



Mt. Washington  
Pediatric Hospital

# Handprints

SPRING 2021

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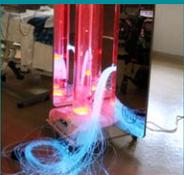
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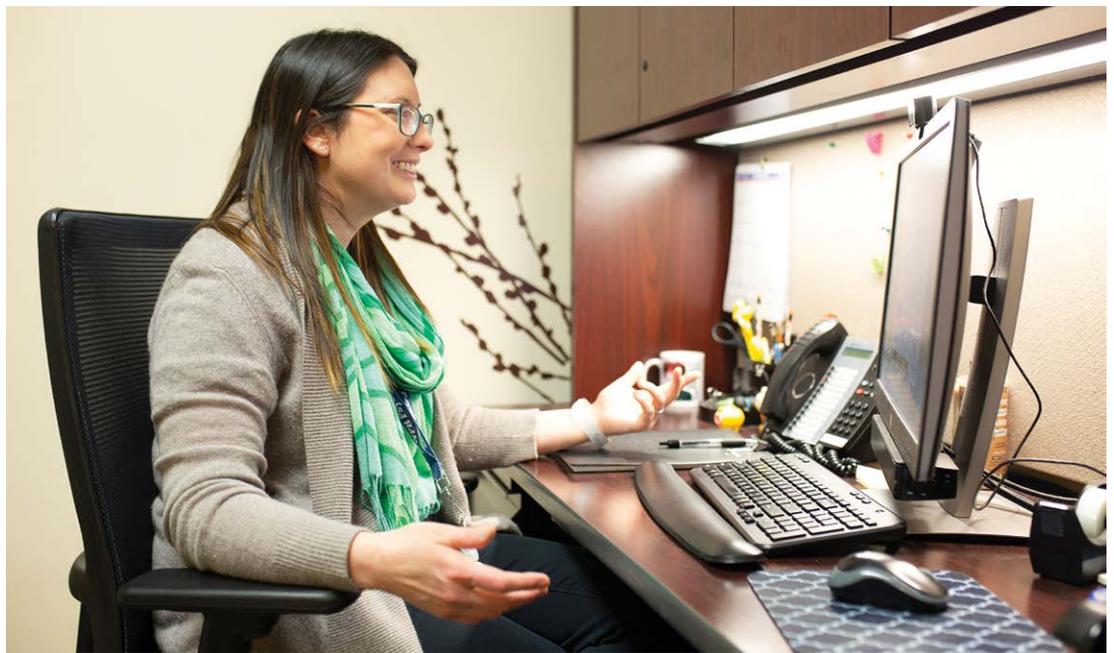
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## Group Therapy Keeps Connections Strong in Tough Times



Group therapy programs, offered through MWPH's psychology department, have been growing steadily over the years, and patients are finding significant support from this approach. Kids, teens, and families benefit from connecting with others and sharing their experiences in a therapeutic environment. Group participants form bonds and encourage each other. It's also a great way to practice skills, from setting boundaries, to enhancing coping and social skills, to making better decisions.

The simplest and most profound benefit of group therapy, particularly during this pandemic, might be knowing you're not alone. Since COVID-19 arrived and changed the world, the psychology department's group therapy programs have been an invaluable resource for patients through the virtual setting.

"Groups are more important than ever, with the isolation we're all experiencing this year due to

"We have grown our groups as the need has increased."

staying at home" said Sahar Moise, PsyD, one of MWPH's team of licensed psychologists.

"It provides therapeutic socialization opportunities where group members are able to express their feelings, share their experiences, and relate to others with similar challenges."

"We have grown our groups as the need has increased," said MWPH senior psychologist Erica Lee, PsyD. "Fortunately, we've been able to transfer most of our groups to an online setting."

Over the past year, COVID-19 has isolated children and families and placed enormous stress on them. The robust group therapy program has helped kids

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## Group Therapy *continued*

maintain their progress in social skills, executive functioning, depression, anxiety, and more. The psychology department offers nine group therapy programs, and all but one of them is available in a virtual setting. Although preschool-age children are too young for effective virtual groups, the therapy team has been supporting parents with virtual training resources.

