

October 28, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

This past week was one of celebration—four celebrations, actually—recognizing and honoring the wonderful individuals who make NCH Healthcare System the extraordinary institution it is.

- At the *Employee Recognition Awards Banquet* at the Naples Grande Resort and Club, we recognized nearly 500 colleagues, all with NCH for multiples of five years. One, RN **Mertice Linton**, celebrated 40 years of service. The average age of our 3,600 colleagues is in the mid-40s, so Mertice has worked longer than about half us have been alive! She performs her tireless service without fanfare and attributes her good fortune to faith. Congratulations and thank you, Mertice.

One of the highlights of the evening, presided over by **Renee Thigpen** and **Brian Settle**, was the recognition of *Employee Superstars*, whose performance goes “above and beyond” in terms of caring, compassion, innovation and diligence. Each *Superstar* received a check for \$500 and a beautiful basket of gifts. The individual exploits of *Superstars* **Erica Bowers**, **Donna Gilman**, **Tammy Gutierrez**, **Kristine Howland**, **Dan Lowery**, and **Linda Ruhl** can be viewed on <http://www.nchmd.org/default.aspx?id=519&rid=125>. Finally, RN **Judith Robinson**’s innovative medication-free solution for a confused patient was recognized as being especially “above and beyond.” And Judith received a well-deserved check for \$1,000 and a travel voucher for \$2,500.

- We also celebrated the start of *Respiratory Care Week*, with our Respiratory team voting **Gwen O’Neil** “*Therapist of the Year*.” Congratulations, Gwen. Our Respiratory team is working to improve patient survival chances by lowering the length of stay on a ventilator and avoiding ventilator-associated pneumonia. North Naples RTs also play a life-saving role in supporting 100 newborns per month, who might need transient breathing assistance.
- At the same time, we ended *National Pharmacy Week* by celebrating the NCH Pharmacy, with its 44 pharmacists and 37 colleagues, who prepare, monitor, and deliver over 5,000 medications per day. Innovative anticoagulation planning, electronic medication prescribing, and the use of robotics with bar coding are just a few examples which ensure a safer care giver and patient experience—from newborns to geriatrics.

We also celebrated the *52nd Hospital Ball* (themed “Young at Heart”), chaired ably by our great and valued friends, Honorary Ball Chairs **Stella and Peter Thomas**, with a record crowd of more than 600 cardiology services supporters. At the Ball, our dedicated caregivers were in the spotlight. RNs **Dee Martell** and **Melissa Michel** were named “*Nurses of the Year*.” And we recognized **Richemond Celiferme** and **Raquel Rodriguez** as “*Nursing Support Superstars*” and RNs **Christina Carranza** and **Krislyn Callis** as “*Rising Nursing Stars*.” Congratulations, all.

We capped the night of the Hospital Ball by recognizing Drs. **Douglas Harrington** and **Mark Russo** as “*Physicians of the Year*” and six other honorees, Drs. **David Greider**, **Ahmed Khatib**, **Carl Liebert**, **David Lindner**, **Deborah Lopez** and **Michael Vickers**. All are outstanding and cherished physicians.

Finally, we remembered fondly a great friend of NCH and our community, **Raymond Lutgert**, a beloved family man and generous philanthropist whose generosity benefited not only the NCH family but everyone in our community. It was a week of celebration that reminded us how fortunate we are to live and work in a community where neighbors really do care about the best interests of each other.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.