

## Teaching Kids to *Eat Well, Be Well*

**D**uring a recent visit to the Osborne School in Rye, NY, a cheerful group of second-graders huddles around Blythedale Children's Hospital Dietitian Marie Roth, eager to impress her with their knowledge of nutrition.

"Who remembers what we talked about last time?" she asks enthusiastically. Eighteen hands fly up in the air. So she puts them to the test...

"How much exercise do we need every day?"

"One hour!" they announce.

"How many fruits and veggies do we need to eat every day?"

"Five a day is the healthy way!" they chant back, in unison.

"Yes!" she confirms, and continues on with increasingly difficult questions.

Today's lesson centers on making balanced meals. Giant Velcro plates and laminated photos of food offer the children the ability to build a healthy breakfast, combining foods from as many different food groups as possible. Impressive is their ability to problem solve, using the information gleaned in Roth's earlier visits ("Milk has calcium, right?" asks one). Laughter plays an important role too. Roth holds her head in mock distress, when one youngster tries to assert that kiwi is in the milk group.

The lesson is part of Blythedale's *Eat Well, Be Well* program, an innovative outreach program designed to bring health and nutrition education to schools throughout Westchester and Putnam counties. Through this program, made possible through the generosity of Kohl's Department Stores, Blythedale staff members teach healthy habits to children through the use of extensive curricula developed by the Hospital's nutritional experts. In addition to providing nutritional guidelines to students, the program aims to provide parents and educators with the necessary tools to continue the message.

"The philosophy behind *Eat Well, Be Well* is very consistent with Blythedale's overall mission to improve the health and well-being of all children," said Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine. "It's a natural off-shoot of what we do every day to provide children and their families with the knowledge and skills to make



Blythedale Dietitian Marie Roth quizzes a group of students at the Osborne School on their knowledge of the food pyramid.

healthy lifestyle choices regarding nutrition and physical activity."

Roth, the program's principal author and instructor, couldn't agree more.

"The small-group setting of individual classrooms allows us to get the kids physically moving as well as tackle many important nutrition topics in fun ways," she said. "While the program encompasses many different discussion topics through the grades, the guiding principles we emphasize in every lesson are Balance, Variety and Moderation. Learning to practice these core ideas or healthy lifestyle habits, and carrying them into adulthood is our goal for every child."

The Hospital's partnership with Kohl's began ten years ago, when the department store first launched its *Kohl's Cares for Kids* program. Through the sale of books and plush animals in the stores in the surrounding region, Kohl's donated money to Blythedale for wide-ranging projects, including the renovation of a patient room, and the creation of a reading corner in the Hospital's Early Childhood Center. More recently, Kohl's revamped the program

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in order to give back to the communities in which the company's stores were located. This provided Blythedale with an opportunity to develop a program to benefit the community at large.

"This prompted us to focus on childhood nutrition, because, at the time, there was an increased interest from the media in the growing correlation

date, the program has reached nearly 50,000 students in kindergarten through eighth-grade, as well as hundreds of educators and school nurses. The team is booked September through June, and typically provides three classes per grade throughout the year.

"The response from the schools has been overwhelmingly positive," said Roth. "The feedback and appreciation extended by the districts demonstrates the program continues to fill an important "need" within the schools and communities."

"In addition, we make learning about nutrition and movement fun and interactive, while offering practical knowledge and take home ideas that can be applied immediately," she said. "In addition to the classroom instruction, the program offers parent and staff workshops, designed with the goal of having both school and home environments foster health and wellness. For those parents who do not come out to the workshops, the program communicates key messages and guidelines via handouts the children take home on each topic presented. We want there to be dialogue in the home and classroom after we leave, and for everyone to be on the same page."

It is the interactive nature of the lessons that is one of the hallmarks of the program. Roth and fellow teacher, Beth Mosher, use visuals, games, and hands-on activities to engage the children. The students measure out the teaspoons of sugar in common products. Red Light, Green Light paddles help the kids show which snacks are "all the time" and which ones are "sometimes" foods. Playing Vitamin and Mineral Jeopardy is always a well-received activity for reinforcing the key objectives with older students, as Roth notes they enjoy the critical-thinking tasks, as well as the competition.

According to Roth, the students' existing knowledge base on matters of nutrition and wellness varies to some degree, but in general, she notes there is a deficit of knowledge.

