

The HEALING SPIRIT

NOTRE DAME HEALTH CARE

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Employee Educational Assistance Program: A New Vision for Employee Education at Notre Dame Health Care

EEAP

Our Educational Bridge Center has been a vital part of Notre Dame Health Care for many years, providing services to support employee education, career coaching, adult basic education, citizenship preparation and more.

One of our core values is to foster the professional development and career advancement of our employees. We believe that by investing in our staff, we are investing in the quality of care and service we provide to our residents and patients.

Our commitment to education is unwavering. Since the Center's inception nearly 20 years ago, we have modified program offerings and services to ensure we are keeping up with the times and meeting the needs of the students seeking support through the Educational Bridge Center.

As the Center's physical space and programs became less utilized in recent years, we explored how to adapt to the changing educational and skills development needs of our employees. This process included our own self-reflection of how we provide these services, as well as feedback and direction from our Board of Directors. As a result, it has been determined that we will transition from a traditional "bricks and mortar" Center to a qualified Employee Educational Assistance

Program (EEAP) that offers a blend of robust and innovative supportive services and resources along with smaller in-person learning opportunities on our campus, and in the larger community as needed and available.

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The healthcare industry as a whole is experiencing extraordinary challenges particularly related to recruiting and retaining qualified employees. **To remain competitive as an employer, we must evolve to meet the growing needs of workers and support their professional growth and development.**

We are excited to expand our current employee benefit program with this new initiative. Our EEAP is aligned with the vision of our sponsors, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who have been committed to educating the poor and marginalized for over 200 years.

In-person learning opportunities will continue to include our traditional adult basic education program, assistance for employees in their journey to obtain their high school equivalency credentials, and the "TEAS," which is a nursing school preparation exam. While our formal ESOL class will be discontinued on campus due to lack of enrollment and attendance, we will direct employees needing this service to community programs and support any associated costs, including tuition and class attendance time. Additionally, tutoring services will remain as needed to assist students in their work for all educational endeavors.

Other highlights of the new EEAP include affording financial assistance to our qualifying employees who want to pursue further education or training in their field of work. Offerings

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du Lac Assisted Living Happenings

Our Assisted Living Community is Growing!

PBVM Sisters Shawl Ceremony



du Lac Assisted Living welcomed 13 Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVMs) to make our community their new home. It is a wonderful union as the PBVMs share a similar mission to the Sisters of Notre Dame du Namur of serving women, children, immigrants and the poor. The two orders are familiar with each other from missions around the world, teaching in local schools and gatherings throughout New England.

The PBVMs were residing in the Presentation convent in Leominster, MA. The Sisters were seeking a larger community and support in their retirement. On a cold and snowy day in January, the Sisters traveled to du Lac Assisted Living for Chapel, a tour and lunch. The Sisters were unanimous in their interest to move to reside at du Lac Assisted Living, according to Presentation Sister Patricia Dowler. "This

move allows them to remain together as a community in a Catholic facility with liturgies, where their physical and spiritual needs will be met," she said.

Karen Laganelli, CEO of Notre Dame Health Care, said the apartments, recently renovated, are "dignified," and appropriate for women serving God.

We are delighted to welcome the Sisters of the Presentation!

Harmony Residents Enjoy Special Therapeutic Activities

The Harmony Memory Care Neighborhood is a special place at du Lac Assisted Living. The beautiful, fully renovated 24-apartment neighborhood is home to 26 residents. The state-of-the-art environment includes a country kitchen, dining room/activity room, living room, sitting area and private studio apartments located around a lovely courtyard.

The staff are all Certified Dementia Practitioners, having completed the rigorous accreditation program in addition to annual dementia training. A Program Director and Activities Coordinator provide daily programming.

Last year, thanks to the efforts of family member, Dr. Richard Rosiello, we were successful in raising funds from many generous contributors to help support some specialized therapeutic activities for residents in our Harmony Neighborhood. The gifts contributed have been so helpful in providing the extra funds needed to bring additional programming to our mem-



Robin Rosiello engages residents in a music and movement circle

ory care residents to support their physical and cognitive health. We brought in favorites such as musical entertainer Jeff Thomas; Silver Moon Gypsy Dancers; the annual visit by Barn Babies; Native American Flutes with Merrilynn Brauman; and regular visits with movement and music specialist Robin Rosiello.

