



Welcome...

This past spring, Pediatrics went crazy for the arts. We brought in professional artists to help our patients create murals, welcomed multi-talented singers, dancers, and actors, and pulled out all the stops for some wonderful parties and holiday celebrations. What makes all this creativity possible? It's a combination of the best patients, a committed staff, and the belief that color, music, laughter, and dancing makes everything better in Pediatrics.



A mother and son pose for a picture during our Valentine's Day festivities.



Some serious painting gets done during an art session with Jerard Studio.



A patient greets the lion during our Chinese New Year celebration.

What's Happening...

Triple Winner...

For the past six years, the Stop & Shop Supermarket Company has partnered with MSKCC to bring the Triple Winner Campaign to the tri-state area. This special partnership supports pediatric cancer research in solid tumors at MSKCC and has raised over \$4.9 million to date.

To play, people purchase a \$1 Triple Winner game ticket at their local Stop & Shop checkout counters.

Everyone who gets a ticket is a guaranteed instant winner of a product valued at \$1 or more and also has a chance to collect up to \$10,000 in cash. The campaign, which lasts from mid-April to July, will raise \$1.25 million in 2008 alone!

Many thanks to the ongoing support of Stop & Shop, the New York Mets, Edy's Ice Cream, and our awesome Triple Winner kids – Kamirah, Kellie, Faisal, Shemar, and Amy – for making a commitment to further our research for a cure for childhood cancer.

Jerard Studio...

This past spring, the professional artists from Jerard Studio in Brooklyn partnered up with our patients and their siblings to create the next installation of the Gallery Wall in the main waiting area of the Pediatric Day Hospital. With our planet's environment as their focus, our young artists were encouraged to explore and interpret the flora and fauna of jungles, deserts, and the sea. Look to the next issue of News9 for more pictures as the project continues. The new exhibit will be installed during the summer of 2008.

Pediatrics gratefully thanks Mary Creede, John Jerard, and all the artists from Jerard Studio for their inspiration and creativity. Their efforts help Pediatrics rival some of New York's best known art galleries.

"You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give."

Winston Churchill



"Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes, and having fun."

Mary Lou Cook



Artist John Jerard helps a nine year old patient bring the beauty of the jungle to life in an impressive drawing of a parrot.

Artist Mary Creede points out the importance of color in drawing.

George W. Hewlett High School...

Each year, the singers, dancers, musicians, and comedians of Hewlett High School showcase their talents at their Cabaret Night in Hewlett, Long Island. For the past 26 years this special event has been raising money and awareness for pediatric cancer at MSKCC!

Even cooler, though, is when the seniors from Cabaret Night come to Pediatrics to perform for our patients and staff. Their comedy acts kept the patients laughing, and their renditions of Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart" and another old favorite, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" were supreme!

Thanks to the ongoing support of all our friends at The Laura Rosenberg Foundation Inc. that makes Cabaret Night and other special programming possible for Pediatrics. Thanks also to MSKCC's Hewlett High School graduates, Dr. Trudy Small, Nurse Julia Scholl, and teacher Ross Cohen, for their words of inspiration to this year's HHS Cabaret performers.



The beat goes on with a drum line of seniors from Hewlett High School.



Norma Rosenberg (center) – along with clowns from the Big Apple Circus Clown Care unit, and members of HHS – wave to patients watching Cabaret Night on closed circuit television.



Dr. Meyers might need some new threads before he goes on tour.



Dr. Alex Chou proves to be a fierce competitor at Guitar Hero. Must be all the practice!

Did you know...

Guitar Hero is fast becoming a new favorite in Pediatrics. But it's not just for patients — staff is going crazy for it too. These impromptu jam sessions are happening weekly — with guess who as the lead guitarist!!! Next time you're ready to test your talents, bring your favorite staff member in for some serious musical competition.

Celebrate...

Super Bowl...

What better way to celebrate the completion of football season than with a win by our very own New York Giants? We kicked off Super Bowl weekend with a football toss in the Recreation Center and some stadium nachos. On Super Bowl Sunday, patients on the inpatient unit watched the game on our big-screen television and rooted the Giants on to their 17-14 victory against the New England Patriots.



One of the winners from the Super Bowl football toss showing off her lucky ball.



The animal float that led the Mardi Gras parade was a re-creation of the Central Park Zoo.

Mardi Gras...

Mardi Gras was a blast this year in Pediatrics. With a bevy of beads and an incredible float, the Child Life staff led the Pediatric Parade Krewe on an unforgettable procession through the Pediatric Day Hospital. Tapping their tambourines and tinging their triangles, this ambitious group of patients announced that Mardi Gras is one of the most musical of holidays.

Valentine's Day...

Pediatrics shared the love at our annual Valentine's Day party. Tons of cupcakes, heart balloons, and lots of hugs made it a lovely day for our patients, families, and staff.



