

Diana Delgado came to work at St. Joseph Hospital three years ago and has thrived here because, she says, “St. Joseph Hospital’s values are woven into everything. They live here.” As the Human Resources Service Line Manager, every day she is faced with issues of Justice for troubled employers and management.

Diana’s commitment to Justice doesn’t stop at the hospital’s doors. She has made a profound difference for our Dear Neighbors in the heart of Mexico, and continues to seek out opportunities to serve the vulnerable and disadvantaged here in California and beyond.

“You always have to look at what is the right thing to do,” says Diana when asked what Justice means to her. “Oftentimes the opposite of justice is not doing anything.”

Director of Organizational Development Cathy Fletcher confirms, “Diana’s kindness and willingness to help the disadvantaged in another country, in our community and in our workplace has provided a wonderful role model for me of what it means to ‘extend the healing ministry of Jesus’.”

Attends to the needs and advocates for people who are vulnerable and in need.

Six years ago, Diana and her husband, who often visited their family ranch in Nayarit, Mexico, decided that they wanted to help the town, where the majority of people live in poverty. They found a school and began buying the children backpacks and stuffing them with supplies. Four years ago they took on a second school, which was really just a shack where teaching occurred. For both schools, Diana has continued to shop year ‘round to provide for their school supplies, as well as books and sporting goods and donated clothes and shoes.

Their humanitarian efforts have extended to the entire town. A year and a half ago, Diana set up a table in the town square and passed out coupons she’d created for free items. There were 250 people who came for the coupons. Everyone there went home with clothes and shoes.

Cathy adds, “As if Diana wasn’t busy enough with this daunting project, she also engaged the HR team in supporting the Christmas party for motel kids that is coordinated

by Physical Therapy. Diana wanted to provide each child with a “goodie bag” and her enthusiasm was contagious. Diana is so generous and she made it fun for all of us to see what we could contribute to the cause. Once the party for the motel kids was over, Diana took an active role in helping to organize the donations for the baskets for the Military families. We did so well with donations, that at the last minute, we were able to adopt a senior. Diana not only delivered the donations to the senior, she delivered kind hugs and a patient, listening ear.”

Is enthusiastic in calling others to work together to understand, serve the needs, and improve the health of our communities.

On the Delgados’ trip to Mexico in 2007, a government official came to their house to invite them on a tour of the local, 39-bed hospital. “It was a nice structure, but with limited supplies,” recalls Diana. “The gurneys were duct taped together and the wheelchairs were dilapidated. There were no privacy curtains or gowns. I saw a gentleman headed off to the OR for leg surgery who was lying on a plastic mattress without a sheet! There were no sheets or blankets for the newborns. It got to me. It made me sad.

“I explained that although our first priority was the children, I promised to look into what we could do to help. After I came home I couldn’t get this hospital out of my head. I’m not good at asking people for donations, but I figured everybody knows someone who has had a baby and could give a baby blanket, so I started collecting them.”

In a meeting with (hospital supplier) Aramark, Diana asked what they did with their old sheets and curtains. “They ended up bringing me a truck load of them,” she recalls. “Word of mouth spread and over the next year some of our team from EVS, Central Supply and the Warehouse connected me with outside sources and we began quietly making inquiries.”

Donations came in from St. Joseph Hospital, Mission Hospital, UCI Medical Center and Orange Coast Memorial Medical Center. “I couldn’t walk in my garage. I ended up with three storage units full, costing me \$1,000 a month in rent!” Diana says with a laugh.

Diana carefully catalogued and recorded each item she had gathered. “There was so much red tape to get through Customs, but when the supplies were finally delivered, this was the largest single donation the state of Nayarit had ever received. It was enough to

equip their hospital, and an additional seven hospitals in the state. “The people from the hospital were thrilled with what they call their ‘beautiful new dining room,’ furnished with the old teal dining room tables and chairs from St. Joseph Hospital,” Diana shares. “We gave them copiers, exam tables, blankets, bedspreads, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, commodes, books and surgical instruments, an ambulance – anything and everything.”

Cathy commented, “It’s been really neat to see someone who has such a kind heart and is so resourceful and creative about how to fill the need.”

