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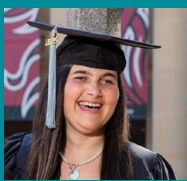


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Kudos

## Weigh Smart® Turns 20



It's time to celebrate! Weigh Smart®, the first program the Mt. Washington Pediatric Foundation chose to fund, marks 20 years of evidence-based, interdisciplinary pediatric weight management services at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH).

"We are experts in rehabilitation, helping patients recover from an illness or setback. But we also work to prevent future health problems in our patients. That's where Weigh Smart is so important," said Scott Klein, MD, MHSA, president and CEO of MWPH.

With the foundation board's support and seed funding, the program took off. Led by medical director

Ann Scheimann, MD, MBA, the program is staffed by specialists trained in pediatric weight management and includes a pediatric gastroenterologist, nurses, dietitians, and physical therapists, all of whom are dedicated to supporting the most important team members: the participating child and that child's family. The first appointment is a comprehensive evaluation, where the team collects lots of information and works with the child and family to develop an individualized treatment plan that includes behavioral, nutritional, and activity goals.

The program started as a 12-week supervised group program for children ages 8 to 17. Since then, Weigh Smart has gone through several iterations. The

*continued on next page >>*

## 20 YEARS OF WEIGH SMART

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Weigh Smart launched	Added Y of Central Maryland as a community partner for program graduates	Added more community partners and awarded the Physical Activity Excellence Youth Category award by the Maryland State Advisory Council on Physical Fitness	Awarded a citation from the Maryland Governor's Fitness Council	Weigh Smart Jr. program started in response to pediatricians who wanted to access services for younger children	Awarded grant for Healthy Living Academy to begin a program of education on healthy lifestyle in partnership with Coppin State University at five local schools

Weigh Smart® Turns 20 *continued*

group model, where participants can celebrate each other’s successes and support each other through challenges, has remained a cornerstone of what makes Weigh Smart work so well.

Michelle Demeule Hayes, MS, RD, LDN, director of MWPH’s Center for Nutritional Rehabilitation, said, “Childhood obesity is one of the issues that MWPH has been committed to addressing for the long term, because it affects so many other aspects of a child’s long-term health. There continues to be a great need in our community, and MWPH has remained dedicated to addressing it.”

As rates of obesity continue to be stubbornly high among children, along with conditions like high cholesterol and prediabetes that used to affect adults exclusively, MWPH is leaning into the Weigh Smart program.

Learn more about Weigh Smart at [MWPH.org/health-services/weigh-smart](http://MWPH.org/health-services/weigh-smart)

“SINCE STARTING THE PROGRAM, Kayleigh's confidence in her ability to cook a healthy meal has allowed her to be more involved in the kitchen. She also has joined a volleyball team at her new school, so she can meet new people as well as maintain a form of exercise to maintain her physical health.

One thing that stands out about Weigh Smart is its emphasis on the whole family being involved. This factor stands out because it recognizes the importance of the microsystem that the participants are part of, which in many cases has a huge impact on the lifestyle they live and their relationship to food and exercise.

It also promotes education for everyone, and it does not single the participant out. Kayleigh's father and I enjoyed being part of the journey, as we learned some things that we could use for ourselves to improve our relationship with food as well. Another thing that I loved about the program was that it did not place a big emphasis on the participants simply losing weight while in the program. Rather, it promoted healthy choices and fitness routines that could lead to the participants maintaining a healthy lifestyle on their own after the program’s completion.”

—Amber, mom of 2025 program participant

20 YEARS OF WEIGH SMART CONTINUED

2011	2015	2017	2018	2020	2023	2025
Summer inclusion program “STRIVE” started—a day rehab model	Awarded Jill Fox Memorial Foundation funding to support families entering the group program whose insurance may not cover the group programming	Launched Healthy Living Academy, a community partnership at Mt. Washington Elementary and Arlington Elementary schools	Launched a telehealth program using a platform that allows patients to log steps and food intake	Awarded grant funding to pilot a six-week virtual program of education and exercise sessions to patients in eastern and western Maryland	Created partnership with Weekend Backpack	Awarded grant funding to purchase an indirect calorimeter machine

UPCOMING EVENTS

MONTHLY FAMILY DINNERS

Please check signage around the hospital for dates.  
Questions? Call Michelle Hanover at 410-578-2651

OCT 04 WALKING WITH GRACE FAMILY FUN WALK  
McDonogh School, 9–11a.m.

