



*Touro College
Graduate School of Social Work*

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FOR RELEASE

**MASTER'S CANDIDATE AT TOURO COLLEGE'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL WORK IMPLEMENTS AWARD-WINNING PROGRAM
FOR CAREGIVERS AT HACKENSACK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER**

New York, N.Y., January 5, 2011 -- Caryn Loffman, a candidate in the MSW program at Touro College's Graduate School of Social Work, has implemented an award-winning program at Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC) that provides respite to caregivers in the hospital's Emergency Trauma Department (ETD).

Called "*Take a Break*," the unique, family-centered program recently received a prestigious "Spirit of Planetree®" award for furthering outstanding patient-centered care. Planetree is a national non-profit organization that provides education and information to healthcare organizations, facilitating efforts to create patient-centered care in healing environments.

Ms. Loffman, a resident of Teaneck, N.J. who is part of a team recognized for its work with "*Take a Break*," helped to implement the program as part of her first-year social work internship requirement and was later asked to stay on as program coordinator.

"'*Take a Break*' is the first program of its kind in New Jersey and has been well-received, both by patients and their caregivers," Ms. Loffman said. "Up until the last few years, very little attention has been paid to caregiver stress and how it affects the health and well-being of the patient. '*Take a Break*' recognizes that care encompasses the entire family."

In her current post, Ms. Loffman helps to select and train volunteers, teaching them about the many aspects of the ETD, including communication strategies and listening skills, so that they may assist patients and their caregivers during an ETD visit. For example, if a caregiver needs to leave the hospital for any reason, the volunteer will sit at the patient's bedside for up to two hours. Volunteers are also available to assist patients who are alone in the ETD, with no family members or caregivers nearby.

The award to "*Take a Break*" was presented by Planetree President Susan B. Frampton, Ph.D., at a special ceremony attended by Planetree members from across the globe in conjunction with the 2010 Planetree® Annual Conference held recently in Denver, Colo.

“The Spirit of Planetree® Awards were created to promote patient-centered care by publicly recognizing individuals who personalize and demystify the healthcare experience for others as well as programs and services that support extraordinary achievement in patient-centered care,” Ms. Frampton said. “Every day, in both their interactions with patients and fellow employees, the ‘Take a Break’ team exemplifies Planetree and patient-centered care.”

In addition to Ms. Loffman, members of the “Take a Break” team at HUMC are Dr. Joseph Feldman, chairman of the Emergency Medicine Department at HUMC, who received the “Physicians Champion Award”; and Sandra Kissler, secretary of the HUMC Foundation Board of Trustees and former member of its Board of Governors, who received the “Caregiver Award.”

The master’s program at Touro College Graduate School of Social Work is designed to train clinical social work practitioners to awaken and enliven the innate ability of individuals, families, groups and communities to learn to meet their own needs and sustain their own state of equilibrium, thereby enhancing human well-being. The program meets all academic requirements for both social work licenses: LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) and LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker).



Caryn Loffman, a candidate in the MSW program at Touro College’s Graduate School of Social Work, was recently recognized for her involvement in the “Take a Break” program she helped to implement at Hackensack University Medical Center. The program, which Ms. Loffman now leads, provides respite to caregivers in the hospital’s Emergency Trauma Department. The program was awarded the prestigious “Spirit of Planetree®” award for its role in expanding patient-centered care.

Photo Credit: Hackensack University Medical Center

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