

Spotlight: Celebration

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Sally Colby, Dietary Float, Weeks Medical Center

I learned something recently. There's a fine line between empathy and compassion. Do you know what it is? The difference between the two is what makes this month's *Spotlight* subject so special.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, while compassion takes it one step further and motivates us to act to alleviate suffering. In essence, empathy is about feeling with someone, while compassion is about acting with care.

If you work at Weeks Medical Center, you're probably not surprised to see Sally Colby being highlighted here. If you've visited Weeks and enjoyed a delicious lunch there, it is very likely that you not only crossed paths with Sally but felt the warmth of her compassion.

When Sally was nominated for Spotlight, both Abby and I were excited to interview her, but only once we sat down to talk to her did we begin to understand why. Yes – Sally is awesome. Her philosophy for a good day: "When I get up in the morning, I paste on a smile and hope it's contagious." She greets you by name (if she doesn't know your name yet, she'll learn it!) and asks about your day with genuine care.

In healthcare, we are trained to empathize. Understand what

it's like to walk in our patients' shoes. Think about what it's like to be a family member with a loved one admitted into the hospital. Consider how we'd feel and act if we were asked to wait in a long line, let strangers poke us with needles when we are sick, or even simply put us on hold for a phone call. But how often do we take that empathy and turn it into compassion?

Sally understands that the cafeteria is a place where families, patients, and employees come to relax, even for just a minute. She empathizes with their busy weeks and stressful days. And that's when Sally is at her best. Her ability to make a connection with anyone who walks in is incredible to witness, but it comes from a place of intention.

She loves to joke around, but will feel out what the other person needs from her at that moment. "You can usually find some thread that helps bind people together," she shared. And she's looking for that thread in every interaction. Often it's as simple as sharing a smile and learning someone's name. Other times it's connecting over shared history or a favorite maple syrup. Sally knows she's had a successful interaction with someone who comes through her line in the cafeteria if they're smiling at the end of it.

Our Mission, Vision, and Values aren't supposed to be passive. They are meant to be active, exhibiting who we are and what we do, every day. Let's follow Sally's example, and not only empathize with others, but turn it into action to show outstanding compassion for each other.

With appreciation,



Pictured left to right:
Bernie Adams, LSSBB,
Chief Quality Officer, and
Abby Lane, Performance
Improvement Specialist

**Nominate
Someone!**