“I was leading groups before the pandemic, but I really prefer them in this format. There is a more relaxed feel. They are in their own, comfortable

“

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”

spaces, and it gives us a lot of options,” said MWPH senior psychologist Eli Getzoff, PhD. “It has been super easy to translate it, and it feels comfortable to the participants.”

One of the most popular groups is the social skills group, which gives kids with

developmental needs or who are on the autism spectrum an opportunity to practice social skills. Another group, Unstuck and On Target, focuses on executive functioning skills. Some groups have school-age participants, while others focus on teens. The newest group is focused on adjusting to COVID-19. “The COVID group arose organically. We saw kids who were struggling to process the loss of traditions like prom and graduation,” said Dr. Getzoff.

“Our COVID group could also have been called ‘Life in 2020 and 2021,’ because we have had meaningful conversations about a range of issues,” Dr. Lee said.

The psychology group therapy team uses a range of tools to support group therapy for children of different ages. They incorporate games, videos, and other engaging visuals. Teens tend to respond well to peer-focused, discussion-based groups. While some groups are larger, with up to nine participants in the group, other groups are using dyads, which pair two children with one therapist, to help kids get the most out of group therapy using the virtual format. The dyad format is a great way to give each child enhanced personal attention, which fosters connection. This can make a big difference, particularly with younger kids.

Virtual groups can reduce barriers to participation, particularly for children or teens who are anxious. They can stay in their own, safe space—often their bedrooms—and they don’t have to worry about who will be there or what it will be like. All they have to do is log on.

“In our groups, kids are getting an opportunity to practice widely applicable skills, which is particularly helpful right now, with so many things changing,” said Marissa Miller, PhD, NCSP, licensed psychologist. “Families are eager to connect, and I’m grateful that we can provide those social connections while also providing a therapeutic service.”

The program is open to existing patients and new participants. Parents who are interested can email the program, and a therapist or coordinator will reach out to get the process started.

To inquire about MWPH’s group therapy programs, and to find out which group may be right for your child, send an email to [mwphgroups@mwph.org](mailto:mwphgroups@mwph.org).

APR  
19

## 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MWPH GOLF TOURNAMENT

12 noon – shotgun start

Hayfields Country Club

Calling all golfers! Join us for our 21st Annual Golf Tournament supporting the programs and services of MWPH.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Paula Bragg at [pbragg@mwph.org](mailto:pbragg@mwph.org).



## GROUPS AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

- Coping with COVID-19 for Children and Adolescents
- Therapeutic Grief Group
- Social Skills Group for Children and Adolescents
- High School Autism Social Group
- Unstuck and On Target
- Acceptance and Coping Skills for Teens
- Regulation, Attention, and Feeling Therapy Group
- Flexible Eating Advancement Support Therapy



# Message from the President

*Dear Friends,*

I continue to be extremely proud of MWPH's staff as we are still navigating the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. I want to recognize the tremendous efforts of our staff in diligently adhering to all the necessary precautions to keep our patients, and each other, safe. As of February, more than 70 percent of our employees have been vaccinated to protect against COVID-19—and that number is even higher today.

It's not over yet, and we must remain cautious, no matter where we go, so that we keep our coworkers, family, and patients safe. We have learned valuable lessons about the potential of telehealth and remote work technology, and we have continued to care for patients and keep hospital operations running smoothly.

I'm delighted to report that we have completed our Rosenberg outpatient expansion. I invite you to check out the wonderful new space as well as the upgrades to the existing space. Thanks goes to all of the Rosenberg staff for their patience during the construction, which is always a disruptive, though necessary, process. With the completed expansion, we can now serve thousands more children in the community.

We're moving forward with our next strategic plan, the centerpiece of which is the construction of our Ability Center, extending the east end of the Rosenberg building. We have engaged an architectural firm to start the design process. When it is complete, the Ability Center will house a brand-new outpatient gym, plus room to grow for other programs and services in the future.

As spring begins, we're looking forward to being outdoors and enjoying time with family in the warmer weather to come. In the meantime, please stay safe.



