1988-07

Connections: July 1988

BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

CONNECTIONS

The monthly newspaper of The University Hospital • July, 1988

The University Hospital

The University Hospital
88 East Newton Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02118

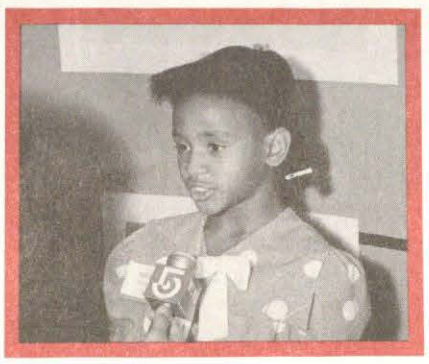
Teaming up for Boston's kids

UH helps city's fourth graders do their part in war against drugs

The winners of a UH Department of Pharmacy-sponsored poster contest aimed at educating Boston fourth graders on the dangers of drugs were announced in late May, during an awards ceremony featuring former Celtic M.L. Carr and Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy.

"They said it would be fun. They said that I would feel better. They said that it would make all my problems go away!! I should have said...No To Drugs!!" That was the dramatic message on 10-year-old Vanessa Cassidy's grand-prize winning poster depicting a young girl slumped against a trash can, crying, with pills and needles at her feet.

A student of the Maurice J. Tobin School in Roxbury, Cassidy was one of more than 200 young artists who participated in the contest, which was held in conjunction with the Boston Public Schools' Department of Instructional Services.



THE GRAND–PRIZE WINNER *of a UH-sponsored drug poster contest aimed at educating the city's youths on the dangers of drugs, Vanessa Cassidy of the Tobin School, Roxbury, is interviewed by a Ch. 5 television reporter.*

Runner-up was Antonio Carlos A. Valente of the James Otis School, East Boston. His poster, sporting the slogan "Don't DesDrugct the World," showed a needle puncturing the side of a globe.

"It may be hard to stand up against drugs, but it's the right thing to do," M. L. Carr told a large group of parents, students, civic leaders and UH employees gathered in the Atrium Pavilion lobby for the May 31 ceremony. Carr and Lt. Gov. Murphy presented awards to 16 district and school winners and runners-ups.

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Summer program at Hospital allows high schoolers to test health field

The University Hospital for a third summer is giving a group of inner-city high school students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the health-care field, through a special summer employment program.

More than 20 youths, through Boston Private Industry Council's (PIC) Summer Jobs Program, will work at 20- to 40-hour-a-week jobs this summer in various UH departments.

According to UH Employment Manager Tina Lawson, PIC's goal is to "introduce students in grades 10 through 12 to the business environment. The program places youths into jobs outside the traditional high school jobs of MacDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken."

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Evans 6 future role: A major research facility

The former site of UH's Materials Management, Evans 6, will be a $3-million research floor when construction is completed later this year, according to Norman G. Levinsky, M.D., physician-in-chief and director of the Evans Memorial Department of Clinical Research and Preventive Medicine.

The new labs will focus on research in molecular biology and molecular genetics applied to problems of clinical interest.

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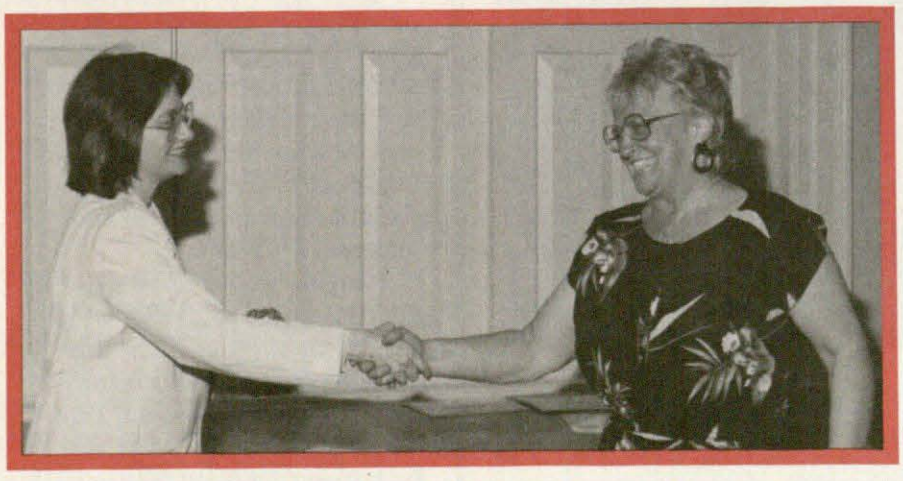

SPECIAL AWARD *– Marilyn Parent of the Computer Center, (right), the recipient of three Department of Training and Development certificates of achievement, receives a special award for her "tenacious pursuit of knowledge," from Department Manager Lynn Gaertner at the Department's second annual "graduation" ceremony held at UH on June 13. (See story, page 4).*

NEW HOSPITAL PROGRAMS

Neurology Dept. launches Parkinson's day program

A special day-long outpatient program for UH patients with Parkinson's disease was implemented in June by the staff of the Department of Neurology. Headed by Marie Saint-Hilaire, M.D., FRCPC, and coordinated by Linda Perry, R.N., B.S.N., the program is an individualized one-day session designed to allow closer physician/nurse monitoring of a patient's response to medication and provide coping mechanisms for Parkinson's patients and their families.