Join us at the beautiful McDonogh School campus for our fourth annual Walking with Grace Family Fun Walk. Register here ▼



DEC 17/18 12TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TOY SHOP

Save the date!  
More details coming soon.



APR 25 11TH ANNUAL STORYBOOK GALA

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital

# Storybook Gala

Presented by  
Mandy, Dennis, Dillon and Benjamin Weinman

Friday April 24, 2026 at 6:30 pm

Marriott Owings Mills Metro Centre

SAVE THE DATE!  
Stay tuned for more details

# Message from the President

*Dear Friends,*

MWPH is 103 years old, and for 90 years of that history, our flagship hospital has been on Rogers Avenue in West Baltimore. That's a long time to keep a hospital building running – especially considering its continuous evolution and growth over the decades. The plant operations team is crucial to the hospital's ability to meet our patients' and families' needs.

Without fuss or fanfare, our dedicated plant operations professionals keep the building running, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Every time a doctor prescribes oxygen for a patient, nurses wash their hands, or a therapist turns on the lights before a rehabilitation session, our clinical team members rely on plant operations to make sure the hospital's physical systems operate without a hitch.

This team's work doesn't often get the glory. A new air conditioning unit isn't unveiled with the same celebration as a new virtual reality therapy device. But the work of the plant operations team is just as important as anything else we do at MWPH. Throughout the year, rain, sun or snow, this team maintains our facility's safety and quality. We depend on these

engineering and facilities experts to do everything from making sure the doors open properly to making sure the air is clean and the temperature is comfortable.

We're proud to highlight this team's work in this issue of Handprints. We see these team members every day, engaging with patients, families, and staff as they go about their work – and we are grateful for the key role they play here at MWPH.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Klein".

Scott Klein, MD, MHSA  
President and CEO

## Where Are They Now?—Ava Conklin

In October 2011, at 8 years old, Ava was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After having the tumor surgically removed, she suffered a life-threatening spinal meningitis infection followed by 13 strokes. She was put in a medically induced coma and was completely paralyzed.

She transferred to MWPH for intensive interdisciplinary rehabilitation, where she could get the expert therapy she needed and also connect with other children.

"We found MWPH and were so impressed with how welcoming they were," Ava's mom, Anne, remembered.

Ava participated in all-day intensive therapy sessions during summer and continued working hard with outpatient therapy appointments during the school year. She began to build up her confidence, and she went on several trips and outings with



Ava then



Ava now

Abilities Adventures, including a trip to Utah.

Today, at age 22, Ava is a proud college graduate. She graduated in May with her certificate from Carolina Life, a program at the University of South Carolina for students with intellectual disabilities.

Ava loved her college experience. "I loved the flexibility of not having classes every day, and I enjoyed making new

friends, going to football and basketball games, and experiencing college life," Ava said.

Her next goals are to get a job and to live independently. She also has a business idea for a line of clothing with funny sayings designed to break barriers and start conversations between people with disabilities and others. She is working on the brand, called Let's Connect Clothing, with her mom. ♥



# 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.

### June



**Name:** Abdul Wali Maqadam

**Years at MWPH:** 2 years

**Favorite thing about your job:**

I'm happy about where I am working now because we work as a team at MWPH.

**Fun fact:** Abdul is currently improving his English by taking classes in Towson.

### July



**Names:** Dr. Stephen Nichols and Amanda Morris

They stepped in and helped a patient who was having a seizure in the parking lot. Their quick action was so appreciated by his mother who is the sister-in-law of Foundation Board member, Lauren Perlin. Here are her words: "Yesterday, my sister-in-law, Melissa, was leaving MWPH with my nephew when he had a seizure. He's never had one. She was in

the lot screaming for help when a doc and a nurse came over to help and waited with her until the ambulance arrived (checking pulse, etc). Melissa said they were amazing, kept her calm, etc!"

