MGH Summer Jobs program in 22nd year

**BENNI ARIAS** entered the MGH Summer Jobs orientation in early July with confidence, ready to begin his fifth year in the program and his fourth year in MGH Police, Security and Outside Services. Working with supervisors Jennifer Goba and Rebecca Colburn, Arias helps patrol both the Main Campus and Charlestown Navy Yard and assists with security calls. His experience with the department has inspired him to pursue a degree in criminal justice when he enters Framingham State University this fall.

“I like helping people,” says Arias. “I’ve learned new skills and passed my First Response training course. Each summer I have more responsibilities, and I rise to the occasion.”

Arias is one of more than 150 students involved in this year’s Summer Jobs program, which runs from July 9 to Aug. 17. At the Summer Jobs orientation, District 7 Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson provided opening remarks, encouraging students to unlock their potential and take advantage of the career opportunities at the MGH.

“Everyone has to take a personal interest in making yourself better,” he told the students.

The MGH is the city’s largest health care employer, and as part of Boston Mayor Thomas Menino’s Summer Jobs Campaign, it also is the city’s largest employer of youth in the summer. The Summer Jobs Program, now in its 22nd year, is overseen by the Center for Community Health Improvement.

Bruins player surprises pediatric patients

**MASSGENERAL HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN** recently welcomed Shawn Thornton, left wing for the Boston Bruins. Thornton visited children July 26 in the Ellison 18 inpatient pediatric unit and the Yawkey 8 Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Clinic. He autographed pictures, shared stories from this past season and handed out Boston Bruins goodie bags. The children said they were thrilled to spend time with the hockey player.

“My nurses in proton therapy told me you were here to make me feel better,” one child said to Thornton.
VIC awarded funding for Type 1 diabetes research

THE VACCINE & IMMUNOTHERAPY CENTER (VIC) at the MGH is committed to projects that accelerate vaccine and immunotherapy development, including those dedicated to finding improved treatment options for people with Type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disease in which a person’s pancreas stops producing insulin. Patients have to manage this disease through careful diet and exercise, as well as daily insulin injections. However, researchers are investigating a potential treatment option of pancreatic islet transplantation, where a patient receives a new set of pancreatic cells that produce insulin. While this is hoped to eliminate the need for the insulin shots, the patient would have to take medications to ensure his or her body did not reject these cells.

VIC currently is working on a new method that may allow islet transplantation without the need for lifelong immunosuppressant drug therapy. This would also eliminate complications associated with these medications. “VIC is excited about this collaboration and the impact it may have in accelerating the development of a broadly applicable cure for Type 1 diabetes,” says Mark Poznansky, MD, PhD, VIC’s founder and director.

To aid in its investigation, VIC recently was awarded $500,000 in funding through a two-year Strategic Research Agreement from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), a global organization that supports the most promising opportunities for curing, treating or preventing Type 1 diabetes. “JDRF’s Strategic Research Agreements were created to provide funding for investigators to address critical gaps and challenges for potential breakthroughs,” says Poznansky. “This partnership between VIC and JDRF scientists aims to help address roadblocks and accelerate JDRF’s mission.”

The work is being led by Poznansky and Tao Chen, MD, research associate at VIC, and in close collaboration with James Markmann, MD, PhD, chief of the Division of Transplantation, and David Sachs, MD, director of the Transplantation Biology Research Center.

George Taylor

GEORGE TAYLOR, an office assistant in the Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology (CIMIT) and the Wellman Center for Photomedicine, died July 25 at the age of 67. Taylor worked at the MGH for 15 years and will be remembered for his strong work ethic, sense of humor and kind demeanor.

Taylor was well-known around the MGH campus for wearing his trademark Yankees’ baseball cap as he pushed his delivery cart during daily rounds, transporting mail, food, paperwork – whatever departments needed. “He knew everyone, and he knew how to get a job done,” says Beverly Dammin, administrative assistant in the Wellman Center. “He was the quintessential ambassador for the entire hospital – excellent with children, patients, staff and visitors alike. His grin and personality were contagious.”

According to Dammin, one of Taylor’s many successes in life was to overcome a challenging childhood spent in state custody after being abandoned by his stepmother at a very young age. Becoming independent and working at the MGH was one of his greatest pleasures in life, and the friends he made here became his family.

