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The updated site is expected to go live in January.

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The HealthCare Connection benefits from Rusty Ball

The HealthCare Connection was one of more than 100 Greater Cincinnati charities benefiting from the Rusty Ball held on Nov. 9 at Duke Energy Convention Center. The Rusty Ball was started by local favorite band The Rusty Griswolds in 2008 to support the many charities who asked them for help. Fundraising for the event has increased every year since its 2008 origin, with the 2012 event generating $482,000 in revenue for the benefit of 159 local charities. At press time, results were still being tallied for the 2013 Rusty Ball. Thanks to the many supporters of The HealthCare Connection who attended the Rusty Ball.

Sickle cell disease advocate shares his story

When Dwayne Palmore and his twin brother were children, there was no routine screening of newborns for sickle cell disease (SCD). “My mother didn’t know what was wrong with us,” he said. “And all they did was give us penicillin.” Then, when the twins were four years old, they were diagnosed by medical director Dr. Marilyn Hughes Gaston at Lincoln Heights Health Center. “Dr. Gaston was a real advocate for us,” he says. Gaston later went on to be Assistant Surgeon General and Director, Bureau of Primary Health Care, Public Health Service.

This October, Palmore returned to The HealthCare Connection, along with Amy Short, project director of the Ohio Valley Sickle Cell Network (OVSCN), to share his story, and to help educate the staff about the special issues of persons with sickle cell disease. “I speak from the patient’s point of view and help to explain what is really going on with us,” he says.

Sickle cell disease is the most common genetic disorder in the U.S. According to the OVSCN’s fact sheet, “Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders. Normal red blood cells are round like doughnuts, and they move through small blood tubes in the body to deliver oxygen. Sickle red cells become hard, sticky and shaped like sickets (a tool used to cut wheat crops by hand). When these hard and pointed red cells go through the small blood tube, they clog the flow and break apart. This can cause pain, damage and a low blood count, or anemia.” According to the OVSCN, approximately 25,000 individuals in this area have sickle cell trait and about 650 individuals live with SCD. While it has primarily affected African Americans, Latino and African immigrants represent emerging populations in SCD.

“The good news is that survival rates have improved, so that many more people with sickle cell disease are surviving to adulthood,” says Short. “However, the transition from pediatric care to adult care has been challenging. Best practices are still being established, because this is still so new. We team with Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center to continuously improve the transition process.” The Ohio Valley Sickle Cell Network is a HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services) demonstration project for SCD treatment. It is based at University of Cincinnati, and has four goals:

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Palmore lost his twin five years ago to sickle cell disease. “Things were not good for sickle cell during that time,” he says. “They are much better now, but there still is a long way to go.” He is a passionate advocate for “Education. Education. Education.” He volunteers his time to speak to organizations and community groups about sickle cell disease and its management and treatment. He also is a coach with the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, and in that role helps teach educational sessions for patients with sickle cell disease.

Says Short, “Our goal is for our consumers to be alive in every sense of the word – feeling good, healthy, feeling actuated.” She adds, “Many when are enjoying life, they are more motivated to take care of themselves, which in turn helps them stay healthy! This often leads to less time spent in the hospital and more time doing things that make them happy.”

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service is free, and we are absolutely neutral. We help them think about what kind of plan is best for them based on their budget – do they want a low deductible and a high premium, or a high deductible and low premium?” He also helps individuals determine whether they are eligible for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This service is open to everyone; it is not limited to THCC patients. “Our priority, however, is our service area in northern Hamilton County,” he says.

Woode meets with individuals at the location that is most convenient for them – Lincoln Heights Health Center, Mt. Healthy Family Practice or Forest Park Health Center. He walks them through the process online, from setting up an account, to application to enrollment. If individuals prefer to enroll by phone or through a paper application, he can help with that process as well. “What’s important is that they get enrolled by the Dec. 23 deadline if they want coverage by Jan. 1.” Open enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplace continues until March 31, 2014. He emphasizes that the Marketplace has a variety of affordable health coverage options. “Don’t assume. You should go through the process to find out where you fall.”

