Volunteers' Gazette
MHSW Junior Auxiliary

Volunteers in Action

Kristina Leong and Marissa Harrison Hard at Work Changing the Clocks in Hospital Patient Rooms and Recording Their Actions When We “Fell Back” Last November

Katie Truong Showcases Her Creativity by Participating in Our Cards for Soldiers Service Project

Junior Board Officers Aala Al Hasan, Rida Khan, Marissa Harrison, and Anam Sherali Shopped ‘Til They Dropped in Support of Our Holiday New Toy Drive. Many Thanks to Volunteer King-Fun Lai Whose Generosity Helped Make this Event a Success!

SAVE THE DATE:
The Junior Board is in the process of planning a Junior Volunteer Appreciation Party for all of our hard-working high school and college volunteers.

• When: Sat., Feb. 12, 2011
• Time: 1-3 PM
• Where: MHSWH Admiral Rooms on Concourse
• What: Food, Fun & Games
• Attire: Casual or Volunteer Uniform

Excellence in Action
**MHSWH Career Corner**

**Name:** Angela McNeal  
**Position:** PCA II, Unit Secretary

When did you first become interested in your profession?  
- I became interested in my profession in 1999 because I wanted to help people and see its end result.

What is your educational background?  
- After four years of high school, I went to college and earned my Associate’s Degree. Now, I’m working towards my Bachelor’s in Communication and Master’s in Social Work at U of H.

What is your typical day like?  
- Catering to patient needs, enjoying my wonderful co-workers, and assisting visitors as needed — face-to-face or via phone calls.

What is your favorite part of the job?  
- Interacting with such a diverse group of people.

What is your least favorite part of job?  
- Not being able to have more quality time with my patients and the families because quality care is very important.

What advice would you give to a high school student who is interested in your profession?  
- Start out with volunteering and if you like the atmosphere, then consider being part of the medical family in any field you choose.

How long have you been working with Memorial Hermann?  
- It’s been six years now.

What do you wish you knew years ago that you have learned after all of your years of experience?  
- I wish I knew how important it was to pursue a higher education earlier in life.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our volunteers?  
- Yes, I like the fact that MHSWH allows such eager, motivated, and dedicated volunteers to share their spare time in the Family Place.

~Aala Al Hasan, MHSWH Junior Board Secretary

**Name:** Rachael House, R.N.  
**Position:** Emergency Room Nurse

When did you first become interested in your profession?  
- When I became unemployed and I was offered employment for two years.

What is your educational background?  
- High school then college for nursing.

How long have you been working with Memorial Hermann?  
- Since 2006; I started as a Premier staff member, and officially became a MHSWH staff member last year.

What is your typical day like?  
- It depends where I am working. It can be pleasantly surprising or pull-your-hair-out crazy.

What is your favorite part of the job?  
- The human body is a complex machine and the dynamic of the human body is very interesting.

What is your least favorite part of job?  
- Abuse of the system.

What advice would you give to a high school student who is considering your career path?  
- Think hard about your decision. It will drain you physically and mentally. It is very rewarding, but there is a dark side too. Also, be able to multitask efficiently.

What do you wish you knew years ago that you have now learned after seven years of experience?  
- The subtle little clues that subconsciously drain in your brain.

~Anam Sherali, MHSWH Junior Board Publicity Liaison
Feature Story: Heart Health
By Rida Khan, MHSWH Junior Board President

It’s just about that time of the year when people are making and breaking their own New Year’s resolutions. One of the most popular resolutions, understandably, is to exercise and get in shape whether it’s through a gym membership, yoga, or fitness DVD’s. Either way, exercising more is a resolution worth sticking to. It is one of the most important changes you can make that will lead to a better, healthier tomorrow and better cardiovascular health. According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in America for adults. This number can change over time, however, if efforts are made by teenagers and young adults to focus more on their health.

Increasing physical activity not only helps you feel and look better, it can also lower other risk factors that lead to cardiovascular disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and obesity. Research has shown that there is plenty to gain from exercising just 30 minutes a day. For maximum heart and lung benefits, try running, swimming, dancing, jumping rope, or anything that gets you moving. Encourage your friends to join you and make it a group activity! If you have fun, you will be more likely to stick with a healthy exercise routine over time.

Other ways to stay in shape include having a balanced diet. This can mean making just simple changes to your routine. Beginning your day with a healthy breakfast and packing a nutritious lunch for school are great ways to start. Go online for simple, quick, and inexpensive recipes that will make the change a breeze.

 Needless to say, smoking leads to numerous health problems and significantly increases your chances of cardiovascular disease. The longer you smoke, the more difficult it will be to quit. Simply put, if you don’t smoke — don’t start. If you do smoke, it is never too late to stop and make a difference in your future well-being.

Sometimes, heredity does play a role. Even though individuals have no control over their genetic background, it is still possible to maintain optimal cardiovascular health by making the right choices.

Healthy habits can prevent many medical problems later in life. Speak to your doctor to find out your risk factors and remember that simple modifications to your regular routine can improve your life dramatically. This year, be sure to make the most of your New Year’s resolutions and keep your cardiovascular health in mind!

The Deal from Debbie

At the risk of stating the obvious, hospitals are always a busy place. A rare moment of quiet usually turns out to be just the calm before the storm! As volunteers, it is our mission to make the day a little bit easier and hopefully a whole lot brighter for our patients, visitors, and staff members. With this in mind, I present to you D.L.’s Top 10 Ways to Make Someone’s Day. (Sorry, not David Letterman...D.L. Varner strikes again!)

