

West Georgia Health Expands Nutrition Services to Community

The Center for Nutrition Therapy at West Georgia Health offers individuals support and personalized plans for a variety of health and nutritional concerns from weight loss to the management of chronic medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

The Center for Nutrition Therapy offers strategies for addressing key issues like portion size, food labels, meal planning, shopping and cooking, modifying recipes, eating out, snacking, special occasions such as travel and holidays and physical activity.

The center is staffed by Heather Coggins, M.P.A., R.D., L.D., C.D.E. and Debbie Horner, R.D., L.D. Both are licensed and registered dietitians who offer expert assessment, guidance and education for each person's individual needs, based on their personal and lifestyle preferences. "We tell our clients that there is no magic bullet for weight loss," said Horner. "It's all about changes in behavior. We teach people about nutrition and how to make healthy choices. We emphasize moderation and balance."



Dietitians Heather Coggins, left, and Debbie Horner, right, provide nutritional counseling at West Georgia Health's Center for Nutrition Therapy.

In addition to weight management, the center provides medical nutrition therapy (MNT) for a variety of health-related conditions including cardiovascular disorders such as cholesterol and high blood pressure, childhood and adult obesity, diabetes management, gastrointestinal problems including irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's Disease, colitis, kidney disorders, osteoporosis, pregnancy and allergies. A physician's referral is necessary for the MNT to qualify for reimbursement from a third party such as Medicare or

insurance.

"We don't put people on diets because diets don't work," said Coggins. "We teach people how to eat a balanced diet, and what an average serving size looks like. Most people are shocked when we tell them a serving of meat should be the size of a deck of cards."

For more information about the programs and services offered at *The Center for Nutrition Therapy*, call 706-845-3000 or visit www.wghealth.org. Physician and self-referrals are welcome.



Golf Tournament Honors Etheridge

Co-workers and friends held a golf tournament to benefit the daughter of former WGH employee Frankie Etheridge who died in June following a brief illness. More than \$2,700 was raised with proceeds benefiting his daughter Madison, whom Etheridge called the greatest gift in his life.

Etheridge had worked for the last seven years at WGH in the Information Services department. Etheridge was a 1971 graduate of Hardaway High School in Columbus. Frankie was known for his loyalty to the Georgia Bulldogs and the Atlanta Braves. He was a well-known golfer at Bull Creek Golf Course and was a top bowler in the West Georgia Health Foundation league.

From the CEO ...

West Georgia Health just concluded our 2011 fiscal year on September 30 with the overall assessment being that it was as successful as we could have asked for under the circumstances. Few communities around the state and region have the bright future we have, thanks to KIA and their many allied suppliers locating in and around Troup County.



As a hospital and an employer, we have continued to improve our documented quality of care and patient satisfaction scores, reflecting what is really good about health care here in LaGrange. In addition, we recently received our scores from the Employee Partnership Evaluation and learned that your satisfaction ranked us in the 93rd percentile – the second year in a row to score above the 90th percentile! We continue to feel the responsibility to make West Georgia Health a great place for all of us to work. We remain committed more than ever to continuing to improve our quality and satisfaction scores as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of our “Above and Beyond” initiative, introduced in October 2006.

But everything is not so rosey everywhere. Our nation’s economy is now entering the fourth year of the recession which started in late 2008, just as West Georgia Health launched our South Tower construction project. We were very fortunate to complete that project and now have our patients benefiting from the outstanding new facilities we have to offer. Like hospitals around the state and across our nation, health care jobs have been a rare bright spot in what has proven to be the most persistently high unemployment picture in my lifetime. West Georgia Health has not had to face layoffs or other types of staff reductions, largely due to continued growth in our market. We have also seen an uptick in the numbers of physicians who express strong interest in practicing in LaGrange, which could be a very good trend if it continues.

We, like our parents and their parents, must endure difficult times and trying circumstances. If this recession is the worst challenge we’ll face, I will consider myself lucky. But I don’t believe that will prove to be the case. When it does end, and history certainly proves that such cycles eventually do turn around, we may find ourselves to be a nation which values life more than we value possessions ... family and friends versus “stuff.”

