



*Dr. Thompson and Dr. Boulad celebrate with this dashing diva*

## Special Edition...

Pediatrics is always bustling with activity and spring was no different! Every June, we celebrate two very exciting events — the Pediatric Prom and the high school graduation of our students. In this issue, we'd like to share some highlights from these very special times.



*Pretty in Pink!*



*Dr. Cheung catches up with grads Jenna and Jalissa*



*Dr. Meyers and Hospital Schools Principal Mary Maher present the Outstanding Courage award to Esteban*



# Pediatric Prom...

As soon as the “save the date” went out you could feel the excitement throughout Peds. Everyone was buzzing about what outfits they were planning to wear, which dance moves to practice, and who would be chosen this year’s Prom Kings and Queens.

Two weeks before the big day, our very own formal clothing shop, “Promingdales,” opened its doors. The new and improved men’s shop featured bowties, suspenders, cummerbunds, top hats and tuxedo t-shirts, guaranteeing some very dashing young fellows. The women’s shop showcased a wide selection of donated gowns and dresses to satisfy every fashion taste. On the big day, face painters, make-up artists, personal shoppers, and stylists were available to make everyone look their very best. Before we knew it, all



*Dr. Boulad and his patient dance to the music*

the prom-goers were ready to party in their fancy attire and their dancing shoes!

Partygoers of all ages proceeded down to MSKCC’s West Dining Room and made grand entrances through the famous balloon arch. The room welcomed guests with glamorous decorations, festive food, lively music, and unbeatable company!



*Boogie down*



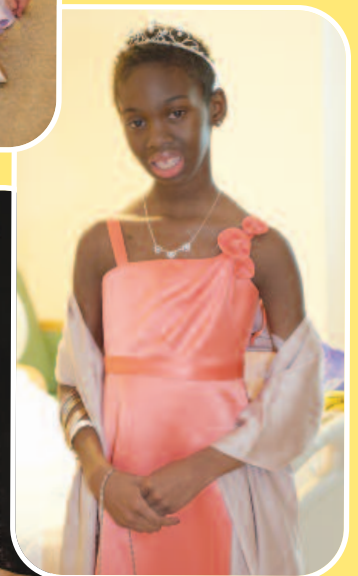
*Brother and sister take a dancing break!*



*This family is dressed in style*



*Staff King Dr. Stephen Gilheeny and Queen Dr. Susan Prockop*



*Beautiful gown and perfect accessories*



Our favorite Party King Entertainment DJ and dancers soon had everyone twirling and swirling on the dance floor under a ceiling of colorful balloons. The music and laughter could be heard throughout the hospital's first floor. Doctors, nurses, and staff joined patients and family members on the dance floor for hours of fun together.

Soon enough, our much-anticipated 2011 Prom Kings and Queens were assembled. The royal court was crowned to cheers and big smiles. This year our staff honors went to Dr. Stephen Gilheeny and Dr. Susan Prockop.

Before we knew it, dancers were taking their last twirls and guests were enjoying their last beautiful cupcakes and overflowing ice cream sundaes. Although a bit tired out, great memories were made and happiness was had by all!



*Fantastic face paint!*



*Heading to Prom in style!*



*Enjoying the party*



*Dr. Kernan, patient and father looking very fashionable*



*Father and son ready to party!*



*Brother and sister get ready for the ball*



*Great glasses!*



*Inpatient nurses enjoy the festivities*



# Convocation...

Each year, Pediatrics is especially proud to formally recognize our current and former patients who have reached one of life's most important milestones, high school graduation. Blue-and-white graduation gowns replaced those of "Promingdales" as we celebrated our Fifth annual



*Grads listen intently to our speakers*



*Roni enjoys Dr. O'Reilly's words of wisdom*

Convocation. Twenty-nine of the more than sixty students who received their high school diplomas or GEDs in 2011 attended, along with their families.

