

the cedars NEWS

S U M M E R 2 0 1 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ANNUAL
PHILANTHROPY
REPORT 2014



“The strength and loyalty of The Cedars community has never ceased to amaze me ... Our community continues to thrive in enhancing the lives of our seniors.”

—KATHRYN CALLNAN

Healing Leads to a Homecoming



WHEN Mary Carol Pochebit began experiencing increasingly severe medical and mobility issues, she and her husband, John, faced a difficult choice. They wanted to stay together in the home they had shared for over 50 years. But Mary Carol needed more assistance with the activities of daily living than John could provide, and more acute medical care than she was eligible for at home.

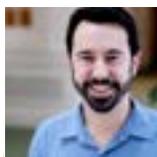
“The nurses and CNAs at The Cedars are just wonderful ... and Dr. Marino? Why, Dr. Marino saved Mary Carol’s life!” —JOHN POCHEBIT

“We have a big, close family,” John explains. “But only one of my sons lives close by. I couldn’t even get Mary to her doctor appointments without calling him.”

Like many seniors, the Pochebits had many apprehensions and misconceptions about nursing homes like The Skilled Care Center at The Cedars. Today, they are so glad they didn’t let those fears keep them from finding Mary the care she needed. Because Mary had a customized care plan from our medical director, 24/7 support from our nursing team, and access to state-of-the-art physical and occupational therapy, she is walking again. She is thriving again. *And she is back home again.*

That’s right—Mary’s health improved so much in long term care that she was able to return home to John and her beloved dog, Barley. “It was the therapy and the nurses that did it,” she says happily. “And Dr. Marino—Dr. Marino saved my life.”

Continued >



INSIDE: Behind the scenes at The Cedars, from senior advocacy to life enrichment, giving back to our community, and more!

DID YOU KNOW:

The Scoop on Skilled Care

Mary Carol Pochebit's story is all the more remarkable when you know how difficult it is to be eligible for nursing home care in Maine.

State medical eligibility requirements were changed 20 years ago to make sure nursing home care was available only to seniors with the most advanced health problems. As a result, our nursing homes serve elderly and disabled people with an acuity level among the highest in the country.

In order to be admitted to a nursing home in Maine, seniors need a physician's order *and* a State evaluation declaring their needs are great enough to require skilled care. Because seniors' health issues must be so advanced to get them into a nursing home, over 97% of Maine's nursing home residents are unable to return home even after receiving care.**

*Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, testimony before the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services, February 6, 2014

**Homeward Bound Program, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, March 2014



"I have worked in nursing homes for ten years, and Mary is the first person living in a nursing home that I've seen get strong enough to go back home."

—DR. MARINO

today," Mary recalls. "And one day she chose an outfit and she told me I was going to get up and we were going on a walk. Robin's confidence and care changed everything! Because of Robin, I'm walking again."

After several months of skilled, one-on-one rehabilitation and diligent nursing care, Mary was

mobile, taking only 11 prescriptions and feeling like herself again. She even began spending weekends at home with John!

"She wanted to go home permanently," says Dr. Marino. "The Cedars has successfully transitioned patients from nursing care to assisted living, and we never stop working diligently with all our patients to recover and restore as much independence as they can achieve. But I have worked in nursing homes for ten years, and Mary is the first person living in a nursing home that I've seen get strong enough to go back home."

Today, Mary maintains her independence with daily assistance from a home nurse and loving care from John, who can't believe their luck. "I thought I'd lost her," he says emotionally, beaming at Mary. "We're so close, you know. I love her like the dickens. It's so good to have her home, looking like a young chick again."

"It's good to be home," Mary agrees softly. "That's what I dreamed about. The Cedars made my dream come true." 🍷

Dr. Marino, The Cedars Medical Director, creates customized care plans for all residents. "I listened to Mary and her family to find out what was important to her," he remembers. "She needed a full assessment with a fresh set of eyes."

Dr. Marino felt Mary's health issues stemmed from the 26 medications she took every day. "It's hard to differentiate a true medical condition from the side effect of a prescription when you're a doctor seeing a patient during a quick office visit," he explains. "You can fall into the trap of prescribing new drugs to treat side effects of old drugs. At The Cedars, we have the advantage of carefully observing residents over time to better calibrate care."

Everyone agreed to a care plan that would lower Mary's dosages while increasing her physical and occupational therapies. "Except I didn't *want* therapy," Mary adds. "I'd been in the I.C.U. at Maine Medical Center after getting the flu. I almost died. I wouldn't get out of bed!"

But Robin, Mary's occupational therapist, wouldn't give up. "I kept saying no, not



The Skilled Care Center
at the cedars

COMPASSIONATE CARE FOR SENIORS IS
THE HEART OF THE CEDARS MISSION.
Call (207) 221-7000 to learn more.