Parkinson's disease, a neurological disorder caused by a deficiency of the brain chemical dopamine, is treated primarily through medication and on an outpatient basis.

As an adjunct to the Hospital's Parkinson's Disease Resource and Referral Center, the program "takes the clinic visit one step further," Perry said. "The new day program responds to the needs of a growing Parkinsonian population. It centers around all aspects of living and coping with the disease and emphasizes the Parkinson team philosophy that learning everything about the disease, including the latest research discoveries, leads to healthy adjustment, proper management and therapeutic success."

According to Perry, education, videos, discussions, exercise demonstrations, emotional support services and participation in research projects are a major focus of the program. In addition, exercises in problem-solving, enhancing self-concept and attitude and continuing social enrichment are techniques also employed. ■

Special program will put UH on managed–care systems' map

Richard Morse, director of the Hospital's new Managed Care Systems Development, is inaugurating a temporary program that will introduce "the new University Hospital" to the Commonwealth's health maintenance and preferred provider organizations (HMO/PPO). UH's Managed Care Introductory Program, which will run through October 1, offers HMOs and PPOs a special reduction in hospital charges if they exceed their admission volume targets, according to Morse.

"The program will introduce our new Hospital to managed-care systems throughout eastern Massachusetts. It will give us a chance to make ourselves much better known in the world of managed care," Morse said.

The introductory program is expected to produce between 25 and 50 new admissions over the summer. In addition, Morse pointed out, it will enhance the Hospital's current contractual relationships and create opportunities for new contracts with HMOs and PPOs. ■

A SENSE OF VALUE *is the title of the award-winning Nursing Department film that depicts the qualities of the UH nursing staff. Film clinched an award in the 1988* ***American Journal of Nursing*** *Media Festival earlier this year. Featured in this scene are Joanne O'Brien, R.N., Evans 7, and a former patient.*

Six-bed short-stay unit helps smooth admitting process

A new short-stay unit, located on the third floor of the Preston Family Building, already has made for a smoother patient–admitting process in the short time it's been in operation, according to Anita King, R.N., B.S.N., assistant director of nursing. The six-bed, six-chair unit, which became operational on May 31, provides accomodations for patients entering the Hospital for ambulatory medical or surgical procedures (except those scheduled in the Booth Ambulatory Surgical Unit) and same-day surgery.

"The unit is functioning very well," King said. "The OR (operating room) staff is extremely pleased with the efficiency of getting patients there so quickly. The unit also has helped admitting," she said, by getting admissions done in a more timely fashion. Discharged patients who meet specific criteria and who have not been picked up by 11 a.m. will be transferred to the waiting room of the short-stay unit, designed specifically for that purpose, King said.

Patients will receive preoperative care in the unit. Following their procedures, ambulatory patients will return there for post-procedural care, while same-day patients will be transferred to an appropriate inpatient unit. ■

Evans

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The labs will be under the administration of John R. Murphy, Ph.D., UH chief of the Section of Biomolecular Medicine.

According to Levinsky, 50 staff, including four to six senior scientists now at BUMC or being recruited, will utilize the facility. Construction is expected to be completed in November, with occupancy scheduled before the first of the year, he said. The floor will house such equipment as DNA synthesizers, dark and cold rooms and a facility for molecular graphics. In addition, there will be a special lab constructed for research trainees who wish to learn molecular techniques from the staff based on Evans 6.

"We're delighted and grateful to the Evans Board of Control for providing funds for the floor," Levinsky said, "The new core facility will make modern molecular techniques accessible to other Evans sections and will foster collaboration with BUSM basic science departments."

The Evans Memorial Department of Clinical Research and Preventive Medicine was established in 1912 and has made major contributions to the medical field.

Murphy said "This new facility will provide a modern open lab in which there will be intergroup collaboration within the Evans and within the entire institution. It will be a busy, active place." ■

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Drug Poster

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The grand prize was an Apple II personal computer; other prizes included a portable compact disc stereo system, color television, 10-speed bicycle and $50 savings bonds.

