

EDITOR'S NOTE

My sister Cathy just sent me an article from Chicago. It's about red-winged blackbirds in flight near Lake Michigan barreling into joggers as the birds try to protect their nests. Several years ago, we visited the Lincoln Park Zoo, a place with birds with fancy names like blue-gray tanagers, blue-bellied rollers and the like. We saw a small group of people in the parking lot looking at a tree on the zoo grounds and laughing from time to time.



**BETSY
TAYLOR**

What are they looking at, we wondered? Turns out it was a red-winged blackbird that was swooping down on unsuspecting visitors, pecking them on their heads and flying back to its nest. How funny, I thought, that this bird is upstaging all the animals and birds that are actually part of the zoo's collection. We walked the zoo some more with other

family members, rounded a bend, walked past a tree, when — PECK! — that bird launched at me from behind, tapped me on my head and flew away again. I wasn't hurt, and we were in hysterics. As were those spectators still in the parking lot.

If there's one thing I haven't had much of during this pandemic, it's those unexpected moments with family. My hope for us as more people get vaccinated against COVID-19 is that we have more of the time we used to take for granted, more of the moments that aren't occasions, but do become memories.

As we worked to put together this issue of *Health Progress* about families and the pandemic, we thought about all that has changed in the past year and a half. The articles take up a number of ways that our families are linked to our physical, emotional and spiritual health. They detail how to better safeguard and ensure the health of family members, from prenatal and maternal care through old age. They explore challenges that come from caring for family members with mental and physical disabilities. They consider how we can ensure patients have opportunities to be with their loved ones in health care settings whenever possible.

Authors look at how much has changed in education and what that may mean for our schools and the social supports they provide. Many arti-

cles consider health disparities, the gaps that previously existed but have been highlighted by the pandemic. The articles delve into the importance of grounding our work by always thinking about what we can do for our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, both domestically and globally. And the writers talk about our church and health care ministry families, those who think deeply and speak from a place of faith as we work toward systems of care that better serve patients, their loved ones and one another.

While I have been at the Catholic Health Association since 2013, this is my inaugural issue as editor of *Health Progress*. I've always been a firm believer that it's right and good to ask questions and to be OK with not having all the answers. I hope *Health Progress* readers will continue to see this publication as a forum for sharing ideas, inspiration, challenges, expertise, queries and lessons of faith. I believe every publication is as good as its contributors, so please feel free to contact me, especially if your health care environment is doing work that may spark improvements or change for other individuals, facilities or systems.

Throughout the pandemic, we at CHA have spoken to and listened to our membership, trying to gauge what was most needed from us and to match people to new articles, resources or other members who may be of assistance. I'm mindful that people are having very different experiences during this pandemic, and that many of our readers work daily to save the lives of those sick with COVID-19. Thank you. We appreciate you. And my hope is that you have time with your own families.

Just keep an eye out for those blackbirds.

The editor thanks Mary Ann Steiner, Kathleen Nelson and Karyn Williams for their work on this issue.

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