



# Handprints

WINTER 2023

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HELPING CHILDREN HEAL AND GROW

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## Snapshots of Care Over the Decades

The care Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH) provides is second to none—and it has evolved dramatically over the decades. In celebration of MWPH's Centennial year, here are "snapshots" of three individuals whose lives were changed for the better at MWPH, each in a different decade.

*"I credit my complete recovery from the disease to the care I received."* —Phyllis Meyerhoff

I needed," Phyllis said. "I credit my complete recovery from the disease to the care I received."

Years later, Phyllis became involved with MWPH once again, this time as a fundraising committee member and eventually as a member of the hospital's foundation board. In 2021, Phyllis's special connection and long history of commitment to MWPH were honored with the unveiling of the Phillis C. Meyerhoff Center for Pediatric and Adolescent Rehabilitation—the same unit where she would have been a patient.



### 1930s: Phyllis Meyerhoff

In 1938, Phyllis Meyerhoff was just four years old when she fell ill with rheumatic fever. Although today we know that rheumatic fever is a complication that can arise after a strep infection, which we can fight with antibiotics, in the 1930s the condition was diagnosed with a stethoscope and treated with strict bed rest. Phyllis recovered at MWPH—then called Happy Hills Convalescent Home—for nine months, seeing her parents and brother only on Sundays.

"I have always felt that I was so fortunate to have this facility available in our community, where I could get the care and professional attention that



### 1970s: Anthony Fowler

For the first nine years of his life, Anthony Fowler

*continued on next page >>*

## SNAPSHOTS OF CARE, *continued*

struggled with uncontrollable asthma. He spent half his life in the hospital—until he came to MWPH (then Happy Hills) in 1970.

MWPH was pivotal in determining the right treatments and medications to control his asthma. After nine months at MWPH, and two more years at a children's hospital, Anthony turned the corner.

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*“Being a patient at Happy Hills was a turning point in my life. After a few months there, I started to get better, and I never looked back. Happy Hills gave me my life back.”* —Anthony Fowler

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“Prior to coming to Happy Hills, I couldn't do anything but sit and look out the window, watching my friends play,” Anthony said. “Being a patient at Happy Hills was a turning point in my life. After a few months there, I started to get better, and I never looked back. Happy Hills gave me my life back.”

For the first time, he was able to engage in his favorite sports, including football, basketball, and baseball. He was even part of a football team made up of kids with asthma—a team that went on to win a championship. Anthony remembers MWPH fondly as a place he could just be a kid and excel in the sports that ultimately gave him the confidence to grow into a successful adult. Today, he is a father of five. Anthony served for 32 years as a federal police officer, stationed at the National Security Agency in Fort Meade. He retired in 2017.

### **2000s and 2010s: Jacob Sittler**

Although he is 18 years old today, Jacob Sittler changed the world as a baby when he became the first person in the world to be diagnosed with Au-Kline syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects multiple systems in the body, including the musculoskeletal, nervous, and digestive systems, among others. He has been coming to MWPH, both as an inpatient and an outpatient, since he was just two years old.

Jacob first came to MWPH to participate in its Feeding Day program. Once his mother, Angela, saw the range of services MWPH

offers, she quickly transferred all his care to the hospital. “Without MWPH, I don't think Jacob's skills would be what they are today. We definitely wouldn't have the support that we need to care for him and for his continued growth. Every provider we've had here has bent over backward just to make sure he got what he needed, to make sure we were informed, and to make sure our concerns were listened to and addressed,” Angela said.



Over the years, Jacob has received physical, occupational, and speech therapy as well as psychiatry and psychology services, among other specialties, at MWPH. He recently spent three months as an inpatient at MWPH while he recovered from spine surgery. Angela has gotten involved with the hospital's Special Families Unite support group and currently serves as chair of MWPH's Family Advisory Committee. ♥

## UPCOMING EVENT



JUN  
05

### 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL MWPH GOLF TOURNAMENT

12:00 pm shotgun start  
Hayfields Country Club  
Visit our website, [mwph.org](http://mwph.org)  
for more information.