To contact Woode and schedule an appointment to explore your options, call 513-483-3041.

5K, GE Back to School Health Fair and back to school exams highlight National Health Center Week

The HealthCare Connection kicked off National Health Center Week on Saturday, Aug. 10, with the 8th Annual Stepping Up For Better Health 5K at Kestrel Point in Winton Woods. This year’s event included a timed run for the first time, which resulted in eight medal winners. The event attracted more than 100 runners and walkers, as well as many who came to learn more from the health fair participants. Special guests included John Lomax (Local 12 News) and Lincoln Ware (1230 WBDZ).

Throughout National Health Center Week, THCC hosted open houses at each of its facilities, and sponsored a food drive to support Valley Interfaith and Mt. Healthy Alliance. The week wrapped up with back to school medical and dental exams on Aug. 17, which attracted 150 patients. THCC also partnered with GE on Aug. 17 for a Back to School Health Fair, which attracted more than 300 visitors for healthy snacks and games focusing on the importance of being active.

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“The good news is that survival rates have improved, so that many more people with sickle cell disease are surviving to adulthood,” says Short. “However, the transition from pediatric care to adult care has been challenging. Best practices are still being established, because this is still so new. We team with Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center to continuously improve the transition process.” The Ohio Valley Sickle Cell Network is a HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services) demonstration project for SCD treatment. It is based at University of Cincinnati, and has four goals:

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Says Short, “Our goal is for our consumers to be alive in every sense of the word – feeling good, healthy, feeling actuated.” She adds, “When people are enjoying life, they are more motivated to take care of themselves, which in turn helps them stay healthy! This often leads to less time spent in the hospital and more time doing things that make them happy.”

Palmore says, “This thing is going somewhere – and that’s good news. I see change. I feel change. And it feels good to know that I’m having a role in that change.”

Among those who attended the Back to School Health Fair during National Health Center Week were (left to right) Ohio State Representative Denise Drakich; Stephen Hill; and Sharonville Mayor Kevin Hardeman.

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Go green. Get the newsletter electronically

Would you like to receive Partners for Health as an email? It’s easy. Just send an email to jacquelines@healthcare-connection.org to give us your email address, and we’ll send this newsletter to you electronically. Be sure to give us your name and address as well, and let us know if you want to be taken off the paper mailing list for the newsletter.

THCC welcomes new Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sandra Mendel

Sandra Mendel, M.D., has joined The HealthCare Connection as its new chief medical officer. She graduated from the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo, and completed her combined internal medicine & pediatrics residency at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. Dr. Mendel has practiced in both private practice and community health centers throughout Ohio and in Northern Kentucky. Says Dr. Mendel, “Your good health is the most important thing. Everything else is secondary. I enjoy restoring people to their best.”

Support THCC in the Cincy Celebration of Champions Charity Golf Ball Drop

The Smith Family Foundation and the University of Cincinnati are sponsoring the Cincy Celebration of Champions Golf Ball Drop on April 17, 2014, at Nippert Stadium, and THCC is one of the beneficiaries. Thousands of numbered golf balls will be dropped from a giant pelican. Prizes are awarded based on the number of balls dropped closest to a target area. To support THCC in the event, go to the website www.CincyCelebration.com, click on the link to purchase a golf ball and then click on The HealthCare Connection to make your donation.

Help us bridge the gap

To date, The HealthCare Connection has provided over $600,000 in uncompensated care to families and adults, young and old, who rely on the safety net that THCC provides. That’s more than 2,000 patients who otherwise would have suffered with illness, dental problems and other unmet health needs. Please consider supporting care for these patients by making a gift to our annual Friends & Family Campaign to help bridge this financial gap. An envelope is enclosed in this newsletter for your convenience. Thank you.

Most sincerely,
Dolores J. Lindsay, MPA
Founder & CEO

P.S. You can give online at www.healthcare-connection.org/support.