A Celebration of Blythedale

Longtime Hospital supporters Larry and Randi Cohen were honored last month at a reception at Chelsea Piers, for their many years of dedication to Blythedale. > continued on page 2

Assisting the Haiti Disaster Relief Effort

Blythedale recently joined forces with the AFYA Foundation in order to donate medical equipment for use in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. Blythedale, which opened a new 56,000 square foot replacement inpatient facility last December, has a surplus of equipment that is no longer being used in the new building. Equipment, ranging from cribs to wheelchairs, and crash carts to sleeper chairs, have been matched with children with special needs in Haiti and adapted for their use.

“With such limited resources available in Haiti, children have been using equipment built for adults,” > continued on page 7
Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

As you enter Blythedale Children’s Hospital this month, the flowers are in full bloom, our animal topiaries strike a welcoming pose, and sunlight streams through the mosaic windows in our rotunda. It seems fitting that the symbolism associated with spring extends into our new inpatient hospital building, as well. Hope, growth, potential...it all springs eternal at Blythedale. A walk through our new halls offers an instant glimpse of the promise that lies ahead for our children, despite the medical complexities that brought them through our door. After many years of planning and constructing our new building, it is extraordinarily gratifying to see our patients reap the multitude of benefits.

Last month, we honored our dear friends, Larry and Randi Cohen at A Celebration of Blythedale at Chelsea Piers (pictures and story at right). The Cohens have been instrumental in bringing our vision to fruition. We recognize them not only for their extraordinary philanthropic impact, but for sharing a vision of a world where children receive the care they need, regardless of their religion, race, or ability to pay. It has been an honor to work alongside Larry and Randi, and because of their commitment and dedication, countless children will know brighter tomorrows.

Sincerely,

Larry Levine
President & CEO

A Celebration of Blythedale

Blythedale Children’s Hospital celebrated its 5th Annual Spring Event at The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan last month. Larry Cohen, a longtime member of Blythedale’s Board of Trustees and former Board Chair, and his wife, Randi, were honored for their decades of support. The event raised more than $520,000 for the Hospital’s second phase of construction.

“This evening was a great success on many levels,” said Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine. “We, at Blythedale, are so deeply grateful to Larry and Randi for their extraordinary commitment to the Hospital and to our young patients. This was an extremely fitting tribute to their years of dedication.”
260 attendees enjoyed spectacular views from the pier, and were treated to the culinary talents of Abigail Kirsch. Michael Gargiulo, co-anchor of Today in New York, served as Master of Ceremonies. In his opening remarks, he credited Blythedale for helping his family, when his own daughter required a medical evaluation. Jordana Holovach, parent of a former patient and founder of Jacob’s Cure.

> continued on page 6
In the Spotlight

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Blythedale Children’s Hospital is pleased to announce it has received a $500,000 grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The grant will be used to fund the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Speech and Audiology at Blythedale. It will also be used toward the funding of emerging research projects.

This grant will enable Blythedale to provide a consolidated space for its vital speech pathology and audiology services. This Center will include treatment rooms with the latest technology, and a spacious audiology booth that can accommodate children in wheelchairs and stretchers.

In addition to the new Center, the grant will also be used to fund a Research Assistant position over the next two years in order to build the capacity of Blythedale’s research department in neurorehabilitation and other relevant areas.

“The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is proud to support Blythedale Children’s Hospital,” said Stelios Vasilakis, co-chief of Public Affairs at the Foundation. “Supporting the upgrade of its facilities, especially the new Speech and Audiology Center, will allow Blythedale to remain at the forefront of advanced pediatric care. More importantly, research conducted at Blythedale has the potential for larger-scale impact, by advancing knowledge and medical practice around the world.”

“This is an extraordinary gift, with respect to the potential magnitude of its reach,” said Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine. “The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Speech and Audiology will provide countless children with unique and cutting-edge opportunities. We are honored to be the recipient of such a vitally important gift.”

For information on Blythedale’s Foundation Giving program, please contact Andy Loose, Director of Grants and Foundation Relations, at (914) 831-2514 or andrew.loose@blythedale.org.

Blythedale Student Receives Scholarship to Study Art

Caroline Dowe, a Day Hospital patient and student at the Hospital’s on-site Mt. Pleasant Blythedale Union Free School District, recently received a 2012 Women’s Hall of Fame scholarship provided by Merrill Lynch through the Women’s Research and Education Fund Scholarship Program.

Eighteen-year-old Caroline received a $3,000 scholarship during the Westchester County Women’s Hall of Fame and Scholarship Awards Luncheon. The award was particularly poignant, given the obstacles the talented teen has overcome in the last ten years.

