffee shops. We can also do Zoom meetings or hold discussions over the phone with email follow-ups. Whatever our customers feel comfortable with, we should be able to do.

We have taken precautions for clients who prefer to come into the office and speak face-to-face. For instance, we installed plexiglass panels around the desks and everyone wears a face mask. No matter which option you choose to meet with Medicare Specialists, a meeting would take approximately one hour.

What advice would you have for people who want to sign up for Medicare now?

Timing is always on the top of everyone's mind. Allow yourself more time and please be patient. You can sign up three months prior to your 65th birthday month until three months after your birthday month.

Don't wait to start this process a week or two before your 65th birthday. I would strongly suggest that people utilize that three month period because if we get hit with the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in the fall, this is going to become a slower process.

No matter what happens, we're going to be prepared and be flexible to work with our clients. You can enroll online at www.medicare.gov or set up an appointment at your local social security office.

What is the most common question about Medicare that you tend to hear from clients?

It's more of a statement than a question—but many people find Medicare to be confusing. They may find that there are too many options to choose from or they are not clear on what the differences are. That can be addressed over a general conversation with us, explaining the differences between a Medicare Supplement and the Medicare Advantage Plan, for example, and how those choices impact you further down the road.

How can a Medicare Specialist such as yourself help our readers?

We can help you enroll in Medicare. There's a lot of misinformation about what to do when you turn 65. For instance, many people wonder if they should stay on their group employee coverage or should they drop it and go on Medicare. We can compare your current coverage with what you can get with Medicare. We are licensed with all of the major Advantage Plans, Part D plans and a majority of the Supplemental plans. We educate our clients so they can make the proper decisions on what plan they should choose.

Any final advice for our readers?

We can help clients with Medicaid and other low income subsidies, PACENET, and entitlements. We can help them assess their current financial situations and find the right plan so they can be sure to afford healthcare.



For more information, visit www.medipgh.com.



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People living with dementia from conditions such as Alzheimer's and related diseases have a progressive biological brain disorder that makes it more and more difficult for them to remember things, think clearly, communicate with others, and take care of themselves.

In addition, dementia can cause mood swings and even change a person's personality and how they may interact. Improving your communication skills and learning the early signs of dementia can help make caregiving less stressful, as well as likely improve the quality of your relationship with your family member.

1. RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS.

You can often recognize the early symptoms if a family member is struggling to participate in or complete everyday activities — such as paying bills, using terms of endearment instead of specific names, changes in their vision, isolating themselves or refusing to leave their homes.

2. UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.

As cliché as this sounds, trying to understand what your family members are going through is an important part of providing them with the best care possible. It's also beneficial to learn how to communicate with them in ways that are supportive, understanding and empathetic.

3. SIGN-UP FOR A DEMENTIA EDUCATION VIRTUAL SEMINAR.

Free e-learning workshops through the Alzheimer's Association are available at https://training.alz.org/. Additionally, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network is offering a free series of virtual seminars to help educate the local community on how to provide care for those living with dementia.



As a Dementia Care Center of Excellence, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network is committed to sharing its deep expertise to provide educational support that can improve dementia care, particularly for persons being cared for in their home by family members.

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Dr. Ryan McBee on DRY EYE DISEASE

ABOUT THE EXPERT: Dr. Ryan McBee, Optometrist, is a native of Lake Tahoe, Nevada and comes to Associates in Ophthalmology (AIO) with a vast knowledge in all aspects of optometry. A graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Dr. McBee graduated in the top five percent of his class obtaining honors in both the clinical and applied science.

His wide span of experience includes the managing and training of employees for ocular based studies that he conducted. He also possesses knowledge and experience in credentialing and billing in which he used to set up optometric practices in Nevada. Dr. McBee works closely at AIO treating patients with many ocular diseases



Q: What causes Dry Eye?

A: Dry eye is a lack of adequate tears and a loss of homeostasis due to inflammation on the ocular surface relating to eyelid margin disease. Tears are a complex mixture of water, fatty oils and mucus. This mixture helps make the surface of your eyes smooth and clear, and it helps protect your eyes from infection. For some people, the cause of dry eyes is decreased tear production. For others it's increased tear evaporation and an imbalance in the makeup of your tears.

Ask an EXPERT

Q: How is it managed?

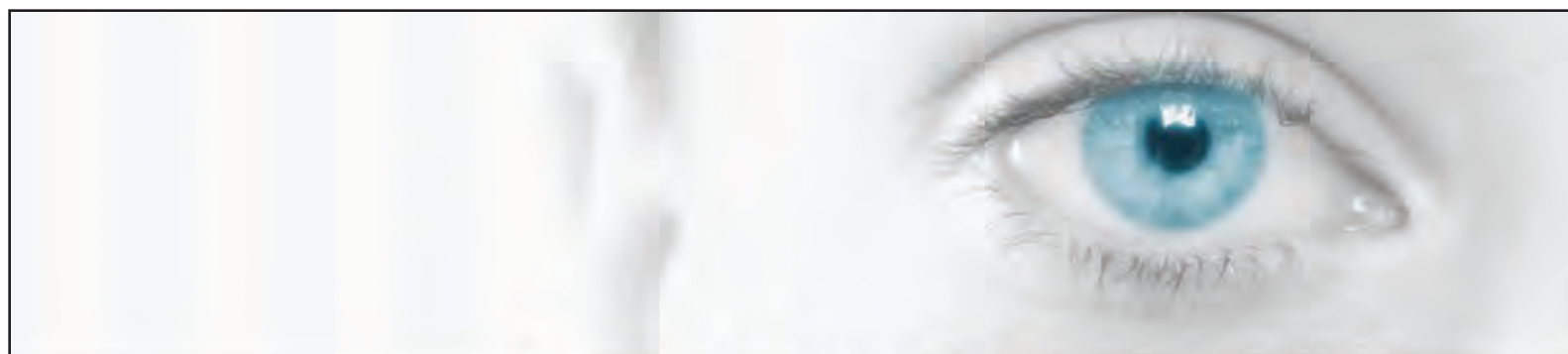
A: The goal is to treat any underlying systemic conditions causing dryness along with treating the eye itself. Treatment usually consists of OTC drops, prescription eye drops, eyelid therapy or a combination of multiple therapies.

Q: What are the usual manifestations?

A: The most common symptom of dry eye is watering eyes. However, patient also experience burning, stinging, discomfort, heaviness, eye fatigue, decreased vision and even an increase in glare at night. When the eye is dry it sends a signal to the brain to produce more tears. However, the glands that are used to produce more tears tend to be salty and therefore evaporate much quicker on the ocular surface. Therefore, the eye will constantly water.

Q: What is the examination like to determine whether someone is suffering from Dry Eyes?

A: The examination for dry eye to the patient might not look any different than their routine eye exam. However, a dry eye evaluation has specific testing geared towards this disease that will then help determine the proper treatment protocol.



Associates in Ophthalmology's

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Eye Health

Q: Are some people more prone to having Dry Eyes than others?

A: There are definitely age and gender predilections with women over the age of 50 more adversely affected. However, a majority of the oral medication people take these days have a side effect of causing dry eye and as computers/cell phones become more widely used the incidence of dry eye has also increased. A recent study out of dry eye clinic in California found that children between the ages of 4-18 were already showing some signs of dry eye and eyelid margin disease due to increased cell phone and computer use. I think we are going to see a lot more people at a younger age with dry eye disease and eyelid margin disease in the practice within the next few years.

Q: What are the typical treatments used to help people suffering from Dry Eyes?

A: Treatment usually consists of a combination of drops and eyelid therapy. As we learn more about dry eye we are finding that the eyelids play a more important role than we originally thought. I find myself treating lid margin disease (i.e. blepharitis and meibomian gland dysfunction) where I would have treated with only drops in the past. If the dryness cannot be managed effectively with OTC therapy then patients have the option of two prescription drops, which are Restasis and Xiidra.

Lid margin disease is typically treated with some form of heat along with a cleaning product. If the disease progresses or if it cannot be managed simply, then antibiotics are generally prescribed both orally and/or topically. Certain patient will need further treatment including eyelid debridement and expression through devices like the BlephX and iLux respectively.

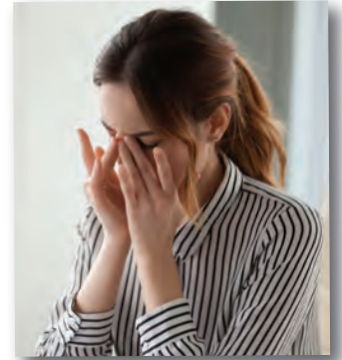
Q: Do you have any recommendations for people to help them avoid Dry Eye issues?

A: Unfortunately, no, since there are so many variables that can affect patients with dry eye disease. The best thing to do is to seek help if any symptoms or changes are noted.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add about Dry Eye?

A: I think the hardest thing about treating patients with dry eye and eyelid margin disease is that nothing is instantaneous. Patients need to understand that treatment can often take months for symptoms relief and that a majority of therapy is chronic. The good news is that the disease is treatable and that there are many more things to come in the next few years for dry eye therapy. For the past ten plus years we only had one eye drop option for patients. Soon we will have multiple drops options as well as a variety of eyelid treatments to offer patients who have been suffering for so long.

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SPRING and SUMMER PROGRAMS

at USC Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park



Kids in the Kitchen



Art Camp



A counselor and camp participants



Eco Explorers Learning Lab

By Kevin Brown

Spring is here, summer is right around the corner and the Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park in Upper St. Clair is ready with a full schedule of programs for every member of the family.

After a fall and winter that saw some closures due to the pandemic, the Center is moving ahead to provide local residents with a much-needed outlet for activities and exercise.

"In February, once we started to really get our momentum going again, we saw more people coming in, along with a lot of new people," said Melissa Lindberg, Marketing/Membership Services supervisor. "They were feeling like they just couldn't be in their houses anymore. They decided to come in and tour and they saw our focus on safety. I think it really helped them feel okay with making this their first place that they truly could go out and be able to enjoy the Center again."

The Center follows recommended guidelines for cleaning and social distancing to protect members, continues a constant cleaning schedule, and maintains multiple locations for hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes for equipment, and hand-washing stations. Changes that were made last year in creating a larger fitness area and utilizing the lobby space are still in effect.

The Center is now fully open and offers members an indoor lap pool, leisure pool and resistance channel, fitness areas with exercise equipment, basketball gym, group exercise areas, and a playroom. Some restrictions apply. Those planning

to visit the Center should check the website for more information. Outdoor walking trails and play areas are also available to members.

The Center is open to both members and residents of Upper St. Clair. Anyone can become a member regardless of residency. In addition, camps, classes, and programs are also open to non-members. Facility hours are Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Advanced reservations are required for some activities including adult pick-up basketball, indoor leisure pool, lap pool, group exercise classes, the playroom, and pickleball.

Spring programming at the Center includes activities for kids and adults. Among the kids' activities are babysitting training, dance classes featuring ballet, jazz and tumbling, dog training, running, outdoor soccer and the ever-popular JumpBunch sports training. Also included are basketball, a mini-med school, soccer training, track and field, and kids' cooking.

