

Winter 2018



## HCA Supports Toys for Tots

New, unwrapped toys were donated to Marine Corps Toys for Tots. The collection took place at 3333 Hylan Boulevard at the Orthopedics front desk. Coordinated by Laura Isolda, Director of Clinical Services, this is the first year HCA has participated and the staff looks forward to participating again next year to make the holidays special for Island kids in need.



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- HCA Launches Neuroscience Walk-In Center
- Education is Key at HCA
- Expressions of Gratitude
- Celebrating the Holidays
- A Very Special Reunion
- A Fall Tradition

### EXTRA :

- Dr. John Reilly Honored
- Employee Flu Shots
- Welcome New Providers to the HCA Family

## HCA Gives Thanks to Our Troops

"We are honored and grateful for the sacrifices made to keep us safe."

The Occupational & Hand Therapy Department sent hand-written (and hand-shaped!) cards to the U.S. troops overseas to brighten their holiday.

## HCA Launches Neuroscience Walk-In Center



**O**ctober 2nd, 2017 marked the debut of HCA's second Walk-In Center. Building on the success of the Orthopedic Walk-In Center (3333 Hylan Boulevard) which opened in 2013, HCA has now opened a Neuroscience Walk-In Center. Located on the 2nd floor of 3311 Hylan Boulevard in the Pain Management suite, with registration at the front desk, the Neuroscience Walk-In is the first of its kind in the entire country. The Center sees urgent back, head and neck pain and injuries and possible concussions (new injuries only). Feedback has been positive, with patients reporting they appreciate the convenience of not having to make an appointment or sitting in a crowded hospital emergency room. Many patients are being referred through primary care doctors, friends and family, and the HCA Orthopedic Walk-In next door. Patients can expect to be evaluated, then treated accordingly, with most being referred for diagnostic exams like MRI. This is a major difference from the Orthopedic Walk-In, because there many complaints can be evaluated and/or tested on the spot (tests are mainly X-rays which we can do same day.) Neuroscience Walk-In patients are typically scheduled for a revisit with one of HCA's Neurology, Neurosurgery or Pain Management physicians for further diagnosis. Please share any patient feedback with us at [g.schlagel@hca-si.com](mailto:g.schlagel@hca-si.com)

A full press release can be found our home page on HCA-SI.com under "Current News & PR."

## Attn: HCA Employees Flu Shots Are Available

It's still Flu Season! Take advantage while you still can and help prevent the spread of this epidemic. If you would like to receive a free flu shot, contact Monica Debruycker, RN via ext. 280 or 339.



**DR. JOHN P. REILLY**

Orthopedic Surgeon

## MVP

Congratulations to Dr. John P. Reilly! He was recognized with the 2017 Joe Ryan Memorial Award for his 30 years as a board certified orthopedic surgeon on Staten Island, and for serving as team physician for the Staten Island Yankees, Wagner College, and Msgr. Farrell, Moore Catholic, New Dorp, Port Richmond, St. Joseph-by-the-Sea and SI Technical High Schools. The award was presented October 7, 2017 at the Old Bermuda Inn.

# "Education is Key" at HCA

## COMMUNITY SEMINAR: LOWER BACK PAIN

*Doctors Alastra and Raval Present on Sacroiliac Joint Treatment Options*



**DR. AMI RAVAL**  
Neurosurgeon



**DR. ANTHONY J. ALASTRA**  
Neurosurgeon

Healthcare Associates hosted two free educational seminars for people suffering from lower back pain. On October 12th, Dr. Anthony Alastra presented, with Dr. Ami Raval presenting on October 25th. Discussion topics included potential causes of sacroiliac joint dysfunction, symptoms, treatment options and new diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Co-sponsored by SI-Bone, Inc., the events were well-attended and included time for direct Q&A with the surgeons. For more information on sacroiliac joint diagnosis and alternative treatments, or to make a consultation appointment with Dr. Alastra or Dr. Raval call (718) 448-3210.

### ON AIR

On December 12th, HCA neurosurgeon Anthony J. G. Alastra was interviewed on the talk radio show, "Health Check." As the guest health expert on the daily WSRQ-FM Sarasota show, Dr. Alastra discussed brain aneurysm and stroke. The podcast can be heard on [www.hca-si.com](http://www.hca-si.com) under "Current News & PR."



