

Touchpoints

A newsletter of the Kenneth B. Schwartz Center

*Strengthening the
relationship between
patients and
caregivers*

SCHWARTZ CENTER GRANT SUPPORTS WRITING PROGRAM FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

Medicine meets the humanities

Back in her residency days, Sigall Bell, MD, carried a small spiral notebook in the right pocket of her white coat, scribbling down notes when the spirit moved her. Her notations weren't about medications or clinical findings but rather about people, "about the souls behind the johnnies of the patients who taught me what really matters about medicine," says Dr. Bell, now an infectious disease specialist and faculty member at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC). "When I flip back through my notebook, I find

notes on wisdoms that were shared with me – about giving bad news, preserving hope, death and dying, praying with families, patient injustices, curiosity, respecting the body, making mistakes, preserving patient dignity."

A half decade later, Dr. Bell formalized that instinct to use writing to make sense of hospital life by creating a curriculum called "Reading, Writing, and Reflection: The New 3R's of Medical Education?" The program infuses the clinical experiences *(Continued on page 2)*

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.



Sigall Bell, MD, works with Harvard Medical School students Courtney Lockhart and Bunni Ajose, who are currently enrolled in the 3R's program.

— Schwartz Center grant supports writing program for

(Continued from page 1)
of third-year Harvard Medical School (HMS) students participating in the Principal Clinical Experience (PCE) year-long clerkship at BIDMC with a healthy dose of the humanities. The

people will think if they see me with the testing kits at lunch?”

“We’ve come to a time when medicine is so fragmented, so detail-specific, so molecular,” says Dr. Bell, who comes from a long line

the first time and are faced with some of life’s most potent experiences, often in rapid succession.” Among her students, there is a nearly universal desire to chronicle these encounters, to preserve the magnitude and power through a written account that they can return to later in their careers or share with friends and family, according to Dr. Bell.

Medical student Jane Lowe said writing helped her gain insight into her clinical experiences. “Often, I would discuss an experience casually with friends or family or think about it on my walk home or while driving somewhere,” she said. “But so many times, it was when I sat down to actually write about something that I was able to really figure out what the experience meant to me.”

Dr. Bell believes greater self-knowledge is just one of the many benefits of the 3R’s program. On a practical level, students learn to write clearly and concisely, without medical jargon. She anticipates that these skills will improve their communication with patients and families and will serve them well later in their careers, when composing a grant proposal or a research paper, for example, or simply writing a referral letter to a colleague. Several students have published narratives written for the program in a peer-reviewed journal.

The discipline of writing about medical encounters also hones the critical skill of observation, according to Dr. Bell. “Good writing is like good doctoring: it requires attention to detail. One thing we stress during the program is keeping curiosity

“Third-year medical students are experiencing their first clinical encounters as primary caretakers. Many witness death for the first time and are faced with some of life’s most potent experiences, often in rapid succession.”

— Sigall Bell, MD

Schwartz Center gave a grant to the pilot program during the ‘06-‘07 academic year, when 16 medical students participated. The 3R’s curriculum has now been integrated into the BIDMC PCE, which is part of the HMS curriculum. By next year, it will have grown to about 50 students, or about one-fourth of the medical school class.

3R’s students participate in reading groups; write and share pieces about their experiences with patients; and participate in “reflection sessions” and writing workshops, where they ponder the psycho-social aspects of caregiving. Writing exercises often encourage students to put themselves in their patients’ shoes with assignments like “Dear Illness” letters that are penned from the patient perspective. That exercise prompted one medical student to conjure up the feelings of a young diabetic, newly diagnosed. “I’m afraid of having to take insulin – all of those injections – and what

of language lovers. “Hospital stays are short and lots of doctors take care of you. There is less time to appreciate the person behind the biomedical facts, and that can lead to an isolating and dehumanizing experience. This program aims to help students give patients a more human identity by teaching them to look at and understand the patient as a whole person.”

And that failure to connect with patients on a human level often begins early: studies show that medical school can have a dampening effect on students’ empathy with patients and on the idealism that often brought them to medicine in the first place. Dr. Bell sees programs like hers as an antidote to these influences.

