The Ladies Visiting Committee:
A Short Little Ditty in 150 (Words)

In 1869, at a quarter to nine
They could wait no longer and
knew it was time

They saw that MGH could be
more by much
With the care and compassion
of a woman’s touch

Six at the start pledged to do the task
Ninety strong today are
answering the ask

They started visiting patients who
could use a friend
And made hospital service a
national trend

Every dollar you spend today
at the general stores
Helps the LVC give back that
much more

Through 150 years they have
supported this place
Funding programs and projects
with a smiling face

A new idea when they first hit the halls
Now they’re the ones to respond
when innovation calls

For the LVC pays close heed
When patients and families have
an unmet need

In 2019, the LVC, with no time to spare
Will tackle the next 150 with a new flair

“…we think that it is an experiment which is likely to prove a benefit to the
Hospital and that it ought to be tried. We are able to think of no objections
to the plan except that the Hospital is very well managed as it is, and that
it is unwise to disturb what is satisfactory. But it seems to us that, although
the Hospital is probably about as well managed as men can manage it, it
may be found that with the help of judicious women it may be managed
better.” – From the MGH Board of Trustees, 1869

The MGH was nearing its 50th year of operation when hospital trustees approved
a proposal from several women in the city who wished to volunteer their time to
visit with patients and serve as “female wards of the Hospital.” And so the Ladies
Visiting Committee (LVC) was born, becoming one of the first hospital auxiliaries
in the country.

Now, 150 years later, what started as a small group of women has grown to be
a 90-plus member organization. While the size and scope of the LVC has
changed throughout its history, the dedication, commitment and drive to
supporting the hospital, its patients and its staff, remains the focal mission of the
volunteer group.

“The LVC has enjoyed a long, successful and fulfilling history based on our core
traditional values of leadership, compassion, inclusivity and commitment,” says
Janet Shipman, chair of the LVC and a member since 2008. “And we plan to
continue to evolve, grow and strengthen our group, seeking out new ways for
how we can best support the MGH in the future.”

Among its many roles, the LVC oversees the MGH General Stores and Flower Shop.

“Every single purchase made at its seven locations goes directly into funds used
by the LVC to give back to the hospital,” says Rose McCabe, a member of the LVC
since 2003 and chair of the LVC Shops Committee. “MGH staff are invited to apply
to the LVC for grants to fund patient programs, services and activities.”

For more information, and for a grant application form,
visit the LVC page on Apollo, the MGH intranet.
Passages from the Ladies Visiting Committee of the Massachusetts General Hospital 1869-1969 history booklet:

“They reported that water pitchers should be covered – long before it was common hospital practice in Boston. A Lady Visitor worked without rest until she found a practical, covered water pitcher and several dozen were ordered by the Committee.”

“Its members arrange creative activities for assigned children, play games with them, teach them handicrafts, read aloud and perform other services to meet the social and emotional needs of these lonely or disturbed young patients.”

“They tactfully prodded the Trustees to allocate a larger sum for carriage rides for convalescent patients as a sanitary measure, enabling them to breathe a different and purer atmosphere to so stimulate and invigorate the patients as to enable them to be sooner discharged.”

Providing comfort for the hospital’s youngest patients – and support to their parents – has been a central theme for LVC members since its inception. Today, the LVC provides numerous donations throughout the year including books, toys, games, videos and art supplies. It also funds support groups, educational programs, and the creation of personalized comfort baskets to every pediatric family that has experienced the death of a family member.

“The LVC has made such an incredible impact in the lives of our pediatric patients and their families,” says Anne Pizzano, child life manager for MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC). “The grants they fund allow us to purchase diversional materials for our Emergency Department, as well as enabling us to offer various supports for siblings and parents of the MGHfC community. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful group of volunteers who care so deeply about the hospital and our youngest patients.”

During the 1870s, the LVC requested – and received – money to pay for carriage rides for patients, knowing the positive benefits of fresh air and a change of scenery. The belief hasn’t changed over the course of more than a century and the LVC now donates funds to the Revere Youth Zone’s summer camp to help students cover transportation costs, scholarships and field trip expenses.

“Last year the money provided scholarships for 20 children to come to camp who otherwise would not have been able to attend,” says Leslie Heffron, RN, nurse educator at Revere HealthCare Center. “We’re able to take more trips because of this support and offer experiences that we aren’t able to offer to the kids in Revere. It’s really significant in so many ways. I’m hugely grateful because the children get to be outside in the woods in nature. They get to be outside hiking, sailing down at the beach, playing in the water. It’s a huge benefit to them – physically, mentally and emotionally. They thrive being outside in the summer.”