"There seems to be a disconnect about where nutritious foods come from, as well as why the human body needs healthy food," she explained. "Schools nowadays

have extensive academic curriculum demands placed on them, and can offer only a very limited amount of nutrition education to students. The greater demand for curriculum time, along with financial constraints, has also resulted in a decreased amount of physical education time for students. Ironically, as these areas have been cut to the bare minimum in most schools, both nutrition and movement have been clinically proven to reduce truancy, while improving academic performance and behavioral issues among students."

The continued support by Kohl's is critical, according to Cavanna. The company recently donated \$200,422 to Blythedale to build a physical activity component into the curriculum, bringing the total amount donated to Blythedale in the last decade to \$1,686,335.

"We are deeply grateful to Kohl's for their ongoing support, and with each grant renewal we look to enhance the program or extend the outreach," she said. "We recognize that adding a message about the importance of physical activity is critical, and the children greatly enjoy the dynamic aspect of the lesson. Marie (Roth) was able to incorporate movement directly into existing lessons. For example, in the lesson plan about beverages, the second-graders love to jump as they count out the number of teaspoons of sugar in common drinks."

"Kohl's is proud to once again support Blythedale Children's Hospital in their efforts to improve children's nutrition and safety in the communities it serves," said Kohl's District Manager Keith Dyer. "Our partnership with Blythedale helps us come closer to

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The Hospital recently invited area Girl Scouts to participate in its Young Chefs Recipe Contest. Winners (as chosen by a panel of celebrity chefs) were announced during a recent Girl Scout workshop at the Hospital. At the event, the Hospital also announced Kohl's most recent donation of \$200,422 toward the Eat Well, Be Well program. Pictured above, the winners join Celebrity Chef Wade Burch of the Food Network; Chef Anthony Goncalves of Restaurant 42 in White Plains; and Blythedale Dietitian Marie Roth.

between childhood obesity and illness," said Blythedale's Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna. "We knew there was a great opportunity to use our clinical expertise and wide-ranging resources to address this important issue."

Roth led the development of the curriculum in 2006, collaborating with physicians and child development specialists. Extensive research was conducted on the developmental skills and learning styles for different age groups, and then, key areas of focus were broken down into individual topics. "We start in kindergarten with important basics, and the lessons for each consecutive grade level build on the knowledge from previous years," said Roth. "We introduce new topics and always reinforce past messages."

And from there, the program grew. As diagnosed cases of pediatric obesity and related complications soared both nationally and regionally, *Eat Well, Be Well* became a highly sought after program throughout the region. To

# Q&A with Blythedale Dietitian Marie Roth

## *Does the level of interest in Eat Well, Be Well surprise you?*

Four years and nearly 50,000 kids later, I am still in awe at the level of continued interest for the program and how quickly we book up for an entire school year. But, I am truly blown away by the interest and attentiveness shown by the children. It has become increasingly more apparent to me that children, innately, want to be healthy and take care of their bodies. Once we give them the knowledge and tools to do so, they are so willing to make positive changes.

## *Why is Blythedale so well-suited to provide a program like Eat Well, Be Well?*

No one does exactly what we do at Blythedale. As a Westchester-based hospital, Blythedale has always looked to share its wealth of knowledge and serve its community. The great thing about the partnership with Kohl's is it has allowed Blythedale to meet a community need on a larger scale than would normally be possible.

## *You talk about the importance of balance, variety and moderation. Why is this so important?*

Balanced eating means the body is supplied with an optimal ratio of nutrients by consuming natural foods from the various food groups in the right proportions. If entire food groups are eliminated from one's diet, balanced eating cannot be achieved. We teach the kids that a meal must have three or more different food groups in order to be

balanced. Snacks should fill in the gaps of any food groups missed at meals. Variety means that within each food group many different foods are accepted and consumed. For instance, eating many different brightly colored fruits and vegetables is just as important as eating the correct number of servings. Messages regarding moderation address two ideas. One, we should always respect and pay attention to our own hunger and satiety cues to prevent overeating. Two, sweets and treats can have a place in a healthy diet as long as they are eaten in small portions and do not displace other nutrient-rich foods.

## *Any tips for handling picky eaters?*

Many parents too often cater to their kids' desires or buckle to demands for junk foods to avoid meltdowns or tantrums, which only exacerbates the issue. There needs to be a division of roles and responsibility. Parents are in charge of what, when, how and where foods are served. Children are responsible for if and how much to eat. Problems arise when parents try to control their child's responsibility or the child is allowed to take over the parents' responsibility. As parents, it is our duty to expose our children to a variety of healthful foods and develop our children into healthy eaters. Exposure is critical. It may take a child 10 to 20 times of tasting a food (in a positive environment) before they accept it into their diet. Be patient and don't give up.



