

Using Technology to Improve the Delivery of Care

As Blythedale prepares to celebrate the grand opening of its new inpatient building later this year by putting the finishing touches on the interior and exterior of the 56,000 square foot building, its new state-of-the-art Information Technology (IT) infrastructure stands ready to handle the complicated technological needs of the new facility.

The implementation of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) is the pinnacle of a three-year, \$7 million initiative to upgrade the IT infrastructure and clinical care model at Blythedale. The Hospital went “live” with the new system for order entry and physician, nurse and therapist documentation in February 2011.

“Our existing facility, built 50 years ago, simply could not handle our technological needs going forward,” said Blythedale

President and CEO Larry Levine. “Given the extraordinary advances made in pediatric medicine, we could no longer meet the demand for rooms that can accommodate life-saving equipment and technology at bedside. It is very exciting to see all these equally important components coming together so seamlessly for the benefit of our children and their families.”

According to Blythedale CFO John Canning, the new IT data center and infrastructure is “fully modernized and will be able to adapt to new technology as it comes out”.

The EMR, he explained, offers Blythedale “improved patient care through better communication across departments, easier and quicker access to information, and reduced risk of medical errors, as well as the elimination of paper patient charts.”

The overhauled system brought a new position for Pat Nyarady, who previously served as a nurse at Blythedale for 16 years, and computer programmer at IBM for ten years. In her new role as Clinical Informatics Coordinator, she has had the opportunity to merge her passion for both fields, and be part of the team that built and customized Blythedale’s system.

“I always enjoyed programming at IBM... the troubleshooting and problem solving,” said Nyarady, who is responsible for electronic documentation. “This gives me an opportunity to utilize my clinical skills, and help build a system that works for everyone.”

To achieve 100% adoption of the EMR, more than 5,000 hours of employee time and effort to build the system and train the staff have been logged. All clinical disciplines have been trained, including medical, nursing, social work, all therapies, respiratory and pharmacy. And in order to meet the increased need, the Hospital deployed 46 new computers (including portable tablets, rolling stations, and laptops).

With the passage of the Stimulus Act in 2009, hospitals

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Walking on Sunshine

Six-year-old Peter Steinberg – catching a ride on Dad’s shoulders – leads the way as Grand Marshall of Blythedale’s recent fundraiser, Walk With Us, held last month at the Hackley School in Tarrytown. Thanks to many supportive walkers, fundraisers and donors (including Sunny Day Sponsor TD Bank), more than \$30,000 was raised for the children of Blythedale!



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nationwide were encouraged to adopt new technologies, including EMR. Those that meet government requirements for “meaningful use” (including integrating health data, such as immunization records; and contributing to a regional health data center) over the next three years will be eligible for stimulus funds. According to Canning, this could result in a reimbursement of several millions of dollars for Blythedale.

In the meantime, Hospital staff have completed the arduous training protocol and are becoming increasingly comfortable with the new system.

“The transition has largely gone well,” said Nyarady. “We’ve come into it with staff with very different levels of tech experience, which puts them at very different starting points. Nursing assistants, for example, many of whom have previously had very limited computer access, have really risen to the occasion and are eager to document the work they’ve done. They feel empowered by their ability to utilize the system.”

Nyarady also points out that the EMR offers a “fresh opportunity to use critical thinking skills and implement best practices.”

The greater transparency, afforded by the time stamp of every entry, ensures that data is filed while it is still fresh in the mind of the caregiver.

Additionally, all clinicians benefit from the ease of access to wide-ranging data, from comprehensive patient information to online Hospital protocols, such as pain scales.

“Everything is at your fingertips, from detailed therapy notes to all prescriptions... you see what every member of the multidisciplinary team is doing right now,” said Nyarady. “It makes it much easier to treat the child holistically.”

According to Chief Medical Officer Joelle Mast, Ph.D., M.D., having an EMR system offers tremendous benefits not only to staff, but to patients and their families as well.

“It is clearly a time-saver for staff,” she explained. “They don’t have to write the same information over and over

on different forms. Scheduling is easier. And different disciplines can keep up-to-date with what is happening overall with their patient. In addition, there is increased safety. For example, medication administration that is computerized eliminates potential errors due to transcription.”