Standing Up for Seniors: John Watson Wins Advocacy Award

"John Watson's unrelenting focus on improving access to the highest quality services possible is why Leading Age is proud to show the appreciation of its members with this special Advocacy Award." —DENISE VACHON



JOHN WATSON, Chief Financial Officer at The Cedars, received a special Advocacy Award from Leading Age on April 14 for his work on Maine's Commission to Study Long Term Care (LTC) Facilities.

John has been a leader in the statewide movement to change the ways our state pays for nursing home care for years, and his distinguished service on the Commission reflects his commitment to good finance—and fairness.

"The Commission found Maine underfunds nursing homes by \$40 million dollars *each year*," John says. "This forces nursing homes to carve out funds from Medicare or private pay to provide acceptable care for their residents. If they can't, they close."

These closures disproportionately affect Maine's rural communities—and leave seniors in those communities without options. Maine's strict medical eligibility requirements restrict access to home nursing, leaving seniors and their families to shoulder the burdens of aging in place. "The State of Maine needs to stop relying on nursing homes to meet our obligation to rural and low-income elders," John explains. "Everyone needs access to quality long term care."

Leading Age, a large nationwide coalition of aging services providers, agrees. "John's dedicated work toward making way for a more transparent and equitable State reimbursement system and his unrelenting focus on improving access to the highest quality services possible is why Leading Age Maine and New Hampshire is proud to show the appreciation of its members with this Special Advocacy Award," Denise Vachon, Leading Age Board of Directors and Executive Director of Park Danforth, declared at the award ceremony.

The Cedars thanks the LTC Commission for its service and congratulates John Watson on his well deserved recognition by Leading Age. 🍷

DID YOU KNOW:

Where Does LD 1776 Stand Today?

LD 1776, a bill that brings long term care reimbursement rates closer to the actual cost of care, passed the Maine Legislature this spring. Representative Margaret Craven of Lewiston, Representative Peter Stuckey of Portland and Representative Dick Farnsworth of Portland all served with John Watson on the LTC Commission and were instrumental in this important bill's passage.

The Appropriations Committee, however, wasn't able to *fund* the bill, so Maine's Department of Health and Human Services now faces the challenge of allocating payment increases under the new system without designated funding.

LD 1776 also created a new commission to further study Maine's long term care system. Governor LePage is expected to appoint members to it shortly, and its work will begin this summer.

INSIDE LOOK:

Favorite Activities in Skilled Care

1. FLORAL ARRANGING

Who doesn't love fresh flowers? This monthly class is a sensory and creative delight for residents.

2. OUTINGS

Everyone looks forward to going out for lunch, ice cream or a scenic ride in our bus.

3. INTER-GENERATIONAL PLAYGROUP

Our seniors love the monthly gathering of children of The Cedars staff and their own grandchildren (and great-grandchildren!).

4. COCKTAIL HOUR

A wonderful opportunity for residents to relax and socialize.

5. SING-A-LONG WITH JIM

Sentimental favorites, classic standards, holiday tunes—Jim Bickford, staff volunteer, plays them all at his biweekly gig, and our seniors and staff sing right along with him.

The People in Your Neighborhood: Nick Viti, Life Enrichment



“To make The Skilled Care Center truly feel like home, we have to know what ‘home’ means to each resident ... we want to recreate their world as much as possible.” —NICK VITI

THE CEDARS holistic approach to skilled care nurtures mental and spiritual well being, not just physical health. Embracing person-centered care and transforming nursing wings into close-knit, thriving “neighborhoods” is one way The Cedars achieves this level of holistic wellness. Our Life Enrichment programming is another.

Our Life Enrichment team engages residents in rich and meaningful activities while fostering a true sense of community. Nick Viti, an occupational therapist, is thrilled to have the opportunity to lead

it. As our new Manager of Life Enrichment, Nick provides one-on-one occupational therapy to residents while creating and customizing programming to reinforce and enhance that therapy. “Because I’m in the therapy gym with residents, I know their strengths and challenges firsthand. I don’t have to design one activity to fit all. I get to design an activity for one person.”

Nick began working with students and adults with behavioral disabilities after graduating from college. “Finding ways to adapt environments and activities to allow my clients to experience success in their lives was so rewarding,” he remembers. “I knew that feeling was what I wanted from my career.”

Nick went back to school to earn his occupational therapy degree from the University of Southern Maine. For his senior project, Nick helped create a ‘sensory room’—a space with visual, tactile and auditory tools to help overstimulated or understimulated residents with dementia restore their sensory balance. After graduation, Nick applied his ideas in a real-world setting while working with dementia patients at an Augusta nursing home.