Diagnosed with a brain tumor at eight-years-old, Caroline endured myriad treatments, including radiation, chemotherapy and surgery, on her long road to recovery. She suffered a stroke four years after her treatments, losing use of the entire left side of her body. She was first admitted to Blythedale in 2006 and by discharge, several months later, 90% of her functioning was restored. Again in need of more intensive therapy and medical supervision than was available in her community, she returned to Blythedale in 2011, where she is a patient to this day. In addition to receiving multiple therapies each day, Caroline is carrying a full course load. She is adept at using an iPad as an augmentative communication device to communicate her thoughts quickly.

The scholarship from Merrill Lynch through the Women’s Research and Education Fund Scholarship Program will allow Caroline to further her art training. She plans to take art classes at Concordia College in Bronxville and hopes to open her own studio someday, selling paintings, cards, wrapping paper and wallpaper.

Caroline was an outstanding scholarship candidate, said Judith L. Werbitt, Senior Vice President of Wealth Management with The Werbitt Circale Group of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management. “We selected Caroline because we recognized her tenacity, her courage and attitude in the face of adversity. It was a slam dunk for us,” she said. “Her drive and determination were the contributing factors. We love the fact that she wants to go into business. She is an inspiration to us all.”
Q&A with Jimmy Coble

What first brought you to Blythedale?

When I was in the third grade, I had a “routine” surgery. Something went wrong, and, on the operating table, I had a stroke. To rehabilitate, I came to Blythedale. In the beginning, I had to “re-learn” everything, from how to walk, to how to read. Eventually, it started to come back. Because the stroke affected the parts of my brain that are associated with memory, I do not remember much of what happened in the aftermath. I have really brief, faint memories. For instance, I remember walking down the school hallway, and I remember a few of the friends I made here.

What brought you back?

What brought me back was the opportunity to do an internship for my school. My school allows fourth quarter seniors to work in just about any field they could want. Because I am interested in medicine, I saw this as a great chance to not only give back to the hospital that had given me so much, but also get first-hand experience in a hospital setting.

What is most gratifying about working here?

The most gratifying experience for me has been working with the kids. All of the children I have been working with seem to be really receptive to my help. It is really gratifying to see them getting better.

What are your future plans?

My future plans involve going to Ursinus College in the fall. I will be studying biology with the hope to go to medical school, and eventually be involved in some sort of medical research (maybe even back here!). While medicine has always interested me, by being here at Blythedale, I have been able to look into a wide variety of careers in the medical field.

Jimmy is a senior at Fordham Prep.

Volunteers Take Center Stage at Blythedale Ceremony

For their dedicated service and commitment to Blythedale’s children, the Hospital’s volunteers were honored during a celebration held in the new lobby this month. More than 70 people were on hand during the recognition event, including volunteers who have logged more than 5,000 hours of service at Blythedale.

“We are truly grateful for our wonderful volunteers,” said Director of Volunteer Services Jabeen Dinzey. “Our volunteers each contribute to Blythedale in their own unique way, but share a common purpose of making each day the best it can be for our children.”

Dinzey applauded the volunteers for the diverse ways in which they share their time and talents.

“We have had the opportunity to partner with a number of local high schools to create internships for junior and senior students,” she said. “These students have provided the Hospital with significant hours of service and they, in turn, have been able to explore health and child related careers. We have also seen the emergence of a number of volunteer leaders among our seasoned volunteers who have patiently and tirelessly assisted in the training and mentoring of new volunteers in their assigned areas. Their commitment is unparalleled.”

Volunteers were treated to hors d’oeuvres and desserts catered by chef Anthony Goncalves of Restaurant 42. The chef was also on hand at the event. Joe Pugni of Grayrock Florist donated a variety of spectacular floral arrangements for the celebration.

For more information on volunteer opportunities, please contact Jabeen Dinzey at (914) 831-2428 or JDinzey@blythedale.org.

Left: Volunteers Fred Kopilak (seated with his wife, GG), and David Shields (with his wife, Karin) enjoy the celebration. Jabeen Dinzey thanks the volunteers for their dedication.
Blythedale Thanks its Nursing Staff

Blythedale celebrated National Nursing Recognition Week, this month, with various events to thank the Hospital’s extraordinary corps of more than 225 registered nurses, nursing assistants and other staff.

At a ceremony held in the rotunda of the new inpatient building, Chief Operating Officer Maureen Desimone, praised the staff for its “commitment and dedication to excellence in pediatric nursing practice and for putting your heart into your career. We are proud of each and every one of you.”

The ceremony was marked by moving speeches by Desimone, Hospital President and CEO Larry Levine, and Acting Senior Director of Nursing Kimberly Everett, who noted the tremendous changes in the past year, including technological advances, a new building, a high census and increased staff. “Nursing has again partnered with other departments to create a team that is simply amazing,” she said. “We are a vital part of this team... advocating, leading, caring for our children and each other.”

Staff members were recognized for their achievements and their excellence on the job. The Nursing department was also feted during celebratory luncheons and dinners, and received embroidered Blythedale jackets and photo directories.

