Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Before the Brooklyn Nets, it was the Brooklyn Dodgers who defined sports in this borough – and one of the stars of the team was Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play major league baseball in the 20th century. During the time that Mr. Robinson played for the Dodgers, the team won six pennants and a World Series championship, and he was named the National Leagues’ most valuable player in 1949.

Jackie Robinson broke professional baseball’s “color line” on April 15th, 1947, when he stepped out onto the playing field for the first time. This was not easy. He was heckled by players from other teams, and by some of the players on his own team. He was spat on, spiked, and received hate mail and death threats.

But through it all, he persevered, and his heart and courage paved the way for the Civil Rights Movement that Dr. King would lead in the 1960s.

Kevin L. Antoine, JD, assistant vice president, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, created the award to recognize individuals and organizations who seek to solve long-term societal challenges. This year, he said, the event also commemorated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington (see Downstate Times, Issue 18, October 2013).

Close to 300 students from local schools – Parkside Preparatory Academy and PS 235 – attended the ceremony, and Borough President Eric Adams and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand sent proclamations.

Jackie Robinson died very young, at age 53 from heart disease related to diabetes. “This is still a major problem in our community and individuals of color are still affected by this disease at very high rates,” said Dr. Ian Taylor, dean of the College of Medicine. “That is why part of Downstate’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is to help make sure that there is diversity in the health professions and that everyone in this community has access to good health care.”

See page 6 for “The Day I Met Jackie Robinson” by Dr. Gerald Deas.

On January 24, 2014 Downstate awarded its Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Leadership Award to the Jackie Robinson Foundation. The Foundation was created by Mr. Robinson’s wife, Rachel Robinson, to carry on her husband’s legacy – and does so by awarding college scholarships and intensive mentoring to minority students. Damian Travier, the Foundation’s Director of Education and Leadership Development (and whose brother is a Downstate COM graduate), accepted the award on behalf of the Foundation.

Keen to share the benefits of breastfeeding, Sarah Marshall, RN, CCCE, CBC, is on a mission. As a patient educator for the Center for Community Health Promotion and Wellness, she wants to encourage all mothers who are able to breastfeed to give their newborns the best start in life.

Since November 2012, she has been offering monthly Breastfeeding 101 workshops at a local Babies “R” Us store.

Sarah Marshall poses with a couple who attended her breastfeeding workshop at a local Babies “R” Us store.

“The event is open to all, but we focus on expecting and new mothers who are trying to start breastfeeding,” she says.

Sarah Marshall also instructs UHB physicians, nurses, and staff involved in maternal and infant care. This training is part of the hospital’s action plan for winning designation as a Baby Friendly

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Promoting Breastfeeding

Downstate’s Breastfeeding Committee recently held a contest to develop a slogan as part of a campaign to educate staff and patients on breast-feeding resources at Downstate. Staff from NS 31, NS 32, NS 35 and Suite G submitted entries.

The “winner” actually came from two people, explains Denise Lewis, RN, IBCLC, breastfeeding coordinator for Women and Children’s Services. Slogans from Leone Waltrous, MD, and Deborah Perine, RN, were combined into one catchy phrase: “Naturally the Best: Breast Beats Bottle.”

The Breastfeeding committee, which meets bi-monthly on Wednesdays, includes Ms. Lewis; Elizabeth Igboechi; Lois Lynch; Juliette Lowe; Sarah Marshall; Tao Liu; Dr. Waltrous; Althea Clement; Stephanie Store; Yvonne D’Andrade; Adina Lerer; and Stephanie Geronimo. Downstate offers a number of programs to promote and provide education on breastfeeding, as well as campus facilities for staff and visitors who wish to breastfeed while they are on campus.

Lactation Resources

Downstate offers a number of programs to promote and provide education on breastfeeding, as well as campus facilities for staff and visitors who wish to breastfeed while they are on campus.

