

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS  
OF MEDSTAR WASHINGTON HOSPITAL CENTER

CENTER

# Scope

FALL 2014



## LVADs Change How We Treat Heart Failure



MedStar Washington  
Hospital Center



# Hope. De

While those three words have always guided Alberto Gomez, 66, the personal mantras he embraces were put to the test when he was suddenly diagnosed with advanced heart failure.





# termination. Faith.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY HAS REVOLUTIONIZED THE WAY WE TREAT HEART FAILURE

The grave cardiac diagnosis came as a complete shock to Alberto Gomez, a D.C.-based builder and business owner, who up until that late December day had enjoyed good health and faithfully gone to annual physicals. But when dramatic fatigue and discomfort set in, tests revealed that not only was Alberto's heart badly weakened, but he would need an artificial heart or a transplant to survive.

### Hope

Since arriving from Colombia as a 21-year-old, Alberto has always had hope. The construction company he founded with hard-earned savings in 1988 had humble beginnings, but grew to include projects such as the Smithsonian Institution and 11th Street Bridge. Despite economic ebbs and flows, Alberto never lost hope. Today, he and his wife, Cristina, continue to run their business, Prince Construction.

Similarly, Alberto's hope proved vital after he arrived at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. With his heart function estimated at only 15 percent, Alberto knew he was a very sick man. Despite the severity of his situation, Alberto's hope was immediately validated after meeting cardiac surgeon Ezequiel Molina, MD.

"I knew I was in good hands," explains Alberto, an avid soccer fan and loyal South American native. "The coach of the 2014 Colombia World Cup soccer team is from Argentina, and so is Dr. Molina."

### Determination

Once Dr. Molina and the Advanced Heart Failure Team decided that Alberto was a candidate for an advanced technology known as a Left Ventricular Assist Device, or LVAD, Alberto's steadfast determination set in. The LVAD is a partial artificial heart that is implanted in the chest and

connected externally to a battery pack that essentially supports the pumping function of a patient's heart.

According to George Ruiz, MD, one of the physician leaders of the Advanced Heart Failure Program, "LVADs have revolutionized the way we think about heart failure. Where patients in advanced heart failure previously had only one option—a heart transplant—they now have an alternative in the LVAD, which can sustain circulation for years."

Two weeks later, Dr. Molina placed an LVAD in Alberto's chest. "It was a pretty sobering feeling," Alberto recalls, "but I saw it as a new avenue to life, and I was determined to make it work. I was very grateful to get another chance, and grateful this technology exists."

Alberto's mental strength and determination served him well. He did not need a blood transfusion during surgery, an often needed measure, and declined pain medication in recovery. And when a stroke he suffered after discharge initially left him with weakness and speech deficits, Alberto overcame them with hard work and perseverance. Currently, Alberto is on a transplant list for a new heart, which doesn't stop him from living life. "I stay very busy," he shares. "And I have no time for complaining."

### Faith

While Alberto's heart now requires a LVAD to ensure proper function, his heart needs no assistance in dispensing generosity, kindness and faith. Since recovering from surgery, Alberto has made it a priority to return to the Hospital Center to visit with patients facing similar procedures.

"I share my experiences," Alberto says. "I pray with them and I cry with them. I tell them to trust in the doctors and the technology."

Maria Rodrigo, MD, a heart failure specialist, says Alberto is a terrific patient advocate. "Some of our patients only speak Spanish," she explains. "He meets with patients and answers their questions. He is very positive, but he is also very real."

"Sometimes, all you need is someone to tell you it's going to be all right," Alberto says. "I hold their hand. I tell them to have hope and use all their strength, and I offer to pray with them."

Hope. Determination. Faith. Alberto Gomez knows first-hand it can make a difference.

**For more information on our heart failure services, visit [MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust](http://MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust).**

### Take the Quiz

If you have heart failure, can you answer YES to any of these questions?

1. Do you become short of breath walking up stairs or down the block?
2. Have you been re-admitted to the hospital for heart failure within the past six months?
3. Are your medications no longer helping with your heart failure symptoms, such as fluid retention or swelling in the ankles or lower legs?

