

Mather Hospital's

Housecalls

A PUBLICATION OF JOHN T. MATHER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL • SPRING 2015

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Eye Surgery Restores Vision to Legally Blind Man

Sam Narouz sees everything more clearly these days. The faces of his two children are clearer. He even jokes with his wife that he can see all the dust in their house now. After years of wearing progressively stronger glasses and his eyesight deteriorating to the point where he was legally blind, Narouz, 57, of South Setauket now reads and drives without any eyewear.

“I feel like I am a newborn child,” said Narouz, who works for the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. “I want to enjoy my life. I want to enjoy people. I was blind and now I see!”

Narouz underwent bilateral cataract surgery and lens implants by Vincent Basilice, MD, of The Ophthalmic Center (TOC Eye) of East Setauket. The two separate procedures were performed at Mather Hospital a week apart in January and February 2015.

“To be able to get rid of his cataracts and also get rid of his glasses as part of a standard surgery, Sam couldn’t be happier. When you’re dealing with a very mature lens there are all kinds of pitfalls, so I’m very happy it worked out the way it did,” said Basilice.

Narouz said he had been wearing glasses since he was about 12 years old in his native Egypt, but for the last seven to eight years his vision had become noticeably worse. “I went to a couple of doctors and they said my eyes were very bad but they couldn’t do anything,” he said. “They said you have to wear glasses. It became worse and worse. I couldn’t see to drive at night or in the rain or snow. My job requires me to do a lot of driving, so I spent a lot of time feeling anxious and frustrated.”

He asked his daughter to research local eye specialists with good ratings that accepted his insurance, and she recommended TOC Eye.

“Dr. Basilice told me that I actually was legally blind and I felt my



“I feel like a newborn child,” noted Sam Narouz, shown above holding a pair of his now unnecessary eyeglasses. At left, Vincent Basilice, MD with Narouz after his cataract surgery.

heart sink. He told me that I had very progressed cataracts in both eyes and was astonished that no one had ever noticed them. He told me he could remove them and that he was fairly certain I would be able to see without glasses. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing.”

According to Basilice, a cataract is a naturally occurring, progressive clouding of the lens inside the eye that can cause patients extreme difficulty with night driving, especially in the rain, and can severely reduce a person’s quality of vision for both distance and reading. The cloudy lens in the eye doesn’t allow light to focus appropriately in the back of the eye.

“Contrary to some beliefs, a cataract is not a film or covering on the outside of the eye,” said Basilice. “It is also not remedied by taking pills, drops, or having laser treatment. A cataract must be

surgically removed from the inside of the eye, and replaced with a lens implant called an Intra-Ocular Lens or IOL. When an IOL is placed into the eye, sometimes the need for certain glasses can be eliminated.”

During surgery, the cataract is broken-up via ultrasound and removed from the eye, he said. The IOL is then placed into the eye in the same place where the old cataract was located. Each IOL is calculated specifically for the individual patient.

The implant that is placed in the eye can often eliminate nearsightedness or farsightedness, as well as astigmatism.

“The surgery went well and in a few days I could see. Really see! I could see my children’s faces clearer. To me, this was nothing short of a miracle,” said Narouz. ☺

“I could see my children’s faces clearer. To me, this was nothing short of a miracle.”

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Looking Forward to Walking Again Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Heals Foot Wounds

This spring, Caryn Composanto is looking forward to taking a walk.

The 49-year-old from South Setauket has been getting around on a scooter for months because of a wound on the bottom of her left foot. Thanks to a treatment plan that included Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, Composanto will soon be standing on two feet.

Diagnosed with diabetes a dozen years ago and with a neuropathy in her right foot six years later, Composanto developed “charcot foot,” a condition that caused weakening of the bones in her foot. As it progressed, the joints collapsed and caused the foot to take on an abnormal shape.

When Composanto took her son to Universal Studios in late September 2014, she developed a blister at the bottom of her foot, but the neuropathy prevented her from feeling the pain. By November, the blister developed into a wound that abscessed to the bone. Composanto was admitted to Mather Hospital where she was treated by Daniel Stern, DPM, a podiatrist. While she was in the hospital, she started getting around on a



knee scooter that allows her to walk with her left leg while her right leg is bent at the knee, resting on a pad and ensuring that her injured foot is elevated.

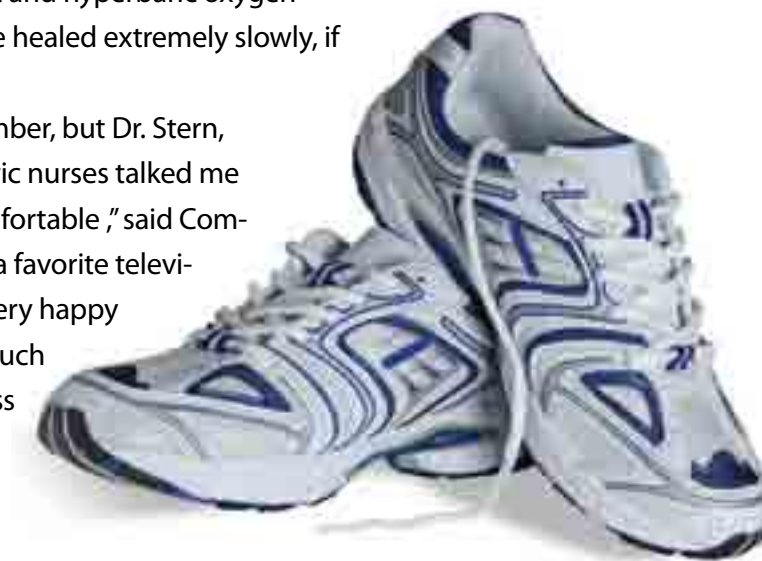
“People think the scooter looks fun, but it really is an inconvenience, especially this winter with all the snow and ice,” said Composanto. “I’m really looking forward to walking normally.”

