



Special Edition...

It's not every day in Pediatrics that tuxes and designer dresses, or mortar boards and graduation gowns are worn, but that's exactly what happens each June. The special attire signifies the arrival of two of our most anticipated events: the Annual Pediatric Spring Prom and our high school Convocation Ceremony where we celebrate milestones in the lives of our extraordinary patients. In this issue of News9, we'd like to share with you some special moments from our 2009 events.



Dr. Meyers and his very classy patient are picture perfect.

Child Life Coordinator Therese Weisbrot reunites with graduating senior, Garrett.



The Prom Limo takes our youngest and best dressed partygoers to Prom in style.



Elegance comes in all ages and sizes!

Prom...

Pediatrics and Prom are perfection. The greatest clothes, the coolest moves, the loudest music, and the best guest list anywhere — our patients, their families, and friends.

A key part of Prom is the dress. Pink was a favorite color for this

season, but with the beautiful silk and satin gowns that lined the racks, there was a color and style for everyone. The young men had their choice of tuxes or tux t-shirts — either of which looked smashing — along with formal shirts, bowties, and cummerbunds.

Make-up artists, manicurists, face painters, and friends arrived early the day of Prom to get everyone ready. The Recreation Center was a sea of smiles and excitement as pre-Prom anticipation spread through the room.



This stunning couple is fired up and ready to go!



Makeup artists and face painters get a head start in the Recreation Center.



The shoe fits!

Colorful bowties and helping hands are part of what makes Prom so awesome.



Kid-friendly food with incredible service sets the tone for Prom.

The arrival of the Prom Limo in the West Dining Room marked the official kickoff of the Pediatric Spring Prom. Guests were welcomed by friendly staff members handing out corsages. Then the partygoers made their way to the dance floor, the Prom King and Queen thrones, and the kid-friendly buffet, complete with mouthwatering desserts.

By the middle of Prom, there was a crew on stage singing and dancing and the floor was packed with partiers showing off their best moves. Prom was reaching its peak! As if things couldn't get any better, kings and queens were announced, crowns were bestowed, pictures were taken, and unforgettable memories



Maggie Rodriguez, from the CBS Early Show, gets some dance tips from Dr. Yadontsay, from the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit, and 8-year-old Megan.



BFFs pose for a quick photo at Prom.

Special Coverage...

This year, Maggie Rodriguez from the CBS Early Show provided special coverage of Prom. Watch the segment on the www.mskcc.org web site. Click on Patient Care, then Pediatric Cancer Care. The story is on our Pediatric home page.



Nurse Practitioner Anne Casson and Dr. Meyers – flanked by patient royalty – were crowned Staff Queen and King.



Dancing and singing on stage for these divas is a dream come true.



They danced, they danced – and then they danced some more!



Session Assistant Erin gives a quick hug to a young prom queen.

Convocation...

Pediatrics hosted its third annual Convocation on Wednesday, June 10th. Welcoming one of the largest classes to date, the day recognized 56 current and former patients who were graduating from high school or securing their GEDs.



Grads gather to listen to last-minute directions before heading into the Ceremony.



The graduate procession through the crowds at the start of the ceremony.



Hospital School Principal Mary Maher helps a graduate with her corsage before the ceremony.



Dr. Meyers awards the Dr. Charlotte T.C. Tan Award to Ali.

The 19 students who attended the ceremony were greeted in the Recreation Center by MSKCC's teaching staff and Child Life specialists. As the grads were guided to their caps, gowns, and corsages, a game of Rock Band brought them together.

Dr. Meyers officiated at the ceremony and invited Shannon, Jeff, Ali, and Zach to the podium to give the graduate addresses. Their speeches were filled with humor, optimism, and courage as they spoke about the challenges they had overcome. They expressed heartfelt thanks to their parents and friends, teachers and principals, and staff members in Pediatrics for helping them to arrive at this tremendous milestone.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the Recreation Center with great food and emotional reunions between patients, families, and staff, all of whom had worked so hard and dedicated so much to this special class of 2009!



Jeff thanks his favorite Nurse Practitioner, Paulette, during his graduate address.



The grads reflect during Dr. O'Reilly's keynote address.



Dr. O'Reilly offers a bit of advice to the grads' parents: "Be courageous and let them go. Let these students shine brightly in the world."



Family members fill the audience, along with friends and staff members.



