



CELEBRATE THE MISSION

As the number of women religious declines, Catholic healthcare facilities often find it difficult to ensure that the mission of their sponsoring religious institute remains central to the facility's services.

The 2,900 employees of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, an 825-bed facility in Baton Rouge, LA, felt the diminishing physical presence of their sponsor, the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady, and the strong Catholic identity they represent. The Mission Effectiveness Committee recognized this and saw it as an opportunity for the sisters and staff to develop a healthcare partnership that would promote Christ's healing ministry while reaffirming the Catholic identity in all aspects of the hospital's services. Toward this end, the Mission Effectiveness Committee commissioned the Mission Effectiveness Education Task Force to develop a method for making real the mission of the sisters and the facility to all its employees.

THE PLANNING PHASE

The education task force convened for the first time in late summer 1991. The nine members had diverse backgrounds, coming from a variety



Mr. Sullivan is education technologist, Education; Ms. Patin is director of nursing, Critical Care; and Ms. Pourciau is assistant director, Tau Center, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA.

A One-Day Workshop Helps Employees Recommit to Their Facility's Mission

BY PETE SULLIVAN,
ROSE MARIE PATIN, RN,
& TRICIA POURCIAU

of medical center departments: nursing, admissions, physical medicine, education, surgery, chemical dependency, and management information systems. None was a newcomer to the facility, and several had been a part of other in-house committees.

The task force's assignment, as identified by the Mission Effectiveness Committee, was to initiate a meaningful, hospital-wide program that would bring Christian values into focus and put the spirit of our mission into daily practice. A comprehensive process titled "Celebrate the

Summary To ensure that the mission of their sponsoring religious institute—the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady—remains central to the facility's services, employees of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge, LA, commissioned the Mission Effectiveness Education Task Force to initiate a meaningful hospital-wide program that would bring Christian values into focus and put the spirit of the mission into daily practice.

The goals of the one-day workshop—"Celebrate the Mission"—are:

- To articulate the central values of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center to all employees
- To promote the Franciscan Missionary of Our Lady's mission of a healthcare ministry
- To acknowledge and celebrate the creation of a vision by the sisters and the staff
- To allow a deep integration of the mission into daily work decisions

To ensure that all of Our Lady of the Lake's 2,900 employees experience Celebrate the Mission, the program is offered twice a month but limited to groups no larger than 35 persons. Many employees, board members, and administrators facilitate Celebrate the Mission sessions.



Mission" was launched 18 months later.

Each step of the planning process was supported by Sr. Linda Constantin, OSF, the task force's liaison with the Mission Effectiveness Committee, which she chaired, and hospital administrators. Without the feedback and encouragement from these sources, Celebrate the Mission would not have gotten off the ground.

Mission Statement When planning the program, task force members first studied and discussed the facility's mission statement:

Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, as a Catholic health care facility, is committed to meeting the health needs of the people of God with compassion, understanding, respect, and dignity. The Medical Center is further dedicated to providing the highest quality health care in a prudent and efficient manner, in accordance with the philosophy of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady.

The message of the mission statement formed the basis for designing Celebrate the Mission.

Program Goals After task force representatives received suggestions and ideas from the Mission Effectiveness Committee, the task force decided that Celebrate the Mission would have the following goals:

- To articulate the central values of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center to all employees
- To promote the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady's mission of a healthcare ministry
- To acknowledge and celebrate the creation of a vision by the sisters and the staff
- To allow a deep integration of the mission into daily work decisions

The task force divided into four groups; each group developed a plan for one program goal. When each group reported back, the task force believed the program could be accomplished.

Values During the program's 18-month planning process, the task force's conversations always seemed to center on values—the administrators' value system, the sisters' value system, or the employees' value systems. When the task force asked, "How do employees develop a sense of ownership of our hospital's mission?" the answer seemed to lie in values and our employees' realization that, although we come from many races, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds, we all have one thing in common—our core values.

The task force believed the best way to help employees attain ownership of the mission was through a one-day workshop that focuses on a comparison of individual values, hospital values,

and the values of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady.

To help employees better understand the values held by the facility's sponsoring religious institute, each task force member spent time (one on one) with a Franciscan sister. The sisters described their religious institute's heritage and the hospital's history, their thoughts about our present-day operation, and their vision for the future. This experience was, in turn, shared with all employees through a videotape produced for the workshop.

THE PROGRAM

To ensure that all of Our Lady of the Lake's 2,900 employees experience Celebrate the Mission, the program is offered twice a month but limited to groups no larger than 35 persons. Many employees, sisters, board members, and administrators of Our Lady of the Lake agreed to facilitate Celebrate the Mission sessions. As part of their commitment, the facilitators participated in intensive training before the program was launched.

