

News Communicator



A CommuniCare Health Services Newsletter Publication

Winter Issue
Volume III, 2005

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From the Desk of Steve Rosedale...



A few months ago I received a letter from an employee at Northgate who just wanted me to know how great a company we have. She had been diagnosed with cancer and all during the time she was out and receiving chemo she received tremendous support from the CommuniCare family. The many calls (the administrator called every day!), the donated vacation time, etc., made the difference for her.

At this point in our corporate life we don't have to ask people to help, we just need to let them know there is a need, and you respond! It's really quite unbelievable to someone on the outside and I stand in awe myself.

You have truly operationalized our philosophy of reaching out with your hearts to touch other peoples hearts.

As we enter the holidays, a time of giving and receiving, a time of joy and thanksgiving. My family (Beatrice, Ronnie, Dina, Kena, Charlie....the list goes on and on) thank you for everything that you do. You are the reason I smile when I come to work and why I can rest peacefully when I go to sleep.

Just know that for every act of kindness that you do, the amplified thank you's from residents and family members circle around you like loving angels to sing your praise. Our warmest best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.



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Focus On...

“Fabric of a Family”

By Kena Minnick, President and COO

CommuniCare is an extension of my family and the longer I am here the more blurred the lines between “business and birth” family. Many of you attended the Free to be a Family Core team meeting in Cleveland where my 72 year old mother sang as part of the Hills Angels harmony group and my 76 year old father dressed in a 2X skirt and black wig came as their “Biker Chic.” The Fabric of a Family is revealed in the stories that parents tell and pass on to the children and grandchildren. The CommuniCare team and the fact that many of you got up and danced with the Hills Angels and did your own Conga Line....is now a part of my parents psychic and the stories they tell and pictures they share. My parents have a lot of stories because they were married April 5, 1950 with a baby on the way. I grew up with a path instead of a bath, learned to carry water for our needs and learned what you do without a refrigerator when the one you have breaks and there is no money to replace it. We were taught the barter system to trade work for things we might need and how to refinish furniture for extra money, but the tough times NEVER seemed too tough because we worked together as a family finding reasons to laugh with each other, singing while we worked or playing silly games. No elaborate trips, vacations, television or technology. No E-Mails and dad can't often hear what he calls the “Cellar” phone. There were many heartaches, pain and promises not kept along the way, but this Fabric of a Family is with me today as we create the CommuniCare Family with our residents, staff, family members and each other.

At this time of year the television specials often present a picture of that perfect family with perfectly dressed and well-behaved kids, gifts and food on the table, but it is important to remember that many of our staff and residents never had the fairy tale. Each of our family stories and those of our residents have joy and heartache, promise and promises broken, love and abuse, tragedy and forgiveness, but we all have the opportunity to be each other's family and create new stories. All that we are and All that we share with each other and our residents becomes the Fabric of the CommuniCare Family and we continue to weave these moments and stories into this beautiful pattern of lives touching lives, that is the true measure of our company.

As we embark upon a New Year together, we can meet and prevail over the many challenges ahead by building upon our stories, relationships and our unifying vision to make a difference in the lives of others or in Steve's words: “To Do Good Things Upon This Earth.” Enjoy the holidays.

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER

25th - Christmas Day

26th-1st - Hanukkah

26th-1st - Kwanzaa

31st - New Year's Eve

JANUARY 2006

16 - Martin Luther King Jr Day

22-27th - National Activity Professionals Week - www.thenaap.com

Pine Valley Corner

“Vendor Day”

By Jennifer Eiswerth,
Administrator

Our Vendor's Day was a hit. This is the second year that Pine Valley recognizes the people that help us service our residents. We treated over 40 different vendors to a variety of delicious finger foods and desserts all homemade by our dedicated staff. We raffled off 15 different prizes which included gift cards, a homemade scarf from a staff member, Pine Valley items, and a Wine and Cheese Basket.

The vendors praised us for being the only facility in our area to offer such an appreciation day. It gave all of us a chance to build stronger relationships, especially with the people that we only converse with over the phone like our County Caseworkers from Medicaid. Since it has been such a success we have incorporated it into an annual event.

