

Talisman of healing

EACH PERSONAL journey is filled with challenges and milestones. May this gift continue to remind you of your own personal beauty and be a source of strength and healing to help nourish your soul along the way.

The small notecard is tucked into the teal organza gift bag, alongside a one-of-a-kind necklace, selected by an MGH patient before her first chemotherapy treatment to battle ovarian cancer. The touching memento is part of the Janet's Jems for Healing program, created and run by Lori Slavin, which honors her mother, Janet, who died from the disease nearly two decades ago.



"My mother had an eye for beautiful art and she loved jewelry," Slavin says. "This program allows me to honor her and feel closer to her, and it allows me to show patients that there are people who are rooting for them and it reminds them how beautiful they are. It's a talisman of healing and support, and I hope it reminds them of life as a 'normal,' beautiful person."

Slavin says she began making jewelry when she was in junior high school and in recent years sold her creations in various boutiques. "It got to a point where it just wasn't fulfilling," she says. "I wanted the jewelry – my art – to have more meaning." (Continued on page 4)



TOUCHING TRIBUTE: Slavin displays one of her creations made with teal beads, representing ovarian cancer awareness.



SUCCESS STORIES: Research staff enjoy lunch on the Bulfinch stairs.

Research Staff Appreciation Day

DESPITE DREARY WEATHER, hundreds of MGH research staff at the main campus and in Charlestown Navy Yard enjoyed the annual Research Staff Appreciation Day lunch and ice cream celebration. The April 25 and 27 events – hosted by the Center for Faculty Development and Research Management – recognized and thanked staff members who provide direct scientific support to faculty investigators throughout the hospital. Research staff members – a community of more than 3,700 people – include technicians, technologists and study coordinators.

"The MGH research enterprise is so successful because of the thousands of people who support our work every day," says Sue Slaughaupt, PhD, scientific director of the MGH Research Institute. "We're happy to honor them on Research Staff Appreciation Day."

Attendees received giveaways and raffle prizes courtesy of the Research Institute. Harry Orf, PhD, senior vice president for Research, recognized the attendees for their many contributions. "Research staff comprise fully one third of our entire research community and, through their diligence and dedication, are the mainstay of our research enterprise," he said.

Maurizio Fava, MD, director of the Division of Clinical Research, said the event is a way for the hospital to express its appreciation for this valuable part of the scientific community. "MGH is an institution that really values research and values everyone who is involved in research." ■

Down to the bones: How to spot and confront a silent ailment

“MOST PEOPLE will reach their peak bone mass between the ages of 20 and 30,” says Joy Tsai, MD, of MGH Endocrinology. “While some amount of bone loss is expected with aging, it is important to identify if you have very low bone density so your doctor can make recommendations to help prevent broken bones. Osteoporosis is a silent disease.”

Here, Tsai talks about the ways in which you can spot osteoporosis and better your bone health.

WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Osteoporosis is a disease of decreased bone mass and strength leading to an increased risk of fracture (a broken bone). About 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men age 50 or older are expected to break a bone due to osteoporosis. It's important to obtain a DXA test to screen for low bone density. Much like checking a cholesterol blood level to screen for abnormal cholesterol levels, a bone density test is a helpful tool to screen for low bone density. We recommend you have a bone density test after age 65 if you are a woman, after age 70 if you are a man, or after age 50 if you are a woman or man who has had a fracture as an adult or have certain risk factors.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE AT RISK FOR A BONE FRACTURE?

The main tool we use to assess bone health is the DXA test – or a bone mineral density test. It uses two different X-ray beams to estimate bone density in your spine and hip. There are also a variety of risk factors for fractures such

as other medical conditions including diabetes, breast cancer and emphysema. Certain medications such as steroids can also increase your risk as can a family history of osteoporosis.

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO IMPROVE BONE HEALTH?

Literally taking “steps” will help improve your bone health. Staying active with weight-bearing exercises, which may be as simple as walking, will help keep your bones strong. Additionally, adequate calcium intake is important since bone is mostly made up of calcium-containing mineral. If you already have osteoporosis, your doctor may recommend a prescription medication in addition to maintaining a healthy lifestyle with exercise and a calcium-rich diet. Lastly, avoiding falls is a good way to prevent fractures. You can talk to your doctor about various strategies to minimize the chance of falls.

For more information about the MGH Bone Density Center, visit www.massgeneral.org/endocrine. ■



TSAI

Two honored with Ellis Award

“AT THE END of the day it's about the patients, and that's why I do what I do every day.”

