

The Epitome of COOL... is Pediatrics! Welcome!

Pediatrics is COOL. We do host great parties. But *that* doesn't make us cool. New York City is known for its parties... The occasional celebrity does drop by to visit. But *that* doesn't make us cool either. Many celebrities live here in New York City... True, we have lots of videos, games, and toys. But even *that's* not why we're cool... What *truly* makes Pediatrics so COOL are the patients, families, doctors, nurses, and all the Pediatric staff who come with awesome attitudes, every day, ready to party like it's 2007.



In this issue of NEWS9, we want to tell you why everything we do in Pediatrics is made so much COOLER by you!



*"Live For Today...
Plan For Tomorrow...
Party Tonight!!!"*

Anonymous



Party On...And On...And On...

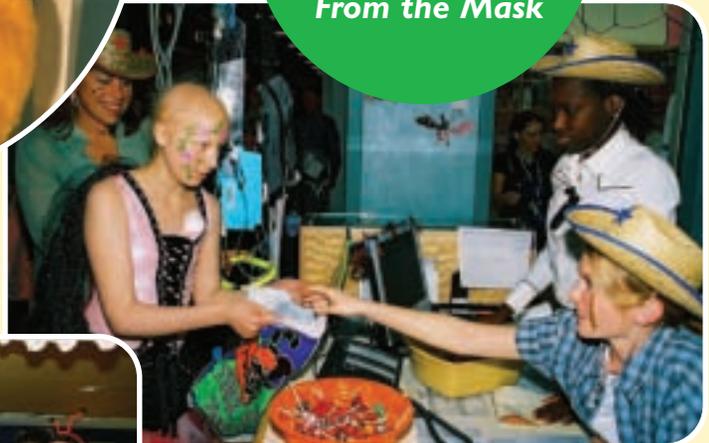
Pediatrics is renowned for our amazing parties. Maybe it's the cupcakes or maybe it's the costumes (and of course it's the guest list!). But one thing we know for sure – each party is well worth all the planning and effort. Here are some recent highlights.

Halloween...

It's hard to figure out the best part of Halloween. Candy is right up there. The costumes are pretty cool, as is the parade of trick-or-treaters throughout Memorial Hospital. From the glam of Cinderella, to the gore of scary monsters, the kids transformed themselves into every dream character under the sun. Parents joined the fun too, one even dressing as an ostrich, and another as Scooby Doo. Festivities began early with face painters decorating cheeks with flowers and entire faces with lions' masks. When everyone looked like somebody else, the Child Life staff – excuse us! we mean Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, Glenda, and the Wizard – led the trick-or-treating through the Pediatric Day Hospital with all the goblins, gremlins, princesses, and pirates close behind. Kids on the inpatient unit also had a fabulous time at Halloween, going door-to-door and exchanging candy, or simply handing it out from gift baskets taped to their doors. All in all, Halloween kicked off the season sweetly and spookily.



*"It's party time.
P, A, R, T, Why?
Because I gotta!"
From the Mask*



Session Assistants dress up as cowgirls and hand out candy to Trick-or-Treaters in the bed area.



Stephanie, a Support Leader in the Pediatric Day Hospital, wins the "look-alike" contest, dressing up as Dr. Meyers. Can you tell who's who?

Thanksgiving...

Although the Pediatric Day Hospital is closed on Thanksgiving, this does not prevent patients staying on M9, their families, and staff members from taking over the Recreation Center and feasting on a banquet even the pilgrims couldn't resist. Thanks to the Guy M. Stewart Cancer Fund, families can attend Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners provided by our friends in the Department of Food and Nutrition Services. This past Thanksgiving, after a few hours of talking and eating turkey, people returned to their rooms to watch football, sleep off their dinners, and give thanks for another holiday of sharing and laughter.



"Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving."

W.T. Purkiser



Christmas...

Santa never fails to make a stop in Pediatrics to visit all the good girls and boys...which is everyone. Arriving with his special elves and bags upon bags of presents provided by The Society of MSKCC's Childrens Committee, our Christmas party was a total hit. Kids sat on Santa's lap and told him how good they were all year long, while the elves handed out Santa's gifts. Santa also made his way to visit our inpatients, presenting each of them with a bag of gifts. The spirit of Christmas was certainly evident in Pediatrics during this holiday season.

"The only thing bad about a holiday is it is followed by a non-holiday."

Anonymous



Hanukkah...

Nobody does Hanukkah quite like Pediatrics. It is a bonanza of fun, games, great food, and awesome people. Chai Lifeline donated so much food – including huge jelly donuts and other amazing sweets – that all the kids' faces lit up at the sight of the table. The magician and game tables had them – and some of their parents – roaring with laughter. The party also had its very own musician who played traditional songs on the keyboard for everyone's enjoyment.