“He loved to socialize and was never without a story or tale to tell,” says Marybeth Nolan, administrative assistant at CIMIT. “There was nothing he would not do for anyone who asked and enthusiastically volunteered his services. He was a good and loyal person with a loving and caring heart. No words will ever capture how much he will be missed.”

A favorite story among Taylor’s co-workers dates back to 2004 when they made a bet with him that if the Red Sox – who he jokingly referred to as the “Red Flops” – beat the Yankees in the World Series, he would have to lock his blue and white baseball hat away in an office and instead wear a bright pink Red Sox hat for an entire week. “Many at the MGH may remember his chagrin, but he loved all of the attention he was given,” Dammin says.

A remembrance of Taylor’s life is scheduled for Sept. 14 from 3 to 5 pm in the Trier Conference Room. All are invited to share memories and stories.

Short-stay unit opens

TO HELP ADDRESS growing Emergency Department (ED) volume and ongoing capacity challenges throughout the MGH, a new Short Stay Patient Care Unit has been created on Bigelow 7, the former home of the Gynecology/Oncology Unit. The GYN/ONC unit now is located on Phillips House 21.

The unit, which opened July 30, features 18 beds that will augment the existing 14 observation beds on the Bigelow 12 ED Observation Unit. This addition increases the total short-stay observation beds at the MGH to 32.

“The opening of the Short Stay Patient Care Unit is particularly timely, as ED patient volume has grown by more than 7 percent in the past year,” says Theresa Gallivan, RN, associate chief nurse in the ED. “This new unit is essential in providing patients with the best environment tailored to their specific needs to enable a safe transition to inpatient care.”

Short-stay patients require observation for 24 hours or less for diagnoses such as chest pain, deep vein thrombosis or intracranial hemorrhage.

“Many short-stay adult patients remained in the ED for prolonged stays or were placed into inpatient beds thereby contributing to crowding,” says vice chair of Emergency Medicine, George Taylor. “We need to care for these patients in a more appropriate location that will promote safety, quality and efficiency.”

The unit was developed as a collaborative effort between multiple departments, including Medicine, Emergency Nursing, Patient Management, Admitting, Information Management, Admitting, Information Management, and the ED.

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Leadership meeting highlights survey, U.S. News rankings

**WITH THE JOINT COMMISSION** survey following on the heels of the release of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, the last two weeks of July were particularly memorable for MGHers. These two topics – along with state and national health care policy, the hospital’s financial performance and the MGH/MGPO Strategic Planning process – were the focus of the July 30 leadership meeting.

MGH President Peter L. Slavin, MD, kicked off the meeting by explaining the methodology behind the *U.S. News & World Report* “Best Hospitals” rankings and giving an overview of MGH’s movement in the rankings over the last decade. “This past year we actually tied with Johns Hopkins with 30 points. But since we were ranked in 16 specialties, and they had only 15, that was the tiebreaker that determined we were the No. 1 hospital in the country,” said Slavin.

Although the No. 1 ranking by *U.S. News* is an honor, Slavin noted it is one of many ranking systems. “We need to take this with a grain of salt. The last thing we want to see as a result of this is for us to be complacent in any way. We all recognize that our real competition is cancer and heart disease and mental illness – all the diseases that affect our patients and their loved ones.”

Slavin then moved to the topic of health care policy. He highlighted state legislation – which passed the next day – that aims to keep health care spending increases on pace with the growth of the overall state economy and shared some of the projected advantages and disadvantages of the bill. He also discussed the recently upheld Affordable Care Act, explaining that, while it would not greatly affect Massachusetts because it already has its own health care law in place, it is creating challenges for other states.

Next, John Belknap, director of Corporate Compliance, provided details about the Joint Commission survey that took place the week of July 23. Belknap commended the survey team for being collaborative and complimentary but noted they were very stringent in applying their standards. “They did identify a number of places where they’re asking us to look a little bit more closely to see if we have room for improvement.”

Belknap shared a summary of the Joint Commission findings, emphasizing that they are preliminary and may change. “All of you should be extremely proud of the way you and your teams performed – not only during the survey, but ‘Excellence Every Day,’” said Belknap.

In addition to the news of a generally positive survey, Sally Mason Boemer, senior vice president of Finance and MGH Cancer Center, shared that the MGH is having a strong year financially. “It is due to a combination of some one-time items – that we don’t necessarily think will repeat themselves – and strong volume in a year when we managed the rate of expense growth not necessarily counting on that level of volume.”