Nick loved the work, but he wanted something more—to truly get to know residents, develop personalized therapeutic goals for them, and create meaningful, enjoyable daily activities that reinforced those goals. Our holistic approach to wellness was just what he was looking for, and he brought his passion for innovative, person-centered care and his in-depth knowledge of dementia treatment to The Cedars in 2013.

“I wanted to work here because The Cedars mission and vision is so broad and forward-thinking,” he explains. “I hadn’t heard of any other nursing home doing the kind of culture change The Cedars has embraced.”

Nick works closely with nursing, dining, activities and housekeeping staff to keep everyone’s focus on individualized care. Together, they customize each resident’s daily routine to honor that resident’s personal preferences, life history and customized care plan.

“The Life Stories are where we start,” Nick says. “To make The Skilled Care Center truly feel like home, we have to know what ‘home’ means to each resident. Were they part of a large family, or an only child? Did they have a 9-to-5 job, work the night shift or stay at home? We don’t want to force them into new habits or routines. We want to recreate *their* world as much as possible.”

Angela Hunt, Chief Operating Officer, enthusiastically agrees. “Person-centered care lets us put *living* at the forefront, while medical and nursing issues are quietly and competently addressed in the background,” she says. “Just like home, our residents get to choose when they get up, when and where they want breakfast, what they want to eat ... their days are filled with choices. After all, there’s nothing typical about anyone’s ‘typical day.’ It’s as special as they are.”

“It’s challenging to offer so many choices,” she continues. “But choices are the key to creating dignity and empowerment.”

So is variety and surprise. “We don’t want schedules to feel rigid,” Nick explains. “If every week repeats the same schedule, even favorite activities start to feel stale. We let residents lead the way and we let ourselves be inspired by what’s happening indoors, and out.”

For Nick and his team, *just like home* isn’t a slogan—it’s a mission. “Nick gets it,” Angela says with a grin. “The Cedars is so lucky to have him.”

FROM THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Setting the Standard for Long Term Care



Richard Marino, MD
Maine Partners Geriatrics and
Medical Director at The Cedars

When we create a personalized care plan at The Cedars, we want to know what each resident’s needs are—even if they can’t express them verbally. We never stop asking residents and their families “*What’s right for you?*” We then decide how to meet those needs with the fewest number of medications possible while using the most current medical research and protocols.

This approach is showing significant results. Our hospital readmission

rates have dropped to just 9%, less than half the national average. We have also significantly decreased prescriptions for medications often prescribed unnecessarily in nursing homes: antibiotics and antipsychotic sedatives.

Many nursing home residents are prescribed strong antibiotics for mild urinary tract infections, forcing them to undergo uncomfortable lab tests, causing digestive problems and increasing their overall resistance to these important drugs. By applying best practices we have reduced the use of antibiotics, especially for the treatment of urinary tract infections. As a result, our residents are experiencing less discomfort, less potential for antibiotic resistance and fewer side effects and complications.

Antipsychotic medications are frequently used in nursing homes as sedatives when residents who have difficulty expressing themselves become agitated. In Maine, 25% of all nursing home patients are prescribed antipsychotics. We’re reversing that trend. Just 5% of our residents at The Cedars are on antipsychotics.

For every resident who is having difficulty expressing themselves, we relate to them one-on-one to determine what they are trying to tell us. Are they uncomfortable or in pain? Do they dislike what they are eating? Our team works together to adapt the environment to meet the resident’s needs. The Life Stories documented by Life Enrichment are a great help with these communication challenges.

When medications are truly needed, we make sure our residents get them. But far too often, these drugs are the *easy* answer when more personalized, engaged care is the *right* answer. We are committed to doing the right thing for every resident.

INSIDE LOOK:

Auxiliary Members Attend Conference



From left: Elena Brandt, Chief Development Officer at The Cedars; The Cedars Auxiliary Members Suzie Berzinis, Past President; Dee Emple, Current President; Hilary Rapkin, Past President; and Rena Becker, Past President.

The Cedars Auxiliary was well represented at the May “Partners in Senior Life” 2014 Annual Conference on Long Island, New York. “Partners for Senior Life” is a resource for senior care volunteers and professional staff to provide education in leadership development and other key areas. Both Hilary Rapkin and Rena Becker, Past Presidents of The Cedars Auxiliary Board, hold volunteer leadership roles within Partners in Senior Life.

The Cedars Auxiliary Celebrates Moms



Student event volunteers Caroline Whitmore, Sophie Emple and Molly Meyer.

