A PUBLICATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND STAFF OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

FORWARD PROGRESS:
Ankers and Apollo in the Ether Dome

“What’s in a name?”

“W HEN I THINK of the history of the MGH, I think of the Ether Dome. I love this room – it is filled with history in so many ways.”

And so it was the Ether Dome – and one of its residents in particular – that became the inspiration for Lisa Ankers, senior lab manager of the Thadhani Lab of Clinical Research in Nephrology, to come up with the winning name for the MGH’s new intranet, apollo.massgeneral.org. “Ether was too obvious,” she says, “but then I thought of the Apollo statue and it just came to me.”

Apollo – the god of medicine and healing, and also of knowledge truth, sun and light – is the name and face of the newly designed site. Though Padihershef, the Egyptian mummy is well known, there also resides in the Ether Dome a statue of Apollo Belvedere, given to the MGH in 1845 by statesman Edward Everett. The plaster statue is a copy of the original Apollo Belvedere, which was unearthed in Rome during the Renaissance and taken to the Louvre in Paris by Napoleon.

‘Dear Aspire’: Thank you

THE 17TH ANNUAL. Aspire Spring Gala featured heartfelt “Dear Aspire” messages from those whose lives have been touched by MassGeneral Hospital for Children’s successful, therapeutically-based program at the Lurie Center for Autism. Among them, “You’ve taught me to be myself,” and “You’ve given me a voice.”

The March 30 gala raised $2.6 million to support Aspire. The program helps children, teens and adults with high-cognitive autism spectrum disorder or a related social profile to develop the skills necessary to live full, independent lives. Programs include a college mentorship group and young adult internships. Aspire also supports more than 17 area school districts and conducts educational workshops that train more than 1,000 professionals and parents each year to help them meet the complex needs of individuals with an autism spectrum disorder.

Created by longtime partner Rafanelli Events, the cocktail reception

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Who is the MGH staffer on Jeopardy?

THOUGH SHE WAS only $401 shy of becoming the March 29 “Jeopardy!” champion, Tricia Riley, NP, of the MGH Thoracic Aortic Center, still “had a blast” being a contestant on the game show.

Riley, who has worked at the MGH since 1999, has taken the online qualifying test annually for years to try to get on the show. After once passing the test, auditioning in person and then not getting called back, Riley finally auditioned again in October 2015. “You take another written test and do some practice rounds like you are actually on the show answering questions,” says Riley. “Then they might call you within 18 months to be on the show.” One year later, she got the call to tape in California in December 2016.

From her hotel stay – with all other contestants – to sitting in the makeup chair, to walking onto the set, Riley highlights the kindness and professionalism of every staff member. “They just made it so fresh and personal and made everybody feel relaxed and at ease throughout what could be a very nerve-wracking time,” says Riley. “My biggest fear was being a deer in the headlights. But it goes by so fast you don’t even have time to be nervous.”

Riley remembers figuring out the correct timing for when to push the buzzer and her Daily Double question. She correctly answered the final clue — “NASA wished John Glenn this 8-letter word when he made the first U.S. manned orbital flight in 1962 and again upon his passing in 2016” — “Godspeed,” but the rest went by in a blur. Watching her episode with a group of friends and family, Riley didn’t remember most of the questions. “I said, ‘Did I really answer those?’”

“My advice to anyone even considering trying out for the show is to go ahead and throw your hat into the ring,” says Riley. “You never know what might happen, and it is an absolute blast.”

Pledging to be part of the solution

ON MARCH 1, to commemorate the 10th annual Massachusetts White Ribbon Day, a special flag waved proudly for the remainder of the week. The flag represents the commitment of men to be leaders and advocates in the struggle against domestic violence and sexual abuse against women, to promote safety and justice, and to be a part of the solution in ending all gender-based violence.

More than 750 people attended this year’s White Ribbon Day event at Faneuil Hall, including members of the MGH Men Against Abuse (MAA) and the MGH Domestic Violence Working Group — both of which helped initiate the day 10 years ago.

“We should all be very proud of the work that takes place throughout the organization; HAVEN, the Employee Assistance Program and Police and Security lead efforts to help our patients, employees and visitors every day,” says Jim Heffernan, senior vice president of Finance and Treasurer and MAA ambassador. Heffernan has been part of the initiative since the idea was first proposed by the Domestic Violence Working Group. “This was a way to increase awareness among men and get men involved more directly. It very quickly grew to a larger group of men and women.”

