Hospitals nationwide face a variety of challenges on a daily basis, including how to enhance the quality of patient care while also reducing costs. The MGH honors staff who have made significant contributions in addressing these concerns with the Bowditch Prize, named in honor of Nathanial Bowditch, a 19th century pioneer of celestial navigation who helped raise support for the construction of the MGH in the 1800s.

Anand Dighe, MD, PhD, director of the Core Laboratory in the MGH Pathology Service, and Angelo Volandes, MD, of the Department of Medicine, were honored with the Bowditch Prize at this year’s 12th annual awards ceremony on Feb. 22.

“Over the past five years, Dr. Dighe has led a number of interdepartmental operations improvement initiatives that have had (Continued on page 4)
The importance of heart health

IN HONOR OF American Heart Month, the MGH Heart Center hosted a number of events throughout February to raise awareness and educate patients and staff about heart disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S.

A lecture hosted by MGH Senior HealthWISE, “Preventing and Healing Heart Disease,” kicked things off Feb. 2 with speaker Malissa Wood, MD, co-director of the MGH Heart Center’s Corrigan Women’s Heart Health Program, who discussed cardiovascular health and its physical, emotional and spiritual aspects.

On Feb. 3, MGH Heart Center physicians – including Wood, Nandita Scott, MD, co-director of the Corrigan Women’s Heart Health Program, Claudia Chae, MD, MPH, clinical cardiologist and cardiovascular epidemiologist, and Maria Vivaldi, MD, cardiologist – presented at the Massachusetts Medical Society’s seventh annual Women’s Cardiac Health Conference at the society’s headquarters in Waltham. Topics included epidemiology of stroke and ischemic heart disease, evaluation of chest pain in women and myths about heart disease in the Latino population. On the same day, many MGH employees participated in National Wear Red Day, to show support for women’s heart health.

Scott also was the featured speaker at a Feb. 6 “Women and Heart Disease” luncheon presentation in the Thier Conference Room. Later in the month, MGH Heart Center physicians attended the American Heart Association’s Go Red For Women Luncheon and Educational Forum at the Boston Sheraton Hotel.

To view the MGH Heart Center’s month-long series on heart health, visit http://www.massgeneral.org/heartcenter/about/

Tips for a healthy heart

1. Know your numbers: blood pressure, fasting cholesterol and glucose, and body mass index.
2. Don’t smoke. If you do, get help with smoking cessation.
3. Know your family history: coronary disease, heart failure, high blood pressure, sudden cardiac death and valve disease can all be inherited.
4. Exercise 150 minutes per week (taking the stairs at work counts). Increments as little as 10 minutes count toward this goal.
5. Do not consume trans fats, eat less than seven percent saturated fats and eat whole grain cereal products and fish two times per week.
6. Manage stress and maximize your support network. Friends can help you lose weight, exercise better and adopt a healthier lifestyle.
7. If you have new symptoms that are of concern, get them checked by a physician. These include fatigue, palpitations, chest, back, arm or neck pain, and shortness of breath with activity.
8. Be an agent of change for your family: encourage your kids, grandchildren, partner and friends to become more active.

– Malissa Wood, MD

Meaningful art

TO RECOGNIZE the MGH for its support following the 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Haiti in 2010, employees Louis Gérard, Patient Transport supervisor, Gregory Dorce, Patient Transport associate, and Farah Andre, patient care associate, presented senior leadership with a painting from Haiti on Feb. 17 in the Trustees Room.

“We wanted to take this moment to say thank you again, on behalf of all the Haitian staff. We are so grateful that you were there for us throughout the recovery process,” said Gérard as he unveiled the artwork.

The piece was painted by Berlin Noncent and depicts (Continued on page 4)

ROWS OF RED: The winners of the MGH’s “Wear Red” photo contest are the Heart Failure/Interventional/Vascular staff who work on Gray Bigelow 8.
New and improved Coffee Central reopens

THE AROMA OF freshly brewed coffee mixed with the tempting scent of baked goods filled the air as the newly renovated Coffee Central officially reopened Feb. 23 at 8 am.

Jean Elrick, MD, senior vice president for Administration, joined Susan Barracough, MS, RD, LDN, director of Nutrition and Food Services, and Joan Shea, assistant director of Nutrition and Food Services, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The protective wall liner was then removed to unveil the new décor to the applause of those in attendance. Staff and visitors lined up to place their orders for the first time since mid-December, when the popular coffee stand was closed for renovations.

Enhancements were made to improve efficiency and included the installation of updated equipment, an additional register and three bakery cases.

The expanded retail space also features new food selections including yogurt parfaits, mini-Bundt cakes, muffin tops and whoopie pies. The night-shift staff can now enjoy a variety of shaker salads, homemade soups and sandwiches.

“We are thrilled with the new and improved Coffee Central. Now it is up to our wonderful staff to serve a fabulous cup of coffee every single time and continue the tradition of top-notch service for which we are famous,” says Barracough. “We’d also like to thank the staff at Tea Leaves and Coffee Beans for being extremely flexible and accommodating as they helped with the influx of customers during the past few months. And, a special thank you to the Planning and Buildings and Grounds crews who helped make our transition so seamless.”