All patient units have additional work stations to accommodate the EMR.



Pat Nyarady is Blythedale's new Clinical Informatics Coordinator.

According to Canning, the EMR is just one component of a broad tech initiative.

“We’re building a unified communication system,” he explained. “This includes a wireless phone system, a new nurse-call system, and a pharmacy distribution system.”

“This is not just about opening a new building,” he said. “It’s about how you work on a day-to-day basis. It forces every

one of us to look at how we practice, and make continuous improvements.”

As far as what’s on the horizon? Canning points to bedside medication verification, resource tracking, visitor management, and an enhanced intranet as future initiatives.

“Everybody at Blythedale always wants to do what’s best for the patient, said Nyarady. “Now we’re able to further enhance patient care by embracing these technologies.”

While state-of-the-art technology is in use throughout the Hospital, Blythedale clinicians employ a variety of new devices and applications to improve the delivery of patient care every day. A sampling of these innovations include:

- **Lite Gait/Balance Master /Gait Rite –**

Blythedale’s physical therapists are utilizing a variety of technologies to assess outcomes and benefits of various equipment for their patients. Lite Gait, obtained through a grant from The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, provides partial body weight support so that patients who are not yet able to fully bear weight can practice gait patterns. The Balance Master is being used to study walking velocity and check for safe walking speeds (e.g., speed needed to get across a street before the light changes) in patients. Gait Rite is a mat which measures many aspects of gait such as stride length and foot fall. This particular innovation enables therapists to help their patients improve efficiency and speed, and serves as an important evaluation tool in selecting assistive devices.

- **Skype –**

Blythedale clinicians have utilized this popular video-conferencing software application to facilitate real-time case studies with ALYN Children’s Hospital in Jerusalem. Both hospitals are utilizing Skype to work together on interdisciplinary patient-care grand rounds, as part of an innovative inter-

national collaboration to enhance the quality of patient care to children with complex medical conditions in both the United States and Israel.

- **iPad –**

Currently utilized by Blythedale’s Speech and Occupational therapists, the portability, price and mainstream appeal of the device makes it an attractive option for children, while the growing list of assistive “apps” make it increasingly popular with Blythedale’s therapists, as well. Assistive communication apps enable patients to work on both fine motor skills and problem solving, while enhancing their ability to access their environment and communicate with others. In the case of several Day Hospital patients, therapy sessions are often carried over to the home when enthusiastic children eagerly share with family members the progress they’ve made on their “games”.

- **Robotic Therapy –**

In collaboration with MIT scientists, Blythedale researchers

studied the efficacy of robotic therapy in children with spasticity. This three year study, which was completed last year, was the first randomized controlled trial of upper extremity robotic therapy in children with motor impairments from cerebral palsy and other acquired brain injury. Children participating in the program have



Speech Therapist Monika Caffrey helps Marie trace letters on an iPad during a therapy session.

shown significant gains in muscle tone and function following therapy with the elbow, shoulder and/or wrist

robots, and research staff continue to explore the most efficient ways to apply these new techniques. Last year, Blythedale broadened its robotic therapy collaboration to include Riley Children’s Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana, Bambino Gesu in Rome, Italy, and Rancho Los Amigos in Downey, California.

- **Multi-Media Center –**

Last fall, the Hospital’s on-site Mt. Pleasant-Blythedale School celebrated the grand opening of its 1,000 square foot Multi-Media Center. Equipped with SMART Boards, netbooks, and iPads, as well as a variety of gaming and recreational devices, students are able to access technology during free time, in addition to during tech classes. According to Superintendent Ellen Bergman, “technology has leveled the playing field for our students. It makes a very big difference for them when they go out into the world – having had the ability to work firsthand on very sophisticated projects.” ■

Local Politicians Visit Blythedale, Meet Patients and Staff



(L-R) NYS Assemblyman Tom Abinanti joins Blythedale Chief Government Relations Officer Regina Kelly, Chief Medical Officer Joelle Mast Ph.D., M.D., President & CEO Larry Levine, and Mount Pleasant-Blythedale UFSD Superintendent Ellen Bergman Ph.D. for a tour.

