

ED News FLASH

> Emergency Department Expansion Campaign <

March 2010

Saving Helen: A Trauma Center Success Story

It was still pitch-black that early morning last July when 90-year-old Margaret “Helen” Connell switched off the bathroom light and, instead of turning right to her bedroom, took a left into darkness and tumbled down the stairs.

The Mountain Lakes resident lay twisted at the bottom, her neck broken. Somehow she managed to activate the emergency device around her neck and her son, John Connell, was contacted. He and his wife raced the few streets over. Mr. Connell knew better than to move his mom and immediately he called 911. The EMTs promptly but carefully stabilized her neck, placing her on a board. As the ambulance pulled away, the driver insisted they go to Morristown Memorial Hospital’s Trauma Unit, even though another hospital was minutes away.

“As we pulled into the hospital entrance, there was a commotion in the back of the ambulance,” recalls Mr. Connell. “Mom’s airway was closed off because the broken vertebrae had swelled. The EMTs tried to establish an airway but failed.”

They rushed Mrs. Connell into an Emergency Department trauma room. Waiting outside, Mr. Connell relived the image of his mother thrashing about, distressed and grabbing her throat.

Then John Adams, MD, reported that Mrs. Connell was stable, breathing with a ventilator: “She was dead; she’s not dead now,” Mr. Connell recalls the doctor reporting. To restore Mrs. Connell’s airway while she was in cardiac arrest, the trauma surgeon performed an emergency cricothyrotomy, a procedure only available at a trauma center like Morristown Memorial. Moved to the Intensive Care Unit, Mrs. Connell spent three weeks on a ventilator. Meanwhile, surgeons

repaired her broken neck. During rehabilitation, she learned to speak and swallow and then she and Jack, her husband of 67 years, moved to a continuous care facility.

“My family was impressed with how things worked at Morristown Memorial – everything went right,” says Mr. Connell. “We never thought to go someplace else, like a New York hospital, once she was stabilized. At Morristown everyone cared.” Mr.

Connell is quite familiar with the hospital, having undergone bladder cancer treatment and spine surgery here.

Recently, the family celebrated Mrs. Connell’s 91st birthday, and her son feels fortunate she reached this milestone. “We could have held a funeral for my mom instead,” he says. “She came out of this close to 100 percent, given her age. She walks erectly, speaks in full sentences and has her wits.”

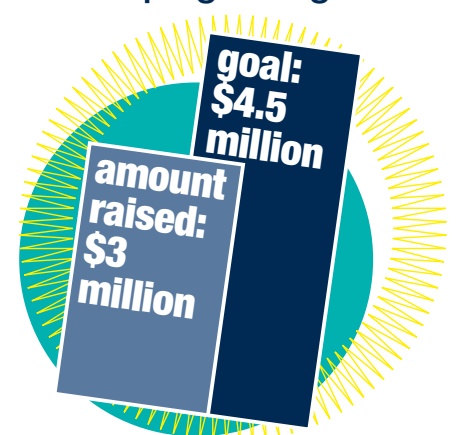


Margaret “Helen” Connell and son John Connell

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Campaign Progress



To support or learn more about this campaign, please call Susan Johns, special gifts officer, at 973-593-2413.



Morristown Memorial
HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Sameths: Supporting a Vital Local Resource



Robert and Susan Sameth

For Robert and Susan Sameth of New Vernon, supporting the Health Foundation's \$4.5 million Emergency Department (ED) expansion campaign is a natural fit. First, their gift commemorates Mrs. Sameth's 20 years of volunteering on the

New Vernon rescue squad. "It's quite a commitment and it's a nice way of honoring all her years of service," says Mr. Sameth. "The Emergency Department is near and dear to our hearts, especially since Sue is there several times a week."

The couple's contribution also acknowledges the excellent medical care that Morristown Memorial provides. Whenever Mrs. Sameth delivers patients to the ED via ambulance, the former nurse reassures them that they will receive first-rate care. "I always tell them: 'I am leaving you in good hands; they will take good care of you here.'"

A Health Foundation trustee, Mr. Sameth echoes his wife's sentiments. "We've been in the area 35 years and feel fortunate to have such a fine facility in Morris County," he says, adding that their recent contribution marks a continuation of their philanthropic commitment to the hospital. The Sameths have lent their support to various hospital causes, including Gagnon Children's Emergency Center and the purchase of an Atlantic Health Pediatric Ambulance.

Fast Track Keeps Patients Moving

While a quick visit to an Emergency Department (ED) sounds too good to be true, Morristown Memorial is taking steps to ensure that this will be the norm for patients with less critical conditions. To reduce the ED's turn-around time and increase patient and staff satisfaction, the hospital's expanded ED will feature a designated fast track area to facilitate the flow of patients.

Staffed by physicians and physician assistants, the fast track unit treats adult patients with minor injuries and illnesses, such as less severe orthopedic injuries, cuts, colds and sore throats that can be processed quickly. All patients entering the ED are seen by a triage nurse; more severe cases are moved to critical care units while the less serious ones are sent to the fast track area.

"Fast track ensures that patients with minor sprains or cuts won't be bogged down by a person with a more severe condition, like a heart attack," says Elizabeth Burger, ED clinical coordinator. "Patients who are fast tracked will be seen and treated in a timely manner, regardless of what is happening in the rest of the ED."

Currently, the ED's fast track area shares space with the Gagnon Children's Emergency Center. With the expansion, a portion of the ED will be renovated and retrofitted to encompass the fast track unit, allowing the pediatric ED to expand to its full capacity. Last year, 60 percent of adult patients were fast tracked, which means approximately 48,000 patients received expedited care.

Fawn Hill Farm: a Must-See in May

The Women's Association is preparing for its 15th Mansion in May Designer Showhouse and Gardens, a month-long fundraiser that has generated over \$5 million for Morristown Memorial since its inception in 1974. This year's event, held at Harding Township's Fawn Hill Farm, will benefit the hospital's Emergency Department, now in the midst of a \$25 million expansion. Over 18,000 visitors are expected to visit the 34-acre estate, which is for sale. Visit www.MansioninMay.com for details.

