



Family CICU experience leads to newspaper column

John and Ruth Strunk have been connected with Via Christi and its hospitals for generations. John's father, who died at a young age, was a physician at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis. Plus, it is their land upon which Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa was built, overlooking the farmstead that they still call home.

So when John recently suffered a heart attack, he chose St. Francis for his care. In a thank you note to Administration, Ruth wrote that their son, Adam, editor of a weekly Newton newspaper, "was struck by all the caring hands," which led him to write a powerful column about his dad's care.

"During those hours of waiting after you've exhausted small talk, there's nothing to do but observe people on the ICU floor. Patients' families mourn or rejoice. Some patients have no one to do either," he wrote. Watching the doctors, nurses, hospital chaplain and others, "I expected to see a removed professionalism from these people to help them block the emotion or empathy...But I experienced the opposite. They've all been so kind, giving smiles, making jokes, and in some cases, lending an ear...It struck me at that moment I was witnessing grace." To read the entire column, go to [thesource/column](#). It's a powerful testament to all who serve in our CICU and at Via Christi!

Honored to serve those who've served

Missy Hampel, RN, director of Via Christi's critical care and medical-surgical units in Wichita, recently took time off work to accompany older veterans to Washington, D.C. And like other the Honor Flight volunteers, she paid her own way — and felt honored to do so. Says Missy, whose father and other family members fought in WWII and the Korean War: "It was a privilege to be part of the member medical team there to help with any medical needs that might arise."

The trip was coordinated by the Honor Flight Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to providing veterans the chance to visit the memorial honoring their service at no cost to them. She took part in a "student edition" flight, in which veterans were paired with rural high school students. Her group, she says, included two veterans who fought in World War II, five in Korea and 18 in Vietnam, and ranged from 70 to 92 years old.

"It was such a heartwarming experience to witness the gratitude and respect given to those who served our country," she says. "I was so proud to witness the standing ovations that our veterans received at the airports, memorials and the school."

It also was a memorable experience for the students, who held fund-raisers to pay their way. "Not only did they gain a better understanding and appreciation of our veterans, they gave of themselves to provide an unforgettable and well-deserved opportunity to a group of veterans," says Missy. "For them, it's a priceless gift."