



Valley Hospital Foundation Newsletter

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# Letter From the Chief Development Officer

David J. Bohan



As we mark the halfway point in another year that has been anything but predictable, I am thrilled to begin this letter with good news. This spring, the Foundation surpassed the \$100 million milestone in support of The Valley Hospital in Paramus. To our donors whose philanthropic commitments have been an integral part of the *Serve. Care. Transform.* campaign's success thus far, thank you. Your gifts send a strong message that this project is essential in serving the healthcare needs of the community for generations to come. The Foundation team looks forward to continuing to work with supporters to meet and exceed our \$125 million goal and write Valley's next chapter.

In Paramus, construction is moving forward as anticipated. As we spend these summer months outdoors, I think about the significant green space at The Valley Hospital in Paramus — gardens, lawns, and walking paths — and how we will be able to enjoy them in the very near future!

And speaking of "green," the new hospital design is focused on sustainability and best practices in energy efficiency — including an anticipated gold-level LEED certification, space utilization, water conservation, and the use of natural light. It will feature a cogeneration plant which will produce anywhere from 35 to 45 percent of the building's power, not including the additional power available from emergency generators. Cogeneration uses what would otherwise be wasted heat to produce additional energy benefits. As a result, we can anticipate about 9,000 tons in carbon emission reduction by running this plant.

As we enter new and exciting stages of the Paramus project, advances and achievements continue at our Ridgewood campus. Valley is now available to you anytime, anywhere, all at the swipe of a finger, with the Valley Health System app! Now available on the App Store and Google Play, the app offers 24/7 access to care and information in a convenient and easy-to-use platform.

This March, we celebrated Doctors' Day, an annual event recognizing medical professionals for their hard work and dedication. Today, we find ourselves in a "new normal," and how we are able to respond to and treat COVID-19 has evolved. As of May, Valley has administered over 200,000 vaccine doses to our community since they became available at the end of 2020. Thank you to our frontline doctors, nurses, and employees for their constant display of courage, skill, and compassion — and their unwavering commitment to patient care.

With the opening of The Valley Hospital in Paramus slated for next year, I invite you to join me on a virtual hard-hat tour to view our progress. It really is amazing to see it take shape:

[www.valleyhospitalfoundation.org/campaign/videos](http://www.valleyhospitalfoundation.org/campaign/videos).

Best wishes for a safe and healthy summer.

A handwritten signature of David J. Bohan in black ink.

David J. Bohan  
Vice President  
& Chief Development Officer



*Bob and Lenni Puritz*

## Garden at The Valley Hospital in Paramus To Be Named for Lenni and Bob Puritz

The Valley Hospital in Paramus' 40-acre campus will provide a beautiful, park-like setting with gardens, lawns, and walking paths, allowing families, patients, and visitors to relax and have a moment of serenity. When the hospital opens in 2023, the lower plaza garden space will be named for Lenni and Robert (Bob) Puritz, longtime friends of The Valley Hospital and philanthropic supporters of the Foundation. The couple, married 68 years at the time of Bob's passing in 2019, were devoted members of the greater Ridgewood community and committed to its development. Lenni, a realtor with Terrie O'Connor Realtors, served on the executive boards of United Way, West Bergen Mental Healthcare, Community Blood Center, and the Glen Rock Unified Scholarship Council. Bob, a local real estate developer and native of Ridgewood, was actively engaged on numerous boards and committees and served as President of the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Van Neste Memorial Park Committee, and he was a member of the Kasschau Shell Committee responsible for the construction of the band shell in 1958 at Veteran's Field.

As a trustee of both The Valley Hospital and Foundation, Bob first was appointed to the hospital's board in 1971, and then to the Foundation's board in 1983, committing many years in service to an institution for which he held deep affection. "He treasured his involvement with Valley and took great pride in the relationships he nurtured and in the hospital's development," remarks Lenni. Bob remained committed to Valley as both an Honorary Trustee and a member of the President's Council; as Lifetime Benefactors, Bob and Lenni supported the annual fund, past campaigns, *Butterflies*, *Women For Health*, and Valley Hospice. "Bob was a dedicated trustee whose leadership was marked by hard work, determination, and good humor," says Audrey Meyers, President and CEO of Valley Health System. "Bob and Lenni have not only been generous donors, but dear friends to all of us at Valley."

In loving tribute to Bob, Lenni has made a significant gift in support of The Valley Hospital in Paramus. "Bob loved gardening, and he loved Valley," she says. "This opportunity to name one of the gardens at the new hospital was a wonderful way to honor his memory."



