



Mt. Washington  
Pediatric Hospital

# Handprints

FALL 2021

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## MWPH Celebrates Capital Region Move



**O**n a beautiful morning in June, MWPH's Prince George's County team achieved quite a feat: they moved an entire hospital unit! The team—along with five current inpatients and lots of equipment—transferred from our previous, 75-year-old location to our new one, within the site of the brand-new University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center. The transfer was the final step in a transition that began with an extensive planning process back in 2013.

"There are a thousand details that went into this move, and our team executed every detail flawlessly. They did a fantastic job, and I am grateful to each of them," said Shelly Stein, MWPH president and CEO. "Now that we have made this move, we are better able to serve our inpatients and outpatients in new and exciting ways, and expand to offer new services through our partnership with UM Capital Region."

The new location will continue to offer MWPH's signature blend of pediatric specialty medical care

and transitional care to the 1 million residents of Prince George's County and the surrounding Southern Maryland region. The excellent care for which we are known will now take place in a new facility with state-of-the-art equipment and lots of comfort and convenience for patients and their families.

"The staff has been amazing with all of this change, including new equipment and new organizational workflows. The nursing staff has been a bunch of rock stars: so positive, and so excited," said Colleen Neidig, RN, nurse manager for MWPH's Capital Region inpatient unit. "They have been truly awesome."

The move has brought a raft of changes on both the inpatient and outpatient units. First, both the inpatient and outpatient units are on the same floor, resulting in easier access for patients and families. Each room in the 15-bed inpatient unit is private

*continued on next page >>*

Capital Region Move *continued*

or semi-private, with an en suite bathroom with shower, a pull-out sleeper sofa for parents or caregivers, and plenty of natural light.

The inpatient rooms also feature cutting-edge equipment, and two of the rooms can be used to conduct overnight sleep studies capability to Prince George’s County. The child life playroom is now twice as big as the one at the previous location, and the hospital’s healing garden offers a lovely outdoor space to relax and reflect.

On the outpatient side, MWPH’s team of physical, occupational, and speech therapists will be able to collaborate and co-treat patients when needed, combining multiple treatment modalities in a single appointment and saving time for families.

“We can work together and help a child with everything from developing motor skills to taking turns and communicating needs and wants,” said Lee Cockrum, PT, senior physical therapist at MWPH’s Capital Region location.

A variety of behavioral health services and medical clinics, including the interdisciplinary Developmental Evaluation Clinic, will continue to see patients at the new location. With all of the therapeutic specialties in one place, families can benefit from the team’s strength in multidisciplinary collaboration. “If a therapist or clinician has a concern, we can call one of our colleagues in for a second set of eyes,” Cockrum said. “We can help determine whether a referral is needed, without families needing to make a separate appointment.”

The facility is located within walking distance from a Metro station and has shops and restaurants close by. The central location makes it easier for working parents to spend as much time as possible with their hospitalized children, and it makes outpatient appointments more convenient, as well.

The new facility has given MWPH the opportunity to make workflow improvements to save nurses and staff valuable time, and within a few months of opening, MWPH’s Capital Region location will implement the Timeless breast milk and formula scanning app, which MWPH had not been able to offer at Prince George’s Hospital Center.

At Capital Region, we were able to customize our unit for our patient population because we were involved in the planning for this new facility. We are also benefiting in a range of small but important ways, from waste-reduction initiatives, to streamlined workflows, to a more secure network,” said Justina Starobin, vice president of outpatient services at MWPH. “We’re happy to be positioned for continued growth in Prince George’s County.”

From the family-centered design to the state-of-the-art equipment, MWPH’s Capital Region location will enable us to continue growing to serve children and their families for decades to come. ♥

MONTHLY FAMILY DINNERS

Please check signage around the hospital for dates.

