

V-WOW CHRONICLES

Volunteering for a Healthy Community

March 2012



**West County
Health Centers**

Caring for our Communities

In The Waiting Room

Volunteer Hosts Extend the Culture of Caring

“Every day that I go to the health center is a gift to me,” says **Judy Hess**, speaking of her volunteer position as a waiting room host at the Sebastopol Community Health Center. A patient since 1988, Judy is enthusiastic about offering the kind of personal interest and attention she receives from health care providers at the Sebastopol Health

Center to patients in the waiting room. Whether it’s assisting patients with information about community resources or just lending an ear to someone who needs to talk, Judy says it’s a privilege when patients get to know and trust her, and when they allow her to help them. “Being a waiting room host,” she says, “is really about forming relationships.”



Volunteer Judy Hess shares community resources at the Sebastopol Community Health Center.



V-WOW ROSTER

Helen Baum

Valerie Belote

Jennifer Byrom

Maria Elena Carrasco

Sharon Cashman

Jo Cipra

Michelle Fabela

Kathleen Grenham

Judy Hess

Patrick Hogan

Hazel Kagan

Shawni Lauenroth

Sharon LeRoy

Sudie Llana

Robin Lorentz

Jennifer Nichols

Julia Pollock

Terri-gene Schmidt

Meghan Schoon

Mario Solano

Virginia Valente-Russo

Liza Vekony

Sharon Whitman

Marcia Woodby

Extending the Culture of Caring

Kathleen Grenham, waiting room host at the Russian River Health Center, echoes Judy's sentiment. Kathleen tells of the time a Latino family came to her, somewhat hesitantly, because they needed food stamps. Their daughter noticed the Latino and Chicano Literature Studies textbook Kathleen had been reading, and they started to talk about it – which created an intimacy and helped the

family feel comfortable and trust her.

Kathleen told them she was learning about the Day of the Dead and wanted to celebrate it. The following week, during Kathleen's waiting room shift, the family came by and presented her with a Day of the Dead sticker.

For Kathleen, the Russian River Health Center is "like a family." Now 24 years old, Kathleen and her family

have been patients there since she was a child. She credits Nurse Practitioner Surani for being a mentor to her in both her personal and professional life. Kathleen loves being part of the health center community and including others in this extended family. And she feels gratified that some patients intentionally schedule appointments when they know she'll be there so they can visit with her.



Children love being read to by the volunteers in the waiting rooms.

When asked what she enjoys about her role as waiting room host at the health center in Sebastopol,

María Elena Carrasco declared "My passion is little babies and little doggies." María Elena loves to look after babies and small dogs while in the waiting room.

"My passion is little babies and little doggies."

She also likes to busy herself in the waiting room by putting out toys and playing with the children.

As a bilingual person, María Elena is a wonderful resource to Spanish-speaking patients – as well as to English speakers who are learning Spanish and want to practice! One Spanish-speaking patient who comes to the health center every week brings her bilingual daughter. María Elena has formed a special connection with the girl, who often asks her "Can we read now?"

The courtesies María Elena extends to patients in the waiting room mirror the care she says she's received as a patient during the past seventeen years at the Occidental and Sebastopol Health Centers. With nothing but high praise for the medical providers who have "listened to, consoled, and always been there" for her during her own challenging health journey, María Elena, like Judy Hess and Kathleen Grenham, is delighted to be able to "give back" to the health centers in her volunteer job as a waiting room host.

iWALK
guerneville
forestville

Want to exercise, but don't like doing it alone? Need motivation?

Join our iWalk volunteers for weekly relaxing and fun walks. All levels welcome!!

Tuesdays in Guerneville at 1pm:

Meet at Russian River Hlth Ctr, 16319 3rd St.

Thursdays in Forestville. 10am longer walk, 11:30 am gentle walk.

Meet at Forestville Wellness Ctr, 6550 Front St



Are you **FRIENDLY, OUTGOING** and **CARING**?
Do you want to make a difference in your community?
WCHC is looking for volunteers to join our team.

For more information about volunteering call Marty at 869-5977, ext. 3312 or go to www.wchealth.org/help/volunteer.