Send in the Clowns!

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Dear Friends,

I am always humbled by how much our donors and volunteers believe in YNHH and our work. This issue of Impact illustrates some of the creative ways you help us provide better patient and family centered care. Even more touching is how deeply personal the contributions are, springing from deep desires to make a lasting difference.

Heidi and Scott Smith found strength in the face of personal tragedy and created an organization that brought Big Apple Clown CareSM to Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital. The Garrett B. Smith Foundation, named for their four-year-old who passed away in 1995, is the single source of funding for this important initiative. Children who are ill still need laughter and play, and to be seen as children, not just as diagnoses. Dr. Chester Drawers and his colleagues certainly see to that.

Carmine Riccitelli and his therapy dog also give to YNHH in an unusual way. These two volunteers help patients cope just by allowing them to pet and hug Jessie, a lovable golden retriever. As Carmine reminds us, “Dogs don’t judge.”

Thank you all for showing me every day the creativity of the human mind and generosity of the human heart. In the midst of significant challenges we regularly experience in healthcare, we are reminded that something as simple as the warmth of a dog or the giggle of a child is vitally important too.

Warmest regards,

Marna P. Borgstrom
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Garrett B. Smith Foundation brings laughter to pediatric patients at YNHCH.
There are physicians at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital who specialize in rare diseases and there are surgeons who perform state-of-the-art procedures. But when a Red Nose Transplant or Rubber Chicken Extraction is called for, even they step aside for the experts: the clowns from the Big Apple Clown CareSM program, begun in 1986 by Big Apple Circus co-founder Michael Christensen.

These clowns are professionally trained in hygienic practices, protocols and special issues related to interacting with hospitalized children. They are very serious about making patients, families and staff laugh, relax and forget their troubles if only for a little while.

Their presence at YNHCH is made possible by the Garrett B. Smith Foundation, created by Heidi and Scott Smith of Greenwich, Conn. It is named after their son who died at the age of four in 1995 from a rare liver disorder. “We can’t change the past but we can affect things going forward,” says Heidi. “That’s the approach we’ve tried to take.”

Scott adds, “This is our way to keep Garrett present in our lives.”

Garrett used to greet his family every morning with, “Sun’s up! Time to play!” When the Smiths heard about the Big Apple Clown Care program that encourages laughter and play, they immediately knew that this was the best way to honor their son’s special spirit. “We had spent so much time in the hospital ourselves, we saw the need,” says Scott.

YNHCH is one of the few hospitals in the country whose clown program is completely funded by a single organization. The foundation is closing in on $3 million in donations, of which $1 million has gone to the Clown Care program. The funds are raised from an annual golf outing held at the Stanwich Club in Greenwich each spring. The Smiths have two other children, Alexander, 16, and Sabrina, 14, who help at the fundraiser. Sabrina, in particular, likes to inspire participants to enter the various raffles.

“In addition to the Clown Care program, we’ve purchased computers and games for YNHCH. And we support cancer research fellowships at leading hospitals throughout the country,” Heidi proudly reports. “We spend 100 percent of what we raise on the programs our foundation sponsors. That’s why we’ve had great support—people know the money is going exactly where it is intended.”

“The fact that the Big Apple Clown Care program exists at YNHCH is a testament to the Smiths’ vision. The program is one of the ways that we try to elevate the minds and spirits of the children,” says Michael Apkon, MD, PhD, vice president and executive director, YNHCH. In fact, the Clown Care program was the inspiration for the Child Life Department at YNHCH to launch its Arts and Enrichment program, which includes visiting artists, musicians, theater professionals and writers who perform for and work directly with pediatric patients and families.

“The Smiths saw the benefit of bringing humor into the hospital as a way to diffuse difficult and stressful situations, to engage children more in the activity of daily living. Without their ongoing support, this program wouldn’t exist. The Garrett B. Smith Foundation is one of the most enduring and significant supporters of YNHCH,” adds Dr. Apkon.
“We create moments of joy and light, absurdity and laughter in some very serious situations. The staff—from the doctors and nurses to the receptionists, volunteers, maintenance workers and the Child Life team—are wonderful partners.” —Liz Bolick, aka Dr. Sneakers (Chief of Pedi-hat-tricks); 18-year member of the Clown Care program.

**PAGING DR. DRAWERS...**
**CONSULT WITH DR. SNEAKERS...**

“This goes to the core of who clowns are—we bring joy into situations that are difficult for kids,” says Liz Bolick (aka Dr. Sneakers), who juggles, dances and has been known to stand on her head. “This work goes to my heart deeper than any other work I’ve done.”