Questions? Please call Michelle Hanover at 410-578-2651

OCT 15-16

MWPH ONLINE AUCTION

For more information and to register, visit [mwph.org/storybookgala](http://mwph.org/storybookgala)

NOV 06

COMMUNITY TOY SHOP

Arlington Elementary School  
Check our website for details: [mwph.org](http://mwph.org)

DEC 19

HOLIDAY DRIVE-THRU TOY SHOP

Check our website for details: [mwph.org](http://mwph.org)



Why do MWPH staff and patient families love our Capital Region location?



CONVENIENT LOCATION



INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT SERVICES UNITED ON ONE FLOOR



LARGE ROOMS WITH PARENT/CAREGIVER ACCOMMODATIONS



TIMELESS BREAST MILK STORAGE APP



HEALING GARDEN



LARGER CHILD LIFE PLAYROOM

# Message from the President

## Dear Friends,

Our hospital reached an exciting milestone in June, as we moved our Prince George's County location to the new Capital Region Medical Center facility in Largo. I hope you'll take a moment to read about the many ways in which the new location is making it possible to deliver excellent patient care and great patient experience for our inpatient and outpatient children and their families.

Our successful transition to the Capital Region location would not have been possible without our fantastic team. There were a thousand little details to account for, from furniture and equipment to supplies and staffing. It was truly an overwhelming task, but when moving day came, our team completed the transition smoothly—all five inpatients that day were transferred without a wrinkle. Thank you all for doing such a fantastic job.

I am pleased to share that we are now very close to breaking ground for our new Ability Center, a brand-new outpatient rehabilitation space that will enable our rehab teams to help patients develop the best possible level of function and independence. We expect the construction process to last a little less than a year.

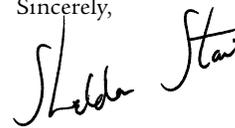
On October 1, MWPH will join health systems around the country—including our two owner hospitals, the University of Maryland

Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine—in enforcing a COVID-19 vaccination mandate for our employees. We did not make this decision lightly, but this policy aligns with our top priority, which is the safety of our patients and team members. Employees who are not fully vaccinated must have a medical or religious exception and will need to take weekly COVID-19 tests. I encourage any employee who has not gotten vaccinated yet (and is medically able to do so) to get the COVID-19 vaccine. It's safe, it's free, and it's our best hope of stopping the spread of this disease and beating this pandemic.

As we head back to school this month, my hope is that this school year will be successful for all of our region's children and that we will eventually return to a semblance of normal.



Sincerely,



Sheldon J. Stein,  
President & CEO

## Where Are They Now?—Carlos Urgilez



Carlos with Dr. Paul Sponseller, following his leg surgery.

Carlos Urgilez was born in Ecuador and came to the United States when he was 4 years old. He learned English fluently in addition to his native Spanish—but learning to walk was much more difficult. The bones in Carlos' legs were bent. As a result, he was walking with the aid of a walker at age 7 and was able to walk independently—with a limp—by age 14.

“My mom and dad have helped me a lot to succeed in my life,” Carlos said. “We used to live in New York City, where we went to many hospitals. Then, someone told my mom that in Baltimore, there was an amazing doctor, and that he would be able to fix my legs.”

That doctor was pediatric orthopedic surgeon Paul Sponseller, MD. In 2011, at the age of 21, Carlos underwent leg surgery, performed by Dr. Sponseller. Afterward, he spent four months as an inpatient at MWPH. During that time, Carlos worked hard doing physical therapy, including two days of aquatic therapy in the pool as well as hours in the rehabilitation gym.

Once he was sent home, Carlos returned for outpatient physical therapy for seven more months. “They helped me a lot,” he said. “Before, my legs were curved, but now, they are straight.”

Carlos is still doing his exercises every day to continue gaining strength and mobility in his legs. “I never give up. I go to the gym every day, and I have been doing physical therapy exercises the whole time.”