Sincerely,

Sheldon J. Stein,  
President & CEO

## Where Are They Now?—Faith Guilbault



Faith directly following surgery



Faith today

Faith Guilbault is no stranger to physical therapy: It has been a part of her life since she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and cortical vision impairment at six months old. When her family moved to Harford County, Maryland about five years ago, however, she began working with MWPH physical therapist Jessica Maher.

“Going to Jessica was crucial to her therapy. It was right by our house, which was amazing,” said Faith’s mom, Karen. “We’ve been with her ever since we moved.”

The supportive relationship that Faith and Jessica had established was key in 2017, when Faith had surgery that involved breaking and resetting both thighbones and both shinbones. After the surgery, Faith couldn’t put any weight on her legs for seven weeks, which led to a setback with walking.

“Before the surgery, she could take a few steps on her own,” Karen said. “After the surgery, Jessica helped Faith get back on her canes, which was huge.”

During their appointments, Jessica works on stretches and exercises that Faith can do on her own. Faith also participates in aquatic therapy in the pool. The most important aspect, according to Karen, is that Jessica makes physical therapy a fun and engaging experience. She helped Faith get as strong as possible before surgery, so that she could come through the surgery well. After recovery, she helped Faith get back on her feet.

Today, 17-year-old Faith keeps busy modeling adaptive clothing for various retailers, doing therapeutic horseback riding, attending school at the Maryland School for the Blind, and spending time with friends and family. She starred in and directed an award-winning documentary, called *Faith’s World*, which was screened at the United Nations Association International Film Festival and is due to air on PBS in April.

Congratulations, Faith! ♥

# 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.

### January

**Name:** Carolynn Gavin

**Title:** Registered Nurse

**Department:** Outpatient Nursing

**How long have you worked at MWPB:** 26 years

**What is your favorite thing about your job:**

*Inpatient:* Watching babies come in with feeding tubes and oxygen and in an isolette and seeing them leave eating and breathing on their own and maintaining their temperatures.

*Outpatient:* Learning about diabetes and endocrine patients and seeing the patients return that I cared for in inpatient.

**Name one thing that most people don't know about you:** I have worked in inpatient, outpatient, and on the KidCare team.



### February

**Name:** Sandy Lee

**Title:** Social Worker/Care Manager

**Department:** Collaborative Care

**How long have you worked at MWPB:** 14 total years

**What is your favorite thing about your job:** Working with families and co-workers to bring about a successful patient and family hospitalization experience.

**Name one thing that most people don't know about you:**

I became a social worker after being injured as a Prince George's County Firefighter. I chose Social Work as my next profession because Social Work is, in my humble opinion, the Fire Service for the Mental Health/Medical field.



## CONGRATULATIONS!



**Bethany Gallagher** has passed the certification board examination as an international board-certified lactation consultant (IBCLC). This international board certification requires higher-level skills and expertise in the care of supporting lactation. With the CLCs, the IBCLCs provide multifaceted support to the lactating mothers at MWPB. The lactation support team consists of Bethany Gallagher, Lorilyn Russell, Ericka Janifer, and Lesley Delaney. Congratulations Bethany on this important accomplishment!



**Lindsay R. Gavin, PhD** has been confirmed to serve as a member for the newly formed Trauma-Informed Care Task Force for Baltimore City as part of the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act. Meetings will begin this month, and she will serve a four-year term. Congratulations on your appointment. We know that you will proudly represent MWPB!

## DAISY AWARD

FEBRUARY

*Kelly Marshall*

"She is kind and compassionate. She listens, shows concern, and is very attentive to the needs of not only my son, but me as well. The first time she was my son's nurse, I was very upset and full of emotions about some things I was concerned about. She was patient and listened, and she made it a point to make me feel at ease and comforted. I had to leave my son for the first time in months, and she made me feel safe to go and kept me updated. She's a star in my book."

— patient parent



# MYTHBUSTERS



*Myth busted by Kimberly Derrickson, PhD, senior pediatric psychologist and coordinator of psychology services at MWPH Prince George's site*

**MYTH:** Psychotherapy and self-help programs are a waste of time. Why bother when you can just take a pill?

**FACT:** Treatment for mental health challenges varies depending on the child and could include medication, psychotherapy, or both.