NYC Marathon and Fred's Team...

Once again, the New York City Marathon surpassed all expectations of fastness and fun. This year, the Marathon was held on Sunday, November 5, and we broke our own record of having the most inpatient kids gather on First Avenue to watch the race. Cowbells, foam fingers, Fred's Team T-Shirts, and huge signs were just some of the paraphernalia we used to cheer on the runners. Most inspiring, though, were our very own staff members who ran this year for Fred's Team. Leading the pack was Brian Kushner, in his tenth New York City Marathon, and first-time marathoners Christine Durney, Jill Ackerman, and Kim Kramer. Our appreciation for the members of Fred's Team, which raises money for Pediatrics at MSKCC, was reflected on the happy faces of the kids and staff cheering them on.

One of the crowning moments of the Marathon didn't even take place on Marathon Sunday. The Monday following the race a group of Fred's Team runners visited Pediatrics wearing their medals. It was pretty hard to tell that they'd run 26.2 miles the day before. Their smiles and energy certainly inspired the patients – and many staff members vowed to run the Marathon in 2007.

Thank you to Aubrey Barr and all our friends at the Aubrey Fund for your ongoing inspiration and support.



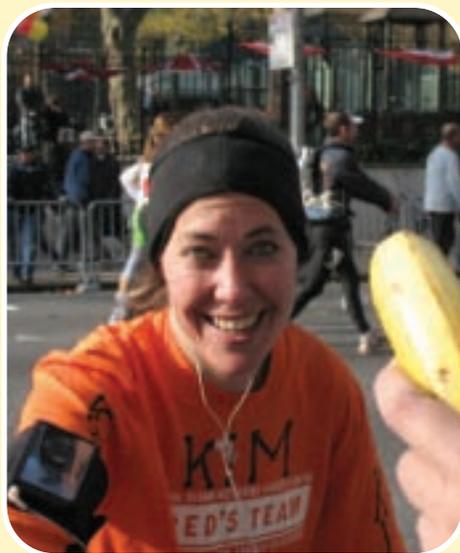
"The Marathon can humble you."

Bill Rodgers

Dr. Boulad and a patient pose incognito.



Aubrey Barr pauses to thank the Fred's Team cheering section during the NYC Marathon.



Dr. Kim Kramer gets some needed nutrition to finish the race.



Jill Ackerman looks like she's at mile two, instead of mile 17!

...And Now, an Exclusive Interview with Dr. Brian Kushner, Fred's Team Veteran and Superstar Runner...



Dr. Brian Kushner tries not to laugh as his name is marked on his jersey.



Dr. Brian Kushner stays focused during the race.

Dr. Brian Kushner, an attending pediatrician, has been running with Fred's Team for the past ten years. Recently, he sat down with Katie Robinson to reflect on his running career.

Katie: What got you started running, and how many years have you been doing it?

Dr. Brian Kushner: I was always active, but it was my wife who got me into long-distance running. She was doing fundraising for Fred's Team in 1995 and suggested I get involved with the team as something to do while our daughters were away for eight weeks at summer camp. So I can actually give you a precise date for when I began training for a marathon. It was June 26, 1996, when we returned home from the mountains after dropping our daughters off at sleep-away camp.

K: How do you train for a marathon? What are your workouts like? How many miles do you run per week?

BK: During the year, I jog four to six times a week, doing six-and-a-half to 11 miles each time – so that's 30 to 55 miles per week. Beginning in late June, I increase my running to six times every week and aim for more than 60 miles a week – though a few years ago, in my prime, I regularly did 75-85 miles per week. There are many times when I'm tired and think about not running – but I get motivated by several things: I think about how being tired is trivial compared to the issues confronting our patients and their families. I think about people who suffer from illnesses of one sort or another who would do anything to be able to get out and walk, much less run. And I think about how great I feel as I get to the end of my run, with the exercise-induced release of endorphins.

K: Do you have a race strategy?

BK: My strategy involves getting some sleep the night before, eating my three "B's – a banana, a bagel, and a PowerBar – and drinking plenty of fluid that morning. Then I head out at a reasonable pace with a target time for each

mile in mind. I try to focus on the overall goal. I think about how many people are counting on me and rooting for me, and I look forward to certain milestones – like getting to MSKCC and seeing my relatives and friends.

K: What did you feel like on race day? Did you have a goal time in mind? What was your final time?

BK: I felt very good on race day. My goal was to finish in under four hours. I ended up doing 3:43. I was extremely happy with that time, though it was not anywhere near my personal record of 2:58.

K: What is the best thing about running with Fred's Team? You've run ten New York City Marathons with the team, correct?