### August



**Name:** Leroy Williams

**Title:** Psychology Associate

**Department:** Psychology

**Years at MWPH:** 3 years

**Favorite thing about your job:**

I love seeing all of the little ones making the progress that they need and deserve.

**Fun fact:** He's the oldest of eight siblings. He's also the proud parent of a pig named Pig.

## CONGRATULATIONS DEBBIE!



**Congratulations to Debbie Fike** for being invited by the state Medicaid Provider Enrollment Office to help assess its new Provider Management Module. The request is in recognition of the valuable feedback she has provided to them in the past, which resulted in significant improvements to their process.

## DAISY AWARD



**Congratulations to Francesca Martinazzi, RN**

"Francesca deserves to be recognized not just for how well she performs as a nurse, but for the kind of person she is: compassionate, steady, and deeply human. I feel truly lucky to have been in her care."

— Ahmad, former patient

## TULIP AWARD



**Congratulations to Shawnie Hampton, PCA**

Shawnie Hampton is a dedicated PCA who brings compassion, positivity, and strong communication to the Meyerhoff Unit. Her ability to connect with patients

and calmly manage challenges makes her truly deserving of recognition.

## IRIS AWARD



**Congratulations to Kathryn Jendras, PT**

Physical Therapist Kathryn Jendras is this quarter's IRIS Award winner, nominated by her patient Ahmad, who shared: "She didn't just help me heal—she helped me

believe in my strength. She changes lives." Kathryn's compassion and dedication truly make her deserving of this honor.

# MYTHBUSTERS



*Myth busted by Masi Syed, MS, RPh  
Director of Pharmacy Services*

**MYTH:** "Antibiotics cure all infections."

**FACT:** False. Antibiotics are only effective against **bacterial infections**. They do not work for viral illnesses such as the common cold, influenza, or most cases of sore throat. Using antibiotics when they are not needed can contribute to **antibiotic resistance**, making future infections harder to treat.

## IT'S IMPORTANT TO:



Take antibiotics only when prescribed by a healthcare provider.

Complete the full course of therapy, even if you feel better.



Never share antibiotics with others or use leftover medication.

Proper use of antibiotics helps protect your health and prevents the spread of resistant bacteria in the community.

5 MINUTES WITH

## Dr. Tanya Nichols

Pediatric Psychologist Dr. Tanya Nichols is part of the Trauma and Healing Program team at MWPH. The evidence-based, culturally-responsive program helps children who have experienced various forms of neglect, abuse, violence, and loss. Dr. Nichols, who joined the hospital in 2022, specializes in complex PTSD and working with foster and adoptive families.

Dr. Nichols said while trauma affects everyone, it can be especially prevalent in a city like Baltimore that has many marginalized and under-resourced communities that have been impacted by historical and intergenerational trauma.

### What brought you to MWPH and your field?

"I have always wanted to help people cope with traumatic events and stress so they could get on a path of healing.

When I finished my fellowship in child welfare and trauma-informed care at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, I knew I wanted to work in a child trauma clinic. So when the opportunity at MWPH came around, I took it. Also, I went to college in Baltimore [Loyola University of Maryland], so I was coming back to a city that I love."

### What is your role's biggest challenge?

The biggest challenges are what you can't control outside of therapy. People start getting better and making strides, but then sometimes another traumatic stressor or incident happens. This might lead to some regression of their progress, but you must journey with the families to navigate and address that particular stressor.

### What do you find most rewarding about your work?

"The best part is being able to be on the healing journey with families, along with all the ups and downs that come with it. I like being a part of a multidisciplinary team that helps equip the parents, the school system, and others to care for the child in a trauma-informed way. I love seeing the children and their families get better with time, and giving them the tools to deal with trauma reminders or triggers throughout their lives."

### What kind of impact do you hope to have on MWPH?

The hospital's mission is to help children heal and grow, and that is a big part of the role of psychology. Psychologists like me heal wounds on the inside. And when children can heal, then they can grow socially and emotionally, and eventually, they will also be able to thrive.



