Honoring the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

BISHOP ROBERT G. BROWN paused momentarily after reading that segment of the inspiring speech given by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 3, 1968: "Just one evening before his untimely death, Dr. King spoke those promising and powerful words of hope," Brown said. "And today – in an era of uncertainty – that flicker of hope needs our constant care."

Brown, senior pastor of Zion Church Ministries in Everett, served as the keynote speaker at the MGH’s annual event honoring the life of the legendary civil rights leader. The tribute, held Jan. 14 in the East Garden Room, was sponsored by the Association of Multicultural Members of Partners (AMMP) and the MGH Multicultural Affairs Office. The event also included remarks from Jeff Davis, senior vice president of Human Resources, musical selections sung by 2012 MGH Star Performer Emily Vanderburg and an opening prayer by Rev. Marcus McCullough of the MGH Chaplaincy.

“Our findings are an unfortunate reminder of the high mortality rate of homeless people and a clarion call for the need to address the epidemic of drug overdose deaths in this vulnerable population,” says Travis Baggett, MD, MPH, of the MGH Department of Medicine and BHCHP, who led the study.

“Overall, young homeless people died at a nine times higher rate and middle-aged homeless people at a four-and-a-half times higher rate,” Baggett added. “While drug overdose deaths among the homeless in Boston from 2003 to 2008 accounted for one-third of all deaths among those ages 25 to 44, a study by investigators from the MGH and the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) compared rates and causes of death among those served by BHCHP with data from a similar 1997 study and found that, while drug overdose had replaced HIV as the leading cause of death, overall mortality rates had not changed.

“Before we start to rejoice, I believe we still have a few challenges today that this nation has yet to overcome,” Brown said. “Together, we can battle poverty and classism. Together, we can stamp out inequity in housing and education. Together, we can eliminate bias based upon gender, age, religion or ethnicity. Together, we can work toward providing equal access and opportunity to our children in education and career choices. The journey isn’t over and hope has not died. The question is: Will you journey with me? I pray the answer is yes – because the struggle continues.”

LASTING LEGACY: Members of AMMP and featured speakers, from left, Davis; Zachary Cox; Brown; Dee Dee Chen; Dianne Austin; Nancy Kingori; Slavin; Robyn Stroud; and Schaeffer Charles

PARTNERS HEALTHCARE, the MGH and the Disparities Solutions Center will host “A Celebration of the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” Feb. 15 from 1 to 2 pm in the lobby level auditorium at Shriners Hospitals for Children-Boston, at 51 Blossom St. The event will feature Dr. Carol R. Johnson, superintendent of Boston Public Schools.
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**Sharing the magic of Disney**

**IN THE** MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGH/C) playroom on Ellison 17, children can spy Cinderella dancing with her prince, Snow White cavorting with the Seven Dwarfs, and some of the 101 Dalmatians getting into mischief. The scenes are depicted in 254 Walt Disney figurines donated by former patient Robert S. Golden in honor of the late MGH surgeon Claude E. Welch, MD, who treated him many years ago.

**WIDE-EYED WONDER:** Golden’s grandson, 6-year-old Kyle Daunais, takes a closer look at the Disney collectibles.

During the collection’s unveiling Dec. 17, Golden, a lifelong Disney enthusiast, said he was grateful for his treatment at the MGH and thought his collection could brighten the lives of the pediatric patients and their families. “If I could even change the paradigm of one sick child and give them a little optimism or bring a smile to their face – there’s nothing like it,” Golden said.

Golden said it was his sister who first introduced him to Disney figurines while she was working for a company that sold them, and he spent the following decades amassing an impressive personal collection. The donation to MGH/C includes figurines from the original Walt Disney Classic Collection and the Giuseppe Armani and Waterford collections.

“It feels wonderful seeing someone for whom my grandpa made such a difference giving back to the institution he loved,” said Welch’s grandson, Christopher Claude Welch, who also attended the event.