**MARIE E. BRIODY, PH.D**  
Neuropsychological Services



**LINDSAY MIARMI, PH.D**  
Neuropsychological Services

## GETTING M.O.R.E. RELIEF: HCA GIVES FREE WORKSHOP ON INNOVATIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

HCA offered its pain management patients a free weekly workshop to learn how to be less dependent on medication for chronic pain relief. Lindsay Miarmi, Ph.D taught a group the basics of the innovative, behavioral-based "M.O.R.E." technique, which was developed by renowned clinical researcher Eric L. Garland, Ph.D. Participants learned new methods to help them reduce and cope with pain and stress, gain control over negative thoughts and focus on positive thoughts and feeling. Dr. Miarmi states, "Personally, I loved leading the group and found it to be a rewarding experience not only for the patients but for my own individual and professional development as well." The workshop ran every Saturday for eight weeks from October 21st through the end of December and will be offered again in the spring. Call 718-448-3210 ext. 441 for more information..



# Expressions of Gratitude

We've added a new feature to the HCA website: "What Our Patients Are Saying" - excerpts from patient thank you letters, notes, emails and phone calls. Here are a few:

"Lindsay is amazing. She has a genuine concern for my well-being. She remembers everything about me. She is a true asset to your company and you should have more like her."

HCA Pain Management Patient,  
9/13/2017

Dr. Lin was excellent  
and his staff was  
outstanding!

HCA Neurology Patient,  
12/16/2017

"I've had two interactions with Dr. Ruggiero and feel as though I've known him forever...he's informative, has a great personality, welcomes any questions and responds to phone calls almost immediately. I also really think the staff are great and friendly and complements the Doctor perfectly!!"

HCA Orthopedic Patient,  
12/24/2017

"Adam Brucoleri is fabulous, compassionate and so easy to talk to. He definitely makes a difference there. Also wanted to compliment Dominic who went out of his way to help me and Angelo, the x-ray tech was wonderful."

HCA Orthopedic Patient,  
2017

Dr. Briody was attentive,  
caring and right on the  
money with her diagnosis  
and recommendations.

HCA Neuropsychology  
Patient, 8/16/2017

For more Expressions of Gratitude from our patients, please see the bottom of the homepage at HCA-SI.com or either of the two listed websites: RateMDs.com or Healthgrades.com.

## Welcome to the HCA Family!



Pediatric neuropsychologist Kayla Downing, PhD joined HCA in October, 2017. She sees patients in the Bay Ridge Brooklyn office under the direction of Dr. Briody. Dr. Downing received her PhD in School Psychology from Texas Woman's University in Denton, TX, and earned her Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Texas Christian University and her Master of Arts in Theological Studies from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. She completed her postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at the PROMISE program at Columbia University Medical Center/New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Dr. Downing has previous experience conducting neuropsychological assessments and providing therapeutic interventions in clinical, school, and community mental health settings. She has additional experience working as a case manager in a transitional housing program serving families living with homelessness.

Healthcare Associates in Medicine is pleased to welcome Teresa Branham, OTD, OTR/L and Christopher DeMario, OTR/L to the staff. Teresa and Christopher will be working closely with occupational therapist Bart Zylewicz, OTR/L under the leadership of certified hand therapist, Mona Samaan, OTR/L, CHT.

From left to right:  
Christopher DeMario,  
Mona Samaan  
and Teresa Branham





# A Fall Tradition: Halloween Costume Contest At HCA

HCA staff at all sites participated in the annual Halloween Costume Contest. Friendly competition was celebrated with all of our offices showing their creative sides! Group team winners received a pizza party while individual winners received a \$25 Amazon gift card. We are open to ideas and suggestions for next year! Please share with Nicole Puglia, Director of Human Resources at ext. 174 or Gina Schlagel, Director of Marketing & Communications at ext. 178.



**Arthur Kill - Administration (Above & Right):**  
 Funniest - Authorization/Surgical Scheduling/Coding - "Emojis"  
 Most Creative - Rose G., Marie A., Lina M., Marie T., Virginia A., and Jadwiga K., Marie V. and Corrine from Billing - "The Rainbow Crew"  
 Scariest - Ileana S. - "Morticia"

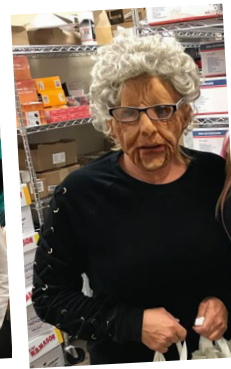


## 3311 - Neurology & Pain Management (Left):

Funniest - Marissa M. - "Picnic Table"  
 Most Creative - Andrea S., Laurie M., Front Desk and Medical Assistant Staff and Dr. Rowe - "Staten Island High School Team Sports Players"  
 Scariest - Jenn B. - "Chicken Cord on Blue"