She says that her 3R’s program comes at a particularly critical juncture in the journey from student to doctor. “Third-year medical students are experiencing their first clinical encounters as primary caretakers,” she says. “Many witness death for

medical students



Sigall Bell, MD, BIDMC, created a "Reading, Writing, and Reflection" curriculum for medical students.

alive, and searching for the humanizing detail that gives patients dimension beyond their diagnosis." As part of the book club, students read "The Hound of the Baskervilles," which complements their writing activities because it helps them understand the importance of being good detectives, of using deductive reasoning to arrive at clinical diagnoses.

In her small way, using the pen as a weapon, Dr. Bell intends her writing program to help foment a quiet revolution in the way medicine is practiced today. "In order to transform medical care in the 21st century, we need an infiltration of the culture of humanism," says Dr. Bell. "This won't happen with one effort of a single person; it takes an awareness and a commitment on the part of many."

Making sense of the intense: A sampling of student writing

"That first meeting was intense. For the better part of an hour, Dr. A. explained the tumor debulking surgery "Carrie" would undergo in two days. Every few minutes, he would pause as she quietly broke down in tears for a minute or so and then stoically regrouped to listen on. Maximal cytoreduction. Genetic testing. Chemotherapy. Each phase of the conversation crashed over Carrie like a wave, and each time she dug in to take the hit. She would glance over to her sister with eyes wide, a combination of fear and surprise that stung deeply every time. A brief hysteria arose as they found out that there could be a genetic component to Carrie's disease, and that both her mother and sister, and even her young nieces, could be at increased risk. It was a raw hour. I had just met these people, and yet within minutes I was thrust into their lives and earnestly sharing their deep pain and grief.

—Alex Herrera

"This is the way that I learned of your death. In red lettering, on the margin of your online medical record, the words "Alerts: EXPIRED" appeared. The phrase, the color, and the knowledge shook me. In those first moments, thoughts raced through my head: Could we have saved you? Was your "expiration" inevitable? Will you ever know how often you crossed my mind? Later in the day, as I compulsively rechecked the computer to make sure the "alert" was real, I became fixated on the words themselves. Why did our hospital choose the word "expired" to convey your death? And why must that word be capitalized and displayed in blood-red lettering, as if it does not have enough inherent impact of its own?"

—Jane Serene

The 12th annual dinner: An evening of growth, gratitude

At the Schwartz Center's 12th annual dinner, a theme was role reversals in the caregiving relationship, explored movingly in a Schwartz Center video that debuted at the dinner, "Transformed by Illness: Caregivers as Patients." The video tells the stories of three caregivers, Lina Chase, MSW, Ken Tucker, MD, and Ron Vender, MD, whose own serious illnesses have given them the gift of heightened empathy and insight.

"Illness is a great leveler," Dr. Tucker, an internist/cardiologist at Winchester Hospital, says in the video. "I feel closer to my patients. We've both looked the dragon in the face and are here to tell the story." The audience enthusiastically applauded as the three featured caregivers came on stage after the video.

The four couples who chaired the dinner were instrumental in helping to raise \$1.2 million for the Schwartz Center's many

valuable programs: Thomas Glynn, Partners HealthCare chief operating officer, and his wife Marylou Batt; Karen Gotting-Smith, AstraZeneca vice president, and her husband Ian Smith; Karen Kaplan, Hill/Holiday president, and her husband Ken; and Eric Schultz, Schwartz Center Board member and Fallon Community Health Plan chief executive officer, and his wife Kim. The event was both monumental and intimate at the same time.

The dinner program updated the audience about a number of Schwartz Center activities. Schwartz Center Executive Director Julie Rosen introduced the Schwartz Center's exciting new collaboration with CarePages.com, the leading Internet service for building online health communities. Compassionate Connections in Healthcare, www.carepages.com/compassionateconnections (see page 10), is an interactive website offering numerous resources for clinical caregivers and patients to encourage better relationships between the two.

