



# Children's News



New England Patriot Matt Light and his family recently presented Dr. Gerald Marx with a \$25,000 gift from the Light Foundation to support echocardiography research.

## New England's newest patriot

**W**e remember Patriot's Day in part because of the night ride of Paul Revere, who warned the American colonists of the approaching British Army. New England Patriot Matt Light and his wife, Susie, will remember it as the day their son Collin was born fighting for his life.

Just 22 weeks into Susie's pregnancy, a routine ultrasound indicated a possible heart abnormality. Children's Hospital Boston cardiologist **Gerald Marx, MD**, used echocardiography to diagnose the Lights' unborn baby with transposition of the great arteries (TGA), a congenital heart defect that occurs when the aorta and pulmonary artery are improperly connected, resulting in the pumping of unoxygenated blood to the body and brain.

Echocardiography is a non-invasive, painless imaging technique where ultrasonic waves bounce off the structures of the heart. The results are used to computer-generate images of the heart walls and valves, which, in turn, are used to diagnose defects and conditions of the heart.

In Collin's case, Marx performed a series of 2D and 3D fetal echoes, both of which are safe for mother and baby, and provided a tremendous amount of information about young Collin's heart before he was even born.

"With the 3D format, we can look at the heart from a variety of directions, which allows for the early detection of heart defects," says Marx. "Diagnosis in utero really makes all the difference. The echo is shared with surgeons, expanding the window of time they have to operate and correct the condition, and it can allow time for explaining to parents what they can expect."

Such was the case with Collin in the months before his birth. The echoes he had helped surgeons make a detailed surgical plan, which would have been otherwise impossible.

On April 19, 2005, Collin Light was born weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces and almost immediately went to the operating room for open heart surgery to correct the TGA.

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## Light up lobsters!

**Why don't lobsters share their toys? Because they're shellfish. Get it? Shellfish.**

Bad jokes aside, lobsters are making a splash at Children's Hospital Boston. Patient families waiting to be called for surgery or to see a clinician can now grab a cup of coffee or take a stroll through the Prouty Garden while staying connected to Children's Preop Clinic through a little red lobster.

Thanks to the creativity of **Mary Ellen Pierce, RN**, the clinic's traditional pagers have been replaced with new, lobster-shaped beepers that light up when the operating room or clinician is ready for the patient. "I walked into a very busy restaurant on Cape Cod and was handed a beeper the size and shape of a lobster," says Pierce. "I thought something like that would be perfect for our waiting room."

Pierce made some calls and was able to order 10, red lobster beepers for Preop. "Our department has kind of a fish theme, so we figured the lobsters would work," says Pierce. "They arrived a few weeks ago and have already been a big hit."



Inside: Wandering  
our Web

## Walsh named new chief of Genetics

After an extensive national search, **Christopher A. Walsh, MD, PhD**, has been appointed chief of the Division of Genetics at Children's Hospital Boston.

Walsh received both his PhD and MD degrees from the University of Chicago and then trained in Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, including a year as Chief Resident. Since 1995, he has directed the Division of Neurogenetics at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC). He is currently the Bullard Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Investigator. Walsh will continue to maintain his laboratory presence and HHMI affiliation at BIDMC.



Christopher Walsh, MD, PhD



### Boosting production of blood-forming stem cells

Researchers led by **Leonard Zon, MD**, director of the Stem Cell/Developmental Biology Program at Children's Hospital Boston, and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, have discovered a possible way to increase production of blood-forming stem cells, also called hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs). Their findings, in the October issue of *Genes and Development*, could eventually help cancer patients and others who need HSCs for stem cell transplants.

Prior experiments hinted that a regulatory gene called *Notch* might play a role in HSC replication. Zon's team worked with a mutant strain of zebrafish that lacks *Notch* signaling and does not produce HSCs in adulthood. Through some clever genetics, they arranged for *Notch* signaling to be activated only in adult fish, by exposing them to a brief pulse of heat. (Activating *Notch* earlier would cause unwanted effects.) When given the pulse of heat, the fish began to produce more HSCs.