These words were spoken by Rony Dieuseul, patient services coordinator in the Psychiatry Department/Bipolar Clinic and Research Program, who was one of two recipients of this year's Pamela J. Ellis Memorial Secretarial Award. Dieuseul received the award along with Salone Callender, patient services coordinator at MGH Primary Care Boston, at the April 26 Administrative Support Staff Day luncheon.

“Administrative Support Staff Day is a wonderful rite of passage in the spring calendar at the MGH,” said Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president. “The people under this tent help us advance all four parts of our mission, and we quite frankly could not do it without you all. The invaluable work that you do makes the work of this hospital possible, and I thank each and every one of you for all that you do.”

The award was established in recognition of the outstanding performance and values of Ellis, who served as an executive secretary at the MGH from 1992 – 1996, and honors MGH secretarial staff who exhibit outstanding qualities in their work. Seventy-one staff members were nominated for this year's award, and the complete list of nominees is featured in a framed plaque hanging on the wall opposite the MGH Gift Shop.

“I can finally hold up this award as a mark of my achievement,” said Callender. “I get so much strength from my colleagues, family and patients, and I thank the MGH for being such a wonderful place to work.”



CALLENDER AND DIEUSEUL

Infant intervention: Saving Mihaly

BEFORE THE BIRTH of their twins, Rose and Emmanuel Oge had a shock. Prenatal ultrasounds and an MRI showed one baby may have an intestinal blockage, however a definitive diagnosis couldn't be determined until birth. When Mihaly and her brother, Darren, were born five weeks premature, the diagnosis was confirmed: Mihaly's abdomen was swollen – a clear sign of internal pressure.

Additional tests showed twisted intestines – a potentially life-threatening condition – and hours after her birth Mihaly was rushed to the operating room. "Our doctors did their best to explain what was happening, but I couldn't grasp an operation the day after their delivery," says Rose. "We were just overwhelmed."

Allan Goldstein, MD, surgeon-in-chief and director of the Pediatric Neurogastroenterology Program at MassGeneral Hospital for Children, diagnosed the newborn with jejunal atresia. This rare disorder is caused by lack of blood flow while the small intestine is developing, which results in a lack of connection between the upper small intestine and the lower small intestine, colon and rectum. Mihaly's intestine also was wrapped around itself and prevented blood flow to the bowel, a condition called midgut volvulus.

The combination of jejunal atresia and midgut volvulus left Mihaly at

risk of losing all of her small intestine and without the ability to digest food.

Mihaly underwent a second operation at 7 weeks old to lengthen her bowel. Without the elongation procedure, she may have had difficulty surviving without intravenous (IV) nutrition throughout her life.

"A typical infant of Mihaly's age would have roughly 160 cm of intestine," says Lauren Fiechtner, MD, director of nutrition in Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition and the Center for Feeding and Nutrition. "So she struggled to absorb enough nutrients from her mother's breast milk to grow. She needed a tube to feed her IV nutrition in addition to her mom's breast milk."

This treatment remained until she was 5 months old, when she finally was able to grow without the IV support.

As Mihaly continues to mature, so will her treatment needs. Mihaly now continues to receive her care at the MGH Center for Feeding and Nutrition to closely monitor how her intestine is processing nutrition while increasing the amount of food she eats.

"We're accepting things now and I feel more educated thanks to Dr. Fiechtner and MGHfC," says Rose. "I have the courage to do my own research to learn as much as possible. We're learning how to cope with her needs." ■



DARREN AND MIHALY

Phone phishing: Don't stall, report that call

EMAIL ISN'T THE ONLY place where criminals go phishing for sensitive information. According to the MGH Office of Privacy and Security, criminals also use the telephone (phone phishing). All staff all have the potential to be targeted, and need to be alert.

WHAT IS PHONE PHISHING?

In phone phishing, callers pretend to be a trustworthy source (ex: Partners IS Service Desk, HR, a bank, etc.) to try and trick you into giving away sensitive information over the phone like usernames, passwords, financial and personal information, answers to security questions, etc. If you get phished, you may become a victim of identity theft, attackers could gain access to devices and the hospital's network, and confidential information can be exposed.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

- Never respond to requests for personal/financial information through the phone.
- Always be suspicious of a caller asking you for access or asking you to enter anything into your internet browser.
- Remember the Partners IS Service Desk will not randomly call you unless you've opened a ticket with an issue.

WHAT DO I DO IF I RECEIVE A PHONE CALL THAT SOUNDS LIKE A PHISH?

Don't stall, report the call. If you are suspicious or don't know a caller or number, ask the caller for their name and callback number, hang up, and report the call (the caller's number, the caller's name and the caller's story) to nospam@partners.org or to the IS Service Desk as a phone phish.