Congresswoman Nan Hayworth and Assemblyman Tom Abinanti each recently visited Blythedale to learn first hand about the Hospital’s special programs and services. Congresswoman Hayworth, an ophthalmologist from Bedford, is the

newly elected representative from the 19th Congressional District which covers parts of Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Orange Counties. Assemblyman Abinanti represents the 92nd Assembly District which includes parts of the Towns of Greenburgh and Mount Pleasant and the City of Yonkers.

During their separate visits, each received a tour of the Hospital, visiting patients and Hospital staff in the Therapy Village, the on-site public school, and on Blythedale’s inpatient Post-NICU. Congresswoman Hayworth and Assemblyman Abinanti met with Blythedale President Larry Levine and Chief Medical Officer Joelle Mast, MD, to discuss the Hospital’s concerns with proposals to cut Medicaid reimbursement and enroll medically fragile children with special health care needs in Medicaid managed care.

The visits were part of Blythedale’s ongoing



Congresswoman Nan Hayworth (at right) visits with Blythedale Chief of Pulmonology Millicent Mitchell, and current patient, Ismael, and his mother, Jessenia.

government relations and public policy program which advocates to protect the safety net of services for medically fragile children and for other children with special health care needs. ■

Scott & Todd in the Evening

BCH Fetes the WPLJ Duo at a "Friday Night Blast-Off"

After two decades of hosting 95.5 WPLJ's "Scott and Todd in the Morning" radio broadcast, Blythedale paid homage to the people who have raised more than \$4 million dollars for the Hospital since 1991.

Celebrating the extraordinary commitment of co-hosts Scott Shannon and Todd Pettengill, Blythedale presented "Scott & Todd in the Evening – A Friday Night Blast-Off" at LIFE in Ardsley.

Nearly 300 supporters of the Hospital and fans of Scott and Todd attended the event, which raised more than \$200,000 for Blythedale's under-construction inpatient building.

In recognizing the radio legends, Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine said, "We welcome the opportunity to salute Scott Shannon and Todd Pettengill for the tremendous difference they have made in the lives of – quite literally – thousands and thousands of medically fragile children."

This December will mark the 20th year that WPLJ has broadcast its final show of the year live from Blythedale. Along with



L-R: Blythedale Board Chair Owen Gutfreund, honorees Todd Pettengill and Scott Shannon, and Blythedale President & CEO Larry Levine

music of The Party Dolls, as well as bidding on myriad items available in a silent auction.

Blythedale Board Chair Owen Gutfreund welcomed guests and introduced Carol Steinberg, the mother of a former patient, who spoke passionately about her family's experience at Blythedale. (Her son, Peter, was admitted to Blythedale last summer, following complicated surgery to remove a tumor on his spine. Peter made a miraculous recovery and has since returned to his home and school).

Following a heartfelt introduction by President and CEO Larry Levine and video tribute to Scott and Todd, the evening's honorees took over the microphones and offered up a



Party-goers peruse the silent auction.

the morning show's on-air personalities and crew, the station brings star power to Blythedale every year, including recording superstars, Rob Thomas, John Mayer, and Jon Bon Jovi – all of whom have made repeat performances.

"It's impossible to measure the impact that WPLJ has made on Blythedale," said Levine. "It's simply not enough to look at the extraordinary amount of money they have raised over the years. It's the recognition and awareness they have brought to Blythedale. It's impossible to quantify the profound impact they have made on our children."

Attendees enjoyed dancing to the lively



(L-R) Keating and Ann Hagmann



(L-R) Jim and Mary Blum, Lisa and John Curreri, Jeanne Fogel and Blythedale Trustee Darren Fogel



L-R: WPLJ's Todd Pettengill, General Manager Steve Borneman, Executive Producer Joe Pardavila, and ABC meteorologist Bill Evans.

humorous and touching assessment of their relationship with Blythedale. They also invited their WPLJ family to join them on stage, noting the important role everyone at WPLJ plays in supporting Blythedale.