The researchers further found that *Notch* regulates HSC production by controlling another gene called *runx1*, and tested whether activating the *Notch-Runx* pathway could restore HSC production in zebrafish exposed to radiation. They exposed some of the irradiated fish to heat, activating *Notch*, and found that their blood counts recovered far more quickly.

"If we had a pharmaceutical compound to activate *Notch* transiently, it might restore the blood system more quickly in patients receiving stem cell transplants," speculates Zon.

Have research news you'd like to share? Email [nancy.fliesler@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:nancy.fliesler@childrens.harvard.edu) or call ext. 5-2426.

### The cerebellum's unsung role in cognition and behavior

Cognitive functions, like language and visual processing, have long been thought to reside primarily in the brain's cerebrum. But researcher **Catherine Limperopoulos, PhD**, in Children's Hospital Boston's Department of Neurology, is documenting an important cognitive role for the cerebellum, previously thought to be chiefly involved in motor coordination. Her team is also finding that cerebellar injury is common in very low-birth-weight babies and can cause wide-ranging developmental problems.

In one study, published earlier this year, the researchers showed that the cerebellum grows rapidly in late gestation—much faster than the cerebral hemispheres—and that premature birth arrests this growth. Another study compared two groups of toddlers born prematurely: 31 with cerebellar hemorrhage identified at birth (but no cerebral injury), and 31 controls whose brain scans were normal. In addition to motor problems, 61 percent of the children with cerebellar injury—versus just 3 percent of controls—had global developmental delays, including deficits in language, visual reception and social/behavioral function.

Now, in the October *Pediatrics*, Limperopoulos and colleagues report that the cerebrum and cerebellum are tightly interconnected and modulate each other's growth and development. MRI imaging of 74 preterm infants showed that when the cerebrum was injured on one side, the opposite cerebellar hemisphere failed to reach normal size. Similarly, when one cerebellar hemisphere was injured, the opposite cerebral hemisphere was abnormally small.

Limperopoulos continues to follow children with cerebellar injury. "We want to understand what happens over time," she says. "The way the brain adapts and reorganizes after injury may be the best indicator of how a child will do."



Children's neurologist Adre du Plessis, MD, examines patient Christopher Tillack, who is followed as part of Limperopoulos's study.

Children's News

## Dialogue

### Benefits Manager Tom Sherr answers questions on Open Enrollment for 2006

#### What is Open Enrollment?

It's the period of time when benefits-eligible employees may sign up for or change their benefits. Unless you are a new hire or have a life-changing event, such as getting married or having a child, this is the only time that you may make changes to your benefits.

#### What's new in benefits this year?

There are several enhancements to our employee benefits package this year, including:

- A change from Tufts Health Plan to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBSMA);
- Three additional earned time days for most benefits-eligible employees;
- Elimination of the waiting period for dental, disability and life insurance benefits;
- Employer contribution of 10 percent toward short-term disability coverage;
- An increase in the short-term disability weekly maximum from \$1,000 to \$1,500;
- An increase in the amount of cash back when employees opt out of health benefits;
- A change from a pre-tax to a post-tax disability offering;
- An increase in the T-pass and bus pass subsidy from 35 to 40 percent;
- An increase in tuition reimbursement; and
- An increase in adoption assistance.

#### Why has Children's switched from Tufts to BCBSMA?

BCBSMA is known for consistently providing excellent member services. Their HMO Blue New England network offers access to 32,000 providers and 228 hospitals across New England, with significantly improved access in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire. In addition, the BCBS National BlueCard PPO program offers seamless network benefits nationally and access to more than 650,000 preferred providers and 6,000 hospitals, providing better access for all of our employees and their dependents.

BCBSMA also has extensive resources, processes and systems to more efficiently process claims, resolve member issues, track payments and create more cost-effective utilization over time.

