

Newsletter

Summer 2021

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Providing Optimal
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Letter from the CEO Jim Schlaman

I want to thank our beloved participants and families for your flexibility and understanding throughout the global pandemic. Your patience with our PACE team as we adjusted our daily activities to serve you in the safest manner possible is so appreciated. The PACE team rose to the challenge, everyone pitching in to do what it takes to care for our participants. What a team! We are excited to open the PACE facility to more participants over the summer.

We continue to monitor COVID 19 and will remain diligent in taking necessary precautions to prevent infection. I look forward to meeting and visiting with more of our PACE family this summer and into the fall.

Kind regards,
Jim

PACE Adapts to a World with COVID

As businesses and healthcare organizations across the globe have struggled to carry on during the world-wide pandemic, PACE is in a unique position to not only survive, but to help ensure the safety, health and well-being of our participants. PACE has always been a home-based model of care. Although we had to make adjustments in how to safely care for our participants during the pandemic, enhancing that home-based model is what allowed us to seamlessly adjust to the new normal.

Vaccinations

In association with Spectrum Health Lakeland and the Berrien County Health Department, PACE of



An RN from Spectrum Health Lakeland administers a vaccine to PACE participant Melvin Durant during the first PACE vaccine clinic.

Southwest Michigan was able to hold multiple vaccination clinics for our participants. Not only were we happy to see our participants get vaccinated to help keep them safe, we were thrilled to have them back in the Day Center where many of us could see them again in person!

In addition to vaccinating our participants, PACE facilitated making sure our staff had ample opportunities to get vaccinated. The Human Resources department did an excellent job of communicating how staff could get their vaccines.

Day Center

The socialization offered at the PACE Day Center is one of the most-loved services PACE offers. Our participants enjoy coming in to play games, create crafts, sing, listen to music, watch movies, play cards, and just hang out with their friends. Participants also enjoy receiving spiritual care when at the center. Typically, there were over 50 participants in the center on any given weekday. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed that.

Last summer, the Day Center was closed to participants for a short time. Then, we were able to open it up to only 5 participants per day. Currently, we are able to have 25 participants in the Day Center per day.

Although many more participants want to come to the Day Center, PACE must evaluate those with the most critical needs in order to determine who may attend. Participants with acute medical needs, psychosocial needs, and respite needs for the family are reviewed to help us determine attendance. We hope to be able to increase the number of participants allowed in the center as soon as infection control guidelines and safety precautions allow. For all participants who we have not been able to invite back to the center yet, please know that we can't wait to see you here again soon!

What are we doing for those who now spend more time at home?

For the participants not able to come to the center, the care team coordinates any additional care needed in the home. PACE Social Workers, Activity Coordinators and the PACE Chaplain all work together to visit our participants in their homes as well as contact them by phone. Activities Coordinators and the Chaplain may video chat with participants to make sure we stay in close contact with them. Providers and therapy staff also serve participants in their homes when appropriate.

Transportation

During the height of the pandemic, only two participants were allowed on the bus at the same time. Currently, we are able to transport 12 vaccinated participants at a time or two non-vaccinated participants. We also employ strict cleaning and sanitizing protocols.

“Our team has been diligent at focusing on meeting the needs of our participants inside their homes during the pandemic. Disciplines worked together to schedule visits providing the best care possible when not able to attend the center. The collaboration and teamwork displayed has been nothing short of amazing!”

~Rhonda Gibson, Director of IDT and Center Operations



Now that weather permits, we are able to open our outdoor patio outside the Garden Room to participants so they can enjoy the summer weather. Top: Virginia Congil plants flowers in the raised flower boxes. Bottom: Reverend Mary Beth Moran Cross (standing), helps Esther Gabriel, Irene Mallory and Paul Hendricks plant flowers for everyone to enjoy!

The Joy of Eating

Remember the expression, “You are what you eat?” Nutrition affects us every day of our lives. It has an important influence on our overall health. It can be difficult to know what foods and diets are best for us and what might even be harmful. That’s where Melissa Powell and Shannon Kramer, PACE Registered Dietitians come in. They help our participants by educating them on the best nutrition for their individual health and well being.

In order to help bring some great information and insights on nutrition to you, we (virtually) sat down with Melissa and Shannon and asked some questions about what they do for our PACE participants.

Q: Why is nutrition so important?

A. Shannon: Nutrition is an essential part of life from pre-conception until our final moments on this earth. Maintaining proper nutrition as we age is fundamental to feeling our best and being physically capable to enjoy life for as long as possible.

