

MEMPHIS Plan delivers peace of mind in time of need

By Jeff Hulett

For more than 20 years now, the Church Health Center's employer-sponsored healthcare plan for small businesses and self-employed people, the MEMPHIS Plan, has been helping those in need have access to quality, affordable healthcare.

Because of generous volunteer doctors who see patients in their own private practices throughout the city, the Center is able to serve uninsured working people and their families on a wider scope. Hospitals, diagnostic centers and laboratories also donate their services, providing continuity of care and peace of mind to the people they serve.

"The Plan – it takes a village approach – creates great camaraderie and loyalty amongst employers and employees," said Church Health Center Founder and Executive Director Dr. Scott Morris. "It also allows doctors and healthcare professionals the opportunity to give back without the headache of all the paperwork."

Pettit's Lawnsapes, a residential and commercial design landscape and property-maintenance firm, has been offering the MEMPHIS Plan to its employees for more than nine years, and they couldn't be happier.

"The MEMPHIS Plan brings our team together," said Pettit's Lawnsapes Manager Barbara Howell. "With the way healthcare is today, I'm so grateful to all of the volunteer doctors who have been selfless and given their time to our staff."

From dental visits to eye care, to regulating blood pressure and blood sugar levels, the staff at Pettit's has benefited from the Plan in many ways over the years. In fact, it even saved one man's life.

"A couple of years ago one of our workers was so sick he had to go to the ER at Methodist," Howell said. "Turns out he had a virus that was affecting his stomach and liver. Thank goodness for the Plan and his operation or he might not have made it."

"It's an amazing feeling for us in management to offer the Plan to our employees. Without it, some of them might not receive care," Howell said.

Located in Binghamton, Pettit's Lawnsapes tries to hire men from the community that might need a second chance. "We've always had a heart for helping those in the inner city," said Barbara Howell.

Jerome Mosby was an employee since 1993 and immediately joined the Plan when it was offered in 2002.

A few years ago, he went in for what he thought would be a routine eye exam only to learn that a disease in his eye would require a special lens implant.

“Jerome must have had this disease since he was a child, but he could never afford surgery,” Howell said.

Thanks to Dr. Thomas Gettelfinger at Memphis Eye Cataract Associates (MECA), Jerome received his cataract surgery and was able to go back to work.

“MECA was fantastic with my father,” said Andrea Levenson.

Jerome recently had an aneurism while on the job and died soon thereafter at Methodist University Hospital. Everyone at Pettit Lawscapes and in the Mosby family said they are grateful for the care Jerome received through the Plan.

Whether it was at Methodist, the Church Health Center or MECA, Jerome Mosby was treated with dignity, and he will be remembered as a great father and hard worker. Howell honored Jerome and his family with a gift to the Church Health Center in his memory.

“Jerome was a part of the family here at Pettit Lawscapes,” said Howell. “He was very soft-spoken, but he loved his children and worked hard to provide for them.”

Jerome Mosby daughter Andrea Levenson said she misses him greatly. “My father was a great man with a great work ethic,” said Andrea. “He would work in rain, sleet or snow.”

For more information on how to become a MEMPHIS Plan volunteer, call (901) 272-PLAN (7526) or visit www.ChurchHealthCenter.org/memphisplan.

Jeff Hulett is PR and Communications Coordinator at the Church Health Center, whose ministries provide healthcare for the working uninsured and promote healthy bodies and spirits for all. For more information about the Church Health Center, call (901) 272-7170 or visit www.churchhealthcenter.org.