

HOUSE CALLS

JUL/AUG 2016



**Advancing
humankindness:
More Than A Job**



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Cover: Stephanie Verrell with the young men helped by The Common Threads Project and Dr. Kamalnath Iyer and Dr. Kiron Thomas.



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We hope you enjoy this issue of *HouseCALLS*. Comments about the publication can be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department:

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HouseCALLS is published by Dignity Health - Mercy & Memorial Hospitals to provide general health information. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a healthcare provider.

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Hello humankindness™



Memorial Hospital first hospital in Kern County to provide Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement

State-of-the-Art for State-of-the-Heart

When it comes to heart care, Dignity Health Memorial Hospital is already known as the premier state-of-the-art medical center for cardiac care in Kern County. Memorial Hospital is breaking ground again as the first hospital in Kern County to offer the minimally-invasive TAVR valve replacement procedure, providing better outcomes for patients.

On Monday, August 22, 2016, Memorial Hospital became the first hospital in Kern County to provide a new procedure, Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR).

TAVR is a minimally-invasive surgery where a damaged aortic valve is replaced through the use of a catheter inserted into an artery in the leg, neck, or chest and implanted in the heart. This procedure is performed by a highly-trained team of specialists working in coordination with one another including interventional and non-interventional cardiologists, vascular surgeons, cardiac surgeons, anesthesiologists, radiologists, echocardiogram specialists, cath lab nurses and technologists, surgical nurses and a valve clinic coordinator.

The benefits of TAVR are life-saving for patients too ill to receive heart valves by conventional open-heart surgery. "It is important to provide TAVR to our local patients," says Nirav DeSai, M.D. an interventional cardiologist who was trained

in TAVR procedures at University Southern California, a busy TAVR center in Los Angeles. "TAVR requires many tests and physician visits, making it hard on patients in such a fragile condition, and their family members, to transport them back and forth to Los Angeles. Now, they will be close to home and receive the same technology from their doctors."

Normally limited to large medical centers in metropolitan areas, Memorial Hospital's Sarvanand Heart & Brain Center will join an elite group, fewer than 500 hospitals nationwide, to provide this procedure. Medtronic, a well-respected medical device company and manufacturer of heart valves, recognized the need for this technology in Kern County and selected Memorial Hospital to be one of the premier providers of TAVR. Their selection was based on Memorial Hospital's demonstrated results in the current valve program and the continuing commitment of the talented and dedicated physicians, surgeons and medical staff.

A generous donation from the Lapjut Munger family was received in 2012, creating the recently named Sarvanand Heart & Brain Center. The largest donation in hospital history has helped establish a Hybrid Endovascular Catheterization Lab currently under construction at Memorial Hospital. The hybrid lab integrates the functions of a cath lab and operating room combining the benefits of each, in one flexible space. When opened next year, the hybrid lab will accommodate TAVR and other procedures.

During the August event, the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association awarded Dignity Health Memorial Hospital the Mission Lifeline Receiving Center Gold Plus designation. Memorial Hospital is the first in Kern County to receive this recognition for their success in implementing a higher standard of heart attack care by ensuring that heart attack patients receive treatment based on nationally accepted standards and recommendations. ■

Photo above: Michele Shain, director, Neuro and Cardiac Services for Dignity Health Memorial Hospital, Dr. Eric Peck, Dr. Nirav DeSai, Dr. Jeet Singh, Dr. Tommy Lee, Cori Kitchen, director of local chapter of American Heart Association.



CBCC and Dignity Health Infusion Center

Some of the recent CBCC 18,000 square foot expansion includes private patient treatment suites, advanced treatment areas and the Health & Wellness Café and lounge.

An Expanded Place for Healing

In 2012, Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals and Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center (CBCC) formed a partnership to provide comprehensive, research-based cancer care in Kern County. CBCC's recent 18,000 square foot expansion augments our cutting-edge diagnostic, treatment, and educational programs to better serve our patients.



The newly expanded center has many special features that are unique to CBCC and Dignity Health. The Infusion Center offers private suites for patients receiving aggressive treatment to be alone with their families. There is a spacious lounge where families can relax while cancer patients receive treatment, and a new Health & Wellness Café offers antioxidant smoothies, organic foods and cooking classes.

