

A Note from Karen Wayman:



Karen Wayman
Stanford Children's Health

In this issue we are spotlighting Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego. Thanks to Rady Children's and the other Collaborative partners who have given their time for these spotlights– more to come! On our end, work continues on the Peer-to-Peer Mentor E-Learning Platform. The goal is to create a tool that will help programs just starting out as well as those looking to expand. One part of the platform is the “decision-maker” page. The idea is to create an “at-a-glance” section with related literature, program benefits, existing program descriptions and a series of short videos from both peer-to-peer mentors and hospital leaders. The “persuasion page” as I think of it – a page filled with the type of information that might persuade a decision maker to support and, hopefully, fund a peer-to-peer program.

-Karen

SPOTLIGHT: RADY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, SAN DIEGO

The Parent Liaison program at Rady Children's Hospital started 25 years ago in the Peckham Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, Hematology/Oncology (Hem/Onc) Unit. There are six paid Parent Liaisons in four service lines: Hem/Onc (3), PICU (1 per diem), NICU (1), and Med-Surge (1).

Parent Mentor Collaborative Meeting Leads to Success
“After we came back from the in-person Parent Mentor Collaborative meeting in March (2019) our team put together a presentation. As a result, the hospital administration decided to add another Parent Liaison position in the Med-Surge Unit (medical and surgical patients). We were asked to help with interviewing and we were very glad when the Med-Surge team hired a Hem/Onc patient's Dad. Since they hired him, the Med-Surge satisfaction scores have gone up. The families love him.



L to R: Josefina Del Campo, Kathleen Stark, Judy Wagner and Gloria Newell

Training and Evaluation
Judy Wagner has been working as a Parent Liaison in the Peckham Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, Hem/Onc unit at Rady Children's Hospital for two and a half years. Gloria Newell and Josefina Martin Del Campo have been parent liaisons for over a decade. ‘Gloria and a social worker, Sharice, created a training module with various scenarios which was a huge help in practicing how to respond to many different situations with the families,’ said Judy. ‘Of the six Parent Liaisons throughout the hospital, we are supervised individually per department.’

Metrics and Fundraising
The Peckham Center for Cancer and Blood disorders has an annual fundraising event. It is an incredible event where patients and families participate along with sponsors, local sports celebrities and volunteers. In addition to the healing Celebration day itself, net proceeds from this event help fund nationally acclaimed emotional and social support programs for patients and their families undergoing cancer treatment. These support programs include hematology/oncology parent liaisons, child life services, Psychologists, activity room assistant and other vital programming to support Hem/Onc families throughout their treatment. The 2020 Celebration of Champions was cancelled and we are currently planning a virtual event for 2021.

Bereavement Letters
We have a program for bereaved families called Kites of Hope. This is a series of letters we mail out to families over the course of a year after their child's passing. These letters support them with the grieving process and help to recognize feelings and emotions during the most difficult time in their lives.

COVID-19 Changes
Covid-19 has changed our perspective. We are learning from novel experiences every day. We now know that it is possible to bring support with social distance, especially when family members can't visit the hospital. We also know that a phone call or text from your loved ones is not enough when the skies are cloudy. We have seen families isolated, devastated by the news of having a child diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones can't be present to bring support.

Parent liaisons have partnered with our psychology team and look out for the positive, offering a virtual weekly support group for parents. There is a group for English speaking families and one for Spanish speaking families. During the virtual session, everyone is happy to see each other on the screen. At the end of the group, we open up the chat and they can share their email and phone number if they want to stay in touch with each other. A lot of them do support each other and stay connected.

COVID-19 canceled our monthly support group, ‘Families Supporting Families’. During this group meeting, speakers were invited to bring valuable information and education to Oncology families. Families were given the opportunity to connect and support each other while also learning valuable information about their child's diagnosis from a doctor, nurse, psychologist or child life specialist.

When COVID hit, Ronald McDonald House stopped many of their services for ambulatory families. We have had to use resources to support our families with meal vouchers and snack packs. We are so fortunate to count on resources to provide support in many ways.

COVID-19 made us realize how “essential” support for our families truly is... and so we are... essential.”

In kindness
Parent Liaisons, The Peckham Center for Cancer and blood disorders, Rady Children's Hospital