



Handprints

SUMMER 2022

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HELPING CHILDREN HEAL AND GROW

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PCA Joann Naseri Retires After 50 Years of Dedication to MWPH

As Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital (MWPH) celebrates its centennial year, the hospital's dedicated team is reflecting on its legacy and the ways in which care has evolved over the years. However, Joann Naseri, patient care assistant, doesn't have to imagine how things used to be at MWPH. In April 2022, Joann retired after an astounding 50 years of employment with MWPH—that's half the length of time the hospital has been in operation!



One special patient even got married while she was recovering at MWPH. The wedding was out on the grounds and her father walked her down the aisle. Joann was one of her bridesmaids. "It was such a special experience," Joann said.

Eventually, Joann transitioned to the nursery to work with the babies. As a PCA, she took vitals, fed and cared for the babies, and took care of any other tasks that needed to be done. In

Joann's lifetime of service began when she joined as a nursing assistant after high school in 1972. When she started, the hospital was in a building that had once been a large private home, which staff called "the mansion." She worked on the 12-bed girls' ward, where her patients were generally 5 to 18 years old and were receiving step-down care in preparation for eventually being discharged home.

the late 1980s, MWPH opened the new hospital building on the grounds. At the same time, the hospital's care was evolving to treat sicker patients, including babies who were born premature. "Our patient mix was changing: we had more preemies, more kids on a ventilator—they required more sophisticated care. We had a lot to learn as things changed, but MWPH trained us every step of the way," Joann said.

“We had a lot to learn as things changed, but MWPH trained us every step of the way.”

During those first years working in the mansion, according to Joann, MWPH almost didn't feel like a hospital

at all. "The old mansion was kind of like a camp for kids, but it was for sick kids who weren't ready to go home yet," she recalled. As a PCA, Joann would accompany patients to many special activities and events, including the circus, Friday movie nights, and evenings spent supervising patients as they played in the backyard pool.



Joann (top row, second from left) and nursing team in the mansion in 1982.

MWPH's littlest patients were Joann's favorites to care for. "I loved taking care of the preemies—they're so tiny," she said. "Some people are nervous

continued on next page >>

JOANN NASERI RETIRES, *continued*



around them because of that, but it never bothered me. I loved taking care of them.”

Thanks to her experience and enthusiasm for the tiniest babies, Joann became known across the hospital as the person to go to when a premature baby had difficulty feeding. Her secret? Patience. “They’re learning how to eat, and you have to go slowly with them. Take little breaks as they work through a bottle, because they can’t breathe and eat at the same time,” she said. “Even though we only have 30 minutes to feed them, because they start burning too many calories after that point, rushing just doesn’t work.”

Another special memory was when Joann and another PCA were responsible for caring for three out of four quadruplets. “We got very involved with them and their family, who lived out on the Eastern Shore. We’d take the babies to the clinic, or go to Johns Hopkins for follow-up appointments,” Joann remembered. “After they were all discharged, we were invited to their first birthday party. Their father picked us up, brought us to the party, then brought us all the way back. It was a great time.”

Throughout her long career, Joann stayed at MWPH because of the patients, the relationships she built with her coworkers, and the hospital’s unique family feeling. “When you join the staff at MWPH, you are treated like a member of the family: Everyone is friendly, and everyone tries to help you,” Joann said. “I learned a lot about teamwork as well. If I was falling behind during a shift, someone would pitch in and help me, and I would help them if they were behind.”

Now that she has retired, Joann is looking forward to spending more time in her garden and visiting friends and family out of town. Once she has taken a little time off to get used to retirement, though, Joann plans to be right back at MWPH—this time, as a volunteer. “I’ve signed up to be a cuddler, and I can’t wait to do that,” she said. “I’ll just take a few weeks to rest up first, and then I’ll be back!” ♥

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUL
10

FOUNDER’S DAY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AT THE MARYLAND ZOO

11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

1 Safari Pl, Baltimore, MD 21217

MWPH staff and their families are invited to a cookout at the zoo with food, fun, and prizes. Each family will also get a wristband for free admission to the zoo following the cookout.



JUL
21 & 22

IAPFS 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel

700 Aliceanna Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202

The International Association of Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing (IAPFS) is a multidisciplinary group of professionals who have a particular interest in the care and treatment of children with disordered feeding and swallowing. For more information, please visit iapfs.org/convention-program/

SAVE THE DATE!

NOVEMBER 19

Maryland
State Fairgrounds

Tickets on sale now at
mwph.org/centennialball

Centennial
BALL
MT. WASHINGTON
PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Centennial
Corner

Members
of the 1922
Society gathered at
Mt. Washington Tavern
for a special donor
reception on May 24th.
Thank you for supporting MWPH!