Schwartz Board Chair Peter Biagetti spoke about the

tremendous reach and impact of the Schwartz Center's programs. Schwartz Center Rounds now occur at 130 sites in 26 states, with more than 27,000 clinicians participating. And a recent independent survey of Rounds sites showed that 83 percent of the participants reported leaving Rounds with enhanced empathy for patients while 88 percent said the experience instilled a deeper sense of belonging to the caregiving team.

Biagetti also highlighted Schwartz Center Dialogues – facilitated conversations between patients and caregivers at three pilot sites – as well as the Center's Clinical Pastoral Care program, which trains clinicians to meet patients' spiritual needs as well as their medical.

Schwartz Center Board Chair Emeritus Andrew Dreyfus paid tribute to Julian "Julie" Cohen, who passed away in February. Cohen, the father-in-law of Ken

Schwartz and a prominent real estate developer and philanthropist, played a critical role at the Schwartz Center from the very beginning.

"Shortly after Ken died, his family gathered to discuss a blueprint for the Center," said Dreyfus. "Julie – who loved Ken dearly – listened carefully to our plans and focused his advice on what he knew best: how to engage the right people to help the organization thrive. We will always remember Julie for being a sweet, wise, loyal and generous man who believed in our mission and helped guarantee our success. We will miss him always," said Dreyfus.

Eric Schultz and Karen Gotting-Smith had the privilege of introducing the five finalists for the Compassionate Caregiver Award (see page 7), and then announcing Barbara Moscowitz as the winner (see page 6). After Moscowitz's acceptance speech, tearful audience members were uplifted by the rousing, foot-stomping songs of inspiration belted out by the Boston Community Choir.

*A record 1,700 people attended
the 12th annual dinner*

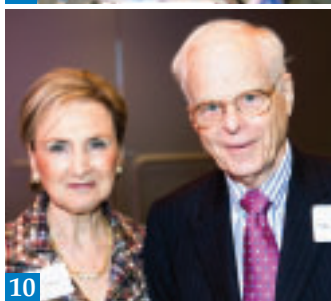
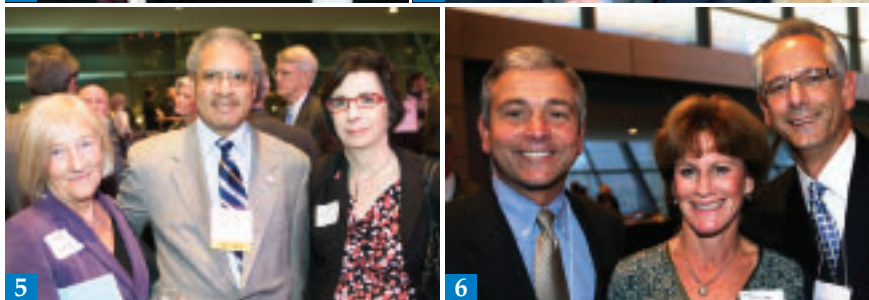
SAVE THE DATE

13th Annual Dinner
November 12, 2008

and gospel

All photo captions are left to right.

- 1) The Boston Community Choir entertains dinner guests.
- 2) Rob Egan, Tufts Health Plan; Richard Doherty, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts and Schwartz Center Board; Anne Levine, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; and Laurie Cowan, Schwartz Center Leadership Council
- 3) Peter Slavin, MD, Massachusetts General Hospital; and Luke Sato, MD, CRICO/RMF
- 4) Philip Johnston, Philip W. Johnston Associates and Schwartz Center Board; Matthew Fishman, Partners HealthCare; John Fallon, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; and Robin Lipson, Lexington Education Foundation
- 5) Terry Ann Lunt, Brazelton Touchpoints Center; Tom Sellers, American Cancer Society and Schwartz Center Board; and Miriam May, Susan G. Komen for the Cure Massachusetts
- 6) Ralph DiPisa, Phillips, DiPisa & Associates and Schwartz Center Leadership Council; Tricia DiPisa; and Peter Biagetti, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo and Schwartz Center Board Chair
- 7) Chairs of the 2007 annual dinner: Karen Gotting-Smith, AstraZeneca; Karen Kaplan, Hill Holliday; Tom Glynn, Partners HealthCare; and Eric Schultz, Fallon Community Health Plan and Schwartz Center Board
- 8) Guests browse the silent auction items.
- 9) William McCall, McCall & Almy; Lynn Nicholas, Massachusetts Hospital Association; and Dale Lodge, Winchester Hospital
- 10) Hedy Samet and Ted Samet, Samet and Company
- 11) Caregivers featured in the video "Transformed by Illness: Caregivers as Patients" shown at the dinner: Ron Vender, MD, Hospital of Saint Raphael; Lina Chase, MSW, Yale-New Haven Hospital; and Ken Tucker, MD, Winchester Hospital



