KEEPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES CLOSER TO HOME WHEN CARE IS NEEDED MOST
PG 4

COVER STORY: PAVILION CAFÉ PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE PG 8

AN APPROACH TO HEALING THAT’S AN ART UNTO ITSELF
PG 12

Dignity Health
Mercy & Memorial Hospitals
PAVILION CAFÉ PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY & INDEPENDENCE
The newly opened Pavilion Café, located in the lobby of Mercy Hospital Downtown, is more than just a great spot to get a cup of coffee; it has provided one man the means to live a more independent life than he once thought possible.

Several years ago, Jodie Porter began working in the kitchen at Mercy Hospitals as a Project SEARCH intern. Project SEARCH, a job-training program of the nonprofit agency PathPoint, helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieve self-sufficiency. Dignity Health Mercy Hospitals partners with PathPoint as a host site for these interns.

During Jodie’s internship, the staff took notice of his skill in food services and were impressed with his positive attitude. David Nickell, director of food and nutrition at Mercy Hospitals, inquired about hiring Jodie as a barista for the new café, to be employed directly by the hospital. In February Jodie was hired and he has been receiving kudos every since.

“Jodie is a pleasure to work with,” Nickell said. “He follows directions very well, provides great customer service, and he thoroughly enjoys working at the café; it’s the highlight of his day.”

The Friends of Mercy Foundation and the generous gift of David and Catherine Gay are responsible for the café where Jodie now works. Their substantial gift was part of a $1 million capital campaign that renovated Mercy Hospital Downtown, as well as areas at Mercy Hospital Southwest. It’s unlikely anyone foresaw the impact of how a gift intended for construction would end up making such a significant difference for one person.

“We never thought that the gift we made would have such an impact on Jodie’s life,” Catherine said. “As donors, we don’t always get a chance to meet the people who have benefited from our gift. Jodie is the sweetest guy with a smile a mile long, and it is an honor to be a part of something so special.”

Because of the opportunity the café has provided, along with the training received from PathPoint, Jodie has been able to realize more independence. He is able to live on his own, has his driver’s license, and is currently planning a wedding with his fiancé.

“It’s been a long

"WE NEVER THOUGHT THAT THE GIFT WE MADE WOULD HAVE SUCH AN IMPACT ON JO DIER'S LIFE. AS DONORS, WE DON'T ALWAYS GET A CHANCE TO MEET THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BENEFITED FROM OUR GIFT. JODIE IS THE SWEETEST GUY WITH A SMILE A MILE LONG, AND IT'S AN HONOR TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING SO SPECIAL."

—Friends of Mercy Foundation Donors David & Catherine Gay

road for me to get here; to be able to live on my own and to be working at the coffee shop at the hospital,” Jodie said. “I am loving it and am getting good feedback from the customers.”

PathPoint is incredibly proud of Jodie’s successes and invited him to speak at their 50th anniversary event back in November.

“Jodie is an amazing man,” Christina Rajal, vice president and director of operations for Kern County’s PathPoint program said. “He truly is a testament that despite disability or disadvantage, when given an opportunity, he can succeed beyond anyone’s wildest dreams, even his own.”

Left: Jodie Porter serves coffee to donor, Catherine Gay.

MERCY & MEMORIAL HOSPITALS | 9