Cedars-Sinai Spiritual Care Department Featured on Front Page of Jewish Journal

In December of 2012, the Jewish Journal recognized the excellence, unprecedented growth, and clinical integration of our Spiritual Care Department with a front page feature article titled, “Healing The Soul: Cedars-Sinai’s chaplaincy program puts spirituality on the medical charts.” The four-page article included quotes from a number of our chaplains and touching stories of their profound patient encounters. Cedars-Sinai began expanding its chaplaincy program about two years ago after an interdisciplinary assessment revealed that patients, doctors, and visitors expressed a desire for more spiritual care. As staff education about the role of chaplains has increased, so too has the number of requests for our services.

The Spiritual Care Department now receives more than 1,100 referrals for chaplains per month, a 175 percent increase in requests compared to less than two years ago.

The tremendous number of requests for spiritual intervention demonstrates the importance and need for professional chaplaincy in our institution.

The Spiritual Care Department strives to meet the many religious and spiritual needs of our varied population with a novel model for the delivery of spiritual care that was developed at Cedars-Sinai. Whenever possible, patients are matched with chaplains of their own faith, but chaplains also function in interfaith roles as liaisons, integrated into dozens of units throughout the medical center. Furthermore, some of our chaplains are co-located in strategic units, such as the Emergency Department and the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Center, with a chaplain on-call every night and throughout the weekend.

With the assistance of this prominent cover article, our Spiritual Care Department received abundant correspondence and enhanced national interest. The department’s strategic growth, the corresponding increase in referrals, and unique model have been featured at conferences and in additional publications throughout the country this past year.

Clinical Pastoral Education New To Cedars-Sinai

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a national program that trains future professional chaplains from all faith and spiritual traditions. Approximately six to eight interns per semester – a combination of seminary students, clergy members, and others – now rotate through Cedars-Sinai to serve patients under the guidance of Reverend Pam Lazor, a supervisor accredited through the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education.

“While we hope that the CPE students will benefit our patients and staff through their spiritual care services, we know that what the students learn here at Cedars-Sinai will go with them as they return to serve their communities,” Lazor said.

“It is wonderful to see Cedars-Sinai finally having its own CPE Program,” Reverend Pam Lazor (center) leading a CPE group.

and three rabbinical students, in addition to the various rabbinic interns that we continue to host from other institutions.

Another innovation this year, also featured in a separate Jewish Journal article, was inspired by volunteer Jeremie Braun.

He created a “Shabbat kit,” which consists of two electric candles, a bottle of grape juice, small loaves of challah, and a copy of the Sabbath blessings, written in Hebrew and in English.

“In the past year, my wife and I spent time at Cedars-Sinai for medical reasons, and we spent the Sabbath there quite a few times,” Braun said.

“Though the hospital offers electric candles to patients who request them, when we realized how many Jewish patients there are here, we realized there was an opportunity to do more.”

Braun became a volunteer at the hospital, and after a fundraising campaign, he and his wife and children began to spend part of each week putting the Shabbat kits together. Every Friday, Braun visits the hospital to deliver the kits.

“It’s a wonderful project and people really appreciate it,” said Rabbi Jason Weiner. “We were already giving out about 30 pairs of candles each week, but Jeremie has taken it to a whole new level.”

As demand for the Shabbat kits grew – the goal is to be able to offer over 50 kits per week – the project moved to their synagouge, known as Chabad of SoLA, in West Los Angeles. There, as many as 60 volunteers pitch in, including children, whose colorful drawings decorate the packages.

“We’re being very careful that no one feels pressured regarding the Shabbat kits,” Weiner said. “They are offered in a very cautious, respectful manner, and neither challah nor grape juice is offered to patients who can’t consume them.”

As for Braun, he feels he gets back much more than he gives. “For all of us, it is a blessing,” Braun said.

For more information about the Shabbat kit project, contact Braun at Shabbatkits@gmail.com

Cedars-Sinai Launches Weekly “Shabbat-On-The-Go” Program

Since its inception this past spring, a weekly celebration of the Sabbath is now held every Friday at 3 p.m. in the Chapel. These “Shabbat on the Go” Kabbalat Shabbat services (literally, “Welcoming the Sabbath”) are 15 minutes of songs, Psalms, prayers, and Torah reflections led by Rabbi Baruhl, Chaplain Laura Young and occasional guests. Challah and grape juice are also served, as people gather to conclude their work week and prepare for Shabbat. The services are broadcast live to patient rooms as well.

The very spirited “Shabbat on the Go” program is intentionally brief so that people can get away from their desks and come to the centrally located Chapel. These weekly services are supplemented by various holiday services, as well as a monthly traditional Shabbat morning service.