Barbara Moscovitz, MSW, LICSW, named Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver of the Year

NO MOMENT captured the essence of the Schwartz Center's 12th annual dinner better than the ending of Barbara Moscovitz's speech. The social worker at Massachusetts General Hospital with a specialty in Alzheimer's disease, who had been named the



Dinner chair Karen Gotting-Smith presents the Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award to Barbara Moscovitz, MSW, LICSW, at the Schwartz Center's 12th annual dinner.

Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver of the Year, described how she and other family members had spent the last two years caring for her mother. Barbara told of how she was able to be at her mother's side in an inpatient hospice program during the last 10 days of her life.

"[The staff] responded to every need with tender attention, and helped us understand and bear the process of her dying," Barbara recounted, fighting back tears as she spoke. "After a few days, I realized that for the first time in my life caregivers were taking care of me as well as my mother. I was finally able to take off my social worker hat and be her daughter." The audience was silent, many wiping at their eyes as they listened.

As Schwartz Center Executive Director Julie Rosen put it: "Barbara saves lives not through her skill with a scalpel, but through her ability to help families find their way – educating them about this perplexing disease, helping them connect with the loved ones who no longer recognize them, and showing them how to use this disease as a way to repair and renew frayed family bonds."

In accepting the award, "the tiny social worker with the big heart" as one patient called her, talked about how Ken Schwartz's idea of caring for the "whole being," resonated deeply with her. "[That includes] the social, spiritual, cultural and familial context of one's life," said Barbara. "We must know the patient's story in order to connect and weave important relationships, traditions and beliefs into our interactions with the patient."

"Her work is both practical and sacred, as much about teaching a wife how to dress and groom her agitated husband as about giving that same woman the privacy to grieve," said dinner chair Karen Gotting-Smith, as she introduced Barbara.

Barbara also spoke about how difficult and heart-breaking it is when a family member is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. "How does one take the car keys away from an independent father or explain to mother why the stove must be disconnected? How do you bathe someone who is afraid of water and react when a parent or spouse no longer recognizes family?" she asked.

While a diagnosis of Alzheimer's can become a family tragedy, she said, there can be hope, and caregivers can play a huge role by partnering with families to help them find their way. Echoing a major theme of the Schwartz Center's work, Barbara stated: "There is no technological substitute for a human connection. There is no substitute for compassion."

Schwartz Center honors extraordinary caregivers

The Kenneth B. Schwartz Center established the annual *Compassionate Caregiver Award* in 1999 to honor caregivers in Massachusetts who display extraordinary compassion in caring for patients. The award is made possible with the generous support of AstraZeneca, a leading international pharmaceutical company.

This year the Schwartz Center received 110 nominations, a record number. The 2007 *Compassionate Caregivers Award* finalists include:

DEBORAH E. FEARON

HouseWorks

"Extraordinary people like Deborah Fearon help seniors and families through some of the most challenging transitions of their lives," says the executive director of HouseWorks, the Newton-based home care agency that employs Deborah as an aide.

Thoughtful, competent and loving, Deborah quickly tunes into the emotional as well as the physical needs of her patients. She is the aide who can win over the most difficult patient; comfort the discouraged; and make everyone she cares for feel he or she is the most important person in the world. The families come to depend on and love her as much as her patients do.

