Kicking Off a New Year of Volunteering!

Treasurer Marissa Harrison, Vice President Aala Al Hasan, Publicity Liaison Anam Sherali, President Rida Khan, Secretary Syed Anjum, & Social Director Vinh Ho

Excellence in Action

Ayodh Patel Covering the Information Desk and Wheelchair Checkout Area

Marissa Harrison, Lillian Trosclair, & Loyda Gavia Preparing to Deliver Halloween-Themed Garlands for Patients Made by a Local Class of 6th Graders

Kicking Off a New Year of Volunteering!
It's very fascinating that something invisible to the naked eye is responsible for over 400 deaths and is associated with 1.4 million cases of illness each year in the United States alone. *Salmonella* is a microscopic rod-shaped, food-borne bacteria that can cause illness to exposed individuals. There are over 2,300 serotypes within the Salmonella family, the most common in the U.S. being *Salmonella Typhimurium* which accounts for nearly 50% of all human infections. This bacterium resides in the intestinal tracts of infected animals and people. Salmonella may be contained in foods such as raw meat, poultry, milk, fruits, vegetables, and seafood. It is almost always consumed unknowingly because it does not alter the taste or visual appearance of contaminated food.

Strains that cause no symptoms in animals can be very dangerous to humans. The most common symptoms caused by this bacterium are diarrhea, fever, and abdominal pain. Headache, nausea, vomiting, and chills may also be experienced. Although some are fortunate enough to overcome infection with minimal treatment, many cannot. Individuals with weakened immune systems, infants, young children, nursing mothers, and elderly persons are most vulnerable.

The best way to prevent a Salmonella infection is to use sufficient heat when cooking meat and to follow standard sanitary principles, especially when handling raw meat or poultry. Information within this article has been verified by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

~ Syed Anjum, MHSWH Junior Board Secretary

**Organic vs. Inorganic Foods**

Organic foods are foods that have been grown free of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Without the use of synthetic additives, organic foods develop a natural defense mechanism that protects the body from cancer and heart disease. Inorganic foods, on the other hand, are generally grown with artificial fertilizers and are sometimes injected with chemicals that actually make them grow faster or artificially repel pests. Researchers have argued that organic foods are healthier than inorganic foods simply because they are richer in vitamins and minerals. Some studies have shown that children under the age of five ingest an average of eight synthetic pesticides each day which can contribute to illness. According to the New York Times, “One study shows that exposure to dietary pesticides is associated with neurobehavioral problems in children.” This is not surprising, as synthetic pesticides can be classified as neurotoxins, and some persons such as children and pregnant women can be susceptible to potential harm.

For those persons seeking to optimize the dietary health benefits of foods they consume while still keeping an eye on their budget, ABC News writer Darcy Bonfils summarizes below her list of suggested fruits and vegetables. Take a look — these tips just might change your style of food selection!

5 Foods You Might Want to Consider Buying Organic: Apples, Bell Peppers, Carrots, Celery & Strawberries
6 Foods You Don’t Need To Buy Organic: Asparagus, Avocado, Cabbage, Grapefruit, Onions & Sweet Peas
5 Naturally Cleanest Fruits and Veggies: Avocado, Mango, Onions, Pineapple & Sweet Corn

Buying organic food is not the only option for those persons interested in reducing their consumption of synthetic pesticides. As seen in the list above, various fruits and vegetables are known for having very low pesticide residue. Other steps you can take to keep pesticides off your plate include thoroughly washing your fruits and vegetables, and steam cooking leafy greens. As with all important issues that affect your health, it is best to consult your personal physician before making any significant changes to your diet.

~ Aala Al Hasan, MHSWH Junior Board Vice President
When it comes to your health, you really don’t want to gamble. It pays to play it safe. The best way to do that is to make healthy food choices, get plenty of rest, exercise often, visit your doctor regularly, and get vaccinated. Many diseases that devastated past generations are now preventable with proper vaccination and we are so fortunate to live during a time in which this is a reality.

In compliance with Texas Senate Bill 7, which took effect on September 1, 2012, all healthcare personnel and volunteers affiliated with Memorial Hermann must submit a copy of their complete immunization record to the Volunteer Office by January 1, 2013. This action is required to verify proof of immunity against the following vaccine-preventable diseases:

* Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus (DPT)
* Hepatitis B
* Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
* Varicella (Chicken Pox)

If a volunteer lacks immunity to any of the above, the MHSWH Health Office will provide immunity blood testing and immunizations, as needed, free of charge during the month of your birthday. As you know, we additionally require that all volunteers receive annual TB screening and a seasonal flu shot. Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital cares about the health of our patients, staff and volunteers because we care about you. Please help us accomplish our goal of 100% volunteer participation in compliance with Memorial Hermann’s Preventable Disease Immunization Policy. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, Becki, Ruth or I will be glad to discuss them with you.

Thank you so much, Volunteers for your enthusiastic dedication to our hospital. We couldn’t achieve our goal of being Houston’s #1 Hospital of choice without you. During this season of Thanksgiving, Becki, Ruth and I are so thankful for each of you. You all make a difference!

~ Debbie Varner, Volunteer Supervisor

Shout-Out to Our Wonderful Volunteers: Aala Al Hasan, JeninaMarie Bernardo, Eseigenete Biressaw, Jay Davlapur, Loyda Gavia, Marissa Harrison, Vinh Ho, Rida Khan, Quang Nguyen, Andre Obimah, Ayodh Patel, Anam Sherali, Justin Shum, and Lillian Trosclair all helped us fall back as we reset the clocks in patient rooms throughout the hospital on Sunday, November 4th. Thanks to these all-stars, we got the job done in no time at all!
**Spotlight on Volunteers Maisa and Inaas Shirazi**

* Where do you attend school and what grades are you in?

Both sisters currently attend St. Agnes Academy and began volunteering at MHSWH this past June. Inaas is in the 11th grade and Maisa is in the 10th grade.

* What extracurricular activities do you participate in?

Maisa participates in field hockey and debate, while Inaas enjoys playing softball.

* What are your ultimate career goals?

Inaas hopes to pursue a career as a surgeon. Maisa is currently interested in the field of criminal law.

* Who in your life has most influenced you both?

Our grandfathers and uncles who are involved in the medical field have been very inspirational.

* Where have you primarily volunteered at MHSWH?

We have had a very diversified volunteer experience at MHSWH so far. Some of the areas where we have volunteered are CPD, the 5th floor, and the Information Desk.

* What has been your most interesting experience while volunteering at MHSWH?

While helping a family get into their car, the father accidentally locked his keys inside. Luckily, he was able to unlock the car by pushing the car’s antenna through a gap in the window. Through his creative solution, the family was able to continue on their way with only a few minutes’ delay!

* What has been your most interesting personal experience so far?

We both had an outstanding opportunity to accompany our mother, who is a dentist, to Iraq as part of a non-profit dentistry project, *Global Kindness*. This organization aims to provide orphans around the world with free, much-needed dental work, as well as food and shelter. Because the project extends around the globe, our mother has even ventured as far as Africa to volunteer her services to orphans there. We were thrilled to be able to witness firsthand the positive differences that doctors are making in the lives of people throughout the world.

~ Marissa Harrison, MHSWH Junior Board Treasurer
Thank You to All Volunteers Who Generously Donated Canned Goods and Other Non-Perishable Items to MHSWH’s Fall 2012 Food Drive. With Your Generosity, We Collected Over 2,400 Pounds of Food for ECHOS!

The Junior Board of Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital is Sponsoring a New Toy Drive

We are gratefully accepting new & unwrapped toys in the Volunteer Office through December 31st. Donated toys will be gifted to young patients in MHSWH’s ER and Pediatric Units.
Everyone has heard of Hurricane Sandy and how much damage it recently caused in the Northeast. Houstonians should also be cautious, as the Gulf Coast region has been subjected to our fair share of hurricanes and tropical storms over the years too. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1st - November 30th, but significant weather events have been known to occur year round.

The key to hurricane and storm preparedness is planning. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA suggests having an emergency supply kit in place. The kit should include water for at least three days (one gallon for each person per day), a 3-day supply of non-perishable food, medications and prescriptions, flashlights, a radio that runs on batteries, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, a whistle, a manual can opener, moist towelettes, plastic garbage bags, and anything else that comes to mind. Having a family communication plan is also important. Every member of the family should know all important phone numbers that may be needed, be aware of recommended evacuation routes, and establish a family meeting place. It is also a good idea to have a predesignated friend or relative, preferably out of town, that other family members impacted by a hurricane or storm can call for status updates. Remember to bring inside all patio furniture, plants, and anything else that is not tied down to keep it from being swept away by the wind. Keeping trees and plants trimmed will prevent them from becoming a hazard and will make them more resistant to strong winds.

If you are interested in donating to the Red Cross to help Hurricane Sandy victims, text REDCROSS to 90999 to give $10 for disaster relief or visit redcross.org.

~ Rida Khan MHSWH Junior Board President


~Winston Churchill
Healthy Banana Ice Cream

I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream!
This is the perfect recipe to make for desert when having a party. It’s fast, easy, tasty and good for you! Enjoy!

Ingredients:
Bananas
Soy Milk
Almonds (or Any Other Nuts You Prefer)

Instructions:
Freeze ten peeled bananas overnight. The next day, place halved bananas in a blender. Add ½ - 1 cup of soy milk, a little less than ½ cup of nuts, and blend away. Once the mix is fully blended, you can put it in a cone or bowl and eat away. Bon appétit!

~ Anam Sherali, MHSWH Junior Board Publicity Liaison

Yoga

Last year we talked about a new and exciting activity, also known as Zumba, that mixed dance with exercise and was becoming increasingly popular in recent years. This year, we’ll be turning back to the past, to one of the most commonly practiced forms of exercise – yoga.

Yoga’s origins trace all the way back to ancient Hindu philosophy, but it was only introduced to the Western world in the late 19th century. In the 1980’s, yoga became an extremely popular form of exercise, particularly in the United States. Yoga is a relatively safe, non-aerobic exercise that focuses on developing strength, balance and flexibility. With a little practice and patience, yoga will contribute to an overall calmness and state of well-being for the participant. Yoga allows one to clear their brain of the worldly stresses and emotions of daily life, thus soothing the body and the mind. Breathing techniques in yoga aid in relaxation and the release of outside stressors, thus promoting more control over one’s life.

If you’re not into hugely difficult exercises that burn massive amounts of calories, but just want a gentle exercise that will really benefit your body as well as your mind, yoga is the one for you. Millions of Americans participate in yoga and thousands of yoga classes are available. So why not grab some old friends, join a class, and give yoga a try? You’re almost certain to meet some new friends in the process!

~ Vinh Ho, MHSWH Junior Board Social Director