BK: I have indeed run ten Marathons with Fred's Team. What a great organization! What terrific leaders! What a great purpose! What great members! The camaraderie is awesome. The perks are pretty COOL. The dedication of all involved is just very, very special.

K: Can you estimate how much money you've raised for Fred's Team over the years?

BK: I have raised about \$250,000 for Fred's Team.

K: How many more marathons do you plan on running?

BK: I have no intention of stopping. I plan to continue until something happens physically to prevent me from getting out there!

K: Final thoughts?

BK: How inspiring all those people are who have overcome physical impairments and participate in the race.

A Day in the Life of...

Not only do celebrities want to come to Pediatrics to visit the kids – some of them don't want to leave. Singers, actors, and sports stars all want to meet and greet every patient in the hospital, and will leave loads of pictures and CDs for patients not in the hospital that day. If you ask us, it's because our patients are so super-COOL that celebrities are drawn here, like bees to honey.

Jennifer Love Hewitt...

Jennifer Love Hewitt loves Pediatrics. She came for her third visit this past fall and was as impressive as usual – kind, thoughtful, and even prettier in person. Patients and families enjoyed her visit as much as Jennifer enjoyed speaking with them. Thank you, Jennifer, for another lovely afternoon.



Rihanna...

Rihanna was delighted to visit all the patients in Pediatrics this year. She signed many autographs, brought toys for the kids, and, in the pictures we took, looked almost as good as all the patients! Rihanna didn't even bat an eye when she gowned up to visit many of the inpatient kids on isolation. To her, it was just another day of making people happy.



Gavin DeGraw...

Musicians on Call introduced Pediatrics to Gavin DeGraw, who was on familiar terms with everyone as soon as he stepped off the elevator. Needless to say, Gavin is charismatic. Not only did he give an awesome acoustic concert in the Recreation Center, but he also gave private concerts to several inpatients, including a stunning version of *Tracks of My Tears* by Smokey Robinson. Gavin made a huge effort to get to know each person he spoke to in Pediatrics, and everyone has declared him a friend forever.

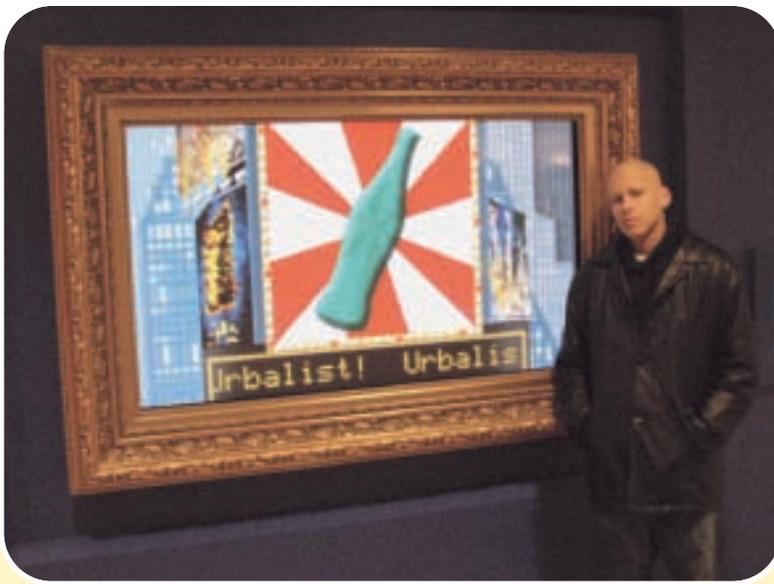


Hofstra Basketball Team...

The Hofstra University Men's Basketball Team visited Pediatrics in December, and proved that if you eat your Wheaties and drink your milk you too can be as tall and as much of a superstar as these athletes. Arriving in their warm-up suits and Santa Claus hats, all the players happily gave away signed posters, basketballs, books of their stats, and pictures. Patients, family members, and staff were in awe – not only at their height, but also because a kinder, more polite, and engaging group of young men couldn't be imagined. Good luck, Hofstra Basketball, in all your games!

Adam Graves...

The very cool, very kind Adam Graves of the New York Rangers hockey team also came to visit the kids in Pediatrics. Parents and patients were impressed that this retired superstar took time from his busy schedule as a coach and consultant to the Rangers to sign autographs and speak to the kids about the sport. Known for breaking NHL records, Adam Graves set similarly high standards during his visit to Pediatrics.



...And Jesse Hershkowitz, Pediatrics' Very Own Hip-Hop Artist...

Jesse, a.k.a. "Urbalist" is a 26-year-old pediatric patient. He was an aspiring Hip-Hop artist in Atlanta before he was diagnosed with cancer. He just finished his last treatment cycle of chemotherapy and sat down with Katie Robinson to discuss how he's feeling, and what he plans to do next. Portions of that interview will be featured in the next issue of News9. In the meantime, check out his music and lyrics from *Cancerous Flow, A Lyrical Journal* on our web site at www.mskcc.org. Go to Patient Care and click on Pediatric Cancer Care.