A Message from the President Each Celebrate the Mission program begins with a welcome from Robert Davidge, chief executive officer and president of Our Lady of the Lake. This has proven to be one of the more powerful segments of the program. Davidge shares how his life experience has brought him to better understand and share the sponsor's mission. As a result of these talks, employees discover more about Davidge's values, goals, and feelings.

Sharing Thoughts In one of the day's preliminary activities, participants write one word or thought they have about the program and place it on the wall of the meeting room. Participants then take a few minutes to read others' thoughts and words. As a closure exercise, participants write a thought about the day and place it on top of their earlier responses. One participant summed up many employees' thoughts by beginning with "trepidation" and closing with "elation."

Values Program participants then develop a list of the five most important values that guide their personal and professional lives. In small groups, employees discuss these values and come up with five values they believe necessary for them to function as successful human beings. These conversations can become quite lively—for example, when employees debate whether ethical behavior is more important than financial security.

These values are then posted for all the groups to see. In group after group, session after session, facilitators have discovered almost identical responses. Of the 33 sessions conducted to date (1,100 participants), a majority of the groups have

To ensure that
all 2,900
employees
experience the
program, it is
offered twice a
month but
limited to
groups no
larger than 35
persons.



chosen ethical behavior as their most cherished value. Other important values included family life, security, helpfulness, and workmanship.

Next, the groups briefly review Our Lady of the Lake's mission and philosophy statements and identify the values stated in these documents. Participants then compare the values they identified in their groups with the values found in the hospital's documents. Through this process, participants are able to correlate their personal values with those of the hospital.

History To acknowledge and celebrate the creation of a vision by the sisters and the staff, participants are introduced to the history of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady. One of the sisters then describes her background and how she became one of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady. She shares the personal struggles, challenges, and rewards of her religious life. Participants begin to realize that they have the same feelings, goals, desires, wishes, and values as the sisters. The importance of partnership with the sisters in continuing the healing ministry of Jesus is emphasized.

Board Member A hospital board member then addresses participants, helping solidify the partnership of community leaders with the goals and values of the sisters, the hospital, and employees.

A Commitment to Mission In the final portion of the Celebrate the Mission program, employees identify behaviors and attitudes they can improve in their professional life. Those employees wishing to make one or more positive contributions to the mission of our organization commit to continuing or changing a behavior or attitude to bet-

ter promote and celebrate our mission.

If a participant wishes, he or she commits in writing, places the intention in a sealed envelope, and turns it in at the end-of-the-day prayer service. Approximately two months after attending Celebrate the Mission, participants receive their sealed commitment as a reminder of their pledge.


As the day closes, participants gather together to discuss their job roles and how these roles affect the organization's mission. If they wish, participants may join in the prayer service. Each participant receives a tau pin as a symbol of his or her commitment to the mission, just as St. Francis used the tau symbol as a sign of his conversion to the Lord.

**Participants
begin to realize
they have the
same goals and
values as the
sisters.**

WHAT IS NEXT?

Celebrate the Mission was developed and is presented by the medical center's employees for its employees. More than anything else, these facts have had much to do with the program's success.

Department managers tell facilitators that their subordinates have changed (see **Box**). Several participants have become facilitators and others are asking, "What's next?" With just more than one-third of employees having attended Celebrate the Mission, sessions are scheduled through 1995. In addition, another task force has begun to identify "Experience the Mission"—the next phase of our ongoing process. A true partnership is developing between the sisters and the staff to bring life to the mission. □

 For more information about Celebrate the Mission, contact Sr. Linda Constantin, OSF, 504-765-8780.

POSITIVE RESPONSES

Our Lady of the Lake Medical Center participants and facilitators report that Celebrate the Mission is a success.

PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

- The program taught me a lot about the hospital I didn't know. It helped me meet new people. It revitalized me as an employee and reminded me we are there for the patients.
- I've become a skeptic over the years that I've worked at the Lake and have felt lost in the system. Glad to know someone's still listening.
- Of particular interest to me was hearing people from all over Our Lady of the Lake voice their values and their

reasons for being there. I was able to really see what is in the hearts of the people we see every day. Suggest shorter review courses periodically to keep the mission in the front of all our minds.

- Made you appreciate the part that each employee (from housekeeper to surgeon) plays in keeping the mission alive. I was also able to explore the ways in which I can personally "live" the mission statement. What a joy!
- It focused on how each of us can make a difference.

FACILITATORS' COMMENTS

- When I first came to Our Lady of the Lake, the words of the mission and

philosophy were moving to me, and it has been a tremendous experience to be a facilitator, seeing the mission and philosophy come alive for others.

- It is the opportunity to live what I believe—that we all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. It allows me to encourage this behavior in others.
- Being a facilitator gave me the opportunity to show that Our Lady of the Lake cares a great deal about individuals—patients, family members, physicians, and especially our employees.
- The program reinforced for me the need to value in action, works, and behavior our most precious resource—our employees.