

Caring

JUNE 2024



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Lessons from Golf

A letter from Debbie



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Caring

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During my annual address to the MGH community in celebration of Nurses Month, I focused on the lessons that we learn from sports and how it impacts us as healthcare providers. Myron Rolle, MD, chief resident in Neurosurgery, shared what he has learned from being an NFL football player and how it impacts his role as a physician. Nurse Meghara McManus, RN, White 8 Medicine, and former professional hockey player, discussed how teamwork empowers athletes and clinicians. Reggie Silver, RN, Interventional Radiology, led a meditation for the audience, explaining his passion for yoga as an instructor and practitioner.

Outside of my life here at MGH, one of my favorite things to do as the weather warms is get out and golf. It is a sport that brings me a lot of joy, alongside a healthy dose of frustration as any good competitive activity does.

Golf has taught me many life lessons.

First, golf is a humbling game, and you have to play the ball where it lands. Some days in healthcare are tougher than others, but like golf courses, there is beauty in every day. We just need to find it.

Another lesson I've learned is that golf requires constant maintenance and tune-ups. You have to practice and strive to learn new things. Working in healthcare is to be a lifelong learner. Processes, practices, and treatment strategies change. We must continuously be hungry for new knowledge and share that expertise with our colleagues.

Finally, to get really good at anything, you have to seek out good coaching. Find mentors that can provide guidance to help improve your game...or in our case, our clinical practice.

These lessons from golf are ones I know I lean on every day in my role here at MGH. In fact, I see so many of these lessons reflected in the pages of this edition of *Caring*. I wish you all a summer of shots straight down the fairway and fair weather!

Debbie



On the cover: Jeff Chambers, RN, Emergency Department assesses patient in the ambulance bay.

Celebrate with Caring

March: Social Work Month, Child Life Month

April: Volunteer Week

May: Better Hearing and Speech Month, Nurses Month

June: Clinical Support Staff Week

**CELEBRATE
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Profiles in Social Work: Easing Transitions, Offering Support

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Amalie Ducasse, MSW, LCSW Inpatient Med/Surg Social Worker

“My days are a blend of compassion, advocacy and support for my patients. Each morning, I immerse myself in the medical histories and personal stories of those entrusted to our care. Meeting with patients and providing therapeutic intervention is the heart of my work. It’s where I sit beside patients, offering a listening ear and a compassionate presence. Assessing patients’ psychosocial needs goes beyond medical care—it’s about understanding their emotions, fears, and coping mechanisms. Sometimes, it’s providing clinical interventions during moments of distress. Other times, it’s connecting them with community resources to ease their transition back home.”

“*I sit beside my patients, offering a listening ear and a compassionate presence.*”



Ashley Paleski, MSW, LCSW Dialysis Social Worker

“As the dialysis social worker, a typical day may consist of working with an individual new to dialysis, helping them determine how this will fit into their lives, supporting patients in clinic who do their own dialysis at home, and discussing goals of care with patients and families. I offer emotional support as well as advocate for my patients and their families. Advocacy may involve researching financial aid or endorsing a different dialysis modality or treatment schedule to increase quality of life. I also have the privilege of working as part of an interdisciplinary team. Together, we work to establish a treatment plan that supports both the patient’s physical and mental health.”

“*I offer emotional support as well as advocate for my patients and their families.*”



Nadia Mancía, MSW, LCSW Emergency Department Social Worker

I am a Latina licensed clinical social worker in the Emergency Department and am fluent in Spanish. The job is challenging but also rewarding in the same breath. I meet patients and their families on their worst days. Not only am I providing therapeutic interventions and emotional support, but I am also making sure that patients feel seen and heard in a very chaotic environment. My caseload differs from day to day. Some days I may complete a safety assessment for a pediatric case, connect an elder interested in getting connected to at-home services to increase their autonomy or provide support to families who just lost a loved one. Our job requires us to be flexible, empathetic, and compassionate.”

“*I make sure patients feel seen and heard in a very chaotic environment.*”





Compassion and Purpose

On May 6, Nurses Month celebrations launched with a session on gratitude, empathy and the importance of self-care led by Andrea Coyle, DNP, MHA, NEA-BC, nurse leader representing CeraVe. Attendees were encouraged to reflect on ways to combat burnout and build resiliency.