At St. Joseph Hospital, the service lines attended to by Diana are mainly in Vice President of Operations Tom Hill’s division. He expressed his high regard for her tireless efforts in numerous situations, including in this example: “Prior to the hospital deciding to contract with an outside vendor for food and nutrition management services, the department had been without a director for quite awhile. Bringing a contractor in from the outside wasn’t particularly popular with existing staff, and we went through several leaders trying to find the right people to match our culture. Out of that struggle staff developed a ‘blame the vendor’ attitude whenever anything didn’t go right, especially among the more vocal staff, even though the contractor was doing what we had asked them to do. Diana was instrumental in helping to break down barriers and perceptions. She served as the middle man in this improvement effort. She worked in concert with managers and helped find the right combination of department leaders. Employees would open up to her. When she had to point out inappropriate behaviors on the part of the staff, she did it in a just way. As a result, the department now has much improved, open and honest communication.”

Contributes to a work environment that supports the integrity of our mission, values and vision with a shared sense of purpose.

Diana’s role as a Service Line Manager at St. Joseph Hospital helps ensure a work environment that removes distractions from the hospital values so its mission can be carried forward. She is a resource to managers and an advocate for employees. The service line manager fosters candid and respectful discussions of employee problems and concerns. “It can be a fine line to serve both,” she concedes. “When employees come to me that often say, ‘That’s not just.’ I sometimes have to remind them that when they do things like

choose not to show up for work, they're not being just to their coworkers and employer – that justice is a two-way street.”

She continues, “It’s okay to challenge someone, but you have to continue to show respect. You have to listen, and that’s sometimes a learned talent. For example, I’ve coached several managers to not start an intervention by telling the employee what he or she did, because they’ll become defensive. Instead, ask them what happened. You’re able to gather more information and get to the truth.”

Cathy adds, “On a daily basis, Diana is there for her service line teams. She works tirelessly to ensure everyone receives her professional support. Diana has a depth of experience and knowledge and she shares it willingly with her colleagues. And, she does it all with a big smile, a great sense of humor and a generous heart.”

Behaves ethically, with integrity, honestly and confidentiality in dealing with others.

“Managers sometimes ask me, ‘Who told you that?’ Unless the person who shared with me is endangering someone or breaking the law, I protect confidentiality. People have to trust me if I’m going to be effective. And, they’re not shy about coming to me and having upfront conversations,” says Diana.

During her human resources career with her last hospital employer, Diana had many offers from other facilities. She chose to stay there for 33 years until, under new management, she found the injustices in how people were treated rendered her unable to continue supporting the management team. She shares, “My boss there asked me why I would want to ‘start over at the bottom.’ But when I came here I had such a peaceful feeling, and was open to embracing the opportunity. Everyone has been so welcoming, and the values are lived even in tough situations. I don’t feel I’m at the bottom; I’m at the top.”

Summary

Tom describes Diana as “a true partner and advocate who embodies Dignity, Service, Excellence and Justice.” He adds, “Diana brings justice, fairness, advocacy and caring to the table in a way that is so consistent with our heritage and mission. She is extremely busy, yet when employees need to talk, she makes herself available and is a good

listener who can advocate on their behalf. Managers also recognize the value she brings to situations in fostering and strengthening communications.”

When Diana and her coworkers volunteered at the Christmas party for motel kids, the Physical Therapy team placed quotes on the back of their nametags. One of those quotes, by author G. Donald Gale, described Diana perfectly:

“A pessimist, they say, sees a glass of water as being half empty; an optimist sees the same glass as half full. But a giving person sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty.”

Diana also provided a quote, which she says summarizes how she feels:

“I hope that my achievements in life shall be these -- that I will have fought for what was right and fair, that I will have risked for that which mattered, that I will have given help to those who were in need and that I will have left the earth a better place for what I've done and who I've been.”

-C. Hoppe

St. Joseph Hospital is fortunate to have Diana Delgado modeling how to provide Justice through her professional and personal life, and respectfully submits her nomination for the St. Joseph Health System Values in Action Award for Justice.