A. Melissa: “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” Hippocrates says it well but that doesn’t make it easy. The thing that I find most amazing about nutrition is that it is flexible, and it can be fueling and fulfilling. When we follow strict diets it’s easy to throw in the towel and reach for the honey buns. When we choose wholesome items most of the time it allows for

treats without effect on our health conditions.

Q: Why do our nutritional needs change as we age?

A. Shannon: Nutrition is an essential part of life from pre-conception until our final moments on this Earth. Maintaining proper nutrition as we age is fundamental to feeling your best and being as physically capable to enjoy life for as long as possible.

A. Melissa: Hydration becomes paramount since our body system changes and doesn’t communicate thirst with us in the same way, medications can cause dehydration and we become dehydrated more easily with changes in body composition. Seek out fluid rich foods like fruits, vegetables,

ice cream, pudding and soups. A steady intake of protein, with each meal is important - think eggs, beans, dairy, chicken, beef, pork and fish – to preserve muscle mass. Maintenance of bone health through activity and adequate calcium (milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, leafy greens, broccoli, canned salmon) and vitamin D intake (dairy, egg yolks and fatty fish) is very important as we age as well. So is vitamin B12 for brain and nerve function – animal proteins – beef, chicken, fish, dairy foods, eggs, and fortified foods.

Q: How do you make eating fun, even with restrictions?

A. Shannon: I’m a strong believer that food can and should always be delicious, regardless of dietary restrictions. My passion for cooking and menu planning has helped provide the participants I work with real-life suggestions for bringing the joy back into their diets.

A. Melissa: An individualized nutrition plan makes it easier. When you can make it make sense, a connection to labs, improved energy or daily blood sugars helps it stick. Working with PACE participants allows us to get to know their habits and preferences so we can fit all foods in. The best healthy eating plan is one that includes all foods in moderation.

Q: How do you educate our participants and their families on the best way to eat for optimal health?

A. Shannon: As a nutritional educator, I understand that all the best way to teach one individual might not work for someone else. Verbal education, handouts, food models, and even YouTube clips are all a part of my educational tool belt!

A. Melissa: Education comes in all forms and the best one is one that is understood and re-enforced. As humans we must hear things in new ways and repeatedly to make it work.

Q: Do you share recipes and tips?

A. Shannon: One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is being able to share the recipes my family and I love, with participants. I believe it helps me relate on a more personal level with a participant. Food truly is connection.

A. Melissa: Recipes are certainly available on request. We try and work with each participant on an eating plan that fits to their level of involvement in the kitchen. For some that means the frozen



Shannon talks to Melvin about food choices.

Melissa gives presentations to seniors in the community.

meal with the lowest salt, for others it means a no bake dessert, many of our Participants rely on family and caregivers to prepare items and time may be a limiting factor.

Q: Can you share a story about a participant who’s condition improved as a direct result of better nutrition?

A. Shannon: I am currently working closely with a participant who was recently diagnosed with diabetes. This diagnosis came as a shock to this individual and caused a significant level of anxiety. I have visited this participant’s home frequently over the past few weeks and have been able to offer reassurance that he is making appropriate dietary changes for optimal blood glucose control.

Q: What are some of the challenges participants face with their diets?

A. Melissa: Challenges vary from food insecurity to poor appetite. We can support participants through home delivered meal support, a caregiver to prepare the meals, shopping assistance, Social Worker support for food assistance application, and oral nutritional supplements.

Q: What are some of the conditions our participants have that require special dietary needs and restrictions? And how do we work with them to incorporate a better diet into their lives?

A. Shannon: Some of the most common conditions that we address include diabetes, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, reflux, and congestive heart failure. All of our participants undergo a nutritional evaluation upon enrollment and are reassessed every 6 months. We are available as needed to provide nutrition education at any time.

New Faces *at* PACE!

Please join us in welcoming these professionals to PACE: Alexis Blackamore, CNA; Rosie Brink, MA; Sindy Carranza, CNA; Brittani Evett, Receptionist; Teresa Ford, Clinic, HC Clerk; Iesha Guynes, Homecare Coordinator CNA; Erica Mooneyhan, Scheduling Coordinator; Andrea Pavlov, Chief Financial Officer; Raakhee Quick, Homecare Coordinator; Hannah Sass, Activities Coordinator; Laurie Squires, COTA; Victoria Stephenson, Social Worker; Sara Ter Beek, Homecare Coordinator; Bryan Upham, Physical Therapist; Alison Walvoord, Homecare Coordinator.



PACE Launches New Website!