As soon as the graduates made their entrance to Vivaldi's Four Seasons, smiles appeared on the faces and joyful tears welled in the eyes of family members, friends, and Pediatric staff.

Dr. Paul Meyers, Vice Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, acted as master of ceremonies, inviting MSKCC's Physician-in-Chief, Dr. Robert E. Wittes, to the podium to deliver the opening remarks. Dr. Wittes recognized the great life



*Dr. Trippett congratulates Lisbell*



*New grads and new friends!*

lessons that all the graduates and their families had learned during their journeys through cancer.

Our graduate speakers, Jenna and Michael, shared stories and knowledge gained from their unique experiences. Awards and certificates were presented to each participant based on their academic and extracurricular achievements. These included two awards given in memory of former pediatric oncology leaders, Drs. M. Lois Murphy and Charlotte Tan, which are bestowed on two graduates who are pursuing careers in medicine.



*Andrew's family is so proud!*



*Diego's family enjoys the lunch reception*



*Sierra and her family celebrate*



*Taylor's entire family including Chef August!*

Dr. Richard J. O'Reilly, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, delivered the keynote address, remarking on the courage and strength each student had to develop and the dedication of their

families throughout the difficult times of their treatment. MSKCC President Dr. Craig B. Thompson delivered the closing address, speaking on behalf of the staff at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Center, all of whom remain committed to conquering cancer.

Following the ceremony, a lunch reception took place in the Recreation Center where graduates and family members spent time with new and old friends from Pediatrics.

## A word from our speakers...

"The celebration of milestones is important. The students whom we honor today all took a detour on their way to this day. In the midst of treatment, it's easy to lose sight of the goal to concentrate on the challenges of each day, to regret time lost, celebrations missed or delayed. That makes it all the more important to recognize this superb accomplishment."

~ **Dr. Meyers**



*Dr. Meyers, Vice-Chair of Pediatrics*

"On this day, we celebrate your obtaining one of life's key mileposts. But actually we celebrate more than academic achievement, as important as that is. All of us in the MSK family also take our hats off to you, for you're learning some of life's key lessons much earlier than most of us did or ever will."

~ **Dr. Wittes**



*Dr. Wittes, Physician in Chief*

"This graduation ceremony is really a way to inspire patients and show what they can do, all the while honoring those who didn't have the opportunity to be up here with us today. All of us have proven that we are stronger than cancer, that we hold the power to graduate from high school, and who knows what the future can hold for us."

~ **Jenna, graduate**



*Jenna, graduate speaker*

## Special Coverage...

This year, Jenna Bush from NBC's Today Show joined us for special coverage of Convocation. To enjoy our commemorative video and the Today Show special, go to <http://www.mskcc.org/pediatrics/pediatric-convocation>

"We know we are the future, because it is people like us, people with a story to tell, experience to act upon, and strength of heart who have the ability to make this world a better place. I would like to say to those of you who are still in the fight: chin up! The only way to come out of this is to live each day with a smile, laugh like you've never laughed before, and tell yourself every day that you have so much life left to live and so many people to share it with, that losing this battle is simply not an option. But to all of us, there is greatness born within every single graduate sitting in this room. The future is ours for the taking."

~ **Michael, graduate**



*Michael, graduate speaker*

"To the graduates, I ask that you be kind to your parents. Remember that you are the consummation of their dreams, and they want everything for you. That's not so easy to understand. To the parents, I ask that you let these kids grow. Let these kids become themselves. And lastly, to all present here, I ask that you remember the brothers and sisters. They give up a lot in silence for you. They care about you and they love you, and they want you to do well."

~ **Dr. O'Reilly**



*Dr. O'Reilly, Chairman of Pediatrics*



*Dr. Thompson, President*

"This is a celebration of your strength and the strength of the human spirit. These qualities will see you through the rest of your lives and the new challenges that life throws at you along the way. And it will allow you to continue to be what you already are to everyone in this room — an inspiration."