# Message from the President

*Dear Friends,*

As the year draws to a close, I've been boxing up my office, wrapping up active projects, transitioning longer-term initiatives, and reflecting on my time at MWPH. And as I do, the feeling at the forefront of my mind is gratitude. I have been privileged to be the person who has had the honor of serving as CEO and leading this outstanding organization for the last 20 years. Out of everything I've done over the course of my 50-year career in healthcare, working here—among the dedicated professionals at MWPH—has been my passion.

It's hard to put into words how much I'm going to miss the work we've done together to further the mission of MWPH. It has been a delight to work with such a wonderful team of professionals, each of whom has given blood, sweat, and tears to ensure that we can continue to serve children and families with the unbelievable quality of care we provide.

Over the years, working together, we have positioned the hospital to succeed for the next 100 years. While MWPH will be transitioning the CEO role to the next leader, the hospital will continue to be owned by two prestigious organizations. MWPH has a great future

ahead. As future challenges arise, I know that the compassionate and committed professionals who make this hospital so special will continue to rise to the occasion. Children and families across our region can count on MWPH to provide the same quality care and love that we have offered for the past 100 years.

Goodbye, good luck, and thank you for 28 wonderful years. I've loved every minute of it.



Sincerely,

Sheldon J. Stein,  
President & CEO

Centennial  
Corner

On November 19, MWPH celebrated its centennial anniversary in grand style. A guest list of energetic and gracious supporters from around the Baltimore area gathered for a truly magical evening—the MWPH Centennial Ball. The black-tie affair, presented by Quotient, welcomed 600 guests, including the founder's family, corporate sponsors, past and present hospital leadership, staff, longtime friends, and others close to this special hospital.



# 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.

### October



**Name:** Shavonne Bland  
**Title:** Staffing Coordinator  
**Department:** Nursing  
**How long have you worked at MWPH:** 15 years  
**What is your favorite thing about your job:** Being able to interact with the wonderful, amazing people who work here. It is a joy!

### November



**Name:** Hannah Shem-Tov  
**Title:** Senior Physical Therapist  
**Department:** Rehab  
**How long have you worked at MWPH:** 12 years  
**What is your favorite thing about your job:** Seeing children progress and achieve their goals is the best thing.

That we can impact how they participate and access their world is really amazing!

**Name one thing that most people don't know about you:** My sister and I rescued pit bull siblings, Bluey and Juniper, who still get to see each other frequently and live their best puppy lives!

### December

The Nutrition Assistants are a team of dedicated professionals who always do their best to meet the needs of our patients. They establish special bonds with the mothers of our patients in the handling and fortification of their milk. The mothers are comforted to know that all feeds are scanned prior to feeding which assures that their babies will always receive the correct feeds.



Edith Aduba



Reea Gabriel



Samantha Gamble



Ildebranda Fischbach



Kayla Zellous

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP DOCS!

In November, *Baltimore* magazine named six of our physicians as Baltimore's Top Doctors:

- Teri Kahn, MD
- Ajoke Akintade, MD
- Maria Eleni Nikita, MD
- Richard Katz, MD
- Michelle Chudow, MD
- Julia Rosenstock, MD

To arrive at the results, thousands of physicians were surveyed to find out where they would send a member of their own family. Congratulations to all on this special recognition!



## WELCOME

### Welcome Mona Rock as Director of Marketing and Communications

Mona joins us from Strathmore Arts Center in Bethesda, MD where she was the director of communications. Mona has enjoyed a long career in marketing and communications, having worked for the Baltimore City Health Department, Jewish Community Services, Prince George's Community College, and the Walters Art Museum, among other organizations.