Across Campus Happenings

It's a Big Year for Notre Dame Health Care! 30th Anniversary of our Long Term Care & Rehabilitation Center

For three decades, Notre Dame Health Care has been providing compassionate and holistic care to the community, inspired by the vision and values of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. In 1990, the Sisters created a non-profit organization, Notre Dame Health Care Center, on a beautiful parcel of land on Plantation Street they had owned since 1900. For many years, the Sisters enjoyed this land as a place of peace and retreat, where they could nurture their spirituality and ministry. They decided to share this gift with others by creating a healthcare center.

This year, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of our first community-based healthcare program—the opening of our Long Term Care & Rehabilitation Center in June of 1993. This was a groundbreaking initiative that brought together religious and lay residents in a community of care and respect. Over the years, Notre Dame Health Care Center has expanded its scope and reach, adding new programs and services such as assisted living, memory care, hospice and palliative care, and post-acute and short-term rehabilitative care.

We will celebrate this milestone with a Summer gathering in June for residents, their family members and friends, which includes Mass, fellowship, memory sharing and a luncheon in the Courtyard at our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center.

**Like Us,
Follow Us . . .**



We love to share all of the wonderful things happening around campus. We invite you to get “social” with us—“like/follow” us on Facebook (@NotreDameHealthCare) on Instagram (@notredamehealthcarema) and on LinkedIn (@Notre Dame Health Care Center Inc.) for regular updates on what we're up to.



Our annual Fall Fundraising Event will be the capstone celebration of the year.

We hope you'll mark your calendar and plan to join us on Friday, October 13, 2023 for a special breakfast event to help raise funds to support the healthcare mission of Notre Dame Health Care.

Our 30th Anniversary Event Presenting Co-Sponsors are F.L. Putnam Investment Management Company and F.L. Putnam Securities Company. Their extraordinary support this year is so meaningful as well as we remember David Putnam, company president and one of the founding members of Notre Dame Health Care's board of directors.

This year's special event will feature memories from the past 30 years; recognition of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur for their work in establishing Notre Dame Health Care Center and the opening of our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center;

and acknowledgment of the service of Father Jonathan Slavinskis who will be presented with the Sister Jon Julie Sullivan Mission Award to honor his many pastoral contributions to the residents, families and staff of our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center and the greater Worcester community.

Please visit our website for additional details on this very special event and how you can support our work through an event sponsorship, donation, participating in our online auction, or purchasing seating to the event. We will also share information on Facebook as plans shape up in the coming weeks.

***We invite you to visit with us,
take a tour and learn more
about how we can help you or
your loved one benefit from
Notre Dame Health Care
programs and services.***



Long Term Care Happenings

Meet the New Director of Pastoral Care



The residents and staff at Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center are pleased to welcome Gina Kuruvilla as the Director of Pastoral Care. Gina has a master's degree from Anna

Maria College in Pastoral Ministry. She comes to us from St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury where she attends with her husband and was the Director of Religious Education. Gina immigrated in 1994 from India where St. Thomas the Apostle brought Christianity to Kerala in 52 AD. Gina spent her summers there as a child with her large extended family. She has memories of her large family kneeling to say the Rosary together at sunset daily and waking to her grandfather reading scripture as his grandchildren drew near to him. Gina's unique life experiences have led her to Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center, and we are thrilled to embrace her joyful, peaceful nature as she cares for the residents and staff here in a very special way.

It's Never Too Late

We are thrilled to have successfully completed our special fundraising campaign to raise \$16,000 to allow the purchase of innovative technology to create customized and unique resident activity experiences for those we serve.



"It's Never Too Late" is a person-centered, customizable technology solution to enable residents to enjoy personalized engagement and activities for meaningful connectivity to the world around them and with their cherished family. A robust library of content such as games, travel, music, movies, audio books, worship, family photos, videos and much more are some of the highlights of this new system. Residents in our traditional and memory care communities will have their own personalized file which can be accessed by our entire team and brought right to a resident's room.

We are so grateful to the many families and friends of Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center who helped to make this a reality. Thanks to the generous support of our community, we raised the funds needed to purchase two mobile units and cover the subscription fee for the first year! We have placed the order for the "It's Never Too Late" units which are expected to arrive very soon. We look forward to training a wide range of our staff who can assist residents and family members as we begin to implement the use of this life-changing technology for the benefit of our residents over the next few weeks.

There's Always Something to do at du Lac!



There's Always Something Happening at LTC!