How Hip-Hop Saved My Life

*The depression hit hard when I heard the news,
I slept for two days, just mainly tryin' to search for clues.
So I decided I would write and record an "EP."
Produce the beats as well, and then put it out on CD.
The perfect way to keep a journal, and also my brain occupied,
I've got to try to keep it positive and brave personified.
Every single song would be about the disease,
From different aspects and angles, and amounts of degrees.
So I stayed writing, stayed fighting, remained exciting,
Stayed on schedule for chemo even though I stayed frightened.
Ayo, I'm so lucky that I love this music,
Cause I could be doin' much worse, undisputed.
Hip-Hop saved me, ain't no maybe about it,
Ain't no such thing as real safety, at least lately I doubt it.
My life is owed to Hip-Hop literally,
Cause it keeps me thinking positive instead of miserably.*



The Writers Workshop...

In each issue of News9, we present the work of writers who participate in our Writers Workshop. This month, we are featuring poetry from a very promising and prolific writer, 26-year-old Rose.

Apple Picking

By Rose

The smell of apple-cider doughnuts
Wafts through the cinnamon-sugar air.
Nostrils flare to inhale the warm scent.
My stomach churns as if already burdened
By deep-fried dough: the physical memory
Of an odd anniversary.

The day before chemo I climbed
An apple tree; carved a pumpkin;
Shaved my hair into a Mohawk.
Two weeks later I pulled the crown out
Watched fine hairs fall from fingertips
Into a mustard yellow plastic basin
Kept at my side for puking.

Back in the orchard, hair regrown,
The tartness of the apple in my mouth
Gives cover for the tears in my eyes.
I wander alone to the pumpkin patch,
Choose the biggest gourd in sight,
Wonder if my fatigued limbs can hoist
My trophy, carry it back to the car.

*"Writing eases
my suffering...
writing is my way
of reaffirming my
own existence."*

Gao Zingjian



We Asked The Experts...

and here are the
**Top 10 Reasons
Why Pediatrics is
So COOL...**

- 10** We celebrate everything here: holidays, birthdays, Rally Days, just because days. What else could we do? – Staff
- 9** The Halloween Parade in the hospital was so fun. I liked going to scans in a costume and getting candy instead of laying on a table. – Patient
- 8** A certain man, in a certain red suit, gave me a certain gift that I certainly love. Next year I want a puppy. – Patient
- 7** I still like the clowns the best. They never know what's going on. – Patient
- 6** People were mesmerized by Gavin DeGraw. He is really something else. – Staff
- 5** I stuffed myself with turkey on Thanksgiving. That seems pretty cool to me. – Patient
- 4** The way the staff goes that extra mile to make everyone feel at home during the holidays with dinners, parties, and special visitors – it really makes us feel that this can be a home away from home. – Parent
- 3** I was truly inspired by watching Fred's Team in the NYC Marathon. They ran with all their hearts for these kids. What a gift each of those runners is to us. – Staff
- 2** I think Jennifer Love Hewitt is just so sweet to come here and visit the children. She's just a doll. – Parent
- 1** The candy. Definitely the baskets, and baskets of candy. Everywhere. Almost every day. – Patient



Calendars...

This year, Pediatrics introduced its very own 2007 calendar. Featuring artwork from the first installation of the Gallery Wall and quotations from the kids who created that artwork, these calendars are not to be missed. Thanks to the Laura Rosenberg Foundation, the proceeds from the sale of these calendars support the art community in Pediatrics. For information on how to purchase a calendar, visit www.mskcc.org. Go to Patient Care, and click on Pediatric Cancer Care. They will remain on sale throughout the year.

Thank You...

This past holiday season, we received a bounty of electronics, games, dolls, costumes, candy, books, and very generous contributions that will fund our recreational programming through 2008. For all those gifts, and for the many more that we receive throughout the year, we'd like to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

And an Extra Special Thank You to...

The Kristen Ann Carr Fund, Sony Music, the Laura Rosenberg Foundation, members of the Children's Committee of The Society of MSKCC and The Society of MSKCC, our very own Santa Claus, Musicians on Call, the Department of Food and Nutrition Services, and our volunteers who always remember us during holiday times. Their help, holiday cheer, and generosity make Pediatrics an extra-special and extra-COOL place all year long.



Memorial Sloan-Kettering
Cancer Center

The Best Cancer Care. Anywhere.

The Department of Pediatrics gratefully acknowledges the Glenn D. Kesselhaut Children's Joy Fund for the support of our creative writing projects and publication of NEWS9.