As a society, we often want a quick, easy fix to our problems. However, like most things in life, there are benefits to exploring all available treatment options and choosing a plan that will result in the best outcome.

Combining psychotherapy with medication has proven to have more lasting results than psychotropic medication alone. Medication can help improve how children feel each day and decrease symptoms, while psychotherapy improves how the child responds. The reason is that psychotherapy teaches coping skills. Psychotherapy helps a child identify inaccurate or negative thinking and learn what triggers behaviors. Then, it provides tools to modify and replace those thoughts and behaviors.

Some studies have shown that adding psychotherapy for children who have medical illness and/or disabilities decreases the cost of care over time and increases outcomes. Combining treatments can provide improvement in physical symptoms, increase compliance with the medical regimen, and increase self-esteem.

Psychotherapy and medications both require a commitment. Results usually do not happen overnight. Therefore, it is important to follow the recommended treatment process long enough to experience some benefits.

Visit [mwph.org/programs/behavioral-health](http://mwph.org/programs/behavioral-health) to learn more.

## PROMOTIONS

- **Jessica Lloyd** from LPN to RN
- **Scott Sekercan** from Grad Nurse to RN

# A Day In The Life

of Jona Clark

Jona Clark is part of the environmental services team at MWPH. Each day, you can find her engaged in detailed cleaning to keep patients, visitors, and staff safe.

“We play a major role in infection prevention: cleaning is the front line of it all,” Jona said. “If it’s not cleaned the right way, it’s not going to be operating right, and it’s not going to be safe for patients.”

**6:50 a.m.** – Pick up cleaning cart and make sure it is stocked with all necessary supplies.

**7:00 a.m.** – Arrive on second floor, Infants and Specialty Care, and consult patient board for upcoming discharges or admissions.

**8:07 a.m.** – Wipe down every surface that can be touched using different Sani-Cloth disposable germicidal wipes for each patient’s crib and every piece of equipment to avoid cross-contamination. Clean and sanitize every surface from the cabinets, to the sinks, to the hand sanitizing station.

**10:36 a.m.** – Clean and sanitize the common bathroom on the floor.

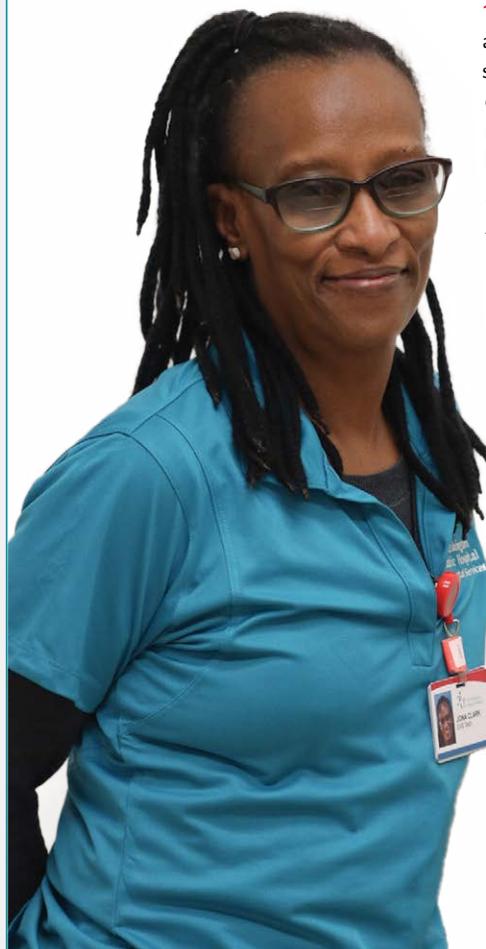
**11:18 a.m.** – Complete high and low dusting, and mop the room on the way out.

**11:52 a.m.** – Clean and sanitize both sides of the sliding doors in a patient’s room, including door handles.

**1:05 p.m.** – Collect trash from patient rooms and common areas for the second time.

**2:12 p.m.** – Reclean each patient’s room to prevent infections, including sanitizing each computer, keyboard, mouse, and chairs at the crib side. Refill hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels, and any other necessary supplies.