It’s a sentiment echoed by all the clowns in the Big Apple Circus Clown Care program at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital, including colleagues Drs. Chester Drawers, Lily Pad, Wedgie, Quackenbush and Eleven.

Leo Desilets (the aforementioned Dr. Chester Drawers and Clown Care program supervisor) adds, “As much as I give to the children, I get back even more. It’s as special to me today as the first time I did it.”

Desilets explains that the clowns’ presence allows the children to be in charge for a few moments during a time when everything else seems out of their control. The kids direct the clowns’ actions—everything from whether the clowns can enter the room to which pranks they enact. “We perform many stock routines but a lot of times it’s improvisational, at the children’s direction. We are taught not to look at the diagnosis and to instead focus on the healthy part of each child. It’s great to hear a child laugh or see him smile for the first time. I have absolutely no doubt that laughter helps people heal faster, physically and mentally.”

Many parents schedule their children’s appointments for when the clowns will be there. “We provide that shimmer of relief amid all the tough stuff the kids endure,” says Bolick.

Voted Clown of the Year by the Big Apple Circus in 2005, Desilets says, “I am so grateful to the Garrett B. Smith Foundation for its support of Clown Care here at the Children’s Hospital. I never take it for granted. It’s an amazing day every day. It’s an honor to do what I do.”
Letter from Kuwait

“WE ALL HAVE SO MUCH
to be thankful for: our
health, our homes, our food,
our family and friends—and
the freedom to enjoy them
all,” wrote Shepard Stone,
58, from his Army post in
Kuwait this past Thanksgiving. Stone is on
leave from his position as a physician associate-
anesthesiologist at Yale-New Haven Hospital,
where he has been employed for 32 years. “So
many are not so fortunate. It reminds me why
I am away from you this year, fulfilling an oath
I swore ‘to protect and defend the Constitution
of the United States.’ That reminder makes my
separation from you all a little easier.”

Stone joined the Army Reserves in 1969
and trained as a medic. He has been involved
in the military ever since, except for the two
years he was in PA training at Long Island
University-Brooklyn Hospital. Stationed in
Kuwait since September 2009 as an aeromedical
physician assistant and colonel with the U.S.
Army, he provides medical care for an aviation
task force. This means he provides occupational medicine support, clinical care and flight
physicals for Army aviators.

Stone has also flown at least once a week,
crossing the border into Iraq a number of
times. These are considered combat missions,
even though the areas he has traveled to have
been quiet. “When I fly, I wear full body armor.
This is uncomfortable and heavy but not as un-
comfortable or heavy as the armor that ground
soldiers wear. And considering the possible
consequences of not wearing the body armor,
we are happy to tolerate a little discomfort!”

Through payroll deductions, Stone has
given $1,000 a year to YNHH since 1982.
He and his wife, Marlene, have also pledged
$10,000 to Smilow Cancer Hospital. “Marlene
and I have been extraordinarily fortunate in so
many ways: our health, our professional careers
and my military career. This is an opportunity
for us to pay it forward,” explains Stone.

He adds, “I have been privileged to care for
my countrymen and others in New Haven and
around the world, and YNHH helped give me
that. Marlene and I are honored to contribute
to such worthy goals as Smilow Cancer Hospi-
tal. YNHH has been very good to the commu-
nity, the country, the world and me. Long may
it prosper.”

Stone will return stateside this August.
He is looking forward to reuniting with
Marlene, rejoining his colleagues and friends at
YNHH—and some of his favorite New Haven-
style pizza from Il Forno once again.

Colonel Shepard Stone,
physician associate-anesthesiologist at
Yale-New Haven Hospital

“When I fly, I wear full body armor. This
is uncomfortable and heavy but not as
uncomfortable or heavy as the armor that
ground soldiers wear. And considering the
possible consequences ... we are happy
to tolerate a little discomfort!”
been interested in developing targeted therapy against genes and proteins like HER2.

**What led you to the field of breast cancer?**

It is a disease that is very challenging on multiple levels. As a disease of women and of the breast, there are a lot of issues around interpersonal relationships, body image and sexual functioning. I thought I could contribute by helping women cope. Cancer is also challenging from a medical perspective. No one clearly understands why people develop it—breast cancer, in particular—so I thought it was a critical place to do research.

The breast center has recently moved into the Smilow Cancer Hospital. How will this help how you deliver care?

It’s a wonderful opportunity to provide excellent service to patients with breast cancer and gynecologic cancer in one setting. If I need a consult on a gynecologic issue pertaining to a patient’s breast cancer, I only have to walk down the hall. Having patients with breast and gynecologic cancers in one place allows them to interact and support each other. They are not lost among all the other cancers.

