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PHOTO FINISH: Runner Christopher Marden crosses home plate at the 2019 Run to Home Base.

Strength and sacrifice: 10 years running

MORE THAN 2,000 PARTICIPANTS – from 41 states – raised \$2.3 million during the 10th annual Run to Home Base presented by New Balance. The 5K/9K event supports Home Base, a Red Sox Foundation and MGH Program, and its mission to heal invisible wounds for veterans and their families.

“Along with the exceptional care I received, and with the support of the other veterans and active duty service members in my treatment cohort, I was able to look in the mirror, face many of my issues and

begin to deal with them,” said Chris Gemmer, a Navy SEAL and Home Base veteran who spoke at the July 27 event’s prerace ceremony. “Home Base provided a path to healing I struggled to find on my own. Home Base gave me hope.”

Race day included a commemorative pregame ceremony during the Red Sox versus Yankees game at Fenway Park, recognizing veterans and military families who have benefited from Home Base care, first
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MGHers knock it out of the park at Fenway

WHILE THE BOSTON RED SOX were away on Aug. 4, there were still plenty of games to play at Fenway Park during the Latino Family Festival – a community health and fitness event featuring information tables, activities and music. Members of the MGH Committee for Latino Initiatives, and staff from MGH Neurology, Pediatrics, and Police, Security and Outside Services offered educational materials, candy and movie passes. Visitors also could enter to win bicycles and tickets to Canobie Lake Park and a New England Revolution soccer game.

“As a proud Latina and MGH employee, I was beyond excited to represent the hospital’s Police and Security Department at this year’s festival,” says Karen Mejia, a security officer in MGH Police, Security and Outside Services. “Being able to make children smile when handing them stickers and coloring books, speak with parents about internet safety, and discuss the department with community members was an amazing experience. The connections I made were priceless and I am already looking forward to doing it again next summer.”



FENWAY FUN: MGH Police and Security officers Evan Williamson and Mejia with children at the festival.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

Daily e-cigarette use proves effective in helping smokers quit regular cigarettes

While the debate about the overall health risks of electronic cigarettes continues, MGH researchers have found the first long-term evidence that smokers of traditional combustible cigarettes who use e-cigarettes daily are more than twice as likely to quit smoking permanently.

The team analyzed data from 8,000 adult smokers from the first three years of the Population Health and Assessment of Tobacco and Health study, a survey representative of the adult population in the United States.

At the start of the study:

- 3.6 percent of smokers were current daily e-cigarette users.
- 18 percent were non-daily e-cigarette users.
- 78 percent did not use e-cigarettes.

During a two-year period, e-cigarette users reported a higher rate of prolonged absence from smoking – 11 percent – than non-users – 6 percent. Smokers who used e-cigarettes occasionally but not daily also were more likely to demonstrate prolonged abstinence from smoking.

“This finding suggests that smokers who use e-cigarettes to quit smoking need to use them regularly – every day – for these products to be most helpful,” says Sara Kalkhoran, MD, MAS, MGH Primary Care physician and lead author of the study.

“Smokers who plan to stop smoking should still be encouraged to first use FDA-approved therapies rather than e-cigarettes,” says Nancy Rigotti, MD, senior author of the paper and director of the MGH Tobacco Research and Treatment Center. FDA-approved therapies include

varenicline, bupropion or nicotine patches, gum or lozenges.

“But this study suggests e-cigarettes may be helpful for some smokers who are not able to quit with these existing treatments,” Rigotti says.

Untapped information from chest X-rays could help predict future health risks

An MGH research team recently created a new tool powered by artificial intelligence that was successful in identifying individuals at risk of developing heart disease, lung cancer and other disorders in the 12 years following a standard diagnostic chest X-ray.

The tool, called CXR-risk, was trained by comparing 85,000 chest X-rays from 42,000 patients with each patient’s survival rate over a 12-year period. The goal was for the tool to “learn” the features of a chest X-ray that best predicted a patient’s future health and risk of death.

To validate the tool, the team then had it analyze chest X-rays from 16,000 additional patients and assign a risk level to each one. They found that 53 percent of those identified as high risk died in the 12-year period after the X-ray was taken, compared to fewer than 4 percent of those labeled as very low risk.

