



Mt. Washington
Pediatric Hospital

Handprints

SUMMER 2024

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MWPH Celebrates Our Dream Team During Hospital Week



Every day is special at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH), but Hospital Week—May 13 to 17—was especially so! The hospital's staff works so hard, day in and day out, to maximize the health and independence of each child we serve. Hospital Week is a time to shine a light on those efforts and have a little fun celebrating them.

"A hospital is made up of disparate groups of people, all of whom come together to do important work that impacts our patients, whether clinical or non-clinical. All the different components of a hospital are necessary to make the hospital work, and that's why it's important to recognize the whole hospital staff during Hospital Week," said Scott Klein, MD, MHSA, MWPH's president and CEO. "We have many staff members who don't often interact with patients

directly, but their efforts absolutely do contribute to the excellent care we provide here."

The theme of this year's Hospital Week was, "team-work makes the dream work," and each day featured a special activity or treat for MWPH's staff:

- Monday was MWPH Spirit Day. Staff members showed off their MWPH apparel, enjoyed a complimentary breakfast, and kicked off a week-long scavenger hunt. There was also a benefits fair, where staff members could learn about some of the benefits that come with their jobs.
- On Tie-Dye Tuesday, there was a tie-dye-making event in the grill, and staff members were treated to donuts in the morning and cupcakes in the after-

continued on next page >>

Hospital Week *continued*

noon. Tuesday also featured the annual President's Club breakfast and Service Awards dinner.

- Wednesday was "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" day. Staff wore baseball-themed clothing and had fun with a book exchange and popcorn bar.
- On Thursday, staff members took a moment to "Pamper the Soul," with some yoga, mindfulness exercises, puppy therapy, and an ice cream truck.
- Friday took MWPB "Down the Shore, Hon" with a fish fry celebration.

Dr. Klein particularly enjoys celebrating the hospital's longtime employees during Hospital Week. "It's so touching at events like the Service Awards dinner to hear how people have chosen to stay here because of the hospital's culture and the environment. People will say, '30 years went by in the blink of an eye because it's such a special place,'" he said.

Hospital Week is also an important time to reflect on the way MWPB staff members connect their work to the purpose of the larger organization. "The people who have been here for 10, 20, 30 years—they are connecting the dots between who we were as an organization and who we will become in the years to come. Thirty years from now, it's hard to imagine how different we'll be, but celebrations like Hospital Week help us stay connected to our past and our legacy," Dr. Klein said. "The longevity of our employees enables us to bridge time." ♥



UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTHLY FAMILY DINNERS

Please check signage around the hospital for dates.

Questions? Call Michelle Hanover at 410-578-2651

ALL
JUL

CHRISTMAS IN JULY AT MWPB

Throughout the month of July, we're collecting new toys from our wish list in preparation for the holiday season and to use year-round, too! Please drop your toys in the bin in the main lobby.

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital Christmas in July



JUL
24

CHRISTMAS IN JULY HAPPY HOUR AND TOY DRIVE

Mt. Washington Tavern
July 24, 5-7 p.m.

Come enjoy Baltimore's best happy hour and bring a new toy for the kids at MWPB.

JUL
25

CHRISTMAS IN JULY DAY

MWPB main campus
8-10 a.m.

Come to MWPB to deliver toys and meet special guests.

SEP
29

WALKING WITH GRACE FAMILY FUN WALK McDonogh School

Join us at the beautiful McDonogh School campus for our third annual Walking with Grace Family Fun Walk. Register here ▼



Message from the President

Dear Friends,

One year ago, my family and I were in the process of moving from New York to Baltimore, beginning an adventure with not just a new job, but a whole new place. We were so warmly welcomed to our new home—it was a delight to meet so many people who have dedicated their careers to MWPH and its patients. Baltimore is truly Charm City.

Since I arrived at MWPH, I have spent much of the last year understanding and helping to clarify the hospital's role within Maryland's healthcare community. Where do we fit, and how can we ensure we remain a key part of pediatric healthcare in the state?