“This is the only center of its kind in the community,” said Ravi Patel MD, board certified hematologist/oncologist and CBCC founder. “There’s no other center like it. This expansion makes sure our patients

Private suites for patients undergoing aggressive treatment.

are taken care of as an entire person. The mind, body and spirit are cared for, not only with medicine and technology, but with other aspects of treatment also.”

Other specialized programs include mind-body medicine and naturopathic medicine. Led by doctors Naina Patel and Kalyan Gaddam, the center helps patients develop coping mechanisms to deal with the emotional stress of cancer, while overseeing programs focused on mind-body techniques, such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, and other wellness practices.

The Naturopathic Healing Program helps patients understand which cancer-fighting foods to eat and which foods to avoid. Patients learn which naturopathic supplements to take while undergoing chemotherapy, which ones may interfere with their treatments, and which will best supplement their diets while in remission.

The expansion also makes room for a new survivorship program. “After they finish their treatment, many patients wonder what to do next,” said Dr. Ravi Patel. “The survivorship program helps them learn what they need to do as cancer survivors to lead meaningful lives. It addresses supportive care on a long-term basis, and is critical to complete healing.”

Combating cancer with holistic and scientific healing, the newly expanded CBCC promotes Dignity Health’s philosophy of total wellness and healing. ■



Employees of the Health & Wellness Café preparing healthy choices for customers.

We're proud of the national recognition we've received for quality and patient safety.



Recognized by the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons.



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAM FOR BREAST CENTERS
ACCREDITED BREAST CENTER
THE AREA'S ONLY ACCREDITED PROVIDER

But the accolades that mean the most to us come from right here at home.



2015 Best Doctor
Dr. Ravi Patel

Affiliated with UCLA's Division of Pediatrics and Hematology at the Mattel Children's Hospital and Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center.





Advancing humankindness: More Than A Job

At Dignity Health, our culture of giving shows up in unexpected places. There are common threads of service for Stephanie Verrell and Patty Keefer, market development representatives for Mercy and Memorial Hospitals—a position commonly referred to as sales. But these health care professionals invest their lives in advancing humankindness in their community and abroad.

As market development representatives (MDRs), Stephanie and Patty increase interest in and awareness of Dignity Health services. They work to bring business to our hospitals by building on existing physician partnerships and establishing relations with new physicians. Their expertise developing connections and maintaining communication between community physicians and our hospitals equips them to build other important relationships—relationships Dignity Health encourages through our culture of giving.

“When you work for an organization whose marketing slogan is Hello humankindness, the thought of giving back begins to resonate with you, not only professionally but also personally.”

—Stephanie Verrell, *market development representative, Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals*

“In the jobs I’ve had previously, employees had opportunities to give back,” said Stephanie. “But when you work for an organization whose marketing slogan is Hello humankindness, the thought of giving back begins to resonate with you, not only professionally but also personally.”

“We’re always asking what we can do to make our hospitals better at meeting needs,” said Patty. This mindset motivates her as a volunteer. Patty travelled to Guatemala last April with Helps International, where she served on a medical team. “It’s so different than in the United States, where we have timely access to the health care we need,” she said. “There, access is extremely limited and the quality of care is subpar at best.”

Helps International has been serving Guatemalans for more than two decades. This team, which included other Dignity Health employees, broke the organization’s record by treating 2,616 patients. They conducted 237 surgeries and extracted 313 teeth. Other services included primary care, women’s health, otolaryngology, and an eye clinic.

“The cataract patients were basically blind, and after surgery they could see,” said Patty. “In my mind, we were truly acting as the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Patty volunteers on a regular basis closer to home as well. “I sit on a nonprofit board for The Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic, a behavioral health clinic for children,” she said. Patty also serves on the Bakersfield North Rotary Board as secretary and hosts a free fitness clinic every weekend.

Stephanie also gives back to her own community. She established a program called The Common Threads Project, which accepts donations of business suits and professional attire for male, low-income, high school students and veterans to help them advance their educational and employment goals.

“My husband is a high school teacher,” said Stephanie. “He had a student who borrowed a shirt and tie from his uncle to go to an awards banquet. The student had never owned a dress shirt or tie, and asked my husband to help him with his tie.” Stephanie explained that the student had a large, athletic build. “His uncle didn’t have pants that would fit, so the young man wore basketball shorts to the awards banquet with his dress shirt and tie,” she said. “My husband came home that day and said, ‘You have got to get this program started.’” ▶

Photos: Dignity Health Market Development Representative Patty Keefer serving in Guatemala.

