

Building Paper Airplanes and Reinforcing Teamwork

By Jamie Talan

One night in late 2012, as children were getting ready for Halloween, Tochi Iroku-Malize, MD, chair of family medicine at the North Shore-LIJ Health System and the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine, had an idea for a fun evening. She grabbed a ream of paper and several samples of paper airplanes and set out to the school of medicine for a night of hard work.

There, she was met by 16 people — medical students, residents, physicians and nurse practitioners — for an innovative session that was designed to help participants understand how to plan and build a set of skills to get a job

done. She introduced them to the Paper Airplane Factory team-building workshop.

Dr. Iroku-Malize heard

about the Paper Airplane Factory Project through the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), an organization that created a school without walls for health professionals interested in training to become leaders in their fields. North Shore-LIJ partnered with IHI's Open

School, forming its own New York chapter. There are chapters all over the world.

People in all walks of healthcare

A surprising object lesson in collaboration and cooperation.

signed onto the Paper Airplane Factory Project, which included one night of airplane building and a subsequent webinar where participants shared their experiences.

The task at hand was building airplanes for a customer who wanted four different types of planes, 18 in

total, and they had to be constructed as a team and delivered in five minutes. Several five-minute rounds would ensue: first with little information, next with detailed information and last without being able to speak a word to one another during the plane-building process.

"They had to make 18 of them in a specific order requested by the customer," said Dr. Iroku-Malize. "Once a plane was done, it would be brought over to a table where the customer was sitting and the plane, if done right, would be approved. If it was not right, it was back to the drawing board," she explained. "They could not move to the next plane on the list until they got the one they were working on right."

After the first round, only one plane passed muster. After the second, many more planes made it to the customer. Participants began to realize that they needed to know their precise jobs to be efficient in getting the job done in the amount of time they had to do it. Between intervals, the groups spent a few minutes talking about how it related back to healthcare and the different roles people in a team must carry out in taking care of an individual patient.

When the teams learned before the third round that they were to build the next



The Paper Airplane Factory workers, just as their shift ended.

New Contemporary Women's Care Facility Opens in Suffolk

ISLANDIA — A new \$3.5 million, 17,000-square-foot Contemporary Women's Care (CWC) facility recently opened in Islandia. The center is part of the North Shore-LIJ Health System's strategy to expand women's healthcare services in Suffolk County.

Led by Brian McKenna, MD, Gloria Escamilla, MD, Joyce Rubin, MD, and Vanessa Soviero, MD, the CWC cares for more than 30,000 patients and delivers more than 400 babies each year. Patients will deliver their babies at Southside Hospital in Bay Shore.

"The new Contemporary Women's Center exemplifies the health system's commitment to providing a collaborative approach to women's healthcare in Suffolk County," Michael Dowling, president and chief executive officer of North Shore-LIJ, said at a special ribbon-cutting ceremony. As part of that approach, North Shore-LIJ recently expanded its fertility services to Hauppauge with a satellite office of the Manhasset-based Center for Human Reproduction. The fertility practice, headed by Gabriel San Roman, MD, will relocate later this year to a state-of-the-art facility in Smithtown. North Shore-LIJ has

Brian McKenna, MD, spoke with a Contemporary Women's Care staff member at the new Islip facility.



also invested in the Bohlsen's Women's Imaging Center in Islip, offering a full range of breast imaging services, including 3D mammography, among other initiatives. Available to all women is North Shore-LIJ's Katz Institute for Women's Health (KIWH), which is dedicated to improving all aspects of a woman's health at every stage of her life. A valuable resource for women and their families, KIWH serves as an entryway to

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plane without speaking, the room grew silent — and busy. As five minutes drew near, one of the teams brought in all 18 airplanes. The other teams were not far behind with more than a dozen paper airplanes.

"It was great to watch the process," Dr. Iroku-Malize said. "When they knew the rules and what their jobs were, and there were no distractions, they were able to complete the job. It was

amazing. You could see the importance of teamwork. You watched as they figured out how to work together to get the job done."

"In our jobs, we have the same goal to get patients better," she added. "One person alone is not going to make that happen."

Ekjot Grewal, a second year medical student, and Patti Adelman, director of the health system's Physician Leadership

Institute, helped run the event.

"I think people came away with an understanding that if you put effort into evaluating the process, you can decrease errors and enhance efficiency," said Ms. Adelman. She said that the debriefing periods between the five-minute intervals was a time of reflection and integration of their experiences. "As people talked about the process, they were able to see how they were

learning how to problem-solve and work through things as a team," she added.

Who knew that a plain piece of paper folded just the right way could be a life lesson in teamwork, process, rules and order?

