Spotlight on Volunteers!

Aarish Khan:

1. What school do you attend and what year are you in?
A. Sam Houston State University, Senior, Graduating in May 2010 with a B.S. in Biology and a Minor in chemistry.

2. What motivated you to volunteer at MHSWH?
A. I wanted to learn more about myself and find out how I could help the community. It is a great feeling when you know you are doing something that can make a difference.

3. What is your favorite place to volunteer and why?
A. Central Processing Department (CPD). I like the footwork involved. It keeps me active, delivering necessary medical supplies and equipment so nurses can do their jobs effectively.

4. Do you have any favorite pastimes?
A. I enjoy reading books on history and watching documentaries.

5. What are your future plans?
A. My current goal is to be a medical lab technician but my long-term goal is to become a virologist / microbiologist.

6. Would you recommend MHSWH to other potential volunteers?
A. I would definitely recommend MHSWH to potential new volunteers because there is always something to do here. You meet people from all walks of life: healthy, sick, rich, poor, friendly, irritable, etc. It is a great environment that you can learn and be a part of.

7. What other extra-curricular activities do you take part in?
A. I am an active member of Tri-Beta, a National Biological Sciences Honor Society. I am also currently doing research on bacterial ecology and their interactions with the environment.

Nancy Annor:

1. What motivated you to volunteer at MHSWH?
A. I heard from a friend that it is a really fun place to volunteer and help. Also, I thought it would be interesting to see firsthand how the healthcare system really works.

2. What is your favorite place to volunteer? Why?
A. I usually volunteer on the 5th floor and I would say that it is my favorite place. You actually get to interact with the patients. It’s the Family Place, and the staff is really welcoming and helpful.

3. Do you have any favorite pastimes?
A. I am learning to play the guitar, and trying to learn new languages including Japanese, Spanish and Chinese. I also work on writing my own music.

4. What are your future plans?
A. My future plans include going to college and studying dentistry. My experience in my preceptorship at DeBakey High School for Health Professions confirmed my interest in dentistry.

5. Would you recommend MHSWH to other potential volunteers?
A. Definitely, because it is a really amazing place to volunteer and a great experience. I learn so much, like how the nurses care for their patients. If someone wants to be informed about the healthcare field, then volunteering here at MHSWH is a good place to start.

6. What other extra-curricular activities do you take part in?
A. Schoolwork keeps me pretty busy, but I am also an active member of Health Occupations Students of America.
Feature Story: Cardiovascular Health

In the United States, a person dies of heart disease every 33 seconds. Someone in the United States has a heart attack every 20 seconds. The numbers continue to become more alarming each year. Luckily however, there are steps everyone can take to become more heart conscious. According to the American Heart Association, it all comes down to the simple things, like good nutrition and adequate exercise. Making a lifelong commitment to both is essential in maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

The first step for optimal heart health is to quit smoking. Smoking increases the progression of atherosclerosis (a condition in which fatty material collects along the walls of arteries and hardens to form calcium deposits), and reduces the body’s overall ability to handle certain situations. Maintaining a healthy weight is also imperative. To maintain a stable weight, you can participate in routine physical activities and eat a healthy diet. Most people don’t regularly monitor their blood pressure, but it can tell you a lot when recorded over a period of time, and once shown to your doctor, it can help in detecting certain diseases earlier. Additionally, blood sugar, cholesterol, and glucose should be maintained at safe levels. You can often do so by avoiding foods high in saturated fats and instead opting for foods that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, soy, legumes and beans are also important for a heart-healthy diet. In fact, research has shown that people who eat beans at least four times a week are less likely to develop a heart ailment.

Being aware helps! Numerous studies have shown that under-educated people are far more likely to suffer heart attacks. For more information, go online to research the American Heart Association, WebMD, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

~ Rida Khan, MHSWH Junior Board Vice President

Vegetarian? Vegan? Flexitarian? What?

Yes, all these terms are quite confusing. Yet they serve a key role in distinguishing the many types of plant-based diets. First, let me define the terms. It’s quite simple, believe me. Vegetarians do not eat meat but still find animal products such as milk, butter and cheese acceptable. Note that the term ‘meat’ includes not only beef but also chicken and seafood. Vegans exclude all types of animal products. No meat, milk, butter or cheese. This means no ice cream, either! Flexitarians are vegetarians, with the exception that they eat meat once or twice a month. Hence, the root word ‘flexible’. Pescartarians include fish in addition to a plant-based diet, whereas polloartarians include chicken.

This year I learned the definitions of all these terms in my aerobics and fitness course. The course included a vegan cooking class taught by my vegan physical education coach. The class primarily focused on healthy cooking and the health concerns associated with animal products. My coach started the class when so many students questioned what she ate. I wondered myself. It seemed a vegan diet with no animal products would tremendously limit her options, but boy, did she prove me wrong! After merely a day in the class, I became vegetarian. The health concerns often present in a traditional diet, along with the animal cruelty sometimes associated with the meat industry, disgusted me. Adopting a vegetarian diet was an interesting experience. I began to cook for myself and I shopped for myself. I discovered many new recipes and ingredients I never knew existed. My best discoveries were rice milk and almond milk. Of course, I knew about soy milk before this experience, but I was never a real fan of it. The first time I tried rice milk, I fell in love with it. I could barely notice the difference from cow’s milk when I ate it with cereal. Also, the nutrition facts were phenomenal — a very healthy alternative to cow’s milk. Eventually, I boycotted school food and packed my own lunch. There are so many easy, quick affordable vegan recipes to choose from. Hummus quesadilla is great! Tofu tacos? Fantastic! Minestrone soup is very tasty. My favorite recipe is called ‘Brown Rice Fantasy’, my coach’s original creation. It is brown rice topped with a mixture of various veggies, fruits and legumes like avocado, tomato, beans and corn. She served it with salsa. It was a delicious and very satiable meal. After a couple of days, I felt lighter, more energetic and all-around more alert. I realized how significantly diet affects my brain. I was less sluggish and I felt my body reboot itself. As a result, I’ve encouraged my family and friends not only to adopt a vegetarian diet but also a more active lifestyle. I have an entire file of more than 50 vegan recipes, so feel free to contact me if you’re interested…or just curious!

