A New Outlook on Life: Carlos Randolph

Heart Failure in the United States affects 5.7 million people, costing $30.7 billion per year in health services, medications, and missed work. More and more young people are being diagnosed each year. Heart Failure does not mean your heart stopped, instead it means that your heart is pumping slower than normal. This causes a reduction of oxygen and nutrients from being circulated through the body.

That is what happened to Carlos. Carlos is a 41 year old, who enjoys working out in the gym and coaching his son’s baseball team. This father of two seemingly had no indication there was a problem with his heart, until one day he was pulling into the gym parking lot like so many other days before. On this day, it felt different. Carlos was experiencing shortness of breath and chest pain. Prior to that day, he had a cough, it was hard to get through a regular cardio exercise, and had difficulty sleeping. Carlos did not understand what was happening. His family had a history of hypertension, but he did not know the extent it would impact him. Carlos drove himself to Saint Agnes. He lived nearby and years earlier had a great experience with the Saint Agnes Emergency Department. The Emergency Department worked to lower his blood pressure, and he was then moved to the Cardiovascular unit for specialized care. His tests would show a left ventricular thrombosis and his heart showed a 23% injection fraction. He remembers vividly, his son asked “is your heart ok? Are you still going to coach me?” “Drs. Elfrey and Yousuf, my cardiologists, explained the course of treatment in a way comforting to my family and me,” Carlos stated. “They kept motivating me to do better and take my treatment seriously. I was embarrassed, I am a young guy, I shouldn’t be here in the Heart Failure Clinic.”

“I would have to commit to make changes and follow a strict course of treatment. That course of treatment would entail seven different medications, two daily injections, visiting anti-coagulation once a week, Heart Failure Clinic twice a week and to visit my Primary Care Physician every three months,” Carlos said. When asked, he stated, “the support I received through my recovery was amazing.” He remembers Dr. Elfrey telling him “you probably had the scariest moment of your life. You can get beyond this. You need to want to do it.” He also received counsel from Sister Louise Busby, she told him to have faith. Carlos created a Living Will and made the decision he

Innovation Tank Provides Grant to Reduce Patient Transportation Barriers

It’s no secret that many barriers exist in today’s world when it comes to health care access. And the challenges that patients face are especially apparent in the Baltimore area, where both the poverty level and the prevalence of disease is high.

Jennifer Broaddus, a social work manager at Saint Agnes Healthcare, was seeing first hand just how challenging it can be for those with chronic health issues, who don’t own a vehicle, to get to the hospital, doctor’s appointments or outpatient treatment clinics, for ongoing care. Transportation, she says, can be one of the biggest obstacles patients face.

“It’s easy to assume that everyone can access public transportation, but that is not always the case,” Jennifer said. “Some of our most vulnerable patients use track phones and pay minute-by-minute. So when they are spending 45 minutes on the phone to arrange for a ride, it becomes cost prohibitive. And hopping on a bus isn’t always as easy as it sounds. Buses run late. Sometimes the route from a person’s home to their doctor’s appointment requires that they take three different buses. They need to have exact change. It’s not a streamlined process, and when you factor in that these people are not feeling well and are many times very ill, it becomes easy to see why they can’t make it to their appointments.”

Reports from the Journal of Community Health and the Office of Planning and Capital Programming in Maryland suggest

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Saint Agnes Hospital Foundation Receives $10,000 from Greater Chesapeake Charitable Foundation to Increase Access to Healthy Food

The Saint Agnes Foundation was awarded $10,000 from Greater Chesapeake Charitable Foundation (GCCF) in support of the Saint Agnes Health Institute’s Food Rx Program. The program aims to meet the needs of vulnerable populations living in food deserts in Baltimore City and individuals with chronic and complex medical needs by increasing access to healthy, affordable produce.

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wanted to live! It took five months for his blood pressure to return to normal and now his heart is at 100% usage. It took an entire team of clinicians to help him through this. Carlos now realizes the importance of a Primary Care Physician. Grateful for the care, Carlos enjoys sharing his story to encourage other people to take control of their health and follow the path your doctors prescribe. Today, Carlos takes medication daily, eats right, exercises, and pays more attention to his body. He looks forward to helping get the word out about cardiovascular health and plans to participate in a weight-lifting competition next year! Carlos enjoys coming back to Saint Agnes to visit his doctors, nurses, and staff to say “thank you for your patience, advice and emotional support. You saved my life!”

What is your connection with Saint Agnes Healthcare?
Saint Agnes is where my family goes for its medical care. Two of my children were born here, and we continue to use Saint Agnes Medical Group for our primary care needs. We live in Columbia, and we have always had such wonderful care at Saint Agnes.

Why did you choose to join the Saint Agnes Foundation Board?
For many years, I worked in Washington, D.C. I knew that if I ever changed positions to something closer to home, I wanted to also find an opportunity to give back to the community. When I joined the Whiteford, Taylor & Preston law firm, I thought it would be a perfect time. I learned about the Saint Agnes Foundation through a networking connection. I already had a very positive relationship with Saint Agnes for my family’s healthcare and thought it would be a natural fit. I started my board role in July 2015.

What makes Saint Agnes special?
The notion that a healthcare organization is devoted to providing healthcare that leaves “no one behind” is so extraordinary. Saint Agnes serves a diverse population, including a very underserved community, and I am proud to be associated with an organization that brings hope and a commitment to health for this community.

What do you see as Saint Agnes’ role in the community?
The new direction of “Health beyond Healthcare” is exciting and sets Saint Agnes apart from other healthcare institutions. The dedication to helping members of the community obtain a healthy lifestyle and addressing circumstances that impact a person’s life like access to healthy food, affordable housing, education, substance abuse, and mental health is such an admirable mission.

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“Food deserts and the obstacles to access healthy and affordable produce is a significant issue that people in our community face,” said Jennifer Broaddus, MSW, LCSW-C, Director of Population Health, Saint Agnes Health Institute. “This funding will help support unique and impactful programs aimed at helping those most in need.”

The Food Rx Program supports Saint Agnes’ focus on addressing “Health Beyond Healthcare.” By approaching all aspects of life that impact one’s overall well-being, Saint Agnes expects to reduce unnecessary medical expenses and to be a community health resource.

The Saint Agnes Health Institute Food Rx Program provides an innovative, multi-tiered approach to food access for Saint Agnes patients with chronic and complex medical needs. Through a partnership with Hungry Harvest’s “Produce in a SNAP” program, a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that pairs access to healthy foods with patient education, patients receiving care coordination by the Health Institute can receive a voucher, like how they might receive a prescription for medicine, for weekly produce pickups at Saint Agnes Hospital’s weekly Community Produce Market or have food delivered to their homes.

Access to healthy food is a key determinant for health. According to the Johns Hopkins Center for a livable future, in collaboration with Baltimore Food Policy initiative, one in four of the city’s residents live in a food desert. A food desert is defined by the Baltimore City Health Department as an area where the distance to a grocery store is more than ¼ mile, the median income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level and 30% of households have no vehicle available. This includes the area surrounding Saint Agnes Hospital.

“It is amazing to see a healthcare system partner with the community in this innovative way,” said Katie Caple, Vice President of RCM&D, and member of the Board of Directors for the Saint Agnes Foundation and GCCF. “Saint Agnes is really putting a stake in the ground to work to take care of its patients as well as the community surrounding its campus.”

Saint Agnes is grateful for the support of GCCF. GCCF’s organizational mission is to provide support to causes dedicated to improving employment services, shelter, food/nutrition, health/wellness, financial education, children and economic development of those in the Greater Baltimore Area.