Cares Team

“Lessons in Life”

During the second month of nursing school, the professor gave a pop quiz. One student was particularly smart and was breezing through the questions, stopping at the last one. The question was, "What is the name of the person who cleans the school?" The student thought that this must be some kind of joke. She had seen the cleaning person every day. The woman was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's. The student had no idea of the woman's name and turned in the quiz with that question blank.

She asked the professor if that question would count toward the grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your career, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello."

The student made a point to introduce herself to the cleaning person. Her name was Dorothy.

Are there any Dorothy's in your work here?

Take the time to meet your co-workers and to smile and say "hello." It only takes a second. Each person here is a vital part of the care that is provided to our residents.

Benefit Spotlight

“Exciting New Changes in Benefits Administration”

By Rachel Stevens, Corporate Benefits Manager

It is with great excitement that I announce to you some changes in our benefits administration! Effective January 1, 2006, Neace Lukens will become our benefits broker and agent of record, replacing Spetner Associates. Neace Lukens has a long and successful history in the benefits field as well as many other health care clients resembling ourselves. They are also local to Cincinnati and currently manage our risk insurance. We are so very happy that they are becoming a partner in the success of our benefits administration team! Some of the exciting new benefits of partnering with Neace Lukens include:

- A one-stop call center dedicated to CommuniCare, to answer any and all employee benefit questions, resolve claims issues, order new cards, etc.
- Open enrollments handled months prior to the actual coverage start date.
- Online new hire enrollment, open enrollment, and life event enrollment, as well as change and termination assistance.
- The implementation of Employee Self-Service and eBenefits via our Ultipro web product.
- Online access to benefits via the kiosks, or phone access, depending on the comfort level of the employee.
- Seamless conversion of benefit elections or changes to deductions into the Ultipro system without the manual intervention of our HR managers.
- COBRA notifications handled by Neace Lukens as soon as they receive record of employee terminations or new employee coverage.
- Carrier bills handled directly at the facility level to improve accuracy and timely changes, additions and terms from the bill.
- Advanced reporting capabilities to pinpoint recurring issues prompting calls to the call center and detailed analysis highlighting opportunities to save benefit dollars via plan design.

With all of these programs, the time that our HR managers spend managing benefit issues, and the confusion of having so many “hands in the pot” will be eliminated, and accuracy will be greatly increased. Processes and procedures will be clearly defined and standardized wherever possible. The corporate benefits department will take on a very strong audit role to ensure the facility is managing their benefit billing and Ultipro data accurately and also to ensure that the facility is not wasting benefit dollars by paying for unnecessary coverage or failing to mark employee changes on the carrier bills. The employees will also see an immediate benefit in the delivery of information and level of customer service. This is going to be a huge step forward in the way we manage benefits at CommuniCare! We are going to be truly World Class in this area!

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Pebble Creek

“Just a Common Soldier”

Submitted By *Jim Egli, Administrator*

This poem is from a newsletter that was written by Air Force veteran A. Lawrence Vaincourt in 1985.

He was getting old and paunchy,
and his hair was falling fast,
As he sat in the Legion hall telling
stories of the past,
Of a war that he had fought in, and
the deeds that he had done.
In his exploits with his buddies,
they were heroes, every one.

Tho' sometimes to his neighbors his
tales became a joke,
All his soldiers mates they listened,
for they knew of where he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for
old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer – for
a soldier died today.

He'll not be mourned by many, just
his children and his wife,
For he lived a very ordinary, quite
uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family,
quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his
passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth
their bodies lie in State.
While thousands note their passing
and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell of their life story from
the time that they were young,
But the passing of the soldier goes
unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution
to the welfare of our land
a man who breaks his promises
and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow who, in
times of war and strife
goes off to serve his country
and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style
in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate to
the service that he gives;
while the ordinary soldier
who offers up his all,
Is paid off with a medal, and
perhaps a pension, small.