~ **Dr. Thompson**



## Reflections from Our Grads...

"You can't let an illness hold you back from anything you want to do. If anything, instead of letting your battle with cancer stop you or hold you back, let it push you to try harder... It's not about the number of times you get knocked down but the number of times you get back up."

~ **Mary Elizabeth**

"Graduating high school, to me, is my own personal way of telling people that cancer has not affected me at all and I can still do the things I once did. This is why I'm so happy to finally graduate so I can move on with the rest of my life and leave cancer in my past. So to the other kids graduating with me, all I have to say is that we definitely earned this and we should be very proud of ourselves."

~ **Esteban**

"I've learned never to leave a day knowing you didn't enjoy at least one second of it — no matter how bad the other 23 hours, 59 minutes and 59 seconds were!"

~ **Samuel**

"It is important to always stay positive and know that in the end, everything will work out. I also learned that emotional pain is often overlooked and not always directly addressed. But to heal, we must face that pain, talk about it and release it to move forward."

~ **Kaitlyn**



"I learned you can get chocolate chip pancakes at MSKCC, anytime." ~ **Jacob**

"Be prepared for what lies ahead, but don't lose sight of where you are and where

you've been. It's the things we've done, along with the things we hope to do, that shape us into the people we need to be. It's people like us who change the world

for the better." ~ **Michael**

"You can never give up on your dreams and goals; you have to push yourself to keep going." ~ **Frank**

"Live every moment, laugh every day, and love beyond words."

~ **Jenna Marie**



"Lessons I've learned: The importance of pushing forward even when the easier option would be giving up." ~ **Caitlin**

"With the help of doctors, nurses and surgeons I am graduating. They gave me hope." ~ **Moikouyah**

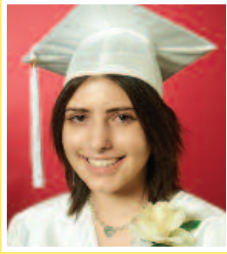




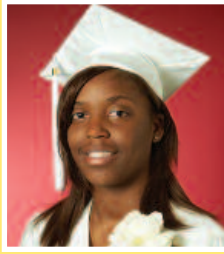
# Class of 2011...



