

# Around the Square

The Newsletter for Employees & Friends  
of Gracie Square Hospital



spring 2019

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## Message from David Wyman

In March of 1959, Gracie Square Hospital opened its doors to patients. Today, we continue the work that Cynthia and Richard Zirinsky, along with Richard's cousin, Lawrence Zirinsky, began 60 years ago.

2019 is off to a strong start, as we celebrate - with pride and gratitude - 60 years of service to the community. We are so proud that our Hospital has achieved Planetree Gold Certification. We are grateful for an incredible \$1,000,000 financial pledge from the Zirinsky family, along with contributions from other donors that are making a difference in the patient and staff experience. We celebrate our employees and volunteers who have helped improve the lives of patients and their loved ones, both in the past and today.

Thanks to the efforts of so many people, Gracie Square is well-positioned to continue our great work and remain an important resource for individuals and families who are struggling with mental illness.

President and CEO

## Zirinsky Family Pledges \$1,000,000 to Gracie Square

Gracie Square Hospital has received a \$1,000,000 financial pledge from members of the Zirinsky family. This generous philanthropic gift from the Hospital's founding family

is in celebration of the Hospital's 60th anniversary. It is the largest gift the Hospital has ever received.

The Zirinsky family remains as firmly committed to the Hospital as they were when Gracie Square opened its doors in 1959. This pledge of support enables us to continue to provide clinical excellence and an exceptional patient experience to all of the patients in our care. ■



Thank you to Cynthia Zirinsky, John Zirinsky and Bill Zirinsky (not pictured)

## Gracie Square Hospital Achieves Planetree Gold Certification

Planetree Gold Certification recognizes excellence in person-centered care, and is awarded to healthcare organizations that care for the whole person - mind, body, and spirit. It represents "the highest mark of achievement for creating an organizational culture that



engages patients, families, staff, and the community to improve overall health and well-being." Currently, Gracie Square is the only hospital in New York City to achieve Gold Certification. Congratulations to every member of the Gracie Square team on this meaningful recognition! ■

Member

— New York-Presbyterian  
Regional Hospital Network

## What Does Planetree Gold Certification Mean to You?

In January, Gracie Square Hospital received Planetree Gold Certification for excellence in person-centered care. We asked staff what achieving this recognition meant to them. Here is what a few employees shared:

*"As the Director of Environmental Services, Planetree certification means we are keeping our patients and guests comfortable and the Hospital clean and safe."*  
**Sherwin Connell,**  
 Director of EVS



*"I am proud to work as a nurse at the only Planetree certified hospital in New York City."*  
**Divina San Antonio,** RN



*"Achieving Planetree*

*means that we are treating our patients as more than just patients; we are treating them as human beings."*

**Adolphus Jones,** Nurse Aide



## Gracie Square's First Patient and Family Advisory Council

This year, Gracie Square Hospital held our first Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) meeting. Currently, the PFAC has eight patients and family members, as well as representatives from multiple Hospital departments, including front line staff and senior leadership. Our PFAC is designed to advance post-discharge collaboration among patients, families, and staff, and find ways to enhance the experience of patients and their loved ones. Thank you to everyone who is participating. ■

## Ask the Doctor Pilot Program Launched

Gracie Square Hospital's Care Partner Program creates a partnership between patients, loved ones, and staff to promote healing and recovery. As part of the Program, patients can choose a Care Partner - a family member, loved one, or friend - to participate in their care while they are in the Hospital.

Recently, at the suggestion of Director of Social Work Michael Stellman, we began piloting an Ask the Doctor Program on our Dual Diagnosis Unit, in which patients and their Care Partners meet with a psychiatrist in a group setting on a weekly basis.

Ask the Doctor is the first Care Partner group at Gracie Square being led by psy-

chiatrists. The Program enables patients and Care Partners to ask a psychiatrist questions in a group setting, where everyone can benefit from the shared information.

