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One of a Kind: Dr. Katz Retires from MWPH



After 22 years of service to Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH), Richard Katz, MD, MBA, FAAP, chief medical officer (CMO) and vice president of medical affairs, has retired from hospital leadership.

“Dr. Katz has been a driving force in MWPH’s growth in quality, volume, and reputation,” said Scott Klein, MD, MHSA, MWPH’s president and chief executive officer. “His dedication to the children, families, and staff here has been evident in his everyday actions, his words, and his enthusiasm.”

As CMO, Dr. Katz has worked to elevate the hospital’s reputation in the region and fought to keep patients and staff safe as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded.

“I have talked with many MWPH staff members who expressed gratitude for his personal advice and friendship over the years, and in particular for his heroic efforts to keep us all safe and informed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when so much was unknown and unsettling,” Dr. Klein said.

When it comes to his clinical work, he is proud to have grown the hospital’s feeding program into a nationally recognized exemplar. He looks forward to continuing to be part of the hospital’s feeding program as a part-time consultant going forward.

Throughout his career, Dr. Katz has been the hospital staff’s champion. He has always believed that his role was to give the staff the tools and support they

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Dr. Katz Retires from MWPH *continued*

need to provide seamless pediatric post-acute care—from inpatient or trauma centers to outpatient programs—that minimizes a child’s disability and maximizes independence. Overall, working with the medical staff to expand and diversify the hospital’s capabilities has been one of his favorite parts of his job. He is honored to have worked alongside each member of the medical staff.



“When I consider my career, what stands out to me is how proud I am of our staff for doing what they do each day. We all care about each other and the work we are doing for these kids,” Dr. Katz said. “I am thrilled to have played a role in developing a diversified medical staff of dedicated doctors, any of whom I would let take care of my baby in a heartbeat.”

Dr. Katz looks forward to spending more time with his beloved wife, his two grown daughters, and their families, including his two grandchildren. He will kick off retirement by finally reading War and Peace, and he’s also interested in taking some gemology courses to learn more about colored stones and diamonds. “My mother-in-law was a diamond wholesaler for 80 years, and I always found the field fascinating,” he explained.

Lucky for the hospital and community, Dr. Katz will maintain a consultative role in the hospital’s Feeding Day Treatment Program.

To all of us, Dr. Katz, you are truly a gem—thank you for your dedication. ♥

“

Dr. Katz is wonderful, caring and understanding. He is a terrific leader, very knowledgeable and experienced at what he does with staff and patients. He is at the ready for any situation that arises.

Thank you Dr. Katz for making my life here at MWPH a great experience and thank you for making it so easy to work with you.

—Kim Nelson

”

“

Richard is a passionate, objective and supportive leader and is always present in the moment. He shows appreciation for everyone.

—Dr. Ajoke Ajayi-Akintade

”

JAN 23 FEB 27 MAR 27

GETTING HOME TOGETHER

4–6 p.m.

Heal and Grow Dining Room

Patient families, please join us for dinner and transition-to-home support.

JAN 25 **SAY YES TO THE DRESS... AGAIN! BRUNCH AND DRAG SHOW**

11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Mt. Washington Tavern

5700 Newbury St., Baltimore, MD 21209

Brush off the dust, unwrap the keepsake box and put that wedding dress, prom gown, tux, or favorite outfit on—all to support the great work of Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital! Learn more and buy tickets at mwph.org/events

FEB 11 **CHAMPAGNE AND WINE DINNER**
6–9 p.m.

La Scala Ristorante Italiano

1012 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202

Proceeds benefit MWPH and specifically, the 2025 Storybook Gala. More details and registration coming soon. Visit mwph.org/events to get the latest information.

Save The Date
MT. WASHINGTON PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL
Storybook Gala
10th ANNUAL
Saturday, April 26, 2025
6:30–11:00 p.m.
M&T Bank Exchange at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center
Presented by Mandy, Dennis, Dillon and Benjamin Weinman

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

It is time to pause to celebrate the career of another remarkable MWPH leader, as Dr. Richard Katz stepped down as vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer at the end of October. A doctor, leader, and cheerleader, Dr. Katz has been a source of advice and friendship to us all over the course of his time here.

When I first arrived at MWPH, Dr. Katz served as a warm and welcoming presence who helped me acclimate to our hospital. In those early days, I particularly enjoyed participating when he gave hospital tours to donors, visitors, volunteers, families, and community members. It was a joy to hear his perspective, including the personal anecdotes he shared about each of the units and the bits of wisdom and experience that came out as he was talking about MWPH. It was clear to me that he took great pride in this hospital and the expertise of the dedicated professionals who work here.

