

WHEN YOU CARE ENOUGH . . .

James Varnum, the president of Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital for 28 years, never hesitated to personally thank employees who went the extra mile to serve patients and improve care. In the same spirit, the James W. Varnum Quality Health Care Endowment was established by the MHMH Trustees upon Varnum's retirement.



Each year, the endowment—which Trustees hope will reach \$1 million—will recognize a national leader in health-care quality improvement, plus one or more DHMC employees or volunteers who exemplify quality health care. The awards will be presented at an annual or biennial conference at DHMC that will highlight

best practices at medical centers across the country.

Although Varnum retired in April, the principles that he stood for will endure thanks to the endowment—and to the culture he left behind. For more on Varnum's tenure, see "Leading a Shared Endeavor" in the Spring 2006 issue of DARTMOUTH MEDICINE or at dartmed.dartmouth.edu/spring06/html/leading.php. J.D.

A WORD ABOUT AWARDS

Four more awards will soon adorn the walls of the DMS Office of Publications. Judged one of the best academic medical center magazines in the country, DARTMOUTH MEDICINE earned a 2006 Award of Excellence from the Association of American Medical Colleges. And Jennifer Durgin, the magazine's senior writer, won not just one but two Will Solimene Awards for Excellence from the American Medical Writers Association—for "Are We Hunting Too Hard?," the cover feature in the Summer 2005 issue (pictured at left), and a profile in Fall 2005 of Dr. Ann-Christine Duhaime, Dartmouth-Hitchcock's chief of pediatric neurosurgery.



In addition, a book project that the publications office oversaw—*The Science We Have Loved and Taught: Dartmouth Medical School's First 200*

Years, by Constance E. Putnam—also received a Solimene Award. The book, described in a recent review as "nuanced" and "imaginatively researched," is available at www.upne.com.

Trying not to rest on its laurels, the publications office has just begun to develop online multimedia enhancements to the print edition of DARTMOUTH MEDICINE. See dartmed.dartmouth.edu/summer06/html/we.php for this issue's **WEB EXCLUSIVES**. A.S.

A summer camp that offers more than s'mores

Hello, Mudda. Hello, Fadda. / Here I am at Camp Hitchcock. / The other kids are just like me. / We see past disability."

For more than 20 years, children with chronic rheumatologic conditions have been writing home with messages along those lines from Camp Dartmouth-Hitchcock. The mission of the camp—which was established by the late Dr. Joshua Burnett, founder of DHMC's rheumatology section—is to give such kids "a true camp experience," says Dr. Kevin Kerin, the current camp director.

Held for one week each summer at the Hulbert Outdoor Center on the shores of Lake Morey in Fairlee, Vt., the camp hosts up to 40 campers from age 8 to 17. They engage in all the usual camp pastimes—from swimming, canoeing, and fireside sing-alongs to games, ropes-course activities, and arts-and-crafts projects.

"Though we do need to distribute medications, and we have two nurses who are here full-time," explains Kerin, a rheumatologist, "we try not to make it about that." And the results, he says, are "just tremendous."

Doing more: Over the course of the week, the campers become willing to do more and more on their own, while asking for help when they need it. "In their daily lives, in their families and in their schools," says Kerin, people might "assume that they can't do as much as they might be able to. It's not that we really press them or stress them. [We] just allow

them to tell us what they need rather than assuming that we know."

"My parents were pretty cool about not letting me use my disease as an excuse," says Kathryn Runge, who attended the camp for five years and now returns



LISA NORLANDER



JENNIFER DURGIN

At a summer camp run by Dartmouth-Hitchcock, kids with chronic rheumatologic conditions get to swing on a ropes course and swim in Lake Morey.



OH, BABY!: Dartmouth now offers one of the most generous parenting policies for graduate students of any institution. It provides up to 12 weeks at full stipend for a birth or adoption, and up to an extra year to finish a degree.

regularly as a counselor. Even so, Runge says she pushed herself harder when she was at camp because “you’re surrounded by other kids [with arthritis] who are doing things.” Runge, who is now 28 and in remission from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, also enjoyed the camaraderie she found at camp. “You can complain about being on meds, about doctors,” she says, “and they understand.”

