

# SidelySide

FALL • 2014

**Heal a Patient,  
Heal a Community**

NCH ED Gives Back

Unlocking the Secrets  
of Healthy Aging

Helping Children Reach  
Their Full Potential



**Sutter Health**  
Novato Community  
Hospital





# Heal a Patient, Heal a Community

By Lily Tung Crystal

Ann Wathen has made it her life's work to help others. As the program manager of community and partner relationships, she helps ensure that The Ceres Community Project of Marin achieves its extraordinary mission—teaching local teens how to cook and delivering their healthy meals at no cost to cancer patients every week. To keep this work alive, the 61-year-old San Rafael resident goes into her neighborhood and reaches out to farmers, grocers and other local businesses that may want to be partners with Ceres. But last year, osteoarthritis in her right hip kept her from doing the job she loves.

"I was in so much pain that I couldn't even walk seven houses down the street," Ann recalls. Her doctor recommended that she have hip replacement surgery and told her that the best person for the job was orthopedic surgeon Robert Mayle, M.D. "He's a kind doctor who makes time for you," says Ann. "He cares about you as a person."

## Comprehensive, Holistic Care

Dr. Mayle practices at NCH's Total Joint Replacement Program—a comprehensive service that follows every patient not only through surgery, but also through recovery and physical therapy.

Once Ann set foot in NCH's beautiful facility, she knew that it was the hospital for her. "I had never experienced anything like it before—it felt holistic, patient-centered," she says. "Since I'm in social services, I'm all about relating to people and making the world a better place, and NCH has that vibe. Everybody without exception was lovely, and I wasn't the only one who had a good experience."

Ann's husband Wally was concerned about Ann's surgery, and the staff took care of him as well, making sure that he understood her treatment every step of the way. "We recognize that it's not just the patient that's

going through surgery. It's also husbands, parents, children..." says Jennifer Lehr, director of NCH's orthopedic service line.

## From Surgery Through Recovery

Ann's surgery took just a few hours and went more smoothly than she ever expected. "It was incredible that on the day of my surgery I was up on my feet and walking," she says. Two days later, Ann was discharged, but her care didn't stop there.

Through Sutter Care at Home, NCH ensures that patients can start in-home physical therapy (PT) on the day of their discharge. After a few weeks of recovery at home, patients then transition seamlessly to NCH's outpatient department Physical Therapy and Sports Fitness.

There, Ann bonded quickly with physical therapist Susanne De Costerd, but partway through, she needed to go out of town to care for her ailing mother. As a result, her PT occurred sporadically. Yet Susanne was always there for her. "I love that lady," says Susanne. "It was a tough time for Ann not only physically but also emotionally. Yet she always remained positive and made a lot of progress with her rehab."

## Full Circle

Now 10 months after her surgery, Ann is feeling like her old self again—hiking, walking, and going out into the community so that people in need can get the food that heals them.

"If you look at Ann now, you'd never know she had surgery," marvels Jennifer Lehr. "What goes around comes around. She has all this goodwill in the work she does, and in turn she receives goodwill."

"It's incredible how I'm feeling," says Ann. "My surgery was a miracle." ❀

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# NCH's Emergency Department Staff Heal Patients While Giving Back

*By George Nevin*

The man in his 40s appeared dazed as he wandered into Novato Community Hospital by a back door. He barely made it to the Emergency Department before collapsing in full cardiac arrest. The medical team swarmed around him, restarting his heart and prepping him to be transported to a specialty cardiac center.

"He was a father with young kids, and he'd been playing soccer that day," says Dennis O'Leary, director of the NCH Emergency Department. "He should not have survived – but he did. We frequently get thank-you cards from people like him."

The NCH ED is an unusual place to work, and a vital resource for the community, according to Dennis and to David Thompson, M.D., co-medical director of the ED. Dr. Thompson says, "I've worked at several emergency departments, and Novato is unique in how well the staff and physicians get along and collaborate. Everyone works together and has the patients' best interests in mind."

NCH has unusually robust emergency capabilities for a community hospital. Dennis points to the hospital's stroke care accreditation by the Joint Commission, which certifies hospitals nationwide. Within a year of establishing its stroke program, NCH was awarded a Stroke Bronze Achievement Award by the American Heart Association.

Other recognitions include a Guardian of Excellence award from hospital patient satisfaction surveyor Press Ganey for reaching the 95th percentile in satisfaction.

Emergency Department staff and physicians feel so strongly about their mission that they are donors as well as employees. For the past two years, physicians and staff have given generously to help purchase 33 advanced patient monitors for the ED, Intensive Care Unit and Medical-Surgical Unit.

Dr. Thompson ticks off the new equipment's advantages: "They're portable, easier to use than the monitors they replaced, and add another level of patient safety."

Without support from community donors, "it would be tough to maintain a top-notch hospital and Emergency Department," says Dr. Thompson. "Donations from the community are critically important. It's expensive to deliver high-quality care, and we constantly need to upgrade equipment."


