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Continuum's Champions of Diversity: Rhona Hetsrony at Beth Israel-Kings Highway

Continuum's Corporate Diversity Charter

Destination Diversity champions a diverse workforce and fosters an inclusive culture that delivers quality care to a diverse patient population. We support the creation of a multicultural environment that works for everyone and capitalizes on the diversity of all associates.



Mentoring Report

The Art of Mentoring at Continuum



HealthCorps students get hands-on experience during a visit to the Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing.

Mentoring at Continuum Health Partners focuses on furthering opportunities for its associates, to be sure (see *Mentoring Program*, page 3), but it also goes beyond to open doors and present opportunities for members of the community served by the organization. "We recognize that mentoring takes many shapes and sizes, that it has a variety of 'looks,'" points out **Pamela Abner**, Continuum's Chief Cultural Diversity Officer and Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. **Debbie Visconi**, Senior Vice President of Administration at Beth Israel, adds: "Mentoring is an art, not a science, that brings us together, breaks down walls and allows us to interact with one another toward mutual success."

Many of the external programs in which Continuum is involved expose students *and* adults to careers in health care, both clinical and administrative. Together with the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA) and SEIU 1199-United Health Care Workers Union, Continuum engages summer high school interns who rotate throughout the organization while getting a bird's-eye view of health care delivery in action. 1199 interns also help support BI Cares, a volunteer program to gauge patient satisfaction. Even individual

departments, like Continuum's corporate Public Affairs and Marketing Department, sponsor students from local schools, colleges and universities.

Beth Israel's Latino Health Institute (LHI) is especially active in community mentoring. Just last year it began welcoming adult interns from the International Center for the Disabled (ICD) in Manhattan, a nonprofit outpatient rehabilitation facility. ICD initially tapped the LHI to conduct quarterly health-oriented workshops. These learning events evolved (continued on page 2)

Mentoring Report

The Art of Mentoring at Continuum *(continued from page 1)*

into three-month internships at BI, which follow three months of vocational training at the ICD for participants. To date, interns have been assigned to such departments as Surgery, OB/GYN and Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine. “We serve as a ramp to get these interns back into the workforce,” remarks LHI Executive Director **Sharon Voytush, RN, MS**. “It’s a win-win all around. Departments get much needed help, and interns get real-work experience.”

The LHI also has partnered with other organizations, including HealthCorps, a proactive health movement modeled after the Peace Corps. “There’s a very low representation of Latinos on many levels in the health care field. We’ve been reaching out to Hispanic youth groups, local schools and organizations to raise awareness and help address this problem,” says Ms. Visconi. “To be out in the community, educating and empowering others, is very satisfying.”

“Continuum has made a real commitment to collaborate with organizations with similar missions,” notes **Marian Scott**, Director of Community Health Education at St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals. “Students are coming here without preconceptions and looking to absorb as much information as possible.”

Ms. Scott sits on the education committee of the Morningside Area Alliance—a community-building partnership of which St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals are members along with such other notable institutions as Columbia University and Riverside Church. The committee works in conjunction with District 5 schools (primarily middle schools) in Harlem to coordinate educational science days. This year, events will feature workshops in health careers, resume writing and skill-set development, and St. Luke’s-Roosevelt staff will take part.



Jessie Fields, MD, foreground, third from left, looks on as Theresa Mack, MD, foreground, second from left, leads a discussion on HIV/AIDS with students from the All-Stars Project.

For undergrads and graduate students majoring in health care, Continuum has partnered with GNYHA and the National Association of Health Services Executives, New York Regional Chapter, to offer summer placements at all its hospitals. Students work on a special project, which they present upon completing the program. “This initiative has been going on for about 10 years,” Ms. Scott says. “Some students have come to work here after they’ve graduated, and one department reached out to an intern to fill a position.”

Among Continuum’s newest community mentoring initiatives is its partnership with the All-Stars Project (ASP), a nonprofit devoted to promoting youth development. **Jessie Fields, MD**, Attending Physician in the Department of Medicine at St. Luke’s and Roosevelt Hospitals, is a member of ASP’s Board of Directors. Joint efforts have included a summer internship at Continuum for ASP participants, and a workshop for public high school students from Harlem, where SLR physicians spoke about their careers in medicine and students visited different

clinical areas. Two students will intern at Continuum this summer, and another workshop is in the planning stages.

“It’s wonderful to work with inner-city kids who often don’t leave their communities, and expose them to opportunities in medicine and science,” enthuses Dr. Fields. “It is important to enhance our relationship with community members and make them feel connected to our hospitals. What better way to do this than by showing the young people that there are real chances for them to succeed?”

Earlier this year, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF), which strives to improve quality of life for the Latino population through education, training and other services, reached out to Continuum for support of its internship program. The program is designed for male high school students, ages 16 to 20, who are fathers, fathers-to-be or father figures in their families. Through this new partnership between CHCF and Continuum, five young men recently completed internships in such departments as Real Estate, Endocrinology and Nursing.