Swim lessons by age group along with swim activities for the whole family are being offered. Lifeguard certification courses for ages 15 and up are available and include in-person and online training.

Adult activities include swimming, group exercise, basketball, and pickleball, among others. Virtual live group exercise classes and on-demand classes are also available via Google Meet and YouTube.

Looking ahead to summer programming for kids, Melissa said that they are focusing on summer camps



Melissa Lindberg

where most of their activity will be. "Summer camps have been proven to enrich the lives of children through interaction with their peers, learning from positive role models like camp counselors, and the numerous opportunities to grow and learn while having fun. Whether a child has an interest in arts, sciences, outdoors, or sports, there is something for them to enjoy this summer," she said.

Camp St. Clair, a popular summer program for kids, will return. "Camp St. Clair, for children entering grades one through seven, runs every day, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants can choose to do a half-day option, whether it be morning or afternoon or they can do a full day," Melissa noted.

"Another new fun thing that we're doing this summer is that we have partnered with the Audubon Society of Western PA to offer preschool programs," Melissa said. "Participants actually get to meet and interact with live birds."

More information will be available soon on senior programs.

As the pandemic slows and we start seeking more opportunities to get out, Melissa recommends that people just start "dipping their toe back in." "You don't need to come into the building every day," she said. "We have the luxury of being in an amazing park here. We really want people to get out and exercise, just enjoy the outdoors by coming and playing on the playground, playing with their kids on the athletic field, or walking the trails with their family. All of that is part of our recreation programming as well, even if it's not structured the way our camps, classes and exercise programs are," she said.

Summer Camp Schedule

- Earth, Wind, Inspire -**
Grades 1-5 -
June 14-18
- Animal Adventures -**
Ages 4-6 -
June 14-18 (No Wed.)
- Camp St. Clair - Grades 1-7 -**
June 21-August 6
- Kids in the Kitchen -**
Ages 4-6 & 7-11 -
June 21-24 & August 16-20
- Strength & Conditioning -**
Ages 12+ - June 21-August 6
- Red, White, & Blue -**
Ages 4-6 -
June 28-July 2 (No Wed.)
- Cartooning & Anime Art -**
Grades 6-8 - July 5-8
- Little Doctor School -**
Ages 4-11 - July 12-16
- Little Veterinarian School -**
Ages 4-11 - July 19-23
- Gemini Theater Workshops -**
Ages 4-6 & 7-11 -
July 19-23 & August 16-20
- Olympics - Ages 4-6 -**
July 26-30 (No Wed.)
- Pets and Animals Art -**
Grades 3-5 - August 2-5
- Ecosystems Science -**
Grades 1-6 -
August 9-13
- Eureka! The Inventors Club -**
Grades 1-5 August 9-13
- Farewell to Summer Carnival -**
Ages 4-6 -
August 9-13 (No Wed.)



A full list of activities, camp offerings, and registration information is available on the Center's website at www.twpusc.org/recreationcenter. The Center can also be reached at (412) 221-1099.

Sign-up at www.guidetogoodhealth.com to get the Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health delivered right to your inbox!

What Comes After Early Intervention Services for My Child?

By Brooke Racicot,
PT, PCS

The first several years of life are a critical time of brain development for a child, building the foundation for years to come. At teli, The Early Learning Institute, our therapists work with families and children with developmental delays and address those concerns in the first three years with the appropriate Early Intervention therapies that will enable a child to reach their full potential.



As your child approaches three years of age, you, your teli therapist, and your health care professionals may assess the need to continue speech, physical, occupational, or other therapies. A recent affiliation forged between teli and The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh provides seamless support for families in continuing care after the completion of Early Intervention services up to age 21 years old.

How do I access additional services for my child?

Begin by consulting with your health care provider as well as your teli Early Intervention therapist to discuss how additional therapies could assist your child. You can either ask for a referral from your physician or you can self-refer. From there, the process begins with an evaluation of your child by the provider that you select.

What services can my child receive?

Providers such as The Children's Institute offer a range of services to address your child's needs including:

Physical Therapy – Physical activity and skilled movements provide essential building blocks for further development. These skills support children as they explore their environment through structured play.

Occupational Therapy – A child's work is their play! Incorporating activities that help children to develop skills of everyday life, like feeding and dressing, enable them to explore their world and do more things independently.

Speech Language Therapy – Speech is an important form of expression. Stimulating language development through integrated play helps a child understand and communicate with the world around them.

Nutrition – Proper nutrition is an essential part of overall health. Ensuring your child has a nutritionally balanced diet will provide them with the energy to learn, grow, and develop.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) – The new ABA program at The Children's Institute provides comprehensive and collaborative therapies for children with autism between the ages of 18 months to 21 years old, conducted both on-site and via telehealth.



Learn more about services provided by teli at www.telipa.org or The Children's Institute at www.amazingkids.org. Brooke Racicot is Senior Director of Rehabilitation Services.

Tips on How to Engage With Individuals With Special Needs

Every month is Autism Acceptance Month in our world! Acceptance requires us all to do some work, so we reached out to some autistic friends for help. Together, we came up with some things we can all practice in order to engage with people who may have neurology that differs from our own:

- **Learn.** Taking time to actively do some research can be enlightening.
- **Be welcoming.** Initiating friendships can often be difficult for many. Be open!
- **Find the joy.** When someone shows or tells us what they like, support that without judgment, and join in with the special interest.
- **Accommodate.** It's important to accept all needs, especially if some of those are different than what you may be used to.
- **Appreciate.** Find, see, and hold onto the value, worth, and dignity of everyone.
- **Understand.** Differences are not wrong, bad, shameful, or a problem. They are just different!
- **Have an open mind.** Surrounding yourself with those who are different than you can be very interesting and stimulate new ideas and solutions.
- **Love.** The person, their abilities, their differences.
- **Educate.** Tell others about your experiences. In return, be open to listening to others.
- **Adapt.** Meet others where they are, not where you want them to be.

Did you read this list assuming when we wrote about others, we are referring to autistic people? Try reading it again from the perspective of someone with autism, reaching out to someone without!



Please contact **Autism Connection of PA** at help@autismofpa.org or call (412) 781-4116 to learn more about the autism, or the "nonautism," in your life!



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Want Better Health? Look Around You

By Nick Jacobs

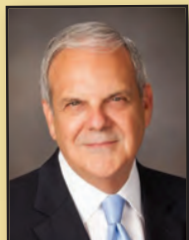
As individuals look for ways to improve their health, most often the focus is inward: on what we eat, how we breathe, what vitamins or supplements to take or by tracking our heart rate, blood pressure or other vital signs.

That's all good. But when we concentrate only on our bodies for health, we often forget to look outward, at our environment, and what it may be contributing—or detracting—from our overall wellbeing.

One of my first AHA! moments on the impact of environment on health came early in my adult life while I watched my father lose his battle with lung cancer at the age of 58. For me, one of the most profound outcomes from the experience of watching dad die in the hospital was my repulsion at the surroundings. Rather than being warm and comforting, they were cold and foreboding. There was nothing healing about the environment, and I knew some of my feelings of helplessness were caused by my realization that even then, in 1975, it simply didn't have to be that way.

A dozen years later, as CEO of a Convention and Visitors Bureau, I saw up close and personal true hospitality and client-centered attention to detail. I marveled at the attention each guest received. I helped train employees on the art—and it is an art—of caring for our guests, who we immersed in an attentive, beautiful, soothing and nurturing atmosphere.

When I entered hospital administration, I immediately tried to cre-



“The point of all this is that the environment in which you function can have a profound effect on your well-being. This is true not just in a hospital, but at home, at work and really, anywhere you are.”

-Nick Jacobs

ate such a healing environment. Unfortunately, my first three CEOs vetoed my efforts, preferring instead to retain institutional green walls and white sheets, curtains, towels and uniforms. None of which were soothing to our patients.

When I became a CEO at Windber Medical Center, I was able to create a healing environment unlike any other at least in our region. I drew on my experience, which also included as a musician and former executive director of an art organization, to take a “plain, white canvass” and make it “as close to home as they could get.” In many ways we mimicked a fine hotel, with healing colors, beautiful artwork and music surrounding our patients and their families.

Our palliative care unit looked like the Ritz Carlton, with balconies, a family area in each room to sleep four, a private kitchen, soft lighting, art and wall hangings. Even roving musicians.

Our lobbies, exam and waiting rooms were decorated by the former hotel manager we hired to oversee housekeeping, dietary and maintenance. We had green spaces indoors and out, elaborate fish tanks, music, aroma diffusers and fountains everywhere. Tranquility was the order of the day. Each piece of brass glistened and our floors had the warm look and texture of highly polished hardwood.

Our waiting rooms had popcorn

or bread-baking machines and herbal tea or coffee services. Our breast cancer center offered dark chocolate and tea and featured a fireplace and decorative wall fountain. Each patient received a specially designed Velcro-clad mammography gown that only exposed one side at a time; dressing rooms featured beautiful, hand-painted privacy screens, mirrored lockers and even deodorant for use post-exam. A private elevator for patients took them from the exam room to their physician's office without the need to change clothes.

Two years after initiating these changes, something unexpected happened: we had the lowest length of stay, lowest restraint and lowest infection rates of any of our 13 peer hospitals. Even with a hospice, we also had the lowest death rates.

The point of all this is that the environment in which you function can have a profound effect on your well-being. This is true not just in a hospital, but at home, at work and really, anywhere you are. Not long ago, it seemed like everyone was talking about feng shui, which has been defined as a way to live in harmony with the principles of the natural world. In his book, “Make the Impossible Possible,” Bill Strickland, CEO of Manchester Bidwell, a jobs training center and community arts program in Pittsburgh, credits the design of his center as essential to the success he has had in changing the lives of literally thousands of individuals, most from disadvantaged neighborhoods.

“The beauty we've designed into our center isn't window dressing; it's an essential part of our success,” Strickland wrote. “It nourishes the spirit, and until you reach that part of the spirit that isn't touched by cynicism or despair, no change can begin. You can't show a person how to build a better life if they feel no pleasure in the simple act of being alive.”

One more example: For almost 20 years, spanning two careers, I used to drive through a five-block city area littered with some dilapidated houses that it was hard to imagine anyone living there. And

yet, in the midst of such despair, sat one house that from early spring to late fall was encircled by a garden of wildflowers so brilliant that the rest of the neighborhood seemed trapped in a 1950s black & white television show. During an otherwise depressing drive, that house provided me with a moment, however brief, of pure pleasure and appreciation. It just made me feel good.

I eventually got to meet the woman who tended and nurtured that garden for more than 50 years. Her name was Twyla, a lovely woman in her 80s. I asked her how she found the resolve over all those years to produce such beautiful flowers. What I didn't add to my question was, “... in such otherwise depressing surroundings.”

Twyla's answer was as simple as it was profound.