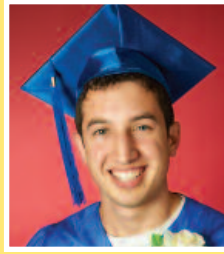
Mary A.  
Morristown, NJ



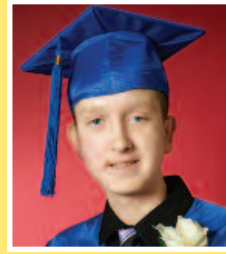
Roni B.  
Englewood, NJ



Sierra B.  
Norwalk, CT



Samuel B.  
Oceanside, NY



Cody B.  
Dix Hills, NY



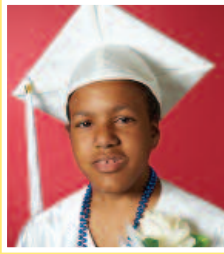
Jalissa C.  
Brooklyn, NY



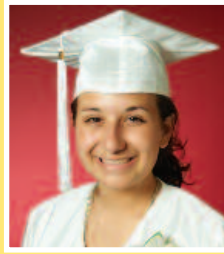
Taylor C.  
Brooklyn, NY



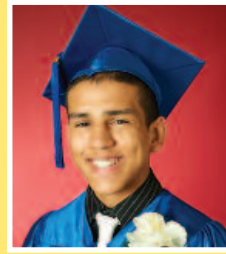
Lisbell C.  
Astoria, NY



Samantha D.  
Ridgefield, NJ



Elena F.  
East Lyme, CT



Esteban G.  
Staten Island, NY



Morgan G.  
Stamford, CT



Caitlin H.  
Dobbs Ferry, NY



Moikouyah K.  
Williamsburg, NY



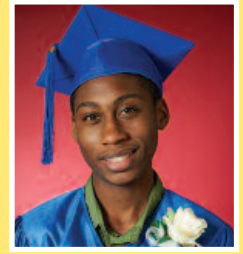
Julianne K.  
Syracuse, NY



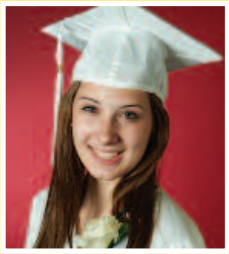
Kevin L.  
Brooklyn, NY



Diego M.  
Jamaica, NY



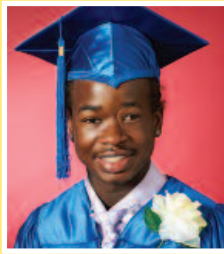
Kalif M.  
Brooklyn, NY



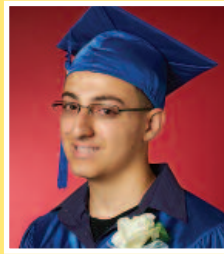
Jenna M.  
Oxford, CT



Brianne M.  
Sayville, NY



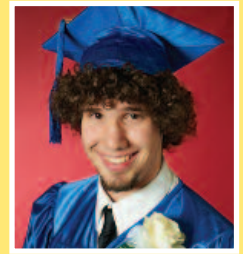
Dominique P.  
New York, NY



Frank P.  
Staten Island, NY



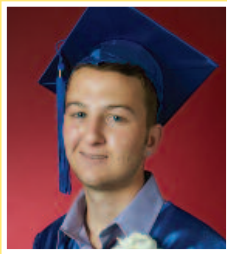
Frank R.  
Bronx, NY



Michael R.  
Staten Island, NY



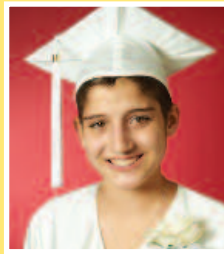
Katherine S.  
Manhasset, NY



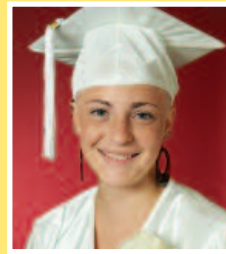
Andrew S.  
Berkeley Heights, NJ



Jacob S.  
Maplewood, NJ



Kaitlyn S.  
Shoreham, NY



Valentina W.  
Freehold, NJ



# Thank you...

## We asked around...

### What were your favorite parts of Prom and Convocation?

- 10 Getting to see the nurses and doctors that took care of me while I was sick. – Graduate
- 9 The fantastic face paint, make-up, jewelry and outfits on all of the kids. – Nurse
- 8 I loved practicing my singing and dancing at Prom for the talent show! – Patient
- 7 The cupcake tower was such a fun new addition to Prom this year! – Child Life Specialist
- 6 The smiles and laughter on everyone's faces throughout the entire day – from dressing up to dancing! – Doctor
- 5 Dancing with Dr. Boulad! – Patient
- 4 I loved meeting other grads who knew what I had gone through. We had such an immediate connection. – Graduate
- 3 Dr. O'Reilly singing and our parents joining in at the Convocation ceremony – Graduate
- 2 It was very special to win the doctor award – I am so excited to become a doctor to help other kids like me. – Graduate
- 1 I felt so proud to be up on that stage with other patients who had fought the same fight. – Graduate

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

Special 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 their 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, Edith Silsdorf, Claudia Rogers, and Joanne DiMartino – Hospital School Principal Mary Maher, and all the past and present teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, principals, tutors, and home instructors for their dedication to helping our students achieve their academic goals at every level.

Finally, a huge thank you to 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 are deeply appreciated. We couldn't do it without you!



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To view this issue and past issues of News9, please visit [www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/5636.cfm](http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/5636.cfm)

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