

Touchpoints

A newsletter of the *Kenneth B. Schwartz Center*

*Dedicated to
strengthening the
relationship between
patients and
caregivers*

Neville Center: Training staff to build relationships

ON a mild morning in March, a small group of residents of Neville Center, a skilled nursing facility in Cambridge, gather for coffee and cake in a room above the street. This spring, Neville Center, temporarily housed at Youville Hospital, looks forward to moving into its permanent home at Fresh Pond, where the facilities will be larger and more comfortable. Until then, however, residents happily chat with each other and the staff, oblivious to the size of the room and genuinely pleased to see each other and talk about the latest news.

No matter where its location, Neville Center is a thriving, bustling community of residents, staff and administrators. In October 2003, the Schwartz Center funded four full-day educational retreats for all full- and part-time Neville Center staff, including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nursing aides,

housekeepers, office staff, and managers. Caregivers participated in workshops, brainstorming sessions and exercises in which they learned essential listening and communication skills to help them better understand and empathize with the residents and each other. Ninety-nine percent of all Neville Center staff attended the fall retreats, which were led by a team of specialists in nursing home culture change from Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, a non-profit organization based in New York.

Key to these sessions was the participation of four members of the Harmony Committee, a group of residents who work with staff to empower residents and improve the quality of life for everyone at Neville. They developed a videotaped presentation in which residents express mixed feelings about living in a nursing home. While they appreciate
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SAVE THE DATE

Please save the date of **October 28, 2004** for the **ninth Schwartz Center annual dinner** at the Copley Westin Hotel. The evening will include the announcement of the sixth annual **Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award**. Corinne Broderick and Richard Winn, Julie Rosen and Gary Belowich, and Peter and Lori Slavin will chair the dinner.



Staff and residents at Neville Center play a game of checkers, finding new and enjoyable ways of connecting and communicating with each other.

— Neville Center

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being part of a community, they still want privacy and respect. Residents long for the freedom they had when they lived independently, such as deciding when to get up in the morning, what activities to participate in, what time to turn off the television and when to bathe. These are some of the

Paul Hollings supports a growing change in the philosophy of nursing home culture which makes caring for the spirit as important as caring for the body. Hollings believes that nursing home care should no longer be based solely on a medical model. He sees that this new philosophy is valuable not just to residents but to staff as

well. "At the heart of this culture change," he says, "is the relationship between residents and residents, residents and staff, staff with each other, and staff with families. We are a community. This is [the residents'] home."

Kate Waldo, assistant administrator at Neville, believes that at the retreats, staff benefited most from hearing directly from the residents. Waldo says, "It helped to make the residents real." Staff learned how to form closer, more caring relationships with residents and how to interpret both their verbal and physical cues. In addition, staff developed a better understanding of the emotional needs of the residents and how to meet these needs. The retreats also helped staff gain awareness about the differences between their own cultures and the residents'.

After participating in the retreats, Micheline Simon, certified nursing aide, said that she began to see how important – and enjoyable – it was to get to know residents on a personal level. She now stops and talks to her residents when

she sees them in the hall. "I ask how they are doing, how their day is going, how their children are. I get to know people better, in a fun way!"

The Schwartz Center hopes that the Neville Center training program can be used as a model for other skilled nursing facilities, as well as in a variety of other resident- and patient-care settings. Increased empathy and better

Neville Center Executive Director Paul Hollings supports a growing change in the philosophy of nursing home culture which makes caring for the spirit as important as caring for the body.

communication improves overall patient and caregiver satisfaction, leading the way to a more compassionate health care environment. Clearly, anyone who walks through Neville Center's halls can see that the residents truly appreciate the staff's interest in their lives. The hallways buzz with conversation. Outside one room, a group of residents eat their meals as if at a sidewalk café. Staff members, though busy with their daily tasks, stop to talk to the residents, make jokes, laugh, squeeze a hand or affectionately pat a shoulder. What makes Neville Center unique is a staff that cares deeply for the residents, and residents who feel respected and understood.



A Neville Center nursing aide who participated in the Schwartz Center-funded training retreats spends one-on-one time with a resident, helping build trust and empathy.

basic losses nursing home residents face, an insight that helped staff find better ways of connecting and communicating with residents.

