

# LABLines



News from LABORATORY ALLIANCE of Central New York, LLC



## Never Forget the “Why”

By Anne Marie Mullin, CEO

In my last article (Summer 2017), I explained the origin and creation of Laboratory Alliance and called attention to the company’s upcoming twentieth anniversary. Had I not been sound asleep on New Year’s Eve when the glass ball was lowered in Times Square and as confetti filled the sky, I would have raised a glass and toasted the completion of our two decades of business. What a great accomplishment!

In no small part, Laboratory Alliance owes the completion of 20 years of service to its talented, dedicated, and patient-focused employees. There was no primer provided to our initial workforce on how to run a successful, consolidated, regional laboratory. In fact, there were few, if any other, laboratory companies structured like us to learn from. It was hard work, ingenuity, and a firm conviction that a locally-owned and run company would be most in tune with and responsive to the needs of the patients at our owner hospitals and of the community-based healthcare providers of Central New York that helped ensure our success.

We have never lost sight of the fact that although a laboratory is a rather hidden provider of healthcare services (except for phlebotomists and couriers), we are privileged to be entrusted by our

patients with a part of themselves – be it their blood, body fluid, tissue biopsy, etc. We view that as a sacred trust that requires the best of ourselves and our technology. As one of our very early advertisements stated, “We may never meet the patients but we touch them every day.” It’s why we come to work and it’s why we work so hard to serve the patients and their healthcare providers who depend upon us.

It’s not what we do that has set us apart and contributed to our growth - it’s why we do it. We must never forget the “why.”

**We may never meet the patients, but we touch them every day.**

It's why we come to work. And it's why we work so hard to help serve the doctors and patients who depend on us. Laboratory Alliance is the largest, most comprehensive clinical and anatomic pathology laboratory in Central New York. Our rapid delivery of test results, expertise of staff and state-of-the-art equipment and technology allow us to help our clients make better informed decisions.

We often only know these patients through barcodes, results and statistics, but these numbers represent our fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, friends and neighbors. What we do every day impacts thousands of lives.

**LABORATORY ALLIANCE**  
of Central New York, LLC  
[www.laboratoryalliance.com](http://www.laboratoryalliance.com)

## Honoring Our Most Senior Employees

For the past two years, it’s been my honor and privilege to recognize, throughout the year, during the employee luncheons that I host, those employees who have reached milestone years-of-service with the company (5 – 10 – 15 years). I am thrilled to now draw special attention to 68 employees with 20 years of service. Considering that the company started with 224 employees, that’s 30 percent of our initial workforce and roughly 16 percent of current employees!

I extend a profound thank you to the following employees:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Joan Bonaparte     | Maria Dillon        |
| Michelle Botwinick | Dawn Doviak         |
| Anne Chamberlain   | Christina Essig     |
| Mary Kate Clancy   | Olga Farrell        |
| Maureen Conklin    | Christine Garritano |
| Michele Connor     | Josephine Gervasi   |
| Jeff Coyne         | Barbara Guiffrida   |
| Nancy Crossett     | Sheryl Hamilton     |
| Ian Crossett       | Ron Hart            |
| Deborah Cullen     | Cheryl Haskins      |
| Marcia Degilio     | Sue Hayes           |

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## Honoring Our Most Senior Employees

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Eric Henry  
 Laryl Hludzinski  
 Claire Huchzermeier  
 Carl Huppman  
 Cathy Husted  
 Jane Keeler  
 Kathryn Lamison  
 Kathleen Laubenstein  
 Daria Lebduska  
 Elizabeth Madonian  
 Sue Maloney  
 Lori Martin  
 Erin Mauro  
 Mary Ellen Milczarski  
 Janet Miller  
 Shelley Murphy  
 Carrie Nappa  
 Dru Ellen Neis  
 Debra Neverette  
 George Popp  
 Lori Post  
 Sister Maria Grace Quartiero  
 Russell Rawling  
 Kathleen Real  
 Rebecca Reynolds  
 Jane Riffanacht  
 Joan Riffanacht  
 Heidi Robinson  
 Jane Roller  
 Jill Rudnick  
 Michele Scott  
 Ellen Searles  
 Debra Shannon  
 Diana Signore  
 Nancy Sniffen  
 Martha Stewart  
 Pamela Sue Swierczek  
 Ann Sylcox  
 Peg Thompson  
 Alan Tucker  
 Olga Volyanik  
 John Vormwald  
 Jennifer Walczyk  
 Elsie Wilson  
 Katrina Zeglin