“As PACE of Southwest Michigan has grown and evolved since we opened in 2012, our website now better reflects our passion for serving seniors in our community who want to age in their home,” shares Jim Schlaman, PACE CEO.

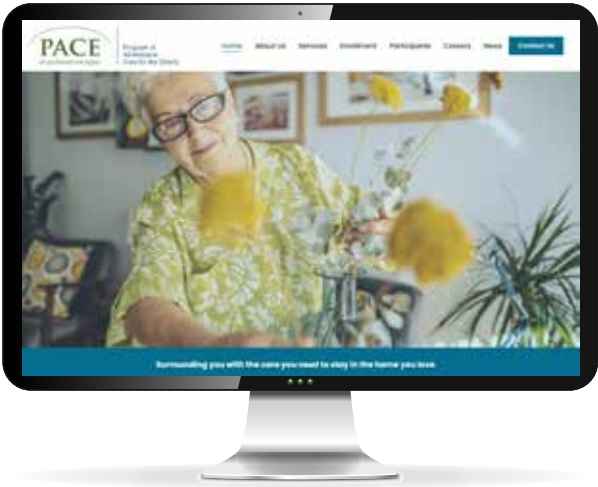
Things you’ll want to check out on the new site include:

- New video, “What is PACE?”
- The PACE Difference
- Photos of PACE participants

Shares Connie Didonato, PACE Marketing Coordinator, “We were definitely due for an update. I feel that the new site more accurately represents our brand image. It is more focused on the **people** we serve and how we are able to help them age safely and more independently in their own home.

Check out the new site and share with your friends and family!

www.paceswmi.com



Participant Ruth Holzwarth enjoys receiving her therapy services in her home from Physical Therapist, Naomi Prahoveanu.

Therapy Gets Creative!

In the past, PACE newsletters have featured the results of the therapy department’s exercise competitions. These are competitions that help motivate our participants and keep exercising fun! However, with the pandemic still affecting how we deliver our therapy care, we have not been able to hold competitions. Instead, we’d like to share with you how we have adjusted our care to keep participants safe while still making it fun to exercise!

PACE physical and occupational therapy has had to make adjustments to ensure the safety and health of our participants and staff. We adapted by providing our services not only at the PACE center, but also in our participants’ homes. We get creative and utilize objects located in the home in lieu of the gym equipment we have in our center.

Some participants still need to come into the therapy room at the Day Center to use equipment such as the parallel bars, recumbent bicycles and other exercise equipment. In order to maintain

social distancing, we allow two participants in the therapy room at a time. Other infection control guidelines we follow include the cleaning of the areas and equipment immediately after use and the wearing of masks during sessions. Says PACE Physical Therapist, Naomi Prahoveanu, “Exercising in masks is not very easy to do but our participants have been graciously understanding!”

Participant Story **Donna Holland**



Donna fondly calls Bangor, Michigan, her hometown. “My best friends still live there. It was a wonderful place to grow up,” she said. “We had a Christmas parade, and every ball game was a celebration—a family thing. My brother was 11 months younger than me and my sister was 13 months younger than him. It was a good life,” Donna said of her childhood. “My parents worked hard, hard, hard. We were poor, but they took us on a vacation every year come hell or high water.”

Donna graduated from Bangor High School in 1967. She attended Lake Michigan College for three semesters, studying Black History and Black Literature. “I’m still very interested in Black history,” she said. “I love to visit the historic spots, like the Underground Railroad sites.” Racial prejudice made an impression on Donna when she became aware of it in her youth. “I couldn’t understand it,” she said.

Donna moved with her parents and sister to Benton Harbor in 1969. She was a teacher at a preschool funded by Whirlpool and was sent to a conference in Boston focused on the Montessori method.

In the ‘70s, Donna and her girlfriends enjoyed dozens of concerts. But the best for Donna was seeing poet/singer/songwriter Rod McKuen. Afterward, he invited members of the audience to speak. Donna walked to the stage and gave him a copy of her first book of poems. “I had dedicated the book to him because I’d learned so much from his work,” Donna said. “It was one of the thrills of my life.” Donna received a note of appreciation from McKuen and holiday cards for several years.

Donna was working for Canteen Vending, when she met her husband, Jon. Donna and Jon joined PACE in 2019. “My doctor suggested PACE,” Donna said. “I love it. They have helped so, so much.”

She is currently taking part in PACE’s virtual poetry forum led by PACE Chaplain, Reverend Mary Beth. “She is just incredible,” Donna said.

“I love those people,” she said of the staff and participants. “The bus drivers are special too.”

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Participants may be fully and personally responsible for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-PACE program agreement services.
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