Message from the President

Dear Friends,

I became part of the MWPH family in 1995, when I came on board as the vice president for patient care services. In 2002, I became president and CEO of this organization, and over the past 20 years it has been my honor and privilege to serve our hospital's mission alongside every one of our dedicated staff members. Although I care deeply about this hospital and its future, the time is right for the hospital to transition to new leadership. It is with bittersweet emotions that I announce that I will be retiring at the end of November 2022.

I've been working in hospitals for my entire career—since I was just 19 years old, in fact—and I knew when I joined MWPH that it was a special place. The exceptional care we provide to children with complex health needs and their families is the direct result of the dedicated staff of professionals we have here. As president and CEO, my most important job was to do whatever I could to make sure that our staff had the resources they needed to take care of patients in the best way possible. Supporting our clinical and nonclinical staff, and making it easier for them to do their jobs, is how I see my role. I hope that I've been successful in that work.

Over the past 20 years, I'm proud of MWPH's evolution, both as a hospital and as a place to work. Making our staff's work lives better by improving benefits and promoting work-life balance has been one

of my key focus areas. We've also been able to launch a lot of great programs and services for the benefit of our patients and families, based on ideas that came from our staff in many cases. MWPH also has a thriving outpatient business, helping thousands more children in the area to maximize their health, independence, and potential.

As I look to the future, I'm both excited and nervous. I'm looking forward to spending more time with my family, including my five grandchildren. My wife and I will also be able to travel more—we've played golf in 40 out of 50 states, and we'd like to get to 50. But no matter where I go or what I do, I will take my immense gratitude and admiration for MWPH's world-class staff with me. Thank you for trusting in my leadership as we have worked side by side to make MWPH the best hospital it can be.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheldon Stein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheldon J. Stein,
President & CEO

Where Are They Now?— Addison and Alyssa Abraskin

Twins Addison and Alyssa Abraskin were born in May 2010 at 30 weeks. They had twin-to-twin transfusion as a result of preeclampsia and were just 3 pounds, 2 ounces and 2 pounds, 8 ounces, respectively, when they were born. After spending a month at Sinai Hospital, the twins transferred to MWPH.



"After they were born, I was in a state of shock, but everyone at MWPH was amazing," said mom Jessica Abraskin. "The nurses helped me feel comfortable holding them, doing their feedings, and caring for them. They taught us everything we needed to know. Our doctor was wonderful. She was always available to answer our questions."

The twins battled broncho pulmonary dysplasia but recovered. Addison was discharged after four weeks, and Alyssa went home two weeks after that. Jessica was particularly touched by the efforts



of MWPH's volunteer cuddlers. She was comforted by the thought that people were there to hold and pay attention to Alyssa after Addison had been discharged home, and she enjoyed connecting with them when she and Addison visited Alyssa each day.

Today, both Addison and Alyssa are healthy and active. They're straight A students who love art, soccer, softball, and piano. Both girls are in Girl Scouts as well, and this year, they chose MWPH as the beneficiary of their troop's service project. The troop collected toys and games from the hospital's wish list and delivered it to the hospital.

"Addison and Alyssa are happy to have the opportunity to give back to the hospital that helped them so much when they were little," Jessica said. ♥

CENTENNIAL
EDITION

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.

April



Name: Emily Hecht
Title: Occupational Therapist–Clinical Specialist
Department: Rehabilitation
How long have you worked at MWPH: 6 years

What is your favorite thing about your job: Collaborating with my awesome coworkers in various disciplines to help our patients advance and make gains in their therapy goals.
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I teach group fitness classes—Les Mills BODYATTACK and RPM (cycling).

May



Name: Joann Naseri
Title: PCA
Department: Pakula Center for Infant Specialty Care
How long have you worked at MWPH: I just retired after 50 years.

What is your favorite thing about your job: I loved taking care of the preemies.
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I was a preemie myself! I was due in April, but came early in February.

June



Name: Christean Nichols
Title: Environmental Services Technician
Department: Environmental Services

How long have you worked at MWPH: I am retiring after working at MWPH for 35 years.
What is your favorite thing about your job: The family friendly environment at MWPH—there's no place like it! I will miss my coworkers very much!
Name one thing that most people don't know about you: I've been married for 47 years! I also love to cook and enjoy gardening.