"Every one of our young people deserves an opportunity" to not get involved in drugs, Carr said. Citing substance abuse as the "number–one problem in the United States" today, Carr said adults should set an example for young people. "The greatest motivator in the world is an example. Let these young people be an example. It's more than the drawings, the wording—it's being an example," he said.

'Keep saying no'

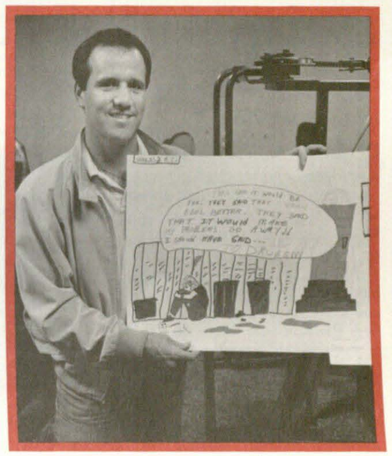
Murphy applauded the students' "dedication and hard work," thanking them for "reminding us all of how to think." She asked the adults who attended the ceremony to "look at these posters—they're telling a very important message." To the youths, she said, "There is no finer competition to engage in than saying no to drugs: Keep doing it and tell your friends."

The anti-drug poster contest was initiated by Darryl Rich, Pharm.D., director of UH pharmacy services, and Kimberly Mu-Chow, Pharm.D., pharmacy clinical coordinator. The two proposed the contest to the Boston School Committee last November because "We know how powerful and dangerous drugs can be when they are misused," Rich said, "We want children to learn early that using drugs is hazardous rather than glamorous."

Judging the contest were Red Sox second baseman Marty Barrett and representatives from the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs, the Massachusetts Society of Hospital Pharmacists, the Boston Public School System and UH. ■

CONTEST ORIGINATORS *Kimberly Mu-Chow, and Darryl Rich, of the UH Pharmacy, discuss the aims of the very successful program with Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy, key speaker at the event.*

'I DON'T WANT TO DIE YOUNG' *is the message on the dangers of drugs in a poster drawn by Sandra Lee Cole, (left), of the James Hennigan School in Jamaica Plain. A district winner, Cole shows her entry to Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy.*



CONTEST FINALIST JUDGE *Marty Barrett, Red Sox second baseman, displays first-place poster in Boston-wide anti-drug poster contest. Other judges included UH staff and representatives from the Boston School Department, the Governor's Alliance Against Drugs and the Massachusetts Society of Hospital Pharmacists.*

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE—*The 16 winners listen attentively to the words of former Celtic M.L. Carr, who honored the students for their entries and called substance abuse the "number-one problem in the United States today."*

THAT WINNING SMILE—*Grand-prize winner Vanessa Cassidy poses happily in the arms of former Celtic standout M.L. Carr. Shown with the pair is Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy.*

AWARDS CEREMONY—*Hospital staff, civic leaders, parents and students gather in the Atrium Pavilion lobby for May 31 awards ceremony. Shown from left to right are UH President J. Scott Abercrombie Jr., M.D., UH Director of Pharmacy Services Darryl Rich, Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy and former Celtic M.L. Carr.*

Employees honored during special recognition event

By Lynn Gaertner

Congratulations to the 60 employees who received certificates of achievement at our second annual Training and Development Recognition Party on June 13.

Among the 400 UHers who have participated in Training and Development programs over the past year, these 60 deserve special recognition for achieving new levels of skill in long-term skill-development programs.

Developing oneself is not unlike erecting a new building, and these dedicated employees are prime examples of the Hospital's theme of "breaking new ground in health care." They have taken the risk of trying something new—something in which success was not guaranteed. Many of these employees have sacrificed ease and free time now to achieve long-term goals for the future. As with UH, these employees have worked to move into the 21st century.

The following employees, formerly non-typists, now type 30 words per minute, having completed an Introductory Keyboarding course: Ann Dekas, Accounts Payable; Phil Cosman and Jeff Jenkinson, Budget; Beatrice Hamer and Michael Morson, Dietary; Mala Sahadeo, Environmental Services; Patricia Bass, Human Resources; Cheron James, Pastoral Care, and Frances Weekes, Dietary.

Medical Terminology and English Grammar Refresher are both 10-week courses that require successful completion of several quizzes and a final test. Employees who excelled in Medical Terminology were Peter Benttinen, Accounts Payable; Peter Manning, Laboratory Medicine; Randy Niles, Medical Records; Liz Pottier, Surgical Oncology; Linda Liem, Nursing, and Marcia Lowry and Phyllis Thibodeaux, Training and Development. The following employees received certificates of achievement in English Grammar Refresher: Wanda Freeman, Administration; Deborah Lee, Environmental Services; Marina Figelman, Laboratory Medicine; Dianne Simmons and Isabel Clark, Nursing, and Lisa Walsh and Yvonne Sanders, Rehabilitation Medicine. Earning certificates in both courses were Georgette Lewis, Anesthesiology, and Marilyn Parent, Computer Center.

