A Friendly Face

Diego Roldan, 57, is a familiar face at the Trinitas Regional Medical Center. He began volunteering at the hospital in 2009. These days, he’s a presence there two nights a week. Initially, Roldan worked in registration, escorting patients to different departments throughout the hospital.

From patient registration, he transitioned to the emergency department, and in 2013, began working with the Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP), an initiative designed to prevent delirium in patients 65 and older by acclimating them to their surroundings.

These days, Roldan volunteers with HELP in addition to his work in the emergency department. Johanna Thomas, elder life intervention clinician for HELP, says Roldan’s patience and positive attitude make him an extraordinary volunteer. “He is always so available for anything that he can assist with,” she says. Further, he is diligent about following the many protocols and guidelines that come with working in a hospital setting.

Patients adore him, too—as was made clear in a recent survey. “Diego is such a calm and soothing person,” adds Thomas. “He’s got this light in him.”

Roldan, who works full-time as the supervisor of a welding company, still manages to come to the hospital after a day’s work looking refreshed and energetic, ready to take on the rest of the day.

Volunteering with HELP, Roldan assists in the evening orientation process for new patients. He also works with patients who have been cleared from physical therapy to do range-of-motion exercises. He helps with meal prep, plays cards and even reads to patients during his nighttime shifts.

A deeply religious man, Roldan especially enjoys reading the Bible to patients who share the same passion. “The most important thing,” he says, “is that it was God that sent me here.” —Lauren N. Bowers

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