It's so easy to forget them all for it
was long ago
that the “Old Bills” of our country
went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their
compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that
our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger
with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician, with his
ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier, who
has sworn to defend
His home his kin and country, and
would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier and
his ranks are growing thin.
But his presence should remind us,
we may need his like again, For when
countries are in conflict, then we find
the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the
politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor while he's
here to hear the praise
Then at least let's give him homage
at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in a
paper that would say:
“Our country is in mourning – for a
soldier died today.”

Aristocrat Berea

“A Working Chance”

By *Ken Loeding, Director of ICF/ MR Services*

The ICF/MR Unit has initiated a relationship with Vocational Guidance Services and the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Both agencies provide vocational services to consumers enabling them to return to the world of work. Through initial evaluations, work adjustment programs and eventual job placement, individuals are afforded opportunities to pursue their interests, improve their work quality and speed and participate in job coaching, job counselling and eventual job placement. Our unit is providing the environment for individuals needing to improve their overall work quality and stamina in.

At this point in time, we are entertaining an individual who is interested in housekeeping. In the days to come, consumers who are pursuing interests in maintenance and laundry will also be joining our daily routines. Each individual is payed an hourly rate by BVR/ VGS and arrives daily with a job coach who monitors their performance and work quality. Our only responsibility is to meet with the VGS work coordinator to discuss progress and interventions, if necessary. Otherwise, each consumer is afforded a work opportunity for 8 to 12 weeks. Upon successful completion, and should positions be available, opportunities within CommuniCare facilities can be pursued.

CommuniCare of Clifton

“Greetings From Clifton Past, Present and Future”

By Stephen Leonard, Director of Activities

It has been wonderful to be part of the Communicare family since April. I have felt very welcome. I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the special events we've had lately with all of you. First of all, it was “all about” Halloween. We had a HUGE Halloween celebration this year! We hosted the 1st Annual CommuniScare of Clifton's “Spooktacular”. We invited the children of our employees, families, volunteers etc. to join us for trick treating from room to room. We then ended the event with a reception featuring refreshments, a costume contest and entertainment provided by yours truly. We had a wonderful time! Then on Halloween day we held an even larger event....Hollywood Halloween! Everyone was encouraged to dress according to their favorite celebrity. Staff members were encouraged to “adopt-a-resident” to assist with the dressing efforts. We had so many wonderful costumes! Everything from Charlie Chaplin to Tine Turner and Ike to Charlie's Angels. An “Academy Award” was presented to the individuals with the “beast” costumes. We also had a red carpet and a walk of fame featuring gold stars with each residents name on them. It was truly a wonderful time for our facility.

We have also launched a special resident volunteer program for our more independent/active residents. The name of the program is “Stephen's Busy Bees” Resident Empowerment Program. Our bees do everything from wipe down tables, decorate for parties, clean up after parties, pass mail, pick up trash, greet visitors in the facility and more! Interested residents have to complete a simple application and are then presented with a name badge and a work schedule. Residents who complete their assignments regularly receive points towards our reward system. It has been a great success, especially for our behavior unit residents. Some other facilities have had questions about this program, feel free to call me if you need more information.

Of course we are not done yet. There are more special holidays to come. This Christmas we will be hosting the “CommuniChristmas Idol” talent contest. Contestants (both staff and residents) can do anything creative including singing, dance, show a piece of artwork, read an original poem, enter a craft project etc. We will then crown a resident idol and a staff idol. I look forward to letting you all know how it turns out. I hope your holiday season is warm and prosperous! Happy Holidays!

By Jennifer Gramse

Taking place the day before Thanksgiving we will be having a reception in the evening and will be using the appetizer recipes from the CommuniCare cookbook, which will be on sale that day. Our very own Activities Director, Stephen Leonard, will be providing the entertainment.

On December 2 we will be having a Chili Cook off for the staff. The winner will receive a crock-pot, the CommuniCare Cookbook, and of course the title of Best Chili Chef. We will be creating a “Wish Tree” for our residents. Each tag represents a resident and has a list of presents they are wishing for this holiday season. Also several places will be donating gifts as well.