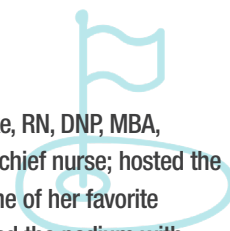
Inquiry Flash Talks

Nurses from across MGH presented their inquiry projects and findings throughout Nurses Month activities. But on May 21, nurses shared their award-winning scholarship initiatives pertaining to evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and original research in exciting short “flash talks” presented to their colleagues and hospital leadership.



Chief Nurse Address

On May 16 in the O’Keeffe Auditorium, Debbie Burke, RN, DNP, MBA, NEA-BC, senior vice president for Patient Care and chief nurse; hosted the nursing community for a special presentation on one of her favorite hobbies - golf. During the presentation, Burke shared the podium with former NFL football player and chief Neurosurgery resident Myron Rolle, MD; former professional hockey player and staff nurse Meghara McManus, RN; as well as golfers and nursing directors Lori Pugsley, RN, MEd, Pediatrics, and Cris Regan, RN, MHA, Ellison 10 Cardiac Stepdown.



Nursing Research Day

With more than 50 posters lining the hallways of the hospital, the Yvonne L. Munn Center for Nursing Research kicked off the annual Nursing Research Day with a presentation on May 23 by Marianne Ditomassi, DNP, RN, MBA, NEA-BC, FAAN; and Dorothy Jones, EdD, RN, FAAN, FNI; discussing the development of a model designed to guide role implementation for nurses with doctoral preparation working in a professional environment.



United Against Racial Bias

Patient Care Services Learning and Development sponsored a pivotal panel discussion showcasing narratives and reflections addressing racial bias within healthcare shared by nurse leaders, frontline staff and co-presented by Marie Borgella, DNP, RN, executive director, Learning & Development; Normella Walker, MA, vice president, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and Anna Brown, JD, senior vice president and chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer at Mass General Brigham.



Warm Welcome

As patients enter the hospital, not only does the staff at the Information Desks provide directions to appointments, they also often share words of encouragement. The hospital receives many letters of appreciation from patients and their families, some sharing messages of gratitude with the Information Desk staff specifically.

One patient writes “Thank you so much, for your presence, attention, your smiles, your words of encouragement—for being my first morning contacts; however brief our connection, in those few minutes you always make a huge difference in my day!”

Another writes, “I will always remember you on my most traumatizing days at MGH and how you were a source of hope, faith and support. People’s paths are meant to cross and I will never forget your positivity and kindness. May your smile and grace spread hope to all visitors at MGH.”

In the top photo, from top left; Bill Graham, Kathy Grady, Tom Burns, Nancy Magoon, Josefina Marroquin, and Ed Jacoby.

In the bottom photo, from left; Stacy Phillip, Joyce Miller, Alexis Lopez, Shanley Devilme, and Ahcene Gherbi.



CHILD LIFE SUPERHEROES

Mass General for Children recently hosted some super friends to surprise their heroic patients. The MGfC Child Life Specialists partnered with Healing Little Heroes, a non-profit foundation created by a current Harvard Medical School student, to bring superheroes Captain America and Spider-Man to the bedsides of pediatric patients.



A Special 'Thank You'

Every year, in the month of April and as part of National Healthcare Volunteer week, the MGH Volunteer Department honors volunteers and their commitment to service with a special luncheon and award ceremony and other events. The annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon and Award Ceremony took place on Thursday, April 18.

For more information about volunteer opportunities at MGH, email jnolan1@partners.org or call 617-726-8540.

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Susan Broderick

The Jessie Harding Award, acknowledging significant contributions to the department was presented to two volunteers Susan Broderick and Nikolay Demidov. Broderick started volunteering in 2016 and to date she has volunteered over 1,300 hours. She volunteers in the volunteer office, the flu clinic and for special projects. Demidov started volunteering in 2015 and to date has volunteered over 1,400 hours. He volunteers in the Patient Discharge program to assist with discharging and escorting patients.



