As part of Mercy Health Network, colleagues of Mercy Medical Center – Des Moines work together with six other regional health systems to serve patients, the community and each other. The work we do together is vital, and the personalized care we provide truly matters. Whether you provide direct patient care or support of the care team, everyone shares a passion which binds us as one.

Mercy Health Network colleagues from across the state recently started sharing their responses to the question, “why do you choose health care as your career?” The answers, tagged with #MyWhy, have been shared on social media and in local newsletters. Check out their #MyWhy samples from your colleagues throughout Mercy Health Network.

Dedication to health care unites Mercy Health Network as one

My passion for health is seeing people make even the slightest change to improve their health and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Andrea | Mercy – Clinton

I felt like my calling was to be a person that could be committed to taking care of people. Now I’m working for Hospice of North Iowa and I am a home care nurse. I just feel like this is my calling to be there when folks are at their most vulnerable time. When they are nearing the end of life, help them to be comfortable and peaceful in whatever days or weeks they have left. I appreciate the chance to work in people’s lives.

Michelle | Hospice of North Iowa

I work proactively with community partners to remove barriers and improve social determinants of health. As I work in the community doing outreach, I am blessed to see firsthand God give mercy and grace to the most vulnerable in our community. Mercy believes in doing everything in the Spirit of the Gospel and that’s exactly what I believe in. I believe this is my calling and my ministry.

Judy | Mercy – Sioux City

I knew I wanted to continue my career in health care when I was a co-op student working as a nursing assistant. I love caring for people and making a difference in people’s lives. I didn’t know if leadership was the route I wanted to take for fear of missing out on the patient care, but I really enjoy being able to mentor and coach others. The most rewarding aspect of the leadership role is to lead a great team of nurses to success.

Shelly | Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare

Mercy is like a family to me. I feel respected and valued as an employee. There is a genuine caring attitude here in the hospital; the employees care about each other and work together as a team. I am proud to be a part of the Mercy team!

Cheryl | Mercy – Des Moines

I enjoy working as a registered nurse because I get the opportunity to have a positive influence on people’s lives.

Cori | Mercy – Dubuque
NEW PROGRAM HELPS PEDIATRIC HEART PATIENTS DOCUMENT THEIR JOURNEY

If you happen to walk through the Pediatric or Pediatric Intensive Care Units at Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics, you might see patients wearing strands of colorful beads. Each bead has a special significance for our pediatric heart patients because they are Beads of Courage, which help children around the world share their own stories of courage during treatment for serious illness.

Thanks to funding provided by the 2017 Principal Charity Classic proceeds, Mercy initiated the Beads of Courage program in May. Staff at Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics and Pediatric Cardiology were trained on how to get each patient started with their strand and a prescription card, which documents each reason – including blood draw, clinic visit, test/scan, etc. – a child may receive a bead. Each of the special beads are made with safe, quality materials.

Beads of Courage has been available to hospitals nationally and internationally since 2005. Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics is the first pediatric hospital in central Iowa with this special program for pediatric heart patients. Since May 15, 48 children at Mercy have been enrolled in the program. Due to its popularity, Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics is looking for volunteers to sew bead bags so the children have a special place to keep their beads and strands.

To find out more about Beads of Courage or find instructions for making bags, visit beadsofcourage.org or contact Ashley Sunderman at asunderman@mercydesmoines.org.

To donate to the Mercy Foundation in support of the Beads of Courage program at Mercy, please contact Sophia Ahmad at sahmad@mercydesmoines.org.

MERCY WELCOMES NEW SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL SERVICES AT MERCY WEST LAKES

Last month, Mercy welcomed Jen Van Liew as the new senior director of clinical services at Mercy West Lakes. Van Liew has an extensive background in nursing and health care administration, which originally began on a surgical floor and in the SICU at Mercy.

Most recently, Van Liew served as the director of health services for United Healthcare, where she led population health management services for more than 400,000 covered lives. She has also served as vice president of community and transition care for Hennepin Healthcare System in Minnesota, president and CEO of Hospice of the Twin Cities and as president and CEO of Visiting Health Nurse Service of Iowa. During her years in Minnesota, Van Liew was named as one of the “100 Top Health Care Leaders” by the Minnesota Physician Association.

Prior to her roles in health care administration, Van Liew was a professor of nursing at Grandview University (formerly Grandview College) and an assistant professor at Mercy College of Health Sciences.

CONTACT US

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If you are interested in submitting information to be printed in the Bulletin, send it to PR and Marketing or call 515-247-3050.
For many people with Parkinson’s disease, the right medication can make a world of difference. But for some patients, the ever-growing list of available medications has little or no effect.

Mary Brown was one of these patients. She came to Mercy’s Neuroscience Center looking for treatment and found relief in a specialized treatment known as deep brain stimulation, or DBS.

“I praise Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Henderson every chance I get,” she says with deep feeling. “They are the reason I am alive today. Thanks to them, I have been given my life back.”

Brown was about 50 years old when she started noticing symptoms.

“First, I lost my sense of smell,” Brown said. “Every once in a while I’ll get a whiff of something, but that’s about it. Then I started to notice that my left pinky would go spastic when I was typing.”

That small tremor eventually spread to her hand, her arm and the entire left side of her body, followed by the right side. After an already heartbreaking year during which two of her favorite uncles, her father, and her boss and mentor all passed away, she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s in 2008 by Randall Hamilton, M.D., a neurologist with Mercy Ruan Neurology. She was 52 years old.

“I truly believe my disease progressed faster than normal because of all the stress of that year,” she says.

Dr. Hamilton tried several different medications but none alleviated her rapidly worsening symptoms.

By 2014, she says, “I looked like a 100-year-old woman. I could barely speak, and I had pain and fatigue 24/7 from cramping and tremoring.”

Dr. Hamilton suggested Brown might be a candidate for DBS, a treatment that involves implanting a small device, similar to a pacemaker, which sends electrical signals to the brain to reduce symptoms and improve quality of life. Esmiralda Henderson, M.D., joined the staff of Mercy Neurosurgery in 2013, and is the only fellowship-trained neurosurgeon in central Iowa, specializing in deep brain stimulation, who performs the complex surgery.

After two two-step procedures to insert and program the devices on each side of her brain—two brain surgeries and two battery implants in 2014—Brown saw incredible improvement.

Once barely able to walk, she is now living independently and loves having her grandchildren visit. Once almost unable to speak, she can barely contain herself when asked about her doctors.

“Dr. Henderson did her residency with the man who invented DBS!” she exclaims. “She is meticulous, kind-hearted, patient and positive – an absolute delight. We are so lucky to have her here in Des Moines.”

Brown has just as much gratitude for Dr. Hamilton, who is still part of her care team. “He’s very straightforward, kind and compassionate, as well as an excellent communicator,” she says. “Over the years, we’ve developed a doctor-patient friendship and I know he really cares about me.”

Brown is eager to share her story of recovery in hopes of raising awareness of the benefits of DBS.

“I look at my diagnosis as a blessing,” she says. “We are put here on earth to help other people, period. By speaking at support groups, and telling my story of Parkinson’s disease and DBS to anyone who’s interested, I can show people there is hope. I owe it to God to pay it forward.”

For more information on DBS and Mary Brown, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LLVzQCL9Ec.