

# Diversity & Inclusion

U P D A T E

FALL 2021



What a journey these last two years have been. In the wise words of Amanda Gorman, “We faced the ‘belly of the beast.’” Just when there were signs of emerging from COVID-19, we still find ourselves being vigilant about mask wearing, social distancing in breakrooms and other areas, and missing many of our co-workers. I am reminded that, *“Even the darkest night will end, and the sun will rise”* (Victor Hugo). During these tough times, let’s lean on our amazing culture, which is what sets us apart. Let’s be good to each other. Let’s check in with one another. It’s okay to not be okay. It’s okay to ask for help – help is healthy. If you need additional support, Crouse’s HelpPeople employee assistance program is available as a benefit to you and your family. Call 315-470-7447.

I hope you will enjoy this edition, where we highlight National Hispanic Heritage Month and Deaf Awareness Month, with the spotlight on two of our own Crouse Health team members. If you missed our last update, I encourage you to visit the D&I section on the CNN intranet or at [crouse.org/diversity](https://crouse.org/diversity).

Stay safe,  
Twiggy Eure  
Director of Diversity & Inclusion

## D&I Resource Corner

For a list of books relative to Hispanic Heritage Month and Deaf Awareness Month, [click here](#).

## We will never forget “The Princess”

The D&I Committee and Crouse family was saddened to hear of the passing of one of the founding D&I Committee members, Veronica Clanton, aka “The Princess.” If you knew Veronica, you knew exactly what she wanted you to know. She was dedicated to her work in Patient Access and in the Business Office. She passionately served and loved Crouse and the 1199SEIU family until her recent retirement after 27 years of service. Her laugh, smile and mood was contagious! We will cherish the time we had with Veronica, along with the memories. She will truly be missed.



## Synergy Partnership

Several Crouse Health leaders virtually hosted six interns (pictured below) from the local Synergy Program (a program hosted by Mercy Works, Inc. at the Clarence Jordan Vision Center in Syracuse) over the summer. Each mentor met with their mentee (named below) at least three times. Special thanks to Seth Kronenberg, MD (Nidaa Aljabbarin); Jameson Crumb, MSBMS, PA-C (Irumva Kabayiza); Jennifer Watkins, MS, CPHQ (Mugabo Jules Nshimiye); Viren Kaul, MD (Hadeel AlQoronz and Hawa Omar); and David Moorthi, MD (Maryam Almafrachi) for making time in their busy schedules for these bright minds. For more information on the program, [click here](#). Additional opportunities will be available next year. If you’d like to become a mentor, please contact Twiggy Eure at [twiggyeure@crouse.org](mailto:twiggyeure@crouse.org).



# Celebrating Hispanic Heritage

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 to honor and celebrate the history, culture, influence, achievements, and contributions of U.S. Latino and Hispanic communities. To help commemorate this wonderful month, meet Patient Transporter Melissa Duran.

Melissa is a native Ecuadorian born and raised in “Quito,” the capitol of Ecuador. She describes her country as being located in the middle of the world with more than 70 volcanos, with 27 of them still active. Using a statement once said by German geographer Alexander Von Humboldt, she beautifully speaks of her native Ecuadorian people: “Ecuadorians are rare and unique who sleep peacefully in the middle of crunchy volcanoes, live poorly in the midst of incomparable richness and rejoice with sad music.”

Melissa arrived in the United States (Queens, NY) eight years ago in pursuit of furthering her educational goal of studying medicine and one day becoming a surgeon.

When asked what her first impression was when she arrived in America, she states, “I felt like I was in a movie when I first arrived as it was snowing and that was something new for me as I had only seen it on television.”



Melissa has diligently accomplished many successful goals since arriving in America, such as becoming bilingual; obtaining both an associate degree and bachelor's degree in biology; and fulfilling her dream of working in a hospital setting. One of her biggest challenges since leaving Ecuador is being far from her family and friends as they play a vital role in her life and culture.

When asked if she liked being Hispanic, she states, “Love it, because Hispanics have the flavor in our blood, romance in the language, and family in our hearts.” Melissa is very proud of her Ecuadorian heritage and is dedicated to her culture, as she is always promoting her strong ties to Ecuador and shares the fact that she hangs an image of her country on the walls of her home for everyone to see.

Melissa's career at Crouse is just beginning, but she has already gained a sense that Hispanic culture is well received and promoted throughout the organization. She experiences it when she interacts with patients and coworkers within the hospital, and when they hear her strong Hispanic accent they get excited and want to speak to her in Spanish, which makes her feel good and very welcomed here at Crouse.