~ Christina Phan, MHSWH Junior Board President
Thanks Valiant Valentine’s Day Volunteers!

Junior Volunteers Prathana Dhar and Dayana Rodriguez show off some of their handiwork before distributing their beautiful, hand-made Valentine’s Day cards and flowers to our patients. These young ladies are truly sweethearts! Thanks a million Prathana and Dayana!

The Asian Care Unit at MHSW!

Opened in July 2009, the Asian Care Unit at MHSW provides a comfortable setting for Asian patients. There are about twenty beds, eight full-time employees and one supplemental employee. A 24/7 support and service line provides interpreters, and translators are available, upon request, to sit with patients or relatives. Other amenities include Asian cuisine, TV and radio. Every week, this unit services an average of ten to fifteen patients. To find out more about this outstanding program, please call the Chinese extension 6768 or the Vietnamese extension 6767.

The Deal from Debbie

We all know that volunteering can be a personally rewarding experience. Helping others during their time of need always is. But on the lighter side, I thought you might want to consider "D.L.'s Top 10 Bonus Reasons to Volunteer at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital." (No, not David Letterman's...D.L. Varner's, of course!)

10. All the handy hand sanitizer you can handle!
9. Running around the star configuration of the hospital floors while helping others is "a-maze-ing" and so good for your heart...literally and figuratively!
8. The garage parking is covered...again, both literally and figuratively!
7. Can anyone ever really get enough hospital “custard”? Yum!
6. You can help others go "4-wheeling"...you know, like when patients are discharged at the front door via wheelchair escort!
5. The all-red uniform tops are all right! No chance whatsoever of being mistaken for a candy cane!
4. Where else can you hear a lullaby at all hours of the day and night? It always makes me smile!
3. Four hours a week at the hospital still leaves at least 20 hours each day to watch shows like "24". Try saying that 4 times fast!
2. Patients, patients, patients. I mean, patience, patience, patience!
1. Caring is cool!

In all seriousness (even on April Fools Day), we love our volunteers and appreciate your hard work. Our volunteers are the best! Way to go team! ~ Debbie Varner, Volunteer Supervisor
HEY GUYS! It’s SPRING BREAK! You know what that means right? No school and tons of time to do whatever you want! Not to mention if you’re a senior like the officers and me, it’s almost time for college! So let’s whip up a few things to do...after volunteering, of course!

* First, don’t slack off your senior year. Keep your grades where they are so colleges have no reason to reject your acceptance....not that they would for you, right?
* Guys...if you don’t get into your top choice...all is not lost. You ultimately decide where you go in life and how you get there, not a college.
* Have fun in college! It’s not there forever, but of course, don’t forget to study!
* Apparently...$5 is a lot of money for a college student. So I guess you should save up your spare change. Oh yeah, I’ve heard paying for textbooks is expensive!
* Learn to love Ramen noodles — a fundamental part of a college student’s diet!
* But really, you should go to college, because now more than ever, education is a part of life that will do you good. Apply for financial aid and scholarships to help out!

AND DURING SPRING BREAK TRY SOME OF THESE SUGGESTIONS:
* Road trip! There’s plenty of time to go anywhere!
* The beach! Go! The weather’s nice, the sky is beautiful. Everyone’s not at work or school. All of this makes for one fun break!
* Go to a concert! It’s the perfect time to sit back or stand and scream!
* Go camping! The weather isn’t getting any better than this and don’t you hear the outdoors calling you? It wants you!
* Get a tan. Have you ever felt you don’t look dark enough? Put on some sunscreen and go outside and do something. Anything!
* Go around to random places! Many people don’t realize just how much there is to do in Houston. Try downtown — tons of stuff goes on there.

JUST HAVE FUN!!!!

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**Heart Health Word Search**

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O I E M S Q I J Q O O C H U N C G
L S N O A L C O H O L S W E A G O
S L E S S E V D O L B M R E N O
I E O C L S Q I H P S O D N X I D
H Z A E I C E E M E W I N O E K C
L J T T I O R L E R O B T R O M
F J G V R E H E T V Y P T Y C M O
X Z X X D I A C A S F Y S I S L
L W I I V T G S J A D R A S N B
Y E T U E G C H N O S M T E O I
N Y C G G U H V T D O Q R Y E N T
D I E T L H T L A E N G A A P N E
I Y W A I H F H P E W E G M I R
H H R Q J E H Y A Q U E H I U C O
Z T M P B L C Z O E N I X Z O Z L
T L P U Y C E S H Z J N C I X T C
J V D T E G B R U P D G U T O R R
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**Heart Health Word Search**

- BLOOD VESSELS
- CARDIOVASCULAR
- DIET
- EAT RIGHT
- EXERCISE
- GOOD CHOICES
- GOOD CHOLESTEROL
- HEALTH
- HEREDITY
- MEN
- NO ALCOHOL
- NON SMOKING
- STRESS
- VEGETABLES
- WOMEN