

## WGH Partners with Medical College of Georgia to Expand Neurology Services

When someone is having a stroke, every second counts. Having access to critical care means a much greater chance of surviving and avoiding long-term brain damage. West Georgia Health (WGH) is expanding its neurological services through its Telestroke Program to provide care when local neurology coverage is unavailable. The program provided in partnership with the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) in Augusta allows nurses and other staff to quickly connect with highly trained, board certified neurologists using video conferencing at patients' bedsides.

Through the state-of-the-art video communications, nurses have real-time access to doctors at the Medical College of Georgia's nationally certified award-winning stroke center. Doctors are able to see and speak with patients in the Emergency Department at WGH via a computer link and quickly determine the best course of treatment for patients requiring emergency or advanced neurological care.

"It's like a virtual exam," said Twyla Buttrill, RN, quality initiatives coordinator, who oversees WGH's stroke program.

"The physician can perform an assessment with the aid of WGH nursing staff to determine if a stroke has occurred."

Buttrill said common symptoms for stroke include numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, confusion, or trouble speaking.

The Telestroke process begins after a patient with stroke symptoms has a Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan. Consulting neurologists at MCG are able to view and discuss all diagnostic testing, including CT scan images with WGH nurses as they assess the patient. This assessment includes a series of questions to determine cognitive and visual function, as well as a physical exam motor function of arms and legs. The assessment is critical to determine if the powerful clot-busting drug, Tissue Plasminogen Activator (tPA) should be administered for treatment. To be effective, it must be given within the first few hours after a stroke.

This technology helps save lives and gives patients the best chance for a full recovery said Buttrill. "When a person suffers a stroke, 1.9 million nerve cells in

the brain die every minute," said Buttrill. "But this steady loss of brain cells can often be curtailed through the use of tPA, but determining its appropriate use must be done quickly and by medical professionals experienced with stroke and critical conditions."

Five patients have been treated using the Telestroke Program since WGH implemented the program in mid-November.

### Know The Warning Signs of Stroke:

#### Common stroke symptoms include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache, with no known cause.

#### If you think someone is having a stroke, use the F.A.S.T. test:

**F—FACE.** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**A—ARMS.** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S—SPEECH.** Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

**T—TIME.** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.



## From the CEO ...

There is so much for us to be proud of about West Georgia Health, much of which I covered during our recent Employee Forums. First, and foremost, is our ability to deliver high-quality patient care on such a consistent basis. Since the Georgia Hospital Association began reporting quality scores for individual hospitals in our state, WGH has been in the top 20 out of 156 hospitals. Most recently, we ranked 13th (not an unlucky number after all).

We can also feel very good about our patients' satisfaction with our people and the care we give. Most of the areas we survey have made it into the top 25% of the Press-Ganey data base, and several are scoring above the 80th percentile! Offering a quality service at a high satisfaction rate is certainly a winning combination.

When I'm asked how we do it, I say that the secret is our people. We genuinely care for our patients and their families. We also have a high respect for our co-workers and the skills they have to offer each other.

On a recent weekend, I opened the *LaGrange Daily News* and an article caught my attention. It was recognizing community citizens who were honored for having "Big Hearts" in caring for others. Reading through the article, I was very proud to read about people I know, especially those who work at West Georgia Health. First, I noted that **Adina Roland**, from Radiology, was named. Knowing Adina as I do, I agreed totally that she has a wonderful personality that shines through with everyone she meets. She certainly deserves to be recognized!

**Etta Roberts** also was recognized for having a "Big Heart." She is often the first person to greet patients, family, and visitors at the reception desk in the South Tower main lobby. Etta is often accompanied by one of our volunteers and, together, they get us off on the right foot in establishing relationships. I have to agree, Etta deserves to be recognized!

Next, I read that the **entire staff of Vernon Woods** was recognized by residents of the retirement community. That made me smile, thinking about how the staff provides such care and comfort for their residents, making their retirement years so much richer and fulfilling.

Lastly, I quickly recognized **Cathy Arrington** and **Angela McSpadden** in a photograph with a new mother who had experienced their help through Lamaze Classes, now offered in the Women's Health Center. Both of them provided excellent care for the birth on my two granddaughters, born here three years apart! I'm certain that the patient pictured with them would say the same thing about her birth experience.

These are just a few recent examples of how our people are making West Georgia Health a great place for patients to receive care! Thanks to all of you for what you do!



## The Intercom Newsletter is published monthly for people like:



The Spelling Blocks ... Mervyn Chapman, Joyce Ellis-Johnson and Hoyal Turner

### Our Marketing and Community Relations Staff

Allison Davis, Director  
Patricia Rogers, Staff Writer  
Gracie Worrells, Graphic Designer

### Printer

Danny Rock

### Contributing Writers

Shelley Chastain, Business Development  
Laura Piestrak, PACE  
Susan Burdick, Vernon Woods  
Jill Montgomery, Gift Shop

If you would like to contribute a story to our newsletter, please contact Gracie Worrells at ext. 3327.