Photo center: Dignity Health Market Development Representatives Patty Keefer and Stephanie Verrell.

The Common Threads Project not only provides gently used clothing, but also mentors students to prepare them for job applications and interviews. “When they have a complete outfit – shirt, tie, pants, belt, and shoes—it totally changes their demeanor,” said Stephanie. “They’re more confident and it shows.”

Two of the young men helped by The Common Threads Project hope to enter the medical field. “One wants to be an anesthesiologist and the other a neurologist,” said Stephanie. She reached out to Kamalnath Iyer, MD an anesthesiologist, and Kiron Thomas, MD a neurologist, both of Bakersfield, and asked if they would be willing to meet with the students. “They got to meet Dr. Thomas and ask questions, and Dr. Iyer let them shadow him. It was a neat experience for these boys,” she said.

In addition to establishing The Common Threads Project, Stephanie is involved in several local organizations, including the US Army All-Star Bowl, which has raised more than \$17,000 in scholarships for deserving high school seniors and organized a scrubs donation drive at Mercy and Memorial Hospitals so that

hospital staff could donate their gently-used scrubs to the Dress for Success Program and help a new generation of healthcare workers get a fresh start.

Stephanie and Patty both embody Hello humankindness. “Since I was young I’ve wanted to give back,” said Patty. “I just like to help people and make them feel welcomed and loved.”

Stephanie shares a similar motivation. “Ultimately, it’s about taking a look around and being thankful for what I have,” she said. “Seeing a need and wanting to help.”

Dignity Health is proud of team members like Stephanie and Patty who invest their professional skills and personal time to give back. ■

For more information visit the following websites:

Helps International: helpsintl.org

Common Threads: commonthreadsproject.com

Dress for Success: bakersfield.dressforsuccess.org



Two of the young men helped by The Common Threads Project.



Five Minutes To Health:

Learn steps you can take in five minutes or less to be safe and healthy.

Immunizations for Adults: Your Health Matters Too!

As an adult, you may think you no longer need vaccinations, but think again. Adults need vaccines to stay healthy, just like kids do. While there are several important vaccines recommended for every adult, many will depend on the individual’s age, lifestyle, health conditions, job, and travel. Talk to your health care provider to make sure you are up-to-date on all your immunizations.

Vaccines for all adults

- All adults need the Influenza (flu) vaccine every year. Flu vaccine is especially important for people with chronic health conditions, pregnant women, and older adults.
- Every adult should get the Tdap vaccine once if they did not receive it as an adolescent to protect against pertussis (whooping cough), and then a Td (tetanus, diphtheria) booster shot every 10 years.

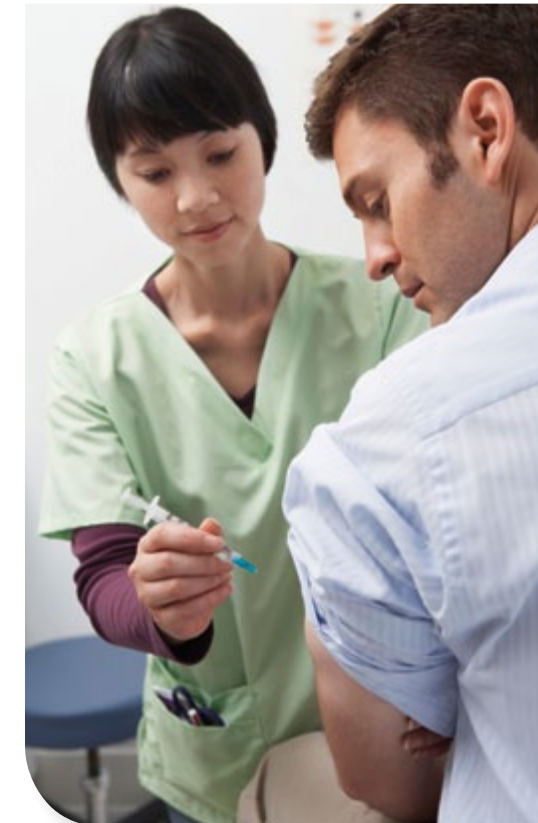
Adults 19–26 years old

Some vaccinations may be recommended for adults in this age range because of particular job or school-related requirements, health conditions, lifestyle, or other factors. For example, some states require students entering colleges and universities to be vaccinated against diseases like meningitis. Check with your health care provider to find out which vaccines are recommended to protect your health.