## Becton Dickinson Provides Grant in Support of Clinical Trials Initiative Fund



The Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care program offers patients the entire spectrum of oncology services while delivering unique care with compassion, empathy, and dignity. Recently, the program was a recipient of a generous grant from Becton Dickinson (BD) in support of Valley's Clinical Trials Initiative, which seeks to increase trial participation among racial and ethnic minority communities in the hospital's catchment area over a three-year period. BD has been a longtime partner in supporting philanthropic efforts at Valley, and their gift sends an important signal about their ongoing commitment to the hospital and the importance of clinical trials in helping to improve and save lives.

This past August, Valley was one of 75 research sites invited to be a part of a nationwide pilot project conducted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the Association of Community Cancer Centers. Over the course of three months, Valley tested a research site self-assessment tool and took part in an implicit bias training program focused on acknowledging and mitigating bias that may affect which patients are offered clinical trials and choose to participate. "Clinical trials are important, lifesaving tools," says Taja Ferguson, Director of Valley's Okonite Research Center. "However, for the outcome of clinical trials to have validity, participants should represent the patients that will be using the medical products. With a more representative patient population, the results of clinical trials will have more accurate outcomes in real-world patients with the illness in question."



*Taja Ferguson, Director,  
Okonite Research Center*

With pilot program data collection now complete, the BD grant will provide funding for Valley's establishment of strategies and solutions to improve the clinical trial experience of the hospital's diverse patient population. These include training Valley personnel to become certified in medical interpretation, offering a rideshare program for trial participants, creating a community needs assessment and patient-friendly navigation system suited to local patient needs, and partnering with local organizations and community leaders on targeted health literacy and awareness campaigns. "At Valley, we are committed to identifying and reducing bias in our clinical research programs," says Ferguson. "Thanks to the BD grant, we can now work to ensure that all patients have access to these cutting-edge healthcare opportunities."

## Tom and Carol Rakowski's Bequest Will Continue Their Support of First-Rate Care

In 2020, Dr. Thomas J. Rakowski retired from The Valley-Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Care. As an integral part of Valley for 39 years, his accomplishments include serving as President of The Valley Hospital's medical staff from 1993 to 1995, and as Chief of Hematology/Medical Oncology for Valley Medical Group. Tom and his wife of 45 years, Carol, have supported Valley's mission since 1984, and today he serves on the Board of Trustees for The Valley Hospital Foundation. "Valley is a first-rate organization and attracts the best physicians," Tom says. "When you see the Valley logo, you know there is a strong commitment to quality."

This commitment is a testament to Valley's strong culture. "Everyone is approachable and completely dedicated to safe, effective, efficient patient care, from environmental services to the president," Tom says. "I am constantly impressed with how many people move out of the area and come [back] to Valley for elective procedures, due to their previous positive outcomes and their trust in Valley," Tom says.

For Carol and Tom, support of Valley continues to be deeply personal. Their three children were born at the hospital, and they have long used Valley for their family's healthcare needs. To ensure their support of Valley continues beyond their lifetimes, Tom and Carol



*Carol and Tom Rakowski, M.D.*

have included an unrestricted bequest to The Valley Hospital Foundation in their estate plan to be used for the hospital's areas of greatest need.

"As part of the Valley community, we feel an obligation to support the hospital," they say. No matter the size of the gift, they believe other community members will benefit from contributing to the greater good of the organization.

To learn how we can help you create a life-saving legacy uniquely tailored to your philanthropic and financial goals, visit [valleyhospitalfoundation.giftplans.org](https://valleyhospitalfoundation.giftplans.org) or contact Bettina Daly at 201-291-6193 or [bdaly2@valleyhealth.com](mailto:bdaly2@valleyhealth.com)



Peter and Erica Diestel

## Peter Diestel To Retire as Valley Health System President of Operations

After 28 years of dedicated service to Valley, Peter Diestel, Valley Health System's President of Operations, retired in June. He will continue at Valley as a consultant, assisting in the development of transition plans as Valley moves its inpatient care from Ridgewood to Paramus.

Since his arrival in 1994, Peter held multiple executive roles at the hospital, medical group, and system, providing leadership over virtually every area across the organization, including Valley's COVID-19 response — from the earliest days in March 2020 through multiple waves of the pandemic. His commitment to quality, reliability, and safety helped foster Valley's efforts to be a high reliability organization dedicated to zero patient harm and 100 percent reliability.

