

Top humanitarian credits others

By Matt Chiappardi
 Staff Writer

Hightstown resident and president/CEO of Children's Specialized Hospital Amy Mansue wanted to help people with disabilities since she was a child, but being a doctor or caretaker was not an option.

"I was no good at care-taking," Ms. Mansue, 45, of Powell Court, said this week. "I was no good at the clinical stuff. I didn't have the patience. I like to see things happen and see them happen quickly."

What Ms. Mansue did have a talent for was administrative and leadership skills, and she used that ability to forge a successful career in health policy, working for former governors Jim Florio and James McGreevey, the latter as his deputy chief of staff.

By 2003, Ms. Mansue was appointed to lead Children's Specialized Hospital, an affiliate pediatric medical facility with the Robert Wood Johnson system with seven locations in New Jersey. The hospital treats medical conditions such as brain and spinal cord injuries, premature birth, autism, developmental delays and life-changing illnesses.

This past month, she was honored by the American Conference on Diversity as one of the state's top humanitarians. Other honorees were Dennis Bone, president of Verizon New Jersey Inc.; and Jerry Izenberg, columnist emeritus for the Star-Ledger.

"If you look at the list of honorees, it's very humbling," Ms. Mansue said. "I'm very honored, but I would say this award is not about me but about the amazing people who work at the hospital."

Ms. Mansue grew up in Plainsboro. Her mother was an art teacher, and her father taught history at Hightstown High School for 20 years.

While growing up, Ms. Mansue befriended a

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girl with a severe spinal cord injury that forever influenced the career path she wanted to take.

"I saw that there were barriers that prevented her living the same kind of life (people without disabilities) do through no fault of her own," Ms. Mansue said.

Ms. Mansue attended the University of Alabama, receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.

After her higher education, she moved to Washington, D.C., and began working for Gov. Florio as a legislative assistant for health and health care-related issues when the former governor was a congressman.

"I've always been very interested in the whole process of how policy happens," she said.

She eventually landed a job in the state Department of Human Services as a deputy commissioner overseeing programs for children, people with developmental disabilities, mental health and Medicaid.

She worked for four years in the private sector as CEO of Health Insurance Plan of New York between 1994 and 1998.

By the early part of this decade, while deputy chief of staff to Gov. McGreevey, Ms. Mansue decided to put her name in the running when Children's Specialized Hospital was searching for a new leader.

"I'd been on the board in the mid-90s and threw my hat in the ring on a whim," Ms. Mansue said. "Now I've been with this amazing organization for six and a half years."

The hospital treated 17,350 patients in 2009, Ms. Mansue said. It also was named as the top place to work in the health-care industry in 2008 by NJ Biz magazine and one of the top 100 health-care employers in the



country by Modern Healthcare magazine.

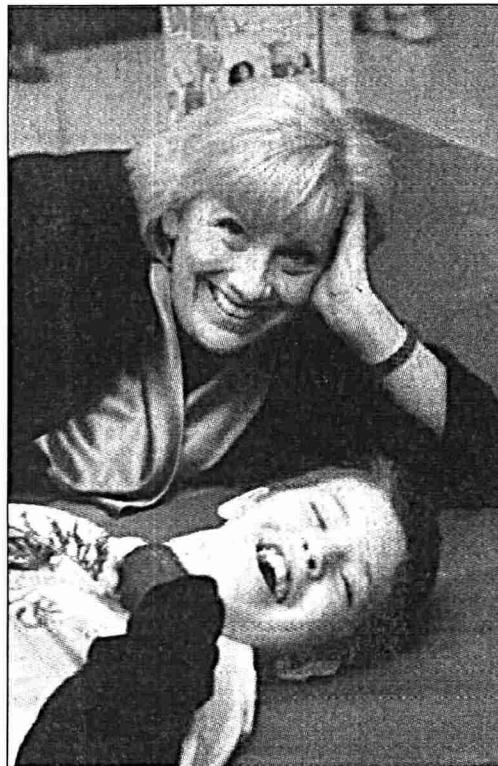
While Ms. Mansue acknowledges her talent for administration, she also gives credit to the hospital's success to the many doctors, nurses and staff who work with patients on a daily basis.

"It's amazing to see the people I get to work with every single day," she said. "Those clinicians have the capacity to care and give hope to children on a daily basis. To see their courage and how involved they are with their patients, no matter how sick they are, takes your breath away."

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Amy Mansue, president & CEO, pops into a physical therapy session with Children's Specialized Hospital patient Christian Panarese.