And when campers are feeling stiff or physically exhausted, “they don’t need to explain that to anyone,” says Kerin, because the counselors and the other campers understand.

“It is such a community of love and respect and acceptance,” says Andrea (Dubois) Carroll, who has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and attended Camp Dartmouth-Hitchcock for 10 years. Now 27, she too returns to camp each year as a counselor. In 2005, she even raced back from her honeymoon to be there. “It is such a huge part of my life,” she adds. Going to camp each year “recharged” her, she says, and “gave me confidence.”

First: While camps for children with special needs have become increasingly popular in recent years, Camp Dartmouth-Hitchcock was one of the first for children with chronic rheumatologic conditions. And, according to Carroll, who is admittedly biased, it’s among the best. “Camp is awesome!” she says. “It’s absolutely wonderful.”

A **WEB EXCLUSIVE** about the camp is at dartmed.dartmouth.edu/summer06/html/vs_camp_dh_we.php.

JENNIFER DURGIN

While resident is at work, she finds it’s a dog-eat-TreatStik world

Most dogs would be perfectly content to spend their days home alone gnawing on whatever’s handy—chair legs or sofa cushions, for example. But most dog owners would prefer that their pets confine themselves to chewing on things not quite so valuable—dog toys, for example. The problem is, most dog toys get boring pretty quickly.

Dr. Tabitha Washington, a DHMC resident in anesthesiology, had just such a problem with Remy, her Chesapeake Bay retriever. Remy spent a lot of time alone while Washington and her fiancé, Michael Jones, were at work. Conventional dog toys bored Remy, so she did the kinds of things dogs do when they’re bored.

Washington applied some creative thinking to the problem. What sort of toy would keep Remy engaged all day—busy enough not to be tempted by chair legs? Something that dispensed treats would be good. Something that made getting treats fun would be even better. Something that made getting treats an all-day job would be just about perfect.

Thus the TreatStik was born. Washington sketched her concept—a short piece of hollow, indestructible* PVC pipe, perfectly sized to fit a dog’s mouth, with a hole in the end just large enough to dispense one small treat at a time as the toy is rolled around. Jones constructed a model out of parts from the hardware store, then they enlisted a rapid-prototype machine at Dartmouth’s Thayer School of Engineering to extrude the first TreatStik.

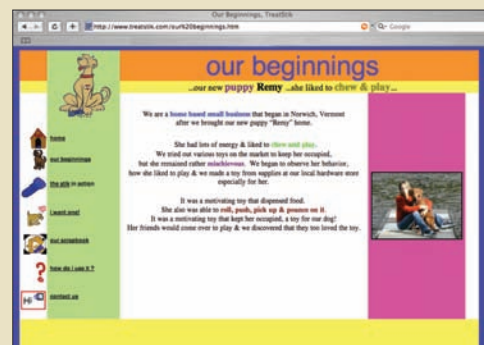
The concept proved workable, so Washington and Jones found a manufacturer in California; designed product labels, a website, and advertising; and recruited Washington’s mother as their distribution agent.

The early product-development phase was, Washington admits, a busy time. “In the beginning, I’d stay up late at the hospital, and then come home and stay up even later” working on the website. But things are now a “little more balanced,” she says. While Washington com-

pletes a fellowship in pain management next year, she plans to also develop some more products, including treats specially designed to go in the TreatStik.

That will be welcome news to Brady, Washington and Jones’s new “very hyper” puppy—a Weimaraner-Lab mix—as well as to the roughly 10,000 dogs who are currently enjoying Washington’s invention. M.M.

* The TreatStik was field-tested by DARTMOUTH MEDICINE’s reporter on Pippin, an Australian shepherd who belongs to Inger Imset, the office manager for Dartmouth-Hitchcock’s Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. If Pippin couldn’t bend, break, destroy, or get bored with the toy, there’s not a dog out there who can.



Anesthesiology resident Tabitha Washington (pictured in the bottom panel with Remy) developed this website to market a dog toy she invented. She came up with it to keep Remy from chewing up the house while she was at work.