## 3333 - Orthopedics (Right):

Funniest - Josephine C. and Cathy B. - "Peter Pan and his Shadow"  
 Most Creative - Azra M. - "Starbucks Drink"  
 Scariest - Roe T. - "Creepy Old Lady"



## Targee - Pain Management & Neuroscience (Left):

Funniest - Medical Records Department - "1980's Rock Band"  
 Most Creative - Chris C. - "Squints" (from the movie *The Sandlot*) and Ramiro M. as Keanu Reeves in "John Wick"  
 Scariest - Dania T. and Alicia C. - "Pirates"



# Celebrating the Holidays



Once again, the annual HCA Holiday Party took place on December 13th at the Staaten. This beloved tradition is something our staff looks forward to every year, celebrating another year of caring for Staten Island! A group of over 200 enjoyed catching up with co-workers and friends at the cocktail party, dinner, and of course on the dance floor!



The holiday spirit continued with HCA staff (pics on the right and bottom) hosting departmental Holiday Bakes, Kris Kringle and White Elephant gift exchanges, Ugly Sweater Contests and Suite Decorating Contests!





# A Very Special Reunion

On a typical weekday, Annette Christie, HCA Communication Specialist since May of 2015, can be found wearing a headset, juggling patient appointments and routing some of the hundreds of calls a day that come through the HCA Communications Center. It's not an easy job, but Annette knows firsthand the importance of getting patients in quickly to see the right doctor. Almost 15 years ago, Annette was the worried mom on the other end of the line.

"My son Jared showed developmental delays for almost two years but his pediatrician never sent him to a neurologist. I still knew something was wrong. At 23 months he started vomiting and began falling, so I made an appointment on my own to see a pediatric neurologist I had heard about, Dr. Steven Schwartzberg at Healthcare Associates. I was happy to get an appointment for a few days later, but the next day Jared could not hold down any food or liquids, he had no tears, a dry diaper and would not stop crying. I was so scared. Jared was admitted to the hospital and the next day, Dr. Schwartzberg came to see him there. He listened patiently as I explained everything and within five minutes he had ordered an MRI, which showed a tumor growing in Jared's brain. Dr. Schwartzberg said, 'I've already spoken with my associate, Dr. Wisoff and made arrangements for you to go to NYU tonight, he'll take care of you.'

"We soon found out Jared had ATRT (Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid Tumor), a rare cancer with a poor prognosis. But we were lucky and surgery proved successful. Jared is one of the only survivors of this disease who did not have to undergo radiation treatment. He even got into a clinical trial through NYU. He's turning 17 this year. He likes school and karate (he's even earned his black belt!) We really owe Jared's life to Dr. Schwartzberg. He was the only doctor that actually listened and believed me."

Fast forward 15 years to the 2017 HCA Holiday Party at the Staaten where a very special reunion finally took place. "I hadn't actually seen Dr. Schwartzberg since he saved Jared. I'd waited eagerly (and a bit nervously) to see him for the last two years at the annual HCA Christmas Party. This year I finally got the chance. My co-worker Pat Palmieri pointed him out to me - it had been so long I wasn't sure I'd recognize him. I walked over to him and said, 'Dr. Schwartzberg, I just wanted to thank you now because I never got to. You saved my son's life when he was a baby. You were the only doctor that listened to me.' He gave me a warm smile, shook my hand, and asked my name and my son's name. I was sure he wouldn't remember us - after all, it was 15 years ago! He said he did and asked how Jared was doing. I'm glad I finally got to tell him what his care meant to us."

Dr. Schwartzberg has been treating adult and pediatric neurology illness and injury for 30 years. Appointments can be made through the HCA Call Center at (718) 448-3210 ext. 100.



**Annette Christie, HCA Communications Specialist, and son Jared**

*many thanks*



**Steven B. Schwartzberg, MD  
Adult & Pediatric Neurologist**





# HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATES in MEDICINE, P.C.

## Mission Statement

To provide service to the Staten Island community and adjacent areas to diagnose, treat and assess all aspects of neurological/neurosurgical, orthopedic and related disorders, diseases and injuries that compromise the health and well-being of those we serve.

**GINA SCHLAGEL**  
Editor

**YAHIRA OCASIO**  
Art Director

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## ADULT & PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGY

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## NEUROSURGERY

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Ami Raval, MD  
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Irina Richardson, RPA-C  
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Lindsay Miarmi, PhD

## PAIN MANAGEMENT

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Hilary W. Alpert, MD  
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## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

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Teresa Branham, OTD, OTR/L

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