



**American Hospital  
Association**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AHA AWARDS FOUR HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

**WASHINGTON** (April 12, 2012) – The American Hospital Association (AHA) will honor four hospital volunteer programs with its Hospital Awards for Volunteer Excellence (HAVE). The AHA HAVE Awards Program is in its 29<sup>th</sup> year and highlights the extraordinary efforts of volunteer programs and the positive impact their contributions have on the patients, hospitals, health systems and communities they serve.

The winners fall into four categories: community service programs; community outreach and/or collaboration programs; fundraising programs; and in-service hospital volunteer programs.

Recipients of this year's prestigious award hail from New York, Minnesota and Iowa.

Representatives from these winning programs will receive their awards at the HAVE Awards Breakfast on Monday, May 7, during the AHA Annual Membership Meeting in Washington.

The 2012 HAVE winners are:

**Community Service Programs**

*Food Pantry (Castle Point & Montrose) VA Hudson Valley Health Care System  
Montrose, N.Y.*

In 1996, the Veterans Administration (VA) Hudson Valley Health Care System started a food pantry on its Montrose Campus in Westchester County, N. Y. to serve its low income outpatients and their families, and a second one on its Castle Point Campus. Both pantries were made possible through grants obtained from the New York State Department of Health Hunger

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Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program, contributions from community based service organizations and from numerous community food drives. They represent the largest non-mandated food pantry at a VA facility. During 2011, the food pantries on both campuses served more than 4,300 households and received nearly \$8,500 in monetary donations and more than \$112,000 in non-perishable food items.

Since opening, both the Montrose and Castle Point Campus food pantries have been solely staffed and led by health care system volunteers. The volunteers are involved in the overall operations of the food bank including staffing, ordering food, space requirements and assisting with grant applications. The volunteers maintain regularly scheduled operating hours on both campuses and maintain records of veterans and families served by the program. Through their efforts, the facility has increased public awareness and understanding of the mission, vision and values of the health care system, which is to provide comprehensive bio-psycho-social health care services to their deserving veteran population.

### **Community Outreach and/or Collaboration Programs**

*Charla de Lupus (Lupus Chat)*®  
Hospital for Special Surgery, New York

Charla de Lupus (Lupus Chat)® is a national peer support and education program serving clients with lupus which disproportionately affects African American, Asian and Latina women. Trained volunteers living with the illness provide peer support and education in English and Spanish for clients in traditionally underserved communities. The program includes a toll free support and education helpline which screens and matches callers with a peer volunteer for ongoing telephone support; monthly support groups; and an award-winning teen booklet written by a Charla volunteer who was diagnosed with lupus as a teen. In addition, Charla partners with federal government agencies such as, Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, and Office of Minority Health and the National Institute of Arthritis Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases to address health disparities in lupus care and outcomes by developing culturally relevant health messages and education.

Charla deploys volunteers who understand lupus first-hand to empower children, teens and adults to cope with the impact of the illness and to help them feel less alone. Volunteers receive a six-week, 20 hour, culturally relevant training program which includes participatory learning in listening skills, lupus diagnosis, treatment, doctor-patient communication, opportunities to share personal experiences and information about essential resources. Pre- and post-evaluation and coaching are facilitated by a peer learning process under the leadership of a professional social work manager. Volunteers also partner with health care providers to help patients better understand their illness and enhance their adherence to complex treatment regimens. Since its beginning in 1994, 50 volunteers have contributed approximately 20,000 hours of service with more than 30,000 client contacts to date.

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### **Fundraising Programs**

#### *Pay It Forward Fund*

North Memorial Hospital, Minneapolis

The Pay It Forward Fund was started by Michelle Morey, a breast cancer survivor, to help breast and women's cancer patients pay essential living expenses while undergoing treatment. Alleviating financial burdens helps patients focus on getting healthy during a difficult time. The name of the fund was chosen to enable patients to accept the help that they need. The hope is that recipients will someday find a way to "pay it forward." Many patient recipients have chosen to volunteer, donate, share their story and their struggle and, in some cases, designate the Pay It Forward Fund for their memorials.

Cancer patients from five hospitals in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area are eligible to receive up to \$1,500 per year to pay medical and living expenses such as insurance co-payments, rent, electricity and heat. In partnership with the North Memorial Foundation, the Pay It Forward Fund is entirely staffed by volunteers who answer phones, field questions, screen potential fund recipients to assure that they meet the fund criteria and process paperwork. Volunteers also plan and organize fundraisers to benefit the Pay It Forward Fund which included a Casino Night event that raised \$228,000 and a Summer Concert series featuring local musicians who donate their talent and raised a record \$53,599. The partnership with North Memorial Foundation along with the volunteer commitment allows 100% of the funds to go to those in need. The Pay It Forward Fund utilizes social media and other modern technology to produce high-level marketing materials and minimize overall costs. After successfully launching an on-line silent auction, the North Memorial Foundation began using the technology for other fundraisers.

### **In-Service Hospital Volunteer Programs**

#### *Cherished Portraits*

University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics, University of Iowa Children's Hospital, Iowa City, Iowa

The Cherished Portraits program provides private, caring, professional portrait sessions for families experiencing stillbirth or newborn death, infants and children with life-threatening illnesses, children who are facing the end of life, or at the time of an unexpected death. Each portrait session, offered on-site by professional photographers who volunteer on an on-call basis, is individualized to reflect each patient and their family. The program addresses the emotional needs of families dealing with life-threatening issues in a positive and life-affirming manner. Each family receives an archival CD of the images which they can use to print portraits or create other mementos with the image of their cherished child. The portrait session and CD is provided at no cost to the families.

A special group of volunteers help triage the calls and ensure requests are divided equally between photographers. These volunteers, recruited from those serving in the hospital's neonatal

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intensive care unit, carry pagers from 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. daily. Staff volunteer supervisors and nurses coordinate the program and recruit professional photographers as volunteers, as well as orient hospital volunteers. The volunteers depend on staff to inform families and identify appropriate patients. Families are more likely to use the service if they receive the informational brochures from staff they know and trust. More than 175 portrait sessions have been offered since the program started in in June 2007.

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### **About the AHA**

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, which includes close to 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, other providers of care and 42,000 individual members. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information, visit the AHA Web site at [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org).