Adults 60 years or older

As people begin to age, immune systems weaken over time, increasing the risk for certain diseases. This is why adults 60 years or older should get:

- **Pneumococcal vaccines**, which protect against pneumococcal disease, including infections in the lungs and



bloodstream (recommended for all adults over 65 years old, and for adults younger than 65 years who have certain chronic health conditions).

- **Zoster vaccine**, which protects against shingles (recommended for adults 60 years or older).

Pregnant Women

If you are pregnant, the two vaccines you’ll need during each pregnancy are:

- **Tdap** (preferably between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy) to help protect against whooping cough.
- **The flu shot** (during flu season) to help protect against influenza.

International Travelers

- **Step 1:** Make sure you are up-to-date with all recommended vaccines and talk to your doctor about getting any vaccines you may have missed.
- **Step 2:** Visit the CDC Travel Health Site for information about recommendations and requirements for the locations you will be visiting during travel.
- **Step 3:** Four to six weeks before you trip, make appointments to get all the recommended vaccines for safe travel.

Talk to a Health Care Professional

Before getting any vaccinations, it’s important to speak with your doctor or health care provider. Some adults with specific health conditions should not get certain vaccines or should wait to get them.

*Info provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov. ■



Bariatric patients' lives change with weight loss surgery

Aera employee Tina Carmona started a bike-sharing program for employees to use at lunch.

What's Your "After" Story?

The physicians and staff associated with Dignity Health's Weight Loss Surgery Program at Mercy Hospital Southwest are committed to helping each patient begin a new life—a life of improved health, activity, and longevity. For the three patients who share their "After Story" below, changing their lives for the better began with the decision to undergo weight loss surgery.



Tina Carmona's Story of Memory Making

"I wouldn't sit with my children at school functions," said Tina. "I didn't want them to be embarrassed by me, and I didn't want anyone to know I was their mother. But in April of this year, I sat with my youngest for freshman orientation." Tina cherishes the memories she is making with her family. For her, undergoing weight loss surgery at Mercy Hospital Southwest means more than going from a size 32 to a size 16.

Tina has started her post-surgery "after" stories, as a way to memorialize the significant changes in her life. "I have lots of pictures of my family, but I'm not in a single one because I was too embarrassed," said Tina. "If something were to have happened to me, my children wouldn't have had any pictures to remember me by." Tina choked up at the thought, but the smile quickly returned to her voice. "Now I'm in all the pictures with my family doing the things we enjoy together. For Valentine's Day, my whole family got together and did family pictures."

Tina thanks God for her beautiful family and for giving her a blessed and active life at home and at work. "I created a program at Aera Energy where I work," said Tina. "Employees can check out bikes to ride to lunch. Even though I created it, I'd never been on a bike because I couldn't." Each year during Bike Share Week, Aera Energy hosts a five day event with employees biking to a different location each day. "I always drove my car with the excuse that I had to take things to set up," she said. "But for our last event, I had someone else drive and set up, and I rode a bike with my colleagues." Tina will always remember the joy of that milestone.



Brad Ochsenbein's Story of Better Health

Brad has lost 210 pounds since having weight loss surgery at Mercy Hospital Southwest. "My legs and my feet were always hurting, and it was because of the extra weight," said Brad. "I was on pain medication and medication for high blood pressure and diabetes. Now all I take is vitamins. I was hurting all the time, but now I can move around. I can walk, run, and ride a bike without pain."

Today, Brad can shop off the rack instead of special ordering clothes. "The biggest change is in the little things," he said. "As heavy as I was, I couldn't go to a movie theater and sit in a regular chair, but now I can. I hadn't been able to wear a seatbelt for years, and I can get in a little compact car now instead of always driving my big truck. Now I can do the little things that everybody thinks are simple, but they weren't simple for me."