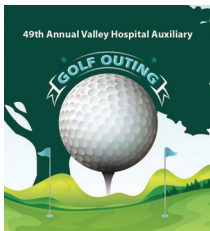
Peter's many accomplishments include leadership positions for the American College of Healthcare Executives, Association of Healthcare Executives of New Jersey, and VHA Mid-Atlantic Board of Directors. Locally, he helped to develop Valley's Ridgewood Academy for Health Professions, operated in partnership with Ridgewood High School and Bergen Community College. The Academy has received recognition from the National Career Academy Coalition and has educated hundreds of students in its 15-year history, several of whom have returned to work at Valley.

As Lifetime Benefactors, Peter and his wife Erica have provided support to The Valley Hospital Foundation. Over the years, they have committed generously to the Auxiliary, the annual fund, past campaigns, and most recently, the Foundation's *Serve. Care. Transform.* campaign in support of The Valley Hospital in Paramus.

With all necessary safety precautions in place, the Auxiliary was thrilled to return to in-person events:



On April 27, the Auxiliary hosted its first **Vegas Night** fundraiser. Over 100 guests attended the event at the Indian Trail Club, which featured casino-style games, food stations, tricky trays, and a silent auction.



On June 6, the Auxiliary hosted the **49th Annual Golf Outing** at The Ridgewood Country Club. Thank you to presenting sponsors Torcon, and Cushman & Wakefield, as well as to the additional sponsors and generous donors for once again making this event a tremendous success!



The Auxiliary's Employee Branch marked Flag Day with their annual **Honor Ceremony** on June 14 in the hospital's Friendship Garden, which was decorated with hundreds of American flags. This year's virtual ceremony featured speakers Dave Bohan, Audrey Meyers, and Employee Branch Chair, Peggy Becher.

*All proceeds from Auxiliary events will support the Auxiliary's pledge of \$3.1 million to establish the Pediatric Section of the Emergency Department of The Valley Hospital in Paramus, and its pledge of \$100,000 to fund an endowment for Valley Home Care's Butterflies — a pediatric in-home palliative and hospice care program for seriously ill children.*

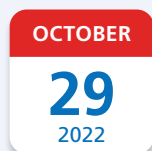
For more information, please visit: [www.ValleyHealth.com/Auxiliary](http://www.ValleyHealth.com/Auxiliary)

## SAVE THE DATE — Mark your calendar!

While we understand the current pandemic situation is ever-changing, we hope you will mark your calendars for the following:



The 2nd Annual  
Sporting Clays Classic  
at Hudson Farms



The Valley Ball  
at The Plaza Hotel



Valley was named the **Best Place to Work in (201) Magazine's Best of Bergen poll**. The Valley Hospital Foundation also **placed as a finalist in the Best Nonprofit category**. This year, nearly 210,000 nominations and votes were cast in the annual poll, which asks readers to vote for their favorites throughout Bergen County.



The Valley Hospital has once again received an **"A" grade for patient safety from The Leapfrog Group**, making it one of only 30 hospitals in New Jersey to do so. This recognition, Valley's 18th, distinguishes Valley as one of the safest hospitals in the United States.



The Valley Hospital has once again been designated an **"LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader," the highest recognition given by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation**. The recipients of this prestigious recognition were published in the 15th edition of the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI). The HEI is a national LGBTQ+ benchmarking tool that evaluates healthcare facilities' policies and procedures related to providing equitable care and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, guests, and employees. As an *LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader*, Valley has earned the top score of 100 in each of the areas evaluated.



Peter Diestel, Valley's President of Operations, is the **recipient of the New Jersey Hospital Association's (NJHA) 2022 Distinguished Service — Operational Excellence Award** in recognition of his 27 years of extraordinary leadership at Valley. The Distinguished Service — Operational Excellence Award recognizes executive leaders who have demonstrated, according to the NJHA, "integrity and superior leadership in improving their organization's overall performance and service to patients, residents, and community members." Peter's roles in leading Valley during COVID-19 and through our journey to become a high reliability organization, among many other achievements, make him a natural choice for this recognition.



Audrey Meyers, President and CEO of Valley Health System, has been named to **ROI-NJ's annual "ROI Influencers: Women in Business" list**. This marks the first year of her inclusion in the ROI Influencers list, which features best-in-industry leaders who are known for being trailblazers and forward thinkers.



Charles Vannoy, DNP, MBA, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, HN-BC®, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at The Valley Hospital, has been awarded the **Rutgers School of Nursing Alumni Association's 2022 Outstanding Alumni Award**. This prestigious award is bestowed upon nursing alumni who have made a significant impact in the world of nursing. Selected for his proven clinical acumen, his commitment to excellence in clinical practice, and his stellar leadership, Charles was also recognized for enhancing staff communication via the use of innovative technology, allowing all members of a patient's care team — nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, case managers, physical therapists, and pharmacists — to communicate more efficiently and effectively using just one communication platform.



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