***MICHAEL MORSON** of Dietary receives congratulations from instructor Marcia Lowry for keyboarding work well done.*

The Healthcare Workplace Education Project is an individualized program of work in mathematics, reading, writing and career development. The following employees demonstrated new levels of competency during the program: Anita St. Louis, Eileen Jarvis and Frances Weekes, Dietary; Sybil Hicks, Environmental Services; Nathalie Sandiford, Nursing, and Maria Amado, Transport. Five persons from Boston City Hospital and the Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital also received certificates of achievement in this area.

Basic Wang Word Processing is a self-paced program that demands completion of several training manuals, a series of exercises and final test. Those requirements were met by Marilyn Parent, Computer Center; Dawn Young, Dietary; Deanna Richardson, Home Medical; Margarita Johnson, Laboratory Medicine; Gwen Butler, Rehabilitation Medicine, and Karlai Browne, Respiratory Therapy.

Supervisors from all three Hospital shifts completed a four-week program on supervisory communication skills, entitled "Communicating Excellence;" they are: William Forbes, Charles Mitchell, James West, Harold Clarke, Herman Martin, John Horton, Kathleen Burke, Richard Rodell and John Ferguson, Environmental Services; Susan Mallard, Human Resources; Jeanne McNamara-Ward, Linda Nichols, Carly Irwin and Karen Hawkins, Laboratory Medicine; Mike Vaccaro and Larry Mini, Materials Distribution; Ethel Hamilton, Marlene McKenny and Michelle Morris, Medical Records; Carolann Reaves, Gail Lopez and Diane Choueiri, Nursing; Clyda Bowen, Respiratory Therapy; Gary Mendez, Transport, and Amy Prashker, Administration.

A special award was presented to Marilyn Parent, who received three certificates and a medical dictionary inscribed, "For your tenacious pursuit of new knowledge and your continued demonstration of the spirit of Training and Development."

The University Hospital can be no greater than the skills employed by those who work here. Congratulations to those who have strengthened UH by strengthening themselves.

Lynn Gaertner is UH manager of Training and Development. Her column will report on various skills programs. ■

***GROUP SHOT**—The graduates of Training and Development skills programs celebrate the completion of second year of courses during last month's awards ceremony.*

UH has the ear of Sen. Bulger on MBTA, key issues

A group of Hospital staff and UH Auxiliary members met with Massachusetts Senate President William Bulger last month to discuss several issues "near and dear to UH's heart," said Ellen Lutch, UH director of health systems development. Lutch said the hour-long meeting, which dealt with several issues of interest to the Hospital, was "extraordinarily successful." The session took place during the Massachusetts Hospital Association's annual State House Day.

MBTA relocation

In the wake of the MBTA Orange Line relocation, the group called on Bulger and city and state officials to identify alternate means of public transportation for UH patients, visitors and employees. The Orange Line, which now operates through the new transportation corridor, formerly ran down Washington Street on an elevated structure that recently was torn down.

The group also discussed the general outlook for the University Hospital and other Boston teaching hospitals following the passage of the three-month-old universal health-care bill. The UH group closed its visit with the president by extending an invitation for Bulger to come to UH for a day-long visit "to experience the level of quality care provided by the Hospital's staff and employees," Lutch said.

'Involved in public process'

"Senator Bulger seemed very impressed over how well-prepared we were," she noted, "The meeting was an example of UH's overall commitment to becoming involved in the public process." Led by Lutch, the group was composed of Maura Mitchell, R.N., M.Ed., M.A., UH's director of nursing projects and external affairs; Rhodes G. Lockwood, secretary of the Hospital's board of trustees; Diane Krane, co-president of the Hospital's Auxiliary; Nancy Dickson, co-chairman of the Auxiliary's legislative committee, and Sonia Nersessian, a new Auxiliary member with a special interest in the legislature. ■

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MATTERS OF HEALTH

Save your skin

I am in my mid-30s and am just beginning to develop wrinkles on my face. Is the summer sun bad for my skin? Is it true that certain creams can prevent my skin from aging?

The best way to save your skin from excessive wrinkling over the years—particularly if you are fair-skinned—is to minimize your exposure to the sun. In fact, the best "anti-aging" complex that you can buy is a bottle of sunscreen with a high sun-protection factor (SPF).