“I can't change how my neighbors choose to live their lives,” she said. “I can't reverse the employment levels in this city. I can't erase the pain, hopelessness or sadness brewing in people's hearts. But what I can do is demonstrate each and every day that a positive outlook, a commitment to excellence wherever you live and a desire to make things even just a little better for anyone who drives by or lives near me is possible.”

She paused, then added, “I just try to give them a little hope through the beauty of my gardens.”

It's undeniable that there exists a link between body, mind and spirit. The more we nurture one, the greater the positive impact on the other two. You don't have to wait until you are sick and hope you end up in a hospital designed for healing, visit the Manchester Bidwell Training Center (although Mr. Strickland has always welcomed guests) or drive through a blighted neighborhood in hopes of finding a mini-Garden of Eden.

All you need do is examine your own surroundings, those you have the power to change, and make an effort to bring more beauty in your life, through art, music and anything else that just makes you feel good in a positive way.

Nick Jacobs is a partner with Senior Management Resources, LLC. He is a founder of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine, former board member and officer of the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine and served on the Executive Committee of the Integrative Health Policy Consortium. Jacobs maintains a website, Healinghospitals.com.

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I got the vaccine because I think we should do everything humanly possible to stop the spread of the virus. This vaccine is a game changer and together we can win this challenge we face as Americans.

~ Mel Blount, Former Pittsburgh Steeler and Pro Football Hall of Famer



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2021 Annual Healthcare Guide



ACORx PHARMACY

ACORx: Managing Medications and Keeping Patients Healthier

By Daniel Casciato

Studies have shown that the cost of medication non-compliance in the U.S. healthcare system can be as high as \$400 billion annually when patients don't take their medications correctly. That figure includes the cost of readmissions, ER trips, additional doctor visits, and even missed days of work because someone didn't take their medication properly.

"If you could save our healthcare system \$400 billion a year, you're on to something," says Shawn Nairn, founder of ACORx Pharmacy, a concierge pharmacy program dedicated to improving patient outcomes through enhanced compliance and ultimately, reducing the overall cost of care. "If you want to reduce people going to the hospital, going to the emergency rooms, going to nursing homes, then medication compliance is absolutely the first place to start. If you improve there, everything else will automatically improve."

Nairn's company, ACORx, addresses this problem by replacing the traditional Sunday-through-Saturday pill cases. Instead of making patients or their loved ones responsible for sorting their own medications or organize pill bottles—ACORx manages this process for them through its Medication Adherence Packaging (MAP). This

packaging clearly organizes multiple medications in an easy-to-follow format, providing instant visual reinforcement of what medications to take and when.

There are several benefits, explains Nairn. First, the MAPs are filled and refilled by a pharmacist, not the patient, spouse, or other family member. This eliminates possibility of patient or caregiver errors.

"Secondly, we deliver it directly to the patient," says Nairn. "Not only is the medication in the packaging correctly, which is often a problem, but it also solves the problem of transportation when people can't get to the pharmacy. We're solving at least two problems for people, along with a certain comfort level that their medications are packed and organized and set up for them to be a success with managing their medications."

Few brick and mortar companies in the industry are following the ACORx model, notes Nairn. While there are many online pharmacies in the marketplace, he points out that one advantage is that ACORx's delivery drivers are trained to work with patients. So they are cognizant of signals, symptoms and signs that they need to convey back to management.

"For example, they may tell us that a certain patient didn't look well today," says Nairn. "Or that a patient still had all of her medica-



Shawn Nairn

tions on her table from last month meaning that she didn't take them. So now I can call the patient, family member or caregiver to let them know. We train our delivery drivers to be aware of these concerns."

Under the current COVID-19 rules, ACORx is using no contact delivery. Its delivery drivers will phone the patient when they arrive to their residence to let them know they are there but to stay in the house. They will leave the medication package by the front door, ring the doorbell, and then leave.

"A minute later, the patient can come out and grab the medication," says Nairn. "It's literally no contact while we're trying to protect our drivers and trying to protect these patients in these ever-so-complicated times that we're deal-

ing with."

Medication compliance is critical to healthy, successful, and productive people, stresses Nairn. Not taking your medication

or taking it when you want can be harmful to patients. The trickle down effect is harmful to the healthcare system.

"Improving a patient's medication compliance keeps them healthy longer and keeps them living at home longer," says Nairn, adding that patients only pay their copay. "Those are the only charges that you have to pay us. Your medication review, your delivery, your refill requests, and everything we do for you is free."

➤ For more information, visit www.acorxpharmacy.com.



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Helping Patients Experience Joy Through Hearing Health

By Daniel Casciato

Built on family, trust and passion, Swift Audiology is a local, long-standing, family-run, full-service audiology and hearing care practice. That passion, which drove Debra Swift, the founder and owner, to found this practice in 1987, remains alive and strong.

Swift set up her first “office” in the rented space of a pharmacy in 1987. Her mission then was to help people who were having difficulties hearing to hear better with the assistance of hearing devices. 34 years later, her personal and business mission has not changed. Since that time, the practice has grown to four locations – North Hills, Allison Park, South Hills, and Washington, PA. Her diverse staff includes Doctor’s of Audiology and Board-Certified Hearing Instrument Specialists who make it their mission to help those in the community hear better and continue enjoying life.

What distinguishes her business from others is a dedicated staff that works directly with patients making them feel heard and cared for.

“Our patients’ experience a family-like atmosphere with state-of-the-art technology and the best option to meet their hearing needs,” explains Swift. “We understand that in today’s market—and more than ever before—individuals are flooded with options for amazing technology to help improve the quality of their life. Choice is in the patient’s hands—we help educate our patients on the options by taking into account their needs, lifestyle, budget and hearing profile.”

Through Swift Audiology’s Hearing Aid Test Drive Program, patients can test drive their hearing aids in real-time and in real life.

“You wouldn’t buy a car without a test drive, so why would you buy a hearing aid without one?” asks Swift.

At Swift Audiology, Swift emphasizes that they are in the business of improving lives, increasing happiness and helping people make meaningful connections with those they love.

“Treating hearing loss with hearing aids is a great way to accomplish this and we are proud to be part of this process for so many,” she says. “We know using hearing aids for the first time is a big step but imagine what could happen.”

This is one patient’s experience and their “Why” they do what they do.

Hearing my husband say ‘I love you,’ the birds singing outside, and getting back something that was taken from me, are the best things about my new hearing devices.” –Ruth

A full comprehensive hearing test will tell you the degree and type of hearing loss you have, notes Swift. This information will help determine if you could benefit from hearing aids. For most adults, the onset and progression of hearing loss extends over some time. Family members and friends are likely to be the first to notice some difficulty hearing, long before the person does.

SWIFT AUDIOLOGY



Through Swift Audiology’s Hearing Aid Test Drive Program, patients can test drive their hearing aids in real-time and in real life. “You wouldn’t buy a car without a test drive, so why would you buy a hearing aid without one?”

—Debra Swift, founder and owner

According to the Hearing Loss Association of America hearing loss has been shown to negatively impact nearly every dimension of the human experience, including physical health, emotional and mental health, perceptions of mental acuity, social skills, family relationships, and self-esteem, as well as work and school performance.

People will not be aware of what they don’t hear (like the sounds of birds, the beep of the microwave). They will be aware that they do not understand speech, as when they say, “I can hear but can’t understand.” The person with hearing loss will notice difficulty in understanding when someone talks from another room, or their back is to them, or now while wearing masks.

“Probably, the major complaint of people with hearing loss is the difficulty they experience in comprehending speech in any kind of noisy place such as restaurants, receptions, large family dinners, in the car, or on a plane,” says Swift. “Group conversations are particularly difficult, especially when there is a great deal of crosstalk. Family members frequently complain that the TV volume is set too high, leading to some family squabbles and frustration for both parties.”

These increasing difficulties in hearing may produce conflict with family members, as the family insists on getting help and the person with hearing loss is reluctant to recognize the reality.

“At Swift Audiology – we take the time to know our patients,” adds Swift. “My mission is to help others hear, comes from a personal experience I had with my grandmother after losing her hearing. Because of her hearing loss, she also lost her independence and connection to family. There was nothing I could do to help her, but made it my mission to help others as I would have my grandmother.”

When people come to her practice, Swift says she takes pride and care in treating everyone like family.

“Because...once you become involved with the Swift Audiology Practice, you become a member of our Swift Audiology family and that makes all the difference,” she says. “How rewarding for our patients, their families, as well as for Team Swift. WIN-WIN!”



For more information, visit www.swiftaudiology.com.

Free Medical Clinic Open at New Facility in Penn Hills

By Eileen Andrews

Sheep Inc. Health Care Center (SIHCC) is a free medical clinic for people without any insurance. The clinic has been in operation since November 2010. For 10 years SIHCC was a pop-up clinic setting up in Monroeville Assembly of God’s children’s education wing every week. In 2020, the clinic renovated a space at MAOG’s new campus at The Fold Church in Penn Hills. SIHCC opened their doors at the new facility in June.

Individuals and families face serious challenges resulting from being unemployed, underemployed or having to work several jobs and not being able to afford insurance. SIHCC provides primary care for the uninsured in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Butler, Washington, Indiana, Armstrong and Fayette Counties. The clinic has a corps of volunteers that include physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, and support staff who are dedicated to this service program. SIHCC is open every Thursday evening from 5:45 - 8:30 pm, the 2nd and 4th Saturday mornings of the month from 9:30 am - Noon, and offers limited availabil-



ity for weekday appointments. The clinic serves uninsured children, adults, the homeless and people of multi-ethnic and racial backgrounds.

During the pandemic, the clinic has seen a rise in new patients. Now with a permanent location, SIHCC is pursuing programs dealing with mental health and expanding our specialty services. Services offered to those without insurance include school physicals, well child checks, diagnosis and treatment of acute conditions such as otitis, pharyngitis, sinusitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, gastroenteritis, soft tissue infections, rashes, bites/stings, minor injuries, UTIs. The clinic also services clients with chronic medical conditions such as COPD, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis and heart disease. SIHCC assists their patients by offsetting the cost of prescriptions and basic labs for help with accurate diagnosis and treatment.



SIHCC is located at 11817 Frankstown Rd, Penn Hills, PA 15235. The office can be reached at (412) 310-0062. Messages by email can be sent from their website at www.SheepIncClinic.org.



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Founder and Owner

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*For 34 years, Swift Audiology,
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CHIPS DENTAL ASSOCIATES

Hybridge Dental Implants Save Patients Time and Expense

Many of us have struggled with chronic dental issues, saving unhealthy teeth that cause constant worry or dental pain. After investing thousands of dollars, we're often left disappointed when those teeth that we so heroically saved, fail us. The logical path that both dentists and their patients followed for years was to save teeth, at any expense. The advancement in dental implant treatment, however, has fueled a paradigm shift.



Dr. Timothy Chips

In the consult room of Chips Dental Associates, Hybridge-certified dentist Dr. Timothy Chips focuses on long-term prognosis when evaluating a patient's smile. It is common for many patients to have a mix of missing, healthy, and unhealthy teeth. Often patients arrive unsure of the best path for long-term success, posing questions like, "Am I really ready for a full mouth restoration? Is it possible to save some of my remaining teeth?"