**NEXT INTERCOM DEADLINE:**  
Friday, April 8, 2011

**Interested in joining the book club discussion?**

**Contact Joyce Ellis-Johnson at ext. 3702 for information.**



## Volunteer Services Hosts Business After Hours

City and county leaders enjoyed the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours recently hosted by West Georgia Health Volunteer Services and Expressions of the Heart Gift Shop. Chamber members heard remarks from Jean Cook, director of Volunteer Services, who explained that gift shop proceeds benefit WGH programs and services including the new Cancer Treatment Center. Pictured from left: Troup County Commissioner Richard English; LaGrange City Councilman Nick Woodson; LaGrange City Councilman Bobby Traylor; and Troup County Commissioner Buck Davis.

# Technology Benefits Seniors

Vernon Woods Retirement Community has invested in a state-of-the-art emergency call system for its residents. Through Philips Lifeline, residents are now able to summon for emergency assistance anywhere in the building or on the outside campus.

In most assisted living communities emergency pull cords are located throughout the inside of the building for residents to use in the event of a health emergency. However, according to Vernon Woods' Executive Director Susan Burdick, falls most often occur away from the reach of a pull cord. This new integrated wireless system will allow residents to summon help anywhere on campus with the push of a button worn discreetly on a pendant around the neck or on the wrist. "This new system provides our residents with the independence while knowing that help is just seconds away," said Burdick. This new wireless option offers residents not only peace of mind but the ability to enjoy our beautiful outdoor grounds more freely with enhanced security.

Philips Lifeline is a \$34 billion global leader in health care, lifestyle and technology and manufactures a broad range of products ranging from consumer electronics to medical systems to light solutions. The company serves over 650,000 seniors worldwide.



*Phillips Lifeline technician Patrick Farrell (r) trains Resident Assistants Kwanza Smith (l) and Tisha Bell on the new system.*



*Resident Patsy Dowdy studies her new personal help button that resembles a wristwatch.*

## SAVE THE DATE

2nd Annual  
Hats and  
Horseshoes  
Saturday,  
May 7, 2011  
Highland Country Club  
5 – 9 p.m.



Experience the tradition and magic of Churchill Downs close to home as the First Steps program of West Georgia Health hosts its second annual Hats and Horseshoes. The Kentucky Derby-Style event will offer guests an opportunity to win cash prizes, and jewels, taste premium bourbons, and enjoy a live band and derby-inspired buffet. Awards will be presented for the best hat and the "best dressed" men.

Tickets \$45 in advance, \$50 at the door. Proceeds benefit First Steps, a West Georgia Health program that provides expectant parents and parents of newborns with emotional support, parenting education, and access to community resources.

For more information contact First Steps at 706-812-2266



*Donna Smiley, center, education coordinator and employees, Linda Stribling left and Linda Dean, right attend the Microsoft beginner's class.*

## Education Services Offers Microsoft Word Classes

Staff had the chance to build their computer skills in a Microsoft Word 2010 class offered through the Education Services department. Seventeen employees attended the first class, which was geared toward beginner level students. The course was taught by Donna Smiley, education coordinator.

"I never had any "formal" education on Microsoft, but after attending the class I learned that Microsoft 2010 is very intuitive, which makes things so much easier," said Tracey Stribling, RN, manager of surgical services.

Sandra Ross, activities director at FHH plans to use her new skills in developing flyers to promote activities to the residents.

Advanced and intermediate level classes in Microsoft Word will be scheduled soon. Classes in 2010 PowerPoint, Outlook and Excel will also be offered in the near future. Notice of classes and schedules will be sent through email.



## Employee of the Month January 2011

**Lisa Cameron**

**Job Title/Dept:** HUC/CNA, Float Department.

**Number Of Years With The Hospital:** 10.

**Family:** Sons: Nygel and Keshawn. Daughter: Adajiah.

**Interests/Hobbies:** Reading, watching football, spending time with family.

**Proudest Moment:** Birth of my children.

**Pet Peeve:** Lazy people. People that have that "it's not my job" mentality.

**Music:** R&B.

**Books:** Books by Terri McMillian.

**TV:** Criminal Minds, First 48, Law and Order.

**Person(s) You Most Admire:** My grandmother. She raised her children, and my sisters and I when my parents died. She also helped us with our children. She was truly a phenomenal woman.

**Best Advice (That You Have Received Or Have To Offer):** Never hold on to the past, it gets in the way of your future. In other words, don't chase your memories when you can chase your dreams.

