

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center DEVELOPMENT

A broad base of support By Katharine Fisher Britton

"I like to tell people," says Marty Candon, president of the 30-member board of the Friends of the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD), "that if it weren't for the Friends of CHaD and QLLA [the Quechee Lakes Landowner's Association] Charities, this floor would look exactly like the one below it." She's referring to the fact that the CHaD outpatient clinic in DHMC's brand new Doctors' Office Building looks like no other floor—with brightly-colored fish hanging from the ceiling, whimsical floor designs, frog princes carved into the woodwork, and interactive science exhibits on loan from the Montshire Museum in the waiting areas.

The Friends of CHaD and QLLA are only two examples of the kind of community-based support that Dartmouth-Hitchcock benefits from. QLLA was the inspiration of Ginny and Tom Lane. Literally hundreds of community members, explains Lorraine Guile, president of QLLA Charities, have volunteered to help organize the group's annual golf event, now called the CHaD Classic, since its inception in the mid-1980s. The volunteers donate their time, their money, and their ingenuity. "We raised \$10,000 on golf carts alone this year," Guile notes with pride, and Quechee landowners are out volunteering on the two courses all day during the tournament.

In its early years, QLLA gave the proceeds of its tournament to the intensive care nursery and pediatric oncology at DHMC. In the mid-'90s, DHMC started a campaign to con-

struct a new Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and QLLA made a three-year, \$100,000 commitment to the project. The group next provided start-up funds for CHaD's PainFree program. For the past three years, QLLA has provided the bulk of the funding—nearly \$300,000—needed to build the CHaD outpatient center. And this year's CHaD Classic, cochaired by Sharin Luti and Nina Kurtz, raised more than \$100,000—putting the group's total giving over \$1 million.

Says Sharon Brown, CHaD's director of community relations, "It's the partnership, that feeling of being in it together, that's been an impor-

The Friends of CHaD and of NCCC are hard-working, long-standing ambassadors to the community, and vice versa.

tant part of both their continued interest and investment and our being so fortunate to have such an incredibly committed, generous community around us."

The Friends of CHaD, which organizes a host of fund-raising events, held its first official meeting in 1996. The group runs these events with some staff support from Brown and her colleagues. But they're basically "in-community" events, Brown asserts. "Ninety-five percent of what happens is through their hard work.

They have become the most amazing group of people I've ever had the pleasure and awe of working with."

The feeling is mutual. Says Candon, "Sharon Brown and her staff have more energy, put in more hours, and do more work for those kids and that hospital than I can ever imagine doing." Candon, who is the fourth president of the Friends of CHaD since the group's founding, can't remember exactly how long she's served on the board, is in no hurry to step down, and seems unfazed by the number of volunteer hours the position calls for. "Most of the people can't remember how long they've been on the board," she notes. "To me, that's a good sign."

A major Friends of CHaD event is the annual Ski and Ride Challenge. Brown cites it as a characteristic Friends event in that it involves a wonderful network of people doing something they love, with a fund-raising component added on. "The fund-raising is very important," Brown emphasizes. "It's providing resources that are critical to our being able to transform medicine in the world of pediatrics. It really has allowed us to develop as a children's hospital in a way that we wouldn't have been able to do, providing resources to support services that aren't supported by fees, or supplementing services that otherwise we would be hard pressed to offer." For example, a portion of the proceeds from the Ski and Ride Challenge go to the Injury Prevention Program. "But," she asserts, "it's about fun, above all else."

DHMC has another hard-working, long-standing Friends group: The Friends of the Norris Cotton Can-



cer Center (NCCC). Jean Brown, executive director of the Friends of NCCC (and no relation to Sharon Brown), describes the 15 members of her board as ambassadors to the community from the Cancer Center, and vice versa. "It's a really exciting time to be associated with the Cancer Center," explains Marty Van Oot, president of the Friends of NCCC. "The research is tremendously exciting for any of us who've lost a friend to cancer," she adds, and Dr. Mark Israel, the current director of the Cancer Center, "is so dynamic."

"Our major fund-raising event," Van Oot says, "and one we work very hard on, is the annual Prouty Bike

The annual Prouty bike ride, below, is a major fundraiser for the Friends of the Cancer Center, while funds raised by the Friends of CHaD make possible amenities like those pictured above on the facing page.



CARRIE BROWN

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Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.