If you can answer YES to two or more of these questions, you may want to talk with your doctor about receiving further medical evaluation.

# Two is Better Than One

CARDIAC AND VASCULAR SURGEONS COMBINE SKILLS TO TREAT COMPLEX CASES

The deep, crushing chest pain was an ominous sign. So was the fact that Kenneth Snyder, 61, felt no relief after taking nitroglycerin, a medication that typically improves chest pain. The retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant's wife quickly called his cardiologist's office, and was instructed to hang up and call 9-1-1.

The Waldorf, Md., resident soon found himself in an ambulance en route to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, the founding hospital for MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute. Here, we are pioneering ways to bring together highly specialized surgeons for the best possible result. In this case, cardiac surgeon Ezequiel Molina, MD, and cardiothoracic surgeon, Christian Shults, MD, joined forces to immediately repair Ken's complex aortic tears and prepare him for the next step.

Just 24 hours later, Dr. Shults brought in Edward Woo, MD, a nationally known vascular surgeon, to place a "stent graft" using minimally invasive techniques.

These grafts are fabric tubes supported by wire mesh that help reinforce a weak spot—or aneurysm—in the artery.

"Ken was best served by the combination of our two specialties," says Dr. Woo. More than 20 patients to date have benefited from this unique combined surgical approach.

Ken returned home one week after his surgery and is now participating in a cardiac rehabilitation program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. He is grateful for the



Surgeons Edward Woo, MD, and Christian Shults, MD.

options offered through MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute. "I am walking, talking, breathing proof of the expertise of these surgeons," says Ken.

With his days of serving on aircraft carriers and nuclear cruisers behind him, Ken's adventures now include taking scenic rides with his wife, Sharon, on their Harley Davidson motorcycles, and spending time with his 10 grandchildren.

"I'm just one lucky soul," Ken says. "I feel very fortunate and can't say enough about the care I received at MedStar Washington Hospital Center."

**For an appointment with a cardiovascular specialist, call 202-877-DOCS (3627), or for more information on cardiovascular services available at MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute, visit [MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust](http://MedStarHeartInstitute.org/Trust).**



Ken Snyder with newest granddaughter, London, and his dog, Frank.

"WE PURPOSELY BROUGHT THESE TWO SPECIALTIES TOGETHER WITH THE GOAL OF PROVIDING OUR PATIENTS THE BEST OPTIONS."

—EDWARD WOO, MD



# Close Watch on Safety Leads to Change in Plans

In hospitals, every minute of every day, our teams must be prepared for the unexpected. No two patients are exactly the same and situations can change quickly. With patients' safety in our hands, we focus on the importance of recognizing these changes—and speaking up quickly.

Monica Wilson, RN, a nurse in our outpatient surgery department, did just that, making a significant difference for one of our patients.

While being prepared for an outpatient procedure, a patient just happened to mention to Monica that her leg was bothering her—something totally unrelated to her impending surgery.

Monica's antenna for change went up. She asked a few questions, and when she learned that the woman had recently hit her leg, she moved quickly. "Her leg was cold, and I couldn't find a pulse in it. Something was wrong, and I suspected a blood clot," Monica explains.

She consulted with another nurse and then alerted a physician, making sure that everyone realized that the situation for this patient had just changed dramatically. When tests confirmed Monica's suspicions, the patient was immediately taken to the main operating room where a vascular team removed the clot. Monica was listening carefully to her patient, she pursued the issue and stopped the surgery, possibly saving the patient's leg and her life.

"It was actually all about teamwork," says Monica. "When we began to realize what was happening, everyone worked diligently together to get her to the main OR quickly and safely."

**To watch Monica and other members of our team share their stories about personally making a difference, visit [MedStarWashington.org/Personally](https://www.medstarwashington.org/Personally).**



# With Stroke, Time

## STROKE CARE ON THE FOREFRONT: LIFESAVING EDGE FOR PATIENTS

In a simple click of a computer mouse, Professor Joseph Cannon made the most critical discovery of his life. In that instant, as he struggled to move the cursor from left to right, a clot closed off blood flow to part of his brain. His speech was silenced. His right leg crumbled beneath him as he slid onto his office floor.

