These days, third grader Shelby Reed of Morristown scans ingredient labels, recognizes code names for sugar and munches on vegetables for every helping of mac and cheese. Ms. Reed participated in Morristown Memorial’s H2O program, one of three innovative initiatives – along with KID-FIT and TeenFitFX – designed to fight obesity and promote healthy lifestyles.

H2O, aka “Health, Happiness and Opportunities,” engages students at three Morris County elementary schools with weekly nutrition classes, food tastings and exercise. “We give the children information and empower them to make good decisions,” says Sibi Sánez-Williams, MEd, program coordinator. Support for the grant-funded program has been provided by Kraft Foods, the Community Foundation of New Jersey and Novartis.

KID-FIT, which is based on pediatrician referrals, helps kids slim down and get in shape. Using a multidisciplinary team approach, an exercise physiologist provides fitness guidance, a nutritionist assists participants with healthy food choices and a social worker lends support. “This is an individualized program that provides assessment and on-going intervention for children who are overweight or at risk for being overweight,” says Arthur Atlas, MD, medical director of KID-FIT and director of the Pediatric Pulmonary Division.

And with grants from the Health Foundation, the New Jersey Health Initiatives program of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and sanofi-aventis, the hospital recently launched TeenFitFX, an online nutrition and fitness program for teens (www.TeenFitFX.com). “During this obesity epidemic, the web site gives teens an opportunity to learn useful information in a fun way,” says Maryann Walsh, coordinator of pediatric and adolescent health education for Atlantic Health. A multimedia classroom component offers a fitness and nutrition curriculum for middle school teachers.

To help provide ongoing support for these initiatives, please call Geraldine Kling at 973-593-2414.
Cyclist Hobin Raising Funds and Diabetes Awareness

This fall, Mike Hobin will fulfill a life-long goal one wheel rotation at a time. The cyclist will pedal across country, starting at the Pacific coast and riding until he meets the Atlantic Ocean in an effort to raise $25,000 for Morristown Memorial’s Pediatric Endocrinology Department.

Raising awareness and finding a cure for what Mr. Hobin calls an “ugly, ugly disease” is the goal of his 3,307-mile bike trek across 11 states. The biker knows all too well the struggle of dealing with diabetes – the dietary restraints and daily insulin shots – as his 25-year-old son, Mark, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes 10 years ago. Mr. Hobin credits Harold Starkman, MD, director of the BD Diabetes Center for Children and Adolescents at Goryeb Children’s Hospital, and his team for providing excellent care and teaching the family how to cope.

“Morristown Memorial and Dr. Starkman have been wonderful to Mark and our family, and I want to try to pay them back,” says Mr. Hobin, a resident of Basking Ridge and Scottsdale, AZ. The athlete is also raising funds for the American Diabetes Association.

His bike journey begins Sept. 13, 2009, in Santa Barbara, CA, and ends 39 days later in Charleston, NC. In between, the cyclist will average 95 miles a day, biking through the Mojave Desert, the Colorado Plateau and the Rocky and Appalachian mountains. The course follows historic Route 66, stops at the Grand Canyon, retraces the Santa Fe Trial and crosses the Mississippi River via riverboat ferry, ending at the Atlantic Ocean.

To make a gift in support of his efforts, visit www.mmhf.org, select Give Now, and under Gift Designation, choose Mike’s Bike Across America from the drop down menu.

Pediatric Ambassador Program

Sitting around the kitchen table, Brett Jacobs, 19, and his mom, Rosanne, banter about his high school sports injuries treated at Goryeb Children’s Hospital. There’s the concussions, the dislocated jaw, the stitches. When they mention his appendicitis, they pause.

Dicitis. Panicked, Mrs. Jacobs called her older son, Kyle, to wait with her, as her husband, Emil, was away.

At the hospital, Kyle asked for directions to the OR, but little did he know he was talking to Brett’s surgeon, Eric Lazar, MD. “This was the sweetest part, as Brett was wheeled in, Kyle and his surgeon came walking in together,” says Mrs. Jacobs, growing teary. “Kyle and his brother had a few minutes together; they are each other’s own best friend. I took this as a sign that everything was going to be ok.”