**What Would You Do If You Had A Million Dollars?** Donate to my church. Travel with family and invest.

**How Do You Plan To Enjoy Retirement?** Spending time with my family and traveling.

## Meet Dr. Forbes

The physician below is a member of West Georgia Health's active medical staff. Visit [wghealth.org](http://wghealth.org) for more physician listings.



**Tiffanni Forbes, M.D., F.A.C.S.**

### Specialty

Hospitalist  
Internal Medicine

### Board Certifications

Internal Medicine

### Medical School

Medical College of Georgia  
Augusta, GA

### Residency

Morehouse School of Medicine  
Atlanta, GA

### Honors/Awards/Achievements

Chief Resident –Internal Medicine  
Morehouse School of Medicine, 2001 –2002

### Joined Medical Staff

2010



*From left to right are Heart of West Georgia board member Dr. Michael Lock, board president Bobby Lumpkin, and Vernon Woods' resident Ann Adamson.*

## Blood Pressure Kiosk Donated to Vernon Woods

Heart of Georgia, Inc. donated a blood pressure kiosk to Vernon Woods Retirement Community. The machine allows residents to independently monitor their blood pressure and pulse at any time. Heart of West Georgia is a local organization whose mission is to promote heart education and wellness in the LaGrange and Troup County area.

*Birthdays Through the Decades ...  
Past, Present and Future.*

**Relay for Life of  
Troup County  
April 29–30,  
2011**



## Whitesville Road Track

To join our WGH relay team, contact Wanda Lowe at ext. 3866

## Dr. Vlachos Play to Debut in LaGrange



As medical director of West Georgia Worx, Dr. Nick Vlachos plays a very important role in keeping Troup County's workforce well. But like Russian physician and playwright Anton Chekov, Vlachos also plays a significant role in the performing arts as an accomplished playwright. His original play, "The Bed" will be presented by the LaFayette Theatre Company, as part of the Lafayette Society of Performing Arts' (LSPAs) 30th anniversary.

Writing under the pen name of Nikos Vlachos, Dr. Vlachos passion began in college while he was studying dramatics at the University of Idaho. Playwriting was put on hold until he wrote down some ideas for a play on the way to a medical conference in Arizona in 2001.

"I completed the first draft of "The Bed" in less than six weeks," said Vlachos. "It was like taking dictation, as thoughts flowed on to paper like water."

A few weeks later, he asked the chairman of the Performing Arts at Milliken University in Decatur, Illinois to read it. He did, liked it and two months later his students performed the play in a workshop production that raised more than \$15,000 for a project to renovate an old downtown theater where the likes of a vaudevillian named Bob Hope and a young B.B. King once performed.

"The Bed," is among a dozen plays Vlachos has written and performed. Most have received awards. "The Bed," his only full-length play, has won various National Playwriting Awards, most notably first prize in the 2003 American Theatre Co-op full-length playwriting contest and finalist in the 2004 Chicago Last Play Standing Competition.

The play, a romantic comedy, chronicles the marriage between a 24-year-old struggling painter, Joe Isaia and Sara Laramie, a 21-year-old registered nurse. It begins in 1983, on their wedding night, and continues to the year 2045.

"The entire play takes place in the bedroom," said Vlachos. "Even though the bedroom scenes change, with the passage of time, as Joe and Sara move into different and more affluent

dwelling, the constant is the couple's bed, which remains the same and figures allegorically in their relationship. Since it ends well into the 21st century there's a bit of science fiction in there as well."

The original work was set in a New York brownstone, but the current production has been rewritten to take place in LaGrange.

According to Vlachos, "The Bed," is a story not so much about making the right decisions but of decisions made right.

Jim Hunt and Kelly Finley will play the roles of Joe and Sara in the LSPA production. Ryan McWhorter will direct the play.

"A story about a married couple can be actually funnier and more entertaining than one about singles," said Vlachos. "My goal, as a playwright, is to have the audience clutching their spouse during and after the show, anxious to renew their vows, and for the singles in the audience to want to run off and find their swan."

The play has also been performed in Chicago and Orange County, California. "The Bed" will open with a black tie gala Wednesday, April 28 followed by performances at the Black Box Theatre on April 29, 30 and May 1, 6 and 7. To reserve tickets, call 706-882-9909.

## Burks Family Reunites with WGH Staff to Give Thanks

The Maternity Services staff held a joyous reunion for a patient and her caregivers who are credited with saving her life when she became critical during the birth of her son. 39-year-old Patricia Burks gave birth to her fourth child Kameron at West Georgia Health on January 7. She experienced complications during her delivery and was transported to Emory Midtown for treatment. She remained there for three weeks while her son stayed in the nursery at WGH.

