Following the June introduction of Operation 5,000, a successful new fundraising event, the My Giving Helps: The MGH Fund + United Way employee campaign will launch its annual drive with a celebration under the Bulfinch tent on Sept. 3. The campaign runs from Sept. 2-26, and lead co-chairs Michael R. Jaff, DO, chair of the MGH Institute for Heart, Vascular and Stroke Care, and Joan Sapir, MGH/MGPO senior vice president, have set an ambitious goal of 5,000 employee donors in 2014.

“Last year, MGH employees demonstrated their commitment to this hospital and to our community by donating over $1 million to My Giving Helps,” says Sapir. “We were so impressed by our colleagues’ generosity. This year’s goal reflects our belief that employees will continue to show their support in greater numbers than ever before.”

Gifts to the MGH Fund provide unrestricted dollars to support the most promising programs and initiatives at the hospital. Donations have been used to support research in a variety of fields — including celiac disease and cancer detection — and to offer important health and support program for employees, such as free stroke screenings.

Gifts to United Way provide assistance to more than 170 organizations in the Boston area, ranging from the Boys and Girls Clubs to the Pine Street Inn to the American Red Cross. Each partner organization is annually evaluated by United Way, which has the experience and expertise needed to ensure donations are put to good use.

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Determined to succeed

“THE AMOUNT OF COURAGE they have consistently impresses me,” says Brett Mulder, PsyD.

Mulder is the Aspire Teen and Adult Services program manager at the Lurie Center for Autism at the MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGH/C).

Aspire offers services that help children, teens and young adults with autism spectrum disorders develop the social competency critical for success. One of these services is the Aspire Adult Internship Program, which helps adults gain valuable experience in the work world.

“With some support and the right environment they can thrive,” says Mulder. “Despite past setbacks and failures, these young men and women bravely and willingly take on challenging internships. It amazes me.”

The internship program has three main areas of focus: increasing self-awareness and self-advocacy skills, improving social competence and

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Head games – the impact of concussions

**AS FALL SPORTS COMMENCE**, Walter Panis, MD, of the Massachusetts General Hospital for Children (MGHfC) Sports Concussion Clinic and the MGH Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service, explains the ins and outs of concussions.

**Q. What is a concussion?**
**A.** A concussion is a pathophysiological event that is caused by torqueing or a twisting of the brain. It is not necessarily caused by a direct blow but by a quick – and usually unexpected – movement of the neck. That force applied to the brain appears to affect the nerve cells and causes them to malfunction.

**Q. What are symptoms of a concussion?**
**A.** A sort of change in a person’s recognition and level of awareness. The most severe form is a loss of consciousness. On the other end of the spectrum, a person might just feel a little dazed or out of it. Other symptoms include headache, sleep disturbance, cognitive and behavioral complaints and mood disorders.

**Q. How are concussions treated?**
**A.** Physical and cognitive rest is the most important and effective, immediate treatment and, of course, preventing another blow. If we think athletes have suffered a concussion, we take them out of play until they have no further symptoms.

**Q. How long does it take to recover after a concussion?**
**A.** I would say 90 percent of people who have a concussion get better within a month. Most people get better even faster; however, it turns out that children recover slower than older kids and adults because of their developing brains.

**Q. With fall sports around the corner, what are ways to prevent concussions?**
**A.** The stronger and healthier you are, the better chance you have of preventing a concussion. Good technique is important, making sure you are well-hydrated and well-nourished. We are seeing more and more concussions in girls; we think it is because they are more likely to report their symptoms.

**Q. Why are concussions increasingly more prevalent?**
**A.** We don’t know for sure, but perhaps it is because people are more aware. Education has increased, and there is more sports participation. People read in the newspaper everyday about concussions – it is part of our culture now. The vast majority of people who get a concussion do get better. When people don’t improve, there is often something else going on.