## PROMOTIONS

- Michelle Gantt from cashier to cook
- Heather Lawless from RN to Nurse Team Leader
- Latonia May-Brown from Senior Respiratory Therapist to Director of Respiratory Care Services

# MYTHBUSTERS



Myth busted by Josh Bord, MS, MT(ASCP), CIC, Infection Preventionist

**MYTH:** The flu vaccine can give me the flu. Or, the COVID-19 vaccine can give me COVID-19.

**FACT:** The injectable flu vaccine, like the vaccine for COVID-19, is not made with any live virus. Both of these shots simply cannot give you the disease. The way vaccines work is complicated,

but in general, small pieces of the disease in question are used to make targets for our immune system. We can't get sick from these pieces, but a needle is going into our arm, making it hurt for a few days. Our bodies are "tricked" to think we are seeing the actual disease, and sometimes that can elicit side effects similar to symptoms of the flu or COVID-19. Feeling mildly sick and having a sore arm for a few days is totally normal after vaccination. These side effects typically go away a day or so after getting the vaccine.

Also, we tend to get vaccinated for many of these infections during times of high prevalence. This means there is usually a lot of circulating flu/COVID-19 already in the community. When we get vaccinated, it takes about two weeks to be fully vaccinated, and during that time, we can still get sick with the disease in question. Many people feel that they got the flu from the vaccine, but in fact, they got vaccinated and caught the flu a few days later. In this scenario, the vaccine provides limited protection.

The best way to protect yourself against severe disease is to be vaccinated. Vaccination doesn't prevent disease, but it gives your body the tools to fight it!

## IN MEMORY OF RACHEL WILLIAMS



In loving memory of Rachel Williams, our beloved nurse who passed away recently, her best friend Andrea Gerhard and Rachel's mom, Marla donated cuddle bears and books for our patients. We know these bears will bring lots of smiles and comfort to our patients. Thank you for such a generous gift to honor Rachel who was such an amazing person and cared deeply for her MWPH patients.

## A Day In The Life of Tammany Buckwalter

Tammany Buckwalter is MWPH's employee engagement and volunteer specialist. In this role, she manages and trains volunteers and cultivates employee enthusiasm through multifaceted personal and group interactions, communicating MWPH's culture to volunteers and staff alike. We caught up with her on a recent Thursday.



**5:30 a.m.** – Wake up, consider the day ahead with a cup of coffee, and complete a YouTube yoga or Pilates session.

**7:45 a.m.** – Arrive at MWPH, carrying several bags worth of supplies to the third-floor administration building office.

**8:00 a.m.** – Set up the boardroom for new staff orientation.

**8:20 a.m.** – Shepherd new employees through a brief tour, followed by an interactive orientation focused on MWPH's CARES culture and organizational values.

**10:42 a.m.** – Catch up on emails back at the office.

**11:08 a.m.** – Work with the community outreach team to support the annual toy shop event with volunteers before, during, and after the event.

**12:15 p.m.** – Sneak in some lunch while returning a call from child life to help with their onboarding process for practicum students.

**1:17 p.m.** – Conduct an orientation for new volunteers in the cuddler program, so they can learn about the hospital and what is expected on the unit.

**3:22 p.m.** – Work on the staff communications for upcoming holiday events using Canva, a design platform, to create eye-catching pieces.

**3:35 p.m.** – Coordinate with the hospital's CARES Rewards and Recognition committee about holiday decorations and the staff holiday gift.

**4:16 p.m.** – Review reports from the hospital's employee exit surveys with director and VP. Formulate strategic recruitment and outreach plans for specific positions.

**4:32 p.m.** – Assist a staff member with the individual's CARES account.

### Tammany's Favorite MWPH Moment

"I love the holiday staff luncheon each year. Everyone dons their tackiest tops for the ugly holiday sweater contest, and we gather for a celebration filled with delicious food, amazing people, and a wonderfully festive year-end celebration. Everyone has a great time together. My fondest holiday staff luncheon memories are those that took place before the new cafeteria opened, when we had a very small space to work with. Although we were all packed in like sardines, it couldn't dampen our holiday cheer."

# THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT



L to R: Sarah Beale, Clinical Child Life Specialist; Teddi Haynes, Child Life; Kelsey Franklin, Neonatal Clinical Education Specialist

No parent should have to lose a child. But for those who are going through such a loss, having the right support can be crucial. The Butterfly Project is an international effort, begun by grieving families, to promote empathy and offer support to families of hospitalized children who have also experienced an infant or sibling loss.



L to R: Megan Campbell, RN and Rachel Spangler, RN

At MWPH, the project began in early 2022, when a parent of twins, one of whom had passed away, asked for the purple butterfly to be placed at the surviving twin's crib in remembrance and recognition. In addition to providing a butterfly to the requesting family right away, "we also decided to delve into the idea, standard-

izing and implementing the Butterfly Project fully at MWPH," said Kelsey Franklin, BSN, RN, CPN, neonatal clinical education specialist at MWPH.

The hospital formed a multidisciplinary Butterfly Project task force to work on issues like HIPAA protection and to customize

the program for our patient population. The project provides support and resources for both hospital staff and patient families and is designed to reduce stress and stigma, provide a safe space, and enhance communication.

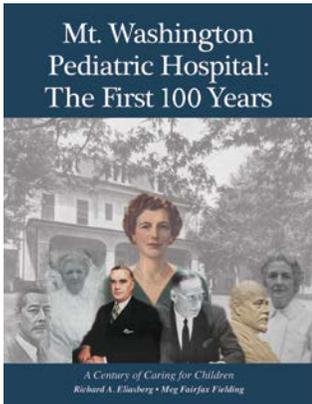
For every family that has lost a child, a member of MWPH's child life team talks with them about the project and asks if they'd like to participate. Parents can place a green dot on the butterfly if they're open to talking about the child they lost and a red dot if they don't want to share right now.

"Families have been very receptive to the project. Providing them a tangible way to honor and remember their child—whether by placing the butterfly at bedside, writing their child's name on it, or providing a packet of butterfly seeds they can plant at home—has been so meaningful," said Sarah Beale, MS, CCLS, CEIM, MWPH clinical child life specialist.

The project has brought MWPH's staff together to support these families on their journey through grief. "One of the best things about the project is that it's a total team approach. It brings everyone together to do something so beautiful," Franklin said.

"One of the best things we can do for these families is simply provide space for them to tell their story and to let them know that we care and we want to remember their child with them if they so choose," Beale said. "Offering this project gives them a concrete way to tell others about their child—that their life mattered and made a difference, no matter how short." ♥

# MWPH CELEBRATES PUBLICATION OF “THE FIRST 100 YEARS” BOOK



There's no doubt that MWPH has a storied history. Over the last century, the hospital has continuously evolved in the level of care provided as well as its physical facilities. MWPH's staff, volunteers, patients, and families know how special the hospital is—and this October, the hospital's story has come to a wider audience with the publication *Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital: The First 100 Years*.

“On behalf of the whole family, I'm delighted that this book—a true labor of love – is now on store shelves. MWPH has an inspiring story to tell. It's still hard for me to grasp how my grandmother, at only 22 years of age, managed to attract the attention and support of such powerful people in order to create this facility to care for the children who needed it most,” said Ann Eliasberg Betten, Hortense's granddaughter and current hospital foundation board member.

The book was the brainchild of Richard Eliasberg (*right*), a long-time supporter of the hospital and the son of MWPH's founder, Hortense Kahn Eliasberg. He co-wrote the book with local historian and freelance writer Meg Fairfax Fielding. Eliasberg's goal was to create a lasting tribute to his mother's work and to capture the hospital's history. The photo-filled book celebrates “the thousands of named and unnamed volunteers and employees who over the past 100 years have improved the lives of the many patients at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital.”

*Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital: The First 100 Years* recounts the story of the hospital's founding in 1922 as Happy Hills Convalescent

Home for Children. The book covers the earliest days and tracks the facility's growth from a small convalescent home into a comprehensive inpatient and outpatient pediatric hospital. Today, MWPH is a jointly owned affiliate of The University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Medicine and serves as a trusted provider of family-focused, coordinated care to children throughout the region.