The members present at various departments, provide information about domestic violence and educate people about how to be aware of sexism and violence and to speak up. The group also organizes information tables and a Father’s Day program promoting positive male role models.

“Often our role is to be an introduction, and then HAVEN, the Employee Assistance Program or other groups continue further,” says Heffernan, who is quick to point out the teamwork from many key members and groups throughout the hospital. “The Facing Forward program jointly sponsored with our partners at MEEI provides care to survivors. Programs in our health centers and recently the Freedom Clinic try to meet the special needs of patients and survivors of trafficking. These are just a few of the ways that we step up.”

The White Ribbon Day campaign began to gain traction in Massachusetts and nationwide 10 years ago. A small group met with the governor, and the day grew from a dozen people in the conference room to close to 1,000 people gathering at Faneuil Hall, 60 flags flying across the state and more than 40,000 ribbons distributed and pledge cards signed this year. Heffernan hopes awareness and education continue to grow.

“We face these issues among our patients and fellow employees all the time,” says Heffernan. “Being aware of the issue is more helpful than being silent and doing nothing.”
Continuing the connection

ON APRIL 18, 102 runners will take to the Boston Marathon course – one of the most challenging in the country – in support of the Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Division at MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC). For first-time runner Holly Peek, MD, the marathon is more than a personal life goal; it’s an opportunity to give back to the clinicians and patients who taught her career-changing lessons.

During her fellowship, Peek, a child and adolescent psychiatry fellow, worked on the child psychiatry hospital consult service under the guidance of Annah Abrams, MD, chief of Pediatric Psycho-Oncology and the Pediatric Hematology Oncology Unit.

Peek helped care for children dealing with a broad range of issues, learned tactile skills – such as how to create a structured routine for children hospitalized long-term and how best to teach coping strategies – and under Abrams’ mentorship, learned how to holistically care for the entire family.

Peek witnessed how Abrams serves as a guiding light to families facing a cancer diagnosis. “Annah has an innate ability to connect with families and provide the support and compassion they desperately need,” says Peek.

As a teacher, Abrams stresses the importance of assessing a family’s whole situation to determine how best to serve both child and parent. She pauses after each clinical case to discuss issues and decompress, which showed Peek that it is OK to share her emotions when caring for children.

Peek also discovered how invaluable services like child life programming and art and music therapies improve a patient’s quality of life, particularly when navigating a new hospital routine. Funds raised by the MGHfC marathon team directly support these activities to help distract patients and siblings from the daily rigors of treatment and care.

After completing her fellowship in June 2016, Peek looked for ways to continue her MGHfC connection and use all she learned from Abrams. She discovered the marathon patient partner program, through which Peek partnered with Emmy Alvez, a sassy 4-year-old undergoing chemotherapy who regularly dons glittery shoes and bows. Peek accompanies Emmy during long infusion visits, often playing with the Jasmine and Ariel dolls she received for her birthday. “I have come to love Emmy and her family,” Peek says. “For all my patients, I’ve done my best to guide them through difficult treatments and healing processes. This was perhaps one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my medical training.”

This story is part of a series that MGH will publish in advance of the 2017 marathon featuring the Pediatric Oncology and Emergency Response Teams. In addition, individuals will run for the Miles for Mass General Program, which raises funds for hospital programs that are close to their hearts – including Botswana Oncology Global Outreach, Caring for a Cure, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome and the Lurie Center for Autism.

Bringing the latest advances in artificial intelligence to patient care

THE MGH AND Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH) have formed the MGH & BWH Center for Clinical Data Science (CCDS), a collaboration made possible with investments from both hospitals and their respective Radiology departments. The CCDS aims to transform health care by applying the latest advances in artificial intelligence (AI).

Founded in 2016, the CCDS has quickly become a leading hospital-based initiative for innovation in health care AI. By using AI techniques – such as machine learning and artificial neural networks – the center is building systems to improve the detection, diagnosis, treatment, and management of diseases. With an initial focus in medical imaging and diagnostics, the CCDS now is expanding into a broader set of opportunities across a wide variety of medical applications.

