
HONORING



Excellence



For 58 years, generous Mended Hearts members have been doing a good job doing a good deed. We have always had great people doing good work, supported by outstanding hospital and corporate partners. These three groups come together to benefit patients and their families at an important, albeit stressful, time. Our members do this without thought of recompense. People join MHI to give back, but they seem inevitably to receive more joy than they give. They don't join MHI to win awards. Yet every year there are members, chapters and partners who do exemplary work, and they are recognized every year at the annual convention, this year in Orlando. Here are profiles of the winners of the four main awards. *(For a complete list of awardees, turn to p. 11.)*



Corporate Award

Much of the excellent work MHI performs is possible because of the underwriting from corporations and foundations that support the mission. In its fourth year, this award recognizes corporations or foundations that provide exemplary support to MHI and serve as a model for similar contributors to emulate. Among the criteria considered for the award, beyond monetary support, are responsible and exemplary leadership in advancing quality patient care in general, leadership in fostering support to MHI from other corporate sources and the overall impact of the corporation's support in advancing the MHI mission.

Because MHI gets excellent support from several corporate and foundation contributors, selection of this

award is always a challenge. This year, the Executive Committee selected Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS)/Sanofi Pharmaceuticals Partnership.

For the past six years, the BMS/Sanofi Partnership has been the main sponsor of our PATH Packs. This is the packet of materials accredited visitors leave with the patients they visit. They contain both education materials and important resources to help patients in their recovery. Because of the Partnership's funding, MHI is able to produce attractive packets that are professionally produced.

"Mended Hearts is a unique organization represented by people who have experienced heart disease and stepped in to help out of their own free will," said Tony Hooper, president of US Pharmaceuticals for BMS, and who accepted the award on behalf of the Partnership.





Tony Hooper of Bristol-Myers Squibb accepts the Corporate Award from MHI Immediate Past President Margaret Elbert

“It’s one of the few organizations where people are able to provide real-life advice about how to live through cardiovascular procedures, recover from them and adapt to lifestyle changes after interventions.”

In addition, the Partnership has been an anchor advertiser in Heartbeat, helping keep our members informed on important issues. The Partnership has also been a premier sponsor of the annual convention. That support enables MHI to provide top-notch presentations that both educate and edify convention delegates. Over the years MHI staff has worked closely with Mark Peters, Director of Healthcare Quality and Advocacy at BMS, and MHI Executive Director Tim Elsner counts Mr. Peters as a tremendous mentor to him.

“Receiving this award was special because Bristol-Myers Squibb specializes in products for cardiovascular disease,” Tony Hooper said. “As a CV patient who personally experienced the benefit of MHI prior to my surgery, I am delighted to assist the organization and further its cause.”



Hospital Award

As has been acknowledged time and again on these pages and elsewhere within Mended Hearts, our efforts couldn’t exist without hospital partners. That said, there are varying degrees of support and cooperation. Partner hospitals nominated in this category were evaluated in eight areas, from providing reasonable access to patients to providing a consistent contact person to recognizing the chapter’s contributions. Judging by the reports of the nominated hospitals, many chapters have especially generous and helpful partners.

This year the committee chose to recognize Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) in Gainesville, Georgia. Gainesville is located about an hour northeast of Atlanta

in a beautiful part of Georgia near Lake Sidney Lanier. NGMC was nominated by Chapter 302, which was chartered only eight years ago. Chapter 302 visits at NGMC’s Ronnie Green Heart Center, which opened in 2002. According to Lynne Allen, the director of volunteer services at NGMC, who accepted the award on behalf of the hospital, the admiration is two-way. Chapter 302 has given 18,000 hours of service since the center was established and made 23,598 patient visits in that time. “MHI volunteers are greatly valued by Northeast Georgia Health System for the direct impact they have on the quality of services provided to patients, family members and visitors,” Ms. Allen said. “There is no greater gift that our organization can receive than to have volunteers’ give their valuable time and service.”

Chapter 302’s service to NGMC is matched by the hospital’s support of them. NGMC provides the chapter access to a new, state-of-the-art conference room for monthly meetings and re-certification trainings. The hospital provides refreshments and meals at these meetings as well as at the chapter’s Christmas party. In addition, they print and mail their newsletter and provide free valet parking for visitors. They even provide lunch



Northeast Georgia Medical Center, North tower

for the volunteers, which adds up to a lot of food because Chapter 302 provides three volunteers every weekday plus one on Saturday. They also pay for two officers to attend the national convention each year. NGMC helps Chapter 302 with outreach to local churches and civic organizations, helping with the design, printing and mailing of letters and newsletters. They even helped make magnets for heart patients to post on their refrigerators so they have easy access to MHI.

One of the deciding factors in the committee selecting NGMC was the fact that they have given Chapter 302 a permanent seat on the hospital’s Auxiliary Board. This ensures that the chapter is included in key functions hosted by the facility.