I have also spent time participating in advocacy efforts for the hospital at the state level and meeting with providers around the region. My message is simple: MWPH has become a jewel in the crown of the finest pediatric healthcare organizations in the state, supported by our two parent organizations, the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Most importantly, I have spent this year getting to know the staff, patients, and families here at MWPH. I have been particularly interested in listening as staff members share their “why”—what drew them to this hospital and what continues to

inspire them as they stay at MWPH. It's powerful to hear from longtime staff, who have built a meaningful legacy as they do their part—whether at the bedside or behind the scenes—to help the children we serve gain the strength, health, and independence they need to return home to their families, friends, schools, and communities.

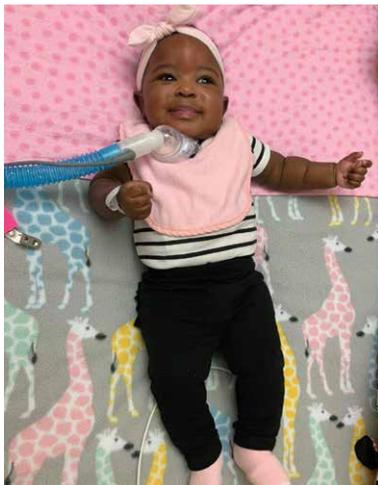


Sincerely,

Scott Klein, MD, MHSA
President and CEO

Where Are They Now?—Selah Little

Selah Little was born at just 25 weeks' gestation and needed intensive medical care. Her birth family, wanting to give her the best chance in life, decided to place Selah with an adoptive family. Over the first few months of her life, she struggled to eat and breathe. When she arrived at MWPH, the team coordinated a g-tube placement and a trach, so she could get the nutrition and respiratory support she needed to grow and thrive.



Selah at MWPH

She was eight months old when she met her new parents, Rachael and James Little. “A few days after we got to MWPH, she started sitting up. It was as if she responded right away to the love we were giving her, and she knew we weren't going to leave,” Rachael remembered.

Today, Selah is four-and-a-half years old, a spunky, loving,



Selah now

kind little girl who is full of life. She is in preschool and is beginning to talk.

Selah and her parents don't let her trach and g-tube stand in her way. “We try to give Selah a normal life and not let her medical needs hold her back,” said Rachael. “She is the biggest blessing in our lives and brings us so much joy.”

She takes dance, plays soccer, and loves her dolls. She enjoys spending time at church with her family

and community and loves being around people.

Selah's parents credit MWPH's team for giving them the training they needed to care for her confidently. “The education that MWPH gave us before we left was amazing. They trained us so well, so we could leave the hospital and trust our ability to meet her needs,” said James. “They love Selah almost as much as we do, and we are extremely grateful for their care and support.” ♥

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.

April



Name: Caroline Boyd
Title: Child Life assistant
Department: Child Life and Therapeutic Recreation
How long have you worked at MWPH: A little over a year and a half (two years in October)
What is your favorite thing about your job: My favorite part of my job is having the opportunity to provide all types of play to our patients and supporting their needs. Also, I love being part of a team full of amazing specialists who encourage me to grow and learn.

Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I was a Super Plunger for five years at the Polar Bear Plunge with the Special Olympics of Maryland.

May



Name: Karima Harris
Title: Medical Assistant
Department: Outpatient
How long have you worked at MWPH: I have worked at MWPH for 4 years going on 5 years now
What is your favorite thing about your job: One of my favorite things about working as a Medical Assistant would be assisting with patient care
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I am a painter, not a professional one, but it's a hobby of mine

June



Name: Joey Piskor
Title: Adaptive equipment technician
Department: Rehabilitation
How long have you worked at MWPH: 14 years
What is your favorite thing about your job: My favorite part is definitely interacting with the patients and actually seeing what I'm doing help them. With adaptive equipment, I get to see what my work does firsthand to impact a child's life, which is really cool.
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I'm very into car culture. I was a Pro AM drifter for a while.