10. Instead of just giving directions to a lost patient or visitor, personally take them to their destination.
9. Instead of silently rolling your eyes in the direction of a misbehaving child, say a few kind words to them.
8. Instead of just admiring a patient’s flowers, offer to change out the water.
7. Instead of just handing out a meal tray, offer assistance with feeding the patient if you suspect that it might be appreciated.
6. Instead of just passing out a book or magazine, offer to read a few pages aloud.
5. Instead of just sitting at the Nurses’ Station waiting to be given a task, offer to help catch the phone calls, restock supplies, or run an errand.
4. Instead of just feeling helpless when a non-English speaking visitor asks you a question in their native language, learn a few key phrases in Vietnamese or Spanish. It will really come in handy!
3. Instead of just standing by while a patient is gathering their belongings prior to discharge, offer to help them pack.
2. Instead of just responding to one request of a patient or staff member, ask them if there is anything else you can do for them. Sincerely tell them you have the time.
1. Instead of looking away from most passersby as you go about your day, try to make eye contact, offer a smile, and better yet...say “hi”. You just might hear it back!

You get the idea. Going the extra mile, or even just the extra step is almost always appreciated, and is the sign of a truly exceptional volunteer. In this season of New Year’s resolutions, why not resolve to go out and make someone’s day? On Valentine’s Day and every day, it will do your heart good! ~ Debbie Varner, Volunteer Supervisor
Get Hip to HIPAA

While serving in a hospital environment, it is crucial for both volunteers and health care professionals to take measures to ensure that the privacy of patients under our care is protected. Though we interact with countless patients throughout the week, it is essential to follow HIPAA rules and regulations instilled to protect their privacy and confidential information that many of us handle every day. HIPAA stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. This legislation was enacted in August, 1996 during the Clinton Administration. It was initially developed to safeguard the electronic transmission of data, and was expanded to cover comprehensive privacy and confidentiality issues pertaining to the delivery of health care services.

One of the most important rules HIPAA mandates is for hospitals to restrict access to patient data, thereby making it available only for those who need to know the information in order to do their job. A patient’s information should never be discussed in public places such as elevators, during casual conversations, or even at home, where those who are not involved in direct patient care might overhear a patient’s confidential information. Secondly, those who handle electronic patient records or data must make sure that all patient information is properly secured when they have finished with a particular record. This is especially important if the handler must step away from their computer even for a moment, or if the computer is in an open area that might be visible to other patients or visitors. Lastly, charts and forms containing sensitive patient information should always be placed face down to prevent others from viewing confidential information.

Thanks to all those who work hard to ensure that HIPAA standards are strictly maintained, Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital has established a great reputation among the patients we serve. With your help, we will continue to provide superior health care services and maintain our standards of excellence for many years to come. ~ Marissa Harrison, MHSWH Junior Board Treasurer

Handmade Valentine’s Cards for Patients

For Valentine’s Day, the MHSWH Junior Board wants to encourage all volunteers to develop hand-made greeting cards along with a brief message to be delivered to our patients the weekend before Valentine’s Day. We want to let them know that we are thinking of them and how much we care. The deadline is Saturday, February 12, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. Art supplies and samples will be in the break room of the volunteer office beginning in February. Please see Rida or Debbie for more information.
The month of February is coming along, and for some, it will be filled with excitement; for others, much dread. Well, you may ask, where did this period of ambivalent feelings originate from? How can one month induce chronic daydreams and create butterflies in the stomachs of some, while causing manic depression and frequent heartburn for others?

The culprit, Valentine’s Day, has had its share of controversies, especially on how it began. From a religious standpoint, there is almost no correlation between the numerous Christian saints honored on February 14th to this modern holiday. One of the few romantic legends, however, speaks of a priest named Valentine who supposedly violated one of Roman Emperor King Claudius II’s rules forbidding soldiers to be married. According to King Claudius’ beliefs, marriage did not make for good soldiers. Rebelliously, Valentine secretly performed marriage ceremonies for various young men, and when Claudius found out about this, he had Valentine arrested and thrown in jail. An additional embellishment to this centuries-old theory has Valentine falling in love with his jailer’s daughter and writing the first “Valentine” card, reading: “From your Valentine”.

My opinion — and a rather cynical one at that — is that Valentine’s Day is an insignificant holiday popularized by Americans, one that is able to vacuum money out of teenage wallets, initiate massive over-consumption of chocolate, and cause a frenzy of red and pink on what is, at best, an arbitrarily-defined day. However, Valentine’s Day does have many pros. It is a day of love and appreciation of the ones you are closest to, friends and family included. It is a day especially to show thanks for what you have been given by others (and may have taken for granted). Think of it as a Thanksgiving not between Native Americans and Pilgrims, but between a husband and wife or two best friends. Now that you’ve had a tutorial in Valentine’s Day 101, why not give in to the corporations of Hallmark and Hershey’s and buy your loved ones that special card and chocolates (or hey, you can even make your own) … because you know it will make their day!

~ Meghan Tang, MHSWH Junior Board Vice President

After the verb “to love,” “to help” is the most beautiful verb in the world.

–Bertha Von Suttner, Peace Activist
Top 100? Ha - ain't got nothing on Top 10, so let's get down to it:

1. Firework - Katy Perry
2. What’s My Name? - Rihanna (Featuring Drake)
3. Grenade - Bruno Mars
4. Raise Your Glass - Pink
5. We R Who We R - Ke$ha
6. Only Girl (In The World) - Rihanna
7. Just The Way You Are - Bruno Mars
8. The Time (Dirty Bit) - The Black Eyed Peas
9. Just A Dream - Nelly
10. Bottoms Up - Trey Songz (Featuring Nicky Minaj)

~ Anam Sherali, MHSWH Junior Board Publicity Liaison