## Meet Marie Roth

Marie Roth, RD, joined Blythedale Children's

Hospital in 2006 as principal author and instructor of the Eat Well, Be Well nutrition outreach program. Marie brings nearly 20 years of experience and passion to teaching about natural foods, nutrition and health.

An early fascination with the interrelationship between food and well-being led her to attend the Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts. Although she graduated Ramapo College with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, Marie sought work in the food industry. Her experiences working in various restaurant and food industry settings, along with the births of her two children, only furthered her interest in food, nutrition and health, which ultimately led her back to school attending Montclair State University's Didactic Program in Dietetics and Dietetic Internship.

To supplement her work in the health field, Marie became a certified personal trainer with the American Council on Exercise and also holds certifications, offered through the American Dietetic Association, in Adult Weight Management and Pediatric Obesity and Overweight.

As part of the Eat Well, Be Well program, she has delivered healthy messages to nearly 50,000 kindergarten through eighth-grade students throughout Westchester and lower Putnam Counties. She also conducts corporate, parent, and school staff lectures and workshops, as well as hands-on cooking programs in the Hospital for children of all ages. In addition, Marie writes on various food, nutrition and fitness-related topics for the Hospital, and numerous other publications. ■

# 14th Annual Golf & Tennis Classic Raises Nearly \$200,000



(L-R) Blythedale Board Chair Owen Gutfreund, Dreyfus President Charlie Cardona, and Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine.

Kevin and Doreen Coffey shared the story of their daughter's journey as a patient at Blythedale, during the dinner reception.



(L-R) Benefit Co-Chair Dan Kortick, former New York Yankee pitchers Jimmy Key and Mike Torrez, and Benefit Co-Chair Carmine Lippolis.

Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale again served as the perfect venue for Blythedale's Annual Golf & Tennis Classic, held this past September. The hugely successful event, attended by more than 80 golfers and tennis players, raised over \$188,000 for Blythedale's new inpatient facility (currently under construction and scheduled to open in Fall 2011).

The event featured a full day of golf, brunch, tennis, a putting contest, cocktail reception, dinner, live auction, and a raffle. In addition, former New York Yankee pitchers Jimmy Key and Mike Torrez hit the links in support of Blythedale.

"This event has become one we look forward to all year," said Chief Institutional Advancement Officer Betsy Bowman. "We're so fortunate to have an incredibly dedicated planning committee, generous sponsors, and the most enthusiastic supporters of our mission. It's great to see it all culminate in a day that is such fun for all involved." ■

*For information on sponsorship opportunities for our 2011 golf outing, please contact Carey Dalton at (914) 592-7138, ext. 303.*



(L-R) The BlueMountain Capital foursome included Alan Gerstein, John Lovisolo, Jimmy Key and Munir Dauhajre.

## We Would Like to Thank Our Generous Sponsors

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## Child Actors Present \$3,100 Donation to Blythedale

When child actors Rory and Declan McTigue celebrated their seventh birthday on October 3rd, they decided to once again make it more meaningful than simply having a birthday party with friends and family. The twin brothers, who appear in the new hit HBO series Boardwalk Empire, chose to again forgo any birthday presents and instead asked their friends and family to make donations to Blythedale Children's Hospital.

On November 9th, Rory and Declan, along with their parents, visited Blythedale to present the \$3,100 they received in donations in honor of their recent birthday.

"We are delighted to have Rory and Declan come back and visit to share this truly special donation. We deeply appreciate the generosity of those who donated in honor of their birthday and are especially grateful to Rory and Declan for once again thinking of Blythedale," said Betsy Bowman, Chief Institutional Advancement Officer for Blythedale Children's Hospital.

"The boys were so moved by our first visit to Blythedale and continued to talk about their experience all year. Rory

and Declan's party gets bigger every year and we hope that as it continues to grow we can share the mission of Blythedale with more and more people" said Sylvia McTigue, the boys' mother.

Along with their role in Boardwalk Empire, the identical twins, who are residents of Chester, NY, have appeared in numerous TV shows including All My Children and Law & Order, as well as advertisements for major retailers.