Coffee Central will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Tea Leaves and Coffee Beans, adjacent to the Wang Lobby, has now returned to its original schedule of Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 3 pm.

IN MEMORIAM

Deborah Abbott

DEBORAH ABBOTT, administrative assistant in the Admitting and Registration Services Department, died Feb. 17 at the age of 41. Abbott was known for her abundance of energy, radiant smile and upbeat nature at all times, even during her fight against breast cancer.

“Debbie was a ray of sunshine,” says Debi Dunkless, assistant to Stephen J. Gills, director of the MGH/MGPO Office of Billing Compliance. “Despite the demands on her time, she was always available, generous with her time and her enthusiasm in assisting others was genuine. Her special warmth and sincerity left you smiling after every interaction.”

Abbott worked as an assistant to Nancy Connery, director of Admitting and Registration Services, for the past nine years. During that time, Connery says, Abbott became the “go-to” person within the department and was well-respected for both her work ethic and for her ability to treat everyone like a personal friend. “Our relationship really evolved into a friendship over the years,” Connery says. “One of the most poignantly meaningful things that happened when she became sick was that I was able to shed my boss persona and just be Debbie’s friend. It allowed me to sit and hold her hand, and tell her I loved her.”

Mary Lee Gamache, administrative assistant to Deborah Adair, director of Health Information Services, recalls Abbott helping her navigate her role when she first started work at the MGH. “I only hope I continue to pay it forward by giving those who need assistance as much time and energy as Debbie gave to me,” Gamache says. “Her attitude, dedication and cheerful approach to any situation not only applied to work, but to everyday living.”

Abbott is survived by her husband, Dan, and two children, Gavin and Shannon, as well as her parents, brother and extended family. A funeral was held in Winthrop on Feb. 21, and a special memorial service in the Admitting Department was held Feb. 24. Donations in her memory can be made to the MGH Cancer Center.
Cooley Dickinson, MGH to pursue alliance

THE COOLEY DICKINSON BOARD OF TRUSTEES voted Feb. 27 to negotiate an affiliation agreement with the MGH, which would help the Northamptons, Mass. hospital develop and expand care programs and increase revenue.

“We are truly humbled that the leadership of Cooley Dickinson Hospital has placed its trust in Mass General to help preserve and enhance the outstanding care that patients and families in western Massachusetts have counted on for so long,” said Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president. “We look forward to working with the Cooley Dickinson board, management, physicians and staff on the next phase of this process.”

Cooley Dickinson CEO Craig Melin said the deal with Mass General would grow programs and volume by bringing additional specialists to Northampton and by increasing the use of telemedicine. Some of the ways the MGH would help Cooley Dickinson reduce overhead costs include providing access to low-interest refinancing of $62 million in bonds, lower malpractice insurance cost, and group purchasing rates for big-ticket purchases, such as information technology systems.

David F. Torchiana, MD, chairman and CEO of the Massachusetts General Physicians Organization, called the pending relationship with Cooley Dickinson good news for both institutions. “Strengthening the relationship would enable caregivers at the two hospitals to communicate and collaborate more effectively, particularly around patients who may require highly specialized services,” Torchiana said. “As we all do our best to prepare for the uncertainties that lie ahead for health care, the systems of care we establish will be increasingly important.”

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

MGH Senior HealthWISE

MGH Senior HealthWISE will host the following free events for seniors age 60 years or older: a lecture, “Can Lifestyle Changes Impact Dementia,” March 1 from 11 am to noon in the Haber Conference Room with guest speaker Paula Caramez, MD, MGH Senior Health Fellow; a book club discussion of “The Boston Irish: A Political History” by Thomas H. O’Connor March 15 from 3 to 4 pm at the West End Library; and hypertension screenings March 26 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm at the West End Library For more information, call 617-724-6756.

Heart Center education class

The MGH Heart Center is holding its monthly education class, “Heart Failure and Device Education Program,” March 7 from 10:30 to 11:30 am in the Yawkey Center.

Kidney Care Day

The MGH Division of Nephrology will host the eighth annual Kidney Care Day in conjunction with World Kidney Day on March 8. A Medical Grand Rounds, “Cardiorenal and Hepatorenal Syndrome,” will take place at 8 am in the O’Keefe Auditorium with speaker Robert Schrier, MD, of the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

for their creation of video decision aides that help physicians broach difficult end-of-life decision-making with patients. “In this era of patient-centered care, documentation of code status and preferences for medical care at the end of life are national priorities that the MGH should lead,” Barry said. “Dr. Volandes has provided new tools to help clinicians accomplish this goal.”

During the awards ceremony, Andrew Warshaw, MD, chairman of the Bowditch Prize Committee and former chief of the MGH Department of Surgery, took time to congratulate all 15 MGHers who were nominated for this prestigious award. “As in years past, we had a very difficult time making a decision,” Warshaw said. “All the nominees were outstanding, and every effort important.”

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