DAISY AWARD



We are thrilled to award Denise Pudinski, MSHCA, BSN, RN, CCM, NE-BC the Daisy Nurse Leader Award.

"The ultimate nurse, Denise has flawlessly navigated many roles at MWPH over the past 41 years. From Weekend Nursing Supervisor to Chief Nurse Executive, her unwavering commitment to the organization is unmatched. She is a testament that MWPH is not only a place where children come to heal and grow, but also a place where employees can grow in their profession and build lifelong friendships through their passion of taking care of pediatric patients who are in the greatest of need. Her dedication to our patients, the organization and the community that we serve is a shining example of not only a Daisy Nurse, but an amazing leader."

TULIP AWARD



Miko Elliott, PCA
 "It is always a pleasure to work with Miko. When Miko is my PCA, I know I don't have to worry about anything. Miko always checks in with her nurses and gives a thorough report once she is finished with each of her rounds. She does her job to the best of her ability and makes sure her patients and nurses are set. Miko is the absolute best, and I believe she deserves this award 110%."

Congratulations to Kayla Kupfer and Heather Lawless for being recognized as TOP NURSES in the May issue of Baltimore magazine!



MYTHBUSTERS



Myth busted by
Kaylie Wiseman, Ph.D.,
pediatric psychologist

MYTH: Autism is a disabling condition that needs to be “treated.”

FACT: While there are many challenges associated with autism that do require support, autism also represents a

difference in how some people process information and interact with their environment.

The biggest gains often come when others are able to understand and accept these differences, rather than see them as something that the individual needs to “change.” An acceptance-based approach allows us to make necessary changes to the environment to help an autistic person reach their fullest potential.

Oftentimes, people with a diagnosis of autism benefit from more explicit information about what to expect. They may not pick up on environmental or social cues as easily compared to those without a diagnosis of autism.

Autistic individuals may also be more easily overwhelmed in certain environments. Sometimes crowded, loud, and bright spaces create sensory overload.

Assistance with organization, planning, time management, and task completion is also often helpful, as many autistic youth struggle with executive functioning.

AUTISM ALSO COMES WITH MANY AREAS OF STRENGTH, and it is important for these to be emphasized just as much, if not more, than areas of challenge. While every person is different, autism has been associated with cognitive strengths such as superior memory, visual spatial skills, good focus when motivated and interested, creativity, and better attention to details. Personal strengths may include honesty and dedication, reliability, strong adherence to rules, and focus on fairness. Increasing awareness of strengths and helping youth to develop these and advocate for themselves leads to better outcomes, such as improved mental health and well-being.

MWPH’s Autism Spectrum Center helps families identify if their child/adolescent may be on the autism spectrum. Receiving a diagnosis helps families understand their child’s strengths and areas of challenge, access critical resources, and plan for a bright future.

Learn more at mwph.org/health-services/behavioral-health/autism-spectrum-center or call 410-578-5080.

5 MINUTES WITH Latia Gilmer

MWPH kitchen supervisor Latia Gilmer joined the hospital’s food services team about a year and a half ago. She sees her role as very hands on, dividing her time each day among working in the kitchen with other staff members, monitoring the café, developing menus, meeting with families of newly admitted patients as needed, and even working the register. “I pop in and help out wherever I’m needed,” she said.

What brought you to MWPH and your field?

I have been in the food service industry for 14 years. Before joining MWPH, I was a kitchen supervisor at St. Joseph’s. When this position became available, I went for it. The hours fit my schedule, and I am able to maintain a good work-life balance. I enjoy it.

While the work itself is pretty much the same, the atmosphere at MWPH feels different. This hospital is smaller, and we care for children exclusively, so the experience of working here is different.

What is your role’s biggest challenge?

What do you find most rewarding about your work?

The most challenging part is getting attached to certain children who are admitted. It’s hard to say goodbye when they leave.