PROMOTIONS

- **Olivia Acevedo** from PCA to Restoration Assistant
- **Shakera Barnes** from Environmental Services (EVS) Technician to EVS Supervisor
- **Kim Curtis** from Registrar to Unit Secretary
- **Jennifer Dorr** from PCA to Restoration Assistant
- **Jennifer Freeman** from Manager, Care Management to Director, Care Management
- **Jasmine Jones** from PCA to Restoration Assistant
- **Taylor Lambert** from RN to RN1
- **Christina Parr** from Physical Therapist (PT) to Clinical Specialist PT
- **Amelia Phillips** from PCA to RN
- **Sean MacDonald** from Nurse Graduate to RN
- **Daytona Stevenson** from Nurse Graduate to RN

CONGRATULATIONS



At the end of May, we said goodbye to **Earnie Standley**, director of plant operations, who left MWPH after an amazing 33 years of service to this hospital. Earnie led MWPH through many years of growth.

When he started at MWPH in 1989, he was assistant director of building operations and services, but he was promoted to the director role just a few months later. One of his first projects was the new Eliasberg building and the addition of the third floor. Earnie has dedicated so much time and energy over the course of three decades to the improvement of our facilities. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

DAISY AWARDS

APRIL & MAY

Rachel Gilligan, RN & Joan Geckle, RN

DAISY Award recognitions honor the super-human work nurses do for patients and families every day. Thank you Rachel and Joan for all you do for our patients!



The Daily Record has named **Jill Feinberg, VP of Development and External Affairs, one of Maryland's Top 100 Women for 2022.**

Jill was awarded this recognition due to her leadership and commitment to the hospital's mission. Her efforts in fundraising, marketing, community outreach, and strategic planning have had significant impact for MWPH over her years of service. Congratulations Jill!

MYTHBUSTERS



Myth busted by Rachana Patani, Director, Community Benefit Programs
MYTH: Used or borrowed car seats are still safe to use.

FACT: Did you know that every car seat has an expiration date? You read that correctly. Many families pass down car seats from child to child or borrow one from a friend or a family member. This

can be dangerous, because the car seat may either be expired or may have been in a collision. Even after a small fender bender, car seats lose their integrity and become significantly less safe.

Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death among children in the United States, and nearly 79 percent of car seats are used incorrectly. Studies done by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics, among other organizations, show that the best way to decrease the risk of injury and death for children is to properly install and use the appropriate car seat for your child.

The best way to keep your child safe in the car is to use the right car seat in the right way. Follow these tips to protect your precious cargo.

- **Selection:** Buy the right car seat for your child. When it comes to safety, more expensive car seats are not necessarily safer. All car seats in the market must pass the same NHTSA testing, meaning no matter the cost of the seat, it is just as safe. When your child is ready for a forward-facing car seat, be sure to select the correct one for your child's age and size.
- **Direction:** Your baby needs to ride in a rear-facing car seat as long as possible—until your child is 2 or more years old. When your child has outgrown that seat, you are ready to move to a forward-facing car seat.
- **Installation:** You'll need to decide whether to use a seat belt or lower anchors to secure your car seat. Both are safe, but only one method should be used. Follow the guidelines listed in your car seat manual for specific guidance on how to install your seat correctly. Forward-facing seats should be tethered with a seat belt or lower anchors.
- **Fit:** Use a five-point harness for your child as long as your child meets the weight or height limits of the car seat. A five-point harness provides more protection than a seat belt used with a booster seat or a seat belt alone.

For more information about car seat safety, visit our website at mwph.org/community.

Yaffa Elefant: *Baltimore* magazine Top Nurse



The 2022 "Excellence in Nursing" awards from *Baltimore* magazine have been announced and **Yaffa Elefant, RN**, nurse team leader on our Meyerhoff unit, has been selected. Congrats, Yaffa!

Denise Pudinski, MWPH's vice president of patient care services and chief nurse executive, commented, "Yaffa is a talented nurse team leader, and patients and staff alike truly benefit from her guidance, compassion and care. MWPH nurses always rise to the challenge to meet the needs of our young patients and fulfill the hospital's mission."

A Day In The Life of Maria Bulla, RN

Maria Bulla, RN, is MWPH's clinical systems liaison/analyst. An employee of MWPH for 35 years, Maria specializes in solving problems for end users of the Expanse software. We caught up with her on a recent Wednesday.

7:00 a.m. – Help improve the mobility of an 8-year-old in a one-hour outpatient appointment before school.

8:19 a.m. – Respond to an email from a leader who is having difficulties accessing an updated report document. Connect with the leader to visualize the issue and resolve in a timely manner.

9:31 a.m. – Triage and route support tickets to the right team member and handle tickets related to Expanse access and other issues.

10:45 a.m. – Answer a phone call from a pharmacist who has a drug that is not showing up on the nurses' medication record and address the issue.