At the time of the consultation, Dr. Chips educates patients toward their best solution. Utilizing a panoramic x-ray and a CT scan, he helps patients view their dental condition through a long-term lens, taking the time to evaluate the reliability of the remaining teeth five or ten years down the road.

If the long-term prognosis of the remaining teeth is poor, the value of replacing unhealthy teeth with dental implants outweighs the cost of recurring treatment in the long run.

Hybridge dental implant patient Dianna Cantrell had struggled for

years with the expense and pain of root canals and crowns. Cantrell appreciated being able to bring a finality to her chronic dental issues with dental implants.

"I wanted to be done, completely done with my dental problems—no more root canals, crowns, or bridgework. With Hybridge, I'm done," Cantrell said.

Dental implants can support the weight of multiple teeth. At Chips Dental Associates, Dr. Chips offers Hybridge, a cost-efficient approach to replacing a full jaw of teeth with a fixed restoration, supported on only 5 or 6 dental implants. With the advanced technology in Hybridge dental implants, patients benefit from significantly reduced treatment time for a whole new smile, all in one relaxed atmosphere at Chips Dental Associates.

In addition to time saved, Hybridge full mouth restorations restore full dental function and optimal esthetics. Unlike dentures and partials, dental implants provide the necessary stimulation for bone health which supports facial appearance. Hybridge dental implants improve the quality of life for a patient, as they can now eat and chew with fixed function, which is often limited for those with dentures or, missing and unhealthy teeth.

Lastly, replacing teeth with dental implants is now more esthetic and natural than before. Hybridge full mouth restorations are made at a state-of-the-art laboratory in Rochester, NY. Using a variety of durable material options, Hybridge is customized to look incredibly natural. Patients are part of the decision-making process to enjoy the smile that they've always imagined.

> For more information on Hybridge Dental Implants, schedule your one-on-one consultation with **Dr. Timothy Chips** today. Call (724) 443-5710 or learn more at PittsburghHybridge.com.

CARE PATROL

How Senior Placement Agencies Support Seniors and their Families

By Lynne Robb

Families at some point may come to the conclusion that the living situation for their loved is no longer safe and/or sustainable. The senior may require help with their personal needs and/or struggle with everyday chores, and even present a danger to themselves. The family caregivers may no longer be able to provide the necessary assistance, care, or time. Often when making a decision under stress, trying to gather all the needed information to make an informed decision on your own is nearly impossible. There are just too many things to consider and there are so many facilities to choose from. Trying to tour each one, ask the right questions, narrowing down the options, and making a final choice would give anyone a headache. That is where senior placement agency comes in. They make the process of transitioning into senior living easy and comfortable. They understand this isn't just about an individual transition but is often a family transition as well. They work with the whole family to find the perfect fit.

There are many benefits in using a Senior Living Placement Service including:



Lynne Robb

- **Providing Local Support:** Meeting and interviewing families extensively to understand healthcare, social preferences, location preferences and financial picture to narrow down and provide best care options to provide the highest quality of life.

- **Provide Resources:** Community amenities, pricing information, occupancy rates, payment resources, moving and downsizing, veterans benefits, and elder law attorneys

- **Saving Time:** Arranging tours and joining the family on tours to advocate and ensure their questions get answered.

- **Advocating for Family and Loved One:** Assisting in the process of what is a very difficult decision every step of the way, by being the liaison, counseling and advocating for the family and resident every step of the way.

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Francine's Stroke Recovery Story: Dancing Once Again

By Kayla Phillips
at blog.encompasshealth.com
(article adapted)

It didn't take long for Francine Johnson to catch Joe Pender's eye some 30 years ago. The pair worked in different departments of the same company when Pender asked Johnson if she wanted to join him to get fried shrimp for lunch—her favorite. They hit it off and soon began dating.

In the early days of their relationship, the two would lie in the floor of Pender's apartment listening to music. "Slow Jam" by Midnight Star became the song that defined their relationship—they danced to it for the first time in Pender's apartment and continued to dance to it throughout their 32 years of marriage.

"That song was our first dance. It said how we felt, and how we still feel today," Pender said. "That song was special to both of us. She'll hear it in her sleep and wake up with a smile."

After Johnson suffered a stroke that left her unable to walk or speak, Pender chose Encompass Health for his wife's rehabilitation. While there, the couple learned that rehabilitation, like dancing, works best when you choose the right partner.

Surviving a stroke

On a Tuesday morning, Johnson complained of sinus issues, but nothing severe. Pender went outside to pressure wash the driveway, and when he came inside, he found Johnson in deep prayer.

"When I walked back in the room, she was pacing and kept saying, 'Jesus help me,'" Pender said. "I told her, 'Say my name,' and she couldn't. She just kept looking at me with those eyes. I can still see those eyes right now."

Pender recognized that Johnson was having a stroke—she'd had a previous stroke many years ago—

and called 911. Paramedics rushed her to a local hospital, but due to COVID-19 visitor restrictions, Pender wasn't able to go inside.

"I sat in the parking lot and just boohoo cried," he said. "I talked to God and said, 'You've got to do something.'"

Johnson was transferred to another hospital for further treatment. Doctors told Pender that the stroke was causing a midline shift in her brain, and she likely had only a 1 percent chance of survival. They could give her medication, but it was a waiting game, and Johnson was unlikely to survive more than 24 hours.

A day later, Johnson was still stable. The following day, doctors told Pender that the bleeding had subsided and Johnson exceeded their expectations, but she was still in critical condition and facing severe deficits.

"The doctor called me and said, 'I don't know what God you prayed to, but I'm going to start praying too, because this is truly a miracle,'" Pender said. "She is the woman that has prayed for everybody, except for herself. I know that she's God's angel. She didn't ask for a blessing for herself, but I did."

Choosing the right rehabilitation partner for stroke recovery

Although Johnson had beaten the odds and survived her stroke, doctors told Pender that she still faced a long, difficult road to regaining her independence that would possibly not be successful.

Pender knew that he would do what it took for his wife to have the best chance at recovery, whatever that might look like. Doctors gave Pender a list of rehabilitation providers in the area, but he was unfamiliar with the options.

"I told the doctor, 'Let me ask you a question. If it was your hus-

band, son, daughter, mother, father, where would you send them?'" She said Encompass Health," Pender said.

Pender asked other trusted friends for their thoughts, and even received a recommendation from a stranger in line at the Walmart checkout when the topic somehow came up. It was a consensus—Johnson's best chance for recovery was at Encompass Health.

Beginning with the basics

Johnson arrived at Encompass Health unable to speak, swallow or sit up on the edge of the bed unattended as her brain continued to heal following the stroke.

"I remember going into the room and she was laying in the bed, and she was hard to rouse," said Van, therapy manager. "She was unable to speak and was moaning. I tried to use a communication board to communicate with her, but she couldn't even point to it. I knew she had significant impairments and that it was going to be a long road to recovery."

Therapists started slowly, meeting Francine where she was in her recovery.

"We started with bed mobility," said Bridget, physical therapist. "We needed to work on sitting balance and just staying upright. That big aspect affects a lot of other mobility. You have to have balance to move into the chair, to stand and to walk, so we started with the basics."

In addition to her physical impairments, Johnson was also struggling to speak and swallow. Speech-language pathologists worked with her on the basics of language, starting with vowel formation. As she progressed, they implemented singing and other familiar actions. Electrical stimulation helped her improve her ability to swallow.

Dancing together again

Throughout her rehabilitation stay, Johnson was very emotional—a common side effect of a stroke. Fortunately, Pender was able to be by her side as visitation rules allowed one family member to be present for caregiver education.

When Johnson seemed particularly upset during therapy one day, Pender knew exactly what to do. He grabbed his phone and asked his bride to dance to their song.

Using a bodyweight support system, Van helped Johnson stand. Together, Johnson and Pender danced to their song and cried while those in the therapy gym cheered them on.

"I knew that that song would do something to her and kick start her psyche," Pender said. "I wanted her to remember my love for her. I wanted her to know that she was safe with me and that I was there."

That moment was a turning point of sorts for Johnson, who continued to make small but substantial strides in her rehabilitation.

"They saw that there were glimmers here and there, and they went after the little glimmers—the little lights—that she responded to and focused on those," Pender said. "The little things they were doing were changing her. She wanted to get better. She wanted to be my Francine again."

At the time of her discharge, Johnson still struggled to walk on her own and communicate, but the glimmers that sparked at Encompass Health continued to burn brighter. Now, Johnson is completely independent. While she cannot read as she once did and still faces some lingering effects of aphasia, she is able to communicate her wants and needs. Most importantly, she and her husband are dancing to "Slow Jam" once again.

"I can see into our future, and it's fabulous," Johnson said. "It's good. It's all good."



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VOICES FOR INDEPENDENCE/TRPIL

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VFI Paramill User



TRPIL is located in Washington County

By Lois Thomson

"We don't want to be the first stop, but rather one stop." That's how Steve Johnson, director of marketing, describes Voices for Independence (VFI), an organization that speaks out for the equality and rights of people with disabilities. VFI, with its headquarters in Erie, became affiliated with TRPIL – Transitional Paths to Independent Living – about a year ago, and it's an example of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. Both organizations are federal Centers for Independent Living.

Johnson said TRPIL, located in Washington, Pa., provides five core services: Information & Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills Training, and Transition Services. "TRPIL will continue to provide those five services, and VFI also offers those services, but has taken it further by offering so much more." He said, for example, that if someone suddenly becomes disabled and now resides at a nursing facility, that person may not know where to turn. "If an individual wants to get back into the community, we have nursing home transition (NHT) staff who can talk with them about what they hope to accomplish. They can collaborate with a social worker on a discharge plan.

"NHT can help someone find accessible and affordable housing, but they don't just say 'here's your apartment.' NHT also provides a bed, couch, cooking items, and essentials. If someone needs an accessible bathroom, widened doorways, or needs to have a ramp installed, our home modification department can step in. Many will need in-home care, which VFI also provides, hiring caregivers daily. There's no charge, as these are Medicaid-funded programs."

Johnson said more important than what the organizations do is why they do it. "The goal is to help people to become more independent than they were before. We're trying to make sure we do as much as we can for as many as we can, but we're about quality, not quantity."

VFI renovated a one-floor schoolhouse in Erie and turned it into a fully accessible building. Steve Johnson said, "We have events – everything from live music and crafts, to cooking classes in an accessible kitchen – and everyone is welcome, even people who don't have any affiliation with VFI." There is also a state-of-the-art gym, free weights, a rowing machine that's accessible, and a paramill – a treadmill for wheelchair users. Likewise, TRPIL has entered Phase II of its Capital Campaign to renovate the former YWCA building in Washington, Pa., which will focus on a fitness center, an accessible kitchen, and re doing the YWCA's auditorium.

