

# COMMERCE

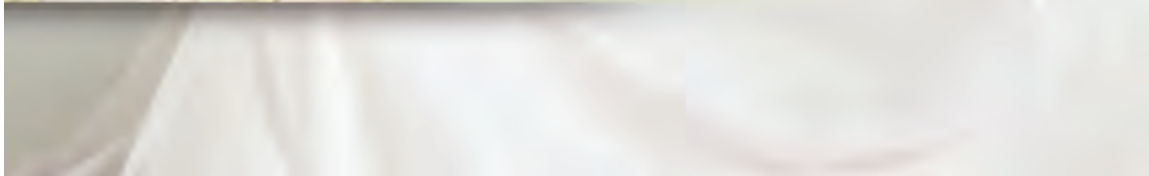
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## A&E Network Star Tanya Memme:

Helping Children in Need  
and Supporting the  
Elizabeth Seton Pediatric  
Center's Plans for a  
New Facility in 2011

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Mookie Wilson Has Traded In  
His Cleats For An 18-Wheeler



Elizabeth Seton  
PEDIATRIC CENTER

# Changing the Lives of Medically Fragile Children—One Child at a Time



The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is in the process of undertaking a \$145 million building, renovation and programmatic initiative that calls for the construction of a \$138.5 million, 165,000-square-foot facility on a 6.5-acre tract in Yonkers and for the Center to move its Manhattan campus there. Groundbreaking is planned for July 2009 and the building should be occupied in 2011.

By JOHN JOSEPH PARKER  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**E**STABLISHED BY THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF New York in 1987, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is a 136-bed, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3)-designated, pediatric specialty nursing facility for medically fragile children with complex clinical conditions and disabilities.

During the past two decades, the Center has evolved into a nationally recognized pediatric and acute rehabilitation center, a pediatric long-term home healthcare program, and an affiliated special education school with campuses within the Center in Manhattan and in White Plains. It is one of only two pediatric nursing facilities in downstate New York, and the only one dedicated to long-term care. The Center also offers the only pediatric long-term ventilator-dependent program in the New York area.

With an occupancy rate of 99.8 percent, there is always a waiting list for admission.

With treatment, care and rehabilitation programs centered on its children and their families, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is a special place—more like a home than a hospital. It is organized into child-friendly “neighborhoods” that ensure a home-like atmosphere and coordinated, high quality medical, nursing, palliative

and rehabilitative care. In addition, the Center’s long-term home healthcare program allows children to transition to home and serves children in the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

“Helping children get the specialized medical long-term care they need at hospitals such as the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is important,” says Tanya Memme, co-host of A&E Network’s *Sell This House*. “It is absolutely necessary to do what we can to help those who can’t help themselves.”

The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center provides care and compassion, healing and learning to children, many of whom are poor. They are valued, cared for and loved in the spirit of Saint Elizabeth Seton and the Sisters of Charity of New York. In the words of Saint Elizabeth Seton: “The front door, the back door, the side door that leads to the chapel... the windows upstairs and down all open at your coming.”

“You will be forever welcome,” explains Center Chief Executive Officer Patricia Tursi. “The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is committed to changing the lives of medically fragile children, one child at a time. Living our mission each day requires an extraordinary balance of



Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center Chief Executive Officer Patricia Tursi received an Excellence in Leadership Award from the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging in 2008.

joys with struggles as we help each child reach a new milestone, however large or small. Our staff demonstrates an unwavering belief that all children, regardless of level of ability, possess unique needs, gifts, and personalities. We place the child and each family in the center of each care decision.”

For this approach, the Center received an “Innovation of the Year” award from the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. But it’s not about accolades.

“This philosophy of holistic child-centered or child-first care is what we are all about,” explains Tursi.

The good news is that under Tursi’s leadership, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is about to embark on a project to expand its services and caregiving so it can help even more children in the future. In this interview with *COMMERCE*, Chief Executive Officer Patricia Tursi discusses this exciting phase in the Center’s history.

**COMMERCE:** *How large is the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center today?*

**PATRICIA TURSI:** A specialized, 136-bed sub-acute pediatric facility, the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center cares for more than 250 children and adolescents from birth to age 21 each year at its 90,000 square-foot leased space in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood.

**Q.** *What plans do you have to expand its facilities?*

**A.** We are in the process of undertaking a \$145 million building, renovation and programmatic initiative as

part of a strategic plan to expand our services and ensure our future. The plans call for the construction of a \$138.5 million, 165,000 square foot facility on a 6.5 acre tract in Yonkers and for the Center to move its Manhattan campus there. Groundbreaking is planned for July 2009 and the building should be occupied in 2011.