11:04 a.m. – Meet with the application team to discuss urgent issues.

1:21 p.m. – Receive a message through the Footprints system from a staff member who is having trouble accessing the correct patient's chart and is getting error messages when updating information. Reach out for further clarification and initiate a ticket with the appropriate Meditech application group for further review.

2:24 p.m. – Collaborate with a member of the IT team to create a new workflow for a user who needs customized access within Expanse.

3: 29 p.m. – Set up a new referring primary care provider in the system to facilitate data exchange, enabling streamlined communication between MWPH providers and community providers.

4:14 p.m. – Test the latest round of Expanse updates from Meditech before they go live.

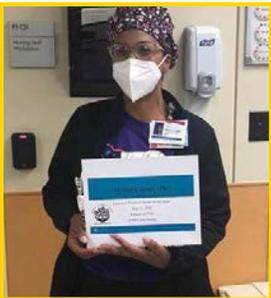
4:45 p.m. – Follow up on a Meditech support ticket that was opened for an active issue at MWPH. Complete integrity testing to ensure this fix has resolved the issue before coordinating the change to be moved into our live Expanse environment.

Maria's Memorable MWPH Moment

"After my first daughter was born, when I was a bedside nurse, I worked her first Halloween. I was assigned to take care of a 6-year old patient with burns. Here was a girl who couldn't go out trick-or-treating—who couldn't go anywhere. It gave me a greater perspective on what it means to be a caregiver, and why we do what we do.

I took care of her for many years on the inpatient side and followed her visits on the outpatient side. It was such a joy for me to see her grow and have her remember me as a person who cared for her."

MWPH Employees Shine During Hospital Week



Clockwise from top left: Our outpatient staff wore their 80s gear for our luncheon, celebrating MWPH through the decades; staff at our ice cream social hosted by the Nursing department; staff enjoyed a lunch & learn led by historian, Meg Fielding about MWPH history; President's Club breakfast members gathered for a photo

◀ Nurse of the Year Awards

LPN of the year: Kimberly Jones

Outpatient RN of the year: Courtney Cook

Inpatient RN of the year: Natasha Duncan

PCA of the year: Susan Temple

FROM MAY 8 TO 14, THE TEAM AT MWPH celebrated Hospital Week with a slate of special events befitting the hospital's centennial year and its dedicated employees. Hospital Week celebrates every MWPH employee, both clinical and nonclinical.

"Hospital week is our time to thank the staff for all they do for our patients and families. The last couple of years have been very challenging, and as a team and a family, I am grateful to all of our employees for staying together and helping us through this while continuing to provide the excellent, compassionate care that they do," said Sheldon Stein, MWPH's president and CEO.

The week kicked off with the President's Club breakfast honoring long-time employees and continued with treats, gifts, breakfasts, spirit day, a celebration dinner, and an ice cream social. This year's service awards honored more than 70 employees who have reached milestone work anniversaries, beginning with those who have worked at MWPH for five years and going up by increments of five years. These awards were extra special, because one employee—Joann Naseri—had reached the 50-year mark! (You can read about

Joann and her incredible contribution to the hospital in this issue's cover story.)

"Coming out of the pandemic, it's a great time for all of us to come together and socialize. We haven't been able to do that as much over the past two years," said Tom Ellis, MWPH's vice president of human resources. "This was the perfect time to come together and celebrate all of us as a hospital family."

This extra-festive Hospital Week closed with a luncheon that paid homage to the hospital's centennial year with a "through the decades" themed cookout, where many employees dressed in clothes from their favorite decade of the last 100 years.

"Hospital Week is a vital part of our effort to recognize everyone who works here, across all different disciplines," said Tammany Buckwalter, employee engagement and volunteer specialist at MWPH. "This is the one week that celebrates the whole team—every person who comes together to make it possible for MWPH to care for our patients." ❤️

MWPH's Spanish-Language Support Group Shows Families *They're Not Alone*



Having a child with complex medical needs can be stressful, and having a language barrier between your family and your child's healthcare team can make that stressful situation even harder. That's why, in 2018, MWPH launched a support group for Spanish-speaking families, called "Familias Unidas, No Estamos Solos." The group has grown from four families its first year to more than 20 families today.

"We know that language barriers increase miscommunication, reduce the patient's and family's satisfaction with their care, and may hinder the patient's healing process," said Sally DeArruda (*at right*), language services manager at MWPH, who leads the group. "Although MWPH has a language services department that is able to provide qualified interpreters to facilitate communication between providers and families, we saw the need to go further by bringing these families together. Not only would the families get support from MWPH, but they could also get help from each other."