Shona Eakin is CEO of VFI, and Johnson said her mentor was Kathleen Kleinmann, former CEO of TRPIL. "Kathleen was planning her retirement, and she asked if Shona would like to take over as leader of TRPIL; so she now serves as CEO of both organizations." Johnson added, "Having grown up in the area as an individual with a disability, Shona lives our mission statement, and lives it well." Eakin's history and experience were instrumental in bringing the two organizations together.

"TRPIL has been around for more than 30 years, and VFI just turned 27 in December. Together, we're now serving a total of 27 counties, so we've grown exponentially and we're trying to reach more and more people in the community. We don't just want to see people with disabilities survive, we want them to thrive. We want to breathe life back into the community, no strings attached, no fees, we just want people to live independently."



For more information, call (724) 223-5115 or visit the website for VIF at www.vficial.org or TRPIL at www.trpil.com.



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PathWays
Life Long Fulfillment

Fostering Independence and Fulfilling Dreams

By Kevin Brown

From its beginnings nearly 60 years ago in Washington County, PathWays today helps individuals in six southwestern Pennsylvania counties live independently and fulfill their dreams.

Originally chartered as United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Washington County in 1964, the organization now known as PathWays continued to grow over the years to serve a broad range of individuals with disabilities. In 2009, PathWays was formed from UCP and today serves 1,600 individuals in Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.

PathWays operates a number of distinct programs serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism, along with their families. Their mission is summed up as lifelong fulfillment, helping individuals attain independence and reach their dreams.

Under its Children's Services, PathWays offers Early Intervention Services to help children with developmental delays or diagnosed conditions reach their fullest potential. These strategies, provided at no cost in the home, are highly individualized and designed to enhance each child's



An individual in the Residential Program and her caregiver are out for a coffee.

learning and growing experiences.

PathWays also operates Rainbow's End Learning Centers, which are full-service day care centers for children of all abilities, providing educational supports as well as social and emotional skill-building in a safe, secure, and welcoming environment. Over the past 28 years, Rainbow's End Learning Centers have grown from a one-room day care of mixed age groups to two locations with 11 different classrooms.

Your Child's Place, the third of the children's services offered by PathWays, is a specialized, pediatric child-care center for infants and children who need skilled nursing care while their parents or caregivers are at work or school. Staffed by registered nurses and child-care professionals, Your Child's Place is equipped to handle conditions that require constant or periodic medical treatment and the use of medical devices.

PathWays' adult services includes the Adult Training Facility (ATF). The ATF helps individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism contribute their talents to the community and enhance social, physical, emotional, and life skills. ATF offers a program called the Work of Heart where individuals learn job-related skills to help them build their employable skills, like problem solving.

Continued on following page

Every life has potential.
We're dedicated to fulfilling it.

Since 1964, PathWays has continually innovated opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through cutting-edge programs, life long services, and individual attention, we empower people of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential.

We offer child, adult, and community services in six Southwestern PA counties. Learn more about how to participate by visiting www.yourpathways.org.



PathWays
Life Long Fulfillment

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or info@yourpathways.org.



A direct support professional from the Adult Training Facility interacts with one of PathWays' individuals.

Continued from previous page

Individuals at the Washington County ATF location volunteer for organizations such as the Meals-On-Wheels program, Washington County Food Bank, Christian Outreach, and others. At the Greene County ATF location, individuals volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program and Direct Results.

PathWays offers a residential program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism to live a more fulfilling life. Its origin dates to 1975 with their first group home and now includes 11 homes in three counties. The residential program operates three distinct services: Licensed Community Homes, Supported Living and HUD Homes.

Licensed Community Homes allow individuals to live independently with 24-hour support staff who offer them a path toward what is essential and important in their life.

Supported Living offers a bridge between around-the-clock supports and independent living. It is a choice for an individual who lives in



A child-care professional from the Rainbow's End Learning Center plays with some of the children in her classroom.

their own home or apartment and desires some assistance in their life.

HUD Homes are fully handicapped-accessible homes that offer safety and comfort to people of all abilities.

Those in the residential homes are supported by professional staff who help them live independently.

Many residents not only receive housing services from PathWays, but also participate in PathWays' training programs during the day.

Rounding out PathWays' services, Agency With Choice offers several community-based services that allow individuals to achieve more independence and live fulfilling lives. This includes options such as companion services, in-home and community supports, homemaker/chore services, supported employment opportu-



A nurse from Your Child's Place works with one of the children they support.

nities, and more.

PathWays truly touches lives with their services and strives to help each individual live to their fullest potential. Their success is best described on their website: "At the end of the day, our true measure of success is seeing the pride and confidence we build in the people we serve."

> If you would like more information about PathWays' services, employment opportunities, or making a donation, please visit their website at www.yourpathways.org or call (724) 229-0851.



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At The Alliance, Children and Families Find a Solid Foundation for Growth and Development

By Nancy Kennedy

The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc. is Allegheny County's highly regarded, superbly effective provider of Early Intervention services for children ages 0 to 3. The Alliance has helped tens of thousands of families in Allegheny County give their children a solid early foundation for their lifelong growth and development and the fulfillment of their unique gifts. Founded in 1988 to provide Early Intervention services for low birth-weight infants, The Alliance has since expanded its scope tremendously and was selected in 1992 by the state to be the Early Intervention Service Coordination Agency for all families in Allegheny County with concerns for their child's development.

Over the course of three decades, The Alliance has evolved into a multifaceted gem of an organization. Well known and respected by professional partners throughout the region's medical, education and

social service systems, and cherished by families in every corner of the County, The Alliance has impacted countless lives. The Alliance serves families of every income level, ethnicity and family composition, fitting their broad array of services to the specific needs of the individual child and family.

At The Alliance, growth is a deeply imbedded value that permeates every aspect of the agency's operations. It is evident in the infants who make progress through developmental assessment and interventions; in the families who learn, gain confidence and emerge as advocates for their children; and in the staff, an interdisciplinary team for whom ongoing education and training enhances their expertise and keeps them at the cutting edge of professional practice.

A family's first encounter with The Alliance offers an introduction to the agency's culture. The Alliance's Intake department consists of two highly trained staff who

greet callers with skill, knowledge and warm caring. "Our intake department does an excellent job of talking to families, eliciting information and getting a sense of the family. They help the family understand what the next steps are; they'll explain what a development assessment entails," says Pat Latzy, Program Supervisor.

In Allegheny County, every child under the age of three is entitled to a developmental evaluation. Referrals to The Alliance come from pediatricians, NICUs, social workers and others, but many calls are initiated by parents who have concerns about their child's development, or are seeking reassurance that their child is developing on track. "Among the common concerns are that the child is not talking or walking," Latzy says. "There may be behavior or feeding issues. Parents may worry that their child is showing signs of Autism or has a hearing deficit."

Children may receive a multidisciplinary developmental evaluation to determine eligibility for services. Those who are at risk for developmental delays are eligible for developmental monitoring, consisting of tracking to assess their progress. Children who do meet eligibility criteria, based on an identified diagnosis or delay, will get a unique plan known as an ISFP: Individualized Family Service Plan – and developmental support services. That could include physical, speech or occupational therapy or hearing and vision services. These developmental support services are collectively known as Early Intervention – services provided to children ages 0 to 3, designed to support the child's development by building and enhancing the natural learning that occurs in the early years. "We also assist families when children are ready to transition to other supports and services at three years of age," Latzy says.

Service Coordination is The Alliance's primary role, explains Karin Shafer, Clinical Director. The professionals who provide this service are highly credentialed, with degrees in early childhood education or other relevant fields. Service coordinators monitor the child's



Pat Latzy



Karin Shafer

progress; they offer support and education to parents and make appropriate referrals. "Our service coordinators meet with families directly and help them find and access services," says Shafer. "There are so many resources that it can be overwhelming," adds Latzy. "Resources might include peer support groups, play groups, or child care. When we find a new resource, we share it."

Helping families with advocacy is another important service. "Advocacy is an important role for a parent. We use a parent coaching model that provides families and therapists with an opportunity to work together to support each child's growth and development; we provide education and support to help them gain confidence," Shafer says. "We also have a Child Welfare program that is unique to The Alliance: each of the Child Welfare offices in Allegheny County has a member of our staff there as an Early Childhood Liaison."

The Alliance has an Infant Mental Health specialist, Breinne Regan, who provides support to any parent or caregiver who is experiencing anxiety or depression, including postpartum depression. The specialist can assess attachment and screen the child for developmental delays.

The Alliance is currently serving 3400 children in the tracking and service coordination programs. "Our goal is to reach as many as possible," says Karin Shafer. "No two children or families are alike, so our services are uniquely tailored to each child and family. At The Alliance, we're all dedicated to enhancing the lives of infants and families. We see the impact of our work on a daily basis, and that's the reward."



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To learn more about The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, visit www.afit.org or call (412) 885-6000.

Pace School Helps Students Develop Skills for Future Success



A mental health therapist supports a student in learning about how his brain functions.



Students learn in many different ways including how to construct by building it themselves.



Teacher and student work together to address any issues and get started with learning for the 20-21 year.



Career exploration includes working with Pittsburgh Trade Institute to learn about brick laying.

By Lois Thomson

"It's important that families know we are a resource, that when they need more services than public schools can offer, we're here to provide them." Karen B. Shepherd, CEO of Pace School, discussed the different ways the school can help students who are struggling with emotional or behavioral issues.

Working with 40 area school districts, Shepherd said all of the children are in special education, and school districts work with the families to establish the child's functioning level. "When the team determines that students' needs exceed what the district schools can offer, they are referred to us. In the next step of the process, we review and determine if our services will meet the children's needs and whether space is available."

At Pace, students' needs are identified within their Individual Educational Program. "We look at where each student is and adapt a modified curriculum accordingly." One parent expressed the impact Pace has had on her child and family: "Looking back several years to when [Jack] started going to the school, it's unbelievable to me the child that they helped him become today. He still has hurdles to jump, but I know he'll get there. Pace is building a future for my son; we couldn't be more grateful."

Pace provides educational and therapeutic services for 150 students, at no cost to the parents. This is made possible with funding from the state and by the school district.

Students who come to Pace often have at least one mental health diagnosis, and Pace integrates a Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) for those children who would benefit from a concentrated level of mental health and psychiatric support. "Within the school, there are 60 spaces available for PHP. This program doesn't feel like a hospital because the student's mental health supports are infused in their traditional school day."

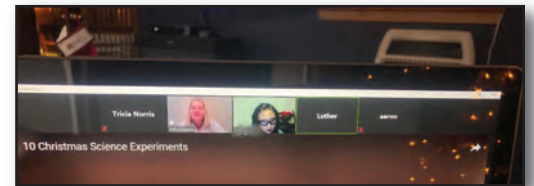
Shepherd said people may not be aware that school services are now offered up to age 21. Pace previously focused on elementary grades, but in 2015 started activating a high school license. Currently the school is in the process of developing a more formalized adult training program.