**LABORATORY ALLIANCE**  
 of Central New York, LLC  
*Celebrating 20 years of service*



Recognizing Laboratory Alliance's 20th anniversary in 2018, CenterState CEO Ambassadors Cindy Mannise, Cory LaDuke and Lori Mentel visited Laboratory Alliance's Operations Center on Nov. 7 to present a certificate recognizing the milestone. Operations Center Director Rita Romano, holding the certificate front center, is joined by CEO Anne Marie Mullin, pictured to her right, and staff members from the Operations Center.

## Influenza Returns to Central New York

Flu activity is significantly higher than it was this time last year.

There were 1,606 people hospitalized with confirmed cases of the flu as of the week ending Jan. 13, the highest number of flu-related hospitalizations since the New York State Department of Health began tracking in 2004.

In a December Syracuse.com article titled "Flu hitting Onondaga County harder than most parts of NY," reporter Jim Mulder noted, "That number represents the tip of the iceberg because most people who get the flu don't seek medical care or get tested."

And the numbers continued to grow.

By mid-January, according to the New York State Department of Health Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report, influenza activity level was categorized as geographically widespread for the sixth week. There were 6,083 laboratory-confirmed influenza reports, a 54% increase over the previous week.

Reports of percent of patient visits for influenza-like illness was 7.16%, which is above the regional baseline of 3.10%. There has been one influenza-associated pediatric death reported this season in New York state.

Preliminary results for influenza vaccine effectiveness (VE) in the U.S. have not been released for the current season, but according to the Center for Disease Control, data suggests that the influenza vaccine continues to offer protection against all influenza viruses, and can reduce the severity of illness for those who do get the flu.

Flu is a serious illness that can lead to hospitalization or death.

The government recommends everyone six months and older get a flu shot.





## Biotin Supplements Can Interfere with Laboratory Results

By Roy Huchzermeier, Ph.D., FACB, Director of Assay Development

High doses of biotin, which can be found in various supplements, can lead to erroneous lab results. Biotin, which is also known as vitamin B<sub>7</sub>, is a water-soluble B-vitamin. Biotin is essential for the metabolism of fats and amino acids, and for cell growth.

The AI (Adequate Intake) of biotin for adults is considered to be 30ug/day<sup>1</sup>. Since many foods contain biotin and intestinal bacteria synthesize biotin, biotin deficiency is rare. Nevertheless, biotin supplements as well as many biotin-containing cosmetics and health products are being marketed to strengthen hair and nails, and for other health benefits, despite the fact that there is little evidence of the efficacy of these biotin preparations.

The use of over-the-counter biotin supplements for cosmetic purposes has increased dramatically over recent years. Typical biotin supplements today can contain 5-10 mg, which is approximately 150 to 300 times the AI for adults. In addition, mega-doses of biotin (100 to 300 mg per day) are now being used to treat multiple sclerosis and other conditions. Since there have been no reported cases of adverse effects from receiving high doses of biotin, no Upper Intake Level (UL) has been established for biotin.

Although biotin is readily cleared in healthy individuals, it is not readily cleared in patients with impaired renal function. The increase in prevalence of high-dose and mega-dose biotin supplementation has led to a higher incidence of interference and erroneous lab test results for many immunoassay-based lab methods that utilize reagents employing biotin.

Biotin is a small molecule that can be chemically derivatized and easily attached to antibody molecules or protein antigens<sup>2</sup>. Avidin, which is a naturally-occurring protein found in egg whites and elsewhere, has an extremely high binding affinity and a high degree of specificity for biotin. Avidin can be readily attached to solid phases such as latex beads, for example.

Today many of the immunoassays in clinical use utilize biotin-linked reagents, avidin-linked reagents, and rely on the interaction between biotin and avidin to form the necessary immune complexes<sup>3</sup>. The use of biotin and avidin in immunoassays often provides for signal amplification which can enhance the sensitivity of these immunoassays.