Volunteer Inspires Shabbat Kits

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Overflow Crowd Attends Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony

A reverent crowd filled Harvey Morse Auditorium to overflowing for Cedars-Sinai’s 29th annual Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, on April 8. Shoah, the Hebrew word for “catastrophe,” refers to the atrocities committed against the Jewish people during World War II, which resulted in the deaths of more than 6 million Jews. “Never forget, and never again,” said Lawrence B. Platt, chair of the Cedars-Sinai Board of Directors, in his opening remarks. He gave special thanks to the late Leon Morgenstern, MD, who led the medical center’s Department of Surgery to international prominence and who organized the first Yom HaShoah event at the medical center in 1985.

“At that first event, maybe 10 people attended,” said Platt, who noted that Morgenstern would have been very happy to see so many attending this year’s ceremony. The late Rabbi Levi Meier, PhD, was also one of the founders of the program.

In his invocation, Rabbi Jason Weiner used the stirring words of Gideon Hausner, the lead prosecuting attorney in the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, who was instrumental in carrying out the horrors of the Holocaust.

“With me are 6 million accusers. But they cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger towards him who sits in the dock and cry: ‘I accuse,’” Weiner quoted. “For their ashes are piled up on the hills of Auschwitz and the fields of Treblinka, and are strewn in the forests of Poland. Their graves are scattered throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Their blood cries out, but their voice is not heard. Therefore I will be their spokesman and in their name I will unfold the awesome indictment.”

Joel Geiderman, MD, co-chair of the Emergency Department and chair of the Holocaust Remembrance Day Program, recalled how, through the lens of the Eichmann trial, he learned how and why so many of his relatives had perished.

Geiderman then called on a group of Holocaust survivors, some accompanied by family members, to light six candles – each representing 1 million Jewish lives lost – at the front of the hall.

Deborah Lipshtad, PhD, a scholar, an award-winning author and an authority on the Holocaust, then spoke about the Eichmann trial, which she said changed both the course of history and how the public understood the atrocities that the Nazis perpetrated against the Jews.

What made the Eichmann trial different from the Nuremberg Trials, a series of military tribunals in 1945 and 1946, were the witnesses’ connections to Cedars-Sinai, to come forward and bear witness.

Louie Conas, medical director, chaplaincy, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, invited the audience to light six candles with him in memory of his family members – his father and his paternal grandfather – who were killed at Auschwitz.

“This story is not a big story. This story is a survivor’s story. It’s a very personal story,” Conas said.

Eichmann was not an ordinary perpetrator of Holocaust atrocity – he was a bureaucrat responsible for carrying out the Jewish Holocaust. “That made the Eichmann trial different,” said Jonathan Schreiber, Cedars-Sinai’s director of Community Engagement.

“The message is quite simple: Looking at our personal connections to faith and tradition can give a tremendous lift to so many aspects of our health.”

Cedars-Sinai Co-Hosts First Ever Jewish Wisdom and Wellness Week

Tremendously Successful Events Tap Ancient Tradition, Modern Practices to Improve Health

Instead of hosting a conference at Cedars-Sinai, this year we ventured into the community, facilitating more than 70 events reaching over 3,500 people in one amazing, innovative, and memorable week in April 2013. Jewish leaders from the public explored the connections between Jewish wisdom and wellness during a community-wide “week of learning” that delved into notable subjects such as the influence of Jewish tradition on end-of-life decisions, yoga as a healing art and the Jewish perspective on advance directives.

The Jewish Wisdom & Wellness week was co-hosted by Cedars-Sinai and the Kalsman Institute on Judaism & Health, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Rabbi, physicians, scholars, musicians and others offered dozens of lectures, classes and musical performances across a broad stream of Jewish thought and practice, mining Judaism’s rich and distinctive tradition to improve health, well-being and healing.

The week kicked off at Cedars-Sinai with a panel discussion moderated by Rob Edelman, Editor-In-Chief of the Jewish Journal which included four prominent Los Angeles rabbis, most of whom have endowed personal health crises, about the ways Judaism can help weather such situations. The panel drew nearly 400 people and was broadcast live to patient rooms.

The week also featured our annual Rabbi Levi Meier Memorial Lecture on Jewish Values in Patient Care, in conjunction with our Center for Healthcare Ethics. The lecture brought prolific author, hospital administrator and clergy, Rabbi Aaron Glatt, MD, to discuss the most important and complex aspects of end-of-life care relevant to the Jewish patient.

Additionally, the week included a Medical Grand Rounds presentation on “Jewish Perspectives on Organ Transplantation: Living, Cadaveric and New Frontiers,” by Rabbi Edward Reichman, M.D.

“Our goal was to jump-start the conversation that Judaism is a resource for people who are addressing health needs and personal crises,” said Jonathan Schreiber, Cedars-Sinai’s director of Community Engagement.

Medicine and Spiritual Care: A Shared Commitment to Listening on the Way to Healing

The nationally renowned authority on professional spiritual care, Reverend George Handzo, MDiv, spoke on Medicine & Spiritual Care at the Ethics Noon Conference on March 20, in Harvey Morse Auditorium. Handzo is president of Handzo Consulting and senior consultant for HealthCare Chaplaincy in New York. His presentation identified dimensions of spirituality in the illness experience, ways for integrating spiritual care into patients’ overall plans of care, and how to partner with professional chaplains on the care team. Following this keynote presentation, Rev. Handzo participated in an afternoon of didactics and discussions for our Spiritual Care Department, which was also attended by chaplains from throughout the region.