As it did with most things, Covid initially threw a curve to Pace. Shepherd pointed out, "Students are referred to us because they have intense needs and respond to learning through a variety of methods and supports. While onsite instruction is the goal, a combined model is important for the safety of our students and families. Currently about two-thirds of students are in the classroom; for the one-third still remote, staff are working with and communicating with families."

Shepherd added there has been one benefit to at-home learning: "Both teachers and parents have seen students be more independent, do things we never thought they could. Teachers and parents are working together."

The outcome of the efforts to

work together are acknowledged in the comments from the same parent quoted earlier in this article. "It's been a bit of a struggle the past few months for Jack; all the changes happening right now in the world are probably very confusing to him. We are so thankful for his teachers and staff at Pace, for guiding and helping us through the difficult times. They've truly gone above and beyond to make him comfortable with the unknown, and continue to cheer him on with the amazing progress he is making."



Remote learning is occurring with students able to share their project results from home.

> For more information, call (412) 244-1900 or visit www.paceschool.org

Pace School also offers an Extended School Year Program to students. Students' participation is contingent on their eligibility, based on review. "There's a process that determines if students are unable to maintain skill set during a break, so we run a five-week, abbreviated day to keep kids engaged. Last year there were about 70 to 80 students." All students must be part of the school to partake of these services.

Pace School's special education helps students gain knowledge through blended academic, social emotional learning and individualized planning.

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ACHIEVA FAMILY TRUST

Protecting Futures and Enhancing Lives

By Kevin Brown

Jackson, 33, has an intellectual disability. His father passed away suddenly and left him an inheritance. Those funds, combined with Jackson's savings, made him ineligible to continue receiving government benefits to provide for his medical care and other much-needed services. Achieva Family Trust opened a pooled trust for Jackson so that he could continue to receive vital benefits and services now and into the future.

Jackson's situation, happily resolved, is just one example of the help that Achieva Family Trust provides to assist people with disabilities.

Established in 1998, Achieva Family Trust is a subsidiary corporation of Achieva, a provider of housing options, employment and many other support services to those with physical, intellectual and mental disabilities. Today, Achieva Family Trust manages 2,400 trusts with more than \$180 million in

assets and is the largest non-profit trust in Pennsylvania. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, Achieva Family Trust maintains offices in Erie, the Capital Region, and Philadelphia.

"Achieva Family Trust serves as corporate trustee for special needs trusts for people with disabilities," says Amy Dolan Strano, president and CEO of Achieva Family Trust. "Because we're serving people with disabilities, they require additional services that a lot of corporate trustees, such as banks and financial institutions, can't provide. Our trust administrators all have significant social service experience with intellectual disability services, with mental health services, and with services for people with physical disabilities. Our trust administrators are looking to maximize the available government benefits to our beneficiaries," she explains.

Trust administrators average 20 years or more of social service experience each. They also provide benefits counseling and future



Amy Dolan Strano is president and CEO of Achieva Family Trust.

planning and connect beneficiaries with a variety of resources, from case management to expert legal advice.

Certain government benefits such as supplemental security (SSI) and Medicaid are "means-tested", meaning the benefits are provided based on income and assets. "You have to be poor, low income and not have a lot of assets in order to receive those benefits," explains Amy. "If someone's checking or savings account gets too high, that would either disqualify them for the government benefits, their benefits could be reduced or eliminated, or they would not be eligible if they were newly applying," she notes. Putting those assets into a trust ensures that the beneficiary can continue to receive vital government benefits, while still having access to the trust funds to pay for the things they need.

Three types of trusts are available through Achieva Family Trust, all under the title of "Special Needs Trusts," according to information on the Achieva Family Trust website.

The Pooled Trust is a trust where the assets of all the beneficiaries are combined (or "pooled") for investment purposes. The trustee still separately accounts for individuals' interest in the trust. These trusts can be established quickly and easily by beneficiaries.

A Payback Trust is used when a beneficiary is receiving funds such as a settlement from a personal injury or other lawsuit. This trust allows them to pay for expenses that are not covered by government benefits, including home modifications, adapted vehicles and specialized treatments or medications. The beneficiary continues to qualify for their government benefits, but upon the death of the beneficiary, any funds remaining must be used to "pay back" the state(s) for Medicaid services received.

A Third Party Trust is established by friends or family on behalf of an individual with a disability to provide for the beneficia-



Achieva Family Trust was able to assist Jackson

ry while still preserving the individual's eligibility for essential, lifelong supports and services.

Achieva Family Trust also operates a Charitable Residual Account. When a beneficiary has passed, any existing Pooled Trust funds become part of the Charitable Residual Account and are used to benefit individuals with disabilities. Since 2005, the Trust has provided more than \$8,000,000 in goods and services to people with disabilities in need.

In addition to administering trusts, Achieva Family Trust provides other services such as benefits counseling and future planning to support beneficiaries and their families. They also offer educational resources including webinars, newsletters and seminars. "Get Wise Wednesdays" is a new event the Trust started this year. "During the last Wednesday of the month, we have staff available to take phone calls and talk about future planning, special needs trusts, ABLE accounts, and other topics that people have questions about," Amy says. "We encourage people to call in on "Get Wise Wednesdays" and have their questions answered," she notes.

Because of Achieva Family Trust, individuals like Jackson have the services and benefits they need now, as well as a secure future. As they say in their tagline, "Protecting Futures and Enhancing Lives," Achieva Family Trust truly offers valuable services.



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The **Achieva Family Trust** website at www.achievafamilytrust.org offers a wealth of information about their services and includes an archive of webinars, newsletters, planning guides, and more. Experts are also available at (412) 995-5000, ext. 565.

THE ARC OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

We Advocate. We Support. We Include.
The Arc of Washington County

by Darrilyn McCreery

Participating in everyday activities, having access to resources, being respected as a valued member of your community, having a sense of belonging and having opportunities to succeed and grow. These are some examples of inclusion.

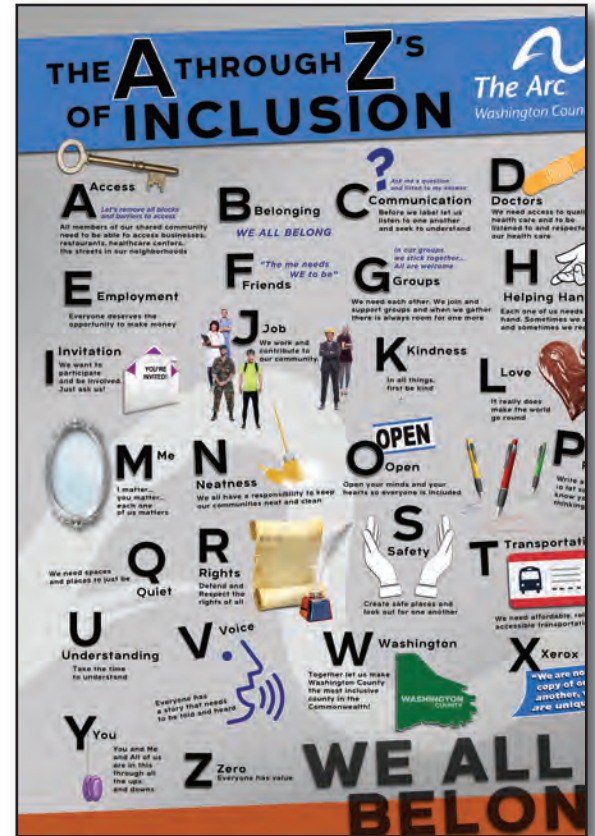
At The Arc of Washington County, our work promotes inclusive opportunities for people of all abilities. We focus on advocacy for others, self-advocacy and advocacy for system change. The Arc of Washington County, an affiliated chapter of The Arc of Pennsylvania and The Arc of the United States, advocate for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual developmental disabilities and/or Autism.

At The Arc of Washington County, advocacy means helping families and individuals navigate the system and connect with resources in the community. People of all abilities should have the opportunity to participate fully in their communities, and that means working, socializing, enjoying recreational opportunities and volunteering. It's not easy, especially over the past year during these unprecedented times – it's tough out there.

Teaching people with disabilities self-advocacy skills, empowering people to use their own voices to speak up for themselves, to be fully involved in the decision-making for their own lives and edu-

cating others on inclusive opportunities is one step closer to raising awareness.

An innovative way that the Self-Advocacy group has accomplished this is through a project called the "A-Z's of Inclusion." This is a project in which self-advocates use their voice as a means to promote inclusion for all. Posters and calendars have been created to distribute to community members as a reminder that people of all abilities have the right to be included and to be a part of their community. Whether it is a barrier, an inclusive opportunity or a word that is dear to them, our self-advocates came up with a word for every letter of the alphabet that expresses the need for inclusion. Inclusion is a term that means all people, regardless of their ability, disability or other needs, have the right to be respected as a valuable member of their community. Often, people with disabilities face barriers that don't always allow for this opportunity, whether its related to accessibility in community establishments, stereotypical actions that assume a person with a disability is unable to participate in the community or transportation to access day to day activities. Our focus is awareness, education, acceptance and advocacy for all.



➤ For more information about **The Arc of Washington County**, visit www.arcofwashpa.org or contact Darrilyn McCreery, Director of Advocacy, at mccrereyd@arcofwashpa.org



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GALLAGHER HOSPICE

At Gallagher Hospice, Social Workers Help Patients and Families Find Comfort, Courage and Peace

By Nancy Kennedy

The mission of Gallagher Hospice is for patients and families to find comfort and courage in our care, says Jane Barthen, M.S.W., a hospice social worker who is a key member of the Gallagher Hospice team. When there are no further curative options for a patient, Gallagher's interdisciplinary team of hospice professionals care for and support families as well as the hospice patients. They build a trusting relationship with each patient and family and offer care that is state-of-the-art, personal, self-determined and respectful.

The fulfillment of this noble mission is a privilege, says Barthen. "Our focus is quality of life for the rest of your life. We help people die with dignity, courage and peace, while alleviating suffering. We want to help the patient meet the goal of dying at home, surrounded by family or passing peacefully wherever they call home."

Hospice care is Barthen's chosen life's work, and she finds enormous satisfaction in it. She found inspiration in her personal experiences with her parents, both of whom received excellent hospice care. "I witnessed the impact of hospice care on my parents' quality of life and knew that this was what I wanted to do. Nursing was my goal while I was attending Carlow University; I then earned a graduate degree in social work at the University of Pittsburgh. This was the foundation for a 42-year social work career, including the last 15 years in hospice social work."

Gallagher Hospice, a Medicare-certified hospice company based in Bridgeville, was created in 2016. Barthen came on board at the beginning of the hospice program and takes great pride in the achievements of the interdisciplinary team. "Our team is comprised of four hospice social work-

ers, registered nurses, hospice aides and chaplains. We also have bereavement counselors, mental health professionals and volunteers available as needed. We are assigned to new patients and we complete an assessment to identify needs. We ask permission to visit and we see patients in their homes as well as other settings, such as assisted living, group homes, skilled nursing facilities and independent living centers."

