

Ultimate Goal Is To Bring Sunshine Into Their Days

Residents at Seven Hills Pediatric Center were “sent to their rooms” in March, not as a punishment, but to keep them safe from the Covid-19 virus.

They have been there ever since.

But they are not alone. Teachers, therapists and staff assistants formed teams, loaded portable carts with creative tools and bring lessons and enrichment to the bedrooms in 30-minute segments throughout the day.

“It’s very time-intensive, but the one-to-one visits provide high quality interaction that the kids need, and they have the benefit of fewer interruptions and distractions,” said Monica Kleeman, M.S. Ed, Director of Education and Activities.

Small group classes and activities definitely promote socialization and often help motivate individuals, she noted, but goals and services have always been individualized to maximize each person’s potential.



Alec revels in the sensory experiences of autumn at Seven Hills Pediatric Center.

Small group gatherings are still not approved yet for the medically-fragile residents, but they enjoyed the sensations of outdoor “walks” and a variety of performances on the lawn (socially-distanced) once the

state Department of Public Health authorized this activity.

Families visits resumed this summer, also outside, but moved indoors as the weather became cooler.

(Continued on page 4)

We’ll Get Through This ...By Taking Care Of The Staff

What is a medical facility’s most important asset?

People!

That’s why employers need to take care of them, asserts Valerie Hoven of **RankenJordan Pediatric Bridge Hospital** in Missouri.

Valerie outlined her hospital’s

work environment during the pandemic at a recent workshop: “We’ll Get Through This. . . Supporting Staff During Covid” organized by the Pediatric Complex Care Association.

RankenJordan’s actions included: a visible command center to serve as a beacon, streamlined communication, strong employee safety and support programs, and

transparency about the challenges.

A very important step that minimized confusion was to have all pandemic information emanate from a single source, according to Valerie.

“Just as NASA has ONE person talking to the space capsule,

(Continued on page 2)

Workshop Shares Morale Boosters

(continued from page 1)

all Covid information is sent from one designated source," Valerie said. It is unfair to bombard employees with multiple streams of information from while they are trying to do their jobs, she explained.

Over the summer, the staff at **Child Serve** in Iowa was showing signs of pandemic fatigue, said Michelle Theis.

The leadership team paid attention to that feedback and initiated targeted check-ins for personal support and guidance. Managers discussed self care, gave paid time off to refresh and lightened the workload wherever possible. Stress management, mindfulness and wellbeing sessions were also made available on-line and at work.

"Listening is probably the most impactful way we have supported our staff through past months," Michelle noted.

The **Children's Center Rehabilitation Hospital** in Oklahoma recognizes five dimensions of wellness -- physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual.

"One of our primary goals is to maximize the potential of everyone who comes through the door," Heather Wilson said. That means keeping employees "whole" as well as the patients.

"The overall shutdown caused great financial stress for our community. We are a big oil state, and the pandemic led to devastating job losses for some of our workers' spouses and partners," she explained.

The hospital gave a \$1,000 gratitude bonus to help out families and partnered with the local YMCA to offer reduced-price day programs for children when schools closed.

Being a religious affiliate, the hospital also addressed spiritual wellbeing.

"We offer prayer huddles at the

Founder's Message

These Are The Reasons We Do This . . .



*D*ear Friends,

Nearly 30 years ago our three-year-old daughter Sarah experienced a devastating illness.

After every possible intervention, we were forced to acknowledge her new reality: permanent and extreme disability.

As we explored life care and services for Sarah we discovered an abundance of benefits but found that third party medical insurers and State and Federal regulators typically approved the basics, but not the comforts that make life more bearable.

Our increased awareness of the shortfall led us to establish H.A.L.O.

With your help we address the gaps for kids like Mia (above left), whose insurance did not cover the cost of an adaptive stroller to ease the pain of her hypotonic hip dislocation when she travels outside her home.

We support programs for young people like Hussein (above right) who benefits from opportunities for social interaction at his pediatric nursing home, and we partner with agencies that address the needs of the other members of families (middle photo) of children with special needs. (Please visit www.halo.org for a complete list of our programs.)

H.A.L.O.'s board and our family are deeply grateful for your invaluable kindness, encouragement and support. We couldn't do this without you.

We wish you well during these challenging times and thank you for your humanity.

Sincerely,

beginning of each shift, virtual chapels to promote daily devotion and Miracle Time when chimes remind us that miracles happen here," Heather said.

All the facilities took a strong approach to safety and sanitation in the workplace, provided free food and

created fun moments to relieve employee tension, also.

The Pediatric Complex Care Association is a national non-profit which advocates for the excellence of care for children with medical complexity.

Adaptive Yoga Is A Virtual Hit; Live Activities Also Attract

In October, two 50-minute Adaptive Yoga and Meditation classes were offered to H.A.L.O.'s Sunday Swim and Sing families and SibShops participants via the Zoom video platform.

They were so well received, plans are underway to offer the activity twice a month.

Parents enthused:

"Bella really enjoyed the yoga/mediation session. It was great that it was so adaptive and open for the kids to do whatever they felt was right."

"My daughter loved it and I wish I did it with her, next time I will. I think it really makes sense as a service for our kids."