These include:

- A weekly Breastfeeding Support Group for mothers and babies meets on Mondays, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the Suite D Conference Room, except on holidays. Any mother who has concerns about breastfeeding may attend with her infant. Call 718-270-2116 or 2088 for information.
- Daily one-on-one teaching in Suite G.
- Prenatal Education Group Teaching is held on Fridays in Suite “G” from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Offered only to prenatal and postpartum patients of Downstate. Participants have the opportunity to discuss personal or health-related concerns, with one hour devoted to breastfeeding education.
- Informational sessions for new moms being discharged (held on NS 32, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).
- A “Baby and Me” group for mothers with new babies meets once a week for 5 weeks on Tuesdays, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration is required: call 718-270-1636. Held at 394 Lenox Road in the Student Center.
- “Expecting Family Education Classes” classes are held on 4 consecutive Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Registration is required. Call 718-270-8846, or 718-270-8245. Held at 395 Lenox Road in the Health Sciences Education Building, Classroom B.
- A DVD, “123 Latch and How to Hand Express Breast Milk” has been added to closed circuit TV channel 31.

Visitors and staff can access the following resources:

- If a breastfeeding woman is visiting the emergency room or outpatient clinic and would like privacy to breastfeed, or to hand express or pump her breast, space will be provided in the ED or in suites B, D, or G.
- A Lactation Room for employees is located on the 3rd floor in room A3-469 (opposite the scrub exchange cubicle). It is mainly used for employees who need a place to hand express or pump their breast milk. This service is available to all employees. Any patient or visitor who prefers privacy for breastfeeding can also use the lactation room. To access use of the room, contact the staff on NS 32 to gain entry.

Benefits of Breastfeeding continued from front.

Hospital. UHB is currently in the final phase of the fourth pathway to becoming the third hospital in New York City to earn this status.

Ms. Marshall promotes breastfeeding because it is easier for babies to digest and helps babies develop a strong immune system that guards against infections and illness. It also helps build a bond between mother and baby.

Good word of mouth has brought Ms. Marshall invitations from other Babies “R” Us stores to teach her course at their locations. A growing number of their customers are now choosing UHB for their postpartum and family health care. As Ms. Marshall often says, “Breastfeeding benefits everyone.”
Marathon Med

When runners in the NYC Marathon run out of steam, get dehydrated, pull a ligament, or suffer other injuries, they frequently wind up in the medical tent looking for help. This year, the Downstate/Kings County ER team came out in force, with 11 volunteers led by Mark Silverberg, MD, associate residency director in Emergency Medicine.

Downstate staff have been at the Marathon’s finish line for the last four years, although individual members have volunteered more extensively. Dr. Silverberg, for example, has volunteered for the past 11 years. It’s an all-day commitment: volunteers arrive at 7:30 am, and usually stay until 3 or 4:00 pm, depending on how the race is going.

“Working at the finish line is exhilarating,” says Dr. Silverberg. “As more and more people cross the finish line, the numbers in the medical tent build, and it gets rather busy – and at the peak, it is very, very busy.”

Building Gingerbread Hospitals

Downstate students who live on campus took time off to do some building with a little bit of gingerbread. Making a gingerbread hospital is not as simple as it might sound – the dough has to be right and construction plans have to be on target. But the goal – to come together and have fun – was accomplished by all.

DID YOU KNOW?

With 960 residents and fellows training in 19 specialties and 32 subspecialties, and affiliations with 39 hospitals or other healthcare facilities – Downstate sponsors the 25th largest residency program in the country, out of 687 sponsoring institutions.
**Baby and Me**

Downstate introduced Santa to many of Brooklyn’s newest residents at the “Baby and Me” Holiday Party. The event was sponsored by Peds’ Parenting Education Program, a support group that provides practical advice to new parents on a range of topics – from breast feeding support and learning infant massage, to babyproofing the home and CPR. Almost all of the moms in the program delivered at Downstate.

**Downstate’s Renal Kids Share Holiday Fun**

Downstate’s Pediatrics Department wants to give a big “thank you” to The Starlight Foundation and Mecca Syria Temple No. 27, who together helped children in Downstate’s Pediatric Renal Program celebrate the holidays.

Both Starlight, a national foundation that seeks to improve the life and health of children, and Mecca Syria, a local Shrine organization located at the Brooklyn Masonic Temple on Clermont Avenue, are long-time supporters of Downstate and its programs for children with renal disease.

