Mother and daughter nurses making a difference in the community

— by Winnie Tobin, communications director, Center for Community Health Improvement

Melissa Vespa’s children recall their mom doing her own homework with them when they were young. Molly, the middle child, recalls her mother having ‘mountains of homework’ and spending many nights and holidays away from the family. Molly resolved then and there never to become a nurse.

Ironically, not only did Molly follow in mom’s footsteps, she and her mom are now nursing colleagues at MGH.

Molly Vespa is the nurse team lead for Connect to Wellness, a new partnership between MGH and Boston Senior Home Care, offering on-site health and social services to low-income, elderly, and disabled residents. Part of the MGH Center for Community Health Improvement, the program helps residents maintain their independence as they age in place.

Melissa Vespa’s career has spanned more than three decades, the past twelve years as case manager for the MGH Integrated Care Management Program working with medically complex patients.

Melissa and Molly’s roles reflect a shared passion. They both help vulnerable patients navigate the healthcare system and educate them about general medical issues, chronic diseases, and medications. And they both enjoy being part of a multi-disciplinary team.

Says Molly, “In this program, you can build relationships with patients. You can identify signs early on and intervene. Over time, patients begin to trust and listen to my advice.”

Melissa always knew her daughter would become a nurse. But neither could have predicted that they’d end up working for the same institution.

Melissa beams when talking about her daughter.

“As a mom, I’m blown away. I have such a feeling of pride. Passing the torch to the next generation is exciting. It’s a great privilege to mentor young nurses at such an innovative time.”

For more information, contact Winnie Tobin at 617-643-5288.