



Spring Sparks Creativity in Pediatrics!

The early onset of warm weather has sparked spring fever in Pediatrics! The creative juices have been flowing on the 9th floor and we are excited to share what we've been up to.



All smiles during Earth Day



Enjoying a colorful tie-dye project

Stop & Shop Triple Winner Campaign

Thank you to MSKCC and Peds' largest corporate donor, Stop & Shop Supermarket Company. Each spring brings the Triple Winner Campaign to all metropolitan area stores in New York and New Jersey, providing over \$10 million to date in support of vital research initiatives.

PLAY Triple Winner

help us fight childhood cancer

Cristian
Melissa
Matisse
Sydney



The Wood Brothers

The Wood Brothers joined us for a musical morning of fun this March. They played several of their own songs and some old-time favorites for an audience of patients, parents, siblings, and staff. After the performance, kids learned to play some of the band's most interesting instruments.

Cherry Blossom Festival

The inpatient unit was full of color and spring themes this April. Patients and staff joined to create a cherry blossom tree, constantly adding beautiful new blossoms and animal friends to sit in the tree. The festival inspired creativity and fun as families made their own birds and butterflies to perch in the branches of the tree.



Dominique and Pnina give a parent advice about her child's dietary needs

Cooking with Chef Pnina

To celebrate National Nutrition Month we hosted a lively and educational cooking demonstration with Executive Chef Pnina and Certified Dietitian Dominique. Kids and family members created savory and sweet burritos while learning about the benefits of this versatile meal from our experts. Burritos are great for packing in additional nutrients such as fiber and protein. The best part is making your own!



Hewlett High School Cabaret

Each year our friends at Hewlett High School put on a cabaret night to raise funds for our pediatric recreation program and this year was no different. After another successful evening event, a select group came to perform for our patients, families, and staff. The Recreation Center overflowed with energy as the talented dancers, singers, and comedians performed. Patients and siblings participated in the show, dancing and singing in their seats, playing musical instruments, and answering silly questions posed by the comedy troupe.

Thank you to everyone at Hewlett High School and the Laura Rosenberg Foundation for your continued support!

Mural Masters

A new weekly program has been added to the schedule in Pediatrics. Every Wednesday, patients, siblings, caregivers, and staff work on a collaborative art piece featuring a word with special meaning. Our inaugural piece, *STRONG*, was inspired by the strength and perseverance of our patients and their families through difficult treatments and long days



at the hospital. Each week participants added to the mural using different mediums such as paint, markers, cotton balls, and anything else that inspired them. We continue this work with our next piece, *PROUD*.



Earth Day

We celebrated the earth in Pediatrics with the Lorax! After a special reading of the story, patients, volunteers, and families created Truffula trees to build a forest similar to the one in *The Lorax*. The finished product — a joint effort of the outpatient and inpatient units — was proudly displayed and added a splash of color to everyone’s day!



St. Paddy’s Day Mural

This St. Patrick’s Day we created our own rainbow with a pot of gold at the end of it! Shamrocks with lucky wishes embellished the masterpiece.



Tie-Dye Bonanza

We are definitely ready for summer here in Peds! Our Tie-Dye Bonanza kicked off some of our special summer programming. Participants created their very own designs and styles, producing some gorgeous new t-shirts.



A young patient and her mom enjoy hunting for eggs during our Easter egg hunt!

Easter Party

Patients and family members enjoyed a colorful Easter Egg Hunt in the Recreation Center!



Mardi Gras Celebration

Beads, crowns, and music make for a great party! We celebrated Mardi Gras in Peds with lots of green, purple, and gold fun.



Notes from Our P.S. 401 Teachers

Meet the Teaching Staff From Our School, P.S. 401

School is high priority for us here in Pediatrics. As part of a New York City Department of Education program called Hospital Schools, we have four full-time teachers who instruct all grades from kindergarten through high school.



Joanne DiMartino, Hospital Schools Principal, Mary Maher, Parent Coordinator, Maureen Murphy and Anne Marie Cicciu at the Annual Convocation Ceremony

After more than a decade as the Early Childhood teacher at MSKCC, I still get the same thrill of teaching my beautiful students as I had during my first year in 2001. These little angels are eager to attend school, learn their letters, write their names and learn their numbers—even through all the challenges of treatment they experience on a daily basis. I am privileged to teach these special students and, heaven knows, how much they've taught me in return.

