

For Immediate Release

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Patients Blossom at Gaylord Hospital

Wallingford, CT (May xx, 2010) – Gaylord Hospital’s Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), Christina Lafex, does not have a degree in horticulture nor does she have a professional gardening background, but with some help from her patients, she is learning how to make her garden grow.

Approximately one year ago, a Gaylord patient with a gardening business, saw potential when he spotted an unused greenhouse on the hospital property.

“Our patient saw an empty greenhouse that needed a lot of work,” says Lafex. “It was a disaster but with his help, guidance and contributions, the greenhouse was soon in running order.”

The greenhouse, previously used as a storage unit, was functioning by October; providing the hospital and its patients with seasonal flowers such as Poinsettias for Christmas, Lilies at Easter, and herbs used in the hospital’s food preparation.

Lafex explains that the patients meet weekly to plan and to plant; gardening tips are shared and therapy takes place. The results of these gardening sessions go beyond nurturing plants; patients are actually reaping the benefit of therapy in disguise. They are working on their fine motor skills, mobility and balance; speech therapy is also utilized when patients make a gardening plan. There is also an opportunity for patients to quietly focus on their tasks while enjoying the feel of the earth in their hands.

“Patients look forward to their weekly sessions, and as the greenhouse is being transformed, an amazing transformation of the patients is also taking place.”

Each patient works on his or her own project, which they will bring home with them when they are ready to leave Gaylord. According to Lafex, patients take one or two plants but generously donate flowers to cheer up the rooms of those who cannot make it to the greenhouse.

Lafex and her team of gardeners have invited the Gaylord staff and other patients to discover the magic of their garden. Based on the enthusiastic response, Lafex is sure that gardening will remain a popular form of therapy at Gaylord – one that will certainly bloom and grow.

Gaylord Hospital is a not-for-profit, long-term acute care hospital based in Wallingford, CT. The Hospital specializes in the care and treatment of people with complex medical and rehabilitation need, outpatient services and sleep medicine. Visit www.gaylord.org or call (203) 284-2726 for more information.