Celebrating 50 years of transplantation

“OUR EARLY PATIENTS knew they were pioneers,” says Paul S. Russell, MD, senior surgeon and emeritus chief of the MGH Transplantation Unit. “Tremendous progress has been made since those early days.”

This week marks 50 years of transplantation at the MGH. Since the first kidney transplant performed on Feb. 27, 1963, the MGH Transplant Center has revolutionized transplant medicine as an innovator in complex, life-saving techniques.

“The impressive successes achieved in transplantation over the last 50 years at the MGH have left us with a solid foundation for future advancements,” says Joren C. Madsen, MD, DPhil, director of the MGH Transplant Center. “Looking ahead to the next 50 years, progress in the understanding and application of immune tolerance will help make the use of animal organs in human transplantation a reality. Likewise, advances in stem cell biology will contribute to the use of novel bioengineered organs. Due to these future advances and many others, there will likely be no shortage of donor organs, and many more lives will be saved. That truly will be a wonderful thing.”

To celebrate its five-decade milestone, the center will host a continuing medical education course, as well as a reception April 8 at the Liberty Hotel.

Collaborating in a crisis

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, chaos often follows. In the days, weeks, months and years after the devastating January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the MGH mobilized teams of first responders to help ease the suffering of the Haitian people and establish longer-term collaborations aimed at improving public health and combating rampant diseases like cholera. Also playing a vital role in the initial response in-country was the U.S. military, which deployed the hospital ship USNS Comfort as well as thousands of troops. On Feb. 25, the MGH Center for Global Health welcomed U.S. Army Lt. General P.K. Keen to discuss his command of the U.S. military’s relief efforts in Haiti as part of “Development and Defense: The Role of the U.S. Military in Global Health,” a seminar and panel discussion.

Keen outlined the military’s initial priorities, which included opening the country’s critical entry points. “We recognized the lifeline for assistance was the airport and seaport, which both were damaged but not to the point (Continued on page 2)
Strengthening educational opportunities for city’s youth is superintendent’s goal

**DR. CAROL JOHNSON** knows a bit about obstacles to obtaining a high-quality education. The daughter of a schoolteacher who made a lower salary than her white counterparts, Johnson learned to read using outdated textbooks that were hand-me-downs from the white schools in her town.

Perhaps that is why today, as superintendent of Boston Public Schools, she is such a believer in the American dream and what an education can do to improve the quality of life for the city’s youth. Johnson spoke Feb. 15 at the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration hosted by Partners HealthCare and the MGH.

Johnson outlined the challenges she has faced during the five years she has been in office – a tenure that has seen the graduation rate increase 6 percent and the dropout rate decrease by 4 percent. “The education of the next generation is the most important work we do in America today,” she said. “It’s no longer a world where it’s acceptable for only a few to make it.”

To improve the chances of student success, Johnson said she embarked on a 2011 plan to close or merge the low-performing, low-enrollment schools in the city, allowing district resources to be used in ways that could better the chances of student success. While it wasn’t a popular choice, she said, it has strengthened the district’s education system and buoyed student success. “Without changes, we would have had to make deep cuts,” she said.

Johnson’s speech came after an inspiring vocal performance by Fred Hawkins, RN, BSN, MHR, CIC, an infection control practitioner in the MGH Infection Control Unit. Hawkins sang “If I Could Help Somebody,” which he said he selected after considering some of the more inspired sayings of Dr. King.

The annual celebration also was a chance to honor the 2013 YMCA Achievers, which included three MGH employees: Kaftun Ahmed, a medical interpreter at the MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center; Tammy Pham, image service representative in Imaging; and Dee Dee Chen, manager of Professional Staff Benefits. The award honors exemplary multicultural employees from diverse backgrounds for both their professional achievements as well as their dedication to community service.

Ahmed was recognized for her advocacy work with Somali-speaking patients, connecting Somali and Arab women to mammography screenings to decrease disparities in breast cancer screening rates among female refugees. Ahmed also works to increase health literacy through various health education workshops and outreach events.

Pham was acknowledged for her ability to foster teamwork, create a supportive atmosphere for her co-workers, and for her active volunteerism at her church and as a Boy Scouts of America scoutmaster.

Chen was lauded for her positive impact at the hospital and within the community through many volunteer activities. At the MGH, she is the executive board chair of the Association of Multicultural Members of Partners and serves as a mentor for young careerists with the American College of Healthcare Executives, a supervisor for the MGH Jobs for Youth Program, and science fair project mentor for Timilty Middle School.

