

Around the Square

The Newsletter for Employees & Friends
of Gracie Square Hospital



summer 2019

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Message from David Wyman

Mental health treatment has come a long way since Gracie Square Hospital opened its doors 60 years ago, but the essence of the care we provide remains the same. As stated in our first patient guide in 1959: "That is why everything about the Hospital's program is patient-centered. Every staff conference, every menu prepared, every discussion is all directed to one goal – the patient's peace of mind and recovery in the shortest time."

From the Zirinsky family who founded Gracie Square and continue to support our work, to the staff who provide high-quality, compassionate care to our patients, we all share that goal today. We want to improve the lives of our patients and their loved ones, and to help remove the stigma associated with mental illness. Thank you to everyone who supports this effort and to each member of the Gracie Square team for your commitment to excellent mental health care.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Wyman".

President and CEO

Celebrating 60 Years of Caring

On May 2, Gracie Square celebrated six decades of caring for patients. Founder Cynthia Zirinsky and John and Bill Zirinsky, the sons of Founder Lawrence Zirinsky, were honored at the event, along with long-time Board Member Lorinda P. de Roulet and former Medical Director Robert Campbell, MD, KCSJ.

Attendees included NewYork-Presbyterian and Gracie Square leadership, members of our Board, and friends of Gracie Square. Steven J. Corwin, MD, President and CEO of NewYork-Presbyterian, and Laura Forese, MD, Executive Vice President and COO,



Philip Wilner, MD, Chairman of the Board, Bill Zirinsky, Honoree, Susan Zirinsky, daughter of Honoree Cynthia Zirinsky, John Zirinsky, Honoree and Trustee, and David Wyman, President and CEO

spoke of NYP's commitment to supporting the important work we do and their pride in Gracie Square's accomplishments. Funds raised at the event will be used to support the renovation of patient rooms and public-facing spaces. ■

The Gold Party – Thanking Staff for a Great Year at Gracie Square

In the past year, Gracie Square Hospital achieved Planetree Gold Certification for excellence in person-centered care. We also successfully participated in Joint Commission, CMS, and Department of Health surveys. On

March 25, to celebrate these achievements, staff were invited to attend a Gold Party. It was a chance to relax with other members of the team and for leadership to say thank you. (See photos on page 2.) ■

Why are You Proud to Work at Gracie Square?

"Gracie is more than a place of work for me. It's a way for me to contribute to a service line that is too often misunderstood and misrepresented. I am proud of where we are today and the direction we are headed."



Adeel Anwer, Director, Financial Planning & Process Improvement

"At Gracie, I feel respected and valued for what I bring to the Hospital. People genuinely care about each other and work together as a team."

Ashley Richards, Human Resources Business Partner



"It is great to be in an environment where my opinion matters. Peers and leadership treat you like family."

Latashia Brown, Staffing Coordinator



The Gold Party



Magnet Fair Held For All Staff

Gracie Square is on a journey to Magnet designation. Although Nursing is leading the effort, achieving Magnet involves the active participation of every Department and all staff. In March, Nursing held a Magnet Fair for staff



Silifat Adekunle and Francine Fakh

from all Departments of the Hospital.

"A group of Patient Care Directors, Unit Care Coordinators, and staff nurses decided to organize a fair to educate staff and engage

them in our ongoing Magnet journey," says Francine Fakh, MA, RN, Director of Nursing. "The team organized a day that would be fun and educational." There were six tables at the fair, each with interactive activities:

- *The benefits of being a Magnet Hospital*
- *Evidence-based practice and research*
- *The components of Magnet*
- *Shared Governance Structure*
- *Hospital-Wide Committees*
- *Jeopardy game about data and outcomes*

"Over 160 staff from all Hospital Departments attended the Fair," says Silifat Adekunle, MSN, RN-BC, NEA-BC, Manager of Education. "Everyone was very enthusiastic and really wants to help Gracie Square achieve Magnet designation." ■

Visibility Boards Enhance Communication on Units



Fifth Floor Chart Room: Older Adult and Asian Psychiatry Programs

In April, 60-inch, touchscreen displays were mounted in every chart room on all floors. Known as visibility boards, this communication tool is another way to provide important information to clinical staff in one, easy-to-access location. Visibility boards highlight

Hospital-wide and unit-specific information about key patient metrics, Hospital committees and how to sign up for them, conferences, educational opportunities, huddle messages, and staff recognition.

With just one swipe or click, staff can pull up information that may have an impact on patient care on their unit. Visibility boards are being integrated into staff huddles and are helping to keep members of the multidisciplinary team better informed. ■

Celebrating our Nursing Team

Nurses Week was an opportunity to celebrate our incredible nursing team and recognize some of our extraordinary nurses, including Daisy Award recipient, Yan Chun Mui, MSN, NP-C, RN-BC, Unit Care Coordinator, Fifth Floor. (Pictured in center of photo at right.) The Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nurses is

an international program that honors the quality, compassionate care nurses provide every day.