**Q. What is key when it comes to concussions?**
**A.** Recognize the symptoms. There is a great concern about the second impact syndrome, which is deadly yet very rare. An adolescent who has suffered a concussion and then has a second impact could develop a life-threatening brain problem, and kids have died or have been severely disabled. Someone who has had a concussion should be taken out of the game even if they recover quickly. If in doubt, take them out.

For more information about concussions, contact the MGHfC Sports Medicine Clinic at 617-724-9722.

— Determined to succeed

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enhancing the capacity to manage stress and anxiety. The goal is to better navigate the workplace, think socially and discover strengths.

“The key is to help them find a niche in the workplace and effectively self-advocate to managers,” says Mulder.

“I’ve learned my determination and willingness to challenge myself are my strengths,” says Marisa Michelson, a 23-year-old Aspire intern at Liberty Mutual.

“Going outside of my comfort zone is the only way I will grow. This is something I have known but only recently found the courage to do.”

Aspire interns have worked at businesses all over the Boston area including the Harvard Museum of Natural History, Liberty Mutual, WGBH Boston and the MGH.

“Working with our Aspire intern has made our employees more aware of different communication styles and motivated them to be more attentive to their own communication habits,” says Jeanne Hopkins, vice president of Communications and Government Relations at WGBH Boston. “It has also emphasized the importance of clarity when offering instruction and explanations, which is beneficial for everyone.”

Along with skills learned in the workplace, Aspire interns have developed lasting relationships with other program interns. Once a week they have a two-hour seminar to build skills, discuss experiences, ask questions and receive advice from peers and job coaches. “The seminar allows the interns to have a close social connection with people who understand the courage it takes to be a part of this program,” says Mulder.

Nicole Spezzaferrari, a former Liberty Mutual intern now working at Watson and Marlow in Wilmington says, “On the last day of the internship, we went for dinner. We were able to chat, joke around and really enjoy each other’s company.”

Adds Michelson, “Overall the people I have gotten to know and work with made my internships truly incredible. They are experiences that I will never forget.”

**The thrill of the drill**

**READY TO RESPOND:** Thirteen MGH staff members recently traveled to Palo Alto, California, to participate in a mock humanitarian disaster at the Stanford Medical Campus. The three-day, full-scale field hospital simulation was organized through a partnership between the Office of Global Disaster Response at the MGH Center for Global Health, the International Medical Corps (IMC) and the Stanford Emergency Medicine Program for Emergency Response. The team slept in tents and ate field rations as they practiced a full-scale response in line with the center’s mission to provide a professional humanitarian response to those affected by emergencies and disasters. “It was a wonderful learning opportunity,” said Rachel Rifkin, Office of Global Disaster Response program coordinator. “It was truly valuable to see what goes into raising and staffing IMC’s Trauma and Surgical Deployment Unit and to practice and work together with colleagues.”
Waiting For an Organ can be a lengthy process with no guarantee when or if a suitable match will become available. Complicating matters is the national organ shortage. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, more than 122,000 patients are on the national organ waiting list, with a new name added every 10 minutes. On average, 19 people die each day from the lack of available organs for transplant, which amounts to about 7,000 people each year.

The MGH and the New England Organ Bank (NEOB) are critical allies in increasing organ donation. “Part of a hospital’s success centers on the education of its clinical staff around organ donation best practices. This, in turn, contributes to better conversion rates – a hospital’s ability to identify patients who have the potential to donate and ultimately go on to become actual donors,” says Kevin Kiely, MGH in-house coordinator for the NEOB.

Nationally, conversion rates hover around 60 percent, but so far this year the MGH organ conversion rate stands at 80 percent. “These higher-than-average rates reflect the effectiveness of our team approach when it comes to the delicate topic of donation with the families of deceased patients,” Kiely continues. “In fact, the MGH has received the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration Medal of Honor for excellence in organ donation for the past eight years.”

As a Level I trauma center, the MGH provides the highest level of care to trauma patients. In collaboration with the NEOB, the hospital has been able to establish several processes to help identify potential candidates.

“Understandably, these are difficult discussions to have, but we handle these matters with the utmost care, concern and sensitivity,” says Kiely. “We try to illustrate to the families that the gift of organ donation will hopefully provide a measure of comfort and healing in their loss.”