The joy of seeing visiting students once their treatment ends—sometimes a visit 3 or 4 times a year—is very touching. The things they remember, after years, when they were seated at our school table amaze me. One child, returning to MSKCC after several years asked me, “Do you still call the children at the table Angel Girl or Angel Boy?” Another student asked, “When you lose at UNO, do you still go in the closet and cry so no one will call you a Sore Loser?” And what a thrill to receive mail and e-mails from parents forwarding their children’s schoolwork with photos and attached notes telling me the color of their child’s hair—a crowning glory for all of us. And just this past week, while seated with three little students at the school table, a dad and son came into the room and said “There you are Anne Marie, you’re still here!” I taught this child eleven years ago and I can still see a glow of innocence around him. He’s a young man,



Edie Silsdorf, Claudia Rogers and Mary Maher at the Annual Pediatric Prom

handsome and bright but he will always be my innocent Angel Boy. I am truly blessed to have such wonderful memories, beautiful children, and loving families as part of my life.

Thank You MSKCC from the bottom of my heart! – **Anne Marie Cicciu, Lower Elementary School Teacher**

“Hi, I’m teacher Joanne. Do you want some homework?”

This is my opening line when I see a child waiting for treatment. The child usually hides behind Mom and sputters “no thank you”, but quickly reconsiders and is eager to come to class.



While this may seem surprising, school at MSKCC provides a break from the medical demands of treatment. It offers a place for learning, socialization, and normalcy. The hospital school ensures that the children will be prepared for the academic challenges when they return to their home school (the next day or the next year).

Although I was a theatre major in college, I quickly realized that I was no Meryl Streep, so I found another stage—in front of the classroom. A teacher is an actor, comedian,



salesman, and magician who tries to make schoolwork seem like play. I have been teaching for 30 years but my recent appointment to MSKCC has been my most rewarding experience. It is a joy to share my love of teaching with my third, fourth, and fifth grade students and to participate in the enriching activities and celebrations offered here. I am inspired by the children and their families as they have taught me to value and find good in each day. Thank You! – **Joanne DiMartino, Upper Elementary School Teacher**

I joined the hospital schools staff at MSKCC three years ago, after 21 years of teaching with the Dept. of Education. Witnessing each student's strength and determination as they attend school in the hospital is a unique experience. Every student brings something to add to the school environment that the teachers here create. For some of the middle school students it is a focus in literature or writing, for others it's completing the year's curriculum for their home school. The high level of individualization for every student is what makes the job interesting all of the time.

One of the most rewarding experiences here is integrating literature, writing and history. This past year we have covered topics such as Ancient Civilizations, United States History and Geography. Reading with the students, and watching them relate to a character or laugh out loud is simple but always brings so much reward to the day. In school, the goal is always to keep up with grade level assignments, or complete the work from every student's classroom.



Having such a close one to one relationship with our students and their families, helps to understand their academic strengths and challenges more deeply than if we were in a typical classroom.

Teaching some of our middle school students how to read and write in English, when they arrive here from other countries is also something that I truly enjoy. It is very exciting when it all comes together and students realize that it is not as hard as they think it will be. Whether a student has traveled here from far away, or living in the city, school creates a sense of the usual for them.

Each year being here brings something new, and it is always interesting learning from the dedicated professionals that work in pediatrics. I look forward to continuing to have the opportunity to work with a truly amazing group of students! – **Claudia Rogers, Middle School Teacher**

I have worked at MSKCC as the High School teacher for two years and consider myself very lucky to have this amazing position. I consider it an honor to be able to work with the teenagers on the 9th floor. Not only do they open their school books with me, but they open their hearts and allow me to become part of their lives during their time here.

There are sad times, but there are so many good times that are dear to my heart. Whether it is trying to figure out a calculus or chemistry problem, conjugating verbs in Spanish, or taking a final on Shakespeare, the students here are motivated and endeavor to keep up with their class work as they receive their treatments. In addition to daily class work, this year I took great pleasure in administering regents and SATs, working on college applications, writing glowing letters of recommendations, and receiving news of college acceptances. Watching my students go on with their lives as they fight their disease has taught me what I want to be like when I grow up. You are my heroes! – **Edie Silsdorf, High School Teacher**



Child Life Month

Each March we recognize the hard work and dedication of our five Child Life Specialists. Throughout the month, Child Life hosted a number of activities and events designed to teach patients and siblings about self-awareness, distraction techniques, and medical play.



Child Life Specialist, Evan Clark, works with a patient to create his own "Find-It"



Our Child Life Team: From Left: Evan Clark, Leslie Marnett, Jessica Anenberg, Alyson Silver, Front: Therese Weisbrot



A sibling creates her "Why I'm Special" t-shirt

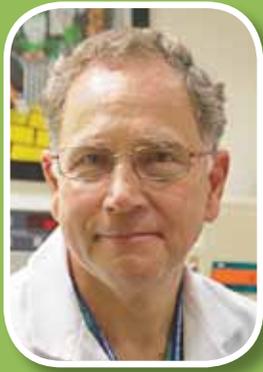
The Child Life Program at MSKCC helps children, teens and families learn about their treatment and adjust to the hospital environment in age appropriate ways. Through medical play, procedure preparation, and special programming, Child Life Specialists provide many ways for patients and their families to learn and share their experiences together. Call us when...