**Q.** *What will the Center of the future be like?*

**A.** The new Yonkers campus will include a state-of-the-art, four-story, LEED-certified “green” complex that will house a 137-bed inpatient facility, a sophisticated rehabilitation center, a campus of the affiliated school, and the home healthcare program. The design represents a dramatic improvement over the current space limitations for both the Pediatric Center and the school. It also provides well-conceived space for classrooms, recreation areas, therapeutic suites, bedrooms, community and quiet rooms, and family respite.

**Q.** *What are some of the added features that will help the Center care for medically fragile children?*

**A.** The upper 3 floors will house the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center’s residential, therapeutic and family space including: 137 beds in 6 neighborhoods. The first floor will house the affiliated school and major common areas. It will provide easy and secure access to outdoor play areas and therapy gardens. At roughly 40,000 square feet, the first floor will feature 15 classrooms, a gymnasium, a chapel/meditation room, an Aquatic Therapy Center, a main lobby and the Big Dipper Café.

The White Plains campus will continue at its present site and undergo a \$5 million renovation. An additional \$1.5 million will be invested in initiatives for home care and clinic services.

**Q.** *How large is the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center today, and what is its current capacity for caring for children in need?*

**A.** The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center cares for more than 250 children and adolescents from birth to age 21 each year. We serve children who are among the most fragile and vulnerable, and physically and neurologically challenged. They are admitted with premature birth complications, cerebral palsy, congenital heart disease, chronic lung disease, chromosome disorders, metabolic disorders, respiratory disorders, muscular and neu-

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rological diseases, and immunodeficiency syndromes. Nearly 70 percent have developmental delays.

**Q.** *How serious is the medical condition of the children being cared for at the Center?*

**A.** Most require assistive devices to move, enteral feeding to eat, and a tracheotomy or ventilator to breathe. Seventy-five percent require long-term care; 40 percent receive palliative care. Nearly half of our children are under age 5; about 25 percent are ages 5 through 12; and the remaining 25 percent are ages 12 through 21.

**Q.** *How long do children stay at the Center for treatment and care?*

**A.** Some families send their children to the Center for short-term post surgical rehabilitation, while others come for end-of-life care. Other children live out their lives at the Center. And no matter the diagnosis, nor their family situation, children are showered with love, hope, compassion and medical care that is second to none.

**Q.** *What are the professional backgrounds of the caregivers at the Center?*

**A.** Five full-time pediatricians along with nurses, teachers, social workers, therapists, child life specialists and nutritionists work together on care planning that takes into account not only their medical needs, but also a child's growth and social needs to play and experience the joys of childhood through play, music and art therapy.

**Q.** *The Center has been recognized for its compassionate and quality care. People are noticing how important the work you do is, right?*

**A.** National publications have taken notice. Cover stories about the Center have appeared in clinical journals such as *Advance for Nurses*, *Advance for LPNs*, with upcoming cover stories in *Advance for Physical Therapists* and *Advance for Speech Therapists*. Recent articles have appeared in *Nursing Spectrum* and in a supplement to *The New York Times*. The Center's reputation for excellence has even reached New Jersey (in which many of its caregivers live). *The Record*, for example, has featured the Center in two articles over the past several years. Our clinical best practices have been featured at dozens of conferences.

**Q.** *What is the Center doing that is so well received by children and their families?*

**A.** At the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center, our



"At the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center in Manhattan, we work together as part of neighborhoods, ensuring that our children receive not only the best possible medical care, but also love and compassion, in the tradition of our namesake, Saint Elizabeth Seton." (L-R, Tursi and Center children Janaya and Stephanie.)—Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center Chief Executive Officer Patricia Tursi

focus is on being a comprehensive health center for children and their families, guided by the belief that children with special needs deserve dedicated health professionals who care about them as people. We also make sure that we understand their special needs and always—always—remember that children with special needs are, first and foremost, children. The Center, even though we are a medical facility, ensures that a child in our care, which we call a resident, has access to family, friends, learning and play.

**Q.** *How does the Center make itself a home-like environment for children?*

**A.** Each resident unit has become a child-centered "neighborhood," and we have formed teams of neighborhood caregivers who will partner with families in providing the highest quality care for each child.

**Q.** *What are the key benefits of the Center's child-centered "neighborhoods?"*

**A.** Through this neighborhood approach, the Center has initiated a process of change that will allow residents and families more involvement in their care. Our message at the Center is "All Are Welcome." We have decentralized decision-making in order to expedite problem solving among staff, residents and families, as well as allowing more time to provide care.