Crouse Health was proud to partner with the Syracuse Onondaga Chapter of the NAACP to promote health and wellness at the NYS Fair this year. Community Engagement, Addiction Treatment Services, and Human Resources represented Crouse and provided information about services, available jobs, and information about vaccines as part of our ongoing partnership with the Healthcare Education Project supported through 1199 SEIU and GNYHA (Greater NY Hospital Association). We'd like to thank all of the Crouse Health team members who stopped through The Van Robinson Pan-African Village during the NYS Fair.

## Coming Soon

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee has embarked on an exciting special project. Several local artists have been selected to create pieces that highlight the diversity of the Crouse workforce. Their work, scheduled for completion this fall, will be on display in the Irving basement hallway area. This initiative will visually underscore the importance and value of a diverse healthcare workforce. A Crouse Health Foundation fundraising campaign led by board member Melvin Stith, PhD, is underway to provide funding for the project. For more information, contact D&I Director, Twiggy Eure, x12762.

## NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

National Recovery Month is held every September to increase awareness and understanding of mental illness and substance use disorders, and to celebrate the millions of Americans living in recovery. This observance reinforces the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.



# Deaf Awareness Month

September is Deaf Awareness Month, a time to celebrate the rich cultural history of the deaf community, and continue the work of advocating for the rights of deaf people everywhere.

Meet Brian Brothers, Aide/Attendant in Environmental Services.



**Q: How long have you worked at Crouse Hospital?**

A: 21 years

**Q: What do you like about working here?**

A: A-Z, I like it all.

**Q: What challenges do you face as a deaf person working in a hospital?**

A: Masks have made it harder to communicate because deaf people rely on reading lips and body language.

**Q: Were you born deaf?**

A: Yes, my mother had the German measles when she was pregnant with me, causing me to be born deaf.

**Q: Anyone else in your family deaf?**

A: My wife.

**Q: What do you like about being deaf?**

A: I like that I am a sarcastic person and people joke with me. Sometimes I worry about my deaf humor coming off wrong to people who don't understand the culture.

**Q: How do you communicate with hearing people in public?**

A: I write notes back and forth, sometimes I use my phone. It makes it easier instead of making people guess.

**Q: Are people receptive to that?**

A: Yes, once I tell people I am deaf they understand.

**Q: How did you communicate before cell phones and video chat features?**

A: In the old days they gave me a pager for work. For making phone calls, you had to go through an operator who read your typed message and relayed it to the person you were calling. (TTY-teletypewriter)

**Q: Do you celebrate deaf awareness month?**

A: I do. There is usually one day that is deaf awareness day, but I don't know what day it is this year. (I googled it, and it happened to be Sept. 9).

Below is a list to answer one of the most popular deaf-related questions on the internet: where can I learn sign language?\*

- Sign language is not universal. Why not? Because sign languages develop naturally in communities, the same way spoken languages do. Sign languages aren't artificially created, nor are they gifts given to deaf people by hearing ones—they're fully-realized, complex languages with their own grammars, syntaxes and vocabularies.
- In North America, the primary sign language used is American Sign Language (ASL).
- There is an International Sign language that was artificially created (by deaf people) to communicate worldwide, in situations like the United Nations—think Esperanto.
- According to the World Federation of the Deaf, more than 200 signed languages are used worldwide!
- Since signed languages are created by deaf people, they are not related to the spoken languages used in the same areas. For example, ASL and British Sign Language (BSL) are very different, even though many people in America and the UK use the same spoken language, English.
- When learning sign language, you should always seek out a deaf teacher.

\* According to the Communication Service for the Deaf

We would like to thank Brian for sharing his insightful interview. The D&I Committee is committed to ongoing education and training about ways to ensure that we are enhancing accessibility for all.

# COVID-19 Vaccination

Becoming educated about COVID-19, the vaccination and COVID-positive activity in our community and in the hospital is important. We need to remain vigilant about mask wearing, social distancing in breakrooms and other areas, and not bringing in food. Please contact Employee Health if you have any questions. If you missed the recent town hall virtual session with Dr. Stephen Thomas, it can still be accessed via the CNN home page.

For the latest COVID-19 information from many sources, visit [crouse.org/coronavirus](https://crouse.org/coronavirus). Also, you may want to read an article by Dr. Tolani Ajagbe about the vaccine [here](#).

## SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

Each September, organizations and individuals unite to promote suicide prevention awareness, shift the public perception, and spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

## D&I Committee

### Members

**John Bergemann**, Director of Human Resources

**Mark Caccavale**, Nurse Manager, 7 Memorial

**Allison Duggan, MD**, Clinical Quality Medical Director, Quality Improvement

**Twiggy Eure**, Director of Diversity & Inclusion; Chair, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

**Corey Giannone**, CD Therapist I, Addiction Treatment Services

**Rebecca Howden**, Manager, Environmental Services

**Kevin Johnson, MD**, Psychiatrist, Addiction Treatment Services

**Queen Lane**, CD Therapist I, Addiction Treatment Services

**Laurie Leonard**, Registered Nurse, Addiction Treatment Services

**Rev. Katherine Lufkin Day**, Managing Chaplain, Rosamond Gifford Spiritual Care Center

**Amanda Marsh**, Registered Nurse, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

**Manuel McCoy**, IT, Clinical Support Specialist, Information Technology

**Kathleen Miller-Murphy**, Director, Women's Health Integration, Community Engagement

**Tawyna Montgomery**, Patient Access Representative, Patient Access

**Dennis Sanabria**, Manager, Patient Access

**Frankie Sanabria**, Patient Care Transporter, Patient Transport

**Karen Sigona**, Quality Improvement Analyst, Quality Improvement

**Tonya Swift-Freeman**, Cardiac Registrar, Cardiac Services Administration

**Thomas Tarbox**, Educational Coordinator, Educational Services

**Terry Zahler**, Educational Coordinator, Educational Services

## Volunteer Opportunities in our Community

### Peace Inc.

[www.peace-caa.org](http://www.peace-caa.org) | 315-470-3369 x361

### Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

- Must be over the age of 18
- Criminal Background Check
- Provide three personal or professional references, attend an orientation session, be interviewed, and commit to a child for one year, spending at least 6 hours a month

### Dunbar Center

1453 S State St., Syracuse, NY 13205 | 315-760-3155

Visit [syracusedunbarcenter.org](http://syracusedunbarcenter.org) to learn about the organization and complete the 'sign up to volunteer' online form.

### If We Eat They Eat (We Rise Above the Streets)

Billings Park, S. Salina & E. Adams St., Syracuse, NY 13202

11 a.m. – Noon bagged lunches are distributed to community

Prepare bagged sandwiches at home. Restaurant donations also accepted. Other donations accepted as we head into fall/winter (socks and hygiene items for men, women, and children).

### InterFaith Works Center for New Americans

Mentor a refugee family by becoming an English tutor or coaching a refugee through writing a resume for a first job in America. Call 315-449-3552, ext. 208 for details.

### MercyWorks

Synergy Summer Program – Mentors needed

Contact Twiggy Eure at [twiggyeure@crouse.org](mailto:twiggyeure@crouse.org) for more information.

### Syracuse City School District/Partners for Education & Business, Inc.

Henninger's Career Coaching – Virtual Coaches Needed for 9th & 10th grade Health Professions & Clinical Lab Tech Students

Contact Twiggy Eure at [twiggyeure@crouse.org](mailto:twiggyeure@crouse.org) for more information.

## Crouse Employee Referral Program

Spread the word! As an employee, you have inside knowledge about your profession and what it means to work at Crouse. Crouse Health has immediate entry level positions available and we are seeking dynamic individuals to join our growing diverse and inclusive organization. The Applicant Referral Program (ARP) is an opportunity to earn a bonus, help a friend or peer find a rewarding career and ensure that Crouse Health continues to employ diverse people who demonstrate our mission, vision and values. The ARP is a way for Crouse to reward you for referring qualified employees and helping us fill open positions. This program is open to any current employee and provides \$2,000 for an RN referral and \$1,000 for a non-RN referral.



**Hiring Today!**

**\$500 Sign-on Bonus**

**Support Services**

- Environmental Services
- Nutritional Services
- Materials Techs
- Patient Access/Admitting

Generous Benefits | Flexible Scheduling  
Supportive Working Environment

Join the Crouse Family—apply today! [crouse.org/careers](http://crouse.org/careers)

Crouse Health values diversity among its employees, patients, families and the communities we serve. Our mission calls for us to provide the best in patient care. Every person is entitled to human rights without discrimination. We embrace and support this basic right within the Crouse healthcare system and in our community. Treating each individual with respect and dignity is part of the Crouse mission, vision and values; our guiding principle of *Carepassion*; and our diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