The donation will go toward Blythedale's Journey of Hope Campaign in support of a new sibling playroom at the Hospital and will be added to the nearly \$2,000 the McTigue family brought to Blythedale last year. ■



## Mitzvah Magic

Thanks to Adam Parks, of Weston, CT, Blythedale patients are now enjoying 14 portable DVD players that were purchased as the result of his \$2,839 donation to the Hospital. The generous teen also designated nearly \$1,000 of the gifts he received at his Bar Mitzvah to assist in providing family members of patients with assistance in getting to Blythedale through the Hospital's Parent Transportation Fund. "We are so appreciative of this very special donation," said Betsy Bowman, Chief Institutional Advancement Officer for Blythedale Children's Hospital. "Adam clearly stands out as a role model. It is especially significant to see such a strong spirit of philanthropy in someone as young as Adam." ■



Madison Coffey receives one of the donated DVD players from Adam Parks.



Blythedale Child Life Specialist Kelsey Frawley and Child Life Coordinator Lisa Levinson, shared the good news of the Mattel donation with Blythedale's patients.

## Mattel and NACHRI Bring the Smiles with Toy Donation

Blythedale Children's Hospital was delighted to receive a generous donation of free toys from Mattel Inc. as part of a partnership between the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI) and Mattel, Inc. The Toy Donation Program was launched in an effort to bring joy and comfort to hospitalized children, and the mission was clearly accomplished when the toys arrived on the scene at Blythedale for use in the Hospital's Child Life Program. "We are so grateful to Mattel and NACHRI for making this donation," said Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna. "There is no greater gift than to help put a smile on the face of a child." ■

# Rockin' in the Holidays with WPLJ

Anyone fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the annual festivities provided by 95.5 WPLJ FM last year, saw firsthand what the holidays are all about. Christmas came a few days early for the children of Blythedale, as the popular crew from “Scott & Todd in the Morning” broadcast their final show of 2010 live from the gymnasium named in their honor at Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

The performers, including Rob Thomas (returning for his 11th consecutive year), John Mayer (returning for a fourth visit), Johnny Rzeznik of the Goo Goo Dolls, and Ryan Star, were the highlight of the four-hour broadcast, which also featured perennial favorites Holiday Express and WPLJ’s house band, The Snowballs. The children started filling the room at 6:00 a.m., armed with posters and markers for autographs, and cameras to catch their favorite performers. The broadcast was simulcast in an adjoining room, as well as in patient rooms and waiting areas.

The concert, which is one of Blythedale’s largest fundraisers



Blythedale Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna, President and CEO Larry Levine and Chief Institutional Advancement Officer Betsy Bowman join WPLJ DJs (center) Todd Pettengill and Scott Shannon.

of the year, has raised almost \$4 million for the Hospital over the last 19 years. This year’s broadcast has raised nearly \$200,000 and contributions continue to come in. The radio station holds an online and on-air auction to benefit Blythedale, offering bidders the



Recording artists John Mayer and Johnny Rzeznik caught up between performances.

opportunity to win items such as lunch with Rob Thomas (\$7,000), seats in the general manager’s suite at a Yankee game (\$9,400), and the chance to spend the day with the “Cake Boss” at his Hoboken Bakery (\$10,000). The Hospital utilized several forms of social media to promote the auction, including a live Twitter feed, broadcast on a large-screen TV at the event.

“This event just gets better and better,” said Blythedale Chief of Institutional Advancement Betsy Bowman. “We are so grateful to our dear friends at WPLJ for not only raising money and awareness for Blythedale, but for offering our patients something so extraordinary. You simply can’t put a price tag on an experience such as this, for our children and their families. The expressions on their faces really says it all.”

For anyone interested in making a donation, please contact the Hospital’s Development Office at (914) 592-7138, ext. 480. ■



(Top to Bottom) Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino joins Scott and Todd on air; Rob Thomas chats with a young fan; Dannon employees manned the auction lines; John Mayer debuted a new song at Blythedale; and, everyone takes the stage for one last song.



Continued from page 2.

achieving our mutual goals for the children of our communities.”

Last year, Kohl's funded the development of a program for adolescents. Moving into the middle schools was a natural progression in terms of growth for the program, according to Roth. “While adolescence is one of the most nutritionally demanding life cycles, it is also one of the most challenging times to get kids to make healthy choices,” she explained. “There is so much going on with adolescents – time and schedule constraints, social and academic pressures, media influences, biological changes and food preferences, etc., all of which can act as barriers to wellness. This program helps them recognize these barriers and design personal strategies to overcome them.”

