Before you call the Help Desk:

Help Desk experts suggest two simple things to try if you are having an issue with your computer:

1) Make sure all necessary wires and connections are firmly plugged in. Sometimes a loose connection is the entire problem.

2) Don't Panic, Just Reboot: This simple mantra can keep you from going crazy. If you begin to get strange errors, mind-boggling messages, or if things just don't seem right, restarting your computer can often eliminate these problems.
2010 Flexcare reimbursement deadline nears

The deadline for reimbursement for 2010 health care and dependent care spending under Sparrow’s Flexcare Spending Account program is nearing. All 2010 receipts (along with the reimbursement form) must be received by April 30. IRS rules require that money left unused in your accounts at the end of the plan year be forfeited. If an associate has a balance in his/her health care spending account as of December 31, the associate may be reimbursed for health care expenses incurred on or before March 15. Forms can be downloaded from the Sparrow Intranet site under Human Resources. Associates who want to check their 2010 health/dependent care reimbursement balances can call PHP at 517.364.8432. Questions? Contact the Compensation and Benefit Hotline at 517.364.5333.

Susan Wilkis is January’s Volunteer of the Month. As selected by Sparrow Women’s Board of Managers and Sparrow Volunteer Services Department. Susan serves as a member of the Service Auxiliary and has been instrumental in implementing the Gift Shop’s new computer-based cash register system.

Bill Parsons has assumed the responsibility of Sparrow’s Performance Excellence department on an interim basis. Bill currently serves as director of learning and organizational development.

Matthew D. Wilcox, DO is the new chief of cardiology services at Sparrow Clinton Hospital. Dr. Wilcox is board certified in internal medicine and cardiology, and is a member of Sparrow’s Thoracic and Cardiovascular Institute (TCI).

Holiday giving wrap-up

Sparrow family members have helped people throughout our community this past holiday season in more ways than we can possibly list here. However, we wanted to recognize three groups whose efforts escaped fanfare, but that we find noteworthy:

» **Engineering Department and Biomedical associates** raised more than $1,100 to provide holiday gifts to the patients and families of Sparrow’s Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. This will be the 21st consecutive year this group has provided gifts to the PICU.

» **Sparrow’s Physicians Health Plan** associates decorated a tree outside their conference room with cold weather gear and donated 328 items to Willow Elementary and Windemere Park Charter Academy. This is the second consecutive year PHP associates have donated items to local elementary schools.

» **Sparrow’s Board of Directors** donated to the Care for the Caregivers Fund, Sparrow’s internal fund to assist associates who are in distress or have experienced misfortune. Sparrow’s Board members are all people from our community who volunteer their time and expertise. They normally receive a modest holiday gift from the health system to thank them for their efforts. For the past two years, the Board has requested the gift fund be instead donated to Care for the Caregivers.

» Warming heads, hands and hearts. Decorated with donated mittens, caps and scarves, the “mitten tree,” is a giving tradition at Physician’s Health Plan.
Software deal for associates

All associates are eligible to get Microsoft Office 2010 (which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook) for their personal use and pay only the cost of shipping and handling, about $10. The software is valued at hundreds of dollars, so it’s a great benefit for everyone who received a new home computer for the holidays or who simply has been waiting to add Microsoft Office.

To sign up, go to http://hup.microsoft.com/. Enter your Sparrow e-mail address and program code, which is F567A8DD9B. Follow directions from there.

Mileage reimbursement adjusted

This Internal Revenue Service recently readjusted the standard mileage reimbursement rate for 2011. Effective January 1, 2011, the new business reimbursable mileage rate is 51 cents per mile. The 2011 rate reflects a one cent increase from the 2010 reimbursable rate of 50 cents per mile. Updates to Sparrow systems have been made and the new rate has been posted on the Accounts Payable page on the Sparrow Intranet.

Social Security tax decreases

Did you notice a slight increase in your take-home pay? That’s because the associate portion of the Social Security payroll tax has been decreased by two percentage points for 2011, taking the percentage from 6.2 percent of taxable earnings to 4.2 percent. This provision is included in the bill that President Obama signed into law on Dec. 17, 2010. The matching employer portion of the Social Security payroll tax remains unchanged at 6.2 percent.

Verizon coverage enhanced

There’s been a significant upgrade to Verizon cellular coverage on the main hospital campus, including the Sparrow Professional Building. Verizon subscribers should now have coverage throughout the campus, including the hospital basement auditorium. Strength of reception might be better in newer phones but some coverage should be available at virtually all locations.

If you find a location where you cannot get a signal, report it to the IT Help Desk at 364.HELP (4357).

Sparrow Clinton opens new ophthalmology practice

Sparrow Clinton Hospital is opening a new ophthalmology practice in the Avery Eye Care Center in St. Johns. The practice is led by Brandy E. Cook, DO, a board-certified ophthalmologist with a subspecialty in neuro-ophthalmology.

To make an appointment, call 989.227.3460.
It’s time to get our children active, which is what the Feelin’ Good Mileage Club is all about.”

For the first time, parents can enroll their children online for the Feelin’ Good Mileage Club, as long as their schools are participating. Online enrollment runs Feb. 14-Mar. 11 at sparrowmilesclub.com.