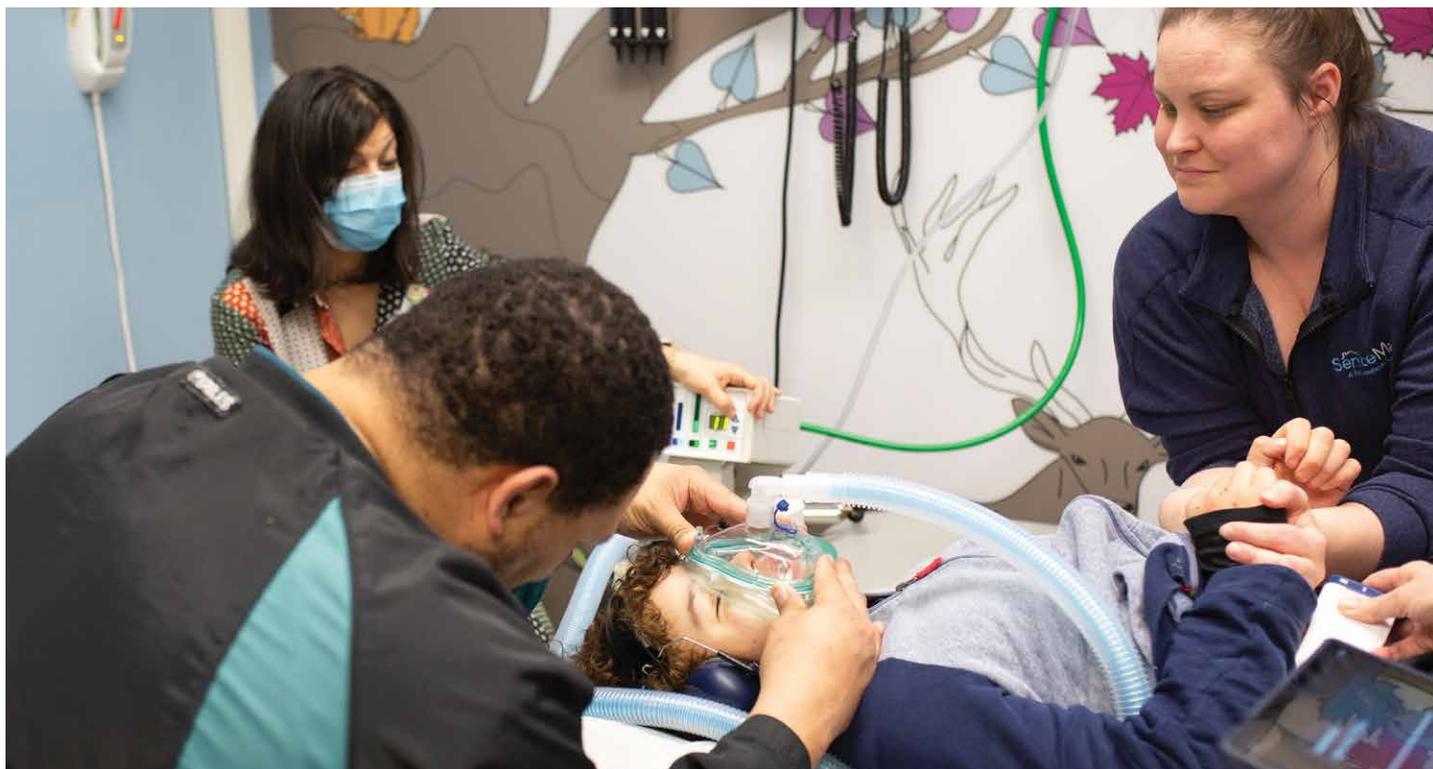
There are a lot of rewarding aspects. There’s never a dull moment—in a good way! Our staff is close. We’re like a family: We joke, we laugh, and we have a good time in the kitchen. It helps us get through the day.

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

I hope everyone I meet here remembers my contributions and believes that I’m an asset to the organization in a good way. I am enjoying working in this department, growing my skills, and advancing my expertise.