How do you spend your rare moments off?

I am studying Buddhism. It’s a very useful way of seeing the world because it allows you to make the most out of every moment you have and become grounded in your interactions with other people. There are no “shoulds” or “musts” other than to be kind to yourself and others.
“ABE ASKED ME AND HERE I AM,” says Linda Secher, with some understatement. Abe Lopman, vice president and executive director of Smilow Cancer Hospital, recently coaxed the 70-year-old out of retirement in Los Angeles, California, to move to New Haven to spearhead the creation of the new “appearance center” (familiarly known at Smilow as “The Boutique”).

The Boutique will be a very special store—a place where cancer patients can find whatever they need to face the world, from wigs to prostheses to attractive swimsuits—in a protected environment. “It’s one-stop shopping. Patients don’t even have to leave the building. It will be a safe, nurturing, positive place where patients won’t feel self-conscious or intimidated,” says Secher.

The Boutique, which will open in late spring, comprises 850 square feet on the first floor of Smilow Cancer Hospital. “It was included in the plans from the very beginning because everyone involved felt it was critically necessary to help patients maintain a sense of normalcy,” says Lopman.

Despite the prospect of facing her first real winter in 25 years, Secher, who has opened 23 oncology appearance centers at hospitals all over the country, jumped at the chance. “After learning all about Smilow, I decided that I had to plant my seeds here because this is going to be a super, super special place,” she says. Secher is certified in breast prosthesis and wig fitting by Look Good…Feel Better, a program run by the American Cancer Society. “This is my passion, what I live for. I think Abe sensed that when he asked me to join.”

The Boutique will stock everything cancer patients need but might be unable or too self-conscious to look for elsewhere. Services will include wig, bra, prosthesis and clothing fittings by certified experts, wig cleaning, instruction in how to wrap scarves, and head shaving.

Secher’s aim is to provide whatever a patient wants and needs to regain his or her identity as a person rather than simply a disease. ☞
One Family’s Dogged Determination to Help

SHE WAS A YOUNG WOMAN who realized that soon she was nearing the end of her fight with breast cancer. With a husband and three daughters under the age of nine, she was at the end of her rope emotionally as well. Then Carmine Riccitelli, a volunteer with the YNHH animal companion program, and Jessie, a seven-year-old golden retriever, dropped by her room. Although the woman wanted the distraction of the visit, it was clear she was uncomfortable at first with their presence.

“What are you so worried about?” Carmine gently asked.

“The way I look,” she answered. A professional firefighter trained to deal with people in distress, Carmine assured her, “The dog doesn’t care about your looks.” Carmine and Jessie spent an hour with the woman, who patted the dog and poured her heart out to Carmine.

A week later, Carmine and Jessie dropped by again. The woman’s mother stopped them to say, “Thank you so much. You don’t know how much you helped. All she talked about was her fireman and his dog for days afterwards.” The woman died soon after.

Carmine and Jessie have been part of YNHH’s animal companion program for two years. (There are 17 dog teams in the program.) Studies have shown the calming effect of pets on the elderly and those who are mentally or physically ill. At YNHH, the dogs are used to help patients relax and feel a positive connection.

“I’ve dealt with high school kids who have been through a lot of trauma. We’ve even had gang kids who would come in high on drugs to the meetings. The dog is nonjudgmental and they sense that. Jessie gets past their defenses,” says Carmine.

Rescued from a Kentucky shelter, Jessie originally trained with the State of Connecticut Urban Search and Rescue Team. Soon after, Carmine decided to try...
her at the hospital. “She passed with flying colors,” says Carmine, who then went the extra step to have Jessie certified by the Delta Society Pet Partners® program, which trains dogs to behave appropriately in hospital settings. Jessie became the first Delta-certified dog at YNHH.

Carmine and Jessie are not the only Riccitellis who have a bond with YNHH. Wife Pat has worked at the hospital for 23 years, the last 14 in the information and technology department. Daughter Caitlin, 15, has been volunteering as an ambassador and with the book cart for almost two years. Tierney, 12, is not yet old enough to volunteer but is planning to join the family team at YNHH as soon as she turns 14.

“They are a very special family,” says Annie Garcia Kaplan, EdD, volunteer coordinator, volunteer services department. “Caitlin is poised beyond her years, and has won kudos from everyone for her customer services skills. Carmine is always willing to go the extra mile. He can connect with everyone. And we can’t wait for Tierney to come on board!”

Pat is justifiably proud of her brood. “You really feel like you’re making a difference. Even on the worst day, you are helping somebody. That’s really what it’s all about,” she says.