MSKCC's teachers pose with New York Board of Education staff members after the reception.

Reflections from Our Grads...

Members from the Class of 2009 impart words of wisdom to each other and future high school graduates at MSKCC. They also offer special thanks to the Pediatric staff members who helped and supported them along the way.

"Words cannot express how we graduates feel today, but I will do my best to describe the indescribable. We are excited. We are proud. And we are filled with gratitude to just be standing here today." **Ali**

"Because I was in an isolated room, I lost my hope. But the Bone Marrow Transplant Team gave that back to me." **Utkar**

"I learned to not sweat the small stuff and always to stay positive." **Samantha**

"Some of my best memories from MSK were experiencing the Forest's Fun Night with my family, meeting Alex, (another teenage cancer survivor), and getting to know all the nurses. They were great! I never met a nurse I didn't like." **Kerri**

"I have learned to take opportunities as they come because the future is so unpredictable. You may not have the chance to do something if you wait too long." **Shannon**

"Never give up and don't lose hope. MSKCC is great and I love the people there. The nurses, the doctors, the Child Life staff –everyone cares so much. This experience has made me a better person and MSKCC has helped my family and me get through this difficult time. It has been a second home to me." **Pritesh**

"Graduation is my first major accomplishment after battling cancer. I made it!"

Josephine

"It is impossible to think about my future without reflecting on my past because, for as far back as I can remember, I have lived with the effects of cancer. My experience with the disease has helped shape who I am today – a person who uses focus and fun to overcome my personal challenges." **Zach**

"When my doctor told me that 95 percent of the cancer was gone after a very short amount of time, I felt on top of the world. I got the best care in the world, and felt so safe at MSKCC." **Jose**

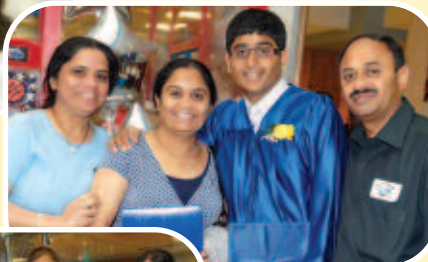
"I've told people of my past experience here at Sloan-Kettering, and they have said to me that I am a miracle because I have gone through this experience with a smile on my face. I believe going through this ordeal does nothing but put a smile on my face because I know that I survived this deadly disease." **Jeff**

"If it weren't for Memorial Sloan-Kettering, I don't know that I'd be here today. And I don't know that I'd be the person that I am today, and have all the same values and same friends and the feeling in my heart that people really truly believe in me, and love me." **Garrett**

"I believe that MSKCC is greatly responsible for my achievements. It has allowed me to survive and has taught me how to overcome different challenges. The hope and encouragement lighted by people like Dr. Dunkel, Dr Abramson, and so many others has allowed me to face the hardships in my journey. This will certainly remain with me forever. Seeing all the courageous patients and miracle-making doctors has allowed me to come in contact with the best people, and I salute them. MSKCC made me into a person that not only survives, but thrives." **Muhammad**

"If you have a chance to study, go for it and don't give up. But don't be hard on yourself either. It's important to enjoy your life." **Sandra**

Sandra's mother, Lie Fen, offers insight into the importance of Convocation. "We [the parents] are all so proud of our kids. They went through difficult times, and now they have a normal life again. It's exciting and very encouraging. I think Convocation sends a clear message of motivation. When you see these seniors graduating despite everything they've gone through, other patients can think – 'If they can do it, I can do it too. Why not me?' Every patient here has the potential for greatness."



Reflections from our Doctors...



Doctors Farid Boulad, Paul Meyers, and Richard O'Reilly recently took a break from all the festivities to reflect on the annual spring events. Here are their thoughts.

Dr. B., what is your best memory from Convocation?

I still remember the first Convocation in 2007 so clearly – the lump in my throat from that day is still there. It was an especially moving event. Every detail, the speeches, the kids – those amazing kids!

What impact do Prom and Convocation have on your patients?

For prom, for that special day, these are the most beautiful kids in the world. And, ... for the following 364 days, they continue to be the most beautiful kids in the world. I think that Convocation is inspiring. When other patients see what the graduates have done, they want to do the same. They see that they can fight not only with their bodies but also with their minds!

Dr. M., what was your favorite part of Prom and Convocation?