#### Are the BCBSMA plans similar to the Tufts plans?

We will offer three BCBSMA health plans that mirror the Tufts plans. In most cases, the BCBSMA plans offer identical benefits to those provided by Tufts. We are still offering an HMO Value Plan, an HMO Premium Plan and a Point of Service Plan identical to the Health Plans offered in 2005.

#### Will I have to pay more in premiums?

Health care premiums will increase by approximately 15 percent this year, but as many people know, the cost of health and prescription drug programs has steadily increased in the past several years. However, BCBSMA has numerous programs in place to manage claims costs and still provide a high level of care.

#### Is my doctor on the participating provider list?

Your current doctors are most likely part of the BCBSMA network. Go to [www.bcbsma.com](http://www.bcbsma.com) to double-check.

#### Do I have to change doctors?

You probably won't have to change doctors. But, in the unlikely event that your doctor doesn't participate in the network, you may want to consider selecting the Point of Service plan, which provides benefits for care received from non-participating providers.

#### I liked the Tufts "Optimal Me" program. Does BCBSMA offer any wellness plans?

BCBSMA offers a variety of disease management programs for illnesses such as asthma,



Tom Sherr advises Children's employee Matt Cyr on planning his selections for 2006.

diabetes, heart problems, and several stress management, healthy eating and exercise programs designed to keep you and your dependents healthy and happy.

#### Will my prescription costs stay the same?

Generally, your prescription drug co-pays will remain the same, with the exception of Tier 2 drugs on BCBS's formulary. In this case, the co-pay will be less than the current co-pay. In the event that a drug is considered "non-preferred," or Tier 3, and it was preferred, or Tier 2, under the Tufts plan, the co-pay would be more. In this case, we would recommend that you speak with your physician to determine if there are more cost-effective alternatives, like switching to a different medication.

#### Whom should I contact if I have questions about my benefits?

You should contact a benefits representative in Human Resources at ext. 5-7790 or [benefits@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:benefits@childrens.harvard.edu).

Open Enrollment  
The online Open Enrollment application will be available from Sunday, Nov. 6, through Saturday, Nov. 19.



# Wandering our Web



Children's Hospital Boston

Come explore Children's Hospital Boston's newly redesigned Web site, [www.childrenshospital.org](http://www.childrenshospital.org). The questions below are part of an electronic scavenger hunt that will guide you through a virtual tour of the hospital, allow you to read up on Children's latest research, teach you a little hospital history and much more. Submit your answers to [news@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:news@childrens.harvard.edu) by November 20 to win a pizza party for 10 of your colleagues. Surf's up!



From soccer players to dancers, Children's Sports Medicine Program cares for young athletes with all sort of injuries. Which department is home to Sports Medicine?

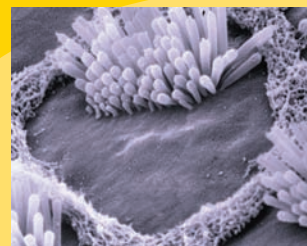
Arthur has a brand new Guide to Children's Hospital Boston. As he and his friends take you on a tour of the hospital, what do they think is "Sprouty" about Children's?