Fortunately for us, even though he is retiring from his leadership positions, Dr. Katz will still be part of our hospital. He will continue to practice medicine here at MWPH, working in his area of clinical expertise: feeding. As one of the nation's top pediatric feeding experts, he will continue to contribute to

the success of our feeding programs, which he helped create and develop.

In the meantime, we are working with MWPH's board of trustees to conduct a national search for our next chief medical officer. I will keep you apprised of our progress in the coming months.

Last, but not least, I wish each of you a very happy, restful, and joyous holiday season.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Klein".

Scott Klein, MD, MHSA
President and CEO

Where Are They Now?—Parth Patel



Parth then

In 2014, when Parth Patel was just 14, he was vacationing with his family in India when he was involved in a devastating automobile accident that claimed the lives of his father and grandfather. Parth sustained many traumatic injuries, including a severe brain injury, and remained in India undergoing a series of surgeries and recovering to the point

where he was stable enough to travel back to the United States.

After 10 days at the University of Maryland, Parth transferred to MWPH at the end of October 2014. When he arrived, he did not seem to be aware of his surroundings and had a g-tube and a trach. At MWPH, Parth underwent intensive rehabilitation including physical, occupational, and speech therapies. He had neurological evaluations and was fitted for specialized rehabilitation equipment.

"Everything was very new to me. I knew nothing about brain injury," said Parth's mother, Priyanka. "But when I came to MWPH, everyone, from the receptionists and the janitors to the



Parth now

doctors, nurses, and therapists, acted like they were my family. They were always there for anything I needed." Parth was discharged home from MWPH in February 2015.

Today, Parth is a happy, highly social person. Although he doesn't talk or walk, he makes connections with others and loves life. "He has come a

long, long way in terms of his cognitive awareness and physical ability," Priyanka said. "He is doing more and more for himself, and he advocates for his needs."

He loves to listen to music, play Uno, watch YouTube videos, and hang out with his friends. He also likes spicy food and has participated in activities like sailing and rock climbing through MWPH's Abilities Adventures program. His future goals include getting a job.

For Priyanka and Parth, MWPH continues to hold a special place in their hearts. "Even after 10 years, when I walk in that building, I feel like I'm home," Priyanka said. ♥

EMPLOYEE NEWS



GET TO KNOW OUR STAR EMPLOYEES

The STAR employee award honors those employees who personify our CARES values—Considerate, Attentive, Respectful, Efficient, Safe. These honorees are recognized as outstanding role models in our hospital.

September



Name: Jennifer Freeman
Title: Director of Admissions, Case Management, Language Services, and Social Work
Department: Collaborative Care
How long have you worked at MWPB: 19 years
What is your favorite thing about your job: Seeing the kids go home and knowing that in some way we all play a part in that.
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I have three dogs ranging from 11 pounds to 100 pounds that all require grooming, so I learned how to do it.

October



Names (l-r): Kelsey Franklin and Amanda Morris
Department: Education
How long have you worked at MWPB:
Amanda: A little over one and a half years
Kelsey: 9 years

Kelsey and Amanda are diligent, efficient, and highly dedicated to meeting the educational needs at MWPB. They quickly respond to urgent training needs and have successfully managed complex patient admissions, ensuring staff are well-prepared. As professional, reliable, and compassionate team members, they elevate the practice through their bedside involvement and participation in various nursing committees. They play a key role in driving annual competencies, orientation, and Vizient graduate programs.

November



Name: Kimberly Bittinger
Title: Patient Accounts Manager
Department: Patient Accounting
How long have you worked at MWPB: 4 years
What is your favorite thing about your job: My connection to purpose. Being able to see that my efforts have a positive impact on hospital processes, which in turn provides a better experience for our patients and families.
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: As a child growing up, my career aspiration was to be a scientist.

DAISY AWARD



Congratulations to Patti Kalb, Registered Staff Nurse I

“Patti is extremely positive and welcoming—a phenomenal nurse and human being. She has always been supportive and available to all who seek her expertise.”

TULIP AWARD



Congratulations to Sherrise Myers, Certified Medical Assistant

“Sherrise deserves 10 Gold Stars. She truly has an amazing bedside manner and goes above and beyond her duties to make sure the patients get the care and attention they deserve.”

IRIS AWARD



We are excited to introduce our new IRIS Award! IRIS, which stands for Inspiring Rehab Initiatives for Success, recognizes team

members who have positively impacted the functional outcomes for our patients to enhance their quality of life. MWPB's first IRIS Award winners are **Sarah Catalfamo**, Senior Occupational Therapist and **Anna Snee**, Clinical Child Life Specialist. Sarah and Anna are leaders in their respective roles in the Rehab Department. Each is honored for their innovative approaches to helping our patients along their journeys to return home with their families and friends. Kudos to Sarah and Anna!