Program Report

Mentoring Program Launches Second Round

This past February, Continuum launched the second installment of its mentoring program, welcoming 16 mentor-mentee pairs from throughout the organization. The program officially kicked off in April with events at Beth Israel and Roosevelt Hospital, and will run until November 2010. This time around, applicants were interviewed in person, and supervisors have been brought into the fold to support their participating staffers and become part of a “mentoring triangle.”

Nearly two-thirds of the mentors are returnees from the pilot last year. “We have many individuals who are trying to pay it forward. I love that some of our mentors have stayed on,” remarks **Amy Chiang**, Diversity Program Manager/Projects Coordinator. “We hope to create a culture of people willing to help and be good examples to others.”



(Top) Front row: Abigail Nimako, Avery Smith, Demetrius Simmons, Maureen Kreider, Sabrina Perry, Elvis DeLeon, Tufail Khan. Back row: Bill LaDue, Dr. Martin Arron, Marvin Russell, Dr. Richard Pierson, Amy Chiang, Terry Cavanaugh, Pamela Abner, Debbie Hackett, John Collura, Christina Figueroa.

(Bottom) Front row: Curtis Brien, Rudolph Woode, Michael Puleo, Neekeesha West, Sophia Slobodien, Elena Quitcon. Back row: Gregory Calliste, Stephen Murphy, Marcia Wynns-Gerardino, Debbie Visconi, Ken Holden, Raquel Ortiz.

News Briefs

LMCs Focus on Diversity Education and Training

The majority of Continuum associates—about 67 percent—are represented by SEIU 1199–United Health Care Workers Union. And each Continuum site has a Labor-Management Committee (LMC) to facilitate communication and improve relationships between management and its unionized staff. In addition, Continuum maintains LMCs with the other unions representing Continuum associates. Working with the 1199 LMCs and a leading diversity consultant, Continuum will begin training union delegates in numerous areas of diversity in health care, including developing cultural competencies, caring for a diverse patient population, and fostering an environment of inclusiveness and respect for others. The training will begin over the next several months and will roll out at each site. The objective is for the delegates to then train 1199 frontline associates, who come in contact with Continuum patients daily.

“Our goal is to promote cultural sensitivity in the workplace. This is particularly important in the health care industry,” notes **Carmen Suardy**, Corporate Vice President for Labor Relations and Employee Relations. “Our union partners have shown an interest in ensuring our success in achieving this goal. We will be working together on this and look forward to having the support and participation of all our unions.”

Update on Recruitment and Retention

Throughout 2009, Continuum placed great emphasis on and extended its search for more diverse candidates to fill senior leadership positions (e.g., director level and above). This objective continues today as the organization grooms staff from within, through several leadership development initiatives, to allow them to rise through the

(continued on page 6)

Council Profile

Site Diversity Council Profile: St. Luke's Hospital

Diversity education has always been a key component of the St. Luke's Site Diversity Council's agenda. With new leadership and new goals, that component will be complemented by regular lunchtime meetings and the formation of subcommittees dedicated to training and development, membership, communications and events.

"There's a common misconception that diversity just includes gender, race and ethnicity, but it encompasses so much more, especially in the workplace. It's about inclusion, respect and opportunities for associates to learn, grow and meaningfully contribute to the hospital's goal in providing excellent patient care," says Council Chair and former Council Secretary **Sharon White**, Residency Program Manager, Graduate Medical Education.

"For us, it's not about focusing on one group. Our challenge is to look at the entire St. Luke's community, help sensitize staff to diversity, and create a friendly, welcoming

environment," adds **Greg Calliste**, the hospital's Chief Administrative Officer.

The St. Luke's Council already has held several "meet and greets," as well as Haitian and Filipino celebrations. It also produced and distributed a brochure about *Destination Diversity* and the Council itself.

"We are encouraging people from all levels and departments to come into the Council," says Vice Chair **Anita Burch**, Administrator, Department of Radiology. Council membership is voluntary, by invitation, and all members have the opportunity to contribute to the efforts of the Council, which meets the second Tuesday of every month.

Moving forward, the Council looks "to get the entire staff at St. Luke's to embrace the diversity program. We want them to help us as we advance," Mr. Calliste says.

For inquiries and suggestions, contact the St. Luke's Site Diversity Council at swhite@chpnet.org or aburch@chpnet.org.



The St. Luke's Site Diversity Council: First row from left: Sava Cucu; Theresa Mack, MD; Marta Alexander; Jose Cruz; Anita Burch; Chester Charlemange; Leonida Lacdao; Lois Dorman; Carolyn Hutson; Majella Venturanza. Second row from left: Stacy Atkinson; Debbie Aloisio; Sharon White; Gregory Calliste; Barbara Gonzalez; Ellen Engelson; Rosa Williams, RN. Third row from left: Pat Nickelson; Mildred Diaz; Lynn Anthony; Roxana Lash; Maureen Stone-Martin; Ramiro Ramos. Fourth row from left: Orin Forde; Raimundo Valdes; Scott Cooper; Susan Palmgren; Troy Wooten. Not pictured: Eileen Lovett, RN; Cheryl Sabatino; LaToya Selby.