Luck intervened in two ways for Joseph: a colleague found him immediately, and he was quickly transported to MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

"I don't remember everything, but I do recall that when I arrived in the Emergency Department there was a large group of people there to receive me," Joseph says. That multidisciplinary team of stroke experts began assembling while Joseph was still in an ambulance racing across the city. The 9-1-1 call had triggered a rapid response, signaling the start of a well-orchestrated process of diagnosis and treatment that recently earned the Hospital Center certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center by The Joint Commission—the accrediting body for U.S. hospitals.



Stroke Team evaluates a patient, (l to r) Adey Haile-Mariam, RN, Nurse Responder Team; Carlos Portillo, RT/RMR; and Amie Hsia, MD.



### Sophisticated Stroke Care

"Our program is the first and only one in the Washington, D.C., region to receive this designation," says Amie Hsia, MD, medical director of the Stroke Center. "There are only a few dozen hospitals in the country that have met the very rigorous standards for this certification. It means that we are among the nation's most sophisticated stroke treatment centers, recognized for our innovation and expertise—a cadre of stroke specialists in multiple disciplines, all available 24/7," she says.

"In this region, the Hospital Center is a hub for acute stroke care," Dr. Hsia explains. "We have strong relationships with area hospitals, and a coordinated approach to consultation and transportation via MedSTAR Transport. This ensures that patients suspected of having a complex acute stroke are quickly transported to our Stroke Center."

### Record Breaking Clot Busting

Once Joseph arrived in the ED, he was swiftly brought to the hospital's stroke-dedicated Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner, which confirmed his diagnosis—an ischemic stroke. Then he was given IV treatment with the clot busting drug tPA. The impact of the medication was immediate. "I started to speak," Joseph says. "All of a sudden, someone said something. I turned my head and responded!"

Time is of the essence when diagnosing stroke. Nerve tissue in the brain is quickly lost as a stroke progresses—hence the phrase, time is brain. "It was just 37 minutes from the time Joseph entered the ED to when we treated him with tPA," says Dr. Hsia. "That's a record we're proud of. The sooner we evaluate and treat a patient, the better the chance for a good outcome. We average time-to-treatment with tPA within an hour of a patient's arrival, a national benchmark that is difficult for other hospitals to meet."



# is Brain

## Research Spurs Clinical Innovation

Speed was on Joseph's side, and so was the Stroke Center's use of MRI for stroke diagnosis—one of just a few hospitals to use MRI as the default first-line brain imaging in the evaluation of an acute stroke patient. "MRI provides more information than a CT scan about what is happening to the brain in the first few hours of a stroke—details that help to identify the location of the clot and the damage it may have caused," explains Dr. Hsia.

This use of MRI imaging to diagnose stroke is just one element of a robust research program at the Stroke Center. "Thanks to our partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Stroke Program through a contract with the NINDS (HHSN271201400063C), we have been conducting clinical research routinely using MRI to evaluate stroke patients for acute treatment for a decade," Dr. Hsia adds.

All of this expertise paid huge dividends for Joseph. After a short stay at the Hospital Center and rehabilitation at MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, he made a remarkable recovery. Today, he is back at work, teaching chemical engineering at Howard University.

"My cognitive skills are very good. I might slow down a bit when I'm talking, but I'm one of the lucky ones. If I hadn't been treated at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, I don't know what would have happened," a grateful Joseph says.

**For more information on stroke services at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, visit [MedStarWashington.org/stroke](https://www.medstarwashington.org/stroke).**

## Think **FAST**, Act **FAST**!

Nearly two million brain cells die each minute from the onset of a stroke until treatment has begun. This drives home the importance of the ability to quickly recognize stroke symptoms and call 9-1-1 immediately.

