WHAT’S HAPPENING?

Children's Center gift drive.

End of Construction:

Seeing the Whole Person

ONE MORNING BEFORE her rounds in the Department of Medicine, Tiffany Stokes, a patient experience concierge at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, stopped to buy flowers for someone she had gotten to know well. “I have a patient who has been here since July,” Stokes says. “Today is his birthday.”

Acknowledging a patient’s birthday is more than good manners; it is therapeutic, says Stokes, one of three patient experience concierges assigned to the Medicine, Oncology and Emergency departments. “It is significant to his overall healing. I’m someone who sees him as a whole person, who makes sure his human needs are met—not just his medical needs.” The patient’s family members were not at his bedside that day but were pleased to know he didn’t spend his birthday alone.

Stokes and the other concierges, Josh Alperstein and Kate Pisano, were tapped by the Department of Service Excellence to become troubleshooters on the front lines of care at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Since March, the trio has helped patients become acclimated to the hospital, responding to their needs and complaints as they arise. Their duties can range from providing an extra blanket to asking a physician to explain a diagnosis in layman’s terms. All are “warm and empathetic, and problem-solvers,” says Lisa Allen, chief patient experience officer for Johns Hopkins Medicine.

The patient experience concierge program launched in departments where scores on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) inpatient survey need the most improvement. In the Emergency Department, “we’re dealing with an eight- to 12-hour wait to get to a gurney,” says Alperstein, previously an assessment specialist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Children’s Center and Sheikh Zayed Tower.

The patient experience concierge program continues on back page

Tips for improving the quality of patients’ hospital stay:

• Be present with the person in front of you. Don’t look at your handheld.
• Listen carefully to patients and their advocates.
• Acknowledge and apologize for delays or problems in the care continuum.
• Remember that patients may be scared and anxious. Do everything you can to reduce their stress. Acknowledge call bells. Assist lost patients and visitors.
• Remember our care values: Be a role model, be the best, be kind, be open.

—Lisa Allen

continued on back page

End of Construction: The Meyer Building Reopens

The renovation project’s overall goal was to upgrade the hospital to all-private inpatient medical-surgical rooms. The 10-year campus redevelopment project included the opening of The Charlotte R. Bloomberg Children’s Center and Sheikh Zayed Tower in 2012, and the renovation of the Nelson/Harvey Building in 2014. The redesign extends the look and feel of the Zayed/Bloomberg buildings to the patient rooms, patient services and public space in the Meyer Building.

continued on back page

PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

Meet Dexo and Bax

Johns Hopkins Corporate Security Launches a Canine Program

This month, a new security team will arrive on the East Baltimore campus. Dexo, a Dutch Shepherd, and Bax, a German Shepherd, are the first members of the Johns Hopkins Corporate Security Canine Program. Fresh from an 80-day training program in North Carolina, the canines and their handlers will spend their first weeks at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the surrounding campus adjusting to their new home. Then, early next year, it’s “paws on the ground.”

The canines, selected for their obedience, work ethic and sociability, will serve as a “deterrent” to crime and additionally be used to detect explosives in suspicious packages. The canine teams are assigned to Corporate Security’s special response unit, which responds to disruptive and aggressive behavior.

continued on back page

People and Bax

Dexo, a Dutch Shepherd,
and Bax, a German Shepherd,
are the first members of the Johns Hopkins Corporate Security Canine Program. Fresh from an 80-day training program in North Carolina, they will arrive on the East Baltimore campus. The canines and their handlers will spend their first weeks at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the surrounding campus adjusting to their new home.
that a daunting variety of patients, from ‘gunshot victims to the man from out of town dying from cancer to the lady from down the street who hasn’t managed her diabetes well,’ and it’s easy to see why tenten Rate and complaints multiply.

When patients don’t know what to expect, anxiety and stress readily escalate, Allen says. “One of the things the concierges do is help keep patients informed and tell them what’s going to happen next.”

To restore disgruntled Emergency Department patients’ faith in their care teams, Alperstein listens to her concerns, apologizes for not being able to address their needs as promptly as they wish and explains what to expect while waiting for a hospital bed.

During her previous years as clinical customer service coordinator in Bloomberg 9 South, Stokes learned an invaluable lesson. “Patients don’t get very long to speak,” she says. “When I first meet a patient, I always ask first if I can sit down, even if I don’t have long to stay. Then, after explaining my role, I attentively listen, allowing the patient the time to express her needs and concerns.”

Shortly after the concierge program launched, patient experience improved for patients admitted through the Emergency Department: HCAHPS scores reflected this. Then, the experience way, we don’t have to open a package. The dog can sniff through and quickly determine whether there are explosives.” Suspicious packages, ranging from a briefcase left by the side of a car in the garage to an unidentified item on the loading dock, are found about once a month, he says. Most of these items are left behind innocently but still have to be treated with caution until determined safe.

Canine security programs are not uncommon in health care settings across the United States, says Bob Wagner, assistant director of Johns Hopkins Corporate Security. Baltimore’s Mercy Medical Center, MedStar Union Memorial Hospital and the University of Maryland Medical Center also have canine security programs. Dexo and Bax will live at home with their handlers as they become part of the Johns Hopkins community.