Visiting guest speaker Amy Ansehl, RN, MSN, FNP-C, was a highlight of Blythedale’s 2012 celebration. Ansehl spoke to a large group of Blythedale staff about the important work of nurses which encompasses patient care and advocacy. “Nursing has many stars and they are at the bedside,” Ansehl said. She went on to stress that “although nurses’ daily work might seem ordinary, it has an extraordinary impact on the lives of patients and their families.”

Celebration

(a foundation dedicated to raising funds for research of Canavan Disease), also addressed the crowd, sharing her own personal experience of caring for a child with extremely complex medical needs, and the vital role Blythedale plays in helping families rebuild their lives.

Attendees at the event purchased nearly $16,000 worth of items from a “Giving Tree”, which will provide vital medical equipment, and much-needed support for social work and other valuable programs, such as parent transportation and pet therapy.

For additional information on this and other special events at Blythedale, please contact Christina Caras at (914) 831-2512 or ChristinaC@blythedale.org.
Congresswoman Lowey Holds Press Conference at Blythedale

This spring, Blythedale hosted a press conference with Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D – Westchester/Rockland) in which the Congresswoman explained her opposition to the Republican budget resolution - the “Ryan Plan” - that cleared the House Budget Committee on March 21. Lowey opposes the budget proposal, in part because it includes deep cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

“Slashing Medicaid for low-income families would not only drive up health care costs for millions, it would hurt the health care industry, which is vital to New York’s economy,” Lowey said in her remarks at Blythedale.

Blythedale President and CEO Larry Levine also spoke at the event. “Blythedale and other children’s hospitals will continue to work with federal and state government to thoughtfully and carefully implement health system reform measures,” Levine said. “But we are opposed to any indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts to Medicaid, like those proposed by the Ryan Plan, that will further risk the health of sick children, result in significant cuts to Blythedale and ultimately severely limit our ability to provide needed care to many young and vulnerable patients.”

Disaster Relief

(continued from page 1)

said Blythedale Children’s Hospital Chief Operating Officer Maureen Desimone. “This, unfortunately, is simply not conducive to healing. We are delighted that this uniquely adapted pediatric equipment will see a second life and benefit so many children,“

Members of AFYA’s assessment team visited the Hospital, armed with photos of children with complex medical needs and their measurements. Once the team determined exactly which items were needed, they arranged for pick-up and transport directly to Haiti.

The children who will receive the wheelchairs and equipment live at Zanmi Beni, a new orphanage just outside of Port-Au-Prince for abandoned physically and developmentally disabled children. These children were living in the pediatric unit of the capital city’s General Hospital, which was badly damaged in the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated the Caribbean nation in January 2010.

“This is an exquisite opportunity to make a one-on-one match with the children who will receive this equipment,” said Danielle Butin, AFYA’s founder and executive director. “This donation enables us to be able to provide and build access for these children that otherwise would not exist.”

It’s a “non-prom” Prom!

Courtesy of Neuberger Berman, Blythedale teens had an opportunity to celebrate prom season with a customized “non-prom” prom at the Hospital last month. Volunteers from the asset management firm, including Blythedale Trustee Darren Fogel and his family, hosted the black light party for approximately 20 patients, complete with decorations, dancing and a sundae bar.

“Corporate volunteers play such an important role at Blythedale,” said Director of Community Relations Lena Cavanna. “Our children benefit from their generosity in so many ways.” Prior to the event, a local teen, Andrew Starker coordinated a volunteer event with his friends at Blythedale so that patients could design donated tee-shirts for the event. For more information about Blythedale’s new Corporate Connection program, please contact Lena Cavanna at (914) 831-2410 or LenaC@blythedale.org.
Carbon Monoxide - The Silent Killer

Young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of carbon monoxide, because of their smaller bodies. Be sure that you have a working carbon monoxide detector and follow some simple safety tips to help protect your family.

Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:
• The most common symptoms include headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and confusion. In severe cases, the person may lose consciousness or die.
• CO poisoning can often be mistaken for other illnesses, such as the flu.
• Often, more than one person in the household will suffer symptoms at the same time.

To decrease risk of CO poisoning the following tips are recommended:
• Install a CO alarm outside every sleeping area and on every level of your home. Place CO alarms at least 15 feet away from every fuel-burning appliance to reduce the number of nuisance alarms. Test alarms every month and replace them every five years.
• Make sure alarms can be heard when you test them and practice an escape plan with your entire family.
• Have all gas, oil or coal burning appliances inspected by a technician every year to ensure they are working correctly and are properly ventilated.
• Never use a stove for heating.
• Do not use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window.
• Never leave a car, SUV, or motorcycle engine running inside a garage, even if the garage door is open.

For more information, please contact Sue Larkin at (914) 592-7555, ext. 71647 or SueL@blythedale.org.