**Concert raises funds for children with disfiguring birthmarks**

**NEARLY $15,000** was raised during the third annual Vietnam Vascular Anomalies Center Benefit Concert, hosted by the MGH Department of Dermatology and the Wellman Center for Photomedicine and held at the Goethe Institut Boston. “It is deeply inspiring to see the talents and energies of our colleagues directed so effectively at improving the health of Vietnamese children halfway around the globe,” said David Fisher, MD, PhD, chief of the MGH Department of Dermatology, who played the cello during last month’s event.

The center, started by MGH and BWH physicians, is the first multicenter humanitarian medical collaboration between U.S. and Vietnamese physicians dedicated to treating children with disfiguring birthmarks. The critical impetus for the center’s humanitarian work was the continued use of radioactive phosphorus P32 to treat hemangiomas, an outdated and dangerous procedure that leaves significant scarring and depigmentation. In the past three and a half years, the center has treated more than 900 children, evaluated more than 2,000 others and has become an official center at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Ho Chi Minh City.

During the concert, guests enjoyed traditional Vietnamese cuisine, bid on silent auction items and were treated to an all-Schumann program that brought together Fisher; violinist Jennifer Frautschi, an Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient; pianist John Blacklow, professor at the University of Notre Dame; soprano Nozomi Ando, a postdoctoral researcher in chemistry at MIT; pianist Vincent C.K. Cheung, PhD, an MIT postdoctoral fellow; violist Grace Park, a graduate student at Boston University; violinist Jennifer Hsiao, concertmaster of the Dudley Orchestra; and Thao Le, a former professor of music at the National Academy of Music in Hue who is a master of the dan tranh, a traditional Vietnamese stringed instrument.

“The money raised at the benefit will be used to continue the center’s mission of providing medical care to children and it will also enable us to help fund an educational exchange program between physicians in Vietnam and the United States,” said Thanh-Nga Tran, MD, PhD, of the MGH Dermatology Department. Tran – along with R. Rox Anderson, MD, director of the MGH Wellman Center for Photomedicine, and Martin Mihm, professor of Dermatopathology at the BWH – served as the evening’s co-hosts.

For more information about the Vascular Anomalies Center, visit [http://www.vietnamVAC.org](http://www.vietnamVAC.org).

**HEALING HARMONIES:** From left, Fisher; Cheung; Ando; Hsiao; Park; Martin Mihm; Tran; and Anderson

**WIDE-EYED WONDER:** Golden’s grandson, 6-year-old Kyle Daunais, takes a closer look at the Disney collectibles.

**HEALING HARMONY:** From left, Fisher; Cheung; Ando; Hsiao; Park; Martin Mihm; Tran; and Anderson

**CHILLING OUT:** From left, Lily Waldeck, 7, Helen Cao, 6, and Claire Kayajan, 6, take a turn in the event’s photo booth.
At a glance: Flu season at the MGH

LIKE MANY HOSPITALS across the nation, the MGH has been seeing many influenza (flu) cases and patients with flu-like symptoms. The severity and duration of any flu season is difficult to predict, but the peak is typically seen during the month of February. This year flu cases started early, and based on the number of positive flu tests done here at the MGH, cases have recently begun to decrease. There are several ways staff can help to prevent the transmission of the flu, including following infection control policies. Key things to remember:

- The single most effective means of preventing influenza is the flu vaccine. Flu shots are available for MGH staff at MGH Occupational Health Services located at 165 Cambridge St., Suite 404. Staff can walk in between 7 am and 5 pm weekdays, or are encouraged to make an appointment by calling 617-726-2217.
- The flu vaccine also is still available for MGH patients who have not yet been vaccinated. Patients should call their primary care physician’s office to see if they have the vaccine and make an appointment for a flu shot. Flu shots also are being given at many other locations, including area health centers, boards of health, senior centers and local drug stores.
- Hand hygiene is key to minimizing the risk of infection from the spread of the virus from person to person. The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. Therefore good cough etiquette also should be used. Cough or sneeze into tissues and dispose of them immediately; then wash or sanitize your hands or cough into your upper sleeve. Contaminated surfaces may also contribute to the spread of viruses so remember to keep your hands out of your eyes, nose or mouth, especially after touching environmental surfaces in public places such as on the MBTA.
- Staff should not come to work if they have a fever of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and one or more of the following symptoms: runny nose or nasal congestion, sore throat, cough or body aches. Staff who have had the flu also are required to remain out of work until the fever is gone for 24 hours, without the use of anti-fever medication.