Evidence suggests that the canine program will be successful, says Lisa Allen, chief patient experience officer for Johns Hopkins Medicine. “There’s definitely data that it does keep things calmer: I hope that’s true.”

The canines’ ability to detect explosives will reduce hazards faced by security personnel, who take a calculated risk when opening suspicious packages, Economas says. “This

In the midst of this, the DEXO and BAX canine security programs at Johns Hopkins Hospital are making a difference.

Johns Hopkins Canine Program

continued from front

behavior incidents and investigates suspicious packages.

“It’s another tool in our efforts to provide a safe and secure environment for everyone who comes to Johns Hopkins,” says George Economas, senior director of security for The Johns Hopkins Hospital. (Corporate Security responds to >1,000 calls for aggressive behavior annually. Economas says.) Dexo and Bax will also be on call to bolster security at other Johns Hopkins campuses, should the need arise.

Working on overlapping schedules seven days a week, Dexo and Bax, each about 18 months old, will patrol the Johns Hopkins parking garages, hospital corridors, Emergency Departments and other locations throughout the East Baltimore campus with their handlers, primarily in the evening hours. Kept on lead at all times, the canines will help to prevent potentially volatile confrontations before they occur.

Meyer Building

continued from front

“Although this was the smallest of the three projects, it was the most impactful to the building’s occupants because patients and staff members were in portions of the building throughout construction,” says Mary Margaret Jacobs, director of patient and visitor services for The Johns Hopkins Hospital. “Everyone is really looking forward to the reopening.”

One of the building’s most notable features is all-private rooms for adult medical patients, a central objective for all of the buildings in the 10-year project. For the first time, the palliative care program will have a permanent home on Meyer 9 alongside general medicine beds. The hospitalist unit and a brand-new electroconvulsive therapy suite will treat inpatient and outpatient psychiatric patients all in one place on Meyer 7. A new gym will also offer state-of-the-art patient rehabilitation on Meyer 7.

Behind-the-scenes but equally important features include new mechanical and plumbing systems, electrical systems, IT infrastructure and upgraded elevators. The exterior of the building will reflect a new look on the north side of the Wolfe Street entrance and the Wolfe Street sidewalk.

Altogether, Meyer 7, 8 and 9 will offer 46 patient rooms. Meyer 8 and 9 will reopen by mid-December and will be followed by the rehabilitation service move to Meyer 7 in early January. “I walked the new space before it even had walls, and it was pretty impressive then,” says Jacobs. Now, with sparkling floors and fresh coats of paint, the Meyer Building is nearly ready for its new patient and employee occupants.

Employees who will occupy the new space will be scheduled for orientation, which will include tours of the units and an overview of the new travel routes in and around the building. Connecting pathways to the Meyer Building will be from the Main Loop, second floor and basement.

If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the Campus Redevelopment Committee at campusrdevredevelopment@jhmi.edu.

Disclaimer: Indoor canines are not trained to handle aggressive behavior annually. Economas says.) Dexo and Bax will also be on call to bolster security at other Johns Hopkins campuses, should the need arise.

Evidence suggests that the canine program will be successful, says Lisa Allen, chief patient experience officer for Johns Hopkins Medicine. “There’s definitely data that it does keep things calmer: I hope that’s true.”

The canines’ ability to detect explosives will reduce hazards faced by security personnel, who take a calculated risk when opening suspicious packages, Economas says. “This

In the midst of this, the DEXO and BAX canine security programs at Johns Hopkins Hospital are making a difference.

Johns Hopkins Canine Program

continued from front

behavior incidents and investigates suspicious packages.

“It’s another tool in our efforts to provide a safe and secure environment for everyone who comes to Johns Hopkins,” says George Economas, senior director of security for The Johns Hopkins Hospital. (Corporate Security responds to >1,000 calls for aggressive behavior annually. Economas says.) Dexo and Bax will also be on call to bolster security at other Johns Hopkins campuses, should the need arise.

Working on overlapping schedules seven days a week, Dexo and Bax, each about 18 months old, will patrol the Johns Hopkins parking garages, hospital corridors, Emergency Departments and other locations throughout the East Baltimore campus with their handlers, primarily in the evening hours. Kept on lead at all times, the canines will help to prevent potentially volatile confrontations before they occur.

Meyer Building

continued from front

“Although this was the smallest of the three projects, it was the most impactful to the building’s occupants because patients and staff members were in portions of the building throughout construction,” says Mary Margaret Jacobs, director of patient and visitor services for The Johns Hopkins Hospital. “Everyone is really looking forward to the reopening.”

One of the building’s most notable features is all-private rooms for adult medical patients, a central objective for all of the buildings in the 10-year project. For the first time, the palliative care program will have a permanent home on Meyer 9 alongside general medicine beds. The hospitalist unit and a brand-new electroconvulsive therapy suite will

From the Editor

Hopkins Insider is published twice a month—on Thursdays—by Johns Hopkins Medicine Marketing and Communications. Email your submissions at least 14 days prior to the requested publication date to Stephanie Shapiro, editor, shapa21@jhmi.edu, for consideration. Upcoming publication dates are Dec. 22 (Johns Hopkins Medicine Clinical Awards issue) and Jan. 5 (Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration issue).