Immunoassays are designed and validated to ensure that endogenous blood substances such as biotin, at concentrations expected to

be encountered in patient samples, would not interfere with the test results. However, the high concentrations of biotin that have become more common in patient samples due to the high dose supplements can disrupt the biotin/avidin interaction necessary for the proper functioning of the immunoassay reagents and thereby interfere with the test results<sup>4</sup>. This, in turn, can cause falsely low or falsely elevated assay results depending upon the architecture of the assay.

Holmes et al<sup>5</sup> reported surveying 374 immunoassay methods performed on eight popular analyzers and found that 221 of these methods employed biotin/avidin-based reagents. Furthermore, an endogenous biotin concentration less than 51 ng/mL in a sample was capable of causing more than 10% error in 82 of these methods. This endogenous biotin concentration can be easily exceeded when high doses of biotin are taken.

For example, a single 100 mg dose of biotin will result in a peak serum biotin concentration of approximately 500 ng/mL in a healthy individual<sup>5</sup>. Reported examples of the interference caused by mega-doses of biotin include falsely low TSH results and falsely elevated T4 and T3 results leading to the misdiagnosis of patients as having Graves' disease when these patients were actually euthyroid<sup>6,7</sup>.

It is not possible to define specific biotin intake limits for preventing lab test interference because of biotin processing variability between individuals and differences between test methods with respect to their sensitivity to biotin interference. However, the good news is that there is a heightened awareness of the potential interference from mega-doses of biotin on clinical lab results.

It is important for clinicians to ask their patients about their use of biotin supplements, and communicate this information (quantity taken, frequency, etc.) to the laboratory. Most importantly, it is always essential for the clinician to consider the patient's clinical presentation when interpreting lab results.

### References

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Biotin supplements, sometimes containing 150 to 300 times the recommended daily intake, as well as many biotin-containing cosmetics and health products, are being marketed to strengthen hair and nails, and for other health benefits, despite the fact that there is little evidence of the efficacy of these biotin preparations. Clinicians should be aware that these mega-doses of biotin affect clinical laboratory results.

## CDC Calls for Prevention Efforts as STDs Hit Record Highs Again

A year ago we reported in *LabLines* that rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, were at their highest levels ever in 2015, the most recent year reported, according to the annual Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report recently published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.) **On Jan. 4 the report was modified, stating that rates for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis have increased to record highs for the third year in a row.** The following was published on LabTestsOnline.com:

Rates for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis have increased to record highs for the third year in a row, according to the latest annual Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While the rates for these three sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have increased for both women and men, **the 2016 CDC report highlights how certain groups have been hardest-hit:**

- People aged 15 to 24 have the highest reported rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea infections and are now showing an increase in syphilis cases as well.
- Men who have sex with men (MSM) face the highest rates of syphilis and HIV coinfection. Data also suggest gonorrhea rates for MSM have increased for five years.
- There has been an upsurge in syphilis in newborns—known as congenital syphilis—where cases have risen to numbers unseen since 1998. A total of 628 cases of congenital syphilis were reported in 2016 (a 28% increase over 2015), with 40 newborns dying or developing severe health complications.

These three STDs can be cured with antibiotics. However, some people do not get tested because signs and symptoms of infection can be absent or easily missed. If left undiagnosed and untreated, chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis can lead to adverse outcomes, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility and stillbirth. People with undiagnosed or untreated STDs can pass the infection on to others and increase the risk of getting HIV.

### Striking statistics from the 2016 CDC report

The CDC recognizes that their surveillance data capture only a fraction of actual STD cases because many infections go undiagnosed and unreported. However, the agency is confident their data provide valuable insights into the more than two million cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis it recorded in the U.S.—the highest number of cases ever recorded by the annual surveillance report.

### Among the most commonly reported STDs, there were:

- 1.6 million cases of chlamydia (a 5% increase over 2015), with young women accounting for nearly half of all diagnosed infections.
- 468,000 cases of gonorrhea (a 19% increase over 2015); this is particularly worrisome because of the growing threat of drug resistance to the only remaining antibiotic treatment recommended for gonorrhea. While rates went up among men and women, men had the greatest increase at 22%.

- 28,000 cases of primary and secondary syphilis (an 18% increase over 2015), with most cases affecting men who have sex with men. Half of these men diagnosed with syphilis also had HIV, highlighting the need to combine STD and HIV health services.