MWPH Now Offers Nitrous Oxide for Pain Management



Great news for families with children who have a procedure coming up, are generally anxious, or have frequent medical interventions: MWPH now offers nitrous oxide as part of our comprehensive pain management options.

“Dentists have been giving nitrous oxide for more than 100 years to great effect. It’s an inhaled gas that works really well to decrease anxiety, which is a huge component of pain,” said Julia Rosenstock, MD, attending pediatrician at MWPH. “There are many benefits to offering this option for kids who are having procedures or interventions—there’s less worry, less pain, and the treatment team can get the procedure done more quickly because the child is calm, which also improves the experience for the child and family.”

In addition to decreasing anxiety and pain, nitrous oxide:

- Is very safe
- Has almost no side effects
- Takes effect quickly and stops working as soon as the gas stops – easy on, easy off
- Can cause some amnesia of the procedure—a child might remember a procedure as taking much less time than it did
- Is offered free of charge to patients

MWPH has begun using nitrous oxide regularly with children who are getting Botox injections, and the team plans to use it for dressing changes going forward, but any patient family can request nitrous oxide for their child. The treatment requires a soft mask to be placed on the child’s face, so the child can breathe the gas. Child Life specialists are available to help normalize the process.

“We have had a great response from every family we’ve used it with,” Dr. Rosenstock said.

MWPH is proud to be at the forefront of the push to offer nitrous oxide to children undergoing procedures or interventions, as part of the hospital’s multifaceted pain management strategy. MWPH’s two parent organizations, the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine, are now looking into starting their own nitrous oxide programs for their pediatric patients as well. ♥



MWPH, MARYLAND ZOO CELEBRATE 12 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP



Although it may not be obvious at first glance, Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital and the Maryland Zoo have quite a bit in common. Both organizations have been part of the fabric of Baltimore for a long time—the hospital recently celebrated its centennial, while the Maryland Zoo is getting ready to mark its 150th birthday. The two organizations are also aligned through their deep, driving sense of mission. And 12 years ago, the two organizations launched a multi-faceted collaboration.

As hospitalized children prepare to transition back to their homes and communities, teaching them how to acclimate and adapt to the world around them is key. One way MWPH accomplishes this is through regular community re-entry outings—and the zoo is a popular destination.

“Visiting the zoo offers a unique experience for us from a functional rehabilitation standpoint,” said Lindie Ashman, manager of child life and therapeutic recreation at MWPH. “It can give children a chance to navigate different environments, from hilly areas to gravel surfaces to crowded exhibits.”

Trips to the zoo help MWPH’s patients learn how to problem solve, so when they go home they can navigate their own world, and adapt in ways that empower them to just be kids and engage in activities and adventures.

When the pandemic hit, MWPH had to put its in-person zoo visits on hold. The Zoo to You virtual field trip program featured tour guides and volunteers at the zoo, giving MWPH’s hospital-bound children the zoo experience virtually. Even after the pandemic, Zoo to You brings the zoo experience to children who can’t safely leave the hospital. The events introduce animals, explaining what makes them special and why they’re important.

“We offer lots of content about animals with different abilities. Highlighting how animals differ from each other, and what makes those special abilities unique, connects with the lived experience of



patients who may be differently abled or who may have restrictions due to an illness or injury,” said Mike Evitts, senior director of communications at the Maryland Zoo.

Possibly the most tangible result of the partnership has been the hospital’s sponsorship of the popular goat corral in the zoo’s farm-yard area. “It’s the only place where you can actually touch an animal at the zoo, so it’s a big hit with children of all ages,” Evitts noted.

For 11 years, MWPH has also been a proud sponsor of the Zoo’s annual Zoo BOO! festival. Staff and volunteers spend the weekend sharing information about the hospital’s work and resources as well as sponsoring the children’s costume contest.