*Dr. Tanya Nichols recently spoke with MPT about childhood trauma and its impact on mental health.*

## DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

# PLANT OPERATIONS



George Verrett III, Maintenance Assistant (L) and Duane Smith, Maintenance Mechanic (R), work together to install new ceiling tiles in patient rooms.

From lights to air conditioning, from the roof to the foundation, and from the front doors to the parking lot, without consistent excellence in facilities maintenance, the rest of the hospital cannot function. The plant operations team maintains the environment the clinical and nonclinical teams need to do their work.

Plant operations is responsible for the “environment of care”—the maintenance and operations of the physical infrastructure and building that supports the health care services provided at MWPH. That includes complex systems that run throughout the building, like the massive heating and air conditioning central plant. It also includes ensuring the hospital can operate for 96 hours on backup power in the event of a prolonged Utility outage and our systems are reliable at all times. The team is responsible for maintaining approximately 600 pieces of equipment, and devices.

“The team here takes great pride in their work. They do whatever it takes to keep the place going,” said Jonathan Jewett, CHFM, CLSS-HC, MWPH’s director of plant operations, who joined MWPH at the beginning of this year. So far, he has been impressed by his team’s high degree of dedication and professionalism.

“Every single person on this team has a commitment to the hospital and its mission that goes beyond their job duties,” Jewett said. “These individuals have highly marketable skills, and they have a

“  
**Every single person on this team has a commitment to the hospital and its mission that goes beyond their job duties.**  
”

wide range of job opportunities available to them in the private sector. They choose to be here.”

The seven-member team is working on various professional certifications and licensures to demonstrate their level of skill and to engage in expanding their skill sets. For example, every member of the team is working toward achieving their certified health care environment worker credential from the American Society of Healthcare Engineering. Team members are also working on more extensive licensure and certification in facilities maintenance, electrical systems, medical gas maintenance and operations, and air conditioning/refrigeration, some of which takes years to complete.

“We’re investing in each of our team members, investing in their futures, and each of the individuals on our team has the ability and ambition to expand their skills,” Jewett said. “We hope they’ll continue to choose to spend their careers here at MWPH.” ♥





# Palliative Care and Bereavement Committee Helps Families and Staff Cope



At MWPH, everyone on the staff works every day in the hope of seeing the children we care for heal, grow, thrive, and return to their families and communities to live happy lives. In a few cases, patients have a life-limiting diagnosis that requires end-of-life planning and care, and in very rare cases, a patient passes away—a devastating event for patient families and one that is difficult for MWPH staff as well. MWPH's palliative care and bereavement committee was formed to support families and staff as they navigate loss.



"Because losing a patient is so rare for us, we wanted to develop an organized response that would enable us to support families and also work through the difficulty for the staff, so that they can be present for the families during this time," said Julia Rosenstock, MD, (left) attending pediatrician and palliative care specialist at MWPH.

The palliative care and bereavement committee was formed in early 2023 and meets monthly with representation from almost the entire multidisciplinary team. Approximately 30 MWPH staff sit on the committee, including child life, other therapy disciplines, nursing, medicine, social work, and volunteer services, as well as our volunteer chaplain team (committee members can be found on *The Heart*). Some committee members have received additional training, obtaining a multidisciplinary certification in palliative care and working on trauma-informed care credentials.

So far, the committee has reviewed best practices for end-of-life-

decision making and processes, implemented a format to follow up with families once a child has died to share memories or express condolences, increased supports to caregivers or siblings, and offered additional trainings to staff.

"In some cases, children live their whole lives in the hospital and never get to be known by their larger community," Dr. Rosenstock said. "Formal remembrances from the team at MWPH—who knew and loved the child—can be such a meaningful way to affirm to families that their child made an impact on the lives of others."

One of the committee's biggest achievements was implementing MWPH's volunteer-based chaplaincy program in May of 2023. In addition, committee members have provided education to staff regarding palliative care, provided bereavement supports and resources to families, initiated policy revisions, and most recently implemented a communication system to share sensitive information with staff across departments. Within the next year, the committee hopes to increase communication and resources offered to former patient families.