We will end our year with a New Year's blowout. This will mark the beginning of a new program called Around the World in 365 Days. Every month a different country, city, or state will be highlighted. We will be able to find out about different cultures and history about the highlighted destination. New York City will be the beginning of the adventure where we will watch the ball drop together. We plan on going to Africa during February here we will study the history and culture and celebrate Black History Month. We will also take a jet plane to Paris to celebrate Valentine's Day. I am looking forward to this exciting journey around the world. If anyone is interested in hearing more about this or possibly booking tickets you may contact our travel agent Stephen Leonard.

Here at Clifton there is always something fun going on whether it is a cooking activity, special entertainment, or just a good game of bingo, it seems there is never a dull moment!

Falling Water

“Happenings”

Submitted By *Elissa Yassine, Marketing*

Recently we hosted two very successful events. The first was our 3rd Annual Oktoberfest. Chef Chuck prepared a wonderful home cooked Oktoberfest meal that included such favorites as: bratwurst, German potato salad, red cabbage, potato pancakes and soft pretzels warm from the oven and of course, no Oktoberfest is complete without German Beer! We served 68 seniors from the community for lunch and 165 resident families for dinner. The guests were treated to live German music and were delighted when the staff and other guests sang, danced and played musical instruments. The second was our 2nd annual Halloween Bash. This wonderfully ghoulish event included invitations delivered to 2500 school children in the Strongsville school systems. The entire facility was decorated for the event, inside and out!! When the children arrived, they were offered a trip down our haunted hall of horrors where they were greeted by vampires and skeletons! Our little goblins were invited to trick or treat with our Residents. We also had coloring contests with some great prizes for the winners. Hand dipped chocolate covered candied apples and fiber optic flashlights were for sale with the proceeds benefiting our Communicare Cares and Employee Christmas Party funds. Those in need of a break from all the festivities were able to relax with apple cider, donuts, milk and juice boxes in the main dining room. We entertained over 200 children and 160 adults. I think the only thing that made the residents happier that evening was the plethora of candy at their disposal. Several of our residents adopted the one for me....one for you method of passing out candy...What a fabulous evening!!

Benefit Spotlight (cont.)

Also effective January 1, 2006, Fidelity Investments will become our 401(k) provider, replacing John Hancock. Fidelity is not only an established and well-known financial services provider, but is on the cutting edge of technology, prides itself on its excellent customer service, and is also local, with its headquarters in Covington, Kentucky, just across the river. By partnering with Fidelity, our retirement plan will be second to none! Some of the exciting new benefits of partnering with Fidelity include:

- Direct online enrollment, and all methods of communication: Webcasts, DVDs for our employees to take home, paper communications, call center.
- Better investment funds and lower expense ratios for those funds. This means a better investment return per fund for our employees, since we will not be splitting the cost of that fund with a 401(k) provider who doesn't directly offer it.
- Targeted education based on your age and stage of life. All employees will not be receiving the same newsletter or education. An employee in their 20's has different goals than an employee in their 50's and their education should reflect that.
- Financial centers in the cities we have facilities in. Fidelity offers financial centers across our footprint. Your employees can visit one of these centers for advice about the direction they should take financially. True investment advice can never be offered due to our fiduciary responsibility, but they can better understand their situation whenever they want, just by stopping by.
- A top-notch website, on the cutting edge of technology. Not only will our employees have access, real time, to their accounts; our HR Managers will also have access to their facility data to aid in questions that may come their way.
- Online distributions and loans, as well as faster transaction processing time. Distributions and loans will no longer take 3 weeks; Fidelity tries to hit a 3-5 day timeframe in their transactions.

I spent a day visiting the Fidelity headquarters and was blown away not only by the technology, but also the customer service model they have designed. I listened to several calls coming into the call center, and the Fidelity customers were treated with respect, received immediate answers, and hung up pleased that their issues were resolved. The mail services division is second only in size and volume to the U.S. Government. It is truly amazing and I saw firsthand how quickly our employees will receive education and statements, and our managers will receive needed materials. Once again, the HR manager should have limited responsibility with respect to day-to-day 401k issues, as Fidelity takes on that responsibility for all areas of our 401(k) administration. This is a fully bundled, one-stop shop approach.