“Downstate has a large population of pediatric patients with kidney disease,” explains Lisa Smith, director of child life & parenting education. Many of them face lifelong challenges, she says, and the opportunity to have fun in a supportive environment “is especially welcome for our patients and their families.”

“We strive to be a premier fraternal organization whose primary objective is having fun and helping kids,” adds Mecca Syria Potentate Noble Preston Bellemy. “Working with Downstate has become one of our traditions.”
An ICLC Family Affair

The Infant and Child Learning Center, better known on campus as the ICLC, got its “party hearty” on at two celebrations – its Fall Festival, and Christmas Holiday party. Both events featured plenty of singing and dancing, storytelling, hugs, and laughter. The ICLC provides educational activities for Downstate’s youngest students – children from six months old to pre-K – and provides a head start on life and school skills.

Hundreds of children and their family members attend these events,” says Kathy McCormack, MS, ICLC co-executive director. “Our goal is to make sure every child feels special and included, and that every family takes a lasting memory home with them.”

Celebration for Downstate’s Youngest Students

Fall Festival
The Day I Met Jackie Robinson

By Gerald Deas, MD, MPH
Director, Health Education Communications

When I was a student in Boys High School, I scored one of the first interviews with Jackie Robinson, shortly after he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers.

How did this happen?
I was sixteen years old and a gung-ho reporter for the school newspaper. When I heard that Mr. Robinson had moved to Bedford Stuyvesant, I took my pencil and paper in hand, and walked over to his apartment, which turned out to be a small second-floor walk-up, and knocked on his door.

This was a few days after April 15, 1947 – the first day that Mr. Robinson stepped out on the field as a Dodger. I remember that day vividly, because April 15 is also my birthday.

Lo and behold – he himself answered the door! There was Jackie Robinson, in a white polo shirt and high-waisted pants. I introduced myself, told him who I was and that I wanted to interview him for the school paper, and just like that, he invited me in.

Physically, Jackie Robinson was a giant of a man – but he was soft-talking and had such a calm, easy-going personality that he put me immediately at ease.

We spent the afternoon together, with Mr. Robinson showing me memorabilia from his career in the Negro baseball leagues.

When I got back to school and turned in my story to the newspaper, everyone on its staff was shocked. They kept asking, “How did you do that?”

Jackie Robinson broke the “color line” in baseball. In trying to publish my interview with him, I found that I also faced a color barrier. At the time, the school newspaper, the Red and Black, would not run a bylined article by an African American. So the story ran, but without my name on it.

One thing I learned from Jackie Robinson is that, in life, you have to take chances. For me, I immediately applied that lesson to my own baseball career, such as it was. I was playing ball in the Kiwanis League. I decided I would take the same type of chances that Jackie Robinson would take on the field – and try my hand at stealing bases.

There was a day when I was “in the zone,” as we would say nowadays, and I stole a record number of bases. This gained a headline in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, “Deas Steals Six Bases.”

My grandmother got so upset by that headline, I almost got a whipping. No grandchild of hers was going to steal and get away with it!

I have many other great memories of baseball in Brooklyn at that time. I would take a trolley for a nickel to Ebbets Field to see the Dodgers play. It cost 65 cents to get into the nosebleed seats – meaning there was no money for popcorn or soda – but it was a treat just to be there.

On days when the Dodgers weren’t playing, I would go to Ebbets Field to watch teams in the Negro League play. At their games, I could get in for free and sit in the dug-out in return for carrying bags of bats for the players and keeping them straight throughout the game.

But my greatest Brooklyn baseball memory has got to be meeting and being inspired by this great man, Jackie Robinson. And I never forgot his advice: In life you have to take chances – something I have remembered throughout my career in medicine and public health.

DID YOU KNOW?

