Catholic Health Services of Long Island (CHS)

Spiritual Care Companion Program (SCC)

Building a Skills-Based Volunteer Team bridging the mission of Christ with the Community

The CHS Spiritual Care Companion Program is an 18 hr. Study/Action/Reflection model training and supporting skill-based volunteers promoting Chaplaincy.

Spiritual Care Companions are the eyes and ears of Chaplains "Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God." —Isaiah 40:1

CHS Spiritual Care Companion Program has a six-year track record built upon four pillar themes and strategies developed to meet the challenges of recruitment, placement, retention, and partnership with faith communities. Our skills-based volunteer program ministers to thousands of patients under the direction of Chaplains and Pastoral Care Directors. Their services are tied closely to CHS’s ability to deliver compassionate care for people from all walks of life and of every religious belief and ethnic group. Our SCC’s understand that dignity is medicine for the soul and are proud to provide the services that reflect the spirit of our shared humanity and the teachings of the Church.

The Spiritual Care Companion program trains skills-based volunteers of all faiths with basic pastoral care skills, and information to be a caring, attentive and listening presence to persons who are sick, elderly, dying and developmentally disabled. In addition, our SCC program offers the opportunity for skills-based volunteers to strengthen their knowledge and faith experience through ongoing support, educational programs, and retreats. Our six-week training begins with “The Call” and ends with “Caring for the Caregiver.” creating healthy leaders promoting compassionate health care. Currently seven SCC’s have begun and/or, completed their training as a Chaplain.

Our Workshop will include the following: advertising, recruitment, conducting an Information session, selection of volunteers, six-week training by topics, placement/mentoring, ongoing support, retention, crucial strategies to ensure long-term success of program, continuing education themes, and spiritual retreats. Material will be furnished at the Workshop.

Volunteer Story

Bill has volunteered at Our Lady of Consolation for many years. Serving as a Spiritual Care Companion, he began reaching out to a resident who was withdrawn and faithfully visited him weekly. Eventually, the resident disclosed that his daughter was among the victims of 9/11. Bill shared that he too had experienced the loss of his daughter, who was about the same age as the resident's at the time of her death. Subsequently, the two men would spend time in prayer together on their children's anniversaries. Their close spiritual relationship lasted until the resident passed.

He is one of more than five hundred trained volunteers who generously gave their time to support our CHS facilities. Their contributions help sustain the important work of CHS’s caregivers across Long Island. Many of our seasoned volunteers have been with the SCC program since the beginning. We have to date over one hundred and thirty-five volunteers who have celebrated their three and six-year anniversaries.