“This event was truly one-of-a-kind,” said Blythedale Chief Institutional Advancement Officer Betsy Bowman. “After all they have done for us, there was no shortage of people eager to step up and make this a truly memorable evening. It was an honor to be a part of something so special.” ■

For information on sponsorship opportunities for our 2012 spring event, please contact Director of Special Events and Annual Giving Carey Dalton at (914) 592-7555, ext. 71303 or email her at careyd@blythedale.org.



L-R: Jorge and Natasha Restrepo and Linda and Dan Kortick



Carol Steinberg and Doreen Coffey, mothers of former patients, caught up at the event.



Carrie, Hayley and Todd Pettengill



Beth Zadek, Gillian Rittmaster and Blythedale Trustee Leslie Weissman



L-R: Joan Whipple, Anne Amato, Dee Beswick, Colleen Hines and Kathi Ice



Trish, Kathleen and Scott Shannon



The Party Dolls

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Trish Shannon
Peggy Tanner
Leslie Weissman

Going Green at Blythedale



Joe Pagni of Grayrock Florist helps the patients make Mother's Day gifts.

Did you know Blythedale has an onsite greenhouse, built nearly 20 years ago in honor of Rhoda Goldstone Weiler, the mother of Blythedale Trustee Abby Popper?

Dr. Josephine Kuhl, Blythedale's Chief of Pediatric Psychiatry, is excited to be "growing" a horticulture program at the Hospital.

"We are up and running," she said

enthusiastically. "Our vegetables are planted, and we are tending to the orchids (a plant, she notes, she would welcome as a donation).

The program has benefitted from a variety of supporters. In 2008, John Furth (grandson of the Hospital's former Board Chair) made a variety of hand-crafted outdoor planters as part of his Eagle Scout project. In addition, Joe Pagni, of Grayrock Florist and Memorials (pictured above), visits every year to help the children plant flowers for Mother's Day. Volunteers from Kohl's Department Stores and Rye Country Day school assist with planting and maintenance of the greenhouse and surrounding grounds, and Nabel's Nursery in White Plains donates containers.

According to the American Horticultural Therapy Association, "therapeutic gardening offers relief from physical and cognitive limitations, reduces stress, gently exercises joints, and stimulates memory".

Simply put, children respond positively to green plants and colorful flowers, and "caring for plants inspires hope".

"There are so many benefits," agreed Kuhl. "Our patients are researching plants and doing project planning. Plus, they are spending time in a beautiful environment and getting to play in the dirt." ■

For more information about the horticulture program, please contact Dr. Josephine Kuhl at (914) 592-7555, ext. 71547, or email to josephinek@blythedale.org.



Thank You *Beary* Much!

Since 2005, Blythedale has received more than \$285,000 from The Starlight Children's Foundation, including a gift of \$40,000 last month to the Hospital's Child Life department.

"Our Child Life program has flourished, due in large part to the generosity of the Starlight Children's Foundation," said Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine. "We have been able to maintain our Internship Program, expand outreach, and support patients and families along the continuum of care. We are deeply grateful to the Foundation for the impact they have made on the lives of so many children requiring specialized medical care."

Also through the generosity of The Starlight Children's Foundation, Blythedale's Child Life Specialists

are even more readily equipped to welcome and ease the adjustment for children newly admitted to the Hospital. Child Life's "Meet and Greet Program" promotes rapid face-to-face contact with children upon admission.

With loveable and soft teddy bears supplied by The Starlight Children's Foundation, Child Life Specialists can now make introductions to our children, with a new cuddly friend for them in tow. According to Blythedale Child Life Coordinator Lisa Levinson, the Starlight bears are adored by the children.

"This early act of giving is one way we can show caring and comfort, in light of the unfamiliar environment to which the child and family will need to

adapt," said Lisa Levinson. "In this way, the bears bring smiles to the faces of otherwise anxious children, serving as a concrete reminder of Blythedale's nurturing approach to specialized care."

Since 2005, the Foundation has ensured that children most in need of psychological and social support receive services to help them successfully manage hospitalization. Child Life services at Blythedale, which are supported by Starlight, include the provision of medical play opportunities to process illness or injury, procedural or therapy preparation and accompaniment as needed, resources to foster self-expression and healthy self-esteem, and normalizing activities to maintain developmental growth and optimize adjustment. ■



Madison receives a teddy bear from Child Life Specialist Kelsey Frawley.