During surgery, Dr. Lazar discovered that Brett’s appendix had ruptured days before and turned gangrenous. Brett was then hospitalized with antibiotics. After three days, he grew weaker instead of stronger, and infectious disease doctor, Elizabeth Baorto, MD, was consulted. After changing antibiotics, he recovered.

The hospital staff catered to Brett, granting him special menu requests: “I asked for Gatorade®, pizza, fresh fruit and milk shakes.” Soon after, Goryeb changed its menu to appeal more to young patients and Mrs. Jacobs was asked to join the Family Advisory Council.

Today, there’s no evidence Brett had been so sick. A lifeguard on break from the University of Maryland, he’s tan and fit and wears a yellow wrist band: “It’s from Goryeb Children’s Hospital. If anyone asks about it, I have a bunch of stories to tell them.”

Families Bring WELCOME Innovations

Change has come to Goryeb Children’s Hospital, thanks to the efforts of the Family Advisory Council, a group of parents who advise hospital administrators and medical leaders about patient needs and hospital priorities from a family perspective.

The most profound difference: doors to the Joan and Edward Foley Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) are no longer locked and visiting hours for parents have been abolished. “Parents can stay around the clock, and family visitors are allowed at the discretion of parents,” says Lisa Ciarrocca, systems manager of child life at Goryeb and council co-chair. “There’s no age limit on visitors; siblings can be in the playroom or at the bedside.”

The council was started last summer as part of the Patient- and Family-Centered Care Program, an initiative to improve communication among physicians, patients and families funded by a $100,000 grant from R Baby Foundation. The program focused on the PICU and Gagnon Children’s Emergency Department and supported collaboration with the Maryland-based Institute for Family-Centered Care. Recently, R Baby provided a second-year $90,000 grant.

“Patient- and family-centered care is different from family-friendly,” says Ms. Ciarrocca. “It includes families in every decision. We’re treating the whole family.” The council, comprised of 12 parents of children treated at Goryeb, meets monthly with physicians, nurses and hospital staff and has implemented improvements.

Now parents are invited to participate in their child’s daily medical rounds, which are conducted at the PICU patient’s bedside instead of the hallway. “Parents need to be part of the team, and better communication with families means better care,” says Elizabeth DuBois, RN, nurse manager of Goryeb and council member.

Success at Goryeb can be seen in a rise in Press Ganey patient satisfaction scores. The overall pediatric ED ranking rose from the 78th percentile for January through June 2008, to the 94th percentile for July through December 2008, after the program was implemented.

Ongoing council projects include evaluating pediatric ED discharge notes to be sure they are clear and bilingual and analyzing signs throughout Goryeb to make instructions more family-centered. For the future, the group plans to work with Goryeb’s pediatric inpatient unit and bring changes to Overlook Hospital.

Last spring, over 120 parents, physicians, nurses and hospital staff attended a Family-Centered Care working conference held at Drew University in Madison. Two consultants from the Institute for Family Centered Care provided a nationwide overview and parents on the Family Advisory Council shared their Goryeb experiences.

GOODWILL IS CONTAGIOUS

Kids4Kids Expands Its Reach

Kids4Kids, a committee of kids and young adults that supports Goryeb Children’s Hospital, started with two friends and has blossomed into a 14-member group that is hosting a Family Fun Day on November 14, 2009, at the Recreation Center in Whippany.

“We’re having a carnival, complete with a moon bounce, a clown crafts and fun activities,” says Chelsea Laufer, age 17. “We’re hoping to make people aware of Kids4Kids and encourage others to become involved.” Ms. Laufer, a new committee member, is also collecting and donating “comfort carts,” toiletries and makeup for parents staying overnight at Goryeb, for her Girl Scout Gold Award project.

Meredith Creo, age 10, will also be helping out at Family Fun Day, as well as at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit picnic on October 4, 2009, and the Hoop-a-Palooza fundraiser on December 6, 2009. The Cedar Knolls resident hopes to engage more children: “It’s about teaching people to care for people with problems. When you help each other, you can heal the world.”