Jessie, however, upstages them all. Not only does her affectionate demeanor help patients to relax, “doctors and nurses melt at the sight of her. Jessie has a special place in our hearts. She was rescued and now she is a rescuer—and a star,” says Kaplan.

Carmine recalls the time when he and Jessie passed a stern-looking physician on rounds with a group of anxious medical students in tow. “They were obviously terrified and nervous. But the look of shock on their faces when that doctor dropped to his knees and started playing like a little kid with Jessie was priceless.”
Kohl’s asks: How high is high?

When the volunteers and staff from Kohl’s attended last December’s holiday party for the pediatric patients at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital, they came away deeply moved. “It was so inspiring to all of us. It made us ask what else does YNHCH need because we want to do more. How high is high?” says Kenny Exler, district manager for ten Kohl’s stores in central and southern Connecticut.

Over the last decade, Kohl’s has donated $1.2 million to YNHCH through the corporate program Kohl’s Cares for Kids® (KCK). This year alone, it raised $123,000. The KCK program raises funds through the sale of specially created merchandise (usually a coordinated book and plush animal) displayed in the front of every one of Kohl’s 1,058 stores in the U.S. Each store supports a children’s hospital in its local community, donating 100 percent of the net profits from the merchandise. The Kohl’s stores in Orange, Hamden, Branford, Trumbull, Fairfield, Norwalk, Brookfield and Ridgefield donate their funds to YNHCH.

Currently, proceeds from those area stores support The Kohl’s Parenting Support Program: Caring Parents Make Healthy Families, of the YNHCH Family Advocacy Center, which just moved into new offices at Long Wharf (see accompanying story).

“We wanted to support programs that can really make a lifelong difference in a child’s life—and maybe even be passed on to the next generation. Caring Parents Make Healthy Families is one of those programs. It doesn’t focus on illness so much as on wellness. What can we do to enable children to grow up healthy and happy?” says Exler.

Kohl’s provides volunteers as well as money through its A-Teams, store staff who volunteer at nonprofit activities focused on enriching the lives of children. They provide extra sets of hands (and feet) for fundraising walks, reading books to children, serving meals, manning booths and much more. Each time an A-Team volunteers, that particular nonprofit also receives a corporate grant of $500.

In 2008, nationwide, Kohl’s associates volunteered more than 216,000 hours, helping Kohl’s donate nearly $5.6 million to support their efforts. “If I need five people to go to an A-Team project, I’ll have those volunteers signed up in seconds. Often, I get more people than I need. Everyone wants to help on the A-Team,” says Exler.

YNHCH staff is well-acquainted with the A-Team. Take that holiday party, for example. Eight members of a Kohl’s A-Team handed out books and stuffed animals to 150 youngsters and their families. “Supplying people power as well as financial support shows how invested Kohl’s is in our community. Their employees across the board want to help. It’s not just higher levels supporting with gifts,” says Paula Crombie, director, YNHCH department of social work. “Without the strength of a funder who has the vision and foresight to see that it’s not just dollars but commitment to improving a community, we could not do what we do. We are very grateful. Many children are going to have better lives because of our partnership with Kohl’s.”

Kohl’s department stores give much more than money to YNHCH
YNHCH Family Advocacy Center
Reaching Out For Healthy Families

Kohl’s supports the parenting education component: YNHCH staff, often aided by Kohl’s A-Team volunteers, go to libraries, community centers and daycare centers in the YNHCH community to educate parents on topics such as injury prevention, child development, health and nutrition.

“Many new parents do not know how to be great parents—they may not have had good role models or been taught how to take care of a newborn. This program has developed materials and an educational program that will help them raise healthy children,” says Paula Crombie, director, YNHCH department of social work.

One-third of New Haven families speak a language other than English in their homes (most often Spanish). Some are undocumented, living in the shadows and beyond the reach of many social services. Caring Parents Make Healthy Families reaches out to those most in need, and to this end has made its program bilingual.

Crombie adds, “It’s a holistic approach. Instead of focusing on taking care of sick children, we talk about how to help healthy children grow up positively. We want to make an impact that will affect generations.”

In February, YNHCH opened a new pediatric facility at Long Wharf, where Caring Parents Make Healthy Families is now located. Kohl’s funding helped to relocate all the prevention and parenting programs there, and consolidate them into a Family Advocacy Center. “Kohl’s is a very different kind of donor because they are invested in this community. They are always right there when we need them,” says Crombie.
Sowing Seeds for the Future

John Dixon, Director of Planned Giving

While it’s true that 80 percent of donors who make a planned giving bequest don’t alert YNHH ahead of time, nothing prepared John Dixon, director of planned giving, for the phone call he got last year from an estate attorney. “He told me that someone had left YNHH $4.6 million in his will,” Dixon says. “It’s the largest bequest the hospital’s ever had, and we had no idea it was coming.”

