



December 2017

VISITING VIGNETTES

A monthly newsletter to all Mended Hearts members.

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Mended Hearts National Visiting Chair

**It's the Most Wonderful Time
of the Year to Volunteer**



This e-newsletter is about showing appreciation to the hundreds of Accredited Visitors and all who volunteer for Mended Hearts in various ways in chapters across the country. Volunteers have a heart of gold and want to give back in various ways. During the month of November, Mended Hearts, Inc. joined numerous other organizations participating in **"Giving Tuesday"**. Accredited Visitors have the opportunity to participate in **"Giving Sunday"** through **"Giving Saturday"** because we give hope and encouragement every time we visit patients and families. For some people, volunteering is about giving. But for Accredited Visitors, it is a **way** of living.

By speaking with a trained patient or parent volunteer who has survived these same difficult situations, patients and parents in crisis can work through their overwhelming emotions as they focus on the vital medical decisions at hand. Accredited Visitors give the most expensive and priceless gift anyone could have ever given - **hope and encouragement**.

The rewards are not all one-way though, because as an Accredited Visitor, you can receive tremendous joy from your visits. Accredited Visitors have the opportunity to see the sparkle return to the eyes of the patient or family member. By making visits, Accredited Visitors know the true meaning behind the goals of "giving back and helping others" and "empowering families affected by congenital heart disease."

Yes, I can pat us all on the back for providing hope and encouragement to hundreds of heart patients and their families. Yes, while it is true that Mended Hearts Accredited Visitors not only provide this hope and encouragement by giving to others, I think we are all grateful for what patients and families give to us.

Here are some of the gifts I believe we receive from our heart patients and families:

- An acceptance into their lives at a very personal time in their lives
- An opportunity to make a difference
- A demonstration of the resiliency of human beings
- An opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of our own lives and relationships.



So, yes let's take time at this special time of year to appreciate each other and the valuable service we provide to the hospitals and heart patients. Let's also pause and appreciate those who have allowed us into their lives at a difficult and sometimes frightening time.

My wish is that as visitors, we make a concerted effort to reach out and focus on the heart patients we have visited during the past months. The true spirit of this season is when we give back to others and in Mended Hearts, we do so by giving the gift of hope to all heart patients and their families. A word of encouragement goes a long way. My wish for each of you is that you add on your "to do" list one phone call to a heart patient.

At the end of the day, when the sun goes down, take a candle and a lighter or match into a dark room. Sit in the darkness for a few minutes. There in the deep blue evening, consider the difficult things people are facing this holiday season. Now light the candle, and look at the way the room changes. What can you see that you couldn't see before? How does the flame flicker through the blackness that used to own the room?



This is probably the situation when a Mended Hearts Accredited Visitor knocks on a door and walks into a hospital room. At that moment, a complete stranger, a Mended Hearts Accredited Visitor can provide that much needed ray of light and hope that tomorrow would be a brighter day. The four patients of Dr. Harken who experienced the power of giving back lit a spark that still burns today. Thank you for continuing to carry that spark.



Thank you for volunteering and striving to make a difference in the lives of heart patients and their families!

You are all vital to the continued success of our Accredited Visitors program and your support is more important than ever as we face the various challenges ahead for ways to recruit more visitors in order to support all types of heart event patients. I sincerely wish you all a wonderful holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2018.

Heartfelt Regards,

Dr. Fredonia B. Williams
National Visiting Chair
Southern Regional Director



Future Questions/Topics

We want to hear from you!

Other challenging questions for this newsletter may be emailed to fredoniabw@att.net.



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