Home field for the Brooklyn Dodgers was located just several blocks from Downstate. The stadium was located at Bedford Avenue and Sullivan Place, now the site of the Ebbets Field Apartments complex, named for the stadium.
Downstate’s Biotechnology Incubator Receives International Attention

Recently, members of a trade delegation from the Putuo District of Shanghai, China – one of the most advanced and affluent high tech regions in that country – visited Downstate to learn more about our biotechnology initiatives. The visit was facilitated by Ian Taylor, MD, senior vice president for biomedical education and research; Eva Cramer, PhD, vice president for biotechnology & scientific affairs; and David Norton, executive director of Downstate’s Advanced Biotechnology Incubator, along with representatives of the Asian American Business Development Center in New York City.

And the Great Rankings Keep Coming In:

**Downstate’s Stroke Services Score in Top 10 % of Hospitals Nationally**

According to a report published by Comparion Medical Analytics, Inc., Downstate’s Stroke Services ranked as 249th nationally out of a field of more than 3,000 hospitals, putting us in the 90th percentile for excellence and patient safety. When compared solely to New York State hospitals, we ranked 8th out of 176 hospitals. Comparion’s ranking system uses the same methodologies as the Hospital Quality Alliance and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

**Dr. Richard Rosenfeld #2 in the U.S. and #9 in the World for Otitis Media**

Downstate’s chair of otolaryngology, Dr. Richard Rosenfeld, ranks among the world’s leading experts in otitis media, and #2 in the United States, according to Expertscape, a data-driven healthcare tool for consumers that tracks worldwide data. The tool was developed by Dr. John Sotos, a Johns Hopkins-trained cardiologist and flight surgeon who was medical technical adviser to the TV series “House.”

**Becker's Review: Dr. Rebecca Twersky is One of 101 Leaders to Know in the ASC Industry**

Becker’s ASC Review, which provides practical business, legal and clinical guidance for Ambulatory Surgery Centers, includes Rebecca Twersky, MD, MPH, among those holding a leadership role in an ASC and who have made significant contributions to growing the ASC sector.

Know of a rank, accreditation, or other honor that the Downstate community should know about? Send it to ewatson@downstate.edu
Dawn Morton-Rias, EdD, PA-C, professor and dean of health related professions, was recognized for community service by Borough President Eric Adams and Assemblymembers Rhoda Jacobs and Karim Camara at a banquet hosted by Strong Movement, Inc., an organization that encourages communities to embrace physical activity and build healthier lifestyles.

On January 23, 2014, Dr. Mario Vassalle and Dr. Kiyomi Koizumi awarded the 41st annual “Chandler McCuskey Brooks Award” for outstanding achievement in the Basic Sciences to Justine Y. Kim, COM 2016, during a brief ceremony in the Physiology Department. The Award included a certificate citing Ms. Kim’s “Outstanding Performance in the Basic Sciences,” a copy of the book, Chandler McCuskey Brooks: the Scientist and the Man, and a check. As a personal gift, Dr. Vassalle also gave Ms. Kim a copy of his book of poems, Lost Emotions.

At its 165th plenary meeting in October, the SUNY University Faculty Senate unanimously elected Henry Flax, EdD, residency education coordinator, Department of Pathology, to serve as the sector head for the Health Science Centers Sector for the 2013-2014 academic year. In this role, Dr. Flax will convene meetings of the representatives of the five health science campuses (Buffalo, the College of Optometry, Stony Brook, Upstate Medical University, and Downstate) and communicate the sector’s concerns directly to Chancellor Zimpher. Dr. Flax also serves as a member of the University Faculty Senate Expanded Executive Committee for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Eli A. Friedman, MD, distinguished teaching professor of medicine at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award in Hemodialysis on February 8, at the Thirty-fourth Annual Conference on Dialysis, presented by the University of Missouri School of Medicine. The ceremony will take place in Atlanta, Georgia.

Suite D now opens at 8 am for sick visits for Suite D patients

No appointment is needed

Not sure if you need to come in?
Get in touch with a doctor at night or on weekends – Call (718) 615-3948
and one of our doctors will call you back.

infants ★ children ★ adolescents
(If you think your child has a medical emergency or can’t wait, take your child to the nearest emergency room)

Discharging a Patient Who Needs Follow-Up Primary Care?
Call 718-270-7207

for an appointment with Internal Medicine Associates (IMA) or Family Medicine.

IMA can frequently accommodate Day-of-Discharge or Next Day appointments.