Barthen and the Gallagher Hospice team approach new patients with sensitivity, recognizing that they are likely to be feeling overwhelmed. "If the patient has just received the diagnosis and prognosis, they need time to take that in and process it. We may just talk on the phone at first. The nurse case manager oversees the clinical needs and supports the team in the setting."

"There are many roles for a hospice social worker; first and foremost among those roles is to be a good listener, assessing needs, providing support as well as resources, and validating feelings of both the patient and family. Spiritual counseling can be a great source of support as well. The clinical care of the end-of-life patient is focused on symptoms and pain management rather than on tests and numbers. If symptoms are managed, a better quality of life is achieved. The goal is always achieving the best possible comfort experience."

Caregivers can easily become worn out, physically and emotionally, says

Continued on page 47.



Gallagher Hospice Social workers (l-r) Jane Barthen, Hillary Kramer, Jaime Morrow, Beth Schwartz



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Who is Eligible for LIFE Pittsburgh?

Eligible participants are 55 years old or older, live in the designated service area, meet the state's medical requirements for nursing facility level of care, are able to live safely in the community, and be financially eligible as determined by the Allegheny County Assistance Office or be able to privately pay.

What Does LIFE Pittsburgh Provide?

LIFE Pittsburgh is a nonprofit program that provides comprehensive and integrated care to seniors who may not otherwise be able to live independently at home. There is a coordinated plan of care that includes medical, social and daily living support. At LIFE Pittsburgh, older adults are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. They receive the very best care from dedicated geriatric care professionals without sacrificing their independence. Primary care and community services are provided through the Day Health Center and through the in-home program based on an individual's needs. The continuous coordination of care sets the LIFE program apart from any other care model, which ensures quality of life to its Participants.

LIFE During Uncertain Times

We are dedicated to continuing to provide care to keep our Participants safe and healthy during this time. While we are adapting our process, we are also committed to continuing to enroll new Participants into our program at this time, as we are a valuable resource to those that need our help.

How Can I Learn More About LIFE?

To learn more about eligibility and/or the process of enrolling, please contact (412) 388-8050 TTY: 711 and ask for the Enrollment Department or visit www.lifepittsburgh.org.

Please reach out if you need extra support, we are here for you. Stay safe, stay well.

PUBLISHER
Nancy Carroll Lammie

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Brenda Metal Confer

DESIGN & LAYOUT
JMC Graphics
(412) 877-5321

EDITORIAL MANAGER
Judy Gramm

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Kevin Brown
Ron Cichowicz
Daniel Casciato
Vanessa Orr
Nancy Kennedy
Lois Thomson

WEB SITE DESIGNER
Keith Trageser
keith.trageser@gmail.com

PRINTER
Gazette Printers

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LIFE Pittsburgh is an all-inclusive program for individuals 55+ who want to stay in their home, but need supportive services to do so. Our coordinated plan of care includes medical, social and daily living support. At LIFE Pittsburgh, seniors are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. LIFE Pittsburgh goes beyond simply "treating medical problems" to actually improving the quality of life for most of our Participants. There is no cost to receive LIFE Pittsburgh services for those who qualify.

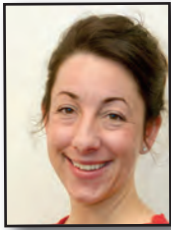


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VITAS HEALTHCARE

Hospice Patient Skydives Once More, Thanks to VITAS and Virtual Reality



By **Evalisa McClure**

From the cramped cabin of the aircraft, VITAS Healthcare patient Kim peered out through the open door and took in the landscape. In the next moment, she was dropping from 10,000 feet, reminding her senses: You are alive.

Kim couldn't help but smile. She had made a habit of seeking these reminders throughout her 64 years on Earth. Now, as she neared the end of her life, the message seemed to come through with renewed clarity as her wish to fly through the atmosphere one last time came true, thanks to her VITAS hospice team.

"It takes a lot of coordination, but when you have a whole team coming together, you can make anything work," says Daily, VITAS volunteer services manager.

To Kim, cirrhosis of the liver seemed at first like a challenge waiting to be overcome. After all, she had raised a son as a single mother, worked on a farm, and been involved in community politics—she understood perseverance. But after receiving a terminal prognosis and beginning care with VITAS, Kim started to focus on what she could feasibly achieve in the time that remained.

"I'd been seeing Kim for about eight months, and one day she mentioned that she'd been skydiving in the past and wanted to do it one last time," says Tammy, Kim's nurse.

Daily suggested that virtual reality (VR) could offer a simulated version of Kim's desired experience without the risks associated with jumping from a plane. The VITAS team manager and physician agreed.

On the day of the skydive, Kim was joined by Tammy, Daily, and other members of the VITAS team in her home. One of the nurses stood ready with the fan as Kim sat down and donned an Oculus Rift VR headset. What followed was a beautiful experience for everybody.

At one point, Kim stood from her chair, ecstatic with the sheer sensation of it all. After "landing" safely on the ground, she immediately began showering the team with appreciation.

For Kim, the experience was clearly a dream



come true, but not quite a replacement for the real deal: Tammy says that her patient still jokes about skydiving—and bringing her favorite nurse along for the ride.



Evalisa McClure is general manager for **VITAS Healthcare** in Pittsburgh.

For more information about end-of-life care services, call the nation's leading provider at **(866) 759-6695** or visit **VITAS.com**.

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Senior Healthcare Program Demonstrated Safer Than Nursing Home Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that PACE/LIFE Programs, with their focus on keeping participants at home and in the community, are safer and more effective than nursing home care. The Senior LIFE healthcare program is a provider of the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) called LIFE in Pennsylvania.

Senior LIFE is a Medicare and Medicaid approved long-term care program that provides complete medical care and supportive services for persons 55 years and older so they can remain in their home.

According to the National PACE Association, **the rate of LIFE/PACE residents that have died from COVID is one third lower than for nursing home residents.** The rate of cases among PACE participants was also one third lower than nursing home residents.

There are no costs for services for Medicaid eligible persons for the LIFE Program. Senior LIFE's ser-

vices are customized to meet the specific needs of each individual and include physicians and specialists, nursing care, physical, occupational and speech therapies, personal and home care, medications, meals and nutritional counseling, eye, dental and foot care, durable medical equipment and more.

During the pandemic, the LIFE/PACE model has demonstrated resiliency and increased potential for the future by continuing to provide all the care and services necessary to keep their participants safe in the community. In response to COVID-19, Senior LIFE has substantially and swiftly adapted to continue to meet all members' care and services needs:

- Maintained existing home-based services for members and shifted provision of most of their center-based services into members' homes to minimize the risk of infection and help protect the extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.
- Expanded Use of Telehealth
- Continued routine and non-

routine assessments

- Care plans modified on an individual basis to accommodate long-term closure of day centers, offering additional services where necessary.

- Increased communication and coordination with the Senior LIFE network of providers regarding their COVID-19 policies.

Benefits of LIFE/PACE over traditional nursing home care

LIFE/PACE organizations serve approximately 1 in 10 of those that could benefit from their care in their communities; of the 2.2M lower-income older adults estimated to need long-term services and support (LTSS), PACE organizations serve just 2.5% approximately.

LIFE/PACE was proven safer and more cost-effective even prior to the pandemic:

- LIFE/PACE employs strong financial incentives for PACE organizations to avoid duplicative or

Data.CMS.gov COVID-19 Nursing Home Data Week Ending 1/03/2021				
Total Confirmed Cases	Total COVID-19 Deaths	AVG Total Occupied Beds	NH Confirmed Cases Rate	NH Deaths Rate
522,516	101,970	1,110,798	47.0%	9.2%

NPA Member Organization Data Reporting Period 1/04/2021				
Cumulative Confirmed Cases	Cumulative COVID-19 Deaths	AVG Total Participating PO Census	PACE Confirmed Cases Rate	PACE Deaths Rate
5,790	1,162	41,085	14.1%	2.8%

unnecessary services while encouraging the use of appropriate community-based alternatives to hospital and nursing home care. Care decisions are provider-led through the interdisciplinary team in consultation with the participant and his or her family. This construct empowers the PACE model of care to achieve better care and patient experience, better population health and lower costs.

- Lower out-of-pocket costs for participants with no Medicare or Medicaid deductibles or copayment
- Better care leads to lower costs
 - 13% lower cost for state Medicaid programs
 - Comparable Medicare costs
 - Reduced Hospital Admission:- 24% lower hospitalization rate than

Continued on following page

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Senior Healthcare Program

Continued from previous page

dually eligible beneficiaries who receive Medicaid nursing home services

- **Decreased Rehospitalization:** 16% less than the national rehospitalization rate of 22.9% for dually eligible beneficiaries age 65 and over.

- **Reduced ER Visits:** Less than one emergency room visit per member per year.

- **Fewer Nursing Home Admissions:** Despite being at nursing home level of care, LIFE/PACE participants have a low risk of being admitted to a nursing home.

- **LIFE/PACE participants** have fewer unmet needs and receive better preventive care, specifically with respect to hearing and vision screenings, and the flu.

- LIFE/PACE incorporates many of the reforms the Medicare program seeks to promote, including person-centered care, delivered and coordinated by a provider based, comprehensive system, with financial incentives aligned to promote quality and cost effectiveness through capitated financing

- LIFE/PACE provides care to older Americans in their preferred environment— home.

- LIFE/PACE and other alternatives to nursing homes will be in great demand.

About Senior LIFE

Senior LIFE is an alternative to nursing home placement and is designed to help seniors live their best lives at home. Through Senior LIFE services, members are able to access the health care and support they need and still have the independence they want. Each member of the Senior LIFE Program receives an individualized care plan. The program is a great option for families who want to keep their elderly loved ones home, but can't stop working to care for them full-time.

There are no costs for services for those who qualify for the program.

The ideal Senior LIFE member is someone 55 or older who may need additional support to live independently in his or her home. Members must live in a Senior LIFE service area, qualify for a nursing home level of care, and be able to live safely in the community.

All care and services are personalized and coordinated by an interdisciplinary team of medical and social service providers.



For more information on the **Senior LIFE Healthcare Program**, call **877-998-LIFE (5433)** or visit us online at **SeniorLIFEPA.com**.

At Gallagher Hospice, Social Workers Help Patients and Families Find Comfort

Continued from page 42

Barthen, so caring for the caregiver is part of the Gallagher mission. "There are many sources of support: hospital groups, private counselors and churches may have support groups. We offer excellent bereavement services for families."

Hospice is challenging on many levels but according to Barthen, the rewards far outweigh the stress. She says that she copes by practicing good self-care: "I read and do scrapbooking to relax. I know that in order to be able to help others, we have to take care of ourselves. At the end of each day, I know that I work with the best co-workers and I believe that I helped someone have a better day."

Barthen believes that many more people could benefit from hospice services, but aren't given the opportunity. "There are persistent myths about hospice and I wish we could eliminate those so people would see the advantages. One of the myths is that hospice means giving up but that is not true. It's a change of focus to quality of life, from cure to comfort. We try to educate our communities to be more open-minded about hospice so that we can at least discuss what it can offer to each individual person. Another problem is that referrals often come late, when a longer relationship would be more beneficial."