Use this simple trick to remember the warning signs of stroke:

**Face:** Does the face droop on one side?

**Arm:** Does one arm drift upon lifting?

**Speech:** Is speech slurred or strange?

**Time:** If you have or observe any of these signs in someone, call 9-1-1 immediately!

**Stroke acts fast. You should, too. Call 9-1-1.**



**"IF I HADN'T BEEN TREATED AT MEDSTAR WASHINGTON HOSPITAL CENTER, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED."**

—JOSEPH CANNON

# How to Beat Thyroid Cancer

Four years ago, Jacob Brogan was diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune disorder of the thyroid gland. He has managed this condition with medication and regular visits to his endocrinologist, Geanina Popoveniuc, MD, at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Late last March, during a routine checkup, an ultrasound identified two small nodules, a follow-up biopsy proved them to be cancerous. Jacob was referred to Erin Felger, MD, of the endocrinology program's surgical team.

A visiting lecturer in American literature at Georgetown University, Jacob had done his homework on his disease and knew what to look for in a hospital. The Hospital Center's mix of proven experience, top endocrine surgeons, multidisciplinary team approach and innovative research was exactly what his research said he needed.

Thyroid cancer is dangerous but highly treatable. "I was scared," recalls Jacob. "Dr. Felger made me feel safe." He was impressed with the standard of care she provided at their first appointment. "She was so meticulous and explained just enough of what she thought I would need to know."

## Nationally Recognized Program

Jacob learned that the Hospital Center's thyroid program is widely recognized for excellence, success rates and research. So respected is our program, two of our physicians wrote the leading textbook on thyroid cancer.

Most thyroid conditions can be treated with medication. But when surgery is the answer, our multidisciplinary team of specialists looks at every potential need and complication, and helps manage the patient's condition before and after surgery.

## Quality in Numbers

Studies show that patient outcomes improve as the number of cases and surgeries rises. Last year, our endocrine surgeons performed more than 600 surgeries; nearly 400 were thyroid procedures. The Hospital Center sees a greater volume and variety of cases than any other hospital in the region.

"Thyroid cancers are by far our most commonly performed surgical procedures," says Jennifer Rosen, MD, section director, endocrine surgery. "This translates directly into better results for our patients. Physicians from across the region refer their complex and recurring cases to us."

Specialists in endocrine surgery achieve the best outcomes for patients, but there are only about 200 in the United States. Three of the best are here at the Hospital Center. (See Top Surgeons sidebar.)



## Nuclear Medicine Strengthens Care

Nuclear Medicine plays a critical role in the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid cancer. Led by Douglas Van Nostrand, MD, section director, nuclear medicine, the program is a leading resource for diagnosing and treating thyroid cancer.

"In a typical week," says Dr. Van Nostrand, "we conduct as many thyroid imaging and therapeutic procedures as a standard community hospital would see in a year."

As one of the largest and most respected nuclear medicine programs for thyroid cancer in the nation, the division specializes in personalizing scans and treatments for each patient.

## Innovative Research and Clinical Trials

Advanced research is a hallmark of the best thyroid programs. The Hospital Center, working in tandem with other MedStar hospitals and research programs, is a leader in developing new treatments, procedures and protocols. Among our extensive, multidisciplinary research and clinical trials are development of:

- A thyroid registry and tumor bank, enabling participation in nationwide gene studies
- A biopsy tool that analyzes light reflected from thyroid tissue to improve diagnosis and reduce the number of patients needing thyroid surgery
- A "laparoscopic hand" that reduces the need for large incisions for adrenal gland procedures, and will have wider surgical applications
- Improved thyroid imaging through the use of I-124, a radioactive isotope of iodine
- A treatment to reduce the growth of thyroid cancer using Metformin, the most popular anti-diabetic medication



Kanchan Kulkarni, MD, Director of Nuclear Endocrinology.

## What Patients Should Know

Thyroid disease can affect all ages and populations. Women and those with a family history of thyroid disease are at greater risk. Thyroid and other endocrine diseases may have symptoms similar to other conditions—or present no symptoms at all. Our best advice:

- Have a regular check-up or screening with your primary physician.
- Know if your family has a history of thyroid or other endocrine problems.
- Have your doctor check any suspicious lump in your throat.
- If referred to an endocrinologist, keep your appointment.
- Don't be afraid. Thyroid and other conditions are very treatable—with excellent results.
- If surgery is needed, select a surgeon and hospital that conducts high volumes of endocrine surgeries.
- Find a rapport with your endocrinologist and surgeon; trust is essential.