The bequest came from Daniel Hays, who died recently at 94 with no living relatives. Back in 1961, his mother, Ruth Hays, had created a trust to pay her son income for life with the stipulation that when he died, the hospital would get what was left.

As the director of planned giving, Dixon works with donors to help them establish a bequest or include the hospital in their retirement or estate plans. These enduring gifts benefit the hospital without using any of the donor’s current assets, and they often provide tax benefits as well.

The element of the unknown is what makes Dixon’s job so interesting to him. “I am sowing seeds that will yield fruit later on. Many people have been personally touched by the hospital in some way and often times their gratitude is expressed through estate gifts years—or even decades—later,” he says.

The connection can be rather surprising. Dixon reports receiving a large bequest once from a man who didn’t have a particular beneficiary in mind when drafting his will. “His lawyer told us that the man mentioned he would like to help children. One of the legal assistants shouted into the office, ‘What about Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital?’ He agreed and made us the beneficiary. We had no idea until decades later.”

Anyone who has made a gift annuity, set up a trust, named YNHH a beneficiary or made a bequest, no matter what size, becomes a member of the Dr. Jonathan Knight Society, named for one of the original incorporators of Yale-New Haven Hospital in 1826. Dixon is proud to be a Society member himself.

“I have made YNHH a beneficiary of one of my IRAs. It’s so easy to do when you’re setting up an IRA or purchasing life insurance. It just takes a few clicks on the computer to designate the hospital as your beneficiary.”

On April 29 at 11am at the New Haven Lawn Club, members of the Knight Society will be celebrated with a luncheon followed by a guided tour of Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven.

To find out more about how a planned gift can benefit both you and YNHH, please visit http://www.ynhh.org/ develop and click on “Planned Giving” or contact John Dixon: 203-688-5902 or e-mail john.dixon@ynhh.org.
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**PANACHE CUT-A-THON**  
To benefit Smilow Cancer Hospital  
Sunday, April 18, 2010  
Panache Salon, New Haven  
1044 Chapel Street  
For more information, please call Panache at 203-776-1758

For more information on the following events, please e-mail giving@ynhh.org

**DR. JONATHAN KNIGHT SOCIETY LUNCHEON**  
In appreciation of the Society’s members  
Thursday, April 29, 2010  
New Haven Lawn Club  
193 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, CT

**IN GRATITUDE**  
A tribute to YNHH’s most generous benefactors  
Thursday, June 10, 2010  
Pine Orchard Yacht & Country Club  
2 Club Parkway, Branford, CT

**FRIENDS OF YALE-NEW HAVEN CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL 19TH ANNUAL GOLF AND TENNIS OPEN**  
To benefit Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital  
Monday, July 19, 2010  
The Farms Country Club  
Cheshire Road, Wallingford, CT

**SERVE LOVE**  
To benefit Pediatric Diabetes at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital  
Sunday, August 22, 2010  
Pilot Pen Tennis Tournament  
New Haven, CT

**HACKERS FOR HEARTS GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
To benefit the Heart and Vascular Center at Yale-New Haven Hospital  
Monday, September 27, 2010  
New Haven Country Club  
160 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT

RUMANOFF’S FINE JEWELRY & DESIGN, of Hamden, chose Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven as the recipient of their annual holiday season fundraiser for 2009. For two days last December, Rumanoff’s donated a percentage of each sale and collected donations on behalf of Smilow. YNHH is grateful to Rumanoff’s and all of the third-party groups who fundraise on our behalf throughout the year.

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**A celebration of life.**

Join us on the New Haven Green to celebrate life!

- Learn about organ donation and register to become an organ donor
- Hear heartwarming stories from our living donors and patients
- Enjoy refreshments, kids’ activities and music – BIG SHOT The Ultimate Billy Joel Experience takes the stage at 1 pm

Your decision to be an organ and tissue donor can make a difference in hundreds of lives.

Rain Date: Sunday, May 16
YNHH offers aid to Haiti

A volunteer team of YNHH and Yale School of Medicine physicians and medical professionals trained in disaster response flew to earthquake-ravaged Haiti on January 26. One member of the team, anesthesiologist Dr. Nousheh Saidi, eloquently described her decision to rush to the site:

“As a medical doctor, I’m supposed to be useful for society. This is what I went to medical school for; this is why I did residencies; this is why I did two specialties. This is it.”

YNHH also donated $30,000 worth of medical supplies to support the aid efforts and $5,000 to a newly established fund to help the Haitians, administered by the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven.