Honorees shine at sixth annual MGH Cancer Center gala

On June 5, the MGH Cancer Center hosted the sixth annual the one hundred gala. Hosted by actor and Newton native John Krasinski, the fundraiser attracted some 900 attendees, raised more than $1.3 million, and honored 100 individuals and organizations for their commitment and contributions to the fight against cancer.

Honorees were selected from nearly 750 nominations received from across the country and represent scientists, caregivers, patients, advocates, volunteers and philanthropists of all ages and backgrounds. Money raised through the one hundred supports cancer research, patient care, education programs and community outreach at the Cancer Center. During the event, Daniel Haber, MD, director of the Cancer Center, said, “I promise you that every year we will celebrate the one hundred until cancer is no longer the scourge that it is today.”

Several honorees were highlighted during the evening program, including Stephanie Quinn, MSW, LICSW, oncology clinical social worker in the MGH Inpatient Medical Oncology Unit. Quinn was recognized for arranging a memorable event where the dean of Worcester Polytechnic Institute presented a patient, a senior at the school, with his diploma just 12 hours before he died.

Bruce Chabner, MD, director of Clinical Research at the MGH, was honored as an oncology pioneer and beloved teacher. And, honoree Ann Murray Paige shared insights from her inspiring journey after being diagnosed with breast cancer at age 37, telling the audience, “Cancer is hard ... but you make it easier.”

The 2013 the one hundred was co-chaired by The Kraft Group President (Continued on page 2)
Research roundup

TREATING ALZHEIMER’S: MGH investigators have determined that the recently identified CD33 gene, which contributes to the risk of late-onset Alzheimer’s, regulates the clearance of the toxic protein amyloid beta (A-beta) from the brains of patients with the disease. The research, published in the journal Neuron, raises the possibility that blocking CD33 activity could help the brain’s immune system remove the brain plaque responsible for Alzheimer’s. “What we discovered is that CD33 is a key switch and when the switch is off and it is deactivated, there is more clearance of that toxic protein,” says Rudolph Tanzi, PhD, director of the Genetics and Aging Research Unit in the MGH Department of Neurology and senior author of the paper. “This could represent a potentially powerful new approach to treating and possibly preventing Alzheimer’s disease.”

TREATING OBESITY: New research shows the amount of weight loss one can expect after gastric bypass surgery can be predicted using a specific gene variant. The findings, published in the American Journal of Human Genetics, could potentially guide treatment planning and spark the development of new therapeutic approaches to treating obesity and related conditions such as diabetes. Lee Kaplan, MD, PhD, director of the Obesity, Metabolism and Nutrition Institute at the MGH and senior author of the report, says the medical community once thought patients lost weight after gastric bypass simply because their stomachs were smaller, which forced them to eat less. But, past studies have shown the surgery also alters hormones, gut microbes and the activity of genes. “This is the first study to identify genetic predictors of weight loss after bariatric surgery,” Kaplan says.

Cooking up confidence

EMPOWERING FAMILIES at risk for hunger or obesity with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals is the goal of the Share Our Strengths: Cooking Matters education program. These six-week, hands-on nutrition sessions have been offered for the past two years through a partnership between the MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center and the Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea.

The classes combine collaborative food preparation – using nutritious, readily available, low-cost, culturally appropriate ingredients – with essential information such as instructions on how to read nutrition facts panels and use calorie-counting programs. At the end of each class, participants take home a bag of ingredients so they can practice preparing the recipes taught that day.

During the group’s most recent session in early June, Revere resident Tom Babson said he enrolled in the class – which has been taught in English, Spanish, Arabic and American Sign Language – to learn how to cook healthy meals on a budget. Revere resident Vanety Ocampo, a native of Columbia, said, “I enrolled in the course to learn more about cooking the healthy foods that I see in the markets that I don’t know.”

“This course is an example of Mass General’s strong interest in addressing the ‘social determinants’ of health. By improving the community’s access to healthy foods, we help to improve the health and well-being of the people in that community,” said Melissa Dimond, manager of Community Initiatives/Healthy Living for Community Health Improvement at MGH Chelsea, part of the MGH Center for Community Health Improvement.

For more information on the Food for Thought program, call Benjamin Brennan, coordinator of Food for Families at MGH Chelsea, at 617-887-3575.