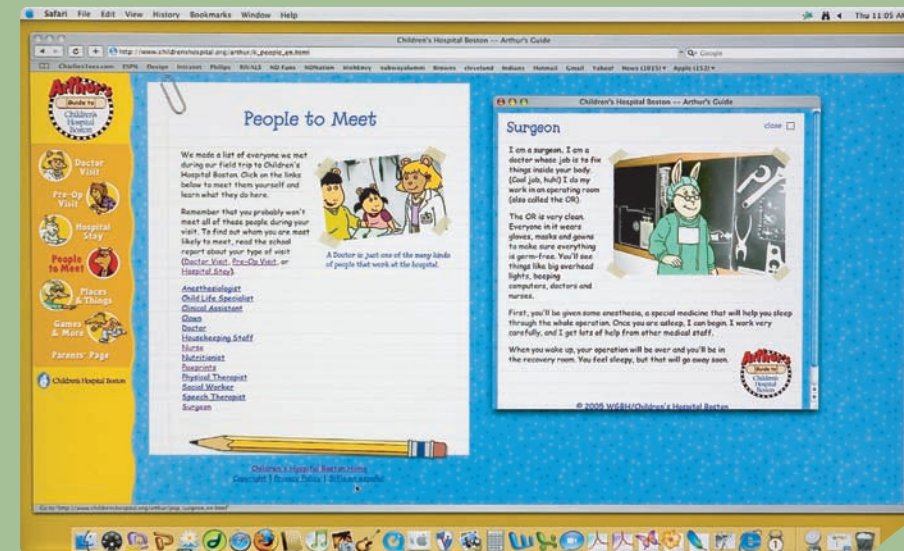
The Wolbach Building is home to many of the hospital's top executives, like President and CEO James Mandell, MD, and COO Sandra Fenwick. But the building didn't always belong to Children's. What institution bought the building back in 1923?



Children's has hosted two live Webcasts, with a third scheduled for November 10. What procedure will be featured in that Webcast?



What Children's researcher studies hair-cell regeneration as a treatment for hearing loss?



Children's media team helps promote the exciting new discoveries of the hospital's many researchers. Which researcher is featured in their latest press release?

The cold weather is here and indoor allergens like dust and mold can cause serious health problems. At which Children's locations can patients be evaluated and treated for allergies?





## It's training time, CHAMP

CHAMPS (Children's Hospital Applications Maximizing Patient Safety) is an integrated clinical information system that will include an upgraded lab and pharmacy system; a computerized provider order entry system; a results reporting system that integrates and displays all aspects of a patient's medical history; an electronic clinical documentation system to support the processes of care; and a new peri-procedure system.

Phase 1 of the CHAMPS project is getting underway with the introduction of PowerChart—a new system that will replace Results Reporting to be retired this winter.

Web-based training for PowerChart will be available in mid-November. Until then, Super Users (visit [web2.tch.harvard.edu/champs/](http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/champs/) to determine if you are a Super User) and current Results Reporting users can sign up for training classes through NetLearning.

For more information on the CHAMPS project, visit [web2.tch.harvard.edu/champs/](http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/champs/).

# 3's a charm

Children's Hospital Boston ranked No. 3 in the 2005 Massachusetts Corporate Reputation Survey, second only to Harvard and Boston Universities. Children's was the top hospital on the list. The 200 Massachusetts business executives surveyed were asked to rate a select list of 70 Massachusetts companies and organizations on six attributes: general reputation, products and services, social responsibility, ethics and corporate governance, workplace environment and financial stability. Children's total score was 67.8 this year, an increase from 66.5 in 2004, and 53.4 in 2003.

## Favors for a special occasion

Celebrate your next milestone by supporting Children's Hospital Boston in a meaningful way. The Children's Hospital Trust's Special Occasion Favor Program allows hosts to make donations to the hospital in honor of memorable occasions—from weddings and birthdays to bar and bat mitzvahs. Place cards or scrolls notifying guests a gift has been made in their honor are available for a \$2 per guest minimum donation.

For more information or to place an order, contact Neeta Bheecham at [neeta.bheecham@chtrust.org](mailto:neeta.bheecham@chtrust.org) or ext. 5-8352.



## Born fighting continued from page 1

"They wrapped him quickly and let me look at him," recalls Susie. "It couldn't have been 20 seconds, and they went running out of the room with him."

It took two surgeries to repair Collin's heart. The first, performed by Children's Chief of Cardiac Surgery **Pedro del Nido, MD**, put the large vessels of his heart in the correct positions. Then, several days later, a second four-hour surgery was performed to correct narrowing in Collin's aorta, which is common after an arterial switch operation. After two weeks on 6 East, Children's cardiac unit, Collin was on his way home. Today, he is 6 months old and expected to live a normal life.

