The Bulletin

Spirit of Mercy Award winner embodies the Mercy Values in meeting social needs

We’re learning more about how social factors can impact a person’s health. Inadequate food, shelter, clothing and other necessities can lead to serious illness and even death. At MercyOne East Village Family Medicine Clinic, Savanna Richardson helps to meet the needs of others as a community health worker. Her service as the hands of Jesus makes Savanna a Spirit of Mercy Award winner.

Savanna often amazes her colleagues with her ability to connect patients with needed services. They see her servant’s heart at work daily, showing compassion and caring for each patient’s unique individual needs and life situation.

Savanna’s work can be powerful. Colleagues shared the story of Savanna’s work with a single mother of four children who was recently diagnosed with stage IV cancer. The cancer made it difficult for the mother to work while receiving treatments, creating a need for food.

Savanna worked with a local resource to make sure the family didn’t go hungry. With Christmas approaching, the family had little hope of a celebration. Seeing Savanna’s efforts, her MercyOne East Village colleagues are helping make this Christmas memorable by providing the family with Christmas dinner, gifts and new clothing for each child.

In another instance, a homeless man came to the MercyOne East Village Urgent Care Clinic. The physician sent him directly to MercyOne Des Moines Emergency Care. When he was discharged, the man returned to his tent to discover his clothing, bedding and food were gone. The homeless gentleman and Savanna reconnected. She knew the man was diabetic, and she asked if he had eaten. It had been two days. Savanna provided the man with her meal from home and then worked with local resources to replace his items.

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Each day, Savanna travels throughout Des Moines and other communities to provide help. With each interaction, she ministers to people who otherwise might not have basic needs filled. Her example is a reminder of Jesus’ advice for our work and personal life – “I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Congratulations, Savanna!

MercyOne’s Community Health Worker program has connected patients with resources for more than two years, growing to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Learn more in the Jan. 3, 2020, issue of “The Bulletin.”
MercyOne Integrity & Compliance

Sticky Scenario
There’s nothing like a cute puppy under the Christmas tree, right? Dogs, as pets, bring us countless moments of joy. However, dogs—and a whole host of other animals, including miniature horses—can also act as service animals, performing tasks for our patients with disabilities. The law has some specific rules about how we treat patients with service animals. Check out this month’s “Sticky Scenario…”

Sharon, an outpatient clinic nurse, calls a patient to the exam room. The patient brings her dog with her. The dog isn’t wearing a vest, and Sharon, not wanting to scare other patients or contaminate the exam room, asks that the dog remain in the waiting area. Was Sharon correct in how she handled the situation?

If the dog is a service animal, then Sharon should have handled the situation differently. Under the American with Disabilities Act, MercyOne is prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities and, with a few exceptions (e.g., sterile areas), requires that we allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals in exam rooms, patient rooms and anywhere else where the public and patients are allowed to go. Service animals are not required to wear a vest, ID tag, or specific harness.

In situations where it is not obvious that the dog (or other animal) is a service animal, staff may ask only two specific questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

MercyOne colleagues need to accommodate the service animal unless the animal is out-of-control or is not housebroken. And, while tempting, staff should refrain from petting and interacting with the service animal and keep conversation directed to the patient.

More information is available in Policy 2.76.2, “Pet Visitation—Service Animals.” You may also contact your compliance team: Laurel Fleming at 515-643-4557, or Jody Gray at 515-247-3227.

It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Throughout MercyOne, our colleagues have been busy decking the halls for the holidays. Check out more examples on MercyOne
Des Moines Medical Center’s Facebook page.