“On April 2 – in recognition of the LVC’s 150th anniversary – its members will visit MGH departments throughout the main campus to drop off chocolate goodies and information about the MGH General Stores. In addition, shoppers on that day can take 20 percent off purchases, with Preferred Card holders taking an additional 10 percent off. “We look forward to meeting more MGH staff members and are excited to share this wonderful anniversary with them,” says Hattie Kessler, LVC member for 5 years.

Adds Betty Raymond, LVC member for 9 years, “Though many years have gone by since the LVC was first created, the group remains dedicated and committed to enhancing the MGH experience in any way that contributes to the comfort and well-being of patients, their families and the entire hospital community.”

Since its early roots, LVC members have been dedicated to supporting cutting-edge programs that benefit MGH patients and staff. Recently, David R. King, MD, trauma and acute care surgeon, was awarded a grant to fund the purchase of 73 wound-packing and tourniquet kits that were placed in all automated external defibrillator (AED) cabinets on the MGH main campus, and funding for the creation of an instructional video outlining the proper use of the first-aid equipment.

“The LVC played a pivotal role in this training program,” says King. “Thanks to this generous grant, I was able to educate hundreds of MGH staff how to correctly apply a tourniquet. This is extremely important as emergencies can happen at any time, anywhere.”

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A star-studded kickoff to Patient Safety Awareness Week

PATIENT SAFETY STARS were shining bright March 11 at the 10th annual Patient Safety Stars Breakfast in the East Garden Room. The National Patient Safety Awareness Week kickoff event recognized 35 individuals and 10 teams from departments throughout the hospital as 2019 Patient Safety Stars. The award honors staff, nominated by their peers, for outstanding quality and safety improvement efforts and dedication to patient safety.

One team recognized during the event was the Ambulatory Anaphylaxis Guideline Development Team that created a guideline empowering frontline staff to confidently administer epinephrine when a patient experiences an anaphylactic reaction. “It was such an honor to be recognized at Patient Safety Stars for doing the work that we are passionate about and love to do every day,” said team member Anna Wolfson, MD, of the MGH Allergy Associates. “We recognized an unmet need regarding management of anaphylaxis and adverse drug reactions in the ambulatory setting, and then were able to translate this into a functional guideline. These sorts of projects will enable providers to improve upon the excellent care we are providing at MGH.”

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MGH rolls out new process for purchasing reusable instruments and devices

**EVERY DAY AT THE MGH**, more than 20,000 instruments and medical devices are used in patient care. On April 1, the hospital will introduce a new purchasing process for reusable critical or semi-critical devices, such as surgical instruments and endoscopes. This also includes the purchase of all necessary reprocessing equipment to ensure these medical instruments are properly cleaned, disinfected and sterilized.

“Across the institution, more procedures are being performed using instruments and devices that require reprocessing,” says Wilton Levine, MD, medical director for Perioperative Services and Medical Procedural Areas. “It is important that we offer the needed support, education and training to all role groups performing reprocessing in order to provide the best care for our patients.”

Any unit seeking new, replacement or expansion of reusable critical or semi-critical instruments and devices must complete a Pre-Purchase Assessment and submit it to the newly formed Reusable Instrument and Device Oversight Committee for approval. The committee is comprised of staff from Infection Control, Center for Sterile Processing, Biomedical Engineering, Planning and Construction and Environmental Safety.

“The group will review requests in a timely manner and provide the education and consultation to ensure the requisite physical space, supplies, staffing and capabilities are available,” Levine says.

“Our No. 1 goal is patient safety,” says Erica Shenoy, MD, PhD, associate chief, Infection Control Unit. “Through the Reusable Instrument and Device Oversight Committee, clinicians and operations staff will have access to the support needed to ensure that reusable instruments and devices are correctly reprocessed between patient use. We know that breaches in these processes can result in risk of transmission of pathogens between patients.”

For more information about this new policy or process, contact HLD_Sterilization@partners.org.

Service animals at the MGH:

Q&A with Zary Amirhosseini, MGH Disability Program manager

**WHAT ANIMALS ARE CONSIDERED SERVICE ANIMALS?**

Any animal trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability is considered a service animal. Under current law, only dogs and – in limited circumstances – miniature horses, are legally considered service animals.

**WHAT KIND OF DOGS ARE ALLOWED AT MGH?**

Service dogs and dogs that are part of our MGH Pet Therapy Program.

