Many employees go beyond their job responsibilities to help patients through difficult times. Sharon Widman of Clinical Nutrition Support Services is one of these people … and the 2008 winner of Pastoral Care’s Spirit of Caring Award.

Widman works on Rhoads 7, a unit with bone marrow transplant patients who lose their appetite, sometimes leading to a ‘failure to thrive’ condition. In presenting Widman with her award at the annual celebration, staff chaplain Kava Schafer noted that “over the years, Sharon has brought a presence. These patients need mothering. They need warmth and comfort. She’ll say, ‘I notice you didn’t eat. Is there something I can get for you?’ and then make a separate trip downstairs to get what they asked for.

“Sharon has bought food — or cooked it herself — and brought it in for patients … anything to encourage them to eat,” Schafer continued. “Sharon brings people to life. People have thrived because of her attention.”

“We know what a gem we have in Sharon,” agreed nurse manager Debra Dearstyne, RN, OCN. “She serves our patients far more than meals.”

**Highlights of the Past Year**

Each year, HUP’s staff chaplains, students in the Clinical Pastoral Education program, and Pastoral Care’s 60 volunteers respond to an estimated 2,500 trauma calls as well as to calls throughout the hospital. Pastoral Care director Ralph Ciampa thanked everyone who does so much to help patients and their families, and our staff, noting that “plans for extending these caring services to Penn Medicine at Rittenhouse are currently under way.”

During the celebration, Ciampa touched on highlights of the past year. For the third year, the Board of Women Visitors provided funds to make *Care Notes* and *Life Lights* available to waiting areas throughout the hospital. These publications provide brief inspirational, non-sectarian readings on (continued on page 2)

"This is the essence of why we’re here — taking care of people and showing acts of kindness to patients."

— Al Black, COO
Earlier this year, the Abramson Cancer Center held its Oncology Memorial Service, an annual tribute to individuals who passed away during the year. Over 200 family members, friends and staff attended the service, which included shared readings and reflections that focused on loss, love, peace, hope, and memories.

Family members, friends and staff brought mementos and pictures for memory boards that were displayed in the auditorium. Family members and friends shared stories of personal and professional accomplishments of their loved ones. “They spoke of their cancer care spanning from 29 days to ten years,” said Patty Meehan, LSW, associate director of Clinical Resource Management & Social Work. “They recounted cross country trips and births of grandchildren that occurred during treatment. They shared poetry and reflections written by the patients.

“Family members acknowledged the care that they received from the Oncology Team,” she continued. “They acknowledged staff for listening and responding to their individual concerns and needs as well as the patients. The outpouring of appreciation from the families was overwhelming.” Family members also acknowledged the care provided by the Wissahickon Hospice Team members.

The Memorial Service is funded through a generous grant from the Board of Women Visitors. In addition, Patient and Family Services of the Abramson Cancer Center and HUP Clinical Resource Management and Social Work provided support for the annual event.

“We are so proud of this event for so many reasons,” noted Christiana Bach, LSW. “It brings together health-care professionals from many disciplines with families to celebrate the lives of those lost to cancer. It fosters a sense of community in grief and in hope.”

To learn more about Pastoral Care at HUP — including its programs, activities, and history — visit www.uphs.upenn.edu/pastoral.