

Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative

celebrate
with us!

9th anniversary
GALA
Thursday, September 13, 2018

checkup

A PUBLICATION FOR THE SUPPORTERS OF BVMI

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Dear Friend...

This issue of our newsletter is all about heart. It runs through everything we do at BVMI. Our medical volunteers are no strangers to the heart issues facing some of our patients. Our non-medical volunteers show their hearts every day with a warm smile for anyone who enters our doors. And BVMI's donors care enough to help people they will probably never meet. At the same time, our patients are working hard to keep their hearts healthy.

You'll read about a special "volunteer family" at BVMI, and about a patient who now has a happier heart in more ways than one. We'll also tell you about an organization that is helping us connect with another segment of Bergen County's population that we're eager to serve.

Please keep telling people you know about BVMI: your doctors, your neighbors who qualify for our services, and anyone you know who might be willing to make a donation. We're not too proud to ask for help, but we are very proud of the big hearts that surround us. That's a lot of love – which, of course, is good for the heart!

Amanda

Amanda Missey, President/CEO
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p.s. Don't forget to join us for our 9th Anniversary Gala at the Hilton Woodcliff Lake on September 13th. It's BVMI's only annual fundraising event, and you're guaranteed to feel good during and after! Please see the insert included with this issue for more details.



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Expanding our outreach thanks to KACF



In a perfect world, BVMI would reach everyone who needs us. Thanks to a grant from the Korean American Community Foundation (KACF), BVMI will soon proudly serve more people of Korean descent.

"KACF promotes a culture of giving within the Korean American Community," said Brennan Gang, Deputy Director & Director of Programs. "We raise funds to 'lift up' vulnerable people in those communities, and we share the funds with organizations that can best help us do that. We work toward increasing the economic security of Korean Americans, while also connecting with non-Korean communities and people of different generations."

"We visited BVMI and saw with our own eyes how skilled and caring the clinical volunteers are," added Brennan. "Their services aren't just free, they're high quality. We also spoke with one of the Korean patients. She was pleased that BVMI looked at her as a whole person, not just on a symptom-by-symptom basis. That made a big difference to us."

"Korean Americans comprise a large population in Bergen County, and we realized that we needed a better way to bring more of these neighbors into the BVMI family," said Amanda Missey, BVMI President/CEO. "It's part of our strategic plan. Thanks to KACF, we'll be hiring an outreach coordinator with the language skills and outreach skills to get us there."



checkup

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HAPPY HEARTS, HEALTHY HEARTS



Marta (shown here with Vicky Fliman, RN, BVMI's nurse navigator) is feeling better, thanks to you!

Heartfelt Thanks

Single moms like Marta will be the first to tell you that “me time” is pretty scarce. Work is a priority to make ends meet, and it’s hard to fit in doctors’ appointments — that is, if you can afford medical care at all.

Marta finally struck a good balance between these challenges in 2014, when a neighbor told her about BVMI. “Being able to schedule BVMI visits around my work schedule has been such a relief,” she said. “And it’s like I’ve found a second home because of the way people here make me feel.”

With a history of heart surgery more than two decades ago in her home country of Ecuador,

Marta’s old symptoms — edema, fatigue, shortness of breath and chest discomfort — had lingered for some time and then started to worsen. BVMI volunteer cardiologist Dr. Josef Machac ordered a number of tests, then recommended that Marta be referred to a specialist. Dr. Herbert Cole, one of our referral coordinators (read more about him in this issue) arranged for Marta to see Dr. Elie Elmann, a thoracic and cardiac surgeon at Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC). This past October, Dr. Elmann performed surgery on Marta, repairing a hole between the two upper chambers of her heart. Fortunately, she’s doing much better now.

“I thank God and everyone at BVMI and HUMC,” Marta said. “I’ve experienced so much genuine concern from them all. You know, I used to work with older adults, and I understand what a little kindness can do for someone’s health — at any age, really.”

We’re glad Marta keeps coming back to BVMI, so we can keep an eye on her now-happier heart. She’s also being successfully treated for some other health issues. “We all have bad days now and then, probably even the people who volunteer or work at BVMI,” said Marta. “But you’d never know it to watch them in action,” she added. “That alone makes the day a better one!”

A Family Affair at BVMI



For Herb Cole and his daughter Liz, volunteering is a family affair

Dr. Herbert Cole is a familiar face at BVMI. He’s been with us since shortly after the concept for BVMI was developed. As a referral coordinator, Dr. Cole helps patients obtain care outside our clinic when it’s advised. “If physicians at BVMI need to find a specialist for a patient, they request approval from one of our medical directors,” said Dr. Cole. “Once they give the green light, I find (and sometimes persuade) the appropriate specialist and make the appointment.”

At the age of 90, Dr. Cole is doing what he enjoys while sharing his skills. “I like it here because everyone’s happy,” said Dr. Cole. “No long faces!”

Dr. Cole’s daughter Liz has always admired her mom and dad — as parents and as BVMI volunteers. Donna Cole, until her passing last summer, often helped with BVMI’s gala. Liz is now the latest Cole to step up as a BVMI volunteer.

“My first assignment is to obtain reports from outside medical providers that see BVMI patients,” said Liz. “This ensures a full picture of treatment for each person. I’m also being trained to work with our electronic medical records system, so I can make things easier for new practitioners coming aboard.”

“Our patients are treated with dignity,” added Liz. “No one is made to feel ‘less than’ just because they can’t afford health insurance.” Thanks, Coles, for being part of BVMI’s family.

Did
You
Know?

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT YOUR HEART

- YOUR HEART BEATS 100,000 TIMES A DAY
- EVERY CELL IN YOUR BODY GETS BLOOD FROM THE HEART — EXCEPT FOR YOUR CORNEAS
- HEART DISEASE IS YOUR GREATEST HEALTH THREAT
- REGULAR EXERCISE IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT KEY TO HEART HEALTH