“It may be possible to improve outcomes for these at-risk patients through earlier screening and preventive medicine,” says Michael Lu, MD, MPH, director of Research in the Division of Cardiovascular Imaging and lead author of the study. “This is a new way to extract prognostic information from everyday diagnostic tests. It’s information that is already there that we are not using, that could improve people’s health.”

– Home Base

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responder champions, community and national partners, and Home Base staff.

“Home Base is truly the product of a grateful nation,” said retired Brig. Gen. Jack Hammond, executive director of Home Base. “We are continuously growing and expanding our boundaries, both geographically and intellectually, to reach new heights in innovation to help veterans and their families facilitate successful transitions to civilian life. As we celebrate this significant milestone, we look forward to many more.” ■



MGH RESEARCHERS are invited to enter a maximum of three submissions in this year’s Research Institute Image Contest. Any image that represents MGH research can be submitted, including those featuring microscope/labs, 3D models, scans and team shots. Entries will be accepted through Sept. 27.

All MGH staff can vote for their favorite image from Oct. 7-18. One vote per day is permitted. The winner will be announced Nov. 1 and will receive the following prizes:

- A Research Institute fleece
- Image featured in *Proto* magazine
- Image featured in the Charlestown Navy Yard (CNY) Building 149 display case

Finalists will each receive a featured spot alongside the winner in the CNY Building 149 display case and a pair of movie tickets.

Visit the MGH Research Institute blog at <https://mghresearchinstitute.com> or the Research Institute Facebook page for complete contest rules and the submission form. ■

The power of kindness and compassion

MGH LEADERS SHARED reflections, readings and prayers at a special “Circle of Concern: Confronting the Fear of Gun Violence” service Aug. 6, led by the Spiritual Care Department. Staff gathered in the MGH Chapel in response to the multiple gun violence attacks that have occurred recently throughout the United States. Below are a few of the thoughts shared during the event.



“ I would like to invite those who are willing to place your hand over your heart and send kindness to yourself. It will help hold you in gentleness and kindness as we go through these painful times. As we do that, I would like to invite those who are willing to extend that kindness to the person beside you, to everyone in this room, extending farther to everyone in the hospital – to your patients, their families, your colleagues and friends – extending further to our neighborhood, to your loved ones and families, extending to every person in this country, in this continent, to other countries, to the whole earth and to all beings. I encourage each one of us to take a few minutes each day to practice sending kindness to ourselves and extending it to all. Each one of us has the power to make a difference, starting with ourselves and our community.

–**Rev. Alice Cabotaje, MDiv, BCC**, director, Spiritual Care and Education in the Spiritual Care Department

“ I am grateful to the organizers of today’s service for providing a place for members of our MGH family to come together to support one another and pray for a better future for our country. We must make sure this senseless loss of life finally leads to needed changes in the attitudes of our society and the laws of our country to prevent attacks like these from continuing to happen. This is a public health problem and we as a health care organization have a responsibility to be part of the solution. I encourage all of us to channel our grief into action, and leave today with at least one thing we will commit to doing to move us forward.

–**Peter L. Slavin, MD**, MGH president

“ We have to have hope. We must all think about what we can do not after a shooting, but when there isn’t one, when people are settling back to complacency. We need to make these efforts part of our day, week and year. We must practice kindness and empathy all days because that can prevent someone from hurting themselves or someone else. We need to all be vigilant in our environments, certainly here but at home as well. I hope we can live with intention, not with fear, and we need to empower ourselves and each other. I visualize a world free from gun violence a lot. I know I am not alone.

–**Bonnie Michelman**, executive director, Police, Security and Outside Services

Giving back: Outstanding employees recognized with inaugural award

THREE MGH STAFF MEMBERS were selected out of 40 nominations to receive the MGH’s inaugural Community Service Award. The award honors employees who selflessly donate their time to their community and are outstanding employees in their department. The new award program encourages employees to make contributions to their community through their time, actions and dedications.

Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president, congratulated this year’s honorees, from left, Julia Kahn, Radiation Oncology research technician; Alison Brookes, MD, of the Medical Walk-In Unit; and Susan Cuzzi, patient service coordinator in the Cancer Center.