This fall, check the Health Foundation web site (www.mmhf.org) for a Kids4Kids link, created by founders Emily Weber and Katie Curtin. The site provides kids with hints and instructions for planning hospital fundraisers.

HAPPY CAMPERS

Tom Sych, 14, of Madison gets his hat signed by New York Jet Howard Green this summer at the team’s practice facility in Florham Park. Tom and other patients at the Valerie Fund Children’s Center at Goryeb Children’s Hospital were special guests at the mini-camp.

Missed an issue of Kids Count? Log on to www.mmhf.org and visit What’s Happening/Foundation Publications where you can access past issues.

Sam’s NICU Fundraiser

October 7, 2009 | 3:30 – 5:30pm
South Street Creamery, Morristown
In conjunction with the Spring Brook Twig, the Creamery is donating a portion of sales to benefit Sam’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
**For Meghan Moriarty**, sweet sixteen wasn’t about presents, it was all about supporting Goryeb Children’s Hospital with a $2,290 gift. For her birthday bash at the Indigo Hotel in Basking Ridge on June 12, 2009, the teen asked friends to bring a donation to purchase a Guldmann mobile lifter, a special lift that helps move patients who are in slings, casts or disabled in any way. (l-r) Jane Harrington-Noonan, Kendall Murtha, Connor Milanik, Aaron Markowitz, Betsy Swartz, Meghan Moriarty, and Brett Owens

By skipping rope and doing good deeds, **students at The Craig School** raised $807.40 to support the pediatric cardiology program at Goryeb. Funds were generated through two fundraisers: a jump-a-thon, where children solicited pledges from family and friends, and an earn-a-heart program, in which Craig Lower School kids performed a kind act at home that parents recorded on a paper heart to be displayed on the “Wall of Hearts” at school. Along with each paper heart, parents donated a dollar. Teachers also contributed hearts and money in recognition of their colleagues. The Craig School, located in Mountain Lakes, is an independent, nonprofit school for students with diagnosed, language-based differences in grades three through 12.

This past spring, the **Spring Brook Twig** donned their aprons and began preparing meals for families with children in Sam’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The first meal, complete with pasta salad, bread and drinks, was delivered on May 13, 2009, by Sherlyn Tronco and Debra Bednar斯基. The group delivers culinary delights once a month.

**For Jake Kling**’s rocking roller skate birthday party at the Florham Park Roller Rink on June 12, fellow third graders from Hillside Elementary School in Livingston brought gifts for children at Goryeb. The 9-year-old birthday boy collected an assortment of boy toys, including LEGO® building blocks, Bionicles and Uno® card games. (l-r) Luke Schnarr, Sean Anderson, Facundo Saiegh, Jake Kling, Ben Lam, and Jesseben Angbetic

**Michelle Delfs** of Milford learned about the gift of giving from her great-grandmother and she’s passing that lesson on to her children, **Makenzie and Landon**. The creator of exquisite hand-made tutus, Mrs. Delfs donated her colorful creations to Goryeb. Proceeds from tutu sales at Chocolate Soup in Milford and on her web site (www.tutusfortots.com) go to the hospital, and all supplies have been provided by her and her husband, **Joe**. Mrs. Delfs hopes young patients find joy pirouetting in the costumes she makes with her children’s help. “Watching Landon carry a box of tutus twice his size to the hospital has been one of my proudest mommy moments,” she says.

**Girl Scouts from troops 1029 and 1851** donated toys for the family waiting area of the Joan and Edward Foley Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in memory of fellow scout Victoria Snoke. The 9-year-old Roxbury resident, a fourth grader at the Jefferson School in Succasunna, passed away on March 27, 2009. The troops collected puzzles, crafts, coloring books and stuffed animals for children of all ages. (l-r) Elizabeth Jasiecki, Emily Giordano and Catherine Leckie (all Troop 1029), Samantha Testfaye (Troop 1851) and Sarah Richman (Troop 1029)