Adds Angela Marquez, administrative director of the MGH Transplant Center, “The MGH has one of the highest conversion rates in New England. This is a direct result of the institutional support for organ and tissue donation, the work of the MGH Organ and Tissue Donation Committee and our strong collaboration with the NEOB. It is important to note that organ donation and transplantation involve an innumerable amount of both clinical and non-clinical staff members. This dedication on all fronts is what drives our success today, tomorrow and into the future.”

Hausman Fellowship – a model for diversity

THE HAUSMAN FELLOWSHIP program launched in 2007 with only one fellow. The following year, there were just three. But at the Aug. 22 graduation ceremony in the Haber Conference Room, 16 fellows were honored. Designed to promote recruitment of minority nurses and meet the needs of a diverse patient population, the six-week program pairs each student nurse with an MGH nurse mentor to provide clinical, practical and social learning experiences. Founded by former MGH patient, Margaretta Hausman, LICSW, the program has become a national model for diversity in nursing.

“If you aren’t in a supportive learning environment there are assaults on your self esteem,” said Deborah Washington, RN, PhD, director of Diversity for Patient Care Services, who welcomed guests. “Over the years, we have built a community, so that the fellows always have someone to process with even in their current work environments.”

As names were read and certificates presented, each graduate stood at the podium and expressed their gratitude.

“Being here made me realize how important my role is as a Chinese American nurse,” said Simmons College student Flora Hu. “I was able to assist with cultural barriers that often arise, since western medicine is not prevalent in Chinese culture.”

Bria Robinson from Boston College said, “The program showed me I am a valuable asset to the health care community, and I have a voice that can be heard.”

Ifeoma Obiara, a student from University of Massachusetts Boston, thanked Hausman for her generosity and fortitude. “If equality is not given, then a legacy must be created.”

For more information about the Hausman Fellowship program, contact Washington at 617-724-7469 or dwashington1@partners.org.
Change in Hotline schedule
MGH Hotline will not publish Sept. 5 because of the holiday.
The regular publication schedule will resume Sept. 12.

Submit news tips and story ideas to MGH Hotline

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MGH Hotline is published weekly by the MGH Public Affairs Office.

AIMING FOR FUN: Summer may be coming to a close for some but not for patients at MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC). On Aug. 21, the Healing Garden on Yawkey 8 was transformed into a summer day camp for dozens of patients and their families. Hosted in collaboration with The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp Hospital Outreach Program, the event treated children to several stations of activities such as arts and crafts, archery and fishing. The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing seriously ill children and their families with a “different kind of healing.”

— Giving
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“Our employees make a world of difference every day by doing what they do best – making the MGH the best place for health care,” says Jaff. “The fact that so many also choose to support the MGH Fund and United Way with a gift to My Giving Helps exemplifies the level of caring that makes the MGH a world-class institution.”

For more information about the 2014 My Giving Helps campaign or to make a donation, visit www.mygivinghelps.org.

Campaign calendar

MY GIVING HELPS campaign organizers will host a series of events and giving opportunities throughout the month of September, including:

2014 Kick-Off Day – Sept. 3
Kick off the 2014 giving season with a celebration under the Bulfinch tent from 11 am to 4 pm and again from 9 to 11 pm. The Operation 5,000 game boards will be open for play, and employees will have the opportunity to make a gift onsite and enter to win great raffle prizes.

Tap to Give – Sept. 3-26
My Giving Helps introduces a new giving opportunity at Eat Street Cafe – simply tap your employee ID on the My Giving Helps badge reader at each register to make a one-time, $1 payroll contribution to the campaign.

Blue and Orange Week – Sept. 15-19
Employees wearing blue and orange that are spotted by a campaign champion will be eligible to receive prizes ranging from restaurant gift cards to movie tickets and overnight getaways.

Cupcake Sales – Sept. 22-26
My Giving Helps cupcakes will be on sale at MGH eateries with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the campaign.