The Intercom Newsletter is published monthly for people like:



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NEXT INTERCOM DEADLINE:
Friday, Nov. 11, 2011



Children’s Attic

After seeing a newspaper article about the Children’s Attic, the WGH Radiology staff decided they wanted to help. The story focused on one of the first children Brenda Morman took into foster care. That child was a 6-year-old girl who had to march in place to keep her shoes on her feet because the soles were dangling and the straps were broken. Ms. Morman has kept those shoes to remind her what poverty is about. This story touched the Imaging staff’s hearts and led to the donation of infant/young adult clothes, socks, underwear and diapers.

The Children’s Attic supplies the area needs for foster children and to the Emmaus House for women who have children.

Pictured from left are Debbie Bowie, Carol Neighbors, Meadow Tucker, Becky Levens, Tollie Ramsey, Janice Parmer, Dee Copeland and in back is Larry Norred.

Brooks Visits Africa as Part of Mission Trip

Angeline Brooks, social worker at Twin Fountains Home, was part of a mission team trip to Liberia, Africa in July. Brooks helped conduct a Vacation Bible School in Monrovia at Matadi Baptist Church for the children and provided leadership classes for the men. Brooks said the trip was life-changing for her. She described her experience in a journal. The following are excerpts:

"I always thought that I knew what poverty was until the moment we drove through the countryside. All of the little huts and make-shift homes had no window panes and the people cooked outside over coals in big pots full of rice and maybe some fish. The children walked with five-gallon cans to the nearest well to get water. The women carried large platters of bananas or



whatever they had to sell on their head. The stores were make-shift booths, put together with a roof and shelves. We were given bottled water to drink and were warned to never drink the local water because it would make us sick.

"The medical needs were very apparent. We saw a lot of sick babies and children who had large sores on their legs and between their fingers. I saw a mother holding a small child who

constantly coughed. A nurse in our group said that the child would probably be dead in three days or less.

"On our first day of Vacation Bible School, we were overwhelmed when we saw 200 children waiting at the door. All we could do was pray and ask God to lead and guide us. The next day there were even more children and some had to be turned away because we were not equipped to handle the large crowd."

LHS Senior Spends Summer Helping Others at the Hospital

A rising senior at LaGrange High School is among 72 students who volunteered their time at West Georgia Health during their summer break. AJ Patel, has been a participant in the health system's Junior Volunteer program for the past four years. The long-standing program for high school students is operated by the Volunteer Services department at West Georgia Health.

"The Junior Volunteer program at West Georgia Health gives our youth a chance to be exposed to the healthcare environment," said Jean Cook, director of Volunteer Services. "Several of our Junior Volunteers are interested in a career in healthcare; and our 8-week program gives them an opportunity to experience a 'behind the scenes' look at the hospital and an opportunity to work alongside our hospital staff."

Even though Patel is not looking

toward a healthcare-related career, he doesn't like to sit idle during his summer break. He heard about the program at school and decided to give it a try. "I like to be productive with my time and volunteering at the hospital is a good way for me to come and help out," said Patel. This summer Patel worked each Tuesday, from 8 a.m. to noon, transporting patients by wheelchair during their dismissal and delivering items to various departments throughout the hospital.

Fellow volunteers, Eugenia and Ralph Fagan, members of the WGH Auxiliary have worked with Patel for the past two summers and presented him with homemade brownies to celebrate his last day. "It has been an absolute pleasure working with AJ," said Ralph Fagan. "He is one of the finest young men I have ever met, and has done a great service to this hospital by volunteering his time."

During the school year, Patel plays on the LHS tennis team and is active in the Service Club. Patel said the Junior Volunteer experience has helped him learn his way around the hospital as well



WGH Volunteer Ralph Fagan, left and Junior Volunteer AJ Patel, right, a rising senior at LHS, prepare to transport a patient for discharge from the hospital.

as meeting a lot of new people and learning new things.

Although students do not receive pay for volunteering, the experience can be an asset on a student's college application. AJ plans to attend the University of Georgia after graduating from LHS. Although he is undecided on a major, math is one of his strongest subjects.

Students ages 14 to 18, who are interested in volunteering next summer can request information from their school guidance counselor. For more information, contact Volunteer Services at West Georgia Health, 706-882-1411.