Nikolay Demidov



Pierce Husted

The Maeve Blackman Award is given to an exceptional volunteer who shows an interest in pursuing a career in healthcare. A volunteer since November 2021, Pierce Husted serves in the Patient Library and the Emergency Department programs. He also volunteers for special projects and was this year's recipient. He has contributed almost 300 hours of service.

The Pat Rowell Extraordinary Achievement Award was presented to Fredrick Earthrowl. Earthrowl has been volunteering 21 years and has contributed over 2,300 hours of service. He serves as a docent in the Paul Russell Museum, an Emergency Department volunteer, and as an evening volunteer in the Yawkey Surgical Waiting Area. Fred is also the trainer for new volunteers serving in the Emergency Room.



Fredrick Earthrowl

The Trustees Award, recognizing the department or individual who makes an extraordinary effort to work collaboratively with the Volunteer Department, was presented to Lisa Leung-Tat and Tiesha Cabral of the MGH Adult Oncology Infusion Center for the strong relationship built with volunteers over the years.



Leung-Tat (left) and Cabral (right) with Lizette Pérez-Deisboeck; Board of Trustees member, and general counsel and chief compliance officer at Battery Ventures.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Ashley Somers, RN

Blake 12 Intensive Care Unit

Ashley Somers, RN, has been a nurse on the Blake 12 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for more than four years. She began her role at MGH in January 2020, a few months before COVID-19 hit. She knew she always wanted to work in a field that enabled her to help people. In nursing school, she completed her clinical internship in the intensive care unit and fell in love with the fast-paced environment, finding that it was the perfect setting for her to mix her desire to care for others, while putting her skills and critical thinking to work. Two years ago, Somers decided to take her nursing experience, combined with her love of writing to write a book informed by her time in the ICU. Now the book, “All We Had,” is published and available on Amazon. Here, she discusses the inspiration and process of going from reader to writer.

**Why did you decide to write a book?**

I have always loved to read and write – there is nothing like getting lost in a good book. As I began working face-to-face with COVID-19, I started to keep a personal journal to keep track of the new and unique experiences we were working through daily. It became a therapeutic tool for me to decompress from the stress and anxiety that came along with being a nurse during the pandemic.

In January of 2022, I was at home with COVID-19 and quarantining with my now-husband. As I sat there journaling, I couldn't suppress the feeling that I had this bigger story within me that was itching to find its way out of my mind and onto paper. I started to write a book, knowing that it very well could simply be a way for me to unwrap some of my feelings. Fast forward two years, and my story “All We Had” came to life. I hope that it gives readers even just a glimpse into what it was like to be a nurse in 2020. My goal was for all readers – healthcare workers and non-healthcare workers – to find a way to connect with my characters and storyline.

What experiences inspired the story? How did you use your role at MGH to inform the process of writing?

My biggest goal was to take the raw emotion of working the pandemic and translate that feeling onto the pages of my book. The pain that the characters experience while caring for some of the sickest patient's imaginable is telling of what it truly felt like while working in a COVID-19 ICU. Some days it felt impossible to make it out on the other side, but

through teamwork and perseverance, we found a way to make it out together. That will always be one of my main takeaways from working the pandemic at MGH. The immense power that results from a group of people coming together in a challenging time, putting their skills to work and leaning on one another for support. I hope my readers will see that as one of the most consistent themes throughout my book. It is even what helped to inspire my title – “All We Had.”

Are there any similarities between writing and nursing?

I think the reason I loved writing my book so much was that it was truly an outlet. I had so much artistic freedom to develop my characters and storyline in a way that let me use a lot of my creativity. I do, however, feel like one of the tools that helped me to succeed in meeting the finish line was the discipline I have learned from being an ICU nurse. You have to be

(Continued on page 10)



Clinical Narrative:

Danielle Theriault, RN, MGH Termeer Center

When looking back on this past year there are so many patient interactions that are worthy of revisiting. The Termeer Center for Targeted Therapies is a unique place. We get to know our patients deeply in a short period of time; often too short. We see high highs, but unfortunately that also comes with a lot of lows. Yet despite these lows and losses, hope always prevails and this is evident by every patient who consistently shows up despite their hardships. It is truly eye opening. These patients are the strongest, most resilient, most caring group of people I have ever had the honor of caring for. They are heroes. They are warriors.