—Joseph Addison (1672-1719)



Ride and Fitness Walk.” The event was started 24 years ago by four dedicated nurses and an ovarian cancer patient named Audrey Prouty. The four nurses decided to raise money for cancer research by riding 100 miles in Prouty’s honor. “Our goal was \$2,000,” recalls Dr. Patty Carney, one of the original four nurses. “We raised \$4,000.” The ride was scheduled for August 18 that year; Prouty passed away on July 7.

The 2004 Prouty drew more than 1,000 participants from 18 states to ride 100, 50, or 25 miles or to walk 5 or 10 kilometers; the event raised \$365,000. Brown—who is finishing her first year on the job, much of it spent organizing the event—says “the day was extraordinary. From the ham [radio] operators making sure everyone’s safe, to the musicians entertaining throughout the day, to the Lions Club members who do the grilling, to the masseurs who give massages all day long, there are literally hundreds of people who donate their time and their services to making this event a success. I’ve never seen a community come together like this—it’s really stunning.”

“To me,” says Carney, who has ridden almost every one of the 24 years, “the reason this whole ride is so enduring is that we all know someone like Audrey—someone who, when faced with their mortality, opens up to the world. She was such a determined woman.” Carney relates a story told to her by Prouty’s husband: One year, when Prouty had relapsed, she received a series of chemotherapy treatments and on the way home from an appointment her hair started falling out. Prouty and her husband had a bush outside their home on which they used to put cotton and other nest-building materials for the birds. So they stopped the car next to it and stood there and pulled out all her hair and hung it on the bush. The next spring, every nest around their house was lined with downy hair. “That was how they were,” says Carney. “She just said, ‘Let’s make this useful somehow.’”

Participants ride or walk in the Prouty for all sorts of reasons, says Brown. “Some people do it out of love for someone who is fighting cancer now. Some people do it because it is a wonderful way to challenge themselves physically. And some people do it because someone they know or love has died of cancer.

Often, the frustration level is very high because we feel helpless. Riding 100 miles can really make you feel like you’re doing something significant. And that helps.”

“We’ve always had people with cancer riding with us,” Carney says. “We had a ski-lift operator who was in his twenties who was dying. He’d failed every kind of treatment. He was such a tough guy that even though his bones really hurt—he had leukemia—once we put him on a bike, he could ride it. He rode 100 miles about two months before he died. It’s a very inspiring ride.”

Last year, Carney rode in memory of her father, who had died of cancer in May. “I had a picture of him on my back, and I had a memory ribbon clipped to the picture. Every once in a while, the little memory tape would tickle the back of my neck and I would think of him.”

The Prouty brings out countless such vignettes. “I love doing it because I ask people their stories,” continues Carney. “Last time I rode I met a family who live all over the U.S. Their mother was treated at the Cancer Center for pancreatic cancer. They convene every year, about 30 of them, to ride for their mom.” And to support the work of DHMC.

Community partners

“CHaD Champions” are community partnerships with companies that become champions for kids, explains Sharon Brown, director of community relations for the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD). Wal-Mart stores of New Hampshire and Vermont are recent CHaD Champions.

The relationship began several years ago when a grateful parent who was a Wal-Mart employee wanted to give something back. She approached her store manager and introduced CHaD staff to Wal-Mart leaders. Small fundraisers were held in a few stores, and the first year the group presented a \$20,000 check to CHaD. Since then, Wal-Mart has expanded the initiative and also sponsors an annual golf tournament to which all the stores’ major vendors are invited. The event is attended by employees, grateful parents and patients, and doctors.

This past year, the group gave \$375,000 to help support a number of programs at CHaD, including the Face of a Child Program. Previously, they supported CHaD’s Neurometabolic Program in honor of the work of Dr. James Filiano, director of the program. A few years ago, Filiano diagnosed Harrison and Gracey Colegrove with a rare genetic disorder; after treatment, the siblings went from needing straps to hold them in wheelchairs to competing in gymnastics and karate.

Marty Candon, president of the Friends of CHaD, attended a luncheon after the golf tournament and sat next to the Colegrove children during a raffle and auction. As people won items, they started giving them to the Colegroves until each had a pile of gifts taller than they were. The emotion of the day was indescribable, says Candon. She was overwhelmed by the generosity of the Wal-Mart associates and their vendors.