Every group meeting is designed to respond to the needs and concerns of its members. Sessions feature expert speakers, from physicians and therapists to child life specialists and dietitians. The meetings, currently offered via Zoom, mix a wealth of resources with an open forum for questions and a safe space to share experiences.

The sessions are special because they put the parents first. "One difference between this group and other community-based support groups is that this group focuses on the parents and what they need, rather than just focusing on their child's condition," Sally said. In between sessions, an active group chat provides real-time support and resources.

“We know that language barriers increase miscommunication, reduce the patient's and family's satisfaction with their care, and may hinder the patient's healing process”

The group is a vital source of support for patient families. Patient parent and support group member Evelyn Diaz said, "What I love about the group, other than the fact that I get a lot of great information, is that we can also talk about our personal situations and ask for help. I would highly recommend this group to any and all parents with special children who think that they are the only ones in their situation. In this group, they will feel supported, loved, blessed, and, most important—they will never feel alone." ♥

Familias Unidas, No estamos solos meets every other Thursday via Zoom. To join the group, contact Sally DeArruda at 410-578-5071.

MWPH: IN THE COMMUNITY

In April 2022, Dr. Eli Getzoff presented her Antiracism work at the Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP) Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. This work emerged from Dr. Getzoff's position as the co-chair of SPP's Community Antiracism Workgroup, a group of psychologists and students addressing racial and social justice issues that impact healthcare negatively. The Community Antiracism Workgroup, presented their work at a pre-conference workshop with over 80 SPP members in attendance receiving wonderful feedback amongst peers.

The presentation showcased The Community Antiracism Workgroup's three key national projects:

1. Fact sheets assessing for social determinants of health that can be used by clinics and eventually the community.
2. Diversifying the pediatric psychology workforce by creating brief video interviews of pediatric psychologists to be viewed by high school and undergraduate psychology students, with a specific emphasis on historically black colleges.
3. Advocacy training and service within our communities; The Community Antiracism Workgroup hosted a 4 night training with the American Psychological Association (APA) Advocacy Department. This training resulted in published op-eds, several members joining their state psychology associations, and participating in national advocacy summits held by APA.



Pictured are Dr. Getzoff (second from left) with the co-chairs for the the Clinical, Training, and Community subgroups of the SPP Antiracism Workgroup.



Patient Parent Perspective

Erin Mosley

Erin and Andrew Mosley are parents to two children: 10-year-old Addison and 6-year-old Alex. Addison was born with lymphatic malformation, which resulted in challenges related to feeding.

How did your family first connect with MWPH?

Addison had participated in feeding therapy at various places since she was a newborn, but although we tried lots of feeding programs over seven years, she wasn't making any progress. We came to MWPH in summer 2019 to participate in the feeding day program. The first day, right off the bat, they had her chewing food. We were blown away, because



all she would eat by mouth before was ice cream and pudding. We were delighted by the progress she made with the program.

What other services has your family received at MWPH?

We continue to do outpatient feeding therapy with Mariah Pranger, Speech Pathologist. Babs, one of MWPH's therapy dogs, is such a huge motivator for Addison. Being rewarded with special time with Babs helps Addison to continue making progress. Last year, we did the virtual peer group feeding therapy with Dr. Logie, and we had a great experience with that as well. Addison now eats eggs, pasta, chicken sausage—all things that felt impossible before.

What stands out about MWPH?

How much they "get" kids. We've gone to many hospitals and medical practices for pediatric care. But at MWPH, they really understand the unique needs of kids—especially my kid. They do such a good job of tailoring their care to your child. It's not one-size-fits-all.

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

Keep an open mind. We were often pleasantly surprised at the things that would click for Addison during the program, when they never had before. Take advantage of all the wonderful resources and expertise that everyone there has to offer.

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

FROM PATIENT PARENTS

"Beverly Neway has been instrumental to the progress of my son's development since starting school. He experiences far fewer sensory 'triggers' and has learned to regulate himself in uncomfortable sensory situations. We have learned so much about our son and his disorder because of Ms. Neway, and our son has learned to manage it as well. We were in great hands the moment he started with her, and we couldn't imagine a greater course of treatment than what he received from Ms. Neway through MWPH."

"I am so happy another parent referred me to the Familias Unidas, No estamos solos group. I love the way we have great topics to help us on how to become better as a person, and how to take care of our mental health. We are motivated to set realistic goals as mothers, wives, sisters, friends and as an individual."

For information or questions about *Handprints*, contact **Katie Yeager**, Communications Coordinator at katharine.yeager@mwph.org



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

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