

Western Pennsylvania Hospital News

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McKeesport Hospital Foundation Launches 32nd Annual UPMC McKeesport Invitational

by John Fries

The annual UPMC McKeesport Invitational, presented by the McKeesport Hospital Foundation, is now in its 32nd year. Filled with three days of exciting activities, the Invitational shows no signs of slowing down and, in fact, seems to keep growing with each new year.

This year's event—overseen as in past years by Michele Baich Matuch, executive director of the McKeesport Hospital Foundation—combines a July 11 tennis tournament chaired by Dr. Domingo Ottonello, a July 26 "South of the Border" fashion show co-chaired by Marlene White and Judy Nicolo, and a July 27 morning and afternoon golf tournament chaired by Dr. R. Curtis Waligura, that concludes with an evening dinner and numerous prizes.

In addition, the Foundation sponsors an annual Healthier Communities Fair that highlights UPMC McKeesport healthcare testing and screenings, as well as numerous community services and programs sponsored by the local Pennsylvania Department of Health State Health Improvement Plan PartnerSHIPs in Braddock, Clairton, Duquesne, McKeesport and Hazelwood. Combined, these initiatives raise funds to support the ongoing healthcare needs of the community. Over \$2.2 million has been raised over the past three-plus decades.

Last year's proceeds benefited UPMC McKeesport's advanced digital mammography center and the MHCP Cancer Care Navigators' logic model designed to support cancer patients in the community who have ongoing access concerns to cancer services. A wide array of other programs and services have been funded by the Invitational, including the hospital's nuclear cardiology and minimally invasive surgery departments; community projects such as the McKeesport Healthier Communities PartnerSHIP's Logic Model Plan and Lions' Diabetes Center; graduate medical education programs in family practice, internal and osteopathic medicine; a 64-slice, state-of-the-art CT Scanner; expansion of the oncology and nuclear medicine departments, and much, much more.

This year's Invitational is co-chaired by several physicians at the hospital—Usman Ahmad, MD; Richard P. Bondi, MD; Domingo Ottonello, MD and R. Curtis Waligura, DO—along with Hugh Coughanour, president of the McKeesport Hospital Foundation; D. James Heatherington and Cynthia M. Dorundo, president of UPMC McKeesport and UPMC Braddock, Matuch serves as overall event coordinator with assistance from Invitational Secretary Meg Pero.

In the recent month, the Invitational Committee has lost one its long-time co-chairs, Dr. Rudolph L. Buck, former initiator and chair of the Family Medicine Residency Program at UPMC McKeesport. A memoriam in honor of Dr. Buck will be published in the Invitational brochure.

In addition, a number of local and regional businesses and organizations are providing support.

At the Invitational's spring luncheon at the Youghiogheny Country Club, Foundation board president Hugh Coughanour who served as master of ceremonies, introduced three speakers whose organizations benefit from Invitational proceeds.

Cynthia M. Dorundo, president of UPMC McKeesport and UPMC Braddock, provided attendees with an update on the extensive range of work that's being done at both hospitals. Dorundo commended the corporate sponsors for being a major part of UPMC McKeesport's accomplishments over the past 31 years because of their ongoing participation in the Invitational. She also highlighted UPMC McKeesport's ongoing mission to provide quality care to the community, adding that patient safety, infection control and ensuring efficient patient flow are ongoing priorities. The latter is important because, as she noted, with 33,000 emergency visits a year, the emergency department is the front door for many patients into the hospital.

Dorundo spoke about the hospital's new cardiac catheterization lab and the hospital's participation in an ongoing C-Port study where stent placements started at UPMC McKeesport last December. To date, 130 patients have agreed to take part in the program.

She also highlighted a new educational program that draws on UPMC McKeesport's strength as a teaching hospital. "This year, we are joining with UPMC St. Margaret to introduce a Registered Nurse teaching program that will be based at UPMC McKeesport," she said. The program, which launched in June, has an inaugural class of 15 students.

In addition to Dorundo's presentation, William H. Markle, MD, director of UPMC McKeesport's Family Medicine Residency Program, provided an overview of services provided at the 9th Street Clinic for the Uninsured. Through volunteers and McKeesport Hospital Foundation funding support, a new medical office opened two years ago in the former YWCA building to provide primary care for the uninsured. Most care is provided free of charge, and only a nominal charge is requested for lab work. Patients receive help locating lower cost medications, and a variety of screenings and services are offered, including those related to mental health, smoking cessation, and HIV/Aids sponsored by the McKeesport Healthier Communities PartnerSHIP, to name a few.

The 9th Street Clinic is open each Thursday from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and is staffed completely by volunteers, including Dr. Markle. He called it, "a place where people age 18 and over can receive health care with dignity and compassion." Presently, about 25

patients visit the clinic each week.

The luncheon's final speaker was Miles O. Darby, an EMS specialist from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, who highlighted the number one influenza initiative with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Immunizations, that operates from mid-October through January each year. In 2008-2009, this community influenza initiative, jointly funded by the Division of Immunizations and McKeesport Hospital Foundation through the Mon River Fleet, administered nearly 5,000 influenza vaccines at 83 community sites, including the 9th Street Clinic, by 11 local emergency services providers in the Mon Valley. "This is the only initiative in the Commonwealth where EMS personnel are used for this purpose and where the Mon River Fleet vaccine program has become a model for administering massive vaccines in an emergency," said Darby.

Since the influenza project started four years ago, almost 15,000 vaccines were provided free to residents in the Mon Valley. For those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, the programs funded by the McKeesport Hospital Foundation through its fundraising events speaks clearly that the hospital and community's healthcare needs are priority.

For more details about the 32nd Annual UPMC McKeesport Invitational, contact the McKeesport Hospital Foundation at 412-664-2590.

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