**WHAT DOES A SERVICE DOG DO?**

Service dogs guide people who are blind, alert people who are deaf, assist individuals with mobility issues by carrying bags or pulling wheelchairs, or remind people with mental illness to take prescribed medications. Some animals are trained to calm individuals with PTSD or traumatic brain injury or autistic individuals.

**WHERE IN THE HOSPITAL CAN MY DOG ACCOMPANY ME?**

Service animals are allowed to accompany individuals with disabilities to admission and discharge offices, inpatient and outpatient rooms, clinics and cafeterias. Service animals may not be able to accompany handlers to restricted areas such as ICUs, operating rooms, recovery rooms, or labor and birthing rooms.

**ARE STAFF ALLOWED TO QUESTION ME ABOUT MY DOG?**

Yes. Under the law, staff may ask you two questions: “Does your dog provide a service?” and “What is your service animal trained to do?” They may not ask about a person’s disability.

**CAN I BRING MY EMOTIONAL-SUPPORT OR COMFORT DOG TO MGH?**

No. Only service dogs and therapy dogs that are part of our Pet Therapy Program are allowed at the MGH. And remember, service animals are working and should not be petted. Distracting them could put their handlers at risk.

**ARE SERVICE ANIMALS REQUIRED TO WEAR IDENTIFYING CLOTHING?**

No. Service animals are not required to wear any wear special vests or badges. If individuals misrepresent their dogs as service animals, that is punishable by law.

**DO SERVICE ANIMALS HAVE TO BE LEASHED?**

Yes, unless being restrained interferes with tasks they are trained to perform.

For more information about the Service Animal Policy at the MGH, contact Amirhosseini at 617-643-7148. For questions about the Pet Therapy Program, contact Jackie Nolan, Volunteer Services director, at 617-724-1753.
A marathon run in honor of his mom

**Daniel Gratzer** is no stranger to the Boston Marathon. This will be his third year running for the Mass General Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Team. This marathon, however, will be extra special for him. He’ll also be running in memory of his mother, Joanne M. Gratzer, who died from cancer in August 2018.

“This year, before my mother passed, I made one final promise to her that I would make her proud and run one last Boston Marathon in her memory,” Gratzer says. “As I told her this, she gave me the biggest smile ever and I knew then I had to do this for her.”

For nearly 20 years, members of the Mass General Cystic Fibrosis Marathon Team have been running the Boston Marathon to fight CF and support the MGH Cystic Fibrosis Center. Last year, the team had a record-breaking year, raising more than $190,000 to benefit the CF program. Supporting this program is near and dear to Gratzer’s heart, as his uncle died from CF and he has other family members that are carriers of the genetic disorder.

“Even though this race and cause are truly amazing to be a part of, it’s going to be a hard day for me,” says Gratzer. “I’m hoping with the crowd supporting me, and with my mom’s spirits, I will thrive on that energy to make her proud as she has cheered me on the previous two years I ran with this team in 2016 and 2017.”

In addition to the Pediatric Hematology & Oncology, Emergency Response and Home Base teams – sponsored by John Hancock – runners also will support the Run for MGH team, which raises funds for hospital programs close to their hearts, including Caring for a Cure, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, the Lurie Center for Autism, and the Mootha Lab.

**Marathon motivation:**

- **As I prepare for my first Boston Marathon run in support of Home Base, I think of the sacrifices made by our service members and their families, and how thankful I am for programs like Home Base to provide support and treatment to those who have given so much of themselves in service to our country. On race day, I know I will also think of these things and of all the people who made donations in support of helping me fulfill my dream of running Boston for Home Base.”**

  **Shira Brown, Home Base Team, Second Marathon**

- **I am a former part-time police officer in New Hampshire and appreciate immensely the importance of emergency response readiness. As a military veteran and former first responder, I wanted to give back to those that provide care during these tragic situations in the future. I have learned that you need to be ready for anything and be prepared. Never leave your house without telling those that matter how much you love them. And no matter what, complete the mission.”**

  **James Scully, Emergency Response Team, Fourth Marathon**

- **In 2001, I lost my dad to cancer. Seventeen years later, I gave birth to a healthy baby boy. During both of these life events, I spent time at MGH. Although both these experiences were very different, we were provided with the best care possible. For this, I am eternally grateful.”**

  **Amy Bell, Pediatric Hematology & Oncology Team, Fourth Marathon**

- **I am running on behalf of my father, Curtis Audin, an MGH Emergency Department nurse for nearly 17 years who retired in August. He was a role model for me and taught me important principles like discipline and dependability, to respect my colleagues and to speak up for myself. He truly cared for his patients, and volunteered to provide emergency relief in New Orleans and Haiti after natural disasters. I am grateful for the opportunity to run the Boston Marathon as a member of the Emergency Response Team, to show my appreciation not only for him, but for all of the emergency responders out there – including my wife – who have dedicated their lives to helping others when tragedy strikes.”**

  **Craig Audin, Emergency Response Team, First Marathon**

- **New SVP**

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to patient care and research, as well as being highly regarded, nationally-ranked leaders in health care,” she says. “Both organizations have top-notch professionals who are committed to their work with extraordinary passion.”