Residents and their loved ones often comment on just how much The Cedars feels like home, and The Cedars Auxiliary is an important reason why. Founded in 1927, The Cedars Auxiliary is a dedicated group of men and women enhancing lives at The Skilled Cared Center and the Sam L. Cohen Rehabilitation Center. Our first Auxiliary members collected a nickel a week to build the Jewish Home for the Aged on Portland’s Munjoy Hill. Today, Auxiliary fundraising and volunteer efforts support therapeutic and recreational programs that allow our elders to live as independently as possible while receiving the highest level of care.

One of their most treasured traditions is the annual Mother’s Day Tea, held this year on May 11. Over 50 residents and their families enjoyed delicious, sweet treats such as petit fours, cookies, mini cheesecakes, and fresh fruit, and sang along to old favorites accompanied by pianist Louis Philippe. Beautiful corsages were presented to the women. Volunteers for the event included Auxiliary President, Dee Emple, and high school students Sophie Emple, Caroline Whitmore, and Molly Meyer, making this a truly intergenerational gathering.

Funds raised by the Auxiliary support this and other beloved annual events, like the Father’s Day Pizza Party and Holiday Party. To join or support The Cedars Auxiliary, call (207) 221-7007 or visit www.thecedarsportland.org.



BE A PART OF A LEGACY OF SUPPORTING MAINE SENIORS. Call (207) 221-7007 to join The Cedars Auxiliary, and enhance the quality of life at The Cedars.

Join The Cedars Auxiliary.

Moving Up and Giving Back

“The Cedars receives so much from our generous community. It’s very important to us to pay it forward whenever we can.”

—ANGELA HUNT, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Angie Hunt, Chief Operating Officer, helps prepare gently used beds and bedside tables for delivery to Partners for World Health—and eventually, to a hospital in Rwanda.

As The Cedars updates and refurbishes accommodations in The Sam L. Cohen Rehabilitation Center and The Skilled Care Center, we found ourselves with a lot of older furniture we no longer needed.

These gently used furnishings had plenty of life and service left in them, however. As the first phase of new furniture deliveries approached, Angie Hunt, our Chief Operating Officer, put the word out to the local nonprofit community. The requests came pouring in, and it felt wonderful to find these pieces such wonderful and meaningful new homes:

- Partners for World Health in Scarborough shipped beds and bedside tables to a hospital in Rwanda.
- The Greater Portland Charitable Furniture Center was able to provide several bureaus to grateful families in the Portland area.
- The Animal Refuge League in Westbrook can keep their homeless pets a little warmer with piles of worn blankets.

Meanwhile, everyone in rehabilitation and skilled care is excited about the new upgrades. Patients and residents and their families appreciate the additional comfort and luxury this redecoration provides.

In particular, The Sam L. Cohen Rehabilitation Center is thrilled to be able to offer private rooms as available. As patients recuperate from surgery, stroke or trauma, private rooms provide an oasis during a particularly vulnerable time.

For more information on these changes or to learn more about The Sam L. Cohen Rehabilitation Center or The Skilled Care Center at The Cedars, contact Chris Souther at 221-7000 or csouther@thecedarsportland.org.

Private rooms available!

COMPLETE PRIVACY AND CUTTING-EDGE CARE. Contact (207) 221-7000 to inquire about availability and schedule your personal tour.



The Rehabilitation Center at the cedars

INSIDE LOOK:

Our Volunteer of the Year



From left: Sharon Leddy-Smart, Director of Members Services; Jennifer Butcher, Volunteer of the Year 2013; and Janine Fijfield, Volunteer Coordinator.

Jennifer Butcher first connected with The Cedars a few years ago, when visiting her grandmother Naomi in The Skilled Care Center. When Naomi passed away, Jennifer submitted a volunteer application. Today, Jennifer brings her wonderful crafting projects to the neighborhoods each Wednesday and Friday—and beauty, joy and fun into residents’ lives.

Jennifer lives in Kennebunkport with her husband of 29 years, Patrick, and their two pugs. A true giver, she previously volunteered for the school libraries and sports programs of her two sons. We are so lucky to have her as part of our volunteer community!



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Calendar

Community Wellness Fair

August 14 from 9AM - 3PM
The Hoffman Center

High Holidays

The Hoffman Center

- Rosh Hashanah Service
September 24
- Kol Nidre Service
October 3
- Yom Kippur Service
October 4

RSVP 221-7000



Gather

a cocktail party
with The Cedars Auxiliary

You're invited to our new benefit cocktail party on October 23, 2014!
Enjoy delicious drinks from Maine Craft Distilling spirits provided by
Fred and Karen Farber, hearty hors d'oeuvres, door prizes and
live music from the Jim Ciampi Duo from 5:30 - 8:30PM at The Atrium.
Tickets: Tracy Ericson at 221-7007 or tericson@thecedarsportland.org

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