MYTHBUSTERS



*Myth busted by Rebecca Gorman,
MWPB feeding manager and
speech-language pathologist*

MYTH: Picky eating is only a stage.

FACT: Many children experience picky eating, especially between the ages of 2 and 4 years. Picky eating becomes problematic when weight gain and nutrition are affected by the child's limited diet. Pediatric feeding disorders encompass a wide range of severity, from children who refuse to eat vegetables, to children who eat only one or two foods every day, to children who do not yet know how to chew foods.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR FAMILIES WITH A PICKY EATER

- Establish a meal schedule.
- Expose picky eaters to new foods regularly.
- Make it fun to try a new food.

For families who continue to struggle with the challenge of picky eating, and would like additional help, MWPB offers many options, including outpatient feeding therapy, group feeding therapy, and the hospital's intensive feeding day program.

To learn more, visit
www.mwph.org/feeding

5 MINUTES WITH Joseph Piskor II

A second-generation MWPB employee, Joseph Piskor II has been part of MWPB since 2009. As an adaptive equipment technician, Piskor provides technical support to the rehabilitation and child life staff that includes building custom orthotics for wheelchair placement, custom rocker chairs, custom-fitted infant head positioners, and wheelchair repair.

What brought you to MWPB and your field?

My dad, Joseph Piskor Sr., ran this shop for 36 years beginning in 1989, before I was even born. Everything that we do today in this wood shop is based on his life's work – for example, our custom rocker chairs were his brainchild, his design. Our goal here is to make our patients more comfortable by making their adaptive equipment better suit their needs.

I started out in the maintenance shop at MWPB and eventually progressed to manager, but I wanted to get back to working with my hands. When my dad was preparing to retire, it was a natural fit.

What is your role's biggest challenge? What do you find most rewarding about your work?

I like everything about the work itself, although my least favorite part is sanding. More broadly, the toughest part of the job is seeing kids come to our hospital in such bad shape. On the flip side, it's super rewarding to see them get better.

I love interacting with nurses and therapists to brainstorm the best way to help a patient. My favorite part is watching the pieces I have made get put to good use and seeing patients get better in part because of it.

What kind of impact do you hope to have on MWPB?

I see it every day. Kids come in hurt or sick and leave with every expectation of a normal life or a better shot at integrating back into the community. Being part of that is what really drives me to do what I do.

I am proud to work in one of the few active hospital-based wood shops left in the country.



CUSTOMER SERVICE



The Customer Service team—L to R: Anitra McNeely and Carol Wilson

What does MWPH’s customer service department do? If you said answer the phones, you’re right – but that’s just one piece of the puzzle. The two-person customer service team, which includes Carol Wilson and Anitra McNeely, takes on many tasks that keep the hospital moving.

“The customer service department is a very important piece – it’s the glue that holds things together,” said plant operations administrative assistant Tracey Gaither, who oversees the customer service team. “They are the connection between the hospital from outside and inside.”

Here is an overview of some of the things customer service is responsible for. This two-person team:

- Serves as the hospital’s operators, answering all incoming calls from outside the hospital and transferring the call or taking a message
- Answers calls that come in on the customer service line from inside the hospital, fielding requests for supplies, maintenance, cleaning, room reservations, and many other things
- Determines how to address customer service requests
- Creates work orders in the plant operations system
- Contacts teams using the internal communications system

- Makes announcements over the hospital intercom
- Monitors the hospital’s general email inbox
- Sorts and processes incoming postal mail
- Prepares mail for carrier
- Contacts departments about packages
- Handles secure mail properly
- Prompts the maintenance team with preventive maintenance work orders
- Provides notary services

“You might not have met them in person, but you’ve probably heard their voices,” Gaither said. “They are great at their jobs.”

How the customer service team stands out

Carol goes above and beyond and maintains a great attitude. “She is the definition of grace under pressure,” Gaither said. She also has a special talent for troubleshooting each printer in the hospital.

Anitra, who worked on MWPH’s security team before coming to customer service, is well known for completing work accurately and in a timely manner. Her colleagues trust her. “If you give Anitra something to do, she is going to dig into it, give it her all, and get it done,” Gaither noted. ♥

Quilters By Design Marks Milestone: 1,000 Items Donated



For 45 years, a group of women from around Baltimore County has met each Wednesday to enjoy a shared love for needlework: quilting, knitting, and crochet. They call themselves Quilters By Design. And this year, they reached an amazing milestone: The group members have donated more than 1,000 handmade items—quilts, blankets, scarves, and hats—to MWPB.

The group connected with the hospital through one of the group's founding members, Susan Davis, who is a longtime MWPB volunteer. Davis is the daughter of Phyllis Meyerhoff, a former member of the Mt. Washington Pediatric Foundation Board who was once a patient herself. While some knit and others quilt, everyone in Quilters By Design is dedicated to making things to give to the hospital.