In addition, we have embraced a trans-disciplinary approach to care in which all disciplines—from nursing and medicine to recreation/child life to physical/occupational/speech therapy—are represented on the neighborhoods—ensuring children on that neighborhood, a 20-bed unit, receive the best care 24/7, 365 days per year.

**Q.** *What kind of medical and nursing care does the Center offer?*



Children at the Center are valued, cared for and loved in the spirit of Saint Elizabeth Seton and the Sisters of Charity of New York. In the words of Saint Elizabeth Seton: "Tenderness is the language children best understand."

**A.** Staff pediatricians oversee specialties of cardiology, neurology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, and pulmonary medicine. When necessary, they arrange for follow-up care with a subspecialty service at a referral hospital. Our highly skilled nurses have specialized training in tracheotomy care, oxygen therapy, pulse oximetry monitoring, nasogastric and nasojunal gastrostomy, total parenteral nutrition, and intravenous therapy. Our nurses provide counseling and training to family members, especially when a child is preparing to return home.

**Q.** *What rehabilitation services are offered?*

**A.** Intensive rehabilitation is offered for children with a broad range of disabilities, such as orthopedic problems, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and speech, visual and hearing impairments. Our therapists have expertise in a wide variety of techniques to help our children as much as possible—using physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, audiology, and aquatic therapy—to help residents with disabilities achieve maximum independence. The Center's recreation department provides therapeutic recreation to stimulate children's minds, senses, and physical capabilities, as well their sense of fun, offering a variety of group and individual activities adapted to children of varying abilities, ages, needs and personalities.

**Q.** *Are there mental health and social service needs as well, given the medical challenges the children and their families have to deal with?*

**A.** The Center's Mental Health department helps residents and their families, as well as staff, cope with the emotional and behavioral issues connected to children's illnesses or disabilities and their stay in a residential nursing facility. A psychologist assesses each child on admission to determine the need for individual or group therapy, special education, or referral to a psychiatrist. As needed, children receive psychotherapy at a level appropriate to their developmental stage, including play therapy and art therapy.

Because families of children with complex medical conditions often struggle with social, economic and emotional difficulties, social workers help parents and other relatives meet these challenges and prepare to provide appropriate care for children when they return home. They refer parents to resources in the community that will enable them to meet chil-

## The Campaign for a New Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center

**N**aming opportunities and corporate sponsorships are needed to support the construction of a new, \$138.5 million, 165,000 square foot facility on a 6.5 acre tract in Yonkers that will help medically fragile children get the best possible care. Here are some of the opportunities that are available for consideration:

**\$10 million:** *Yonkers Campus* (6.5 acre park-like campus setting that will include the newly constructed, \$138.5 million, state-of-the-art healthcare and educational center for medically fragile children.)

**\$6 million:** *Affiliated School—Yonkers and White Plains Campuses* (One special education school that operates two campuses, one located within the Yonkers inpatient facility for the children who live there, and the other located in White Plains serving community-based children. The nationally recognized school meets the special learning needs of the medically fragile children and special needs children.)

**\$5 million:** *Children's Pavilion—Yonkers Campus* (4-story, 165,000 square foot facility housing a 137-bed, pediatric long-term care facility, a 15-classroom special education school, and a long-term care home health facility.)

**\$5 million:** *Outpatient Pediatric Clinic* (Establish a state-of-the-art outpatient clinic to serve 3,000 special needs children from Westchester, Putnam and the Bronx.)

*The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center and John A. Coleman School are committed to changing the lives of medically fragile children, one child at a time. To learn more, please visit [www.setonpediatric.org](http://www.setonpediatric.org).* ■

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dren's special needs. As needed, they also advocate for families with Medicaid, insurance providers or Social Security.

**Q.** *School must be an issue, too. How do you handle education for children who can't leave the Center due to a medical condition?*

**A.** Despite their extensive care requirements, 86 percent of the Pediatric Center's children attend the on-site school which occupies the 2nd floor of the Manhattan facility and includes 15 classrooms and an

adaptive gymnasium. The school, a New York State-approved special education facility within the Pediatric Center, gives individual and classroom-based special education to over 400 children from infancy to age 21. It has a campus in White Plains as well.