The COVID-19 pandemic has called upon the Gallagher Hospice staff to assume a larger role in supporting end-of-life patients and their families. "The COVID pandemic has impacted everything we do. With restrictions on visiting, families may be unable to be with their loved one. As a medically necessary service, we can go in to provide care, emotional support and spiritual care when the family cannot. Our staff may be the only support the family has."



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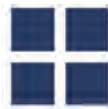
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In order to choose a health professional who is right for you, you need information. The following guide is a good place to start.



AESTHETIC & VEIN SERVICES

Monroeville Vein & Laser Center
412-373-9580
monroevilleveinandlaser.com

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

JCVS Care at Home
412-742-4033 • jcvshome.org

Voices for Independence
724-223-5115 • www.vficil.org
Now hiring caregivers.

CUSTOM SHOES & ORTHOTICS

Best-Made Shoes
412-621-9363
www.bestmadeshoes.com.
5143 Liberty Ave, Bloomfield.

DENTAL

**Chips Dental Associates
Dr. Timothy Chips**
724-443-5710
PittsburghHybridge.com

Valley Brook Dental
Joseph L. Gurecka, DMD
724-942-8982
valleybrookdental.com

EYE CARE

AIO - Associates in Ophthalmology
888-634-9800 • AIOvision.com
Laser Cataract Surgery, Dry Eye Clinic, Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, LASIK, Diabetic Eye Care. Pediatric Eye Care. Locations in Butler, Irwin, Kittanning, Meadville, Monroeville, Uniontown, West Mifflin, Wheeling, WV

FLU VACCINATION

Allegheny County Health Department
412-578-8062
AlleghenyCounty.US/Influenza

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND FITNESS CENTERS

The Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park
412-221-1099
www.twpusc.org/crc/cre-home

HEALTHY EATING

East End Food Coop
412-242-3598
www.eastendfood.coop
Local, organic, fair trade, non-GMO
Gluten-free, vegetarian • Vitamins & Supplements • Smoothies and more!

WIC

Allegheny County Health Department
412-350-5801
www.achd.net/wic or www.pawic.com
Nutrition and supplemental foods program for pregnant women and breastfeeding women. For more information on guidelines, appointment openings, and how to apply, call the ACHD WIC Program or visit visit the county or state's website.

HEARING

Swift Audiology
Allison Park 412-219-7158
North Hills 412-218-0426
South Hills 412-219-9758
Washington 724-731-1885
www.swiftaudiology.com

HEART & VASCULAR MEDICINE

Greater Pittsburgh Vascular Medicine
412-469-1500
www.greaterpittsburghvascular.com

Jefferson Cardiology Association

412-469-1500
www.jeffersoncardiology.com

HOSPITALS

Advanced Surgical Hospital
724-884-0710 • www.ashospital.net
A Physician Owned Hospital
Orthopedic Surgery Hospital
5x Winner Guardian of Excellence,
Patient Satisfaction (Press Ganey)
Awarded Outstanding Patient
Experience 6 Consecutive Years
(Healthgrades). Onsite MRI and
PT/OT Services

HOSPITALS

St. Clair Hospital
412-942-4000 • www.stclair.org

WHS The Washington Hospital
724-225-7000 • www.whs.org

IMAGING

Health Enhancing Thermography
1-855-254-4328 (HEAT)
www.heat-images.com

St. Clair Hospital Diagnostic Imaging Services

www.stclair.org
Diagnostic imaging services at the I; St. Clair Outpatient Center – Bethel Park and the St. Clair Outpatient Center - Peters Township; and the MRI Center on Broughton Road.

INCONTINENCE

Tri-Medical
800-541-0734
www.trimedonline.com

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Eagle Medical Equipment
724-218-1051
eaglemedicalequipmentpa.com

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT PHARMACY

ACORx Pharmacy
412-857-2922
www.acorxpharmacy.com

ORTHOPEDICS

Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation
1-800-828-CAST (2278)
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

St. Clair Hospital Center for Orthopedics
412-942-4000
stclair.org

Sports Medicine and Joint Replacement Specialists
412-207-9780
www.drgreghabib.com

WHS Orthopedics and Sport Medicine
724-206-0610
whsdocs.org

PEDIATRICS

WHS Washington Pediatrics
724-250-6001 www.whs.org

PHARMACY

ACORx Pharmacy
412-857-2922
www.acorxpharmacy.com

PHYSICIANS

St. Clair Medical Services
www.stclair.org

Washington Physician Hospital Organization Provider Network
whs.org (See pages 25-28)

REHABILITATION

Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation
1-800-828-CAST (2278)
www.advancedorthopaedics.net

Encompass Health
Harmarville - Sewickley
www.encompasshealth.com
877-937-7342

REHABILITATION

ProMedica / Heartland and ManorCare
412-498-9375
manorcare.org

WHS Physical Medicine and Sports Rehabilitation
724-229-2700
whsdocs.org

SUPPORT GROUPS

VITAS Healthcare Family and Caregiver Support
800-723-3233 • VITAS.com
Provides caregiver stress management education as well as emotional support.

VITAS Healthcare Remote Grief Support Groups

800-723-3233 • VITAS.com
We offer an assortment of phone-in grief and Zoom support groups, free of charge, to help meet the needs of caregivers. For more information - www.vitas.com/family-and-caregiver-support/support-groups

WOMEN'S HEALTH

WIC Allegheny County Health Department
412-350-5801
www.achd.net/wic or www.pawic.com
Nutrition and supplemental foods program for pregnant women and breastfeeding women. For more information on guidelines, appointment openings, and how to apply, call the ACHD WIC Program or visit visit the county or state's website.

Voices for Independence

NOW HIRING CAREGIVERS!

Voices for Independence has been proudly serving Western PA for nearly 30 years, and we are now hiring caregivers in your area! In addition to a rewarding job with very competitive pay, we also offer:

PAID TRAINING • FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING • PAID TIME OFF (PTO)
24-HOUR STAFF SUPPORT • HOLIDAY SHIFT DOUBLE TIME & MUCH MORE!

APPLY TODAY AT WWW.VFICIL.ORG | (724)223-5115

Resources for Children & Adults with Special Needs or a Disability

ACCESS PRODUCTS

Voices for Independence
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-866-407-0064
www.vficil.org

ADVOCACY

ARC Human Services
724-222-6960
www.aadvantageinc.org

TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

AUTISM

Autism Connection of Pennsylvania
412-781-4116
800-827-938
www.autismofpa.org

The Early Learning Institute (teli)
412-922-8322

Pace School
www.paceschool.org
412-244-1900

Every child with ASD is an individual, and like all individuals, has a unique personality and combination of characteristics that Pace School considers in the learning process.

Pathways
724-229-0851
yourpathways.org

University of Pittsburgh REACT Program (Regulation of Emotion in ASD Adults, Children and Teens)
1-866-647-3436 • REACT.pit.edu
The REACT lab currently has seven ongoing research studies and is recruiting participants from the community for all of them.

DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY INTERVENTION

The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers
412-885-6000 • www.afit.org

The Early Learning Institute (teli)
412-922-8322

Pace School
www.paceschool.org
Pace School is an Approved Private Schools (APS) licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the State Board of Private Academic Schools and approved by the Secretary of Education to provide a free appropriate special education program for students with severe disabilities.

Pathways
724-229-0851
yourpathways.org

DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY INTERVENTION

WHS Children's Therapy Center
whsdocs.org

EMPLOYMENT/JOB TRAINING

AHEADD –Achievement in Higher Education with Autism & Devel Disability
412-856-7223

Pathways
724-229-0851 • yourpathways.org

Project Freedom (technology skills training)
412-246-4434

TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living) (job placement)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

Pace School
412-244-1900
www.paceschool.org
Pace School's Extended School Year (ESY) Program educational supports and services based on each eligible student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to assist them with maintaining skills acquired during the regular school year.

HUMAN SERVICES AND DISABILITIES TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

IN-HOME AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Pathways
724-229-0851 • yourpathways.org

TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

Voices for Independence
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-866-407-0064
www.vficil.org

TRANSPORTATION

ACCESS shared ride service
412-562-5353
(MATP) – 888-547-6287

Travel Training - Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3
412-394-5700

PEDIATRIC DAY CARE

Your Child's Place
724-223-7801 • yourchildsplace.org

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

Drivers Education – special needs
866-672-9466

Port Authority of Allegheny County
412-442-2000

Wheelchair Getaways (van rental)
800-642-2042

RECREATION AND SOCIALIZATION

Camp Laughalot
724-222-6960 x225

Dis+Abilities Connection -
Networking events for adults with disabilities
724-219-3290

TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center Summer Camp
Woodlands
724-935-5470

The 24-Hour Friendship Line
800-971-0016
www.ioaging.org

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

ARC Human Services
www.archumanservices.org

Pathways
724-229-0851
yourpathways.org

SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST

Achieva Family Trust
412-995-5000 x565
www.achievafamilytrust.org
Trust administration for Special Needs Trusts for persons with disabilities. In addition, AFT provides no-cost Future Planning Services for families who are trying to plan for the future of their children.

SCHOOLS

Pace School
www.paceschool.org
The Pace School K-21 program model helps prevent failure for children and assures learning success by scaffolding supports and building positive relationships

TRANSITION TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

Children's Hospital Advisory Network for Guidance and Empowerment
412-647-2345

PA Department of Health Transition Health Care Checklist
724-830-2701

TRANSITION TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

TRPIL (Transitional Paths to Independent Living)
724-223-5115 • TTY: 724-228-4028
Toll-Free: 1-877-889-0965
www.trpil.com

SPECIAL NEEDS DENTISTRY

Pitt School of Dental Medicine
412-648-3039

GENERAL RESOURCES:

ADA Phone Line
800-514-0301

Allegheny County Family Resource Guide
412-350-7079

Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Intellectual Disability (OID)

Every person registered for OID services receives Supports Coordination -
412-236-2750

Connections Pittsburgh
www.connections pittsburgh.com

Educational Rights Network
https://onepa.org/edrights/

PA Health Law Project
www.phlp.org

UPMC Disability Resource Center Forbes Tower
412-605-1483

PA Statewide Information and Referral Resources for Persons with Disabilities PA 211 or
1-888-553-5778 or 211

Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources
1-800-753-8827

Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging
Washington County
www.swpa-aaa.org
724-489-8080

Area Agencies on Aging
Allegheny County
412-350-4234 -
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/olderadults.asp

To be included in this Directory, call (412) 877-5321 or email goodhealthmag@aol.com. Visit us at guidetogoodhealth.com for additional healthcare resources and information.

Collaboration. Connectivity.
Community. Our doctors prepare
to share every advantage they can
before your appointment begins—
and when it ends, they do it all again.
Because the thing they care about
most, is you.

**Every minute of every day,
our expert doctors care about you.**

John T. Sullivan, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer



stclair.org

Expert care from people who care.