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# MGH HOTLINE

A PUBLICATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND STAFF OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL



## Baby boom on Lunder 10

**B**USY NURSES ON LUNDER 10 are about to become even busier. Fourteen staff members on the oncology unit are pregnant – with one expecting twins – and they all are due between May and November. Some mothers-to-be are pregnant with their first child, others with their second or third.

“As a first-time mom, I didn’t really know what to expect,” says Sarah O’Malley, RN, who is due in August. “It’s comforting to have friends who have done it and have them be so encouraging, telling me, ‘You’re going to figure it out.’”

Despite the number of maternity leaves to navigate, Ellen Fitzgerald, RN, nursing director on the floor, is excited by every pregnancy announcement. “I don’t know how you can be anything but joyful about bringing life into the world,” she says.

## Physician recognition dinner honors clinical excellence

**MORE THAN 680 PHYSICIANS** and guests celebrated the 10th physician recognition dinner on May 18, which included the presentation of five Brian A. McGovern, MD Awards for Clinical Excellence. The award was created in 2004 – a year after the well-loved MGH cardiologist’s death – to honor physicians who exemplify his clinical acumen, dedication, compassion and kindness. This year, 168 nominations were submitted for 102 physicians. The recipients were:

### Medical Services

- John Herman, MD, Psychiatry
- Walter O’Donnell, MD, Pulmonary and Critical Care

### Other Services

- Helen Shih, MD, Radiation Oncology

### Surgical Services

- Brooke Swearingen, MD, Neurosurgery
- May Wakamatsu, MD, Obstetrics & Gynecology

“Thank you all for the excellent care you provide patients every day,” said Timothy G. Ferris, MD, MGPO CEO. “Over the past two years, I have spent time in many of our divisions, and I continue to be inspired by the breadth and depth of the commitment and caring you show our patients, team members and each other. Your commitment to excellence is what makes Mass General an international leader in health care.” ■



**SALUTE TO SERVICE:** From left, Herman, Shih, Swearingen, O’Donnell and Wakamatsu

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## Recognizing those who fuel the hospital's rapidly growing research enterprise

**THE MGH RESEARCH INSTITUTE** leadership team and the Center for Faculty Development joined forces for Research Staff Appreciation Day at the hospital's main campus and the Charlestown Navy Yard earlier this month.

Staff members – laboratory technicians, chemists, clinical research coordinators and many others who support research at the hospital every day – were treated to a picnic-themed lunch and a made-to-order ice cream sundae bar with the heavy scooping done by Research leadership.

“Research is a team sport, and you all play a pivotal role in making it possible for us to do what we do,” said Maurizio Fava, MD, director of the Division of Clinical Research of the Research Institute.

At the main campus event under the Bulfinch tent, Harry Orf, PhD, senior vice president for Research, told attendees they are the fuel that



drives the research engine at the MGH – an enterprise that grew to \$928 million in 2018 and is on track to increase significantly once again this year.

“On behalf of everyone here, we want to thank you for the role you play in research,” said

Susan Slaughaupt, PhD, scientific director of the Research Institute. “I hope that you’ll all help us spread the word about the science that happens at Mass General. Enough people in our world do not understand that we are the biggest and arguably the best research enterprise in the country, so you can help us spread the word.” ■

## New freezers a hot commodity

**AS PART OF AN** Eversource energy conservation program, 50 new energy-efficient minus 80-degree Celsius Stirling freezers became available at no cost to MGH researchers in December 2018. A drawing was announced by Harry Orf, PhD, senior vice president for Research, to determine which researchers – after meeting a few simple criteria – would be able to exchange their old freezers for an upgrade. Entries poured in, and a total of nearly 400 researchers responded in hopes of receiving a more energy-efficient, cost-saving subzero freezer.

“We have almost 700 minus 80-degree freezers that are used throughout the MGH Research community, and that adds up to using quite a bit of energy,” Orf says. “The new technology in these freezers makes them ultra-efficient, using only 24 percent of the energy of our older models.”

The MGH Facilities Engineering Department was already looking into ways to switch out the old freezers when they became aware that Eversource was giving away 100 units, says Orf. The MGH and Brigham and Women’s Hospital decided to share the 100 through the random number drawing. Once the freezer swap was completed in March, the old freezers – if still in working order – were sent to be reused or for metal reclamation.

“We still have hundreds of old freezers to swap out, so our next task is to come up with an incentive program to switch them,” Orf says. “At the MGH, we are always looking for ways to promote energy-efficiency, and this is simply one of those ways.”