Employee of the Month August 2011

Novelette Collins

Job Title/Dept: Housekeeper. Environmental Services.

Number Of Years With The Hospital: More than a year.

Family: I am the youngest in the family with four older brothers.

Interests/Hobbies: I enjoy reading, traveling and shopping. I am a member of Canaan Baptist Church in Welch, Alabama.

Proudest Moment: August 2011. When I was elected "Employee of the Month" at West Georgia Health.

Pet Peeve: When people pick on or belittle other people for no reason.

Music: I enjoy R&B, hip hop and gospel.

Books: Books written by Terry McMillian.

TV: *All My Children* is my favorite daytime soap to watch and I also like *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*.

Person(s) You Most Admire: My mother, Carrie Daniel. She taught me to be independent, work hard and to treat people the way you would want to be treated.

Best Advice (That You Have Received Or Have To Offer): In life you will be faced with many obstacles good and bad, but always remember to be at your best no matter what you are faced with.

What Would You Do If You Had A Million Dollars? I would share it with my family and build a new home.

How Do You Plan To Enjoy Retirement? When that time comes I will enjoy traveling and sleeping late!

With Heartfelt Condolences

WGH acknowledges the following deaths:

Mrs. Ruth Starnes
mother-in-law of
Nita Starnes, Technician
Central Supply

Mr. Charles "Buck" Cross
brother-in-law of
Judy Wright, Social Worker
Social Services

West Georgia Hospice 22nd Annual Poinsettia Sale

Let us take care of your Christmas list with beautiful poinsettias that also provide a special gift of kindness for our hospice patients.

\$12 for each Poinsettia (must be pre-paid)

Local deliveries

Delivery dates are November 28 through December 1, 2011.

Proceeds benefit West Georgia Hospice patient care.

For more information, call 706.845.3905



West Georgia Hospice Volunteer Class

We are thankful for this new group of volunteers who give support and encouragement to our Hospice patients and their families. Thank you to all of our Hospice volunteers who use their gifts and talents to be a blessing to others. Pictured from left are Pam Wilbanks, Peggy Wilson, Connie Neal, Joyce Wood, volunteer coordinator, Mary Newman, Scott Smith, Carolyn McCoy, John Colbert, Margaret Hanson, Stephanie Deep, Peggy Johnson, Jean Rendleman, Tammy Forbus, volunteer specialist, Judy McGavic, Keri Lindsey and Teri Raven.



Christian Featured in CIO Magazine

West Georgia Health's Chief Information Officer, Sonya Christian is among a select group featured in the July edition of *CIO Magazine*. Before coming to WGH, Christian was CIO at Slidell Memorial Hospital in Louisiana

when Katrina hit. Below is an excerpt from the article entitled "Four Ways to Keep Staff Together Through a Disaster."

"Staff members that had been solid and steady had maybe not the same level of dedication to their jobs in an emergency," said Christian. One of Christian's network administrators was due to work as a member of the storm team but didn't show up. "He gave notice eventually because he'd relocated to another area of the country," she recalls. Another network administrator did report for storm team duty but when he was released on break, he didn't come back. Surprised, she had to reassign duties."

Now at West Georgia, she designates backup staff for the first wave response team in case some employees waver. After Katrina, Christian helped run Slidell's command center, working 10 days straight, mainly in an area set up for

hospital staff coming off shifts but unable to go home. While sewers weren't working and portable restrooms weren't yet set up, she recalls, people used the nearby ground. "This alarmed a lot of our staff. They'd never had to deal with that, even people who worked in the emergency department," she says. "I saw department directors come back and sit down and cry." And she let them. She herself stole moments alone in the stairwell, she says, to do the same. Since then, when faced with drawn-out emergency conditions, she builds time in the response team's schedule to leave work. The breaks renew the spirit, she says. "Everyone on the disaster team needs to get away from the immediate work area, even if they feel they don't want to."

(Copies of the full article are available from Marketing. Contact Patricia Rogers at rogersp@wghealth.org).

Patient Appreciation at West Georgia Dialysis was a Huge Success

Patient Appreciation Day at West Georgia Dialysis was celebrated in grand style on August 29 and 30. The dialysis center was decorated for a Hawaiian luau and many of the dialysis patients dressed in floral costumes to have their pictures taken in front of a Palm Tree backdrop. Patients enjoyed games, bingo, door prize drawings and island music.