His hard work has paid off. For the last two years, Carlos has participated in the Abilities Adventures trip, heading to Utah with a group from MWPH for an outdoor adventure. When he is not flying across the country with Abilities Adventures, Carlos keeps



Carlos on the Abilities Adventures trip to The National Ability Center in Park City, Utah.

busy with his college classes. He is studying business management at Goucher College and is on track to earn his degree in December.

His advice for other children and young adults overcoming physical limitations? “I want to tell them not to give up. You can do anything you want, but it will take time. You have to be dedicated,” he said. ❤️

# 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.



### July

Name: Kevin Brown

Title: Network Communications Manager

Department: Information Systems

How long have you worked at MWPB: 5 years

What is your favorite thing about your job: The people that work here at MWPB

One thing people don't know: I played ice hockey in college and then coached the team at UM College Park.

### August

Name: Colleen Neidig

Title: Nurse Manager

Department: Nursing (Capital Region)

How long have you worked at MWPB: 13 years

What is your favorite thing about your job: Watching the patients be discharged.

It is always such a treat to see how far they have come and how excited their families are when they get to take their babies home.

Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I have a full music recording studio at my house.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Our very own **Holly Wilson**, PCA at MWPB at UM Capital Region Medical Center, won a national award called the Billie Jean King Young Leadership Award. The **Billie Jean King Youth Leadership Award** celebrates and honors youth who are using the power of sport as a catalyst for change and making a positive impact on society. Congratulations!



## Good Morning America at MWPB!



We were so thrilled to be featured on *Good Morning America* highlighting our successful patient care and all that our staff team has continued to do during this pandemic. You can view the segment on our MWPB YouTube channel.



# MYTHBUSTERS



*Myth busted by Danielle Raines, PsyD, senior pediatric neuropsychologist, MWPH*

**MYTH:** Dyslexia is diagnosed based on whether someone reverses letters while writing.

**FACT:** This is actually not a common characteristic of what is known as dyslexia. Dyslexia is a type of reading impairment that can present in many ways.

The most common type of dyslexia is difficulty understanding the sounds associated with individual letters, which impacts a child's ability to read and can also affect spelling. This subtype of dyslexia is called "dysphonetic" and is the most common form of dyslexia.

Another subtype of dyslexia is called "orthographic." This is when individuals are able to sound out words when reading without difficulty and spell more difficult words appropriately, but only those where the phonemes are exactly represented in the word. When they encounter the many trickier words in the English language, they are unable to spell them (e.g., writing "laff" for laugh). In other words, they rely too heavily on the sounds of the letters when spelling.

Reversing letters while writing is actually developmentally appropriate in younger children. Part of learning to read is helping children learn that these symbols called letters each have a special sound, and if they are turned in the wrong direction, it changes that sound. We ask children to keep all of this in mind at the same time they are also starting to manipulate and control a pencil. It's a lot to learn!

## PROMOTIONS

- **Brandi Frazier** from Patient Food Service Aide to Patient Account Specialist
- **Rebecca Wedra** from PCA to RN

## A Day In The Life of Dawn Whatmough

Dawn Whatmough has been a pharmacy technician at MWPH since 1995. "It's the perfect place for a perfectionist like me, because working in pediatrics, you have to be careful. I like to do something well and do something right." We followed Dawn on a recent Wednesday to see how her work supports MWPH's patient care.

**7:00 a.m.** – Sanitize all surfaces first thing in the morning to support infection prevention.

**7:15 a.m.** – Retrieve printed medication labels for each prescription and separate them by individual drug.

**8:09 a.m.** – Fill medication prescriptions for each patient, placing medicines into unit-dose packages or individual syringes.

**8:32 a.m.** – Answer a phone call from a staff member with a medication question.

**9:15 a.m.** – Respond to a changed medication order from a physician by filling the medication right away and taking it to the unit.

**10:08 a.m.** – Compound drugs in tablet form into liquid medications appropriate for pediatric use.

**10:54 a.m.** – Place medications into each patient's individual bag on the medication cart and pass along to pharmacist, who will double-check and approve every medicine.