Cont on page 6

Four Light: Judaism on hope & health" held at Cedars-Sinai.

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First Mezuzah Placed in Advanced Health Sciences Pavilion

Led by Chairman Lawrence B. Platt, members of Cedars-Sinai’s Board of Directors participated in the placing of the first mezuzah in the Advanced Health Sciences Pavilion in March 2013. In addition to a public blessing and ceremony which also took place this year to inaugurate the opening of the entire facility, affixing the first mezuzah to the doorway of the Pavilion’s board room was a poignant moment.

“The Board of Directors is truly dedicated to recognizing Cedars-Sinai’s Jewish tradition,” said Rabbi Jason Weiner, Senior Rabbi, Manager of the Spiritual Care Department. At the blessing, “we discussed how appropriate it was that this mezuzah, which reminds us to truly listen, was being placed in this board room, where so many will work to listen and understand each other.”

Like every mezuzah in the medical center, this newest mezuzah is custom-made in Israel and has been donated by Herb and Sharon Glaser. The couple began their tradition of providing mezuzot to Cedars-Sinai in 1982, first in honor of Sharon’s parents, Doris and Louis Factor, and then also in honor of Herb’s parents, Rosalind and Samuel Glaser. Thanks to the couple, each room in the medical center (except for closets, storage rooms and rest rooms) has a mezuzah on its door frame.

“The Glasers know this is important because they appreciate the sense of protection and security that their parents felt by having a mezuzah on the door,” Weiner said.

Mezuzot donated by the Glasers have been placed on the doorways of all the rooms of the new Advanced Health Sciences Pavilion.

CEDARS-SINAI DEVELOPS A MEANINGFUL ACADEMIC SEAL

This year, Cedars-Sinai’s Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences and Translational Medicine was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an affirmation that the PhD-awarding educational effort meets the most rigorous standards of higher learning. In conjunction with the first graduation ceremony, held this July, Cedars-Sinai created a new academic seal, containing symbols representing the institution’s history, judaic tradition, and commitment to healing and education.

The image in the lower right corner is a drawing of Kaspare Cohn Hospital, the precursor of Cedars-Sinai, founded in 1902 and located in the Angelino Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. The lower left image is known as the Staff of Asclepius, an image that represents the Greek mythical figure of healing and medicine. The symbol also recalls the Staff of Moses with entwined Copper Serpent, used in the Torah to cure all onlookers, (Numbers 21:6-10). On the academic seal, both of these images are placed on the pages of a book, symbolizing the importance of education and knowledge at Cedars-Sinai.

The upper images of a cedar tree and Mount Sinai signify the merger in 1961 of Mount Sinai Hospital and Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, which resulted in Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

The Hebrew text at the bottom translates as “You Shall Surely Hear” (Exodus 21:19), from which the Talmud derives the obligation to heal.

Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony Cont from page 4

It’s these unseen witnesses who are at the core of the Yom Ha’Shoah, Rabbi Weiner said. “Since so many people were tortured and murdered and can’t speak for themselves, it is our obligation to ensure that we remember what happened to them so that we can do our best to ensure that such atrocities never happen again, to anyone,” he said. “The day is really about memory, not history. History provides us with numbers and statistics, but memory infuses us with the consciousness of individuals. It is our hope that days of remembering, such as this, empower people toward greater compassion, knowledge and inspiration to make the world a better place.”

To order a free copy, contact the Spiritual Care Department at 310 423 5238. Or download a PDF for free at www.cedars-sinai.edu/spiritualcare

RABBI WEINER PUBLISHES GUIDEBOOK ON JEWISH OBSERVANCE IN A HOSPITAL

This year Rabbi Weiner published his Guide to Traditional Jewish Observance in a Hospital, a 110-page book designed to assist people in observing Jewish Law while undergoing medical treatment, particularly in the complex and unfamiliar environment of a hospital. This work examines issues in a detailed and organized manner, and includes relevant hospital policies and procedures for patients, their families, and healthcare providers. Hundreds of patients have already received this volume upon request. It has also been used in dozens of staff training sessions and has been distributed to over a thousand rabbis, chaplains, and hospitals around the country.

Join research for her today and make a difference!

1/40 Ashkenazi Jewish women are carriers of the BRCA1 and/or 2 gene. This year, a new initiative will focus on these hereditary cancers. Joining research for her is a way for Jewish women to become involved in the fight against cancer. Women have historically been underrepresented in cancer therapeutic trials, and many times innovative studies to find new therapies or to improve early detection methods fail because they cannot enroll adequate numbers of participants. research for her matches women over the age of eighteen with and without a history of cancer with potential research opportunities in order to close this gap.

To enroll or learn more, go to www.cedars-sinai.edu/researchforher