If question on grads’ minds is “Got match?” answer is “You bet!”

Jeffrey Barrett and Sue Ann Hennessy couldn’t stop grinning. They hugged, exchanged excited chitchat, and hugged again—looking more like a couple of teenagers than a fourth-year medical student and an assistant dean.

Barrett, originally from Jamaica, had just learned that he had been assigned by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) to do his psychiatry residency at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx—his first choice. “We’re so proud of the accomplishment he’s made,” Hennessy, assistant dean for student affairs, said later. “Dr. Martha Regan-Smith, myself, and a lot of other deans at the Medical School, we’ve been his family away from home.”

Incredible: When Barrett received his “Match Day” envelope—and the letter inside telling him where he would be doing his residency—he also sought out Dr. David Nierenberg, senior associate dean for medical education, to shake his hand and give him a hug. “He has been a mentor and incredible teacher to me,” said Barrett of Nierenberg.

The hugs, smiles, and exclamations of Barrett and his mentors were actually not the exception but the norm for DMS students on Match Day 2005 in mid-March. Students and their spouses, partners, and friends, as well as numerous professors and administrators, filled the chairs and overflowed into the aisles of Auditorium G at DHMC for the Match ceremony. Given the importance of residency in a physician’s training, the excitement was understandable.

Hugs: Match Day is “a highlight of [students’] medical education. . . . It’s everything that they have worked for,” said Hennessy, by way of explaining the emotion in the room. “You know, when you’re happy you usually hug the people you love or you care about . . . who [have] been there for you. . . . And generally,” she adds, “students are very, very happy with their matches.”

This year, more than 25,300 medical students participated in the NRMP, which uses a computer algorithm to match medical school graduates with openings in more than 8,000 accredited U.S. residency programs. Nationally, the most popular specialty choices this year were dermatology, emergency medicine, and several surgical disciplines; DMS graduates, however, once again showed a commitment to primary care, with family practice, internal medicine, and pediatrics topping the list.

Practice: Dale Ross is one of the ’05s who chose family practice. Originally from northern Idaho, he is particularly interested in rural family practice and “getting out in the community.” His wife, Angel, and their two children donned black cowboy hats for Match Day, and the whole family is looking forward to moving to Casper, Wyo., where Ross will be training at the University of Wyoming.
“We’ve enjoyed our time at Dartmouth—it’s been a great place for us,” says Ross. But “we are looking forward to heading back out West.”

Ross is the only DMS graduate bound for Wyoming, Massachusetts (where 11 students are going), California (10), and New York (7) proved the most popular destinations; three ’05s will remain at DHMC next year.

The Match placements for all DMS ’05s, plus placements for the ’05 graduates of the Brown-Dartmouth Program, are listed in the adjacent box.

DMS’s dean, Dr. Stephen Spielberg, applauded the students’ achievements but added, “It’s also a little bit sad because it’s kind of the beginning of the end of us having you all here.”

Welcome: While Match Day is a time to say goodbye to graduating students, it’s also a time to welcome incoming residents. In July, more than 100 new residents from all over the country—and the world—will arrive at DHMC. In addition, the New Hampshire-Dartmouth and Maine-Dartmouth family practice residency programs will welcome 18 new residents. “This year we had the strongest class of interviewees to date,” says Dr. Gail Sawyer, director of the New Hampshire-Dartmouth program. “We are very excited to welcome the Class of 2008.”

Perhaps Dr. Susan Harper, DMS’s assistant dean for medical education, summed up this year’s Match best when, at the beginning of the ceremony, she described the results as “awesome!”

Jennifer Durgin