**11:18 a.m.** – Receive a delivery from the drug wholesaler and put the order away.

**12:35 p.m.** – Fill subcutaneous and IV medications under the IV hood to protect medications from cross-contamination.

**1:26 p.m.** – Print a bed roster for all patients in the hospital to match each patient with the correct room number.

**1:46 p.m.** – Review the pharmacy's medication inventory and place an order with the drug wholesaler.

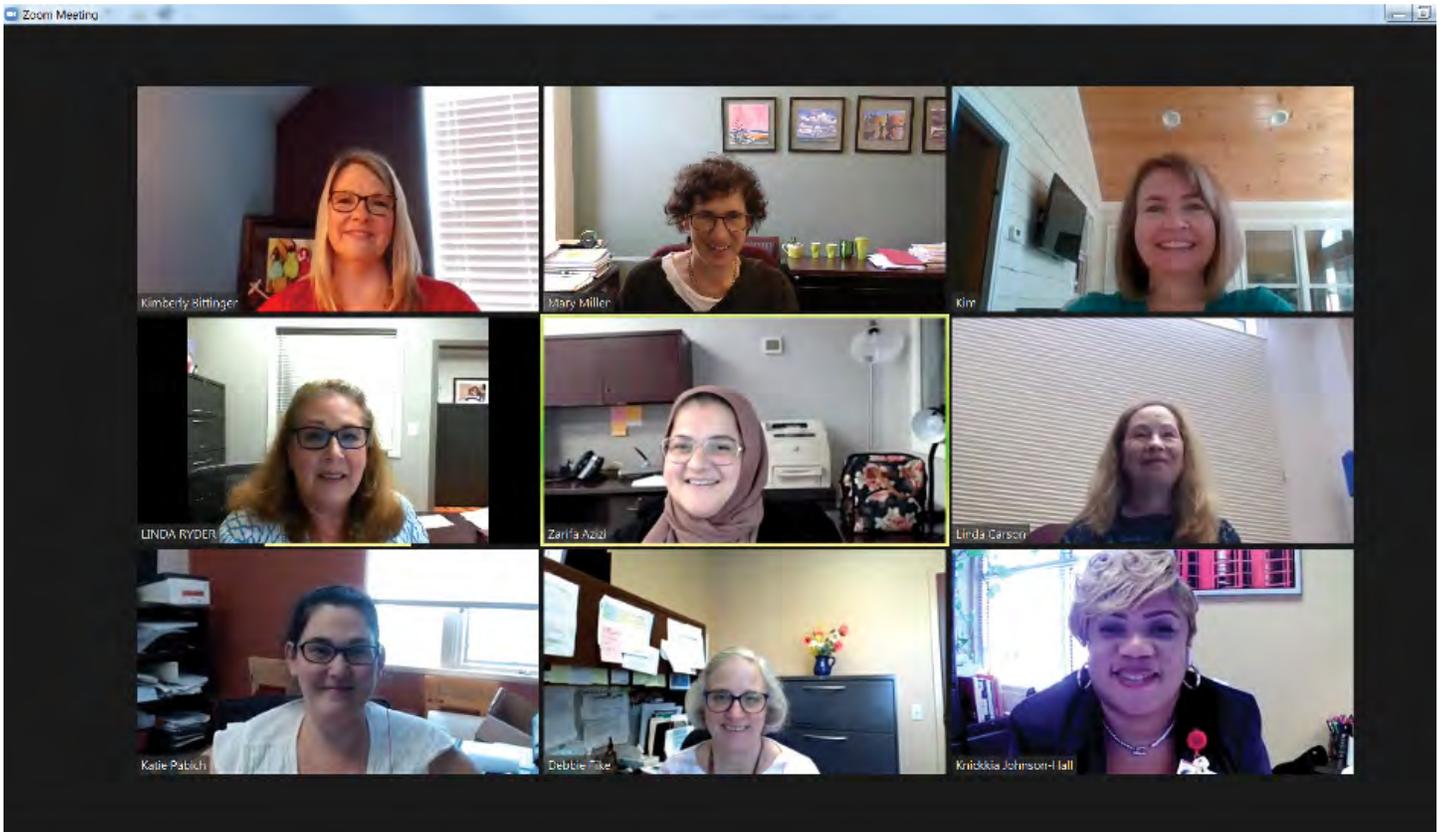
**2:03 p.m.** – Check discharge medications filled by outside pharmacy to make sure everything is correct and complete.