Burks, who is an OT at WGH Home Care said the experience was an awakening for her and her family. "I thank God for the amazing staff at WGH who brought me back to life after

experiencing five cardiac arrests," said Burks. "I know I am here today and my children still have their mother and my husband still has his wife because of the power of prayer and the staff who were with me, including my doctor, Madhavi Naik."

Burks presented thank you gifts to the nursing staff and physicians. "I want each of you to have a remembrance of me and to realize the importance of what you do every day and how important you are to your patients," said Burks.



*Patricia Burks and baby Cameron, center are pictured with West Georgia Health Staff along with her pastor, Dr. Clarence Sams.*



## WGH Hosts High School Students For Job Shadowing Day

*From left, Calyn Reynolds, CHS, and Deondra Smith, THS, observe Tara McKeen, RN at work on the obstetrics unit during job shadowing day.*

Local high school students had the opportunity to learn first-hand what it is like to work in a hospital during the annual job shadowing day Feb. 2. Sponsored by the Troup County School System and the LaGrange Troup County Chamber of Commerce, the event offered 12 students from Callaway, LaGrange and Troup High schools the opportunity to learn more about health care careers in the real-life environment.

Tara McKeen, RN, guided Calyn Reynolds, a junior at Callaway High School and Deondra Smith, a senior at Troup High School through a typical day in the obstetrics unit. McKeen said both students have what it takes to work in health care. "They were both very friendly and kind to the patients as they made rounds with me," said McKeen. "Those are very important qualities for providing good bedside care."

Smith plans on becoming a registered nurse and looks forward to one day working in a labor and delivery unit. "I realize how important it is to communicate with your patients, because you deal with so many different types of people," said Smith.

Reynolds, who plans on becoming a pediatrician enjoyed assisting McKeen with taking patients' temperatures and blood pressure readings. "I learned a lot about dispensing medications and how to interact with different types of patients," said Reynolds.

## Expression From the Heart Gift Shop News

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who stopped and shopped at the gift shop for your Valentine's Day merchandise! Pamela Cox was the happy winner of our Valentine's Day bear. Pamela works at Hospice, and was so excited! Mr. Beary Sweet will make his new home with Miranda Joy, Pamela's 11-year-old daughter. Pamela said, "My daughter is the joy of our lives, and she loves stuffed animals." Her exuberance is contagious!

Speaking of exuberance, we attended the Atlanta Mart in January, and our merchandise has been arriving at a steady pace. We hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoy picking it out for you. Since March is the time of the year that the weather warms up, we hope to "warm" you up to visit the gift shop by offering a 20 percent discount on a gift item of

your choice every Friday. Our only exclusions are perfume, Yankee Candles of the Month, and items we purchase from Specialty Distributors. The only catch is, you have to say, "Please give me my TGIF discount."

Have a great month. Expressions From The Heart is a non-profit gift shop contributing to the projects of WGH one purchase at time.



*Erin Nacey, WGH volunteer congratulates Pamela Cox for winning "Mr. Beary Sweet" during the Valentine's Day drawing.*

**With Heartfelt Condolences**  
WGH acknowledges the following deaths:

**Mr. Mark Allen Scott**  
*brother-in-law of*  
**Mary Ann Hairston, Secretary**  
**Nutrition Services**

**Mrs. Jewel Teel**  
*mother of*  
**Peggy Thompson, Activities**  
**Coordinator**  
**Twin Fountains Home**

## WGH Service Line Focus: Audiology Services

West Georgia Health provides the only state-of-the-art Audiology Department staffed by a certified and licensed, doctoral-level audiologist. Dr. Francye Largeman has more than 20 years of experience in the assessment and diagnosis of hearing problems for patients of all ages.

Dr. Largeman's expertise includes selection, fitting, maintenance, repair, programming of new and existing hearing aids and assistive living devices from a variety of manufacturers. She is a graduate of Emory University and earned her master's degree in Audiology from the University of Georgia and received her doctorate degree from A.T. Still University.

The West Georgia Health Audiology Department offers the following services:

- Diagnostic hearing evaluation
- Hearing aid evaluation and fitting
- Assistive listening devices and assistive listening device repair
- Newborn hearing, screening and testing
- Ototoxicity monitoring
- Auditory processing screenings and diagnostics
- Hearing loss prevention programs, consultations and education
- Tinnitus assessment

Dr. Largeman's office is located on the first floor of the hospital in the Rehabilitation Services department. Patients may enter through the Community Services Clinic for convenient access. To schedule a free screening call 706-845-3677. A referral and/or prescription may be needed depending on specific health insurance coverage. Medicare, Medicaid and most insurance programs are accepted.