DANUZA (DANNY) NUNN, MS-CCC-SLP *Massachusetts General Hospital*

Danuza (Danny) Nunn is a speech pathologist with Massachusetts General Hospital's Department of Speech, Language and Swallowing Disorders. She does not simply treat patients, but rather partners with them and their families, getting to know the "whole" person as well as their loved ones, "establishing trust,



From left, Schwartz Center *Compassionate Caregiver Award* finalists: Deborah Fearon, HHA, *HouseWorks*; Barbara Moscovitz, MSW, LICSW, *Massachusetts General Hospital*; Danny Nunn, MS-CC-SLP, *Massachusetts General Hospital*; Rosemary Surdyka, RN, *Health Care for the Homeless, Mercy Medical Center*; and Glenn Randall, MD, MPH, *Summit Elder Care*

adapting care and ensuring shared decision-making," says her MGH supervisor.

Danny's schedule is based not on a clock, but on her patients' needs. "We see her literally running to Shriner's Hospital or up to the Center for Laryngeal Surgery in Government Center, often in inclement weather, to meet patients and check in on them when they come for follow-up appointments with their physicians," says a colleague.

GLENN R. RANDALL, MD, MPH *Summit ElderCare*

A geriatrician with Summit ElderCare in Worcester, Glenn R. Randall exudes warmth and gentleness, say those who know him. He often uses humor to connect with his patients. "It is difficult for me to tell you what strikes [me and my patients] as so funny, as I do not tell jokes, but I use the situations we are in as the basis for comedy," says Glenn.

Glenn is a superb communicator, able to transcend even language barriers. He celebrates his patients' lives but doesn't shy away from tough

discussions about the end of life, so patients' wishes are aired and then followed when it is time, ensuring comfort and dignity.

ROSEMARY J. SURDYKA, RN *Health Care for the Homeless, Mercy Medical Center*

Rosemary J. Surdyka's patients sometimes come to her, but more often she seeks them out. As a registered nurse with Health Care for the Homeless at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, she sees her patients on the streets, in makeshift campsites by the river, beside railroad tracks, in soup kitchens and at shelters. For those who will not come into shelter, she delivers blankets and warm gloves in addition to superb healthcare, forging relationships with patients who long ago severed most of their connections with society.

Colleagues describe her as creative, energetic, and eternally optimistic. As one co-worker put it: "Although her ways are quiet, she is a fierce advocate for her clients ... a steady calm in their frenetic world."

Development Matters

The Rabb Family Foundations Giving: A family affair



Nancy Cahners

Nancy Cahners still remembers vividly the compassionate care her father received at the end of his life, twenty years ago.

“Our entire family relied on the ability and willingness of the providers to open their hearts to us,” says Cahners, a fourth-generation philanthropist. “What a precious gift that was, and how amazing it was that strangers were willing to become such an essential part of our lives. For the provider, that openness takes an emotional toll. I feel a strong desire to support those who are willing to be so generous to others.”

For more than a decade, Cahners and her family have been saying “thank you” to providers like those who cared for her father. Through the Rabb family foundations – her mother’s side of the family – they have supported the Schwartz Center since its inception, underwriting Schwartz Center Rounds at Beth

Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) and Mt. Auburn Hospital as well as the pilot at BIDMC of the Schwartz Center’s newest program, The Patient Voice for Compassionate Care: Schwartz Center Dialogues.

For Cahners, giving back to the community has always been a family value. “Everyone in my family takes their involvement with community organizations as seriously as we take our involvement in our careers,” says Cahners, “Growing up, our dinner table conversation was usually about one or another organization.”

Those sentiments were echoed by both her aunt, Carol Goldberg, and Goldberg’s daughter, Deborah Goldberg. “I believe there is a “giving gene,” says Carol Goldberg. “It comes from one’s family, and is probably the most important legacy we inherit and pass on to the next generation.” But Goldberg hastens to add that she does believe generosity can be learned as well.