"I asked Johnny what his favorite part of the day was and he said yoga." Even though it didn't look like he was benefiting, it seems like he really did!"

H.A.L.O. partners with Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Boston to provide recreational, therapeutic and respite services to individuals with neurological impairment and their families who care for them at home.

Since February, programs have been delivered virtually and since July in

small, safe, in-person groups.

"It's vital to keep our families connected and served in meaningful ways, said Angela Waring, MS, Respite and Recreation Program Manager.

H.A.L.O.'s SWIM AND SING: The actual swimming has been temporarily halted. Six in-person music therapy sessions were offered through September, with 1-5 individuals with impairment attending each class, outdoors when possible.

Online, 25 programs were offered on to program participants on Zoom with a range of 1 to 7 attending each event. Activities included book group, movement, mindfulness, the popular adaptive yoga and meditation.



of 1-4 participants. Participants stayed socially distant, wore masks and played games while sharing feelings. Fourteen on-line meetings drew 2-8 siblings at each.

In September Angela surveyed families about programming during the new school year.

The fall schedule accommodates school hours. SibShop meetings were reduced from weekly to bi-weekly to ease participant burn out after a day of on-line school.

For Halloween, Angela rallied a dozen community volunteers to host a socially distant event with games, pumpkin decorating, a spider web walk and more. State Covid guidelines were observed; items were sanitized after each user.

The first hour was dedicated to the SibShops participants, then the fun opened up to all of the young people and families. The second half was a Music Therapy session for all. A total of 41 guests attended the day.

The event closed with "Trunk or Treat" – safe trick or treating from a car trunk. It providing an opportunity to practice social skills and turn-taking.

Music therapy was most popular, according to Angela, drawing comments such as:

"Johnny loves this music class."

"Everyone waited for Taylor to arrive at Singing today, and that meant so much. She always participates so enthusiastically. See you next time."

H.A.L.O. is a sponsor of JF&CS's Sibshops support group for young people who have a sibling with special needs. Three in-person sessions were held at JF&CS headquarters in place of the usual field trip activities. Each attracted attendance



The Power Of Love Prevails In The Pandemic

Holidays will be different this year, with smaller gatherings, face masks and other measures to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

It will be especially challenging for Robin F. because she and her family will not be able to share them with her older sister Lisa.

"Celebrations in our family have always revolved around Lisa," she explained. "We are all very close. Our mom taught us early on what the power of love can do for Lisa: hearing our voices, touching her hands, seeing our faces and planting gentle kisses on her cheek, all of this has brought her to where she is today."

Lisa is a medically fragile resident at New England Pediatric Care in Massachusetts. She cannot walk or talk, is fed through a G-tube, and requires 24-hour skilled nursing. She transitioned to NEPC in her teens, when her care became too complex for the family.

"That was a big adjustment for all of us, but she has only continued to thrive," said Robin, an occupational therapist with her own family now.

Family visited faithfully until the pandemic struck in March. Then they made do with the weekly Facetime visits generously offered by the staff.

They resumed visitation outdoors in July, and appreciate moving indoors



Lisa laughs during a socially-distant visit with her parents.

now that the weather is colder. However, they recognize that those precious 30 minutes a week could disappear any day now that the infection rate is climbing.

"I go with mom to visit about once a month because I feel it helps them get through this, but the restrictions prohibit much of what they want to give her."

"For me the Facetime visits are almost better than the in-person visits," Robin said.

"I get quite emotional when I leave a visit. None of it is easy - we are all doing what we need to do to get through this pandemic."

I just can't wait to hug and kiss her cheek and hold hands again!"

Enrichment Happens Indoors and Out

(continued from page 1)

Covid restrictions meant the Seven Hills couldn't have its annual pumpkin party, so it purchased 80 sugar pumpkins and craft materials for decorating.

Utilizing hand-over-hand techniques, the staff worked with each resident to customize their pumpkins to their own taste. The project also provided opportunities to work on goals including making

choices, communication and creative expression.

"Our mission has always been to focus on the individual, to nurture and empower each person to achieve their highest possible degree of personal wellbeing and independence," Monica explained. Pandemic or not, the team at Seven Hill Pediatric Center remains dedicated to these goals.

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 1
WINTER 2020



A Foundation for Children with Neurological Impairment

OFFICERS

Alan Pinshaw, M.D.
Founder and President

Paul Chervin, M.D.
Vice President

Julius Levin
Vice President

Scott P. Gladstone, Esq.
Treasurer

Michael Alper, M.D.
Clerk

Ian L. Katz, M.D.
Secretary

Ronald Marcus, M.D.
Member at Large

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karin Alper

Rebecca Dalpe, Esq.

Susan Treisman Mirageas

Gayle Pinshaw

Arthur Sneider, Esq.

Julia Anne Wicoff

ADVISORS

Harvey Levy, M.D.

Peter Mowschenson, M.D.,

Michael Ronthal, M.D.

Rabbi Donald M. Splansky,
Ph.D., D.D., D.Hum.

Harry Webster, M.D.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Abrams, Little-Gill, Loberfeld, P.C.

HALO Foundation
1330 Boylston Street
Chestnut Hill, MA. 02467
WWW.HALO.ORG