**3:25 p.m.** – Dry mop and dust the hallways.



# ADMISSIONS



New patients are admitted to MWPB each week, sometimes multiple patients in one day. The admissions staff is instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition for each child and their family.

Patients, families, and MWPB employees know that the children we serve receive the best possible care at MWPB. But before that can happen, a lot of puzzle pieces need to come together. That's where the admissions department comes in. "It takes a whole team to bring one child in," said nurse liaison Heather DiNunzio, RN.

Because the children being admitted are medically complex, each admission requires extensive coordination with departments across the hospital. The admissions department creates a database to map out the course of a child's hospitalization, making sure every detail is in place before a patient arrives on site.

**“We go to the bedside at the acute care hospitals to reach out to parents and let them know what to expect.”**

The department's nurse liaisons are the first point of contact for families preparing to have a child transferred to MWPB. "We go to the bedside at the acute care hospitals to reach out to parents and let them know what to expect," said Barb Nosek, RN one of the department's nurse liaisons. Because of COVID-19-related restrictions at many acute care hospitals in the area, the admissions team now conducts these initial conversations by phone.

The admissions team checks insurance to verify benefits and make sure parents know what their policy covers as well as any deductibles, copays, or out-of-pocket costs. "I don't want families to be blindsided at all," said Shirley Price, the department's financial counselor. The admissions department also helps with hospital billing and keeps referring hospitals in the loop as beds become available at MWPB.

For the admissions team, it feels great when all the pieces come together to get a child admitted to MWPB. "I know what excellent care we give, so being able to transition children out of the PICU, which is an intense, stressful environment, and knowing that they will get excellent care here, makes me happy," Heather said.

"It makes me feel good to be able to get a child in here," Shirley said. "I also love when they go home, because I know that we have done our job." ♥

## MWPB Admissions Department Team

**Cardell Payne**  
*Admissions Manager*

**Shirley Price**  
*Financial Counselor*

**Yadira Rodriguez**  
*Authorization Specialist*

**Barbara Nosek**  
*Nurse Liaison*

**Heather DiNunzio**  
*Nurse Liaison*

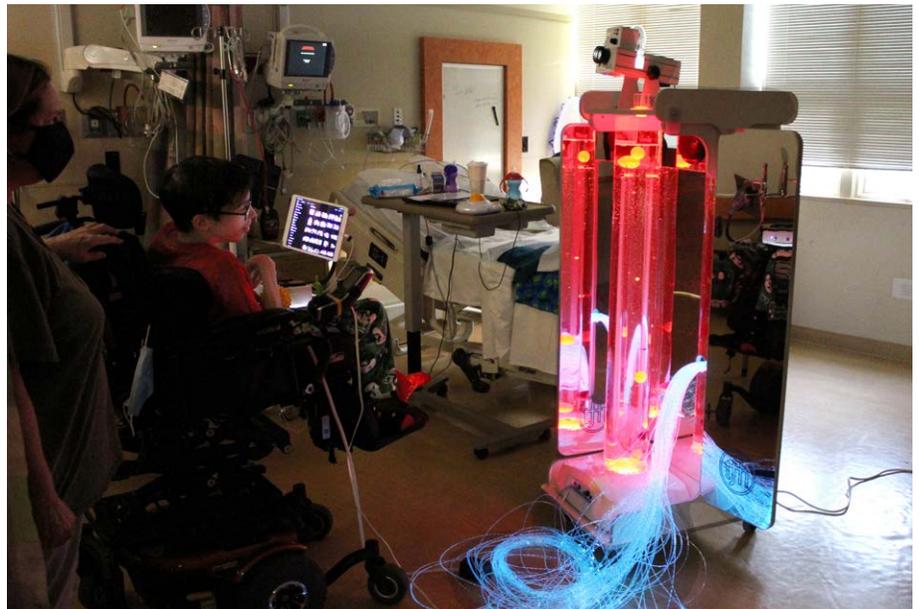
# New “Lights and Bubbles” Machine Expands MWPH’s Pain Management Options

Pain is incredibly important to manage effectively. “One of the biggest difficulties patients have in the hospital is that procedures are often painful,” said Julia Rosenstock, MD, pediatrician at MWPH. “This leads to anxiety and makes other problems worse. It’s hard to build trust with your healthcare team if you’re worried that they’re going to hurt you.” Studies have also shown that over time, pain can rewire pathways in the brain to increase pain sensitivity.

