Couple finds joy in volunteering with Yucatan heart program

Thirty-eight years ago, Alecia Stessman was on the pediatric floor at Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics visiting a patient. A staff member overheard how fluent Alecia was in Spanish and asked if she would be interested in volunteering with the Yucatan heart program – Mercy’s 40 year-old philanthropic cardiac surgery program for children on the Yucatan Peninsula. Alecia was intrigued with what the program offered and thought she would give it a try.

The first day she arrived as a volunteer she “fell in love with the program and is still in love.” Alecia gets most excited for arrival day. The families and patients don’t know what to expect, but Alecia greets them at the airport and rides with them back to the hospital via Mercy’s valet services. She takes the time to comfort, educate and show her love by being there for the families. They are always anxious and nervous, but Alecia feels her love and support are very comforting to the families.

Jim, Alecia’s husband, has also had a big impact on the Yucatan program. He joined Alecia when she began volunteering and sits with the parents while their children are in surgery. What he loves most is watching the relief the parents experience when the surgeon arrives in the waiting room and informs them surgery is over and the child is in the recovery process. Jim and Alecia are delighted to watch the children transform from their arrival in Des Moines, to the beginning of surgery, to the recovery process and finally, to their discharge. When there is an emergency, Jim and Alecia are with the families showing their support – even through the night or if necessary.

“We always appreciate the doctors. They are all miracle workers. The patients are so delicate and the doctors are always there for them no matter what time of day or night it is. They genuinely care,” says Jim.

Another selfless thing Jim and Alecia do to help the families is listen to their needs. If the families need supplies or clothes back home, Jim and Alecia not only purchase items for them, but they will also figure out a way to get the supplies back to Mexico.

“Without Jim and Alecia, this program would not function as smoothly. They are a blessing to our program,” said Ashley Sunderman, RN, children’s outreach coordinator for Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics who helps coordinate the trips for the Yucatan families.

Jim and Alecia are delighted to have a few more volunteers added to the program. Some started last year, but Jim and Alecia are excited to educate the volunteers and get them more involved as the groups of families arrive from the Yucatan this year.
PREPARATIONS FOR PAY SCHEDULE TRANSITION UNDERWAY

This fall, Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines will align with all other Catholic Health Initiative (CHI) markets on one consolidated pay schedule. This transition, which will move pay days to the opposite Fridays, will allow the entire organization to streamline the payroll process. Moving forward, Mercy will continue to have 26 pay periods each year. The transition will not result in a reduction in rate of pay or payment for hours worked. A schedule for the transition is included below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSITIONS</th>
<th>PAY DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last bi-weekly pay on current schedule: (Sept. 2-Sept. 15, 2018 pay period)</td>
<td>September 21, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week of pay: (Sept. 16-Sept. 22, 2018 pay period)</td>
<td>September 28, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First full pay on new schedule: (Sept. 23-Oct. 6, 2018 pay period)</td>
<td>October 12, 2018 (paychecks viewable on Oct. 10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All benefit deductions are based on 26 pay period deductions in the calendar year. To ensure the correct amounts for premiums are deducted, the Sept. 28 paycheck for one week of pay will contain the following deductions:

- Benefit deductions (health, vision, dental insurance)
- Tax withholding deductions
- Retirement deductions (normal percentage election)
- Wage garnishment deductions
- Recurring deductions for the Foundation and United Way
- Allowances and one-time payments.

Voluntary deductions for purchases at the cafeteria, Starbucks, Mercy Gift Shop, etc. will not occur on the Sept. 28 paycheck. Voluntary deductions for Sept. 16-Oct. 6 will occur on the Oct. 12 paycheck. Loan deductions for 401K and 403B and one-time deductions for the Foundation and United Way will also not occur on the Sept. 28 paycheck.

How to prepare

Before the pay schedule change takes place, Mercy colleagues are encouraged to review their personal direct deposit allocations and auto-pay schedules to ensure adequate funds will be available during the transition.

If you have any questions, please contact your manager or HR business partner.

SATELLITE PAIN CLINIC OPENING SOON AT MERCY NORTH

Mercy is expanding pain treatment services to meet the growing need of patients in the communities we serve. Using the latest technology and research to diagnose and treat a broad range of pain conditions allows providers and staff the ability to focus on providing an optimal patient experience.

On Friday, Aug. 24, Mercy Center for Pain Medicine will open a satellite pain clinic at Mercy North in Ankeny.

A physician will be on location every other Friday to see patients in clinic and to perform select procedures in the former surgery center. A provider referral is needed.

Providers may make a patient referral to the Mercy Pain Center Ankeny by calling (515) 247-3150. To learn more about pain and the pain services at Mercy, visit mercydesmoines.org/pain.