

December 24, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Two important virtues signify this holiday season—*kindness* and *respect*.

Kindness and *respect*—for each other, our patients and their families, colleagues, workmates, friends, family, and all of those who makes our lives rich and rewarding in every way—should be our goal during this holiday season and, indeed, throughout the year. We are fortunate at NCH that examples of *kindness* and *respect* are all around us.

- I heard one such example last week from RN Shirley Maretti, who is just completing her first 90 days with us. Shirley was clocking in one night just before 7 p.m., when she and another nurse saw a young security officer holding a beautiful flower arrangement. When Shirley's colleague teasingly asked if the flowers were for them, the young man laughed. But shortly thereafter, he handed the flowers to Shirley to share with the nurses. Shirley placed the flowers in the nursing station of 6 South, and everyone on the floor appreciated that young man's kindness.
- A different example of *kindness* and *respect* was shared with me last week at a lunch meeting with our hard-working Environmental Service Department.

There's a reason that NCH is known as a clean, neat, and well cared-for environment. We're proud of the appearance of our facilities. And a primary reason for that pride is the dedication of the unsung heroes of our Environmental Service Department—people like Marion "Smitty" Smith, a veteran of 28 years at NCH, and Pedro Morales, who has been here for 8 years. Smitty and Pedro and their colleagues keep our facilities sparkling, with smiles on their faces and happiness in their hearts.

But the men and women of Environmental Services cannot do it on their own. It saddens me to hear stories, as I did last week, of people dropping litter or not using trash containers correctly or just not using good judgment in keeping work areas safe and clean. We need to treat our Environmental Service colleagues and the job they do with *kindness* and *respect*, so that the reputation of NCH for quality medical care delivered in a pristine environment may continue.

The fact is that when we all work together in that spirit, we benefit individually and collectively.

Please enjoy this special time—Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or whatever holiday you celebrate. I know all of us yearn for peace, family, comfort, warmth, conviviality, and, most of all, good health for all those we serve and ourselves. And this year, as you celebrate with loved ones and give thanks, keep in mind the importance of those two wonderful words—*kindness* and *respect*.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D.

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