Deborah Goldberg, who also was a cousin of Ken Schwartz on her father’s side, is proud of the legacy that has been passed down to her. “Both sides of my family have had a longstanding commitment to bettering the human experience,” she says. “We do everything we can in terms of financial contributions, sweat equity, politics, public policy and public health. And the Schwartz Center is a piece of all of that. It’s about human dignity. It’s about empowering the

caregivers and supporting them through their personal process of caring for people.”

Nancy Cahners says that her work with her family foundations has also enriched her relationships with relatives like Carol and Deborah Goldberg. “What a pleasure it is to collaborate with one’s relatives on such interesting projects,” she says. “Our relationships have a chance to evolve beyond weddings, bar mitzvahs and funerals. We know each other’s passions and unique strengths. When we discuss a grant proposal, we learn from each other and we influence each other.”

In addition to the financial support of the Schwartz Center through her family foundations, Cahners as an individual has been a passionate, hands-on champion of the organization’s work. She is a member of the Schwartz Center Leadership Council and the Leadership Committee for the Schwartz Center’s annual reception for women in health care, and she has sat on the Compassionate Caregiver of the Year Award Committee for three years; she also has hosted a reception for Schwartz Center donors at her home.

“It’s very gratifying to collaborate with people as smart and creative and dedicated as the people who are drawn to the Schwartz Center mission,” says Cahners. “The issues are complex and important. And the wonderful thing about the Schwartz Center is that it brings in people from

all the different hospitals. We draw on our strengths as a medical community. Our impact extends well beyond our individual institutions.”

Cahners’ professional work as a hospital chaplain and ethicist dovetails nicely with her involvement with the Schwartz Center, she adds. “My professional, volunteer and philanthropic lives are synthesized,” she says, “so I’ve been able to be an informed philanthropist. And this is another reason I feel so connected to the Schwartz Center. I can really see how effective it is and how relevant its work is. It’s added a whole new dimension to my life as a philanthropist, and that has been thrilling.”

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Cosmopolos, Inc.
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SCHWARTZ CENTER JOINS PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE

The Schwartz Center has joined the Leadership Council of an exciting new statewide initiative called The Partnership for Healthcare Excellence.

The Massachusetts-based Partnership is the first statewide effort in the nation to focus specifically on patients – helping them to play a greater role in improving the quality of their health care. The goals of the Partnership are to educate the public about variation in healthcare quality and to provide consumers with information and tools to improve the quality of their own care. The Partnership also seeks to motivate consumers to advocate for overall health system changes that improve quality of care.

The Partnership believes that having patients who are educated, active and engaged is one of the best ways to improve the safety and effectiveness of health care for everyone.

To learn more about how the Partnership is working to ensure that consumers have a stronger voice when it comes to improving the quality of their health care, visit www.partnershipforhealthcare.org.

SCHWARTZ CENTER ENHANCES WEBSITE

As an adjunct to its partnership with CarePages (see page 10), the Schwartz Center has made additions to its website www.theschwartzcenter.org.

It now includes:

- A summary of the scientific evidence that supports the work of the Center organized by categories including communication, compassion, spirituality, end of life, cultural competency, caregiver training and empowering patients;
- A Rounds case of the month;
- Tips on implementing Rounds; and
- A comprehensive list of Rounds topics by category.

In the near future, the website will also include a comprehensive bibliography of articles related to the work of the Center by category and a section with resources for patients and families.

Schwartz Center partners with CarePages.com

THIS FALL, the Schwartz Center began a new partnership with one of the ten largest healthcare-related web sites on the Internet, CarePages.com. Schwartz Center Executive Director Julie Rosen says the collaboration will enable the Center to expand its reach to millions of patients and caregivers through an information resource center and online community.

CarePages.com facilitates communication between patients and their loved ones. Patients can create their own web pages on which they maintain updates about their illnesses and treatments, enabling friends and family to log on and stay abreast. For patients busy with treatment, resting and recovery, this has become a welcome method to let people know what is going on: 2.5 million patients access the site on a regular basis. It is also a social network that provides emotional support and resources for information on various long-term illnesses and conditions including breast cancer and brain injury.