To commemorate the occasion, each patient received a tee shirt with the words "Embrace Life" and the West Georgia dialysis logo printed on it. Patients were treated to a Chick-Fil-A meal which West Georgia Dialysis Director Cathy Phillips personally picked up and delivered to the center herself. By their example and concern, Cathy and



Pictured from left are Carole Hughes, volunteer; Kelly Box, medical records/lab technician; Willie Brewer, patient; Charlie Kennedy, patient and Wenda Lovelace, RD, LD.

Medical Director Dr. Richard Ingram and the staff at West Georgia Dialysis motivate patients to live life as fully as possible despite the challenges of renal disease.

Honored guests at the event were Jerry Fulks, CEO/President, and Tripp Penn, Vice President. They were both greeted with smiles and a warm welcome by patients and staff alike.

Many patients commented that they were honored that the hospital leaders came to spend time with them.

Our primary goal was creating an opportunity to tell our patients that they are valued and that we are delighted to be their dialysis center of choice. Based on the expressions on the dialysis patients' faces, it appears that on this occasion, we were abundantly successful.



Christmas Tour of Homes Sunday, December 4, 2011 2 - 6 p.m.

Refreshments, Boutique and Entertainment

Tours will begin at Hills and Dales Estate Visitor Center. Vans will be provided to transport guests to the individual homes.

Tickets \$25

Benefit for West Georgia Hospice.

Call 706.845.3905

Junior Service League Pledges Support

On August 25, the members of the Junior Service League (JSL) of LaGrange voted to support the Comprehensive Cancer Center with a pledge of \$50,000 to fund the Resource Center that will provide cancer information and resources for patients and their families. The Junior Service League's gift will be funded through its 2012 Follies "Ballroom Blitz," which is a variety show featuring local talent from JSL and our community. This fun event will be held on two evenings, March 23 and 24, 2012. Auditions are scheduled for February 28 and 29, so polish up your tap shoes and dust off your tux. Anyone with a talent (or not) is encouraged to audition. The JSL would love to have strong participation from West Georgia Health staff and their families ... as performers and as audience members. For more information on participating in the program, please contact Susan Ferguson via email or at ext. 7332. Thank you Junior Service League members for your support!



Recognition of Advanced Certification

The Compliance Department is pleased to announce Sheri Jones, Compliance Auditor, and Robbie Miller, RAC Coordinator, recently achieved their Certified Professional Medical Auditor (CPMA) certifications through the American Academy of Professional Coders.

The certification will enable our team to be well equipped with the knowledge to better understand the full concept of coding, medical records, compliance and several other aspects of performing their jobs at a higher level.

In today's medical environment there is increased scrutiny of the coding, medical record and billing aspect. Consequently, continuous education of the regulations, requirements and retention are changing and constantly being tested. With the CPMA certification Sheri and Robbie have achieved, our organization will continuously be focused on the cutting edge of quality auditing.

Robbie became a member of the



Sheri Jones, (left) and Robbie Miller show off their certificates.

WGH Compliance team in April 2009 as the RAC Coordinator. Prior to Robbie's joining the Compliance Dept., she has held several positions at WGH beginning in Nursing Administration, OR, ER, Coding, RMD, all of which gave her a good pulse of WGH operations when she became the RAC Coordinator. When not working, Robbie and her husband, Don, spend much of their time with their four

children and seven grandchildren.

Sheri Jones became a member of the WGH Compliance team in June 2010 in the position of Compliance Auditor. Prior to her joining the Compliance Team, she was employed as Supervisor of Centralized Scheduling/Insurance Verification. Sheri's background complements the position she holds today at WGH. She has experience in the clinical (LPN) areas, physician office practices, as well as an entrepreneur of her own Fitness and Rehab Center. Sheri and her husband, Don, along with their dog Annabelle, have settled into their farm "Tucaway" in Warm Springs, Ga. They are proud parents of two children and most recently became grandparents.

When you see these team members, please take a few minutes to congratulate them on taking the next step in their dedication to WGH of "doing a GREAT job" at the work they do for us.