Robert Pipkin's Story of Lifted Weight

"When I was a much larger man—weighing 465 pounds—I was always very jovial, comedic, and upbeat," said Robert. "But I realized after losing this weight that I was doing things to hide my inner pain. You don't realize how miserable you are in that setting until you are taken out of it. You don't realize your mental health is suffering. Then you realize this weight is lifted from you—both literally and figuratively."

Robert had been diagnosed with double bigeminy palpitation. "When the heart condition kicks in, it's like a heart attack mixed with an anxiety attack," said Robert. "I was in the hospital overnight for treatment, and it dawned on me that construction workers use hammers to drive nails and drills to drive screws. Why had I been avoiding the help of surgery? I realized surgery was just a tool. I wouldn't be where I am today without this tool."

Robert and his wife discussed having surgery together, and decided Robert would lead the way. "The first week after surgery is the hardest mentally and physically," he said. "After my wife saw my recovery, she said she wasn't going to do it. But after that first week, she saw the change happening quickly because of my drive and determination." Now Robert's wife sees the benefits. "I want anybody to know they can do it if they have the drive," he said. Robert recently completed a marathon with his wife and a friend—something he never could have done without weight loss surgery. "If I could change just one person's mind about having surgery and help save a life, it's worth it to me to share my story." ■

Dignity Health Bakersfield Weight Loss Surgery Program Services:

- Introductory education
- Physician consultation
- Nutritional counseling
- Weight loss surgery
- Post-surgery support
- Bariatric healthy cooking class

Attend our free informational seminars designed to:

- Explain the surgical options available
- Clarify the before-surgery requirements
- Describe what to expect after surgery
- Introduce team members who will support you
- Help you decide if weight loss surgery is for you
- Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass
- Sleeve gastrectomy

Weight loss surgical procedures

- Gastric banding
- Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass
- Sleeve gastrectomy

To learn more about Dignity Health's bariatric surgery, or to take your free and easy online assessment, go to:

dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/weightloss

Call: 661-663-6765

Email:

BariatricsBakersfield@Dignityhealth.org

PINKPALOOZA: PINKfest is Back!



PINKfest

Women's Health Care Festival

Treat yourself to a day of valuable health education, mixed with fun activities and exhibits focused on taking action for better health—body, mind and spirit.

Get your friends together and come out to laugh, learn, and celebrate the vibrancy of good health!

PINKfest will feature:

- Free glucose, blood pressure, body fat, cholesterol, & heart screenings
- Physician-led seminars
- Free massages
- Demonstrations
- Booths featuring local health and wellness professionals
- Food & drinks
- Shopping & giveaways
- Even a photo booth

Saturday, Sept. 17

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Mercy Hospital Southwest
400 Old River Road

Due for a mammogram? Do it at PINKFest!

Mercy's Women's Imaging Center is offering appointments during the event.

Only \$50! (Cash only at time of service. No insurance, no billing, and no credit cards.)

Call **632-5281** to make your appointment.



Being Healthy Is Beautiful

A free monthly e-newsletter dedicated to improving women's health.



Remembering to take care of ourselves isn't always easy, because we're often taking care of others. That's why HealthyHER, a free monthly e-newsletter, is dedicated to improving women's health. Each month we offer a variety of articles and information geared specifically toward the body, mind and spiritual needs of women. Our current issue shares the latest health and wellness trends, a closer look at weight loss surgery, and a list of recommended apps to help you monitor your sleep cycles and a reminder that adults need vaccinations too! Subscribe today because you are worth it.

To subscribe please send your e-mail to: subscribe@healthyher.org





Sisters of Mercy carry on the legacy of caring for the poor, sick and uneducated.

Top row: left to right - Sister Josie Gonzales, Sister Cristina Caballero, Sister Sherry Dolan. Bottom row: left to right - Sister Mary Hope Sanchez and Sister Judy Morasci

Mercy is Our Heritage: Celebrating Mercy Day

Bravery with compassion. | Strength with tenderness. | Tenacity with forbearance. | Influence with humility.

Though rarely combined, the above character traits are qualities of two women who define our heritage at Dignity Health Mercy Hospitals. Catherine McAuley and Mary Baptist Russell shared the same passion to serve the poor, sick and uneducated.

Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in 1831 in Ireland. Her story is one of vision and sacrifice. Mary Baptist Russell led a group of pioneering Sisters of Mercy to California in 1854. Her story is one of courage and resolve. We honor the achievements of these and other Sisters of Mercy each year on Mercy Day, September 24, the anniversary of the opening of the first House of Mercy in 1827.

“We celebrate Mercy Day as a reminder of who we are and the responsibility we have to carry on this legacy,” said Sister Judy Morasci, vice president of mission integration for Mercy Hospitals. “The real key is to keep the legacy alive through education, communication and ritual so our employees know our mission and carry it out.”

“The real key is to keep the legacy alive through education, communication and ritual so our employees know our mission and carry it out.”

—Sister Judy Morasci, vice president of Mission Integration, Mercy Hospitals

Sister Judy conducts orientation for Dignity Health physicians, employees, volunteers, and board members, teaching them how to put the mission of mercy into action through acts of humankindness. She especially enjoys sharing the stories of Catherine McAuley and Mary Baptist Russell, who dedicated their lives to nursing the sick and caring for the poor. Their stories continue to inspire and articulate our calling.

Catherine McAuley

Orphaned at a young age, Catherine (who was uncomfortable with the title “Mother Superior”) was raised at times by Irish Catholics and at others by Irish Protestants. As she approached adulthood, she began serving a wealthy Quaker couple as their house manager. The grateful couple bequeathed their estate to her, and she used the funds to build House of Mercy. Catherine was a fierce advocate for abused, female servants and poor, uneducated girls. She did not originally intend to form a cloistered or religious community, but in order to continue in her passion, she professed her vows in 1831 and formally established the Sisters of Mercy.

Mary Baptist Russell

Together with seven other Sisters of Mercy, Mary Baptist travelled 8,000 miles from Ireland to California. These brave, young women—all in their 20s—crossed the Atlantic and arrived in Nicaragua, then journeyed by wagon to San Francisco. While the Wild West was nothing like Ireland, the poverty, illness and despair they had encountered at home helped prepare them for their mission. The rough and tumble citizens of California did not welcome the godly nuns at first. But when cholera broke out, the Sisters of Mercy ventured into the community to nurse the sick, and they became honored as women of mercy and compassion. The Sisters founded St. Mary’s Hospital in 1857, the first Catholic hospital on the West Coast and the first of the Mercy hospitals to later become part of the Dignity Health System.

Celebrating our History, Continuing our Mission

“We celebrate Mercy Day as a hospital community during the week surrounding September 24,” said Sister Judy, who schedules a number of events to invite staff and community members to reflect on the compassion of the Sisters of Mercy and honor their legacy.

“We have a beautiful recognition award named in honor of Sister Mary Baptist,” said Sister Judy. “We give the award to an employee who is aware of community needs and is compassionate in caring for people. We have a luncheon and ceremony to honor all nominees and announce the recipient of the award. It’s one way we thank our staff for carrying out the mission of mercy that is our heritage.”

To learn more about Mercy Day festivities, contact Sister Judy Morasci at 661-632-5647 or judy.morasci@dignityhealth.org ■

The Mission of Dignity Health

We are committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality, affordable health services for all. With a history rooted in kindness, the mission and values we were founded upon remain the same today.

Mercy Week 2016 Calendar of Events

MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 19

Blessing of the Hands

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 20

Ritual “Opening the Doors of Mercy Week”

(Held in both main lobbies)

Downtown 10 AM / Southwest 11:30 AM

Flowers delivered to all patients

WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 21

Mercy Week Employee Celebrations at Downtown and Southwest campuses

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 22

Mercy Week Employee Celebrations at Downtown and Southwest campuses

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 23

Congratulations to all Sr. Mary Baptist Russell Award Nominees



Enjoy the life you were meant to have.

Find out if bariatric surgery is right for you.

The physical, emotional, and health benefits of weight loss surgery can put life on a whole new path. It is a big decision, but of those who commit, no one ever wishes they'd waited longer.

Our experienced surgeons, nurses and counselors support and prepare patients for success every step of the way. If you feel like all else has failed, we invite you to attend an informational event or take our free online assessment to help determine if bariatric surgery is right for you. It could be the first day of your happily ever after.

To take the assessment or reserve your space at our next event, visit dignityhealth.org/bakersfield/weightloss or call **661.663.6765**.