Special Event

What Is Fun and Educational? *BI's Diversity Jeopardy!*



Diversity Jeopardy participants signal that they have the question to the answer.



This past winter, Beth Israel-Petrie Division's Site Diversity Council hosted *Diversity Jeopardy* at the Phillips Ambulatory Care Center. Eleven teams made up of associates from various departments tested their knowledge of diversity and competed for prizes, while an audience of over 50 staffers cheered them on. The event, led by Council Cochairs **John Samuels** and **Kim Parker-Maneja**, followed the format of the popular television game show, but focused on diversity in such areas as music, sports and LGBT achievements. Teams used tambourines, bells and maracas to "buzz in" with their answers.

"I think all involved deserve the sincere congratulations of the entire institution for advancing a greater understanding of the many diverse cultures represented in New York and at Beth Israel," says **Henry C. Bodenheimer, MD**, Chairman of the Department of Medicine and leader of his department's team, which won the competition.

A second *Diversity Jeopardy* is planned for later this year.

Q&A Profile

**Continuum’s Champions of Diversity:
Rhona Hetsrony at Beth Israel–Kings Highway Division**

Rhona Hetsrony joined Beth Israel–Kings Highway Division as Vice President for Administration six years ago, and since then has led the institution in meeting the health care needs of a very diverse community that includes Russian, Haitian, Caribbean and Orthodox Jewish populations. *Destination Diversity* spoke with Ms. Hetsrony, one of Continuum’s many champions of diversity, about what she brings to the table and how Kings Highway has become invested in the organization’s diversity initiative.



Food, drinks and a special presentation highlighted the Chinese New Year celebration—4707, the Year of the Tiger—at the Kings Highway Division this past February. On hand were, left to right, Rhona Hetsrony, Vice President of Administration at Kings Highway, Chaplain Elaine Chan, actor/singer Ruth Zhang, and pianist Linda Lin.

Why is diversity so critical to Kings Highway’s health care delivery?

Our community is a real melting pot. To serve it well, it’s important to know where residents come from and be familiar with their languages, customs and traditions. The same principle applies to our staff. We’re all about teamwork here, so we have to truly understand one another to work well together.

How has Kings Highway participated in *Destination Diversity*?

We have a very active Site Diversity Council that meets monthly and is co-chaired by **Marsha Chyrack** and **Rosa Rafaele**. Among its most noteworthy accomplishments are “Lunch and Learns,” where we take a “journey” to another country by having staff members from abroad provide voluntary presentations about life in their homelands, coming here as immigrants, and how they came to careers in health care. We decorate the room to represent their countries and offer native foods for lunch. We do “Lunch and Learns” four times a year and 30 to 40 people usually attend. Each event tells us interesting things that opens dialogue and reminds us that although we come from different places, we can happily coexist.

What have you personally contributed as a champion of diversity?

I like to think I’ve provided a comfortable environment in which staff can explore, make recommendations and support diversity.

Do you sense a change in the cultural climate at Kings Highway since *Destination Diversity* began?

There’s definitely been a change in the way we respect one another. We’re in a much happier environment, which is a wonderful feeling. Also, our patient satisfaction scores are improving, so it’s very satisfying that we’re working well together.

What are King Highway’s goals moving forward?

We’d like to concentrate on our external community efforts, perhaps by visiting neighborhoods and bringing along health professionals to answer health questions.

champion

News Briefs (continued from page 3)

ranks. "We also remain focused on new hires and are partnering with organizations that may help bring diverse candidates to us," says **Pamela Abner**, Continuum's Chief Cultural Diversity Officer and Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. "As we move forward in 2010, we look to focus our efforts on the managerial level as well."

Continuum began its diversity initiative in January 2006. A report generated April 2010 revealed that since then the organization as a whole has realized modest increases in the numbers of Asians, African Americans and Latinos in administrative and physician leadership positions.

On the retention front, Continuum will determine areas for improvement through the use of exit interviews and by working with departments where retention may be an issue.

HEI Kudos

Beth Israel Medical Center will be highlighted as a "top performer" in the Human Rights Campaign's 2010 Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) Report. The HEI, a joint project of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), is a rating system used to gauge how LGBT-inclusive and friendly a hospital's policies and practices are. The report is released annually and focuses on areas including patient non-discrimination, hospital visitation, decision-making rights, cultural competency and employment benefits.

The recognition stems from Beth Israel's voluntary participation in HEI's online survey, for which the hospital expects to receive a

perfect score. **Michael Graziano**, Coordinator, Quality Improvement, BI, and **Rolston Cyril Watts**, Director of Development, Continuum, co-chair the hospital's LGBT Committee, a subgroup of the Petrie Division's Site Diversity Council, and completed the survey with the assistance of other LGBT committee members.

"The format of the survey allowed us to supply HRC with additional information that wasn't part of the scoring criteria," offers Mr. Graziano. "For instance, the Medical Center was praised by HRC for creating a policy regarding welcoming and room assignment for transgender patients. HRC also applauded us for creating and distributing a 'Provider Tips List' for providing care to LGBT patients."



Continuum Health Partners
555 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019



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