Behind the scenes, the zoo’s innovative approaches to rehabilitation are designed to maximize well-being. “We work with state and government agencies to rehabilitate animals who were injured in the wild. And for the animals in our care, our team of animal behaviorists designs habitats to encourage natural behaviors, challenge animals with puzzles, and provide the full spectrum of well-being for the whole animal,” Evitts explained.

“Our children love learning how each animal receives special care, some needing extra support to stay healthy and active—just like them! Our children have opportunities to bond with the animals and feel less isolated when they learn that many animals need medication, extra care, and rehabilitation, too,” Ashman said. “These experiences help to normalize the hospital experience for our patients and equip them to go back into the world.” ♥



MWPH IN THE COMMUNITY

MWPH is proud to have a long-standing partnership with The League for People with Disabilities. Shanna Richmond, who came to us from The League, is one of our nutrition aides who has been working at MWPH for six years.

Her supervisor, Donna Morris-Snoussi, Director of Clinical Nutrition Services at MWPH speaks very highly of her. “We are very grateful to have Shanna in the nutrition department. Shanna is very good at her job. She has a special talent in iden-

tifying the correct formula, entering expiration dates and lot numbers, and labeling each container. Her speed in doing this job is remarkable, and we are all impressed with her work.”

Shanna was recently featured in The League’s 2024 showcase video, produced for the organization’s annual gala.

**Thank you for all you do
for MWPH, Shanna!**



Patient Parent Perspective

Timi Roberts



Timi Roberts is a single parent to a special young lady, 22-year-old Mackenzie Taylor. Mackenzie was born two months early, weighing a little over 3 pounds at birth. She was diagnosed with Prader-Willi syndrome and has faced multiple serious medical challenges as a result.

How did your family first connect with MWPH?

When she was in middle school, Mackenzie got very sick and was put in a medically induced coma. She needed intensive rehabilitation afterward, and she came to MWPH on an outpatient basis. Once I saw the care she received, however, I knew that I could trust the MWPH team to help Mackenzie as an inpatient.

What other services has your family received?

Mackenzie was hospitalized each year with an infection, and each year, she would come to MWPH as an inpatient to recover. From the officer at the door, to the folks who make the meals, it has been nothing but top-notch care for Mackenzie and me at MWPH.

What stands out about MWPH?

The professionalism, the structured schedule, and their care of both Mackenzie and me. It felt like at the end of six weeks, we had made a host of new friends and family members. The team keeps you updated and informed of the care plan and progress, so you're not guessing about what your child is doing today. I felt like I could go to work, which I needed to do, and Mackenzie would be fine. If I couldn't be home taking care of my child, MWPH was the next best thing.

What would you tell parents coming to MWPH for the first time?

If I had come for a visit while she was first hospitalized, it would have reduced my apprehension about that first stay for inpatient rehabilitation. Once you visit, you'll see that every aspect of your loved one's care is taken care of. You go in heavy, stress-filled, and worried, but they take that burden away from you.

KUDOS for our Caring Staff

We'd like to give kudos to our amazing staff of teachers at MWPH!

Diana Zwaig-Krol will be retiring this month. We can't thank her enough for her time and commitment to our patients at MWPH.



L to R: Sara Angell, Wendy Bozel, Diana Zwaig-Krol, Helayne Amrani

"Diana is one of the most committed teachers that I have had the pleasure of knowing.

She has made an impact on the lives of so many students—she finds ways to tailor her teaching style to meet the needs of each student and their family, and nurtures the talents of each student.

Engaging in school while hospitalized is not easy; Diana carefully helps our children navigate their new norms, and demonstrates patience and understanding to foster a safe and supportive learning environment.

Diana's creativity brings learning to life—every child leaves her classroom smiling, with a desire to find a way to contribute to the world. It truly takes a village to help our families through their hospitalization, and Diana has been a key figure in supporting our children—her commitment to education and finding the spark in each child is exceptional. We wish her the best of luck in her much-deserved retirement!"

—Lindie Ashman, Manager, Child Life and Therapeutic Recreation

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

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

Handprints is a publication of the Development department for MWPH's patient families, staff and the community.



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