**2:35 p.m.** – Take the medication cart to the units and distribute a new 24-hour supply of medication to each drug locker.

**3:25 p.m.** – Fill medications for each new patient who has been admitted in the afternoon.



## FINANCE



**MWPH'S FINANCE DEPARTMENT** includes many offices: patient accounting, outpatient authorization, finance, payer relations, and health information management (HIM). The department's mission is to "support our patients, families, clinicians, and staff by working with accuracy, efficiency, and compassion to maximize the hospital's resources, and to enhance access to care by minimizing financial barriers."

"Everyone on the team contributes to that mission, and to do that, it requires technical knowledge, subject matter expertise, and a deep understanding of the ways in which we're here for the children MWPH cares for and their families," said Mary Miller, MWPH's chief financial officer. "We bring that knowledge to bear in ways that facilitate the care that our providers give those children."

The finance team is dedicated to making sure that MWPH continues to be able to provide the excellent services it is known for by doing the behind-the-scenes work that makes the hospital's financial stability possible.

Just like the approach elsewhere in the hospital, finance employs multidisciplinary collaboration and functions as an interconnected, cohesive group. The HIM team is responsible for assigning codes based on the medical record documentation, and patient accounting bills claims to insurance. Among the payer relations team's duties are to ensure that all MWPH providers are

credentialed properly with payers and that contracts are in place. The authorization team makes sure referrals, authorizations, precertifications, and notifications are in place, and finance manages the overall revenue cycle—every part of which requires diligence and persistence.

And, of course, everyone in the finance department has one duty in common: to make things right when they go wrong. "If the insurance and billing process went well all the time, we wouldn't need so many people to do this work," said Kimberly Bittinger, manager of patient accounting.

The department's work has a significant customer service component, helping families understand their bills and benefits. The team advocates tirelessly for MWPH's patient families, checking and rechecking to make sure that the insurance companies are paying for covered services and following up on denials. They are constantly in touch with families, and they also communicate with clinicians regularly.

"These are scary issues for families, and we need to be sensitive and kind," said Knickkia Johnson-Hall, manager of outpatient authorization. "Everyone on our team does a great job of that."

Most of all, the finance team is proud of the hospital and its providers—and the ways in which the team's work supports the hospital's mission of maximizing the health and independence of each child MWPH serves. ♥

# MWPH LAUNCHES ART THERAPY PROGRAM

Art is an essential part of what it means to be human—it helps us express and communicate thoughts and feelings. For children in the hospital, art can also be an important part of healing.

That's why it's such great news that MWPH has launched an art therapy program, led by art therapist Katy Alexander, LCPAT, LCPC, ATR-BC. She is credentialed in art therapy at both the state and national levels and has a professional counseling license as well. She has been working at MWPH for the past three years. The part-time program, which is grant funded, began in July.

"I'm really excited to provide this service, and there is definitely a need for it, especially for the kids we see at MWPH," Alexander said. "It provides another way for them to express themselves, because there are not always words for what they're going through."

Art therapy is not just about making art, although this certainly happens during the sessions. "The process of making art can be a helpful mode of expression, and we also process the art by talking about it. Art therapy can help children and adolescents cope while they are in the hospital and can also develop self-esteem, self-awareness, and insight," Alexander said.