## I am MGH: Surgery

**THE MGH AIMS** to provide excellent patient care, train the next generation of leaders, advance health care through innovative research and serve the local community every day. The following excerpts are from videos of four residents in the MGH Surgical Residency Program, who share their experiences as students, clinicians, researchers and members of the MGH family. The residents discussed their expectations, preconceived notions, what led them to choose the MGH and the



experiences that have surprised them during their years here. Visit <http://www.massgeneral.org/diversity-inclusion> to view all of the videos.

### CAN YOU SPEAK TO THE DIVERSITY IN BOSTON AND AT THE MGH?

I was exposed to a bit more diversity in North Carolina than I have been in Boston, but it’s changing. I think in my five years here it has changed a fair amount. Around the hospital, there are a lot of academics and forward-thinking people, which helps. Certainly some interactions have not been as openminded as I would like, but I take that as an opportunity to educate people and move things forward. The Surgery residency has changed a lot since I’ve been here. Our diversity numbers are improving. People are realizing it’s necessary – not just because it’s a thing you want to have, but it’s clear from research that having a diverse workforce makes you better.



**Asishana Osho, MD, MPH**  
Fifth year resident

## Diversity & Inclusion in Action: Joyce Miller, volunteer coordinator, MGH Volunteer Department

### HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK HERE?

I started my career at the MGH in 2004 working in 3D imaging as a staff assistant. With the encouragement of my director, Gordon Harris, I went back to school and earned my bachelor's degree in Health Care Management. From there, I've held a variety of roles including credentialing coordinator in Cardiology, grant administrator/financial analyst for the Laboratory for Computer Science and patient service coordinator for the Cancer Center. Currently, I'm a coordinator in the Volunteer Department. My role is to oversee and supervise the hospital's 1,300 current volunteers. I interview and recruit new volunteers, place them in various roles throughout the institution and manage our office.

### HAVE THERE BEEN CHALLENGES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH? HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

There have been a few challenges along the way. One that stands out was a brief layoff a few years ago, and another was a role which wasn't exactly what I'd hoped it would be. But I don't look at these challenges as negative. I've learned a lot about myself when faced with adversity. Each role I've held has prepared me for the next one. And I'm appreciative of the knowledge I gained in these previous roles.

### HAS YOUR CAREER PATH TAKEN ANY SURPRISING TURNS?

It sure has. I've participated in volunteer work since a very young age. I was a candy striper at 14 for my local hospital. However, I never would have imagined working within the Volunteer Department. I believe this role is really where I'm meant to be and where I'm most comfortable. I love interacting with new people and empowering them to brighten another person's day – to put a smile on another person's face.

### WHY DO YOU THINK DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE IS IMPORTANT?

My role in the Volunteer Department allows me the opportunity to work with one of the most diverse groups of individuals at the hospital.



MILLER

Volunteers choose to be here, which in my opinion makes them even more treasured. While working here, I've come to realize everyone has their own special story of why they want to volunteer. Hearing these stories truly puts life into perspective.

### HAVE YOU FOUND ANY SUPPORT FROM THE MGH DURING YOUR TIME HERE THAT HAS IMPACTED YOUR CAREER?

I was very fortunate to have been chosen for the administrative chair position of the Association of Multicultural Members of Partners (AMMP). While in this role I met some of the best colleagues without whom I would not have found my current position. It was through a networking session that I was introduced to Jackie Nolan, director of the Volunteer Department. She explained about her department and happened to mention they were recruiting for a coordinator. As she continued telling us about her role, the department and the diverse group of people she meets daily, you couldn't help but be excited too. You could see the effect working in this department had on her – and I wanted to be a part of that. This role has been the most fulfilling and most rewarding of my career.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FOR THOSE LOOKING TO CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT HERE AT THE MGH?

My advice would be to get involved in the many committees MGH has to offer. The connections you make now could benefit you in the future. Have patience with people – you never know what challenges someone may be going through. Lastly, the world is full of nice people, if you can't find one, be one.

*Diversity & Inclusion in Action is a feature highlighting employee stories of inspiration, perseverance and management best practices in workforce development and diversity. If you know of someone who should be considered for the series, email Emmanuela Menard or Dianne Austin, Human Resources. ■*

### DESCRIBE THE HOSPITAL'S SUPPORT OF YOUR DUAL ROLES AS MOM AND DOCTOR.

There are a number of really strong women attendings that are role models here. Their support has been great because you feel like you're not reinventing the wheel, and there are people to turn to who have done this before. My training has been the same as my male colleagues, and I'm getting the same experience from that perspective.



Dana Schwartz, MD  
Chief resident

### WHY DO YOU FEEL YOU BELONG AT MGH?

I belong because I've never felt like I don't. I've never felt out of place or treated differently. I'm given the same opportunities and support. My leadership responds to my emails as fast as anyone else's. I've never felt that I was treated differently because of how I look or because I grew up in El Salvador. I've never felt singled out. That's why I feel I belong here.