HEALTHY HELPINGS:
Chef Brian Swan, top left, teaches the June 4 Cooking Matters class.

— the one hundred

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Jonathan Kraft and his wife Patti, and Vicary Graham, regional president at BNY Mellon Wealth Management. During the event, Kraft paid tribute to the 2013 Mass General Marathon Team: Fighting Kids’ Cancer ... One Step at a Time. Many members of the team joined him onstage, including team captain Howard Weinstein, MD, chief of the Mass General Hospital for Children Hematology-Oncology Unit, who presented Kraft and Krasinski with Boston Marathon medals.

In a video message from Cambridge, England, where he is currently filming a movie, actor Matt Damon recommitted to coming back to host the one hundred in 2014, along with his pal and “pinch-hitter” Krasinski. Damon hosted both the 2011 and 2012 events.

To view videos from the event, read about this year’s honorees, and submit nominations for the 2014 the one hundred, visit www.theonehundred.org.
Home Base launches public service ad campaign

THE RED SOX FOUNDATION AND THE MGH HOME BASE PROGRAM have launched a public service advertising campaign designed to increase awareness for the “invisible wounds of war” – Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – which affect one in three returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The campaign also is intended to raise funds to support Home Base’s clinical, education and research services to enable veterans and their families to recover.

The campaign, launched during June’s PTSD Awareness Month, includes print, radio, online and electronic billboard advertising. Developed pro bono by the Hill Holliday advertising agency, all of the ads feature messages about PTS and TBI and encourage viewers to visit www.helpathomebase.org.

To develop the campaign, Hill Holliday staff met with veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts as well as military families who have received help at Home Base. A special feature of the advertising campaign is a “Beetle Bailey” cartoon developed exclusively in support of Home Base by renowned cartoonist Mort Walker, which will appear in the Boston Globe on June 16.

“These messages are timely and urgent. Although the U.S. war in Iraq has ended and troops are returning from Afghanistan, it is critical that we remember that, for many veterans and their families, these wars have not ended and the return home has meant nightmares and difficulty sleeping, no longer feeling safe in everyday places, trouble concentrating, severe headaches and family stress,” said retired Brig. Gen. Jack Hammond, executive director of Home Base.

A number of media outlets have contributed thousands of dollars in advertising space and time for the Home Base effort including: The Boston Globe, Clear Channel, MLB, Jumptap, Millennial Media, WHDH, AdSpace and JCDecaux.

Since its founding in 2009, Home Base has provided clinical treatment for more than 600 veterans and family members from Massachusetts and the New England area, and educated some 7,500 clinicians nationwide to recognize PTS and TBI in their practices.
Preserving Padi

THE MGH’S 2,500-YEAR-OLD EGYPTIAN MUMMY Padhiershaf, along with his inner coffin, was moved to a new custom-built horizontal display case during the weekend of June 7. Employees and the public were invited to visit the Ether Dome — “Padi’s” home since 1823 — to observe the restorations, part of a multi-phased conservation effort sponsored in part by an anonymous donor and the MGH Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation. Conservators trained in restoring ancient artifacts spent the weekend cleaning and stabilizing both the mummy and his coffin. Earlier this year, Padi received a full-scale medical investigation, including full body X-ray and CT scanning, into what his life and health would have been like some 2,500 years ago, when he was a 40-year-old stonemason from the Necropolis in Thebes.

— Celebration

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finest, most dedicated employees in Boston, and they make the MGH the truly wonderful place that it is,” Slavin said. “Each of you has a very important role in making sure that our patients get the best care, our young clinicians get the best training, our researchers keep making life-saving discoveries, and that we keep benefitting the community around us.”

In addition to the event, posters highlighting the many Support Services departments and employees are now on display in the main lobby.

2013 support staff accomplishments

• Biomedical Engineering inspected more than 49,000 medical devices last year.
• Buildings and Grounds maintains approximately 6 million square feet of space in 24 buildings.
• Environmental Health and Safety supports operations at 28 MGH-licensed facilities plus several other off-sites.
• Environmental Services schedules 21,500 conference room requests and special setups.
• Mail Services sorts mail into more than 500 mailboxes for MGH locations and Partners affiliates.
• Linen Services assesses and restocks more than 100 areas per day with clean linen across the main campus and off-site locations.