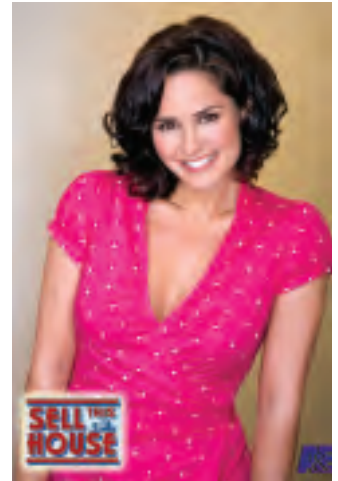
This year, it was honored as a "School of Excellence" by the National Association of Special Education Teachers, earning it the highest level of recognition a private special education school can achieve. This distinction has been bestowed upon only eight other schools in New York.

The affiliated school is approved by the State of New York Department of Health and is a member of the Council for Exceptional Children. The school operates on an annual budget of nearly \$16 million and employs 155 full-time teachers, staff, and assistants.

**Q.** *What does the Center do for families when the prognosis for a child is not good?*

**A.** The Center averages about 15 deaths a year among the gravely ill children it serves. In the last six-and-a-half years, only four residents have lived to 21 and so aged out of the center into adult nursing home care.

Because the Center serves many children with life-threatening conditions, we often have the sad necessity of providing compassionate end-of-life care for dying children and support for those who mourn their passing. The interdisciplinary Pediatric Palliative Care Program seeks to improve pain management, care planning, family involvement, and bereavement counseling for children diagnosed with terminal illness, and for all who need these services.



"Helping children get the specialized medical long-term care they need at hospitals such as the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center is important," says Tanya Memme, co-host of A&E Network's *Sell This House*. "It is absolutely necessary to do what we can to help those who can't help themselves."

**Q.** *When children are able to go home with their families, is there a way for them to still get care from the Center?*

**A.** The Center has established a homecare division, representing an evolution in the continuum of healthcare services the Center provides. This option is available in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan. ■

## The Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center University (ESPCU)



The administration and leadership of the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center officially launched the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center University (ESPCU) in December 2008.

This newly developed program offers Pediatric Center employees a variety of courses focused on developing profession-

al skills in the current healthcare industry corporate environment. It is also the first long-term care provider corporate university in the United States.

The ESPCU offers valuable training and continuing education opportunities for the Pediatric Center's employees on relevant health-related topics ranging from management and customer service, to clinical education and training. It is offered fully online at [www.espcuniversity.org](http://www.espcuniversity.org) and is accessible to employees anywhere, anytime.

"Our new corporate university is a reflection of our commitment to our employees and continuous learning," says Center CEO Patricia A. Tursi. "We are excited about the opportunities that this brings to our staff."

Many Pediatric Center staff have presented at conferences as leaders in their respective fields.

"In a work environment where continuous quality improvement is a key focus, ongoing education and dissemination of best practices is highly valued," adds Human Resources Director David G. Epstein. "Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center University is a manifestation of this commitment to self-improvement of the Center's employees."

Course offerings will provide valuable training and development opportunities for employees online and in person. Online courses will include topics ranging from management and customer service to clinical education and training.

Opportunities for continuing education conducted on-site with personal interaction include:

- **Conferences & Seminars**—facilitating employees to attend professional gatherings and providing current practice models in music therapy, palliative care, nursing, pediatric medicine and more.
- **Lunch 'n Learn Series**—lunch-time lectures from experts in medicine, rehabilitation and nursing on a wide range of topics.
- **Clinical Education**—from in-house training in IV therapy administration to CPR recertification, employees are provided with opportunities for clinical skills development.

For more information, visit [www.espcuniversity.org](http://www.espcuniversity.org). ■

*"I'm wishing to spend my days happy and growing. Are you?"*



**We change lives** ONE CHILD AT A TIME

## **And So Can You.**

Each day, our NY-based comprehensive health system enriches the lives of medically fragile children, ages birth to 21. Children, as ethnically and culturally diverse as the city in which they live, who are faced with a broad range of complex medical conditions. We join with families in delivering holistic care to these children—everything from medicine, nursing and rehabilitation, to social services and home care—not to mention nurturing education and play. Our programs ease the fears of families, build confidence, and help our children fulfill their potential. And, per the tradition of our namesake Saint Elizabeth Seton, it is all accomplished in an atmosphere of loving faith, mutual respect, and compassion.

But it takes more than just strong belief to sustain our work. We are a multi-site organization with complex medical equipment, hundreds of highly skilled employees, and a growing range of services and programs. With your support, we can continue our mission and change the lives of even more children for years to come. To find out how your individual or company donation can help, please contact our Development Department today.

Call: 646-459-3909 • Email: [info@setonpediatric.org](mailto:info@setonpediatric.org) • Or visit our website: [www.setonpediatric.org](http://www.setonpediatric.org)

**Elizabeth Seton**   
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*Changing lives, one child at a time*