1. A child or teen is newly diagnosed so we can help with needs.
2. A child needs preparation and support for an invasive procedure and/or scan.
3. A child or teen requires assistance with swallowing or taking medicines.
4. A sibling expresses specific fears or concerns and can use some help.
5. A patient is having difficulty coping with a necessary procedure, i.e., crying, fighting, hiding or may be non-compliant with treatment plan.

Who's Who in Pediatrics

The Peds team is made up of a large and unique group of professionals who work to bring our patients and their families the best care possible. We are proud to introduce this new feature to our newsletter. Meet two of the stars from the Peds Surgery Team.

Chief of Pediatric Surgical Service: Michael La Quaglia, MD



Most patients requiring a surgical procedure will meet Dr. La Quaglia at some point in their care. Dr. La Quaglia performs more than 500 surgeries every year. He works with Carol Rossetto (see below) and other nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, and surgical fellows on his team to provide the best care possible before, during, and after surgery.

1. What did you do before coming to work in Pediatrics?

I worked at Boston Children's Hospital as a pediatric surgeon. I came to MSKCC in 1987.

2. Why do you love Peds?

I love working here because of the kids. They are so vibrant and interesting. I also truly enjoy interacting with patients and their families. Meeting people from all over the world and being able to help them is really gratifying.

3. What do you do when you're not at work?

Outside of work I love to go running and participate in Aikido, a type of Japanese martial arts. I also enjoy doing advanced math algorithms in my free time—I even have a book with me now!

4. What is your favorite program or activity in Pediatrics?

My favorite activities during the year are Prom and Convocation. Prom is so much fun—seeing the kids dance, get dressed up in gowns and tuxedos and having a great time is amazing. Convocation is the ultimate confirmation of my work here. To see patients who are doing well and able to finish high school and lead a more normal life is an honor to witness.

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP): Carol Rossetto



Carol is a Nurse Practitioner with our surgery team. She works closely with patients and families before and after their surgery. She also coordinates care with the other medical teams when patients need further treatment.

1. What did you do before coming to work in Pediatrics?

Before I came to MSKCC, I worked as a PNP at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I had a soft spot for MSKCC since I did a clinical rotation here with Dr. [Peter] Steinherz while I was in graduate school at Yale. But I never in a million years thought I would work here.

2. Why do you love Peds?

The best part of working in Peds is the kids that you get to see and treat every day. They have an amazing amount of resiliency, strength, and determination. They just want to be kids and if we can make that happen on top of treating their cancer, then we have done our jobs! We are so lucky that we have so many non-medical resources for these kids, including yoga, music therapy, karate, and guided imagery.

3. What do you do when you're not at work?

Outside of work I like to exercise, travel, and enjoy New York City. New York is a candy store for adults.

4. What is your favorite program or activity in Pediatrics?

The Prom. The smiles you see on the faces of the kids and the parents bring tears to my eyes. They look forward to this big event all year round and have a blast!



We asked around...

Summer is coming, what is your favorite part?

- 10** *I love the sunshine that streams through the skylights in the bed area. It brightens everyone's day!* – Session Assistant
- 9** *Ice cream parties!* – Patient
- 8** *Our annual talent show! Who knew Dr. Cheung and Dr. Boulad could sing like that?!* – Child Life Specialist
- 7** *It's so exciting to hear about everyone's adventures and the fun they had at summer camp.* – Nurse Practitioner
- 6** *The summer assistants are so fun to play with—they always have new ideas for activities!* – Sibling
- 5** *Seeing patients play with their brothers and sisters who are off from school is so heartwarming* – Nurse
- 4** *No school!* – Patient
- 3** *More time with family and friends* – Physician
- 2** *The end of chemotherapy for me!* – Patient
- 1** *Watching the New York Yankees play almost every day!* – Administrator



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Writer's Workshop

A young bone marrow transplant patient sent this sweet poem to her anonymous bone marrow donor.

To My Greatest Donor

As I lay here in my hospital bed
There are so many thoughts that can be said

My recognition of good knows no bound
That people like you can be found

Giving stem cells to someone you don't even know
Is the ultimate kindness that one can show

You took out a lot of time and energy
To make sure you're a suitable match for me

Then the transplant was on delay
But you patiently waited for my special day

November 17th, 2011 will be etched in my memory
As the time your stem cells entered my body

God should grant you long and happy years
And you should only cry happy tears

Thank you, thank you, thank you so much
I hope one day we will be in touch!



Join the Bone Marrow Donor Registry Today!
http://marrow.org/Join/Join_the_Registry.aspx



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