A look back: MGH and the flu

WHILE THE 2012-13 FLU SEASON has been an intense one so far, it is by no means the worst in the lengthy history of the MGH. One season that stands out in the hospital’s historical records was the Spanish flu of 1918. The pandemic, which came on the heels of World War I, infected more than 500 million people globally. Boston was hit particularly hard by the virulent strain, which was thought to have come into the local port with military shipments. During this epidemic, the MGH treated thousands of flu patients, but in many cases there was very little caregivers could do to fight the virus. In a compilation of house pupil recollections gathered by James H. Means, MD, MGH chief of Medicine from 1923 to 1951, Thomas D. Cunningham, MD, recalled his experiences treating the overwhelming numbers of patients when he was an intern at the MGH in 1918.

“The Surgical wards were turned over to Medical cases. Each Medical interne was put in charge of a ward, and the two senior Medical internes took alternate turns in the Emergency Ward, never leaving, as the cases poured in so fast. ... During the first week of the epidemic, 57 percent of the admissions died. The morgue was completely filled, and the undertakers could not begin to keep up with the number of dead. Many patients were brought to the emergency ward dead in the ambulance. Others would die an hour after admission. It was not unusual to pass two or three of your patients being carried out the back door as you were going up to make your midnight visit.”

Winterfest wows with a memorable afternoon

MORE THAN 150 CHILDREN and their families turned out to the annual Winterfest celebration, hosted by the MassGeneral Hospital for Children Cancer Center Jan. 13 at the Liberty Hotel. The festive event included a visit from Boston Red Sox mascot Wally the Green Monster and Frosty the Snowman.

Attendees also were treated to crafts and face painting thanks to The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp Hospital Outreach Program, as well as scrapbooking, nail art and foosball activities. An interactive show by magician Peter O’Malley brought many laughs from the group. Raffle prizes and contests were held throughout the afternoon, and for those wanting some relaxation time, chair massages were offered. Families were also able to document the memorable day by posing for snapshots in the photo booth.

“This community effort ensured a special day for children who endure many difficult treatments throughout the year,” said Elyse Levin-Russman, LICSW, clinical social worker in the Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Unit, who led the program. “Special thanks go out to the pediatric oncology staff who volunteered and helped prepare for this magical afternoon.”

The event was also made possible by a variety of donors, including the Friends of the MGH Cancer Center and Isabella Curly Cakes. Cancer Center staff on Lunder 10 and the MGPO Professional Billing Office provided gifts and gift cards for the children.
times higher rate than comparably aged adults in Massachusetts.”

The study, which will appear in the Feb. 11 issue of JAMA Internal Medicine and is receiving early online release, updates the previous study covering the years 1988 to 1993. That report found that HIV was the leading cause of death among BHCHP patients aged 25 to 44, while homicide was the principal cause among those 18 to 24. To update that data, the investigators analyzed available information for more than 28,000 adult patients who had received care from BHCHP from 2003 through 2008. The significant drop in deaths from HIV infection was offset by an increase in deaths from overdoses and other substance-abuse-related issues, resulting in no change in the overall mortality rates from the earlier study.

“Our results highlight the dire need to expand addiction and mental health services and to better integrate them into primary care systems serving homeless people,” says Baggett. “They also suggest that, while health care services like BHCHP can help improve the health of homeless people, they probably are not enough. Making a major impact on mortality for these patients will also require addressing the social factors that contribute to homelessness in the first place.”

In response to the study, BHCHP and the Boston Public Health Commission are leading a citywide effort to address the high number of overdose deaths from a medical and policy perspective. ■