

Prov *People* up close and personal with Portland-area employees and volunteers

Karen Masulis, R.N.

Center for Medically Fragile Children, Providence Child Center

On Tuesdays, Karen Masulis, R.N., is the immunization coordinator at CMFC, making sure all children are up to date on their shots. Last year, she arranged for 70 children to have a total of 273 vaccinations, often done with the help of nursing students she mentors from the University of Portland. She also works two days a week as a staff nurse at the center. Because of her work, Karen has received the Provider Award from the Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children. "This award demonstrates the commitment of Providence Child Center to the health of our profoundly disabled and medically complex children," says Jean Wilkinson, R.N., M.S.N., clinical nursing manager at Providence Child Center. Karen also just began a two-year family nurse practitioner program at Washington State University in Vancouver.



Karen Masulis, R.N., Center for Medically Fragile Children, Providence Child Center, hugs CMFC resident Joslyn Hodges.

How did you get to Providence?

I decided to return to nursing four years ago after taking a 15-year break as a stay-at-home mom. I completed the nursing reentry program at Portland Community College, which helped me catch up on all the things that have changed. The last clinical rotation I did was at CMFC, and I was hooked.

How did you become immunization coordinator?

The Infection Control Committee at PCC decided to raise the practice

standard for immunizing the kids. We wanted to implement the latest recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics so we would be ahead of the requirements for school entry in Oregon, which was our previous standard. This wasn't an area I had a lot of expertise in, but they asked me to do it.

How did you get up to speed?

Management was wonderful. They sent me to conferences and made sure I had the resources I needed. The vaccination schedule got pretty complicated because of all the new things out there, so we had

some catching up to do. For example, we decided to give the hepatitis A vaccine even before the schools start requiring it. There's also meningococcal, Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), varicella (chicken pox), and all our kids get flu shots. We've had a very busy year getting all the kids vaccinated.

Are the kids nervous when they see you?

Well, I only give shots one day a week, and I usually ask the other nurses, CNAs and nursing students to help hold the children getting a shot so they're not hurt during an injection. And we don't have to give all their shots at the same time like what's done in the pediatrician's office, because the kids are here every day.

Is it a big challenge to care for nonverbal kids?

Most kids at CMFC don't speak, but you get to know them and understand their nonverbal cues, their facial expressions, and learn what makes them happy. Many have epilepsy, although the seizures can be small and subtle, so you learn to recognize when you need to move a child to a quieter area.

A lot of people think it must be depressing working at CMFC, but that's not true. There are a lot of activities, visitors and field trips – and lots of joy. The kids didn't ask to be like this, but they all have value and deserve to get the best quality of life possible.

Kathi Evans wins Providence ElderPlace Excellence Award



Congratulations to Kathi Evans, day center supervisor for Providence ElderPlace at Cully and the Marie Smith Center, who has been given the Employee Excellence Award for Providence ElderPlace.

This is what those who nominated her had to say:

Kathi is appreciated by all for her commitment to quality. A key member of the ElderPlace team for more than six years, she is respected for her leadership and support of the whole team – aides, rehab, and life

enrichment staff at both locations.

Kathi displays professionalism, compassion and an upbeat approach. She consistently respects all people and genuinely is interested in the other person's point of view.

Kathi has been a driving force behind the diversity program at her locations and within ElderPlace as a whole. She formed the first committees at her sites and ensures that the programs functioned consistently.