After their experience at Children's, the Lights decided to donate \$25,000 from the Light Foundation, their non-profit organization, to provide "Better Living through Giving" by helping to support Marx's research in echocardiography.

"To this point, echocardiography has been predominately for adults," says Marx. "This money will help us further develop the technology for pediatric patients." One way to do this, explains Marx, is to "use higher frequency ultrasonic waves to produce finer images with better resolution."

"The work [Children's is] doing is unbelievable," said Matt at a press conference on October 11 to announce the donation. "It's an honor to present this check. I hope this helps them continue to do the great work they do."

Despite the fact that Collin had a difficult start to his life, Susie knows he'll be okay. "Collin was born fighting. That'll be his spirit forever."

## Spotlight Meals of Hope

The Patient and Family Resource Room on 7 West at Children's Hospital Boston recently launched a new program to lift the spirits—and fill the stomachs—of patients and their families on the Oncology, Hematology, Stem Cell Transplant and Neuro-Oncology units.

The program, Meals of Hope, invites chefs from restaurants across the city to cook and deliver dinners to Children's patient families. Each month, a different restaurant provides a comforting meal, arriving with trays filled with specialties from their restaurant. Tasty dishes ranging from southern barbecue to the best Indian cuisine in Boston give patients and families an opportunity to experience the great culinary diversity of the city and sometimes a chance to try something new.

One parent captured the true essence of the program's impact when she wrote the following in a thank you note to the restaurant: "Your thoughtful meal offers a moment of warmth, hope and compassion during a time of turmoil and uncertainty! We deeply appreciate, from our sated tummies out to our fingers and toes, your kindness."

These dinners offer a much-needed change from the routine these families develop, as they spend countless nights and dollars

ordering the same items from the cafeteria or the nearby food court. But the greatest reward seems to be for the parents, who get to see their child enjoying food again, often for the first time in months, since chemotherapy and other treatments often affect the appetite.

The following restaurants have generously participated in the Meals of Hope program in 2005: Bertucci's, Canestaro's, Chef Chang's House, Cold Stone Creamery, Golden Temple, India Quality Restaurant, Linwood Grill & Barbecue, Longhorn Steakhouse, Qdoba, Sorento's, Union Oyster House and Vinh-Sun B.B.Q. & Restaurant.



Seven-year-old Aislen Cipro enjoys a hearty meal from Sorento's in the 7 West Resource Room.

In addition to the restaurants that donated dinners, Kashmir provided a significant discount for a catered dinner in the 7 West Resource Room.

For more information, or if your restaurant would like to participate in Meals of Hope, contact Summer Holubec at (617) 355-5645 or [summer.holubec@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:summer.holubec@childrens.harvard.edu).



The following letter was sent to Josh Greenberg, director of State and Federal Relations in Children's Hospital Boston's Office of Child Advocacy.