There is no magic potion available to remedy growing older and, unfortunately, the aging process that occurs everywhere in the body is accelerated on the face because of exposure to the sun. It is this "photo damage" that causes much of the wrinkling, blotchiness and coarseness that are attributed to aging. As a matter of fact, you've probably noticed that the unexposed skin on your body is smoother, more evenly pigmented and younger-looking than the skin on your hands and face.

As the skin ages, tiny blood vessels in its lower layer (the dermis) begin to decrease in size, making the skin look paler. The outer layer (the epidermis) becomes littered with dead skin cells, leaving the skin feeling dry and rough. The skin's connective tissue, which is made up of a firm structure, known as collagen, and a flexible material, known as elastin, also begins to diminish; thereby weakening and loosening the skin and setting the stage for wrinkles.

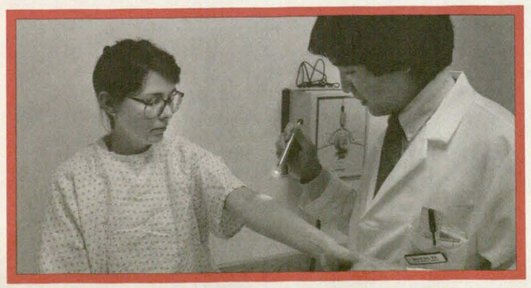
Pigment cells called melanocytes, located in the lower layer of the epidermis, serve as the skin's protective barrier against sunlight. These cells reduce in number as the body ages, making the skin more vulnerable to sun damage. When melanocytes produce too little pigment in some places and too much in others, dark patches known as "liver spots" result. The protective action of pigment is the reason that darker-skinned people seem to suffer fewer wrinkles and signs of age than people with fair complexions.

Skin creams won't prevent wrinkles

Even though billions of dollars are spent in this country on moisturizers, these products can only temporarily make your skin look and feel better: Using them today will not prevent wrinkles tomorrow. Products that claim to contain collagen do not work, because connective tissue that is applied externally does not become collagen in the skin; collagen can only be manufactured biochemically by the body.

The fight against wrinkles recently received a boost from a prescription product known as tretinoin (marketed as Retin-A), which is derived from vitamin A and has been used in the treatment of acne for nearly 20 years.

Researchers have found that Retin-A is capable of stimulating the production of blood vessels, thus giving the skin a rosy glow. A glossy shine is produced when increased epidermal cell production pushes dead cells off the skin's surface while thickening the viable (living) cells of the epidermis.



***TESTING FOR SKIN CANCER**—Howard Koh, M.D., Ph.D., a member of the Department of Dermatology, uses a simple technique to examine medical assistant Connie Palmer for signs of skin cancer during free Boston University Medical Center employee screening on Thursday, June 2.*

Retin-A also can cause melanocytes to produce pigment more uniformly, giving the skin a more even color and helping to diminish or eliminate liver spots. In addition, it also can stimulate the production of collagen, which could make the skin firmer and stronger.

For the first few days during Retin-A treatment, the skin looks red and is easily irritated by soap. Since it thins the outer protective layer of the epidermis, leaving the skin more vulnerable to sun damage, Retin-A should be used in conjunction with a sunscreen. The product is available only by a doctor's prescription. Dermatologists warn that Retin-A does not work for everyone: For some patients, the changes in the skin are very subtle, while for others, prolonged redness and irritation may occur.

You may have heard about a product that currently is undergoing testing, which is tretinoin in an emollient-cream form that helps to decrease the amount of irritation caused by the product. The cream will not be available to the general public until additional studies are done and FDA approval is granted.

This "Matters of Health" was prepared in cooperation with the Department of Dermatology of the University Hospital. "Matters of Health" is a weekly health information column that is produced by the Medical Center's Office of Publication Services and distributed by the Marketing Services Department to more than 150 health-care organizations across the country. Those hospitals, in turn, print the column in their local newspapers. As a result, the University Hospital's health information column is published in nearly every state in the nation. Employees may send suggestions for future "Matters of Health" topics to the Office of Publication Services, Doctors Office Building 915. ■

Nutrition month theme: 'Eat right for your whole life'

The University Hospital Food and Nutrition Services will host a Nutrition Awareness Week, "Whole Foods For Your Whole Life," from July 18 to 22. UH employees, during the week, can develop their own individualized weight-loss program, preview nutrition videos and displays and sample tasty, nutritious treats.

"Computer Magic," a program that will allow UHers to devise their own weight-loss regiment, will be set up outside the Preston Family Building (F-1) Cafeteria on July 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and July 20, from 7 to 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Throughout the week, employees are encouraged to use a special "Dial-a-Dietician" hotline number, x5945, for answers to questions regarding nutrition and diet. ■

Urology nurse receives award

Terry Payton

Terry Payton, R.N., a nurse clinician with the Department of Urology, has been named the first recipient of the Patricia Putetti Lectureship Award by the American Urological Association-Allied (AUAA). The award will be given annually to the individual who best exemplifies the late AUAA charter member's caring qualities and respected clinical expertise.