At Home — Hospice & Palliative Care — Happenings

Support for Various Forms of Grief

As part of our ongoing commitment to support our grieving families and patients in the central Massachusetts area, we also serve our Notre Dame du Lac Assisted Living Community. Our hospice Bereavement Coordinator, Peggye Arcouette, MSW, LCSW, BC and Reverend John Neilon, Spiritual Care Coordinator, joined with du Lac's Director of Pastoral Care, Judi Brennan,



during Holy Week to offer a special grief session to residents to provide an opportunity to explore various forms of grief as part of life's ongoing journey. Grief, which is a loss, can be felt for many reasons. We know that the passing of a loved one is what we think of most often when we hear the word grief or grieving. But feelings of loss can be felt when we lose a job, our driver's license, our body's ability to function properly, and more. For example, when we require the use of a wheelchair, walker and/or cane, we can experience grief at a high level.

The residents were able to express some of their feelings centered around grief and appreciated the space to be able to share and feel safe. It was such a success that Peggye and John are planning to meet more regularly with residents to support any new or ongoing needs.

Supporting our Staff with Continuing Education

Embracing the mission of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur to educate for life, four of our nurses from the Notre Dame Pediatric Palliative Care program recently attended the Pediatric ELNEC (End-of-life Nursing Education Consortium) conference in Boston. ELNEC is a national and international education series to improve palliative care. Our pediatric palliative care nurses specialize in patient and family centered care that enhances the quality of life for children living with life-limiting illness.

Notre Dame Health Care has been pleased to offer this specialized service for our children in the community since 2012. Congratulations to our pediatric palliative care nurses for completing this comprehensive course and doing so with a smile!



Growing to Meet the Critical Needs of our Community

Thanks to the efforts of our employees the Notre Dame At Home Division is recognized as a leading provider of hospice and palliative care services in Worcester County and surrounding areas. We have developed a solid reputation for providing outstanding, compassionate care to patients and families who receive our services. Physicians, hospitals, clinics, and other professionals who refer their patients to our care know they can rely on Notre Dame At Home to care for their patients with skill, empathy, and the utmost dignity. We're proud of our team who work hard not only to take care of our patients, but to support each other as well.

Naturally, as a result of our reputation and teamwork, we have grown significantly over the past year. We recently hired additional seasoned clinical and support staff to accommodate our growth to ensure quality patient care. Whether providing direct care or working behind the scenes, we are stronger together and grateful for a truly dedicated team! As our circle grows wider, Notre Dame At Home is pleased to welcome all our new employees as they embark on their new career path with us.



NOTRE DAME HEALTH CARE

555-559 Plantation Street • Worcester, MA 01605-2350

Tel: (508) 852-5800 • Web: notredamehealthcare.org



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TRIBUTE GIVING

Remember and honor a loved one with an inscribed leaf on one of our *Trees of Life* which are located in the vestibule of the Notre Dame du Lac Chapel and the lobby of our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center. By request, and with your gift of \$250 or more, we will inscribe a “bronze leaf” in memory or honor of someone special in your life and will have it placed on one of our “trees.” For details, please contact pthayer@notredamehealthcare.org.



The Healing Spirit is published as a service to the community. / EDITORS: Paige Thayer and Cathy Smith

For additional stories and information, please visit our website notredamehealthcare.org

EEAP

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would include tuition assistance; scholarship support; loan repayment assistance; the costs of certification classes and other professional development courses; compensation for employee class time; assistance with U.S. Citizenship preparation; and so much more.

Forty years ago, I was a young professional that was afforded the life and career-altering gift of tuition reimbursement provided by my employer. This allowed me to pursue my graduate degree and a career dedicated to supporting the healthcare needs of elders, and others. I am so very grateful for their faith in me and the investment they made in my future at that time. It has paid dividends along the way as my career developed. I'd like to think I've made a difference; I certainly love what I do and take nothing for granted.

The extraordinary benefit EEAPs can have on employees cannot be overstated; these programs change

These programs change lives by helping to provide career and economic stability which benefit the employee and their families.

lives by helping to provide career and economic stability which benefit the employee and their families. They also benefit the current and future organizations who are stronger for having employees who are well trained and committed to their work. And well-trained and committed employees will also translate to better care for the residents and patients of Notre Dame Health Care.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about these enhancements in support of our educational mission! Times change, and we must evolve to better meet these changing needs. As we “pivot” to a more comprehensive program offering a wider array of needed resources and supports for our staff, we know there may be some bumps along the way. We are committed to supporting the ever-changing needs of our employees and to ensuring we have the

strongest, best-educated workforce possible to provide the compassionate care and high-quality services our residents, patients and families deserve.

–Karen Laganelli, CEO

We are grateful for the privilege to serve and fulfill our mission to provide our residents, patients and families with the care they so deserve. And, we are grateful to all who support our work with gifts of time, talent and treasure throughout the year.