Final Countdown to the Grand Opening!

While this month marks two years since Blythedale Children's Hospital broke ground on its 56,000 square foot inpatient facility, construction quickly nears completion in anticipation of a grand opening later this year.

The new building features 86 beds in private and semi-private rooms, in an intensely child and family-centered environment supported by state-of-the-art technology. It includes a Post-Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, a dedicated Traumatic Brain Injury Unit, and a Family Resource Center to accommodate the needs of parents and family members.

The exterior work on the building has been completed, and site work, including paving of roadways and sidewalks, as well as the installation of topiary gardens is well underway. Inside, flooring is being installed



and furniture is being delivered in anticipation of welcoming patients in December 2011.

"Everyone is eagerly awaiting the grand-opening of our new inpatient hospital," said President and CEO Larry Levine. "From patients and

families, through staff and supporters... it has been extremely exciting and gratifying to watch the progress unfold. We look forward to opening the doors of this magnificent facility and welcoming everyone for tours to see it firsthand." ■

SAFE KIDS

Preventing Hyperthermia

Did you know that a child's body heats up 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's? It only takes a few short minutes before a child can become dangerously overheated. In just 10 minutes a car's temperature can increase by 19 degrees – and it continues to rise.

In 2010, more than 49 children died while alone in a vehicle. But these deaths are preventable - not inevitable. Please take a moment and learn how to keep your kids safe.

Top Tips for Preventing Hyperthermia

- Dial 911 immediately if you see an unattended child in a car. EMS

- professionals are trained to determine if a child is in trouble.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- Place a cell phone, PDA, purse, briefcase, gym bag or whatever is to be carried from the car, on the floor in front of a child in a back seat. This triggers adults to see children when they open the rear door and reach for their belongings.
- Set your cell phone or Blackberry reminder to be sure you dropped your child off at day care.
- Set your computer calendar program, such as Outlook, to ask, "Did you drop off at daycare today?"

- Have a plan that if your child is late for daycare that you will be called within a few minutes. Be especially careful if you change your routine for dropping off little kids at day care.
- Teach children not to play in any vehicle.
- Lock all vehicle doors and trunk after everyone has exited the vehicle – especially at home. Keep keys out of children's reach. Cars are not playgrounds or babysitters.
- Check vehicles and trunks FIRST if a child goes missing. ■

Blythedale Children's Hospital is the local coalition leader for the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

today



95 Bradhurst Avenue, Valhalla, NY 10595-1697

Today is designed to inform our friends in the community about the services of Blythedale. If you know someone who would like to be on our mailing list, or if you have ideas for future issues, please let us know.

Call **Connie Cornell** at
(914) 592-7555, ext. 71461
or email conniec@blythedale.org

Visit us at our website
www.blythedale.org

Meet Blythedale's New Director of Volunteer Services

Blythedale Children's Hospital is pleased to welcome Jabeen Dinzey as the new Director of Volunteer Services. A graduate of Duke University, Dinzey brings a wealth of experience to the position, having spent over twelve years running volunteer service departments at major medical centers in the region.

"I am delighted to be joining the Blythedale team at such an exciting time in the Hospital's history," she said. "As the new inpatient building prepares to open its doors, we are provided with the opportunity to expand our vibrant existing volunteer program and create new volunteer initiatives to involve the community and to continue to enhance the lives of our children and their families." ■

For more information about volunteer opportunities at Blythedale, please contact Jabeen Dinzey at (914) 831-2428, or email her at jdinzey@blythedale.org.



save the date

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2011

**The 15th Annual Golf & Tennis Classic
Sunningdale Country Club**

For further information, please contact Director of Special Events and Annual Giving Carey Dalton at (914) 592-7555, ext. 71303 or email her at careyd@blythedale.org

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2011

**National Food Day
Westchester County Center, White Plains, NY**

Please contact Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna at (914) 831-2410 or email her at lenac@blythedale.org for more information

**COMING SOON:
IN DECEMBER
Grand Opening of the New
Inpatient Facility!**