Nora is one of those warriors who I have had the privilege of caring for. She consistently shows courage and perseverance. She is just a few years older than me but has experienced more misfortune than any one individual should experience in a lifetime.

Nora has Stage 4 melanoma and has exhausted standard of care treatment options. Originally from Ukraine, she had been living in the Southern United States with her husband and adolescent son. After her husband died unexpectedly during the COVID-19 pandemic, she moved to New England with her son to be closer to family and to explore research treatment options. This circumstance alone could destroy someone. I can't even imagine enduring such a loss. As a working mom of two children, with a supportive husband and family, I still often feel overwhelmed by the basic daily stressors of life. Nora is not only dealing with daily life stressors, but she now must face them as a newly widowed parent undergoing intensive treatment every two weeks. Her study requires very time intensive commitments, requiring she spend 10-12-hour days at MGH every two weeks. As a result, she needs to coordinate care for her son on these days. Her father needs to stay at her house, and she needs to stay with her mother, as neither she nor her parents can drive in the dark.

As I navigate this life, I am often reminded that it takes a village. Yet this profession reminds me that everyone's village varies in size; some with huge supports and unfortunately many with minimal support. But cancer does not discriminate. Patients, independent of their economic, cultural or family constraints, show up repeatedly to fight. Nora never complained. This study requires a four-hour

observation independent of how far along patients are in treatment. She is currently in cycle 10. A few months ago, I asked about the possibility of asking the drug company, who dictates this observation time, if we could decrease the observation time as Nora had been tolerating treatment. The physician confirmed there had been no mention of decreasing this time yet from the drug company. When daylight savings came in the fall, Nora brought up in conversation that she would now need to sleep at her parents for 2 nights and her father would have to sleep at her house for those nights as it would be dark in the morning when they needed to leave for MGH and dark when they left. Although in the grand scheme of things this is something small, it hit me hard. This young woman, a mom, continues to sacrifice so much without a real complaint and now is required to spend more time away from her son who needs her support, just so she can get the treatment she needs and deserves. I continued to inquire about asking the drug company if we could decrease the observation time – probably annoying all those involved – but in the end the drug company agreed to decrease her observation time to one hour. To see the pure joy on Nora's face was everything to me. I was able to give her more time in her day, something we all take for granted.

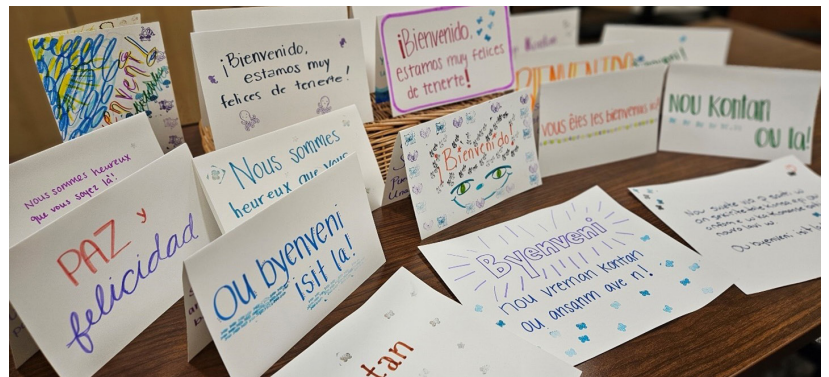
Last month I was notified that I was nominated for a DAISY award, an award given around the world to recognize excellence in clinical care, but also compassion. This is an absolute honor in itself, but when I found out I was nominated by Nora, I was in complete awe. Here is a woman that legitimately has the weight of the world on her shoulders, but took the time out of her day to write the most genuine letter during some of her hardest days. It still amazes me that patients are so thankful and grateful when they are experiencing some of their darkest moments. It is a true testament to humankind and the strength and perseverance these patients possess. I feel my life has been forever impacted by so many of our patients; some of who I have only had the privilege of knowing for a very short period of time.

A HELPING HAND TO STAY CONNECTED

This year, in particular, the Social Services Department have borne witness to an increasing number of stories from people who have fled horrendous conditions in other countries, often making long, dangerous journeys to get to the United States, arriving with very few personal possessions. Many of these families have medical needs that have been worsened by lack of access to medications and care, stress, poor diet and, too often, violence, on their often months-long journeys.

