When Brian King of Charleston found out he needed a kidney transplant, his wife Pam jumped into action.

“Once I made the decision, it was just like let’s do this,” Pam said. “We can’t do this fast enough.”

However, Pam was not a match for her husband.

“I was like, What do we do now? What are the other choices and alternative?” Pam said.

When Dave Kent of St. Albans learned he needed a kidney transplant, his son Dustin wanted to help.

“The first thing that went through my head was to get tested and see if I’m a match,” Dustin said. However, Dustin was not a match for his dad.

“I felt bad for him because he was devastated,” Dave said.

About a week later, each family’s transplant story events that would forever impact both families.

In going through test results and blood types, Alice Jones, the CAMC Kidney Transplant Center transplant coordinator, noticed that Pam King matched Dave Kent and Dustin Kent matched Brian King.

She contacted the two families to see if they’d be willing to do what is called a paired kidney exchange, sometimes referred to as a “kidney swap.” This happens when a living kidney donor is incompatible with the recipient, so the donor exchanges kidneys with another donor/recipient pair that is a match.

“We thought this could be a blessing from God because sometimes people don’t get second chances,” Dustin said. “Everything happens for a reason.”

Meanwhile, the King family talked it over.

“Let’s do this,” Pam said. “I was continually always hoping there was someone out there who was a match.” So both families agreed.

This is the first ever paired kidney exchange performed at the CAMC Kidney Transplant Center and in West Virginia. It represents 30 years of a strong partnership and commitment between CAMC and Cleveland Clinic.

“When I made the decision, it was just like let’s do this fast enough,” Pam said. “We can’t do this fast enough.”

This is a historical moment in the state of West Virginia and for these two remarkable families,” said Alan Wee, M.D., Cleveland Clinic Kidney Transplant Surgical Director, who was one of two surgeons who performed the specialized surgery.

“We made history 30 years ago when we brought the kidney transplant program to CAMC and together we’re honored that we’ve been able to do it again and make this vital service available to more families.”

“This may be the simplest type of kidney exchange, but it resulted in great life-saving events that would forever impact both families. This was made possible by the heroic acts of altruism and love by the donors. With the current scarcity of organs, this type of intervention can make a big difference in alleviating a health crisis in West Virginia, which has the highest incidence of end stage renal disease in the country,” said Dr. Joseph Africa, M.D., Cleveland Clinic Kidney Transplant Surgical Director.

“This is the first ever paired kidney exchange in the state of West Virginia to be named as one of the 100 Best Hospitals* in the nation by Healthgrades, an online resource for information about physicians and hospitals. This is the second year in a row CAMC has achieved this premier designation.

The recipients of America’s 100 Best Hospitals Award™demonstrate superior clinical outcomes across the majority of common inpatient conditions and procedures and sustained this performance for at least three consecutive years.

“Clinical excellence is our top priority, and to be named as one of the best hospitals in the country for the second year based on the quality of our care is a testament to our dedicated physicians, clinicians and staff,” said Dave Ramsey, CAMC President and CEO. “Our success comes from working together and being committed to doing the right thing for every patient, every day.”

Hospitals that are among America’s 100 Best™ represent the top 2 percent in the nation for consistent clinical excellence and have consecutively received the Healthgrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence™ (DHACE) for at least the last three years. CAMC has earned the DHACE every year for the last five years.

“Hospitals that have achieved America’s Best Hospital™ Distinction have sustained high quality outcomes for their patients over many years and often offer programs that engage consumers and their overall communities in their care,” said Brad Bowman, MD, Healthgrades’ Chief Medical Officer.

Healthgrades research shows that America’s Best Hospitals also outperform their peers in treating a core group of conditions that account for more than 80 percent of mortalities in areas evaluated by Healthgrades, including heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, respiratory failure, sepsis and stroke.

For more information visit healthgrades.com/quality.

CAMC offers expanded parking system

CAMC Memorial Hospital upgraded its parking system in early March. CAMC Women and Children’s Hospital is scheduled to make the switch in May and CAMC General Hospital will follow in July.

The upgrades feature enhanced security and more convenient payment options for visitors.

New ticket dispensing machines, card readers, cameras and gates will be installed at each entrance and exit of the parking lots. Users will be able to pay with cash, credit card or debit card at kiosks in hospital lobbies or as they exit the parking area.

Closed circuit TV for monitoring will be added along with intercom boxes at the parking exits so customers can communicate with security.

