Volunteers’ Gazette

Brownies, Cupcakes & Cookies for a Cause!

Jr. Board Officers Maisa Shirazi, Inaas Shirazi, Vinh Ho & Aala Al Hasan Raise Funds While Having Fun!

All Profits from Jr. Board Bake Sales Directly Benefit Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital — A Sweet Deal All Around!
Autism Awareness

Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD as it is called, refers to a group of disorders that fall under the same umbrella. As specified in the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (published by the American Psychiatric Association), these complex disorders include Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Rett Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder—Not Otherwise Specified. ASD is characterized by verbal and nonverbal communication issues, social interaction deficits, and repetitive behavior. Affected children may be able to speak if they fall on the milder end of the spectrum, or completely nonverbal if they fall closer to the other end of the spectrum.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1 in 68 children are afflicted with ASD. This statistic seems to be rising, and only a small fraction of this can be attributed to improved diagnosis and better awareness. The ratio of boys to girls affected with Autism is about 4:1, meaning boys are far more likely to be Autistic. The implications of this are being studied.

Diagnosis of ASD is usually made in children around the age of 2, but it can be difficult because it relies solely on a child’s behavior and development, as opposed to a blood test or another biochemical indicator. The exact cause of ASD is currently unknown, but researchers continue to investigate and learn more. Currently, there is no proven cure for ASD. Still, the National Institute of Mental Health recommends intensive behavioral therapy during early childhood and adolescence, as it has been scientifically proven to positively impact cognitive function and communication skills. Early intervention is key.

Please visit autismspeaks.org to learn more and find out what you can do to help this advocacy organization make a difference in the lives of those touched by ASD.

~ Rida Khan, MHSWH Junior Board President
The Deal From Debbie

There is no doubt that volunteering at Memorial Hermann Southwest allows us to build valuable life and career skills, make lasting friendships, and have a lot of fun along the way. Another great benefit of volunteering in the hospital setting is that by helping others at a time when they need it the most, a treasure trove of wonderful memories are made, even when you least expect it. I’d like to share with you one of my most enduring memories over the past few years at Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital.

One Saturday morning close to Valentine’s Day, a gentleman walked over to the Information Desk where I was training a new volunteer and asked if he could borrow a pen and a piece of paper. The man further told us that he was sure his wife was sleeping soundly, but that he wanted to write a letter and leave it on her hospital door. We were touched and delighted to give the man a pen and a decorative piece of paper. We invited him to sit down in the lobby and soon he was busily composing his message while I continued my training.

When the man finished, he walked back over to the Information Desk and asked for a piece of tape along with a confirmation of his wife’s floor. The location code in the computer indicated to me that the patient was in our Hospice. I gave the man some tape and provided directions to the 10th floor. As he walked away, I impulsively added, “Read it aloud to her, sir.” The man smiled and waved as he hurried off to his destination.

Later in the afternoon, that same gentleman walked by the Volunteer Office, and spotting me, he came in and shook my hand. He thanked me for helping him earlier and told me that he had taken my suggestion. He said he was sure his wife could hear his letter, because he had never seen such a beautiful smile on her face — one that he would remember forever. I, too made a forever memory that day.

On behalf of a grateful hospital, Becki, Ruth and I want to welcome you all – both our new and returning Volunteers – to Memorial Hermann Southwest and to thank you for being a part of our Volunteer Family!

~ Debbie Varner, Volunteer Supervisor

Congratulations to Our 2013—2014 Scholarship Recipients!

Volunteers Ayodh Patel, Inaas Shirazi & Owais Abbas
Stop and Protect Yourself from Germs!

If you were to obtain and wear a pair of glasses capable of viewing microbes, there’s a good chance that you would be quite surprised. Over each surface they encounter would be a blanket of organisms, whole worlds and civilizations naked to the human eye! These microbes are the oldest living organisms on Earth and occupy a number of important roles in daily life. However, even though 99% of microbes are harmless, it is very important to guard against the 1% that can cause harm to humans. Each time a pair of hands shake, doorknobs turn, or faucets are shut off, there is a chance that a pathogenic microbe has been given the opportunity to spread and cause illness.