Payton, who has published papers and lectured on the topic of male impotence, was presented with the award at the Urological Association's annual assembly in June at the Lafayette Hotel, Boston. ■

TODAY'S PARENT

Mastering the art of communicating with your child-care provider

By Peggy Kociubes

Last month's question for readers was: "How do you communicate with your child-care provider regarding a small concern you have about your child's care?" Here is a sampling of your responses:

- "I was concerned over the fact that my babysitter arrived at my house late and made me late for work at least once a week," said one reader, "I explained my predicament to her and she said that she was really sorry and would leave her house earlier in the morning to get to my house. We've had no trouble ever since."
- "My baby seemed cranky and out-of-sorts when I picked her up at the family day-care provider's," another reader replied. "When I spoke to the provider about it, she said that my two-year-old daughter was 'into everything' and always saying 'no.' Even though the provider was a very nice person, I felt that she was better for babies than for toddlers. I made a switch to center-care and have been very happy."
- "My family day-care mother is a middle-aged woman from Italy," a third reader wrote, "She is warm and kind and loves the children in her care: She has 10 grown children of her own. She also has some cupboards in her kitchen that look somewhat unsafe: hinges that are broken. I had a cup of coffee with her when I dropped off my child—I came a little early to discuss the situation with her—and I told her of my concern, saying that my husband was handy and that he would be happy to fix the hinges. She said that would be fine with her. I feel the key to our working this out successfully is the fact that we have a great relationship with our day-care mother: She's like family to us."

The keys to success in communicating your needs to your child-care provider are: Having an ongoing relationship in which you respect one another; identifying problems early and discussing them without rancor; and being prepared to switch to another child-care provider if a situation between you and your child's provider is not working.

Finding quality child care

A question that is frequently asked by parents is: "How can I tell if the child-care option I'm considering is of high quality?" Although differing parenting styles will mean that certain child-care situations will match up to a family's needs better than others, the following are some basic fundamental standards of quality to use as guidelines in choosing a child-care provider: small group size, trained staff, low staff/child ratios, low staff turnover, safe/clean environment, open visiting policy for parents.

When shopping around for a provider, arm yourself with a list of questions: This will help you focus your attention. Along with basic observations, your best indicator of quality will come from references from parents who are utilizing the service. Feel free to ask a potential child-care provider for a list of names and telephone numbers of several references.

Next month's question is: "How can I tell when my child is old enough to be left home alone?"

Peggy Kociubes is the child-care coordinator for the University Hospital staff and employees. For more information or to submit future column suggestions, please contact the Child Care Resource and Referral Office, Talbot 205, x8584. ■

***A CELEBRATORY SLICE**—The 'graduates' of the first session of UH's Freedom From Smoking clinic celebrate their kicking of the habit. A second session for Hospital employees will be held this fall. Clinic is sponsored by Respiratory Therapy and Occupational Health. For more information call Occupational Health, x5363.*

UH School

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Before the summer began, Lawson received "orders" for 22 students from more than 10 Hospital departments. The departments making the requests included Medical Records, Dietary, Nursing, Training and Development, Security and Telecommunications, Pastoral Care and Education, Materials Distribution and Radiation Medicine—a broad spectrum of what helps make a hospital tick, according to Lawson.

"We want to enlighten youth on the different opportunities that exist in health care," Lawson said, "We want to make them aware that there are jobs in a hospital other than those of nurse and doctor."

The opportunity to explore

Another attractive feature of the program, Lawson said, is that it allows youths to get a first–hand glimpse of the business world, in the hopes that by the time they leave high school they will have some career direction for the future. "It's nurturing and hand-holding and learning what the health-care field is all about," she acknowledged.

The University Hospital, in its previous two years of sponsoring PIC students, has experienced a high success rate of those enrolled in the program. Wayne Baker, a June graduate of Boston Tech, is a case in point.

Baker is spending his second summer at UH, working in the Department of Security and Telecommunications. In the fall, he will major in criminal justice at an area community college: His career aspiration is to be a police officer. "I always wanted to do something in the law field, but working at UH has given me direction and has helped me grow," he said from his post at the Atrium lobby information desk.

Presents 'a positive image'

At the end of his junior year of high school, Baker was informed of the Hospital position by the job-placement coordinator at Boston Tech. "I wasn't working, so I thought I would give it a try," he said, "I've been grateful to her (the job placement coordinator) ever since." Baker enjoyed his first summer at UH so much that during that school year, he began working on weekends. This fall, while attending college, he will work full-time under UH's co-op program. One of the benefits he will receive under the co-op program is tuition reimbursement.