"When I think of MWPH, I see a place of healing and an environment that fosters hope," said Sarah Beale, MS, CCLS, CEIM, (right) senior child life specialist at MWPH. "MWPH is dedicated to improving the health of all patients we serve, and our committee embodies that by promoting a culture of holistic care." ❤️



## PHILANTHROPY SPOTLIGHT: SUSAN DUBROFF

**Susan retired at the end of 2021 after 31 years of service to MWPH**, ending as the hospital's director of rehabilitation services. During her tenure at MWPH, she was instrumental in launching and sustaining many clinics and programs, including the Feeding Day Treatment Program, Movement Disorders Clinic, Balance Clinic, Seating and Adaptive Equipment Clinic, Making Valuable Progress Clinic, Transitional Brain Injury Program and Clinic, and the Rehab Day Treatment Program. She devoted her career to mentoring and helping others.

After her retirement, Susan and her husband Rich chose to make a planned gift to MWPH. They are investing in the future by investing in the health and well-being of children.

"I am very proud of the work I did during my career, and I wanted to find a way to continue supporting the rehabilitation department's staff to ensure that these programs and clinics could continue well into the future," Susan said. Rich and I wanted to give back by supporting the children and families I had devoted my career to helping. I loved working at MWPH—and by electing to include the hospital in our wills, Rich and I are able to honor and celebrate the organization that was such a big part of our lives."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PLANNED GIVING AT MWPH, VISIT [WWW.MWPH.ORG/GIVING/PLANNED-GIVING](http://WWW.MWPH.ORG/GIVING/PLANNED-GIVING)



## Patient Parent Perspective

Sundus Waseem



Sundus Waseem and her husband Babar Fahim are parents to 8 year old Zayyan Fahim. Zayyan is on the autism spectrum, having been diagnosed at about 2 years old. The biggest indicator of autism was trouble with chewing food.

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

Zayyan went through several years of feeding therapy elsewhere. He was able to chew some crunchy food, but his progress had stalled. His therapist recommended the feeding program at MWPH. I reached out, and Zayyan got an evaluation in 2024, and he participated in the intensive summer feeding program in 2025.

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

Zayyan had a huge amount of success with the feeding program at MWPH. Now, he is really enjoying his food each day. He also had fun playing with the hospital's facility dog and doing activities with the other participants, improving his social skills in addition to his feeding skills. This fall, we will talk with the MWPH team about virtual outpatient appointments, and we also may participate in next summer's feeding program.

### *What stands out about MWPH?*

The structure of the program was very appealing to me, and the staff members were all very positive and helpful. There was great communication each day about his progress, and the team was very respectful of our cultural preferences. From the very first day, he began making progress more quickly than anyone expected. I was very impressed.

### *What advice do you have for other parents?*

Communication is key to your child's success. Don't be afraid to request accommodations or ask for something. My biggest fear was, what if my son chokes? I shared that with one of the therapists on the feeding team, and the very next day, she had arranged for me to take a class on choking first aid and CPR. They truly made me feel that all my questions were welcome, and they were happy to help.

## KUDOS for our Caring Staff

*"From the moment we walked through the doors, every member of the MWPH team made our family feel supported and safe. The doctors were not only highly skilled but took extra time to explain treatment plans in clear, encouraging language. Their dedication to evidence-based care and gentle bedside manner gave us absolute confidence in our baby's recovery.*

*The nurses were the heart of our stay—always three steps ahead of our needs, whether it was soothing anxious moments with warm smiles, or celebrating small milestones right alongside*

*us. Their compassion and professionalism never faltered, even during the busiest moments of the day.*

*Every corner of MWPH radiates love for children, care, empathy, professionalism, and excellence, which is stemmed from the leadership of their upper management as well...Our gratitude is immeasurable, and we wholeheartedly recommend this hospital to any family seeking top-tier pediatric care."*

*—George, Maria's father*



For information or questions about *Handprints*, contact **Katie Yeager**, Communications Manager 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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