“We are excited about the potential impact that the CCDS will have on patient care – both for medical imaging as well as other fields in the future,” says James A. Brink, MD, chief of the MGH Department of Radiology. “The innovations the CCDS will support promise to be the next steps in providing the best care to our patients – from the first diagnosis to the final treatment.”

The CCDS is currently exploring multiple partnerships with industry to co-develop and validate algorithms that can recognize patterns of disease and advance diagnostic capabilities. It also is actively building a corps of data scientists, developers and fellows to train and test models with the potential for commercialization. As the organization scales and leverages data repositories throughout the Partners eCare ecosystem, it will access a significant patient population for clinical evaluation of its products and establish a technology infrastructure to facilitate improvements in workflow efficiency.

Over the next several months, the CCDS will host forums with clinicians at the MGH and BWH to introduce its work, solicit feedback and seek collaboration. It currently supports more than 20 machine-learning research projects in various stages of development and validation.

“The MGH & BWH Center for Clinical Data Science combines the predictive power of data science with vast stores of biomedical information and extensive expertise at MGH and the Brigham to innovate clinical practice,” said Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president. “It will undoubtedly inform the next generation of information services at Partners and the myriad operational efficiencies that will follow.”
— Apollo
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The Louvre made and sold plaster casts of the statue, including this one that Everett bought and shipped back to Boston.

“When I saw the information asking staff to submit their ideas as part of an intranet naming contest, I knew the name would have to be a tie to the history of the hospital,” says Ankers. “When I thought of it, that was it. There are so many meanings associated with Apollo that relate to the hospital – I knew I wouldn't think of anything better.”

Another Apollo tie? The original Hippocratic Oath, when translated into English, begins, “I swear by Apollo the Healer, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture.”

Ankers received a signed Julian Edelman football for her winning submission. When she learned she had won the contest, she said, “I immediately called my husband, I could not believe it! I was completely surprised and it was such an honor. I already have a spot for it right on the mantel.” ■

— Aspire
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at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston attracted more than 850 guests and featured dinner-by-the-bite, a donut wall and live music by the Berkshire Hills Music Academy Performance Troupe.

Seth Rogers, a former Aspire intern, introduced event co-chair David Long, chairman and CEO of Liberty Mutual Insurance and a member of the MGH Board of Trustees. Co-chair Tim Sweeney, president of Global Consumer Markets at Liberty Mutual Insurance, launched an impromptu live auction featuring a package that included two Super Bowl tickets.

“All of us at Aspire are grateful to all of you,” said Scott McLeod, PhD, executive director of Aspire. “You support the program, you speak out, you show up. You make it possible for me to say that no Aspire applicant is turned away because of a family’s inability to pay. That is what really matters. That is what’s making it possible for children, teens and adults on the spectrum to pursue careers and lead full lives.”

Boston MedFlight marks milestone

BOSTON MEDFLIGHT marked a milestone last week as it provided transport to its 65,000th patient since its founding in 1985. On March 28, a patient in respiratory failure requiring specialty care was transported in a ground critical care ambulance from Tufts Medical Center to the MGH by the critical care transport team.

“We are honored to have served each and every one of these patients, and to have positively impacted their lives and the lives of the countless family members and friends they represent,” says Boston MedFlight CEO Maura Hughes, CPA, MBA.

“And while we are proud of achieving this significant milestone we remain focused on delivering the highest level of medical care and most efficient transport, by air and ground, to the region’s most seriously ill and injured patients.”

Boston MedFlight was formed in 1985 as a nonprofit air transport service through a cooperative effort of the MGH, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Children’s Hospital, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Tufts Medical Center. Boston MedFlight now operates from three bases – located in Bedford, Plymouth and Lawrence – with three helicopters, six ground critical care vehicles and a fixed wing airplane. Each year Boston MedFlight completes more than 4,000 patient transports – an average of 11 per day – with 1,100 of those patients coming to the MGH.

THE BOYS ARE BACK: On April 3, Eat Street Café celebrated Red Sox opening day at Fenway Park with a popcorn giveaway and also served up special ballpark favorites. On the menu was the “John Farrell” – an Italian sausage with peppers and onions – a “Pedroia Basket” – corn dogs with spicy mustard – and other tasty treats for visitors to get back in the swing of baseball season.