MGH named a top hospital in America by U.S. News & World Report

THE MGH HAS BEEN RANKED #2 in U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals 2019-2020 and is the only hospital among the 5,000 institutions evaluated to rank across all 16 specialties. The MGH has consistently placed among the top five hospitals on the Honor Roll since its inception in 1990.



Other hospitals within Partners HealthCare that ranked highly on the annual survey are Brigham and Women's Hospital at #13; McLean Hospital, which ranked #2 in Psychiatry; Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (in partnership with the MGH), which ranked #3 in Rehabilitation; and Mass. Eye and Ear (in partnership with the MGH), which ranked #2 in Ear, Nose and Throat and #4 in Ophthalmology.

Three Partners hospitals also have been ranked in the U.S. News & World Report regional survey.

Newton-Wellesley Hospital ranked #5 in the Boston region and #6 in the state, and was recognized as high-performing in geriatrics, pulmonary, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure and lung cancer surgery. Wentworth-Douglass Hospital ranked #6 in the region, and North Shore Medical Center was recognized as high-performing in heart failure and COPD.

THE MGH'S RANKINGS IN ALL 16 SPECIALTY AREAS ARE:

Cancer	8
Cardiology and Heart Surgery	5
Diabetes and Endocrinology	2
Ear, Nose and Throat (with Mass. Eye and Ear)	2
Gastroenterology and GI Surgery	5
Geriatrics	11
Gynecology	6
Nephrology	7
Neurology and Neurosurgery	13
Ophthalmology (with Mass. Eye and Ear)	4
Orthopedics	6
Psychiatry	1
Pulmonology	5
Rehabilitation (with Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital)	3
Rheumatology	6
Urology	11

What people are saying

ALONG WITH SHARING NEWS, events and information of the hospital, the MGH Twitter and Facebook accounts help keep our patients, staff and community connected. Here are a few things people have said recently, including some congratulations on the U.S. News & World Report's Best Hospitals 2019-2020:

Gail H: Absolutely well deserved! We are so blessed to live within driving distance. I researched transplant centers and chose MGH for my husband's liver transplant. Now I feel we are in the Mass General family. Thanks to all who saved him.

Valerie M: Congratulations to MGH! A most well deserved ranking! A wonderful place to work that does amazing things for its patients and employees.

Bob P: Massachusetts General is one of the greatest hospitals. Thank you for taking such great care of my mother and others in my family for well over 40 years now.

Arminda F: I am grateful for the excellent care my family and I have received at MGH since 1971. Congratulations! Well deserved!

Jay W: The people are amazing professionals who have a passion for outstanding care. From checking in, tests, prep, the surgery and the recovery, everything was excellent. They were all wonderful. Thank you all. You are an amazing group of people!

Abigail O: Excellent care and service, the nurses and doctors have been nothing but kind, professional and done everything to keep me comfortable! 5 out of 5, will always come here for my and my family's medical needs!

Angelique M: So proud to work at MGH and wouldn't take my family anywhere else for their health care.

Alex V: Excelente servicio en ese hospital todo. Super bien muchas gracias.

Gail T: Mass General, during my lifetime, has always been in the forefront of medical care. Congratulations for the recognition.

Jackie E: We are so blessed to have MGH. They saved my husband's life. We are so grateful to the nurses and the doctors. We are especially grateful to his surgeon. She is surely a miracle worker.

Takashi O: Congratulations, MGH. I truly appreciate all of your hard and compassionate research and support efforts for patients and the future.

Gary M: Congratulations, very well deserved! People come from all over the country for the excellent care at MGH and we are fortunate to live close by.

Kurt H: I'm so grateful to everyone at Mass General. You are the best. Thank you!

Marc V: Congratulations! Forever grateful to all the professionals at this world class hospital.

Doris H: From the moment that I was admitted to MGH, I felt like the most important person in the world. They saved my life. My family and I will be forever grateful to MGH.

Cynthia R: I could not say enough good things about this hospital. I am here today because of all the wonderful people who work at MGH. It takes many good people to make everything work so smoothly. I would not want to go to any other hospital, they are the best there is. ■

