

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

# Sharing Spirits

NorthShore University HealthSystem honors 10 employees for sharing their talents with the greater community.

By Barb Hailey

Every day, the nearly 9,000 employees and physicians of NorthShore University HealthSystem (NorthShore) demonstrate their knowledge and compassion to patients. Many employees also go above and beyond their traditional workday by volunteering with nonprofit organizations to help these groups strengthen communities—locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

For their commitment to the community outside hospital walls, 10 employees were recently honored with NorthShore’s annual Sharing Spirit Award. Those who were chosen each received a \$500 contribution to the volunteer organization they support.

Since 2003, John Volkening, a mental health therapist at NorthShore’s Evanston Hospital, has been traveling to Colombia, South America, as part of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). This organization takes trained peacemakers to areas of conflict in the world to meet and work with other people committed to nonviolence. Volkening is in the middle of his second three-year commitment volunteering as a reservist with CPT leading delegations of peacemaking teams.

“I view ‘the community’ as the larger world, rather than just this area,” Volkening said. “With Christian Peacemaker Teams,



Sharing Spirit award winner John Volkening, a mental health therapist at NorthShore’s Evanston Hospital, volunteers with Christian Peacemaker Teams and leads delegations of peacemaking teams to Columbia.

I am able to apply all of the skills I have learned through my work at NorthShore. It has been a gift to work with so many wonderful and inspiring individuals struggling to breathe more life and hope into the world.”

As a financial counselor who helps patients navigate complex health insurance issues, Yemisi Hester-Tolliver admits it is “my calling to work with people who need help.” After her job responsibilities are done at NorthShore’s Evanston Hospital, Hester-

Tolliver changes hats to volunteer with Community Works and Sports Alternative in Chicago’s Austin neighborhood where she lives. The 20-year-old organization helps at-risk youth develop important life skills through sports and neighborhood violence prevention.

Hester-Tolliver draws on her experiences being involved with her son’s activities to help other children in the program. “Many kids don’t have mentors,” she said. “They need caring adults with whom they can share their accomplishments or provide them with good advice.”

The other 2009 Sharing Spirit Award winners and the organizations they support include: Pamela Barber, Evanston Chapter of the Gift of Hope and Tissue Donor Network; Heather Costello, M.D., The Village Medical Project (Africa and South America); Sheryl Brown, Greater Wheeling Area Youth Outreach; Amy Kelly, The Orphan Foundation of America; Donna Krickl, RN, MS, American Cancer Society; Sheila Linderman, Hadassah/Children’s Hospital Israel and Wings Foundation for Battered Women; Sarah Rabbitt, RN, BSN, LYDIA Home Association; and Chongsoo Yim-Kovanda, Northfield Presbyterian Church. **C**

### Upcoming Foundation Events

#### 14th Annual Myra Rubenstein Weis Health

#### Resource Center

#### Benefit Luncheon

May 5, 2010

Highland Park Country Club

*Healing in the Future*

(847) 926-5003

northshore.org/mrw

#### The Hospitals’ Gala

June 12, 2010

The Westin Chicago North Shore

*Tropical Notes*

(847) 570-5041

northshore.org/gala