"I'm going to stay here for a while if I have a choice," he said.

"We're very happy that we've had some influence in stimulating Wayne's career interest," said Ed Stedman, director of the Department of Security and Telecommunications, "In my mind, he presents a positive image of UH. We've been impressed with his ability to learn—he's done very well."■

Comedy cruise to set sail

A UH-sponsored comedy cruise from Boston Harbor will be held on Saturday, Aug. 6, from 8 to 11 p.m. A cash bar and routines by three comedians will be featured. Tickets are $15 and can be purchased from Diane Sprague in the Human Resources Office, Talbot 1.

The Human Resources Department also has free discount coupons to Rocky Point, Riverside and Canobie Lake amusement parks, Edaville Railroad and Southwick Animal Farm. Twenty-percent-off discount coupons for round-trip ferry tickets to either Martha's Vineyard or Nantucket also are available. ■

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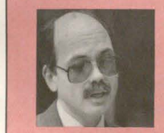
YOU SAID IT

This month's question is:

What is your idea of the "ideal" vacation?

Chanes Luis, M.D., Emergency Room: "Definitely not the ER! My idea of the "ideal" vacation is going somewhere where I can lay on the beach, relax and have a margarita."

Dorothy Johnson, Administration: "Plenty of sunshine, a week on the beach and no phones!"



Rev. Larry Burton, Department of Pastoral Care and Education: "A month in Maine with my word processor...and my wife! Either that or England on foot."

William Rosperich, Computer Center: "Probably, just having some time off, some peace and quiet. I've about had it after four days of a vacation. I like to be home."

Luke Mullin, Maintenance: "No phones, no worries about money and no traffic problems."

Jean Chuang, Department of Physical Therapy: "Going to Jamaica or Bermuda to lay on the beach."

***UH BLACK ACHIEVERS** Phyllis Thibodeaux, (left), of the Department of Training and Development, and Beatrice Hamer, Preston Family Building (F-1) Cafeteria supervisor, provide two Weston High School students with information about the Hospital's many employment opportunities during a June 3 Career Fair held at New England Life Hall for Boston high schoolers.*

***UH IN SOAP LAND**—We all know UH is nationally known in the real world of medicine, but it seems we've also made it in the sudsy world of soap opera. A recent episode of the popular "All My Children" featured this scene, in which actor Matt Connolly is told that his wife, Nina, has a severe vascular problem, necessitating surgery that cannot be performed at the hospital in which she is a patient. Asked by the anxious Matt where the procedure can be done, the "physician" delivers this solid-gold line: "The staff and facilities at the University Hospital in Boston are excellent." Apparently, this was not the first instance of UH-boosting on All My Children. A staff soap-opera fan says that another great line on the show some weeks back had one character telling another, "the thing to do is to move to the North Shore and get a job at Boston University Medical Center."*

NERSCIC staffer, patient help launch innovative device for quadriplegics

Occupational therapist Liz Squires of UH's New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center and patient Susan Haider are thankful that "Egbert" has come along to make life a bit easier. The voice-activated computer device, new on the market and developed with Squires' assistance, can help Haider and other spinal cord-injured patients perform such tasks as raising beds and dialing and answering telephones.

"One of the hardest parts about working with some spinal-cord-injured patients is watching the frustration they experience when they can't perform simple tasks," Squires said. "Egbert," who talks to patients with a real voice—that of a WSSH disc jockey—rather than a synthesized one, is a Simplicity Series 5 computer-controlled unit developed by Quartet Technology, Inc. of Tyngsboro. The innovative device sells for $2,490 and can be paid for by Medicaid if it is prescribed as a medical necessity. Optional gadgets can be purchased that control a variety of home appliances.

Instrumental in development

When Quartet engineers first began to develop Simplicity, they talked with Squires to try and assess the needs of her patients. The engineers utilized the information received, completing the product and asking Squires for her evaluation of it.

"The people from Quartet wanted to teach me how to use the device so that I could teach some of our patients and see how they responded to it," she said. Haider, a quadriplegic, was one of Squires' test patients. During a press conference held last month at the Marriott-Copley Place Hotel, Boston, at which Simplicity was unveiled, Haider demonstrated the device. "Simplicity is ideal for me," she said, "Without it, I would need someone to help me do almost everything."