Fiscal year 2012 has provided a strong base for developing the 2013 budget, said Mason Boemer. The main challenge the hospital faces is ensuring that unit costs are in line with market expectations and long-term affordability.

The closing presentation was given by Ann Prestipino, senior vice president for Surgical and Anesthesia Services and Clinical Business Development, who gave an update on the MGH/MGPO Strategic Planning process, an institutionwide effort that will guide decisions in the years ahead. Work to date has included the review of major internal and external trends and interviews of more than 40 key individuals at the MGH, which led to the development of an MGH case study. MGH administrative, clinical and Board of Trustees leadership as well as leadership from Partners reviewed this case study during an April retreat and identified key questions that must be answered going forward.

Staff now are launching six workgroups that will focus on the following priorities: redesigning the delivery system for population health, differentiating MGH episodic care, improving integration of the clinical and research missions, organizing research for the greatest impact and success, redefining the teaching model to prepare trainees for the changing health care landscape and explicitly linking community to other MGH missions.

“With the help and input of the many talented members of the MGH community, we are excited to move forward in the next phase of this process,” says Prestipino.
Blood Drive Challenge throughout seeking participants for its Pharmacy Blood drive Challenge National Health Observances series, “Prescription and Nonprescription Pain Medications,” part of the “Prescription and Nonprescription” offering the following free programs:

Patient and Family Learning Center is The Maxwell and Eleanor Blum Blum Center events information, call 617-724-7352. White Building, Room 110. For more 1 pm in the Blum Center in the All programs run from noon to by MGH volunteer Becky Wertz. a Sept. 12 harp music performance specialist Paul Arnstein, RN, PhD, and Sept. 5 with speaker MGH nurse two points for platelet donations. Also during the month of August, all blood donors will be entered to win a pair of tickets to the Blue Man Group at the Charles Playhouse and will receive a coupon to get a second ticket at half price with the purchase of one. For more information, call 617-724-9699 or email mwentworth@partners.org.

Latest issue of Proto available The summer 2012 issue of Proto, the MGH’s quarterly science magazine, is now available online at www.proto.com or as a free iPad application at www.proto.com/ipad.

Portraits in Primary Care The John D. Stoeckle Center for Primary Care Innovation “Portraits in Primary Care” program honors members of the MGH primary care community who make contributions to primary care in a remarkable way, every day. The deadline to nominate staff is Aug. 29. For more information, access https://stoecklecenter.wfubo.com/forms/portraits-in-primary-care-2012/.

Francis Delmonico, MD, senior surgeon in the Division of Transplant Surgery, has been elected president of The Transplantation Society, the premier international organization for the worldwide advancement of transplantation which represents more than 100 countries. Delmonico also has been appointed as an advisor to the World Health Organization for tissue and organ donation and transplantation.

Joseph Betancourt, MD, MPH, director of the MGH Disparities Solutions Center, has been named to the inaugural class of the W. Montague Cobb/National Medical Association Health Institute Senior Fellows. The fellowship honors the top 25 individuals in the nation who have distinguished themselves by addressing health care disparities through research, clinical care and mentoring.

The Scientist has ranked the MGH fifth on its 10th annual Best Place to Work in Academia survey, the only institution in the northeast on the list. For the past 10 years, The Scientist’s Best Places to Work in Academia surveys have asked academic researchers to highlight the aspects of work they value the most — such as support, access to great research, and collaborations — as well as areas they wish their institutions would improve, such as appropriate family-care policies. In the current survey, MGH’s strengths are peer researchers and job satisfaction. Full survey results appear in the August issue and online at www.the-scientist.com.

CRAIG B. THOMPSON, MD, president and chief executive officer of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, received the seventh annual MGH Award in Cancer Research on June 28. Presented by Daniel Haber, MD, PhD, director of the MGH Cancer Center, the award is given in memory of Nathan and Grace Shiff — parents of a former MGH research fellow — in recognition of outstanding contributions and achievements in cancer research.

Thompson is a medical oncologist with extensive research experience in cancer, immunology and translational medicine. He and his lab have pioneered the study of the BCL2 family of oncoproteins and their role in regulating cell survival. His laboratory currently is focused on investigating the metabolic requirements of dividing cells and defining the molecular signaling pathways that regulate nutrient uptake. Thompson is a member of the Institute of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.