Lynne Allen (r) accepting the Hospital Award from emcee Becky Witt for NGMC

“The doctors and staff at NGMC are great at getting the word out about MHI,” said Peter Rocco, the chapter president. “We average about 200 patient visits a month and are often asked by doctors and nurses to visit specific patients they think we can help.” As an example, Peter cited the chapter’s participation in a pilot program for the Society of Cardiovascular Angioplasty Intervention. They are one of a handful of pilot sites in the U.S. where accredited visitors visit catheterization patients in the cath lab.

“We have an excellent working relationship,” Peter said. “We do an excellent job of supporting each other. We both have an intense desire to help patients recover from heart disease.”

“It is obvious that the Mended Hearts volunteers have true empathy and compassion for the patients and their families,” Lynne Allen said. “The volunteers often help to relieve anxiety by offering hope and encouragement. There is no doubt that the service provided by our MHI visitors positively affects the overall success of NGMC’s heart program, which is rated number one for overall cardiac care in Georgia and is in the top five percent nationally.”



President’s Cup

The President’s Cup recognizes excellence at the chapter level. Each year the selection is difficult because MHI has so many outstanding chapters. (For a listing of the runners-up, turn to p. 11.) In choosing the recipient, the president evaluates every aspect of chapter activity and responsibility. Just to be considered, chapters must turn in their annual reports on time. Other considerations include the content of chapter meetings, attendance, growth in the number of visits and visitors trained, the number of scholarships awarded and local public recognition.

This year’s award goes to Chapter 294 in Aiken, S.C. Marilyn Kohl was president in 2008 when the award was earned, and she has just been succeeded by Patrick

Boardman. Chapter 294 was chartered in 2001, and last year their 49 accredited visitors made 1,435 patient visits at the Aiken Regional Medical Center (ARMC), where they have given more than 2,100 hours of service. A team of two visitors visits every day with heart disease patients receiving invasive and non-invasive treatment at ARMC. In addition, another team of two visits at 8 AM five days a week in the cath lab and surgery waiting rooms. Twice a month Chapter 294 sends a team of visitors to the University of South Carolina – Aiken Wellness Center where they talk to heart patients in the Cardiac Enhancement Program.

When outgoing president Margaret Elbert presented the award, she noted that “Chapter 294’s service to the community is legendary.” Here is a list of their accomplishments: They raised \$25,000 to purchase 12 AEDs for the county sheriff’s department. They raised another \$11,000 for advanced mannequins for the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) School of Nursing. These mannequins can be programmed for different medical emergency scenarios, so the nurses are trained on how to respond to a variety of situations. They also gave USCA \$16,000 toward the purchase of special rehab equipment for the wellness center. In addition to the nursing school, Chapter 294 gave another \$10,000 for equipment used in the Nursing Skills Laboratory at the Aiken Technical College. They gave another \$5,000 to their emergency medical technician program. They raised another \$3,500 for the American Heart Association. Much of this money is raised at a golf tournament held each fall.

In addition to all that, they contributed \$2,500 toward the purchase of Bluetooth technology for eight ambulances. This technology allows the EMTs to send EKG results directly to the hospital while they are still in route. This allows ER staff to be ready for patients as soon as they come through the door.



Convention emcee Becky Witt presents the President's Cup awarded to Marilyn Kohl (l) of Chapter 294

In addition to giving money, Chapter 294 shows appreciation very well: They have sponsored a series of appreciation events at ARMC, including a catered breakfast for the cardiovascular nurses and a luncheon for the ICU/PCU nurses. At both events, the nurses each received a certificate of appreciation.

“It was an honor to accept the President’s Cup award on behalf of Chapter 294,” said Marilyn Kohl. “This is not a one-person job, and many members stepping up to the plate made it possible. The publicity we have received as a result of this award has provided us with another opportunity to educate our community on what MHI is all about. Ours is a very important mission.”

“We have been runner-up a couple of times for this award, but winning is an awesome realization,” current president Patrick Boardman said. “Winning this award was a team effort, and each member contributed to our success. It did all our hearts good.”



Mended Heart of the Year

We now come to the award that personifies the MHI mission. Mended Heart of the Year is awarded for outstanding service given over many years. This year’s winner is Gerry Harrelson, age 77, of Chapter 266 in Charleston, S.C.

Although she and her husband Jack have been members of Chapter 266 for almost 14 years, you might think of Gerry as MHI’s No. 1 virtual visitor because she is the chair of the Internet visiting team. She has held that position since 2001, when then-President Fulton Johnson asked her to take it on. Apparently it’s been a good fit.

Gerry and Jack joined MHI in January 1996, a few months after Jack’s bypass surgery. She went right to work as the newsletter editor, a job she held for nine years. “I loved that job,” she said, “and only gave it up to help Sue Borum set up the 2005 national convention here in Charleston.”