The search committee, comprised of leaders from both the MGH and Partners, was given countless examples of how Thomas-Williams has fostered workplaces where employees feel appreciated, valued and, most of all, heard. She says she is excited to bring this approach to the MGH and sees many similarities with YNHH.

When asked what she would like the 26,000 employees of the MGH to know about her, she emphasized that, although she takes her role as an HR leader very seriously, she doesn’t take herself too seriously.

“I take pride in being very approachable and relatable, and I have a wicked sense of humor,” she says. “I look for ways to laugh at life’s quirky circumstances.”

A former student athlete, Thomas-Williams is a lifelong sports fanatic, especially when it comes to basketball and March Madness. “I have even been known to talk a little smack,” she says, “only when provoked, of course!”

Thomas-Williams will begin her tenure at the MGH on April 29.
‘Compliment a Colleague’

THE MGPO RECENTLY invited staff to participate in a “Compliment a Colleague” initiative aimed at acknowledging and celebrating colleagues and teams who deliver exceptional clinical care. Staff were invited to commend their colleagues when they saw the following while caring for patients – care coordination and continuity, rapid access, going above and beyond and giving personal attention, and innovation and thinking outside the box.

View all compliments at mgpo.partners.org. Here are a few examples of the compliments that were shared:

“Katia Canenguez, PhD, EdM, is dedicated to patients, and ever willing to provide additional support to facilitate care coordination for patients. This is particularly the case for patients with limited resources and who may benefit from additional guidance to maintain continuity in treatment. She gives personal attention to the needs of her patients, attuned to their unique challenges and strengths, to help them connect with co-treating providers and other resources.”
- Archana Basu, PhD

“Steven Schlozman, MD, was immediately available to pivot to a patient with significant medical and psychiatric comorbidity and interface with treatment teams/colleagues in a way that connected with the patient on a personal and effective level, by once again thinking ‘outside the box.’”
- Peter Newberry, MD

“Oluwaseun Johnson-Akeju, MD, has for many years demonstrated a deep commitment to safe and well-organized patient care on Lunder 4. As the Neuroanesthesia team leader, his rapid implementation of workflow improvements and initiatives have led to enhanced staff coordination and overall efficiency. Thank you!”
- James Rhee, MD, PhD

“Susan Carlson, RN; Melissa Alao, LICSW; Catherine McCarthy; and Margaret Chapman, MD, the Stay Connected Care Coordination Team, go above and beyond each day to coordinate care for high-risk patients in the post-discharge period. They identify issues, work swiftly to resolve them, and have taken on process improvement in order to be able to serve more patients. They exemplify the Mass General credo every single day.”
- Elizabeth Fonseca

“I had a complex patient who needed to be admitted and Michael Bowley, MD, PhD, and his team provided expertise, definitely thought outside the box, and established excellent care. Also, we shared a few more patients that he saw as inpatients and his notes and plans were superb.”
- Paloma Gonzalez Perez, MD, PhD

“Toby Nagurney, MD, is always so appreciative of his co-workers. He is the first person to compliment a job well done and thank people for their hard work. It is so refreshing to work with someone who always acknowledges his peers and recognizes that team work truly provides for the best patient care possible. He loves teaching, and takes the time to do so, even when the department is busy.”
- Laura Paskind, PA-C

“Maria Umana is our Yawkey 4 OB billing coordinator and she not only makes sure the department is continuously kept in the loop with all billing changes, aspects, etc. She goes above and beyond to help our patients as well as those from our off-sites to make sure they have their insurances up to date and, if not, spends long, hard hours on the phone making sure they have what they need. Not only does Maria go above and beyond during regular business hours, she is the first to step foot into the office daily at 5 am and even works to close any loops needed over the weekend. We are so grateful to have such a hard-working, dedicated staffer and team player within our team. Thank you Maria!”
- Janika Gates

“Mary Mott, NP, always made me feel welcome while I rotated at the Mass General Stroke service as a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation resident. She is very kind and works very hard for her patients and the entire team. I can’t imagine the service running as smoothly without her.”
- Moorice Caparo, MD

“Compliment a Colleague”