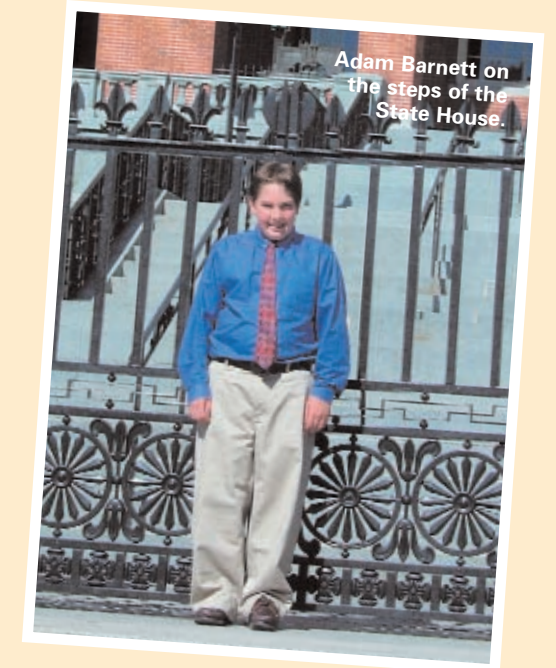
Dear Mr. Greenberg,

I just wanted to let you know what a great experience my son and I had working with **Lisa Mannix** [Office of Child Advocacy] on legislation in committee at the State House. My son Adam, age 11, is in the OWL Program [Optimal Weight for Life] at Children's, and he was recommended to Lisa as a potential spokesperson in favor of Bill 1457, which mandates healthy snacks in schools.

Lisa did a great job of preparing us for Adam's testimony and keeping us informed through the process. She kept in constant contact by email, phone and cell. She met us and sat with us at the State House and this helped make for an exciting experience for Adam, without any of the anxiety.

Adam did a great job and was met by a small horde of reporters afterward and even made the evening news. We were really proud of him and grateful to Lisa for making it happen.

Regards,  
Richard Barnett



Adam Barnett on the steps of the State House.

## Mid-Week Morning Show airs November 9

On Wednesday, Nov. 9, Children's Hospital Boston's Mid-Week Morning Show will air from 11 to 11:30 a.m. on Channel 22 from the Patient Entertainment Center. Don't miss lots of fun and exciting news, guests and segments brought to you by Child Life Services!



## 2005 Season of Hope

Children's Hospital Boston's "Season of Hope" annual tree lighting event is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 1 at 4 p.m. This year's program will include a patient tree-lighter and a performance from Youth Pro Musica (a children's choral group). Cookies, fresh fruit, apple cider and eggnog will be served.

## Recognize an outstanding colleague

Be sure to nominate a deserving colleague for the 2005 David S. Weiner Award for Leadership and Innovation in Child Health. Nominees should demonstrate leadership, commitment and potential for success by improving the health of children through advocacy efforts, developing programs, partnering with the community and/or conducting health services research. A \$20,000 grant will support the award winner's program, department or research initiative at Children's. Nominations are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 28.

For more information, go to [web2.tch.harvard.edu/dsw/](http://web2.tch.harvard.edu/dsw/) or contact Katherine Cusack at [katherine.cusack@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:katherine.cusack@childrens.harvard.edu).

## Scout Update

Find out how you can protect yourself from Spyware by visiting [www.childrenshospital.org/chnews/scout.html](http://www.childrenshospital.org/chnews/scout.html).



## Fire drill

On Wednesday, Oct. 19, Children's Hospital Boston's Injury Prevention Program hosted their annual "Fire Prevention Event for Children and Families" in the Patient Entertainment Center. Children's health educators joined Fire Inspectors Jeff Morales (left) and Ken Simpson in providing materials, education and free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to children and families. More than 100 kids and parents attended the two-hour event.

## Celebrating Latino heritage

Dancers from the Ritmos Academy of Latin Dance and Music (pictured) took to the Patient Entertainment Center stage to showcase traditional dances from Latin America and Spain as part of the 2005 Latino Heritage Celebration. Organized by Social Work's Spanish Team Collaborative and Psychiatry's Latino Team, this year's celebration featured a lunch seminar presented by UMass Boston professor Miren Uriarte, PhD, and a Community Health Fair. According to **Maria Carvalho, LISCW**, one of the celebration's organizers, "Things went well with the academic conference, the entertainment and overall. We were pleased with the response and enthusiasm of attendees."



## Read to Achieve

Celtics Captain Paul Pierce, rookie forward Ryan Gomes and Head Coach Doc Rivers (right) spent time reading stories, participating in arts and crafts projects and visiting with patients at Children's Hospital Boston on Monday, Oct. 17. The Reading Timeout was filmed for use in a public service announcement focusing on literacy that will air beginning in November.