### The importance of getting tested

According to the CDC, getting tested for STDs is one of the most important things you can do to stay healthy. Data from the 2016 surveillance report show that STD screening is especially critical for women and men who have sex with men because they are uniquely susceptible to the health consequences of STDs. For these populations, the CDC offers the following recommendations:

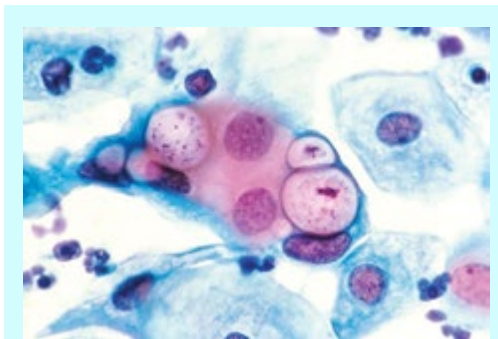
- If you are a sexually active woman younger than 25, or if you are a sexually active woman of any age and have risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, you should request annual chlamydia and gonorrhea tests. If you have never been tested for HIV, you should have an HIV test.
- If you are a pregnant woman, you should request syphilis, HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea and hepatitis B tests early in your pregnancy. If you engage in behaviors that place you at

increased risk, you should also request that testing be done later in your pregnancy, usually the third trimester.

- If you are a sexually active man who has sex with men, you should request tests for syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV at least once a year. More frequent STD testing, such as every three to six months, is recommended for men who engage in high risk behaviors, including men who have multiple male sex partners.

All Americans can help turn back the rise in STD rates by committing to the CDC's three-pronged action plan: 1) Talk openly about STDs with your partners and healthcare providers. 2) Get tested. It's the only way to know if you have an STD. 3) If you have an STD, take the medication your healthcare practitioner prescribes.

If you are not comfortable talking with your regular healthcare practitioner about STDs, there are many clinics that provide confidential and free or low-cost testing.



This picture shows cells infected by chlamydia when viewed under the microscope. Healthcare providers collect samples that are sent to Laboratory Alliance's main laboratory in Liverpool for testing. To test for chlamydia or gonorrhea, samples for women are collected using a swab or brush from cells or secretion from the vagina. For men or women, the initial portion of the urine stream (first-catch urine sample) is also used; sometimes a swab of cells or secretion from a non-genital area that may be infected. To test for syphilis, a blood sample is drawn from a vein in the arm. Sometimes, a sample is collected from a scraping from a chancre in the affected area. *Photo by Lance Liotta.*

## Syracuse City School District P-TECH Program



### P-TECH Career Coaches Participate in First Mentoring Event of the Year with 26 Freshmen

By Mark Jordan, Ed.D., Education Coordinator

The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program is a progressive educational model designed to provide academically at-risk students with the opportunities to graduate high school, complete a two-year degree and secure employment in high-demand STEM careers — **science, technology, engineering and mathematics**. P-TECH is a collaborative model incorporating a K-12 school district, an institution of higher education, and a business partner. Each of these participants contribute to the development of students' academic, technical and career readiness skills and prepare them to hit the ground running as they enter the workforce.

The first mentoring event of the 2017-18 school year took place on Oct. 13, when 13 of our career coaches representing both the Clinical Laboratory Technology and the Health Information Technology programs traveled to Henninger High School and met with 26 new freshmen. This event was a great opportunity for the students to get to know their career coaches and learn about the role they play in the field of healthcare.

Using the small-group mentoring model, each career coach met with two students. The objective of this event was for students to explore the career of clinical laboratory science through the lens of their career coaches. Each of the students conducted structured interviews with their coaches, asking probing questions relating to the challenging and most rewarding aspects of their jobs, educational requirements, work environment, essential hard and soft skills and

many other topics. Some of the career coaches also brought props to share with the students such as microscope slides and pictures demonstrating different diseases, as well as different specimen collection devices. This provided another dimension of engagement and learning for the students as they interacted with these tools of the trade and listened to the career coaches' explanations of the items.

The career coaches present at this event include Michael Adetu, Maria Dillon, Barbara Guiffrida, Roseanne Ianuzi, Mark Jordan, Lazaro Martinez, David Mineo, Katie Raimondo, Rita Romano, Debra Shannon, Angela Smith, Morgan Thomas and Jennifer Walczyk.