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT THE PRIVACY OFFICE:

Email: mghprivacyandsecurity@partners.org

Call: 617-726-1098.

DON'T STALL, REPORT THAT CALL.

Be aware of phone phishing scams.
Always hang up and report any suspicious callers/ numbers to the IS Service Desk.

To learn more, contact your Information Security or Privacy Officer

Excellence and excitement

THE MGH CELEBRATED the achievements of its staff during the annual Partners in Excellence Ceremony April 27 under the Bulfinch Tents. A total of 1,705 MGHers were recognized, representing 273 individual awards and 68 team awards. Recipients were commended for their work in one of six areas: quality treatment and service, operational efficiency, leadership and innovation, teamwork, community contributions and sustainability.

“On behalf of the MGH, I thank each and every one of you for your part in ensuring we fulfill our promise to our patients and their families, by providing the most excellent care possible, educating the clinicians of tomorrow, discovering the cures of tomorrow and taking care of our neighboring communities,” said Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president.

For a full list of honorees, visit apollo.massgeneral.org.



— Janet's Jems

(Continued from page 1)

In October 2015, Slavin turned to her husband, Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president, who suggested she reach out to Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, DNP, chief nurse and senior vice president of Patient Care Services. “Lo and behold, within a few days, we brainstormed this program,” Slavin says. “The nursing staff has been really remarkable in first helping get the program started and now giving out the necklaces to patients when I can’t be at the hospital.”

Since its inception, Slavin has provided 60 pieces of handmade jewelry to ovarian cancer patients when they come to the MGH for their first chemotherapy treatment, as well as to other patients who participate in the Look Good, Feel Better program – a monthly class offering beauty techniques for patients with cancer. Starting this month, Slavin plans to expand the program by visiting patients who are receiving treatment in the infusion unit.

“The necklaces are inspirational,” says Kathleen Gill-Bazazi, manager of Images. “They are so unique – some are bright and bold and others are simple. Patients find one that matches their personality or that they think will bring them added strength to get through treatments. Lori coming in and sharing with them how cancer touches everyone’s lives and explaining this program is a way to provide beauty and healing to them – it’s really special. It cheers them up.”

Slavin hopes to grow the program to reach 120 patients annually. “I feel so honored to be able to do this,” she says. “I feel like my mother is here with me and it keeps her spirit alive. I get to pass her love of creativity and her love for life forward to someone else. It’s really special.”

Study helps smokers quit, and never look back

LIKE SO MANY previous monumental moments in her life, Ellen Czahar, assistant and surgical coordinator in the MGH Orthopaedics Department, wanted to document it with a snapshot. The empty pack of cigarettes marked the last pack she would smoke as she embarked on a happier, healthier way of life.

“I smoked two packs a day,” says Czahar, who smoked for 41 years. “I was a big smoker. Back then, it wasn’t a bad thing and once you figured out that it was, it was too late. I was convinced that I was going to smoke until I died of lung cancer.”

Over the years, she tried to quit – albeit half-heartedly, she admits. It wasn’t until respiratory issues in the winter and a persistent cough began to terrify her to the point that she thought of seeking help. “Then an email blast came out about a smoking cessation study,” Czahar says. “And I didn’t delete it.”

She looked at the email again a few days later, and again for a third time. “Then I thought, ‘If you don’t do it now – you won’t ever do it.’”

Czahar reached out to the Partners in Helping You Quit (PiHQ) research study, led by Nancy Rigotti, MD, director of MGH Tobacco Research and Treatment Center. Open to Partners HealthCare employees, the study provides coaching and medication – available with no co-pay to those enrolled in Partners health insurance – to help smokers cut down on or quit smoking. Smokers who join the PiHQ research study are randomly assigned to one of two programs, both of which provide a personal tobacco coach and offer help that is private, confidential and tailored to employees’ needs. The study tests which program is most effective in helping employees quit smoking.

With the help of her coaches, Czahar mapped out a treatment plan and picked a quit date – Dec. 18, 2016. She finished the pack of cigarettes she had and took the photo of the empty container before throwing it in the trash. “That was it,” she says. “I never looked back. I won’t say it was easy – but it wasn’t hard. Being ready to stop smoking was probably the most important part because once you make up your mind and do it, it makes it easier.”

Czahar says being a PiHQ study participant was instrumental in her being able to stop smoking and continues to be smoke-free, now five months later. “They are always there for you – either by email or phone,” she says.

For more information about the PiHQ research study, call 617-724-2205 or email PiHQ@partners.org. ■

