Spotlight on Volunteers!

Harsh and Rudra Patel

For brothers Harsh and Rudra Patel and their Aunt Dharma Patel, volunteering is a “Family Affair”. Harsh, a student at HBU and Rudra, a student at DeBakey High School for Health Professions, are mainstays of the 8th floor during the weekend while Dharma administers the Information Desk on Sunday mornings.

Katie Truong and Stacy Nguy

Cousins Katie Truong and Stacy Nguy keep it “All in the Family” as they wrap up their Sunday afternoon volunteer shift on the 4th floor. This dynamic duo has a combined total of almost 400 volunteer service hours. Katie is finishing her freshman year at the University of Houston, while Stacy is a graduating senior at DeBakey High School for Health Professions.
**Feature Story: Asthma Awareness**

May is Asthma Awareness Month. Asthma is a respiratory illness that can be life-threatening. There is currently no cure, but asthma can be controlled through various medical remedies and by minimizing exposure to countless environmental triggers that patients can encounter indoors as well as outdoors. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, these triggers can include pollen, dust mites, mold, pet dander, secondhand smoke, and even cockroaches. Other triggers include nitrogen dioxide and warm-blooded pests. With efforts to avoid such triggers, an asthma patient can lead a normal and healthy life. The website maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that asthma is one of the most common long-term diseases of children, but adults of all ages can have asthma, too. When someone is experiencing an asthma attack, they may show signs of wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, and chest tightness when something aggravates the lungs. Most patients carry their inhaler around with them in case of an asthma attack. According to the EPA, asthma affects 23 million Americans, 7 million of whom are children. Thirteen million school days are missed each year due to asthma. African Americans continue to have a higher rate of asthma emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths than do Caucasians. The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people. If someone in your family has asthma, you are more likely to develop asthma as well. The most important thing to do if you have asthma is to contact your physician and immediately work out an asthma action plan. You can also visit the CDC or EPA website for more information.

~ Rida Khan, MHSWH Junior Board Vice President

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**Prom on a Budget**

The lavish limo, the pricey dress, the expensive dinner, photographer, ticket, corsage, boutonnière, makeup, hair-styling. What do they all have in common? You guessed it. Prom. But the truth is... unless you are employed or have hefty savings, this stuff really adds up! The bill can easily rack up to several hundreds dollars—dollars that could go toward college. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, these triggers can include pollen, dust mites, mold, pet dander, secondhand smoke, and even cockroaches. Other triggers include nitrogen dioxide and warm-blooded pests. With efforts to avoid such triggers, an asthma patient can lead a normal and healthy life. The website maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that asthma is one of the most common long-term diseases of children, but adults of all ages can have asthma, too. When someone is experiencing an asthma attack, they may show signs of wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, and chest tightness when something aggravates the lungs. Most patients carry their inhaler around with them in case of an asthma attack. According to the EPA, asthma affects 23 million Americans, 7 million of whom are children. Thirteen million school days are missed each year due to asthma. African Americans continue to have a higher rate of asthma emergency depart-

Out of curiosity, we all searched for our dresses online at Macy’s, Dillard’s, and JC Penney — typical department stores with large prom dress selections. Each of us found the exact dress, except for nearly five times more in cost. Now, don’t get me wrong. We did quite a bit of leg work to track down these bargains at Ross. But take my word and do a little searching. With persistence you might find the dress of your dreams hung between two “interesting” others. Here are a few other cost-conscious options to consider:

* Hold a sleepover the night before so everyone can do each other’s hair and make-up the next day.

* Drive your own car. Rocking out to the radio with your friends is always fun and the familiarity of your own car makes the experience more comfortable, intimate, and enjoyable.

* Make a corsage yourself out of synthetic flowers, as opposed to fresh flowers that will die by the end of the night. This way you can keep your corsage for years thereafter.

* Eat lightly for dinner since dancing does not work on a full stomach.

Following these tips will not only help you enjoy the prom you always dreamed about but may also spare some college savings in the process. In the midst of this economic recession, every penny counts!

~ Christina Phan, MHSWH Junior Board President
Junior Board Officers Wanted!

If you are currently a 10th or 11th grade high school student and would be interested in potentially serving as an officer on the 2010—2011 Junior Board, please speak with Debbie Varner in the Volunteer Office about completing an application. The planned slate of officers will include the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian. New officers will be selected by the end of the summer.

Thanks to the Clock Crew!

Many thanks to the following volunteers who worked hard during the weekend of March 13th & 14th to reset hundreds of clocks in the patient rooms at MHSWH:

Ruchika Bhardwaj, Huy Bui, Soudi Daliri, Vinh Ho, Thu Huynh, Cody Le, Harsh Patel, Rudra Patel, Cindy Truong, Anum Umer, and Amanda White

Thanks to your positive attitude and outstanding dedication, this tremendous effort went like...well, clockwork!

The Deal from Debbie

As the grass is getting greener, the weather is warming up, and the days are finally getting longer, I can’t believe that another school year is quickly coming to a close. Where has the year gone? It seems like only yesterday that school was back in session. Now it’s prom season, and many of our Junior volunteers are preparing to graduate from high school and go off to college. Sadly, some of you will be leaving us, but I hope that many of you will come back again (please!) to volunteer at MHSWH if you possibly can, even if it turns out to be many years from now in the future. You’re sure to meet lots of new friends and you just might even see a familiar face or two from the past.

One day recently I looked up from my desk in the volunteer office as a friendly woman introduced herself to me. “Hi, I’m Carolyn O’Donnell!” the vaguely familiar voice greeted. Instant flashback — let’s just say...quite a few years back. The smiling volunteer was none other than Mrs. O’Donnell, my 9th grade geometry teacher! Sine, cosine, tangent...talk about a blast from the past! Life is full of happy surprises.

Thank you Mrs. O’Donnell for making a difference, not only in my life, but in the lives of so many people. As I like to tell my 10 year-old nephew, math is important not only because you use it almost every day, but because it trains your brain. When you think about it, volunteering is important not only because it helps others, but because it trains your heart. Volunteering helps us to be more patient, more compassionate, and more in touch with the needs of others. The volunteers at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital have some of the biggest hearts of anyone I know. With sharp brains and strong hearts, we can accomplish just about any goal we set out to achieve.

April 19th—23rd was Volunteer Appreciation Week. I can’t think of a better time to let you all know how much Becki, Ruth and I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you volunteers for giving so generously of your time and talents! ~ Debbie Varner, Volunteer Supervisor
Hey guys…so I’m thinking it’s time for some more suggestions from myself again. Hopefully you’ve tried out a few things I’ve picked and enjoyed them! Summer is fast approaching and school is closing. A new chapter is about to start so let’s make the last few days worth it!

* Volunteer! I know most of you already volunteer at MHSWH, but consider multi-tasking! Also try helping out at a nursing home or even some organizations you can find through school.

* Reflect back on the year! Go out to the crafts store and buy a scrapbook! Fill it up with some memories, especially if you are graduating.

* Go to the park and camp…maybe Brazos Bend State Park! You can interact with the alligators, go have a picnic, go fishing, hiking, bike riding, and anything else you can think of!

* Go support the Houston Astros! Yes, I know they didn’t get off to the best start, but you’re a Houstonian and you should go support them nonetheless!

* Enjoy the weather! It’s the perfect time, the temperature is just right to go outside and exercise or play some sports. Get your friends together and have fun!

* WATER FIGHT! Go out! It’s hot! Perfect weather!

**Prom Word Search**

Be Safe – Don’t Text and Drive!