This upgrade will allow for better management, security and control of CAMC’s public parking lots and garages. Parking services will now be covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Valet service will still be offered at General and Memorial hospitals.

Since 1987, the CAMC Kidney Transplant Center has:

• Transplanted more than 1,100 kidneys to patients ranging from 10 months to more than 80 years old

• Transplanted 265 living donors

There are 156 patients of the Kidney Transplant Center still waiting for life-saving transplants.

The CAMC Kidney Transplant Center is the only kidney transplant center in West Virginia.

To learn more about the services offered at the Kidney Transplant Center, visit camc.org/Kidney.

To learn about organ donation and to register to be a donor, visit donateLife.gov.

The “Art of Medicine.” A special program provides some patients an outlet for many of their thoughts and emotions during their hospital stay.

Win Win: A relationship with a local farming cooperative is boosting the economy and providing fresh, healthy foods for CAMC’s patients, visitors and employees.

THE CUTTING EDGE
CAMC’s is the first in southern West Virginia to offer a new, FDA-approved treatment for gastroesophageal reflux disease. An implanted device may offer patients a quicker recovery, relief and a faster return to a normal diet compared to other procedures.

Learned yet gain patient experience through a unique program that helps to train doctors, nurses and other health care professionals at the CAMC Patient Simulation Center.

All of these projects have become part of Linda Andresen’s daily routine on 5 South at CAMC Memorial Hospital as part of the creative arts program. Now in its second year, this program offers a welcomed and artistic break for oncology inpatients and their families.

The creative arts program has been a vision of the CAMC volunteer services team for quite some time. Also known as Arts in Medicine or Arts in Healthcare, the creative arts concept started at Duke in 1978 and has since grown in popularity.

Jennifer Fennel, 5 South nurse manager, was familiar with a similar program in Columbus and wanted to explore the possibility of adopting it at CAMC. She worked with Kristy Fidler, director of volunteer services, and Andresen, a volunteer on 5 South, to kick off the CAMC creative arts program.

From the beginning, it was evident that the definition of art meant many things to many people.

“Art doesn’t just mean visual art,” Andresen said. “It can mean music. It can mean dancing. It can mean writing. It’s a way for volunteers and staff on 5 South to engage patients in something other than just worrying about what they are currently going through.”

From Christmas-specific projects to traditional puzzle books and paintings, Andresen keeps supplies stocked and available for whomever patients are ready to participate. If a patient requests something that hasn’t been done before, Andresen will research it, and more-than-likely, supply it for the patient the next time she volunteers.

The program also provides patients an outlet for many of their thoughts and emotions during their hospital stay. Because of this, it’s important for volunteers involved to be adequately trained in patient contact.

“All of the creative arts volunteers get the VIP (Volunteers Interacting with Patients) training so they feel more comfortable approaching different situations in patient rooms,” Fidler said.

“You just don’t know what a person needs until you go in there and find out,” Andresen said.

Though not its overarching goal, supporters of the program agree that creative arts projects serve as a type of therapeutic intervention for the patients.

“Research shows that when people are engaged in artistic activities, both their blood pressure and anxiety go down,” Andresen said. “I believe that we are all more alike than we are different, and it’s a fine line that we can cross any time between health and illness. But more than that, it has enriched my life. I honestly feel it’s a privilege to be able to do this.”

As a mental health professional, Walker has worked hard to combat the stigma surrounding mental health issues. “I believe that we are all more alike than we are different, and it’s a fine line that we can cross any time between health and illness,” she said. “There can’t be judgment, and we are all vulnerable. Don’t look at mental illness as a weakness—see it as a strength for those that get help.”

“For Andresen, this program has helped her fill a personal desire: the desire to give back. Jennifer Fennel, 5 South nurse manager, was familiar with a similar program in Columbus and wanted to explore the possibility of adopting it at CAMC. She worked with Kristy Fidler, director of volunteer services, and Andresen, a volunteer on 5 South, to kick off the CAMC creative arts program.

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For Andresen, this program has helped her fill a personal desire: the desire to give back.

“The program met some of the strengths that I have in that I like to talk to people, I like to be with people, and I like to help people. But more than that, it has enriched my life. I honestly feel it’s a privilege to be able to do this.”