Currently, Alexander works on the inpatient units with school-age children and adolescents, although she has also worked with parents and siblings. Sessions are often held one-on-one at the bedside, but they can also be in the playroom or outside.

Typically, a session starts with an art-making directive—about articulating goals for the future or processing their illness or injury, for example. Making art is an absorbing sensory

activity that provides welcome distraction for pain management and can add structure to the patient's day, as well as something to look forward to. It can help patients communicate and learn about emotions and coping skills. Alexander adjusts each session to the patient's specific needs, age, and current challenges.

"The great thing about art therapy is that you don't have to like art or be good at it—it's about what you get out of it, not about what it looks like," Alexander said. ♥

Patients or families wishing to be referred for art therapy should contact **Katy Alexander** at [katy.alexander@MWPH.org](mailto:katy.alexander@MWPH.org) or 410-578-7063.

## MWPH: IN THE COMMUNITY

MWPH held its first Community Childhood Immunization Clinic on Saturday, August 28. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many children missed their well-child visits and routine check ups, causing them to be behind on their childhood immunizations. These immunizations are required to return back to school in Baltimore City and surrounding counties.

The clinic was led by Dr. Richard Katz, MWPH's Chief Medical Officer and Dr. Ed Perl, MWP Foundation board member and Community Health Advisory Board Chair alongside the Community Benefit team. More than 155 children were vaccinated for a total of 322 vaccines given.





## Patient Parent Perspective

Brenda Bonilla



Brenda and Maegly Bonilla are parents to one 9-year-old son, Joel Bonilla-Gramajo. We asked Brenda to share her experience with MWPH and advice for other parents.

### How did your family first connect with MWPH?

We were referred to MWPH by Baltimore County's Infants and

Toddlers program so that Joel could be evaluated for autism. We went to MWPH's Developmental Evaluation Clinic, which was fantastic. Dr. Gersh was the first one to diagnose Joel with autism, and since then, Joel has received behavioral, speech, physical, and occupational therapy at MWPH.

### What other services has your family received at MWPH?

The interpreting services at MWPH are spectacular. There is no way I could have gotten this care for Joel otherwise. It is a great service to the Spanish-speaking community. In addition, the Spanish-

language support group at MWPH that my husband and I have been involved in has been fantastic.

### What stands out about MWPH?

The providers are wonderful: Dr. Gersh, Dr. Harper Johnston, our behavioral therapist, and our speech therapists, Mariah Pranger, are all amazing. The services they provide at MWPH are individualized for each child, and the support for the families is remarkable. We feel like we're part of the family. Even during the pandemic, MWPH continued taking care of the children, offering therapy sessions and the treatment these kids need as well as the support groups for the parents.

### What advice would you give to parents coming to MWPH for the first time?

If you go to MWPH, you will be surrounded by very capable, professional, knowledgeable people. You will always have great interpreters if English isn't your first language. You will have a great support group and will be treated with lots of love. At MWPH, the team is not only focused on the child's treatment but is also focused on the parents' well-being as well.

You will also find lots of specialists, which is important because they can treat your child's special needs specifically. I speak from experience: My son has made so much progress since he was diagnosed with autism and ADHD.

*Thank you to the MWPH Language Services team for their help with this feature.*

## KUDOS for our Caring Staff

### Much appreciated

"When Dr. Long told us she was coming to Mt. Washington, we agreed to come to be able to stay consistent with one doctor. The staff at Mt. Washington is amazing! We appreciate you all so much!"

— Patient parent

### Awesome Service

"Sidney is a breath of fresh air. He addresses all my questions and is very attentive. He greets everyone coming in and is a good asset to the hospital. Thanks for good, awesome service!"

— Patient parent

For information or questions about *Handprints*, contact **Katie Yeager**, Communications Coordinator at [katharine.yeager@mwph.org](mailto:katharine.yeager@mwph.org)



Mt. Washington  
Pediatric Hospital

Where Children Go to Heal and Grow

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

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