The Social Service Department consulted with the MGH Center for Immigrant Health (CIH) to identify where donations from the Social Services staff could best make an impact. Many new arrivals to the United States need phones to stay connected to care and to complete public benefits applications. Social Service staff responded with a successful drive to purchase phones and phone-minute cards for new arrival families in need.

In a companion effort, staff also sought to counter some of the negative and hurtful messages families have reported experiencing. Staff created and decorated cards (photo at right) with warm messages of welcome and support in multiple languages.



RAISING BURN PREVENTION AWARENESS

During National Burn Awareness Week, staff on Ellison 14 Burns and Plastics, hosted events and information sessions to educate and support patients and staff. Above, staff spoke with passersby in the White Corridor offering education and resources. Below, staff wear T-shirts representing their local fire departments as a show of appreciation.



Celebrating Speech Language Pathology

In the month of May, audiologists, speech language pathologists and others celebrate National Speech-Language-Hearing Month. At MGH, SLPs serve as vital members across 14 multidisciplinary teams and clinics. Below is a collection of SLP milestones from the past year within the Speech, Language, and Swallowing Disorders and Reading Disabilities Department.



- RN Author (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

organized and timely, while also perfecting your assessment skills, advocating for your patients, and prioritizing interventions. It is an art-form in itself. I tried to translate these things into my writing process – creating a detailed outline, turning that outline in a book, and then going back to add in the depth and emotion that really makes a reader drawn to a storyline.

What aspect of writing the book surprised you the most?

Although the task of writing an almost 300-page book with several rounds of edits, while working full-time as a day-night nurse, was extremely challenging, it surprised me how “easy” the storyline flowed. I truly believe I was given this unique experience, of working a global pandemic, to be able to tell this story. It was such a unique and scary time in our lives, that affected all of us in one way or another. I feel blessed to have been given the chance to share even just a glimpse of what nurses do and the importance of our work. I hope it shines a light on the profession as a whole.

- CNO letter (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

At right, Silver led a meditation for the Chief Nurse address audience. Below, attendees in the O’Keeffe Auditorium participated in a breathing exercise.





FITBIT FRENZY

Staff from the MGH Outpatient Gastroenterology Clinic utilized funds through the MGH Nurse Wellbeing Grant to purchase Fitbit watches, devices that tracks physical activity and monitor heart rate and quality of sleep, to support nurses with their fitness goals - at work and at home!



MGH PHYSICAL THERAPY ON THE MOVE

Physical therapists from both inpatient and outpatient MGH Physical Therapy attended the American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting in February at the Boston Convention and Expo Center.

NATIONAL ETHICS CONFERENCE

Members of the MGH Ethics Committee recently attended and presented at the National Nursing Ethics Conference (NNEC) April 4-5, 2024. Ellen Robinson, RN, PhD, HEC-C, FAAN, nurse ethicist and co-leader of the MGH Optimum Care Committee/Consult Service (center); and Brian Cyr, MSN, RN-BC, nurse director, White 11 Medicine (right); presented a breakout session titled “Enhancing Moral Agency and Decreasing Moral Distress: Hospital Policy is a Viable Tool for Clinicians” with Joan Henriksen, PhD, RN, HEC-C, clinical ethicist, Allina Health, and faculty University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics.

Hilary Gorgol, BSN, RN, CHPN, staff nurse on Lunder 9 Hematology/Oncology (left); was selected to present her poster “An educational program to address levels of moral distress in inpatient oncology nurses.”



ALL EYES ON THE ECLIPSE

On April 8, 2024, all eyes were on the skies as the moon crossed in front of the sun for a partial eclipse. At left, Pediatric ICU staff, from left, Matt Jarvis, RN; Olivia Osgood, RN; Eamonn Farrington, RN; and Angela Larochelle, RN; gather in their nurses station, showing off their protective glasses.



The Art of Nursing

In partnership with the MGH Photography Department, and as part of Nurses Month, nurses from 13 different units and clinics from across MGH were photographed in an effort to highlight the beauty and art of compassionate care. Photos were featured in a poster campaign, will be displayed on Bulfinch 2 and used in other projects. Other disciplines within Patient Care Services will be featured to create a library of images featuring MGH staff.



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