"I want to thank each member of the Gracie Square nursing team for your commitment to providing the best care to our



New Departmental Recognition Program Acknowledges All Staff

Throughout the year, there are national months, weeks, and days, such as Social Work Month or Environmental Services Week, that pay tribute to staff in specific jobs. Gracie Square has instituted a Program based on these annual recognition events to acknowledge all staff for their contributions to excellent patient care.

As part of the new Program, each Department will have a week-long celebration with different events. These include a potluck meal where employees are invited to bring a dish or dessert that represents their hometown, native country, or culture, and a Hospital-provided donut or ice cream social. There is a scavenger hunt, in which staff compete to find answers to questions, some about policy and others about the leadership team. There is also a recognition ceremony, where members of each team are awarded certificates that include *Gracie Square Lunch Expert*, *Calm in the Eye of the Storm*, *The Human Handbook*, and *Outside the Box Thinker*, to name just a few.

The Social Work Department was among the first groups to participate. "People in our Department really loved the Program," says Michael Stellman, Director of Social Work. "They appreciated the food and that leadership stopped by to say thank you, but I think the most fun was the certificates of recognition. It was a great way for staff to acknowledge one another." ■

patients," says Michael Radosta, Chief Nursing & Quality Officer. "I am really proud of the work you do." ■

Recognizing Staff Who Deliver an Exceptional Patient Care Experience



Throughout 2018 and into the first quarter of 2019, the Dual Focus Unit received the highest score at Gracie Square on the Press Ganey Survey.

Their score of 91 for the first quarter of 2019 was over 3 points higher than the Hospital-wide target of 87.8.

“We believe that delivering safe, high-quality, patient-centered care requires effective interdisciplinary collaboration,” says Nahla Mahgoub, MD, FAPA, Unit Chief. “Our entire team, including psychiatrist, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, psychologist, nutritionists, housekeepers, nurse aides, physical therapist, and others, effectively work together for our patients.” (See box on the right for some specific strategies Dr. Mahgoub shared.)

In the Words of a Dual Focus Unit Patient...

/// I ended up in the ER and told staff to send me to Gracie for help . . . I even asked to go the 3rd floor. The staff is phenomenal – caring, attentive, courteous, and respectful. I see and feel the change in the new Gracie and I thank God for Gracie because it's my beacon of hope. ///

Our Team: Smita Agarkar, MD

Getting to know Smita Agarkar, MD, Unit Chief, Crisis Stabilization and Psychotic Disorders Unit.



What is your role at Gracie Square?

I am the Unit Chief for the Crisis Stabilization and Psychotic Disorders Unit, and the Director of Medical Student Education and Informatics.

What is most rewarding about your role?

I feel good when I know I have done the best for my patients. It is most rewarding when my patients return home and can integrate back into the community. It really makes me feel like I have given back. I also love working with medical students.

Can you talk a little about your work with Medical Students?

I have had the opportunity to teach both Columbia and Cornell students, and I try to

help them find more innovative ways of caring for patients. Our program takes an interdisciplinary approach, which means working closely with nurses, social workers, and other members of the team. I am incredibly proud of my students and the work they are doing.

What about your work with Informatics?

I am part of a team working to help Gracie Square use information technology, such as Cerner and Epic, to improve the provision of care and lead to better outcomes.

Why did you become a psychiatrist?

Growing up in India, I always knew I would be a doctor. When I was doing research in brain imaging, I became fascinated with how the brain works and decided to study psychiatry. It is a rapidly evolving field with so many recent advances. I am constantly searching for new tools to help patients who

have not responded to other treatments.

What does it mean for you to be Indian American?

I think it is a blessing to be exposed to two different cultures. It has given me perspectives on life that one cannot learn, but only experience. A fusion of both Indian and American culture has integrated a strong sense of tolerance and patience with being outspoken and confident. This duality of cultural fusion is constantly reshaping my thoughts as I try to understand what patients from different cultures experience, which is particularly important in New York City where our population is so diverse.

What do you like to do in your time off?

I like reading fiction, walking, taking long drives, and spending time with family, especially my two nephews who are 7 and 12 years old. ■

Strategies for Providing Great Patient Care

- A core team, including psychiatric provider, primary nurse, and social worker, meet with patients daily to assess progress in treatment, safety, and individual needs.
- Patients are involved in decision-making, including medication preference and discharge planning. They are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity to their cultural values.
- Staff provide care and implement unit policy consistently. They are always available to patients, set clear expectations on the unit, and address patients' requests and concerns professionally and promptly.
- Staff are empowered to do their jobs and recognized for their contributions.

Press Ganey Update: As of May 14, Gracie Square's Press Ganey Score was 86. Our target for the year is 87.8.