More people are taking these steps to heart—and turning to MedStar Washington Hospital Center. For patients like lecturer and writer Jacob Brogan, there's no better place to be for a happy ending.

**For an appointment with one of our thyroid specialists, call 202-877-DOCS (3627).**



Endocrine surgeons Nancy Carroll, MD, Erin Felger, MD, and Jennifer Rosen, MD.

## Three Top Surgeons Shape the Future


The future of endocrine surgery at MedStar Washington Hospital Center is in the skilled hands of three superb surgeons. Fellowship-trained, they offer a level of care unavailable at most hospitals, including the latest minimally invasive tools and techniques. Patients also trust them to minimize side effects, such as changes in the patient's voice or the impacts of changing hormone levels.

**Jennifer Rosen, MD**, section director, endocrine surgery, came from Boston University Medical Center, where she made her mark as a surgeon and a pioneering researcher. Dr. Rosen is widely recognized for her work in complex minimally invasive procedures for endocrine diseases, including treatment for recurrent and advanced disease.

**Erin Felger, MD**, brings her experience as a Navy surgeon to the program. She served in Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay. "This gave me a unique perspective on the needs of different patient populations." Her knowledge and understanding puts patients like Jacob at ease and builds the trust so important to care.

**Nancy Carroll, MD**, was attracted to endocrine surgery because of its mix of surgery with medical treatment and management. "I work with a remarkable team of people here from every related field to give patients the very best care."





The Beck family tours construction progress of the new MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute; (l to r) Jennifer Lyons, Eric Lyons, John Beck, Judy Beck, John Beck II, and Peggy Green.

# An Ongoing Gift from the Heart

## Nina Beck loved going to the hospital.

That might sound rather unusual for someone dealing with a serious illness. But Nina's enthusiasm was hardly surprising to her family and friends. Always eager to help anyone whenever and wherever she could, Nina volunteered at every school her four children attended, every sports league they joined, and at her church. When her youngest child graduated from Northern High School in Owings, Md., the administration hired her rather than risk losing its best volunteer.

"She had a big heart," says daughter Jennifer Lyons. "Unfortunately, there were some physical problems with it."

Shortly after turning 50 in 1996, Nina became unusually sick. Diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, a weakening of the heart muscle, she began seeing MedStar Washington Hospital Center cardiologist, Elizabeth Ross, MD.

During the next 14 years, Dr. Ross and members of the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute's Advanced Heart Failure Team worked with Nina to manage her condition. In the fall of 2010, Nina received an LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device), enabling her to enjoy another Thanksgiving and Christmas with her

family. The disease proved to be too much to fully conquer, however, and Nina died in March 2011.

Nina's passing opened a new chapter in the Beck family's relationship with the Hospital Center. The Becks requested that memorial contributions go toward MedStar Heart's technology and education programs.

The Beck family, who live in Odenton, Md., also launched the annual Nina Beck Memorial Golf Outing, raising nearly \$40,000 for MedStar Heart in its first three years.

The family looks forward to continuing its involvement with the Hospital Center.

"Mom was such an advocate for them, encouraging others with heart problems to see the doctors at the Hospital Center and sharing stories of her experiences there," Jennifer says. "What better way to carry on her work and her spirit than by supporting efforts that will help others fight heart disease."

**You can make a difference with a contribution to help support the work of MedStar Washington Hospital Center. Contact the Washington Hospital Center Foundation at 202-877-6558.**



# What's New

## Only Program in the Region Ranked for Heart Care



MedStar Washington Hospital Center has again been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the nation's best for cardiology and heart surgery—

the only hospital in the Metropolitan area top-ranked for heart care.

This marks the 18th year that the Hospital Center has been nationally ranked by the magazine. *U.S. News* also credited nine of the Hospital Center's other specialties as high performing: Cancer; Diabetes and Endocrinology; Ear, Nose & Throat; Gastroenterology & GI Surgery; Geriatrics; Gynecology; Nephrology; Pulmonology and Urology.