The dragon dancers and kids began the Year of the Rat with lots of red (for good luck) and cheer.

Chinese New Year...

According to the Chinese calendar it's the Year of the Rat, and Pediatrics celebrated with just the right activity: a lion dance. Pediatrics welcomed a professional dance troupe to perform the lively traditional dance. Special Chinese food was on the menu to give patients, families, and staff a taste of what to expect in the coming year.



Not to be outdone, Pediatrics made their own dancing lion for the New Year.



“To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act.”
Anatole France



St. Patrick’s Day...

St. Patrick’s Day was celebrated in style and with all the luck of the Irish in Pediatrics. Though the annual New York parade took place, as it does every year, on Fifth Avenue, the Child Life staff pulled together an equally impressive parade of its own, complete with pots of gold, Celtic music, and a traveling rainbow. Some party-goers even spied a lucky leprechaun in the Pediatric Day Hospital.



Purim...

Another holiday Pediatrics celebrated was Purim. Thanks to our friends at Chai Lifeline, who brought some awesome puppets and great food to share, patients and staff learned about the history of this celebration and performed impromptu skits with their new felt friends.



To view this issue, and past issues of News9, please visit
<http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/5636.cfm>



Happiness Really is Camping...

Summer camp can offer many exciting and lifelong memories: campfires, sing-a-longs, cool counselors, and lasting friendships. For Carlos Romero and Kelly Ann Mount, their camp experience included these special occasions and the place where they first became friends. But what they hadn't bargained for was that their friendship would take them beyond the campgrounds of HIC and on an incredible journey together.



Then... Carlos and Kelly, about 13 years old, on the campgrounds of Happiness Is Camping.

Carlos and Kelly met at Happiness Is Camping. HIC is one of the country's first summer camps exclusively for kids with cancer and their siblings. Carlos, diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), began attending HIC when he was eight. Kelly, who was also diagnosed with ALL, began going to camp when she was seven. Though both were treated at MSKCC and shared the same diagnosis, their friendship blossomed on the campgrounds of HIC. Neither remembers their initial meeting. Instead, they were part of a very close group of friends that returned to camp summer after summer.

The group of campers liked to go horseback riding, swimming, and fishing. Even after Kelly and Carlos finished their treatment, they continued to attend camp because HIC was about seeing their friends and having fun. As they got older, they enjoyed hanging out in the teen lounge and watching the stars at night. One summer, Carlos even returned to HIC as a camp counselor. The precious few weeks the group shared at camp were invaluable, and many of them stayed in touch throughout the school year with letters and phone calls.

When Kelly was a senior in high school she asked Carlos to her senior prom. She still thought of him as just a friend, though Carlos had begun to feel differently. Maybe it was the tux or maybe it was the timing, but by the end of the summer, Kelly and Carlos were officially an item. Through college they dated and their relationship deepened.

After Carlos finished graduate school they took a short trip to Victoria, British Columbia. Carlos thought the vacation a perfect opportunity to propose. As they moseyed through a series of huge governmental buildings that looked like castles, Carlos – an avid photographer – took out his camera and posed Kelly on the regal steps of the state building. As she smiled for the camera, he approached her with an engagement ring, got down on his knee, and proposed – catching the whole experience on film.



Now... Carlos and Kelly pose for their engagement pictures this past year.

Carlos and Kelly know that things happen for a reason, and that the odds were against them of ever getting to meet, let alone become lifelong friends. Carlos knows that the odds of getting cancer, of being treated at the same hospital, of attending the same camp despite living in different states, of maintaining friendships from childhood, and ultimately falling in love with one of those friends – are incredible.

“I am always amazed how patients stay in touch with each other over the years.

Whether they are roommates together, or bunkmates at HIC, they form a special bond,” commented Roseann Tucci, Nurse Practitioner for the Adult Survivor Program (ASP) at MSKCC. These special bonds go beyond roommates and bunkmates though. Roseann has known both Carlos and Kelly since she volunteered as a staff nurse for HIC, and was a guest at their May 23rd wedding. “Two former patients, survivors of childhood cancer, marrying each other this year is indeed a rare and beautiful thing!”



Summer Camps

For Carlos and Kelly, camp was a life-changing experience, and we hope that many kids will share in the fun times summer camp can offer. That's why we work closely with three area camps, all of which meet the medical needs of our patients and that kids can attend at no cost to our families.