In October, the site began to host several additional pages jointly managed with the Schwartz Center, called **Compassionate Connections** (www.carepages.com/compassionateconnections). Patients and caregivers can contribute to the pages and receive information and tips. There are personal “stories of inspiration” about patient-caregiver relationships and how a caregiver’s bedside manner is an integral part of a patient’s treatment and recovery. Site visitors are encouraged to share their own stories through the “Tell Us Your Story” feature. Rosen is also writing a blog entitled “Bedside Manner” that features interviews with clinicians familiar with the Schwartz Center.

“We wanted to create more of an online presence for the Schwartz Center, to get out the message about who we are and why our mission is important,” says Rosen. “We also are excited about the interactive nature of our venture with CarePages, which should bring patients and caregivers even closer to each other.”

The Schwartz Center website, www.theschwartzcenter.org, has links to CarePages and complementary content to the CarePages website.

CarePages was started by a couple whose newborn son was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. To keep friends and family informed about his health, they constructed a web page that included updates, photos and a message board. That experience inspired them to begin a company to enable others to do the same. The Schwartz Center’s focus on caregivers “balances very nicely with CarePages’ mission, which focuses on the patient,” says Rosen.

THE SCHWARTZ CENTER DEBUTS IN NEWYORK CITY

On Thursday evening, November 15, 2007, the Schwartz Center hosted a reception in New York City co-sponsored by Bank of America and the law firm of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo. More than 80 people attended including individual supporters of the Schwartz Center and representatives of hospitals and hospices, pharmaceutical and life sciences companies, and other healthcare-related businesses.

Featured speaker **Dr. Herbert Pardes**, president and CEO at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, gave a heartfelt talk on the importance of compassion in health care and strongly endorsed the importance of the Schwartz Center’s mission. A number of insightful and thought provoking questions from the audience addressed specific concerns related to the delivery of compassionate health care in the context of the “business” of medicine.

This gathering promoted the Schwartz Center’s targeted expansion plan for the Schwartz Center Rounds at prestigious hospitals in three key cities: New York, Philadelphia and Washington, DC. In New York City within the past year, Rounds have started at Mt. Sinai Hospital, St. Vincent’s Comprehensive Cancer Center and Maimonides Hospital. New York-Presbyterian Hospital and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center plan to start the Rounds in early 2008.

Our Health Care World

I recently had the unique opportunity to speak at an event on the topic of end-of-life care with a family member whom I love and respect deeply – my aunt, Lois Green. The forum was an annual meeting of the Better Ending Partnership, a Worcester-based organization whose mission is to improve end-of-life care for central Massachusetts residents.



Lois Green and Julie Rosen

Lois invited me to speak at this meeting because of the natural connection between the Schwartz Center and the Better Ending Partnership. I talked about a subject near and dear to the Schwartz Center's heart – patient-caregiver communication – specifically, the type of communication patients crave and why superb communication is so critical, especially at the end of life.

Then Lois stole the show.

Lois is a 77-year-old force of nature. She chairs the Better Ending board and actively participates on a number of other boards, including Clark University and UMass Memorial Health Care – education and health care being two of her life-long passions. She's a prodigious fundraiser and has an awe-inspiring amount of energy. At age 75, while undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer, Lois was tapped to be the interim executive director of the United Way of Central Massachusetts. Back then, cancer never slowed her down. And now, fighting cancer for the fourth time, she continues to thumb her nose at her disease, and she inspires me with her energy and vision. She is currently working with UMass Medical School to produce a training video for second-year medical students on how to talk to and treat patients at the end of life.

Lois talked about the last four months of her husband Bob's life – a very good ending, despite the cruel things lung cancer can do to a body. Bob, my mother's oldest brother, was lucky to have not only my indomitable aunt at his side but also a team of empathic caregivers who made it possible for him to die at home. There was the physician who made a house call on a Saturday to remove the stitches from Bob's feeding tube so he wouldn't have to go to the hospital; the beloved visiting nurse who cared for Bob until the very end; and their family doctor, who came the day he died to say goodbye, trading golf stories, jokes and a hug.