"Ask the Doctor is another opportunity for patients and Care Partners to learn about the mental and physical effects of substance abuse and mental illness, and how to develop healthy lifestyles," says Nahla Mahgoub, M.D., FAPA, Unit Chief. "We know that Care Partners play a critical role in the journey to recovery and can offer extra support to patients post-discharge. By including loved ones in patients' treatment, we can help promote compliance and prevent rehospitalization." ■



(Left to Right) Mary Grace Treschitta, PMHNP-BC, Nahla Mahgoub, M.D., Anthony M. DeDonatis, PMHNP-BC, RN-BC, and Michael Stellman, LCSW-R

## Asian Psychiatry Program Provides Culturally Sensitive Care

Since the early 1990s, the inpatient Asian Psychiatry Program at Gracie Square Hospital has provided culturally sensitive, high-quality mental health services to Asian communities in the New York Metro area. Our Program is based on the understanding that cultural factors influence the way patients and their families view the causes and treatments of mental illness.

"In the Asian community, even when a person is an adult, it is likely that their par-



(Left to Right) Chen Chen, LMSW, Fen Ju-Tai, LCSW, Yan Chun Mui, RN, Nadine Chang, Ph.D., Jieun Saunders, LMSW, and Fong Liu, M.D.

## Moving Forward on Our Magnet Journey

Last year, Gracie Square embarked on our journey to Magnet designation. The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) awards this designation to organizations that provide excellence in nursing and patient care. As we move forward, the ANCC model for its Magnet Recognition Program is serving as our roadmap. “Although Nursing is at the heart of Magnet, designation is a reflection of excellence by the whole healthcare team,” says Michael Radosta, Chief Nursing & Quality Officer. “We want all employees to be aware of the ANCC model and what it means at our Hospital.”

Below is a brief summary of the five components of the Magnet model, based on ANCC materials. In the future, you will be hearing more about how these components are being put into action at Gracie Square.

**Transformational Leadership** – The Hospital’s leadership team must “transform the organization to meet the future.” To achieve this, leadership needs to help the organization understand “why change is necessary” and “communicate each department’s part in achieving that change.”

**Structural Empowerment** – Solid structures and processes “provide an innovative environment where strong professional practice flourishes” and help achieve “the outcomes believed to be important for the organization.” In a Magnet organization, staff are “developed,



2018 Magnet Conference, Denver, Colorado

directed, and empowered to find the best way to accomplish the organizational goals and achieve desired outcomes.”

**Exemplary Professional Practice** – “The true essence of a Magnet organization stems from exemplary professional practice within nursing.” Strong professional practice is so important because of what it can achieve for patients, staff, the organization, and the community.

**New Knowledge, Innovations, and Improvements** – “Magnet organizations have an ethical and professional responsibility to contribute to patient care, the organization, and the profession, in terms of new knowledge, innovations, and improvements.” To prepare for success in the future, innovative staff will review and refine systems and practices.

**Empirical Quality Results** – “The question for the future is not *What do you do?* or *How do you do it?* but rather, *What difference have you made?*” Data and quantitative benchmarks will be used to “demonstrate excellence” and show progress over time. ■

### *Asian Psychiatry continued from page 2*

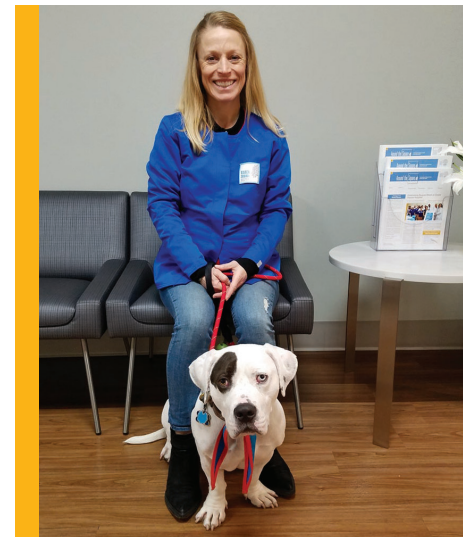
ents and other members of their extended family are involved in their well-being, so we work very closely with family members,” says Nadine Chang, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist and Asian Psychiatry Program Committee Chair. “We also work to address the stigma associated with mental illness in the Asian community.”