Proper hand washing is the most important defense against the spread of harmful microorganisms. You should always wash your hands before and after you prepare food, go to the restroom, or even pet your dog or cat! Hand washing seems like a simple enough task, however there’s more to it than first meets the eye. Follow the steps below from the CDC to wash your hands to the fullest extent of your abilities:

- Wet your hands with clean running water, turn off the tap and apply soap.
- Lather your hands and rub them against each other, making sure to clean under your nails, between your fingers, and the backs of your hands.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Singing your favorite song in your head makes this go by a lot quicker!
- Rinse your hands under the running water.
- **Without** turning off the faucet, dry your hands with a **paper towel**.
- Use the paper towel you used to dry your hands to turn off the faucet and open the door. Discard the paper towel in the trash can that is located nearest to the door.

Using paper towels is a must due to the fact that air dryers are the perfect environment for harmful bacteria. They are usually warm and bacteria like to collect around the exhaust fan. In the hospital setting, it is important to adhere to “200% hand-hygiene”. In other words, be sure to wash your hands both before and after direct contact with a patient.

There you have it! Now you have perfected your hand-washing skills and can avoid making others sick!

~ Vinh Ho, MHSWH Junior Board Social Director
Healthy Quinoa and Black Bean Recipe

Prep Time: 15 Minutes
Cook Time: 35 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 cup uncooked quinoa
- 2 (15 oz.) cans of black beans, rinsed & drained
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1 -1/2 cups vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic, and sauté until lightly browned.

2. Mix quinoa into the saucepan and cover with vegetable broth. Season with cumin, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 min.

3. Stir frozen corn into the saucepan, and continue to simmer about 5 minutes until heated through. Mix in the black beans and cilantro.

Benefits of Quinoa

Quinoa is a complete protein containing all nine essential amino acids.

Quinoa contains iron. Iron helps keep our red blood cells healthy and is the basis of hemoglobin formation.

Quinoa contains lysine. Lysine is mainly essential for tissue growth and repair.

~ Aala Al Hasan, MHSWH Junior Board Vice President
STRESS AND ALLERGIES

ALTHOUGH STRESS ALONE CANNOT CAUSE ALLERGIES, EASING YOUR MIND MIGHT MEAN FEWER ALLERGY FLARE-UPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF ANNALS OF ALLERGY, ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY, WHICH IS THE SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND IMMUNOLOGY, ALLERGY SUFFERERS WITH PERSISTENT STRESS EXPERIENCE MORE ALLERGY FLARE-UPS.

"STRESS CAN CAUSE SEVERAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE BODY, INCLUDING CAUSING MORE SYMPTOMS FOR ALLERGY SUFFERERS," SAID ALLERGIST AMBER PATTERTON, MD, LEAD STUDY AUTHOR AND ACAAI MEMBER. "OUR STUDY ALSO FOUND THOSE WITH MORE FREQUENT ALLERGY FLARE-UPS ALSO HAVE A GREATER INCIDENCE OF NEGATIVE MOOD, WHICH MAY BE LEADING TO THESE FLARES."

RESEARCHERS FROM THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY ANALYZED 179 PATIENTS FOR 12 WEEKS. THIS IS WHAT THEY FOUND:

- 39% HAD MORE THAN ONE ALLERGY FLARE-UP.
- THOSE WHO SHOWED NO ALLERGY SYMPTOMS HAD LOWER STRESS LEVELS WHILE 64% OF THE STRESSED GROUP HAD MORE THAN FOUR FLARE-UPS OVER TWO, 14-DAY PERIODS.

~ Inaas Shirazi, MHSWH Junior Board Secretary
Spring is the Season of the LIVER

The liver is a large organ that sits on the right side of the stomach. It weighs about 3 pounds, is a reddish-brown color, and rubbery to the touch. Protected by the rib cage, one normally can’t feel their liver. The gallbladder sits under the liver, along with parts of the pancreas and intestines. The liver and these organs work together to digest, absorb, and process food. The liver is mostly responsible for filtering the blood coming from the digestive tract before passing it to the rest of the body. The liver also detoxifies chemicals and metabolizes drugs. As it does so, the liver secretes bile that ends up back in the intestines. The liver also makes proteins important for blood clotting and other functions. Spring is the season of this important organ, so take care of your liver by avoiding unnecessary chemicals in your diet and environment. The liver oversees the ligaments, tendons, and joints, which do not want to get rusty and old. By eating the right stuff, we stay flexible and our bodies run efficiently!

~ Maisa Shirazi, MHSWH Junior Board Treasurer

New Faces Around the Hospital Places!

Anam Kesaria is Ready to Assist with Patient Transportation

Petros Kenno Exemplifies Service with a Smile No Matter What the Assignment Is

Mounika Medi Multi-Tasks by Stuffing Envelopes at the Information Desk

We’re on the web! MemorialHermann.org