Today Gerry has 196 Internet visitors on her list. Each must be accredited through their local chapter and have a recommendation from either the chapter president or visiting chair. Gerry receives an average of a dozen requests each month from patients who contact her through the MHI Web site. “I am surprised by the number of people who ask for help and support after finding our Web page,” Gerry said.

Gerry sends those email requests to the visitors, and those with the relevant experience then contact the patient or caregiver. Last year she received about 140 requests. Those requests generated over 3,700 responses to patients and 600 visits with family members by Gerry’s team of visitors. “I am so grateful for my Internet visitors, many of whom have been doing this for many years,” Gerry



Gerry Harrelson (r) receives the Mended Heart of the Year Award from Margaret Elbert.

said. “I appreciate their willingness to tell about their heart problems and how they have recovered and coped with life after a heart event.”

For many years Gerry visited in the hospital with her husband Jack, who is a Mid-Atlantic Region ARD for South Carolina. However, she has stopped doing that because she has developed chronic lymphomatic leukemia. Because of a lowered immune system due to chemotherapy, she is reluctant to go into hospitals. Her cancer is in remission, but she almost missed the convention because of a bad case of shingles.

A computer keyboard is not the only keyboard Gerry knows her way around: She has played organ and piano in Charleston churches for more than 35 years. She taught piano in her home for two decades and still serves as an organist when she’s needed.

“I have received so many thank-you notes over the years from those the online visitors contact,” Gerry said. “They often tell me that one of our visitors had just the message they needed to hear. Because I have not had a heart event, I can only email caregivers. I know it relieves the stress of caregiving to have someone to talk to who has been through it. It is a joy to help so many heart patients and their families. It is gratifying to help people who are not able to get support anywhere else.”

“I was totally surprised and honored by this award,” Gerry said. “I feel that the ones who should have received it are those who respond to the many requests that I send out. They are the ones who give the much-needed support. However, I am proud that I can be the one who helps make the connection between the patients and loved ones and those who can give the support.” ❤️



Mended Hearts Award Winners from the 57th Annual Convention

President's Cup Award

This award honors the chapter that has had significant achievements in many areas. Some of the key criteria include content of chapter meetings – variety of heart-patient related subjects, growth in number of visits and visitors trained, attendance at chapter meetings and other MHI meetings as well as growth in membership and local public recognition.

Chapter 294 – Aiken, SC, Marilyn Kohl, President

The four runners-up were:

- Chapter 127 – Cookeville, TN, Tom Little, President
- Chapter 115 – Lexington, KY, Joe Arnold, President
- Chapter 230 – Pontiac, MI, Bob Cordts, President
- Chapter 61 – Dayton, OH, Barbara Forman, President

The Mended Heart of the Year Award

Gerry Harrelson – National Internet Visiting Chairman; Charleston, SC, Chapter 266

Corporate Award

Bristol-Myers Squibb/Sanofi Pharmaceuticals Partnership

Hospital Award

Northeast Georgia Medical Center – This is the hospital for Chapter 302, Gainesville, GA.

Newsletter Awards

In recognition of those members who keep their fellow chapter members informed about local and national activities as well as provide important health and lifestyle information to improve patients' lives. There are three divisions – monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly.

Monthly Newsletters

Award of Excellence – *The Metroplex Heartbeat*

Jim Bushnell, Editor
Dallas, TX, Chapter 30

Award of Excellence – *The Mended Hearts News*

Jim Bushnell, Editor
West Plano, TX, Chapter 348

Runner Up – *Heart to Heart*

Bonnie Weck, Editor
Louisville, KY, Chapter 11

Honorable Mention – *The Mended Heart of Delaware*

Horace Sherrill, Editor
Newark, DE, Chapter 198

Honorable Mention – *Hearts by the Sea*

Gordon Schmidt, Editor
Charleston, SC, Chapter 266

Bi-Monthly Newsletters

Award of Excellence – *Heart to Heart*

Ron Michaud, Editor
Salisbury, MD, Chapter 221

Honorable Mention – *Life Line*

Jill Snyder, Editor
Toledo, OH, Chapter 100

Quarterly Newsletters

Award of Excellence – *Heartbeat of Rochester*

Brent Gossen, Editor
Rochester, NY, Chapter 50

Honorable Mention – *The Heart Connection*

Evelyn Davidson, Editor
Rapid City, SD, Chapter 208

The Sydney & Helen Shuman Nurse Recognition Award

For nurses who make a positive difference in the care of heart patients during treatment and recovery. The award includes \$250 cash.

Jan Harper, RN – nominated by Donald Bruns, Chapter 311

Jill Gray, RN – nominated by Kenneth Dawson, Chapter 28

The Mary M. Amato Education Award

For two students in the healthcare field. Each award includes \$500 cash.

Erin Hicks of Lima, Ohio

nominated by Larry Hicks, Chapter 111

Alexander Malosh of Sylvania, Ohio

nominated by Betty Malosh, Chapter 100