Happiness Is Camping (HIC), located in Blairstown, New Jersey, is a sleep-away camp for patients and their siblings ages 6 to 15. This awesome camp is home to its very own zip line, which whisks patients from treetops to the ground. Sign up for one week, or the whole summer – you'll never be bored at HIC! For more information go to <http://www.happinesiscamping.org/>

Sunrise Day Camp is the only full-time day camp in the area for kids with cancer. Patients and siblings ages 3 to 16 can enjoy the pool, driving range, or arts and crafts activities during the day, and return home to their families at night. For more information go to <http://www.sunrisedaycamp.org/>

Camp Simcha is a sleep-away camp located in Spey, New York, and offers boating, mini-golf, drama, and a host of other activities for patients ages 6 to 21. Their kid-friendly cuisine is awesome, and their hot air balloon ride is out of this world. For more information go to <http://www.chailifeline.org/programdetail.php?program=1>

For even more information on these and other summer camps, see Katie Robinson – or check out the Web sites above.

“Carlos and Kelly have been part of the HIC family for a long time. They played at camp, volunteered at camp, worked at camp, and are now becoming a family together. We couldn't be more thrilled to be part of their story.”

Kurt Struver,
Executive Director of Happiness Is Camping



Back row, from left to right: Evan, Therese, and Melissa.
Front row: Nicole, Kate, and Jessica.

Child Life Month...

Child Life Month is recognized in March and our specialists pulled out all the stops with extended programming and activities. One of the highlights was Kids' Clinic, where patients acted as the medical staff and examined their doctors and nurses. Special thanks to Therese, Jessica, Nicole, Evan, and Melissa for all their help and support.

“Dedicate some of your life to others. Your dedication will not be a sacrifice. It will be an exhilarating experience because it is an intense effort applied toward a meaningful end.”

Dr. Thomas Dooley



In Kids' Clinic, roles are reversed. Acting as doctors and nurses, patients are able to take the vital signs of their own doctors and nurses.



During SIBS Day, a patient tries to conquer cancer by kicking out all the cancer cells in the game “Captain Chemo.”



Carol Rossetto, a Nurse Practitioner on the surgical team, gets her blood pressure taken during Kids' Clinic.



The Writer's Workshop

High school graduating senior Laura Parisi shares in this essay what it was like to suddenly know she could accomplish her dreams. Diagnosed with a brain tumor in early childhood, she struggled with school and self doubt until she overcame her inhibitions. This fall, Laura will be attending Cabrini College to pursue a degree in graphic arts.

We Asked The Experts...

And Here Are The Top 10 Reasons Why Pediatrics is So Spectacular...

10

The artists from Jerard Studio were so patient with the kids. They encouraged them through every stage of production — from concept, to drawing, to color selection. I can't wait to see the results. — Parent

9

I loved Kids' Clinic because I got to give my doctor a shot. — Patient

8

The beautiful tradition that connects MSKCC with my old alma mater, Hewlett High School, is a privilege to witness. — Teacher, Ross Cohen

7

Dr. Chou's secret goal in life is to be Slash from Guns 'N' Roses. — Teen

6

Thank goodness for the Child Life specialists. They have helped my daughter get accustomed to the hospital with books, medical play, and explaining what's going to happen next. — Parent

5

I love camp and being outside and all the counselors and swimming — and not caring about what I look like. — Patient

4

Our neighborhood Stop & Shop went out of their way to make us feel welcome. They hung my child's sign in the front of the store and we met store managers on Day One. The Triple Winner campaign is a great thing for Pediatrics. — Parent of Stop & Shop kid

3

The lion they had for Chinese New Year should go on "Dancing with the Stars." — Teen

2

Dr. Meyers may know a lot about medicine, random trivia, how to tie bow ties — but he needs some practice on the guitar. — Teen

1

Every time a former patient comes back to Pediatrics — happy and healthy — is a memory you embrace for a lifetime. — Staff Member



I've learned in life that you cannot wait for things to just fall into your lap. You have to make them happen for yourself. For instance, I push myself a little harder every day so I am prepared for college. But for a long time, this was not even a consideration because I thought I could never get into college. It was for people with good grades who were on the honor roll. I had neither.

In grade school and middle school, I struggled. I thought I couldn't do better in my classes due to the brain tumor I had as a young child. I convinced myself that because of it I could never do better than I was doing. I do not know what came over me, but as soon as I started high school I started to do better. My grades improved and I went up in class rank. Now, as a senior in high school, I have finally achieved my dream of being what I saw as "college material." I am in an honors class, I have made honor roll many times, and I cannot wait to start college in September.

My case manager in high school saw from Day One my potential to succeed despite my disabilities. She asked me on multiple occasions to speak to another student who also had a brain tumor. This particular student was convinced that he could never go to college because he had cancer. I told this student about my life, and how I had overcome many physical and emotional challenges in order to start college in September. After talking to him, I realized that if I had not flipped the switch and turned on the ambition to go to college, I would be in the same position as he was.

Currently, when anyone asks me about my experiences with cancer, I tell them how I have overcome so many things. In the future I would like to talk to people about what it is like to be a survivor. Maybe with my help, people will begin to see past a survivor's appearance and really understand their abilities and achievements.



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