

February 16, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

“The customer is always right.” That’s the marketing mantra that prevails in business. At NCH, we’ve made it our business to listen to the voice of the customer—whether patient, family member, or NCH colleague. And today, I’d like to focus on some of those who focus on everyone else, making a lasting difference in our community’s health and welfare.

One excellent example of folks helping others is the **Employee Advisory Council**, which serves as the governance body for *Partners in Caring*, *Employee Events Team*, *Health & Wellness Team*, *Super Stars Team*, and *Survey Team*.

- **Partners in Caring** is an employee-directed welfare fund that provided nearly \$18,000 to 21 employees-in-need last year. Additionally, the organization contributed another \$10,000 to assist with projects within the system to help employee welfare. Projects included back to school supplies, holiday presents for families in need, TVs for employee break rooms, several new Christmas trees, purchases of pastoral educational books, and patient safety awareness programs.

We also nearly doubled the individual employee grants for unexpected needs from \$650 to \$1,100. This fund covers such expenses as airplane fare for a death in the family, assistance to pay rent or a mortgage in hard times, help after a house fire or aid with other unforeseen stresses. Nine new associates have recently joined this internal philanthropic team, bringing the total committee to 16.

As of December 2011, our **Emergency Assistance Fund** has grown to more than \$105,000, and our **Projects Fund** totaled just under \$17,000. I am pleased to report that we received \$16,374 from employees, which was matched dollar for dollar by the NCH Healthcare System. **Partners in Caring** is involved year-round in many wonderful, worthwhile activities. Stay tuned for more to come.

- Meanwhile, the **Employee Events Team** also has year-round fun getting our extended NCH family together to socialize. The annual *Easter Egg Hunt* involves the younger generation as well as some of my fellow grandparents. *Lunch with Santa* is a happy annual event where we get to see the next generation grow remarkably each December as the kids sit on Santa’s lap, have a picture snapped, and then enjoy a healthy and child-friendly lunch. *Parent’s Night Out*, also around the Holiday Season, gives parents a child-free Friday night to help Santa select the right presents. We also conduct an annual *Toy Drive* so no child is without presents for the holidays. Non-perishable food is also collected and distributed.

Sun Splash has become an annual summer event at the Livingston Water Park. NCH takes over the whole place for an evening BBQ two Saturday nights in a row (so our weekend colleagues can take advantage of their off week). Everyone plays in the water until exhausted and is guaranteed a restful night’s sleep. In August, we help children by buying backpacks and other school supplies to get a good start in the school year.

Working together in ways like these, our 3,954 colleagues, 665 physicians, 1,200 volunteers and 22 community Board members prove that at NCH, *“our customers are always right—and they’re appreciated.”*

We do all need to care for each other in so many ways, as we are all in this together. So, please help out by contacting Human Resources Manager **Michelle Zech** with any additional ideas.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.