“It is remarkable to see the hospital evolve to care for more than 8,500 patients annually—all while remaining committed to the original mission of improving the health and well-being of all children, regardless of their ability to pay,” said Hortense's son, Richard Eliasberg, who played a pivotal role in ensuring the hospital's continued success after Hortense's death. “Today, the hospital bears little resemblance to what it was when the hospital started back in the 1920s. I'm sure my mother would be absolutely amazed.”



*Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital: The First 100 Years* is exclusively available at The Ivy Bookshop in Baltimore, Maryland and at [theyivybookshop.com](http://theyivybookshop.com). ♥

## MWPH: IN THE COMMUNITY

### CAR SEAT INSTALLATION & INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM



Part of MWPH's community benefit work is the Car Seat Installation Program, which contributes to the program's overall mission of improving the health and quality of life for children and their families.

Unfortunately, more than half of car seats are not used or installed correctly. As a comprehensive program, it offers car seat checks and installations to our MWPH patient families, low-cost car seat assistance to those in need, and community car seat checks.

MWPH's Community Benefit Department prides itself in prioritizing the needs of our community and seeking effective ways to meet those needs. Coming in January 2023, all patient families will be able to schedule their hands-on car seat installation via our website at [mwph.org/community/car-seat-program](http://mwph.org/community/car-seat-program).

For additional information, please contact our Car Seat Hotline at (410)-578-8600 or email us at [carseattech@mwph.org](mailto:carseattech@mwph.org).

◀ We'd like to welcome **Chelsey Rush** to MWPH! Chelsey is our Community Outreach Coordinator and Lead Child Passenger Safety Technician. She has extensive experience in health education and promotion and will be a wonderful addition to the MWPH team.



## Patient Parent Perspective:

*Mitch and Kristina Meier*

Grace's mom, Kristina. The Meier family has gotten involved with MWPH as well, giving back to the hospital with fundraising efforts, volunteering, and committee work.

### *What stands out about MWPH?*

"The folks who work at MWPH care," Kristina said. "We've never felt like a number to them. They've been true allies and advocates who really listen."

"MWPH encourages us to have a flexible, growth-focused mindset," Mitch added. "The team at MWPH understands that Grace is unique, and they celebrate her forward momentum and progress."

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

"Lean on the therapists and professionals there. Every child is different, and if you keep putting the effort in, keep going to the therapy appointments, and keep doing what the doctors say, it will make a difference in your child's life," Mitch said.

"MWPH is a special place. Seek comfort in knowing you're getting amazing caregivers who not only want what's best for your child but also what's best for you and your family," Kristina noted. "It's okay to be sad and scared, but you are not alone."



Kristina and Mitch Meier are parents to two daughters: Reese, who is 5 and a half, and Grace, who turned 2 in December. Grace has been receiving services at MWPH since she was 4 months old.

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

Grace was diagnosed with a developmental delay and severe plagiocephaly at 4 months old, tracking six to 12 months behind typical developmental milestones. She was fitted for two helmets at MWPH's plagiocephaly clinic; has received intensive physical, occupational, and speech therapy; and was fitted for leg braces at MWPH. Grace has had an estimated

320 appointments at MWPH in the last year and a half.

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

Grace has benefitted from a "dream team" of physical, occupational, and speech therapists, working in tandem on Grace's fine and gross motor skills. In late November, before her second birthday, Grace started walking. "She's on her own timeline, her own path, but she's making really big leaps," said

# Kudos to our staff! MWPH's tradition of quality care, as we celebrate 100 years of healing and growing!

## FROM PATIENT PARENTS

"Anna Snee and Courtney Hinkle from child life and Becky from PT are the BEST! They deeply, genuinely care about the kids and what's best for the kids. It isn't just a job to them and it really shows and really means a lot!"

—patient parent

"My daughter has been fortunate to have Hannah (Shem-Tov) as her PT for the past 3 years! Hannah has been a huge part of her growth and we are so lucky to have her as our PT!"

—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*

Est. 1922

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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