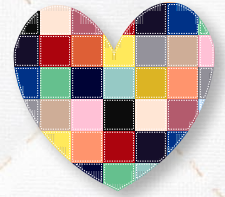
"It's a fabulous group of people, all of whom are very generous,"

Davis said. "It's a sisterhood and a real labor of love."

The group is dedicated to this endeavor. One member continues to send boxes of handmade items for donation on a regular basis, even though she has moved to Arizona. Another member brings crocheted baby blankets in from her sister, who can't make it to the weekly meetings but continues to contribute. The group created a special quilt to mark MWPB's centennial, and it now brightens up a hallway in the hospital.

MWPB makes good use of these handmade items. Each piece is given to a family to take home with them from the hospital. No matter whether the patient is a baby or an older child, having a warm and cuddly item handmade just for them is a special gift.

Davis knows firsthand what an impact these gifts make. She volunteers in the Meyerhoff unit each week, spending time with patients from 18 months to 21 years old. "I was also a parent who had a child in and out of the hospital for a long time, so I understand what it's like," she notes. ♥



THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF QUILTERS BY DESIGN:

Susan Davis

Carole Glowacki

Bunny Bernstein

Carol Caplan

Roseann Milner

Judy Hyatt

Judy Dunlap

Ruth Strauss

Geri Pare

Nanette Greif

Ellie Hofstetter

MWPB'S COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A HUGE thank you to Comm-Tronics, Inc. for donating 750 coloring and activity books with crayons for the patients at MWPB! This meaningful project started with technician Artez Greer, who, inspired by the kids at MWPB, proposed the idea of a coloring book donation. What began as a simple book evolved into a 16-page activity book featuring their own superhero, The Hyphen! We are so grateful for this thoughtful donation and for your ongoing support of MWPB!





Patient Parent Perspective

Christina Argo



Oaklyn with Michelle Sudlow, Rehab tech and Kristina Wolfsheimer, PT.

Christina Argo is a wife and mom of three: her sons are teenagers, and her daughter, Oaklyn, is 6. Oaklyn lives with Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS), a rare, nonhereditary, genetic disorder that can result in chronic hunger, developmental delays, and behavioral challenges.

How did your family first connect with MWPH?

Oaklyn's first experience with

MWPH was a routine sleep study, as sleep apnea is common among children with PWS. While on a waitlist for physical therapy elsewhere, we learned that other families whose children live with PWS were all at MWPH for physical therapy, so I was delighted when MWPH got her in for an appointment right away.

What other services has your family received at MWPH?

Infants with PWS are typically born with low muscle tone and can

develop scoliosis. At MWPH, Oaklyn's physical therapist happens to specialize in scoliosis, and she has been successful with Oaklyn's progress toward her goals. Oaklyn's pulmonologist, Dr. Laura Sterni, also sees her as a patient at MWPH, and she loves going to see Dr. Sterni and her team. It's wonderful when a kid loves to go to their doctor!

What stands out about MWPH?

The people. When Oaklyn walks in, she is welcomed by the incredible staff, from security to the front desk, to her therapists. It's wonderful that Oaklyn has access to these specialized services, which encourages ongoing intervention. There's a family feeling about the atmosphere, where we always feel welcome.

What advice do you have for other parents?

The medical professionals at MWPH are experts in their respective fields, and having a team that can be trusted to do what they do with excellence and compassion is a remarkable gift. Secondly, everything they do is oriented toward children, from incorporating outdoor activities into physical therapy to using light walls, bubbles, and other sensory elements. It's truly a special place, and we're so thankful to be a part of the MWPH family.

KUDOS for our Caring Staff

"My preemie (28 week) son was transferred from the NICU at Sinai to MWPH for continued care. We had an extremely positive experience here. The nurses are very attentive, gentle, and caring. They were also very forthcoming with updates and keeping me in the loop. My favorite part of this hospital is they set up care to make me feel like the parent instead of a bystander. I had much

more control and say in caring for my baby. Also Dr. Satpute was extremely supportive, effective, and caring. The security and front desk staff were also very nice throughout. I was very nervous about the transfer because it was such a big change, but I found MWPH to be a blessing on the road to bringing my baby home."
—patient parent

"Maryellen Davis is our PT from JHH, and when we needed services again and learned that she is at MWPH, we followed her. She is very good at what she does, and my kids love her."
—patient parent

For information or questions about *Handprints*, contact **Katie Yeager**, Communications Manager at katharine.yeager@mwph.org



Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

Where Children Go to Heal and Grow

Est. 1922

An affiliate of University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine



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