“One of the most gratifying things is how much the kids remember from past lessons, and how eager they are to share changes or improvements they have made in their personal lives as a result of the program,” said Roth. “A fourth-grade girl told me that ever since she learned to read the nutrition facts label, both she and her mother now read the labels for everything they purchase. She was excited to share they both lost weight and were making healthier food choices for the entire family. In another school, a teacher reported that all the kids selected water and refused to drink the fruit punch offered at their holiday party because it wasn't 100% juice. These types of individual stories are testimony to the positive impact the program has on individuals and families.”

“While we all feel passionate about our work with the Eat Well, Be Well program, witnessing the outcomes of nutritional awareness is extremely empowering and keeps that passion alive,” she said. “The bottom line is we want the kids to enjoy the program, remember the messages and be happy and excited to see us visit again.” ■

*For more information on Blythedale's Eat Well, Be Well program, please contact Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna at (914) 592-7138, ext. 374 or email her at [lenac@blythedale.org](mailto:lenac@blythedale.org).*

## New Inpatient Facility on Target for Fall 2011 Opening

Construction of Blythedale's new, two-story, 56,000 square foot inpatient facility has progressed rapidly since ground was broken on the project in June 2009. The structure is now fully enclosed, and substantial interior work is underway. Throughout this \$65.3 million modernization project, the Hospital has continued to offer uninterrupted service to patients and their families, and will continue to do so until the project's completion.

This fall, the construction of a fully operational patient room was completed (*pictured at right*). The recommendations of clinical staff, as well as patients and their families, was solicited in order to design a room that fully satisfies Blythedale's high standards for function, safety, comfort, and durability. According to Hospital President and CEO Larry Levine,



“We have approached every decision with a painstaking degree of detail and commitment in order to create an environment most conducive to healing. It has been extremely gratifying to witness firsthand the progress on this state-of-the-art facility.” ■

*For more information about supporting Blythedale's Journey of Hope Campaign, please contact the Development Office at (914) 592-7138, ext. 480.*

# SAFE KIDS

## HIDDEN DANGER – TIPS TO AVOID FURNITURE TIPOVERS

Whether you have a baby learning to stand, an unsteady toddler trying to climb or a fearless preschooler who still doesn't quite understand balance, furniture tip-overs are a real danger for kids.

Regardless of your child's abilities and limitations, top-heavy furniture, TVs and appliances can tip over and seriously injure young children.

There are many easy-to-install devices that anchor furniture to the wall, making furniture more stable and tip-over resistant. These devices are designed for dressers, wall units and anything your little explorer might try to climb.

### Top safety tips to help prevent tip-over hazards

- If a piece of furniture is unstable or top-heavy, secure it to a stud in the wall using brackets, braces, anchors or wall straps. Large items such as TVs, microwaves, fish tanks, book cases, heavy furniture and appliances

can topple off stands and fall on children.

- If you have a newer, flat screen TV, make sure it's properly anchored to the wall.
- Read the manufacturer's instructions for tips or warnings regarding placement of your TV or furniture.
- Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers.
- Don't keep remote controls, candy, toys or other items that attract children on top of furniture, as your child might be enticed to reach for these items.
- Supervise young children at all times. ■

*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.

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L-R: Current DAISY award-winner Suzanne Bartlett, RN; Blythedale Clinical Nurse Educator Linda Bove, RN; DAISY Co-Founder Bonnie Barnes; Blythedale Chief Clinical Outcomes Officer Linda Hurwitz; and DAISY Co-Founder Mark Barnes.

## Spreading Cheer with a DAISY Award

DAISY Award Co-Founders Bonnie and Mark Barnes recently visited Blythedale Children's Hospital and were on hand as Blythedale's CPR, PALS and BLS coordinator, Suzanne Bartlett, RN, received this quarter's award. The DAISY Award is a nationwide program that rewards and celebrates the extraordinary clinical skill and compassionate care given by nurses everyday. The award was developed in honor of the Barnes' son, Pat, who lost his fight with an immune system disease 11 years ago. Touched by the loving care of their son's nurses, the Barnes' founded the DAISY Foundation as a way to acknowledge their work. Blythedale presents a DAISY award quarterly. ■

save the date

**FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2011**  
**Scott & Todd in the Evening**

**A Fun Friday Night Blast-off  
to Benefit Blythedale**

*For more information, please contact  
Chief Institutional Advancement Officer Betsy Bowman  
at (914) 592-7138, ext. 411 or email at  
[betsyb@blythedale.org](mailto:betsyb@blythedale.org)*

**SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2011**  
**Walk With Us!**

**A Family Fundraising Event to Benefit  
Blythedale at the Hackley School**

*For more information, please contact  
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