Lois conceded at the beginning of her talk that many patients don't have experiences as positive as Bob's in their final days. Her knowledge of the healthcare system, her ability to care for him at home, and their adequate financial resources gave them advantages others do not have.

Organizations like the Better Ending Partnership and the Schwartz Center are working to make sure that communication and compassionate care continues right up to the very end. At Schwartz Center Rounds, caregivers often discuss end-of-life topics such as how to communicate to a patient the heartbreaking news that his/her disease is incurable or what constitutes a "good death."

And our Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Massachusetts General Hospital and Yale-New Haven Hospital teaches caregivers how to minister to patients' spiritual needs as well as their medical. Not surprisingly, spiritual concerns often loom large when death is near.

To borrow a phrase from Ken Schwartz, my Uncle Bob's ordeal was "punctuated by moments of exquisite compassion." Such endings are what every patient deserves. They're what every patient should expect.

With best wishes for the new year,

Julie A. Rosen
Julie Rosen
Executive Director

IN THE NEWS

On December 19, **Channel 5's Chronicle** featured a story on the Schwartz Center and the Rounds at Massachusetts General Hospital. The segment included interviews with **Executive Director Julie Rosen** and **Board Vice Chair, Thomas Lynch, MD ... Barbara Moscovitz, MSW, LICSW**, Massachusetts General Hospital, winner of the Schwartz Center **Compassionate Caregiver Award**, was featured in "White Coat Notes" in the *Boston Globe*.

In addition, *NECN's Healthweek* interviewed Barbara about taking care of aging parents/grandparents around the holidays... *The Republican* of Springfield, MA, wrote a story about **Rosemary Surdyka, RN**, a finalist for the award, who works for **Health Care for the Homeless at Mercy Medical Center ... PRNewswire.com** posted an article highlighting the new collaboration between **CarePages** and the Schwartz Center. CarePages' website now features a *Compassionate Connection in Healthcare* page, sponsored by the Schwartz Center, where patients and caregivers can tell the story of their relationship ... The **Schwartz Center Rounds** were featured in several media outlets this fall. *Nursing Executive Watch* published a story in November about the Rounds and how the sessions improve caregivers' emotional health and the quality of compassionate care they deliver... *Nurse.com* posted a story about how effective Rounds have been at **Overlook Hospital**, Summit NJ, and **Virtua Health**, Marlton, NJ. **Jeanne Kerwin**, Rounds facilitator at Overlook for the past five years, said, "The participants are sometimes moved to tears and sometimes moved to hearty laughter, but all of this emotional release is healing and enables us to continue to provide compassionate care to our patients ..." *Myrecordjournal.com*, the website for the *Record Journal*, a regional newspaper in Connecticut, included a story on Rounds at **Midstate Medical Center** in Meriden. Physician leader **Howard Kaplan, MD**, commented on the success of the Rounds after only one year. "I thought Rounds would be well received but I did not expect the level of enthusiasm and the participation..." *Advisory.com*, an on-line publication of the **Advisory Board Company** which serves a membership of more than 2,600 hospitals, health systems and universities, featured an article that focused on Rounds at **Brigham & Women's Hospital** in Boston with quotes from **Martha Jurchak, RN, PhD**, and **Emerson Hospital** in Concord, MA with quotes from **Jon Dubois, MD ... The Boston Globe** published a letter to the editor from **Schwartz Center Board Vice Chair, Thomas Lynch, MD**, in response to an article on patients firing doctors. Lynch mentioned that this is a common topic at Rounds discussions around the country... **Catholic Health Association's (CHA)** publication, *Catholic Health World*, featured a story on the Rounds, focusing on **Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center** in Boise, Idaho, one of five CHA hospitals that conduct the Rounds... The December issue of *Brookline Magazine* featured a story on the Schwartz Center dinner with several photographs of Brookline and Newton guests.

Touchpoints

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