

Nursing update



I recently learned of a story within our Via Christi family that speaks to how our mission and values are lived out each day in our working environment and to the spirit of Christmas.

Patient transporter Jane Rea, who has worked alongside Larry Brownlee in the Radiology department at Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph for 22 years, had long wished that there was something she could do to help her co-worker, whose kidneys were failing.

Jane admired how Larry, a radiology technologist, rarely called in sick because he didn't want to burden his co-workers and how despite his declining health he never lost his sense of humor. She encouraged him as his family was tested to see if they could donate a kidney. Sadly, they could not.

When Larry had to go on dialysis in January 2008, she prayed that a suitable kidney for transplant would be quickly found—never imagining that she could be a donor because while they had the same blood type, they had differing Rh factors.

Then a co-worker in their tight-knit department came across information that Rh factors don't matter. So Jane started the process to see if she was a match. She received a letter confirming her suitability as a donor on the 16th anniversary of the death of her son, who died awaiting an organ transplant.

Prior to their surgeries, the department threw a party in their honor, giving Larry a superhero cape with the letter "K" on the back for kidney and one for Jane adorned with Lifesaver candies. The menu for the fun-loving pair's party included kidney bean salad, split-pea soup and lemonade served via an IV fluid bag!

On July 30, 2008, Jane donated one of her kidneys to Larry—and both returned to work as soon as they were medically able.

Today, eight years later, they continue to serve alongside each other, with an even stronger sense of appreciation for each other, the camaraderie in their department and their Via Christi family.

Their tale truly embodies our mission and the spirit of Christmas. It's also one that depicts the spirit that permeates our Nursing units each and every day.

So with Christmas now less than a week away, please know that your contributions to those we serve and to each other are greatly treasured. May each of you be as blessed as Jane and Larry and as you continue to bless others.

Merry Christmas!

Carla Yost
System Chief Nursing Officer