MedStar Team McGee participated in honor of breast cancer survivor Jane McGee, RN, senior nursing director, Medical-Surgical Nursing (bib 311).

## Raising Funds for Cancer Research

The Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC recently hosted its 34th Annual Sprint Four the Cure 5K race, with proceeds going to the Washington Cancer Institute at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. More than \$50,000 was raised in the September 20 event, in which 673 participated. All proceeds from the 5K will directly benefit Washington Cancer Institute. Through this event and a golf tournament, Four Seasons Washington, DC has raised more than \$1 million to support cancer research at the Hospital Center.



Elmer Huerta, MD, director, Cancer Preventorium (l to r), Videra Washington, breast cancer survivor, D.C. Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie (Ward 5) and Sandra Swain, MD, medical director, Washington Cancer Institute, at October press conference.

## Battling Breast Cancer

A recent MedStar Washington Hospital Center study found that a staggering number of African American women are seeking treatment for advanced breast cancer—almost double the national average. The Hospital Center and D.C. Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie recently held a press conference to announce that, thanks to a \$100,000 Avon Foundation grant, breast cancer specialists will start door-to-door outreach to promote the importance of early screening and prevention.

## Better Than Ever and Now Together

In union is strength. A long-standing leader in cardiac services, MedStar Washington Hospital Center, home to MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute, has brought together, under one umbrella, the nine acute hospitals in the MedStar system.

One of the highest-volume programs in the nation, MedStar Heart cares for some of the region's most complex cardiovascular cases. Hospital Center physicians and specialists have advanced the development of groundbreaking technologies, such as left ventricular assist devices (LVADs), and minimally invasive procedures like transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR).

With the integration of these hospitals and an extraordinary group of physician practices into one seamless delivery system, MedStar Heart provides region-wide access to the full array of advanced services, for all heart problems.





# MedStar Washington Hospital Center

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## NICU Reaches Safety Milestone

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at MedStar Washington Hospital Center recently celebrated a major safety milestone: two years without a single Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI) in its smallest and most vulnerable babies.

Central line infections are one of the safety outcome measures most closely monitored by all hospitals.

The NICU hit the two-year mark on July 31 this year. "This is unheard of, since these tiny infants are highly vulnerable to severe infections due to their immature immune systems. It takes incredible teamwork to achieve a record of this level," said Zacharia Cherian, MD, chairman of the Neonatology Department. "The NICU's new goal is to reach three years without a CLABSI," added Cherian.



The NICU PICC insertion team (l to r): Nuncia Dimagnaong, Susan Barsanti, Rafaela Lopez and Ester Jeannette Abella-Calahong, hold a plaque from MedStar Health celebrating the NICU's accomplishment.

## CENTER Scope

CenterScope is produced by the Public Affairs & Marketing department of MedStar Washington Hospital Center, 110 Irving St., NW, Washington, DC 20010.

MedStar Washington Hospital Center, a valued member of MedStar Health, is dedicated to delivering exceptional patient first health care. We provide the region with the highest quality and latest medical advances through excellence in patient care, education and research.

MedStar Washington Hospital Center, a private, not-for-profit hospital, does not discriminate on grounds of race, religion, color, gender, gender identity, physical handicap, national origin or sexual preference.

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[medstarwashington.org](http://medstarwashington.org)

## K. Eric De Jonge, MD, Receives DCHA Award

K. Eric De Jonge, MD, always wanted to make a difference in the world—and he has. In 1999, he co-founded the Medical House Call Program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center to promote the health and dignity of elderly patients by helping them remain in their own homes. Mobile teams of geriatricians, nurse practitioners and social workers bring total care to home-bound patients.

Recently, Dr. De Jonge was honored for his life's work by the District of Columbia Hospital Association, earning the Distinguished Service Award. Family members convey best the tremendous difference the program makes for older residents of Washington, D.C.

"Words cannot express what your service has meant to our family," one woman wrote. "You allowed Mom to be herself (you know how she loved to sing)... I miss her so much, but just remembering the care you provided has made it easier."