Thank you to all of the career coaches who were able to attend! In December we held a mentoring class for sophomores, and this event is detailed below.

### P-TECH Tenth Graders Visit the Laboratory for a Chemical Hazard Communication Hands-On Learning Experience in December

By Mark Jordan, Ed.D., Education Coordinator

Laboratory Alliance employees at the Operations Center hosted 17 tenth grade students from the Syracuse City School District's P-TECH Clinical Laboratory Technology program on Dec. 12 for their first mentoring event of the 2017-18 school year. This event provided students with a unique hands-on opportunity to develop their skills in laboratory safety and apply their classroom learning to a real-world scenario.

The mentoring event consisted of four main parts. For the first part, students, under the supervision of Laboratory Alliance's career coaches, autonomously circulated throughout specially designated areas of the lab locating and identifying key safety and personal protective equipment. During this process, students became more critically oriented to our laboratory environment and potentially their future place of employment!

Once students completed the scavenger hunt of safety equipment, they met in small groups with our career coaches to review their findings and learn about the significance of chemical hazard communication using Safety Data Sheets (SDSs). The students clearly demonstrated their prior knowledge of SDSs and the information contained within them, a great testament of the

effective instruction provided by their instructor, Janet Clark of the Syracuse City School District. Building upon the students' prior knowledge, we provided them with a hypothetical task involving a chemical hazard. The students conducted a thorough assessment of the hazards associated with this task using the relevant SDSs and described how to safely perform the task.

The culmination of this mentoring event was the moment we had the students spill the pseudo-hazardous chemical on the workbenches and, under the direction and guidance of Laboratory Alliance's career coaches, appropriately managed the spill using chemical spill kits. It is not often students are actually asked to spill something in the lab so this was something they definitely enjoyed! More importantly, we expect they will long remember this valuable hands-on experience.

This mentoring event was strategic in targeting key laboratory skills in safety and providing an opportunity for the students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. I would like to thank all of the career coaches for their participation and flawless execution of this event. The career coaches present at this event included Michael Adetu, Mark Jordan, Daria Lebduska, Heidi Ricci, Rita Romano and Jennifer Walczyk.

## Introducing Affiliated Doctors at St. Joseph's Pathology



Laboratory Alliance welcomes two new doctors to our affiliated pathology practice at St. Joseph's Health.

**Yan Hu, MD**  
Pathologist, St. Joseph's Pathology, P.C.

Dr. Hu joined St. Joseph's Health in 2017 following a fellowship in pathology at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center in Philadelphia. She received her doctor of medicine in 1999 from Nankai University, one of China's most prestigious universities. In 2006, she received her Ph.D. in biochemistry at SUNY Buffalo, where she also completed her residency in 2016.



**Geoffrey Mikita, MD**  
Pathologist, St. Joseph's Pathology, P.C.

Dr. Mikita joined St. Joseph's Health in 2017 following a fellowship in hematology at New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. He did his residency at the same hospital in 2016 in anatomic and clinical pathology. Dr. Mikita earned his medical degree at Chicago Medical School in 2012.

### About St. Joseph's Pathology

St. Joseph's Pathology's experienced pathologists bring to the diagnostic bench decades of practical experience, and with it the expertise to handle a variety of challenging cases. The pathologists' educational backgrounds are diverse and of the highest caliber and their skilled technologists use state-of-the-art equipment and methods.

St. Joseph's Pathology uses the technical services of Laboratory Alliance. Through this affiliation, the pathologists have access to numerous special histochemical stains and more than 80 immunohistochemical stains, as well as cutting edge in-situ hybridization technology. Their technical range is extended even further by the use of outside reference laboratories for additional ancillary tests and special studies.

## When your doctor orders labwork, we're in your neighborhood

First, visit us online at [laboratoryalliance.com](http://laboratoryalliance.com) to find the Patient Service Center near you. Then, bring your prescription to any of our centers — no appointment needed. Prompt, courteous, locally owned and in your neighborhood.

### Baldwinsville

#### Baldwinsville Village Commons

15 East Genesee St., 2nd Floor, Suite 230  
Baldwinsville, NY 13027  
315-857-0329  
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 8 a.m. – Noon

### East Syracuse

#### Crouse Medical Center

5000 Brittonfield Pkwy, Suite A108  
East Syracuse, NY 13057  
315-437-0856  
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Closed for lunch 12:15 p.m. – 1 p.m.