To learn more about the creative arts program and other opportunities to volunteer at CAMC, visit camc.org/volunteer or call our Volunteer Services department at (304) 388-7426.
CAMC is helping the fruits (or should we say vegetables) from its 4-year-old partnership with The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF). This journey started with learning about the “Seven Forms of Community Wealth” and how they can be applied to CAMC’s community. Brenda Grant, chief strategy officer; Steve Perry, associate administrator for supply chain management and Mike Marinaro, systems director food and nutrition services, formed the CAMC team.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in West Virginia, and 32 percent of Kanawha County residents are obese and physically inactive. You can decrease sodium and fat in diets through the use of fresh vegetables and herbs.

CAMC’s goal was to provide a market for locally-grown vegetables to support current and new local growers and to improve our local economy by substituting “imports” from the outside economy with herbs and vegetables that can be grown locally for the same or lower cost and for the same or higher quality.

At the same time, hospital patients, families and workers are introduced to healthier foods by reducing the amount of salt and fat in their diets.

Working with TGKVF, CAMC brought many partners and stakeholders to the table – the Department of Agriculture, West Virginia State University Agricultural and Environmental Research, Corey Brothers, local growers and many others. Through the efforts of this group CAMC was able to address certification, liability and other issues.

As a result, in its first year (fall of 2014) CAMC purchased more than 400 cases of local produce for its cafeterias totaling $4,075. In 2016, this increased to $24,477. Local growers have to become certified by the Department of Agriculture, allowing them to sell to CAMC.

During the fall of 2017, CAMC was approached by the Minutemen Farmers Cooperative, a cooperative of local veterans who are learning how to grow crops for sale. CAMC nutrition services bought more than 3,300 pounds of butternut, acorn and spaghetti squash from the farmers to use and sell to visitors in cafeterias.

An informational display shared the “Homegrown by Heros” story and provided recipes to encourage support for the effort. CAMC chief prepared dishes using the squash and guests purchased takeaway orders.

“These veterans are in a program to educate them on farming techniques to grow organic crops on small West Virginia farms,” said Mike Marinaro. “This was a great success for CAMC cafeterias, and our customers truly enjoyed the delicious locally-grown squash menu items.”

Steve Perry was instrumental in making this happen.

“It has been a pleasure to know we are making a difference in the lives of members of our military who have given so much of themselves for us,” Perry said. “It is good to give back.”

“Our working relationship with CAMC is setting the standard in how the health industry and our professional farmers can work together for everyone’s health and nutrition,” said Don Smith II, a board member of the Minutemen Farmers Cooperative. “The Minutemen is primarily a veteran professional farmers can work together for everyone’s health and nutrition,” said Don Smith II, a board member of the Minutemen Farmers Cooperative. “The Minutemen is primarily a veteran professional farmers can work together for all people’s health and nutrition.”

Building on these results, the Minutemen Farmers Cooperative hopes to grow the service to every professional farmer training cooperative, and our first apprentice, Christy Wilburn, successfully harvested and got their produce certified by the Department of Agriculture, allowing them to sell to CAMC.

In 2015, local growers sold $6,259 in produce to CAMC’s cafeterias with the same or higher quality.

In 2016, this increased to $42,477. Local growers have to become certified by the Department of Agriculture, West Virginia State University Agricultural and Environmental Research, Corey Brothers, local growers and many others. Through the efforts of this group CAMC was able to address certification, liability and other issues.

The families met for the first time Jan. 22 at CAMC General Hospital.

“Meeting with Mr. and Mrs. King kind of set me at ease a little bit,” Dustin said.

On Jan. 29, Alikin Wool, MD, removed one of Pam King’s kidneys and Joseph Africa, MD, transplanted it into Dave Kent. The next day, Dr. Wool removed one of Dustin Kent’s kidneys and Dr. Africa transplanted it into Brian King.

“This is the road less traveled, and you have to be ready for any outcome,” Pam said about exchanging kidneys instead of donating directly to her husband.

“I was amazed,” Dave said of the pairing process.

“To be a donor match, the donor and recipient must have compatible blood types, and the donor is tested for antibodies that could negatively impact the transplant.

“Living donors typically have a six week recovery period and then can get back to living their normal lives.”

This paired exchange has created a special bond between the families.

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“The program takes college students interested in the medical field and provides them hospital experiences and opportunities to broaden their exposure to working with an interprofessional health care team,” said Art Rubin, DO, WVOSM regional assistant dean – south central region.

The “green coats” are in direct patient contact on selected units at CAMC General and CAMC Memorial hospitals. They attend resident didactics and participate in the CAMC Simulation Center.

There are two 20-week sessions (spring and fall), which makes it easier for students to manage than one 40-week commitment.

The current Green Coat session has four students participating.
New device offers relief from acid reflux

“Patients” help caregivers learn