When I saw Lawrence, one of my patients, get on the floor to dance – that was one of the most memorable moments I have of

this year's prom. I thought the speeches by the kids at Convocation were fantastic. They were funny, witty, and wise beyond their years.

Why are Prom and Convocation so important?

Truthfully, I think Prom and Convocation have a bigger impact on us, as staff members, than they do on the kids. Prom and Convocation remind us that we are in fact getting these kids back to their normal lives. The events celebrate these special



milestones and I love being a part of them.

Dr. O., what were the highlights from this year's Convocation?

When the graduates marched up the aisle to a standing ovation – that was incredible. And it sent a spiritual high to all the MSKCC staff who helped get them to that moment in their lives.

I was impressed with all the graduates' speeches from Convocation. The image of Zach, who spoke about his love of snowboarding – rocketing down the side of a mountain – was inspiring!

We work every day to get these kids to go on and lead regular lives. We are here so that these kids can graduate from high school, go to Prom, snow-



Class of 2009...



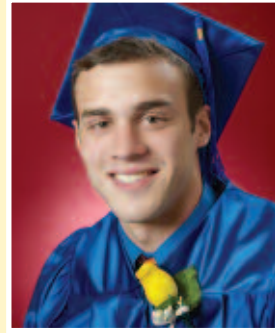
Alexandra B.
Hewlett, NY



Christopher M.
Carmel, NY



Edwin H.
Wyandanch City, NY



Garret M.
Smithtown, NY



Jeffrey I.
North, NJ



Joel C.
New York, NY



Jose T.
New York, NY



Joseph W.
Green Farms, CT



Josephine A.
Oceanside, NY



Kelly L.
Barnegat, NJ



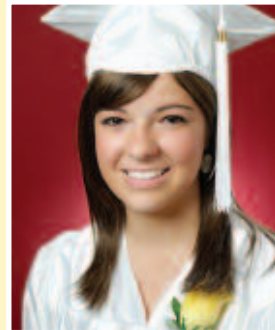
Kerri M.
North Plainfield, NJ



Muhammad J.
Brooklyn, NY



Pritesh P.
Old Westbury, NY



Samantha L.
Oceanside, NY



Sandra L.
New York, NY



Shannon C.
Montrose, NY



Shaquana G.
New York, NY



Steven Zack S.
New Milford, NJ



Ulkar M.
Bayside, NY

Thank you...

Pediatrics extends its deepest thanks to everyone who made Prom and Convocation spectacular occasions.

Extraordinary thanks to the many individual donors and the members of The Society of MSKCC and its Children's and Associates and Kids Kick In Committees for your very special efforts and contributions.

Thank you to Polly Blitzer and her team of cosmetologists from BeautyBlitz.com, MC Dana and his crew of DJs and Dancers from Party King Entertainment, and Juliana Thomas from Juliana Thomas Photography for all you do to create our magic.

We thank the New York City Department of Education for their support for our Annual Convocation, the MSKCC teaching staff – Anne Marie Cicciu, Ross Cohen, Mary Ellen Fitzsimons, and Rosemarie Vasti – Hospital School Principal Mary Maher, and all the past and present teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, principals, tutors, and home instructors for your dedication to helping our students achieve their academic goals at every level.

Finally, a profound thank you to all of MSKCC's Departments of Food and Nutrition Services, Volunteers, Medical Graphics and Photography, Public Affairs, Media Services, Facilities Management, Security, and Environmental Services. Your hard work and commitment to Prom and Convocation is deeply appreciated. We couldn't do it without you!

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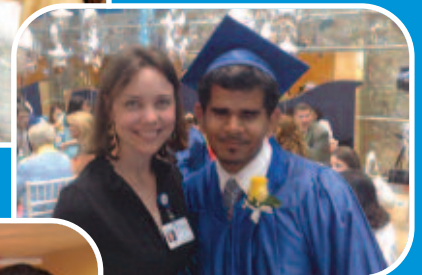
Dr. Meyers awards the Dr. M. Lois Murphy Award to Ulkar.



Spiderman has all the superhero moves.



Smiles and friends abound at Prom.



Patient Services Coordinator Katie and Muhammad pose for a picture during the reception.



Graduate Samantha has lots to smile about with her parents, her NP Lauren, and Dr. Trippett.



Tux t-Shirts were all the rage at Prom.



Not just another day in Peds...



Sandra gets some help with her corsage from teacher Anne Marie.



Therese crowns one of the Prom Queens.