Squires said that the device has lived up to its name—Simplicity—and that it has proved to be enormously helpful to spinal-cord patients. Normally, quadriplegics would have to blow through a tube or bite a switch to activate certain appliances. "The response from both patients and staff members has been tremendous," Squires said. In addition to providing a great service to patients, she noted, the device serves as a good "companion" to them. "Patients feel like they are actually talking with someone," she said. ■

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Patty Doran-Wong: Hospice work allows her to reach out to grieving families

Because Patty Doran-Wong, R.N., July's Spotlight Award winner, describes herself as "very family-oriented," she said she finds it easy to go into the homes of terminally ill people and become their friend before they die. Wong, a pain-control nurse in the Department of Anesthesiology and surgical-oncology nurse on Atrium 7 West, is a hospice volunteer, who through her work, helps people with six months or less to live, to die in the comfort of their homes rather than in a hospital room.

Along with helping patients, Wong also provides support to their families. "It's nice to do for the hospice patients what you would do for your own family, whether it be giving a family a chance to get out of the house without the fear of leaving the sick person at home alone or going grocery shopping or fixing meals" she said.

Wong became involved with Hospice West, a Medicare-certified organization servicing hospice patients in the Waltham-Weston area, in 1982. Although Wong said she did not meet one of the criteria to become a hospice worker—she had never experienced the death of a loved one—she said she was allowed into the program because of her background in oncology nursing. "I had lost over 100 patients to cancer over the years," she acknowledged.

Patty Doran-Wong

Wong's primary reason for getting involved in hospice, she said, was the fact that terminally ill patients could maintain their privacy in their own homes. After all, she said, death is a very private matter. "People share so much wisdom when they're dying," Wong noted.

In her six years as a hospice volunteer, Wong has "befriended" about 20 patients and their families. "You pick up clues from the patient and family as to what your role will be. Each case is very different. At times, you may be needed to help make funeral arrangements, help with the writing of a will or help purchase Christmas presents for a patient who cannot leave the house," she explained. Wong's volunteer hours vary from week to week. She said her services are needed more towards the end of a patient's illness rather than at the beginning.

Wong's other functions as a hospice worker include assisting with volunteer training, fund-raising and planning annual memorial services for the families of deceased patients.

A UH nurse for 16 years, Wong said she receives insight from patients she encounters both in her roles as a surgical-oncology nurse and hospice volunteer.

"I love being a surgical-oncology nurse. The rewards you get from your patients are wonderful," she said. About her work in hospice, she said, "It gives you insight into what life is all about. It teaches you what's important and what's not..."

A reception honoring Wong will be held on July 20, at 3 p.m., in the Atrium C and D Conference Rooms.

If you would like to nominate a fellow employee for the award, contact Gloria Shapiro, R.N., M.S., C.S., Nursing, x7500. All nominees must have been employed by UH for at least one year.■

***KEY TO A HEALTHY HEART**—Evans Medical Group Systems and Finance Manager Lisa Brenner, (left), is given a free cholesterol test by a Massachusetts Department of Public Health clinician at a two-day screening held at UH in late May. The clinic, sponsored by Occupational Health, was brought back by popular demand on June 28 and 29.*

Cruise to benefit Child Care Project

The University Hospital Child Care Project Fund-raising Committee invites all employees to its first annual fund-raising cruise on Friday, July 29. The 'Fort Independence' will sail from Long Wharf promptly at 9 p.m. Tickets are $15 in advance and $17 at the boat. Music by Jay Michaels, W.I.L.D. disc jockey, Big "E" and Company and The Peoples Choice. For tickets and information contact Karlai or Eunice, x8780, or Margarita, x7811.

The committee will host a picnic for UH employees and their families on Sunday, July 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on George's Island, Boston Harbor. Cost for round-trip boat ride is $5 for adults and $3 for children.■

CLASSIFIED

Condominiums for sale by owners:

New, one-bedroom, located in Jamaica Plain on Orange Line, near hospitals, dining room, kitchen, deeded parking, $129,500. Call 329-5961 or 426-7624.

One bedroom, water-front property located in No. Weymouth, condo fee includes all utilities, excellent amenities. Call anytime, owner anxious, 335-7868.

Study participants wanted:

The Boston University Medical Center Neuropsychology Lab is looking for males aged 25 to 55 to participate in a study on memory and emotion. Pay is $11 for the first hour and $6 for each additional hour; flexible hours can be arranged. No medical procedures required. Call Dottie Weber or Mary Hancock, x4803.

Employees invited:

The family of Dietary staffer Mollie Gannon invites all employees to a one-year anniversary Mass honoring her mother, the late Sarah Guarriello, on August 29, at 2:30 p.m., in the Preston Family Building Chapel. Guarriello was a former UH patient for many years before her death.■

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The deadline for **Connections** is at noon on the second Monday of each month. Story and photo suggestions for **Connections** should be addressed to Cynthia Paradis in care of the Office of Publication Services, DOB 915, or call x8482. The Office of Publication Services is part of the Department of Marketing/Public Affairs, Boston University Medical Center, Donald R. Giller,director.