But the cost of upgrades can seem low when they help NCH's medical professionals achieve "a really good save," Dr. Thompson says. "I can't help but remember the woman who came into the ED and went into cardiac arrest. Everyone descended on her and resuscitated her. She survived, but if she'd collapsed in the parking lot, she would not have made it."

**For information on giving to Novato Community Hospital, please visit our website at [novatocommunity.org](http://novatocommunity.org) or email [walkermd@sutterhealth.org](mailto:walkermd@sutterhealth.org).** ❖



# Sutter's Family Medicine Practice in Marin is a Resource for Back-to-School Preparedness

By Gary Quackenbush



Preparing to return to school involves lifestyle choices that affect a child's academic performance, according to Patty Glatt, M.D., a family physician in the Sutter satellite office at 1350 South Eliseo Drive, Suite 220, in Greenbrae, California.

She works with specialists, including OB/GYN, psychiatry, breast surgery, cardiac electrophysiology and integrative medicine. Together they focus on family wellness from infancy to the elderly.

"Many believe physical exams are all kids need before school begins, but home environment and parental involvement also impact student health," Dr. Glatt says. "Here are some tips that can support school success."

Eating meals together positively impacts scholastic achievement and helps reduce child obesity and delinquency. Family mealtime leads to positive interactions and improved psychological well-being. If it is challenging to get the family together at dinnertime, try sharing breakfasts, or any activity when family can gather regularly.

Overscheduling can drain inner resources kids need for healthy adjustment and development. School-age children need 9-10 hours of sleep nightly. Quality sleep builds brainpower, improves attention span and stimulates mental alertness.

Keep the TV, computer and cell phone out of the bedroom to make it conducive to study and quality sleep. More than two hours of "screen time" can increase anxiety and reduce social and academic success. Monitor social media usage and educate tweens and teens about the dangers of cyberbullying, "sexting" and posting personal information on public networks.

Exercise (45-60 minutes a day) improves health, mood, learning and academic performance. Walking the dog, biking to school and group sports are good sources of exercise. Place a greater emphasis on active play instead of competition and winning.

"In all matters, it is consistent effort, not the outcome, that is important," Dr. Glatt stresses.

Expect your child to participate in age-appropriate family chores – setting the table, putting away toys, feeding pets, cleaning rooms. This instills confidence and teaches self-reliance that carries over into school competency. Helping to prepare healthy meals develops good attitudes toward food and better nutritional choices that support mental acuity.

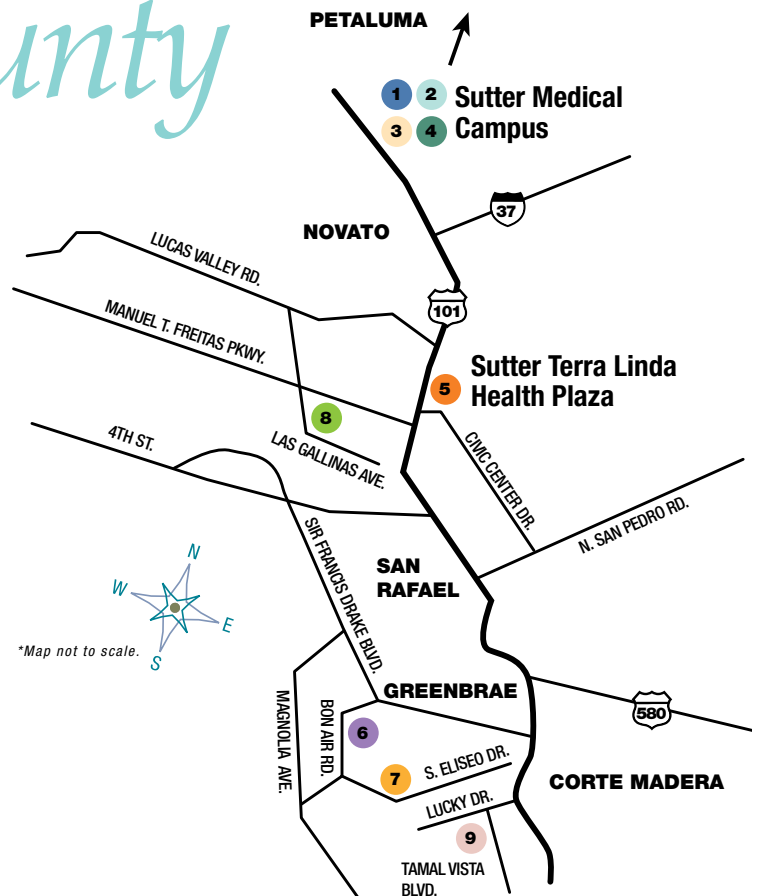
Properly illuminated, uncluttered study areas foster better retention when learning is engaged, and inviting school friends over to study together is more fun.

"Our practitioners cover the most common medical issues and other factors that affect family health — including school success. At Sutter, we address the whole person at each stage of life," says Dr. Glatt.

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