Neville Center Executive Director

Pfizer Inc. helps expand Schwartz Center Rounds

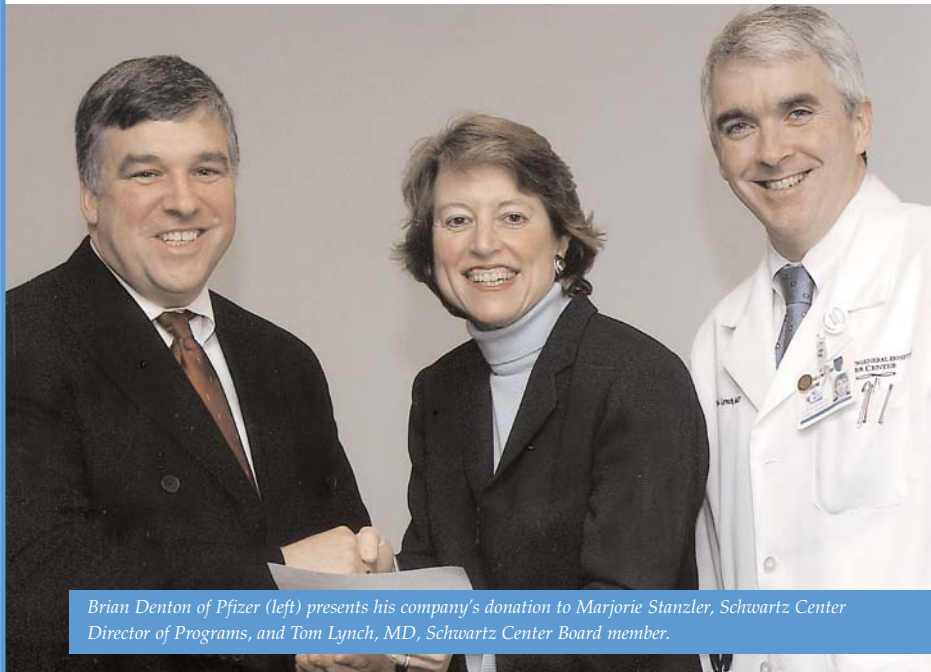
The Schwartz Center Rounds® received an enormous boost this year with a generous \$150,000 three-year gift from Pfizer Inc. – the largest corporate gift the Center has received to date. The Rounds provide multidisciplinary clinicians with the unique opportunity to discuss difficult social and emotional issues that arise in caring for patients. Caregivers who participate explore the human dimension of health care, exchanging ideas, thoughts and feelings in a comfortable setting. While providing support to caregivers in their often difficult and stressful jobs, the Rounds enhance communication and promote teamwork.

The Pfizer gift will help underwrite:

- Expansion of the Rounds to new hospitals and oncology centers around the country
- A marketing package to promote the Rounds with a moving video about the Rounds and comprehensive informational materials
- Presentations and workshops at national medical meetings to generate interest in the Rounds

The Rounds currently take place in 45 hospitals in 11 states, and the demand is growing constantly.

“Pfizer is excited to be part of such a compassionate and thoughtful program that enhances quality care and benefits hard working caregivers around America,” said Brian Denton, Pfizer Oncology account manager. “We are honored to present this gift to expand an already successful program.”



Brian Denton of Pfizer (left) presents his company's donation to Marjorie Stanzler, Schwartz Center Director of Programs, and Tom Lynch, MD, Schwartz Center Board member.

REMINDER: CELEBRATION OF WOMEN IN HEALTH CARE

The Schwartz Center's second annual **Celebration of Women in Health Care** will take place on **Wednesday, May 26**, from 5:15 to 7:30 pm at the law firm of Goulston & Storrs at 400 Atlantic Avenue, Boston. **Nancy Achin Audesse, executive director of the Board of Registration in Medicine**, will be the special guest. Audesse is a dynamic speaker who has been a tireless advocate for patients' rights as both a state senator and private citizen. Please join an enthusiastic group of women from every sector of health care. Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased at the door. To join the Leadership or Host Committee or to RSVP, please call 617-724-4746.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Schwartz Center occasionally needs volunteers to help with office work during regular business hours. If you are interested, please call Sarah at 617-724-4746.

For your convenience, we have enclosed an envelope should you wish to make a donation to the Schwartz Center. You may also donate by credit card via www.theschwartzcenter.org. Thank you for your support.

Touchpoints

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Health care attorneys start their day with the Schwartz Center

AT A BREAKFAST RECEPTION hosted by Michael Blau and McDermott, Will & Emery on March 16, guests learned more about the Schwartz Center's important programs and engaged in a lively repartee with Tom Scully, former administrator for Medicare and Medicaid Services, about the implementation of the new Medicare bill. The 100 attendees included representatives from more than 30 law firms as well as HMOs, hospitals, educational institutions, government organizations, health associations, and pharmaceutical companies. A Host Committee, organized by Blau, Steve Weiner of Mintz, Levin, and Bill Knowlton of Ropes and Gray, raised more than \$10,000 for the Schwartz Center.



Tom Reardon of Epstein, Becker & Green (left) and Steve Weiner at the health care lawyers event

HOST COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH CARE LAWYERS EVENT

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
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Neighborhood Health Plan
Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research
Paratek Pharmaceuticals
Partners HealthCare System, Inc.
Philip W. Johnston Associates
Ropes & Gray LLP
Rosenfeld & Rafik
Tufts Health Plan
Tufts-New England Medical Center

RECENT EVENTS

On May 3 **Rita Charon, MD, PhD**, Columbia University Medical Center, mesmerized 50 guests as part of the Schwartz Center's speaker series. In her talk, "Literature and Medicine: Bridging the Divide," she eloquently described how reflective writing can increase the empathy caregivers feel for their patients. The Center funded Columbia's narrative writing program in the oncology unit. The *Wellesley Townsman* featured Charon's talk in its May 6 edition ... The **First Annual David Medeiros Comedy Celebration**, organized this spring in Medfield by his friends and family, raised more than \$5,000 for the Schwartz Center. Medeiros, who loved life and loved to laugh, succumbed to pancreatic cancer at age 20. During his illness, he was featured in a Schwartz Center-funded video about young people with cancer, produced at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.