Numa Perez, MD  
Fourth year resident

### WHAT DREW YOU TO MGH?

For me there were multiple draws. As far as Mass General in particular, I was a bit intimidated by the Bulfinch Building and the granite and just by the brand – centuries of excellence and progress. Looking around I asked myself, "Do they look like me? Do they think like me? Can I cut it intellectually, academically? Do I enjoy the same TV shows or restaurants?" So far, I haven't been disappointed. ■



Sahael Stapleton, MD  
Fourth year resident

## A mantra that matters: Ask. Listen. Do.

### WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

It is a question that can evoke vastly different responses from patients, colleagues, friends and family members. For one MGH patient, it's a slice of toast in the morning. For another person, trust is essential. From a freshly brewed cup of coffee to the feeling of making a difference, the answers are as personal, important and ever-changing as each person's individual health care journey.

"The question of 'what matters to you?' is crucial," says

Susan Edgman-Levitan, PA, executive director of the MGH Stoeckle Center for Primary Care Innovation. "This simple inquiry can provide us with more meaningful insight into a person's life and what they value most. This awareness can help us create customized plans of care and deepen the connection between the people who provide care and patients who receive that care."

Edgman-Levitan says the idea is one she and Michael Barry, MD, medical director of the Stoeckle Center, introduced in a 2012 *New England Journal of Medicine* article. The concept has been embraced by many, including the Boston-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement, which now participates in an international "What Matters to You?" Day. The MGH will join the festivities this year, hosting its inaugural event June 5 from noon to 1:30 pm under the Bulfinch Tent.

"The idea in its most basic form is to 'Ask. Listen. Do,'" says Mary Cramer, chief experience officer and executive director of Organizational Effectiveness, MGH Center for Quality and Safety. "This helps build trust, empathy and understanding. In a clinical setting, it

helps to align our care plans with patient preferences. In a work setting, it promotes collegiality and a shared mission."

MGH clinicians who have started to introduce this idea into their clinical areas say they have seen a positive response from both patients and staff. Lindsay Carter, MD, inpatient director for Quality and Safety, MassGeneral Hospital for Children, says pediatric patients in all inpatient units are invited to complete a "What Matters" sign to hang above their bed with words or phrases describing their likes, dislikes

and a few facts about them.

"Staff can engage in a personal conversation more quickly with patients," Carter says. "Importantly, it also signals to a child and family that we care about what matters to them, and this, in turn, empowers them to tell us."

Primary Care physician Gregg Meyer, MD, says that during the month of March he required all clinicians working on his Bigelow Service team to include their patient's

responses to the question "what matters to you?" when taking the patient's history. "I can say that the answers were not surprising, as most – about 50 percent of the time – said they wanted to get better," Meyer says. "But in at least 25 percent of cases, we learned something very important about the patient that changed – directly or indirectly – our care plan and our approach to the patient."

What matters to you? Is it a day with family and friends? Is it a warm chocolate chip cookie? MGH staff are invited to share their thoughts and read what colleagues have to say by visiting the What Matters to You? site on Apollo, the MGH intranet. ■



**SUPPORT ON THEIR SLEEVES:**  
The MGH will host "What Matters to You?" Day June 5.

## Healthcare Transformation Lab celebrates research fellows graduation

**THE MGH HEALTHCARE TRANSFORMATION LAB** celebrated the second class of its Healthcare Innovation Research Fellows Program May 15, honoring Numa Perez, MD, Surgery resident, and Konstantin Stojanovic, MD, Neurology resident, for their work throughout the past year.

The year-long action-learning program provides an opportunity for MGH health care providers interested in care delivery transformation projects to make an impact on the front lines. Fellows lead innovation projects with mentorship from experts in the field, while gaining hands-on experience guiding their projects from ideation, to iteration, to implementation.

"This program afforded me the opportunity to further develop my passion for digital health and allows me the time and space to focus primarily on innovative projects," says Stojanovic, who focused on areas where technology and digital health could play a role in patient care. By joining the Healthcare Transformation Lab as a research fellow, he has been pursuing a project using big data to create machine learning algorithms to diagnose sleep disorders.

After three years in the operating room, Perez saw an opportunity to improve both the experiences and outcomes of his patients. The Healthcare Innovation Research Fellows Program led him to partner with an industry vendor to deploy a novel patient engagement and data collection platform for MGH Colorectal Surgery patients. The app will serve as a digital surgical companion, providing patients with education, notifications and reminders as they traverse what can be a very daunting perioperative journey.

"In an ever-more-complicated health care environment, the most effective way to create lasting change is to work at the system level," says Perez. "We must identify sophisticated solutions to the complex situations our patients encounter." ■



**PEREZ AND STOJANOVIC**