At MWPH, we are dedicated to addressing and minimizing pain. “While we can’t promise no pain, we can promise no unnecessary pain,” Dr. Rosenstock said.

We use a wide variety of approaches to minimize pain. The newest is an exciting distraction machine called the Vecta—or, as MWPH’s patients and staff know it, “the lights and bubbles machine.” Thanks to grant funding, MWPH was able to purchase two Vectas in October 2020. The machine includes a mesmerizing bubble tube with all sizes and colors of balls that go up the tube, then gently drift down. The bubble tube can be lit up with a variety of different colors, which the patient can choose and mix.

The machine has a projector with a variety of discs that display moving scenes. The machine also includes fiber optic strands that change color slowly, which the patient can hold or play with. In addition to the bubble sounds, the machine can play music through



its speakers. The equipment takes very little motor control to use, and it’s portable. All in all, the Vecta is an entrancing machine that gives patients the control and distraction that are important for reducing pain and anxiety.

“It’s great for kids, whether they are dealing with chronic pain or need distraction through a procedure. Everyone loves it—it has such a calming effect, not only for patients, but for parents as well,” said Natalie Rotolone, CCLS, certified child life specialist at MWPH. “It’s really versatile, and we’re able to use it in many ways.” ♥

## MWPH: IN THE COMMUNITY

Black History Month brings us together and reminds us that black history is a part of all history. This year, the MWPH Community Benefit team joined this celebration of history and legacy with two events.

One event offered live virtual book readings by talented Baltimore based black children’s book authors. More than 758 households tuned in and had the chance to ask questions and interact with the authors. MWPH is purchasing books from the authors to distribute to Park Heights schools and our patient families.

The second was an art contest for city youth. Participants were asked to submit artwork conveying the theme ‘What Being Black Means to Me’. The artwork was then auctioned on Facebook and money raised supported each child starting an investment account to promote the importance of wealth management and educate about financial literacy. MWPH provided all the art supplies and assisted in the online auction. Nearly 50 youth participated in the event.





## Patient Parent Perspective

Sarah Koontz

Sarah Koontz is mom to two kids: Landon, who is four, and Lily, who is six.

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

Landon (pictured at right) was referred because he has numerous feeding difficulties. He has some other medical challenges as well, including a seizure disorder, lung disease, and aspiration pneumonia. We had been seeing feeding therapists elsewhere, but nothing was helping. We started at MWPH in summer 2020—our first appointment was virtual.

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

Landon has participated in MWPH's feeding day program. Some of Landon's medical challenges affect his esophagus, making it harder for him to swallow and easier for him to choke and gag on foods. In the program, we worked on textures and self-feeding. Now that he can feed himself, he has a newfound independence and is so excited about eating.



### What stands out about MWPH?

Everything. Everyone there is unbelievable. The staff in the playroom is so creative. They've really made our time in the feeding day program so meaningful. All of the different therapists hit the ground running with Landon, and he made so much progress

as a result. For my child to gain this independence is so unbelievably gratifying. The whole program is completely wonderful. They helped my child do things that I didn't think were possible.

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

I was worried because of COVID-19, and I think a lot of parents might share similar worries, but the MWPH team took every precaution and kept these kids healthy. There's nothing you can lose with this program, and so much to gain.

## KUDOS for our Caring Staff

### Just what parents need

"The customer service is great. The unit is clean and precautions have been put in place to keep us safe. Sidney has been very pleasant and that is just what parents need to see before a visit. His kindness and bubbly spirit is awesome."

— Yolanda Morris, 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

*Handprints* is a publication of the Development department for MWPH's patient families, staff and the community.



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