The Program is staffed by a multicultural, interdisciplinary team who speak Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Asian languages. “Gracie Square has developed strong

relationships with local outpatient mental health and community organizations that serve the Asian community,” says Dr. Chang. “We work closely with them to promote mental health treatment and remove barriers to care.” In addition to providing community lectures and interviews for local Chinese newspapers, Fong Liu, M.D., Psychiatrist and Unit Chief of the Asian Psychiatry Program, hosted a radio show on a local Chinese station that was very well-received. ■

## Pet Program at Gracie Square

We are grateful to the Good Dog Foundation for helping us establish a Pet Program at Gracie Square Hospital. Currently, every Friday, Slick and his owner Christina visit with patients in the Hospital, alternating units each week. “Patients have been asking for such a program,” says Marty Mancuso, Chief Administrative Officer, “and we are so happy to be able to provide this comforting service to them.” ■



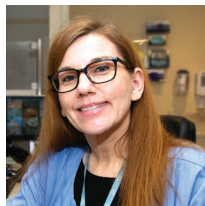
## Successful Joint Commission Survey

In February, Gracie Square had a very successful Joint Commission Survey. “The Survey is another validation of the progress made at Gracie Square over the past few years,” says David Wyman, President and CEO. “Most importantly, it shows that we are maintaining a safe, high-quality environment of care for our patients. This is only possible because of the ongoing dedication of Gracie Square employees who work together to do their best for patients and their loved ones. Thank you to each member of the Gracie Square team for all you do every day.” ■

## Recognizing Staff Who Deliver an Exceptional Patient Care Experience

In this issue, we are highlighting two more Gracie Square team members who received commendations on the Press Ganey Survey: Rebecca Geller, RN, and Felicia Perry, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. ■

### What our patients are saying



/// Rebecca was always here for me. ///



/// Felicia eased my stress with her kind words. ///

## David Wyman Introduces the Breakfast Club

Each month at the Breakfast Club, David Wyman, President and CEO, is meeting with employees who have received special praise



from patients on the Press Ganey Survey. “I am so appreciative of the great work our staff does daily, and proud to read what our patients are saying about the care they receive here,” says David. “The Breakfast Club provides me with the opportunity to spend time with and thank employees who are recognized by our patients.” ■

◀ (front row, left to right) Claudia Villacres, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Ashley Richards, Human Resources; (back row, left to right) Quentin Nelson, Nurse Aide, David Wyman, and Alton Findlay, Nurse Aide

## Press Ganey Target for 2019 is 87.8

*In 2018, we set an ambitious target of 86 for our overall Press Ganey Score. Thanks to the efforts of the Gracie Square team, we achieved our goal. This year's target is 87.8. We are already well on our way, and as of February 19th our score was 86.4. The Press Ganey score is so important because it reflects how our patients feel about the care and service they receive here.*

## Our Team: Alan Contreras, Nurse Aide

Getting to know Alan Contreras, Nurse Aide.



### What do you do in your role?

As a Nurse Aide on the 4th floor Crisis Stabilization and Psychotic Disorders Unit, I assist patients with Activities of

Daily Living, including helping with laundry, changing linen, and getting them snacks if they are hungry. I also talk with patients on the unit and listen to them.

### How did you become a Nurse Aide here?

This is my first job in healthcare. Previously, I worked as a waiter in a restaurant. My father was getting older and that led me to take a nurse aide class. While I was in school, I

attended a career workshop, and the leader recommended me to Gracie Square. I've been here for about two years.

### What was it like going from a restaurant to a hospital?

Both roles are about helping people. At first, the idea of working in a psych hospital was a little intimidating. But once I got here, I quickly became comfortable with the patients and with my role. Now I feel like I have a true purpose and that I'm good at what I do.

When you are on a unit, you have a bond with your team. Patients realize it when everyone is on the same page.

### What are your career goals?

I want to be a nurse. I have gone back to school again and am working towards my BSN. Before we had our son, who is one

year old, I was going to school. I took psychology classes and really liked them. A lot of the classes I took then are transferable to a nursing degree.

### Do you also serve as an interpreter at Gracie Square?

Yes. I was one of the first people at Gracie Square to pass the test to become a certified interpreter. My family is from Peru, and I am fluent in Spanish and English.

### What do you like to do in your time off?

I love to spend time with my son. I am very family oriented and enjoy family outings, especially with Peruvian food, which is the best. I also like to listen to all kinds of music. ■