

1st PERSON



Helping Any Way We Can

by Lori Gardner

A few times a year the staff at the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) participates in community service projects. At holiday times we donate cash, gift cards, and newly purchased items to needy families. At other times of the year we collect school supplies for schools with a high number of low-income students or participate in local food drives. This year we decided to see if a local ACCC cancer program member could use some help. Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland is just 15 minutes from our office, so it was the perfect candidate.

A quick look at the Holy Cross Hospital's website (<http://www.holy-crosshealth.org>) led us to a page with a list of items they were seeking for donation to the Pediatric Unit.

ACCC staff spent about two months collecting items and mon-

etary donations to purchase items on the list. When we were satisfied with what we collected, I contacted Kerry Snyder-Husted, program director of the Cancer Institute. Kerry was surprised and delighted to learn that we were ready to make a visit to deliver gifts to the hospital.

At Holy Cross, we were met by staff from the Pediatric Unit and the Cancer Institute, who escorted us and our gifts to the Pediatric Unit. It was heartwarming to see how excited everyone was about our donations.

Of course, we couldn't let our visit go by without a tour of the Cancer Institute. It was gratifying for me to enter the Oncology Wing and immediately see the ACCC Membership Plaque proudly displayed on the wall.

Kerry walked us through the unit and explained the changes that are about to take place. The hospital is embarking on an expansion in oncology services, beginning with the launch of a new breast center, and a physical relocation to centralize

cancer care services in one location. Listening to Kerry describe her program's plans was exciting. It got me thinking about how ACCC directly helps its members realize projects like this with information, resources, and connections to others who have been through the process. I encouraged Kerry to sign up for the ACCC listserve, *ACCCExchange*, where she can address challenges and experiences with her peers.

My job puts me in touch with cancer care professionals on a daily basis. But my perspective is from my office in Rockville. I don't often get to visit you—our member programs. When I do have an opportunity for a visit, I am continually inspired by the dedication of our membership. I'm glad to know that ACCC is a partner in these efforts. We don't have the means to collect donations for all of our members, although we will certainly try to expand our efforts in this area and do a similar program again. But ACCC staff want you to know that we are here to help in any way that we can.

Lori Gardner is ACCC's senior director of Membership and Marketing. This column first appeared as a blog post on the Association's blog ACCCBuzz.

Kerry Snyder-Husted, program director of the Cancer Institute at Holy Cross Hospital, shows ACCC's senior director of membership and marketing, Lori Gardner, (R) where ACCC's membership plaque is displayed.



Lori Gardner and Christian Downs, JD, MHA, ACCC executive director, with staff at Holy Cross Hospital. ACCC staff donated toys, puzzles, books, and many other items to the Pediatric Unit.