— **Collaborating in a crisis**

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where we could not repair them,” he said. “We flew in special operations airmen, who would otherwise be going into other countries to open airfields for combat operations. In this case we brought them in, and within 26 hours, they set up a card table between the runway and the taxiway and they operated off that card table for three weeks.”

Keen said the use of military training and expertise was a key way to support relief organizations already working in the country. “The mission was very simple. We were there to save lives and mitigate the suffering of the Haitian people,” he said. “What I learned from my experience there was that the muscle of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief are NGOs (non-governmental organizations) because the only way we can help the Haitian people is with unity of effort.”

Joining Keen for the presentation and panel discussion were moderator David Bangsberg, MD, MPH, director of the MGH Center for Global Health; Hilarie Cranmer, MD, MPH, director of center’s disaster response program; Ross Boyce, MD, a Global Primary Care Program medical resident and former Army captain; and Margaret Bourdeaux, MD, of the division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Bangsberg also acknowledged a special guest audience member, actor Sean Penn, founder of the J/P Haitian Relief Organization, which is dedicated to saving lives and bringing sustainable programs to the Haitian people.

Following the discussion, the panelists, along with Penn, enjoyed a tour of the Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation and a reception.
**Magnet site visit begins March 4**

**From March 4 through March 7,** four appraisers from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) will conduct a site visit as part of the MGH’s Magnet recognition redesignation process. Magnet recognition is the highest honor bestowed upon a health care organization for excellence in nursing services. Fewer than 7 percent of hospitals nationwide have earned Magnet designation.

In 2003, the MGH became the first hospital in the state to be granted Magnet recognition from the ANCC, and in 2008, the hospital was redesignated a Magnet hospital for an additional four years.

The Magnet site visit provides an opportunity for staff to showcase the excellent care that is provided to patients and families at the MGH. The appraisers will visit as many patient care units and practice areas as possible and will want to speak with all members of the health care team, patients and families about the MGH. Questions for staff will focus on the care provided to patients and families; how they work together in teams; how involved they are in making care better for patients and families; job satisfaction at the MGH; and how the hospital supports education and other opportunities. Appraisers also may ask patients and families about their care, the staff and the environment at the MGH.

For more information about the Magnet Recognition Program, visit [http://mghpcs.org/pcs/magnet](http://mghpcs.org/pcs/magnet).
Happy New Year!

NEARLY 200 PEOPLE gathered in a Simches Building conference room Feb. 15 to celebrate the Year of the Snake as part of the MGH Chinese Scientist and Staff Association’s (CSSA) traditional Chinese Lunar New Year event. The festivities featured a dinner buffet and entertainment by Boston-area dancers and musicians, who showcased their talents throughout the three-hour event.

“This event is not just a chance for the CSSA to celebrate with one another, but also a way to invite a great many non-Chinese friends and colleagues at MGH to explore our traditions, culture and arts,” says CSSA President Ying-Hua Wang, PhD, research scientist in the Center for Regenerative Medicine. “It is a time to allow us to make new friends and enjoy time with one another, not just in academia, but in our personal lives as well.”

The annual celebration is one of the CSSA’s largest and most popular events. Throughout the year, the organization also hosts seminars focused on traditional Chinese medicine.

TOP HONORS: On Jan. 25, the MGH received the Presidents Award from the Greater Boston Business Council, the Boston area’s leading business group for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community. Accepting the award at the evening reception at the Skywalk at the Top of the Hub were, from left, Jeff Davis, senior vice president for Human Resources, with members of the MGH Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Employee Resource Group; Jared Ruckman; chairman Kevin Knoblauch; Marc Cella; Thom Fitzgerald; Brian Hurley; Justin Chen; and Tina Rosado.

Focus on patient safety awareness

WHAT DOES A CULTURE OF SAFETY LOOK LIKE? That’s the question that three MGH staff will discuss as part of a March 7 presentation recognizing Patient Safety Awareness Week, which runs March 3 through 9. “What Does a Culture of Safety Look Like? Stories from the MGH Front Lines” will run from noon to 1 pm in the O’Keeffe Auditorium and is open to staff, patients and families.

“These stories come from leaders whose units have scored high in several dimensions of the 2012 safety culture survey. They are clearly strong role models for others,” says Lela Holden, RN, PhD, patient safety officer.

During “the week that lasts all year,” the MGH also will host its fourth annual Patient Safety Star Appreciation breakfast on March 6. “Safety Stars” exemplify the principle that all staff have the responsibility and opportunity to contribute to patient safety. Earlier this year, staff were invited to nominate a colleague who demonstrated particular excellence in patient safety and 51 MGHers will be honored for their dedication at the breakfast.

For more information about Patient Safety Awareness Week, call 617-726-8031.