### Camillus

#### Medical Center West

5700 West Genesee St., Suite 209  
Camillus, NY 13031  
315-468-0501  
Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 8 a.m. – Noon

### Camillus

#### Township 5

260 Township Blvd., Suite 40  
Camillus, NY 13031  
315-468-1490  
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Closed for lunch from 12:15 – 1 p.m.

### Cazenovia

#### Atwell Mill Professional Building

132½ Albany St, Suite AnxS-1  
Cazenovia, NY 13035  
315-655-8107  
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Closed for lunch 12:15 p.m. – 1 p.m.

### Cicero

#### Cicero Professional Building

6221 Route 31, Suite 108B  
Cicero, NY 13039  
315-752-0077  
Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Closed for lunch 12:15 p.m. – 1 p.m.

### Fayetteville

#### Northeast Medical Center

4000 Medical Center Drive, Suite 210  
Fayetteville, NY 13066  
315-329-7047  
Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday 8 a.m. – Noon

### Liverpool

#### North Medical Center

5100 West Taft Rd., Suite 2F  
Liverpool, NY 13088  
315-452-2280  
Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday 8 am – Noon



### Pulaski

#### 4870 North Jefferson Street

Pulaski, NY 13142  
315-298-4743  
Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Closed for lunch 12:15 p.m. – 1 p.m.

### Syracuse

#### Madison Irving Medical Center

475 Irving Ave., Suite 100  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-471-1983  
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### Syracuse

#### St. Joseph's Health Medical Office Centre Suite 802

104 Union Ave. and Townsend Street  
Syracuse, NY 13203  
315-703-5004  
Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### Syracuse

#### Upstate University Hospital - Community Campus Physician Office Building South

4900 Broad Road, Suite 1K (first floor)  
Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-492-5428  
Monday – Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



## Monthly Prize Giveaway Recognizes Employee Dedication

In August, Laboratory Alliance launched a monthly prize drawing for its 410 employees by giving away 18 pairs of tickets to the New York State Fair. Each month, employees are randomly chosen from all of our sites and departments to win tickets or gift cards to local activities and businesses.

In September, **Marissa Brillanti** in Customer Service won two tickets to the Wild Animal Park in Chittenango and she spent her birthday with the wild animals.

“It was so much fun we spent all day there,” said Marissa. “There were shows that demonstrated how the animals are cared for and showed how they live in the wild. It was very interactive – we fed carrots to the giraffe at least four times during the day!”

**Jeremy Fuller** in our Microbiology Department won two tickets to the Burnet Park Zoo in October’s giveaway. Because he’s already a member of Friends of the Zoo and visits regularly, he shared his giveaway prize with a co-worker who took her family to the zoo.

**Lisa Blair**, who works at our Rapid Response Laboratory at St. Joseph’s Hospital, also shared her November prize. She won two \$10 gift cards to Dunkin’ Donuts, but wrapped one for her boyfriend as a Christmas present.

Thirty-six employees each won a ticket good for a carload to Lights on the Lake in December.

The best thing about the giveaway is that all winners’ names are put back into the drawing each month, insuring that everyone has an equal chance at winning throughout the year.

“It’s a way to show appreciation for our dedicated employees,” said Barbara Guiffida, vice president of human resources. “And our giveaway prizes say “go enjoy yourself, have some family time, see what’s fun in Central New York!”

Prizes in 2018 will follow the 20th anniversary theme and be distributed to 20 employees each month.

**Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.**

— Michael Jordan

## LA Newsmakers

### Employee Anniversaries

#### October, 5 Years

**John Civiok, Jr.**  
**Kristiana Giang**  
**Wendy Radney**

#### November, 5 Years

**Ronilo Aquino**  
**Michelle Dautrich**  
**Jacob Dillon**

#### November, 10 Years

**Amy Dishaw**  
**Stephanie Jefski**  
**Vicki Nolan**

#### November, 15 Years

**Galal Galal**  
**Deborah Weller**

#### December, 5 Years

**Kevin Morton**  
**Martha Starmer**

## New Employees

Please welcome our new employees

### At our Corporate Office

**Danielle Carrera** - Customer Service Representative  
**Nelya Svintozelsky** - Customer Service Representative

### At our Operations Center

**Shena Barker** - Phlebotomist  
**Briana Blasier** - Phlebotomist  
**Concetta Blondin** - Laboratory Office Assistant  
**Kristyn Bowman** - Phlebotomist  
**Nicole Burden** - Phlebotomist  
**Andrew Castle** - Phlebotomist  
**Colleen Cruz** - Phlebotomist  
**Emily Gaido** - Laboratory Office Assistant  
**Keisha Hall** - Technical Processing Assistant  
**Lisa Hamelinck** - Medical Laboratory Technician  
**Andrea Howington** - Technical Processing Assistant  
**Honey Marlee Hurtado Otorala** - Medical Technologist  
**Hannah Jones** - Referral Testing Specialist  
**Simon Kimball** - Technical Assistant  
**Alison Madill** - Technical Processing Assistant  
**Michele Peryea** - Courier  
**Jessica Pesta** - Laboratory Office Assistant  
**Ivy Roberts** - Phlebotomist  
**Shayloni Robinson-Paige** - Laboratory Office Assistant  
**Suzanne Wood** - Phlebotomist

### At our Rapid Response Laboratory at Crouse Hospital

**Melissa Macijeko** - Medical Technologist  
**Tiffany Orr** - Technical Processing Assistant  
**Alicia Reyes** - Technical Processing Assistant

### At our Rapid Response Laboratory at St. Joseph’s Hospital

**Maxwell Blair** - Technical Assistant  
**Erin Dwyer** - Medical Laboratory Technician  
**Christopher Mascato** - Laboratory Office Assistant  
**Kristina Mennig** - Manager  
**Kyle Seeley** - Laboratory Office Assistant

# Community Connections

**The American Heart Association®  
Go Red For Women  
FUNraise For National Wear Red  
Day and Laboratory Alliance  
will participate in National Wear  
Red Day® on Friday, Feb. 2.**



Many of us know someone affected by heart disease and stroke because about 2,200 Americans die of cardiovascular disease each day. That's an average of one death every 40 seconds. But together we can change that. Cardiovascular diseases, which includes stroke, claim the lives of about one woman every 80 seconds unnecessarily — because about 80% of cardiovascular diseases may be preventable with education and action.

### The Facts About High Blood Pressure

#### What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure (HBP or hypertension) is when your blood pressure, the force of the blood flowing through your blood vessels, is consistently too high.

#### If you have high blood pressure, you are not alone

- Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure. Many don't even know they have it.
- The best way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked.

#### Know your numbers

Learn about checking your blood pressure numbers and what they mean.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 - 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 - 139	or	80 - 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

#### High blood pressure is a “silent killer”

Most of the time there are no obvious symptoms.

- Certain physical traits and lifestyle choices can put you at a greater risk for developing high blood pressure.
- When left untreated, the damage that high blood pressure does to your circulatory system is a significant contributing factor to heart attack, stroke and other health threats.

#### There is hope

- While there is no cure for high blood pressure, with proper treatment and management, you can live a long and healthy life.
- An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Read more online at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) and search “The Facts About High Blood Pressure.”



Through the annual Community Campaign, United Way of Central New York provides financial support to 88 programs at 33 local organizations and coordinates strategic community initiatives.

**Donations are down and they are not going to reach their goal.** Without additional community support, United Way may have to cut funding to the vital human service programs. Cuts will mean decreased or lost services for thousands of our neighbors here in Onondaga County.

In an effort to make up the \$500,000 shortfall in our community, **Wegmans is partnering with the United Way on the “Bridge the Gap”**



**campaign, hoping people will chip in extra. Wegmans is accepting donations to the United Way at cash registers through March 3.**

Donations are also being accepted at [unitedway-cny.org](http://unitedway-cny.org) or by calling 315-428-2211. Help Bridge the Gap and keep the programs whole. You can make a gift online, by check, gifts of appreciated stock and distributions from IRAs.

**On behalf of the people you will help... THANK YOU!**



Comments, suggestions or inquiries should be directed to **Joan Rusin**, Senior Executive Assistant, 315-461-3038, or by email to [joanrusin@lacny.com](mailto:joanrusin@lacny.com)