Stern consulted with Joseph White, MD, Director of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit at Mather Hospital on treatment for Composanto. She was put on a treatment regimen of two hours a day, five days a week for six weeks. By March, Composanto’s wound was almost completely healed.

“For wounds to heal, there needs to be oxygenated blood, but with diabetes, small vessel disease can prevent oxygen delivery,” said White. “Treatment in the hyperbaric chamber increases the oxygen in the blood stream bringing it to places it couldn’t previously reach. This alerts the body that there is a wound and triggers the creation of new blood vessels, all of which speeds healing.”

Without the combination of wound treatment and hyperbaric oxygen therapy, Composanto’s wound likely would have healed extremely slowly, if at all, White added.

“I was nervous at first about being in the chamber, but Dr. Stern, Dr. White, Dr. [Kenneth] Hirsch and the hyperbaric nurses talked me through everything and made me feel very comfortable,” said Composanto. “They even got me the entire series of a favorite television show to watch during my treatments. I’m very happy with the outcome, and I have to say that it was such a personal experience I am actually going to miss going there.” ☺



About Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT)

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is used to treat a variety of medical conditions including decompression sickness (the bends), carbon monoxide poisoning; non-healing wounds, especially in diabetics; and soft tissue injury or infection due to radiation treatments (including radiation cystitis, radiation colitis and other affected radiation areas). HBOT also helps to preserve skin grafts and flaps, and has been shown to be effective in treating patients with sudden blindness due to retinal artery occlusion.

Patients receive treatment in comfortable, pressurized chambers that deliver 100 percent oxygen. As the increased oxygen saturates the red blood cells as well as blood plasma, it circulates throughout the body, reaching hypoxic (deprived of oxygen) tissue that the body was previously unable to recognize as in need of healing. Increased oxygen levels also stimulate the body to release the growth factors and stem cells that promote the healing of chronic wounds.

Mather Hospital’s Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Unit is staffed by physicians board-certified in hyperbaric medicine and a Magnet™ recognized nursing staff.

For information, call 631-476-2768 or visit www.matherhospital.org/hyperbarics. ☺

Vascular Surgery Gets Patients Back on Their Feet

With warmer weather comes the urge to get outdoors, to walk, jog, ride a bike and play ball, all the things we've been dreaming of all winter. But painful legs and feet may keep some indoors or on the sidelines.



David Luc is ready to get out and enjoy warmer weather.

That pain may be due to peripheral arterial disease (PAD), a common problem caused by a narrowing or blockage of arteries that reduces blood flow to arms and legs. Because your leg muscles don't receive enough blood, you can get painful cramps when walking or exercising.

David Luc of Centereach knows all about that pain. What started as a small ache on the back of his left leg about a year ago became progressively

worse. "The pain would just engulf the entire lower portion of my leg and then move up my leg to the buttock," said Luc, 65, who works at the Apple Store. "The longer I walked the more the pain intensified to the point I couldn't walk. As soon as I stopped, the pain would dissipate."

His doctor recommended that he see vascular surgeon Kara Kvilekval, MD. She showed him sonograms of his two legs, the right pumping blood throughout, the lower left having virtually no blood flow beneath the knee. Kvilekval decided to use a new technique called an atherectomy, described as a "roto-rooter" of the artery that scrapes plaque off artery walls. That was followed by a medicated balloon to open the blood vessel.

Within a day after the procedure, Luc's lower left leg was feeling better. "The leg itself is absolutely perfect," he said. "I can feel blood flowing through my ankle again. It's like a light switch was turned on."

"The whole process from being seen for the first time to walking out of the hospital was 48 hours, that's pretty remarkable to have your lifestyle change that fast."

-Cornelius McDonnell

Cornelius McDonnell of East Setauket was also slowed by PAD. A retired language teacher, the 96-year-old teaches two classes a week for other retirees at Stony Brook University. But last year he began having problems with his left foot. "I was getting such pains trying to walk," he said.

McDonnell's podiatrist recommended he see Ahmad Bhatti, MD, vascular surgeon. Bhatti discovered that McDonnell was not getting sufficient blood flow to his foot. Bhatti solved the problem by placing stents into arteries in McDonnell's foot to restore the blood flow. "The whole process from being seen for the first time to walking out of the hospital was 48 hours," McDonnell said. "That's pretty remarkable to have your lifestyle change that fast."

Within a few days the pain was gone, McDonnell said, and he is now back to his regular active schedule, teaching classes and riding his exercise bike.

Why PAD Happens

The most common cause of PAD is atherosclerosis, a buildup of plaque on the inside of arteries. Plaque is made of extra cholesterol, calcium, and other material in your blood that builds up in the walls of your arteries. Plaque buildup can be caused by high cholesterol or high blood pressure. Every part of your body needs oxygen-rich blood. Plaque buildup prevents blood from flowing freely and starves the muscles and other tissues in the lower



Cornelius McDonnell with his wife, Catherine, at their East Setauket home.

body. Symptoms include painful cramping in your hip, thigh or calf muscles after activity, such as walking or climbing stairs; numbness or weakness in the legs; sores on your toes, feet or legs that won't heal; and a change in the color of your legs.

PAD can often be treated through increasing exercise, quitting smoking and eating a healthier diet. In some cases, PAD may be treated with aspirin or other medications that prevent blood clots from forming, lower cholesterol levels and control high blood pressure or control diabetes.

In cases of severe PAD, surgical options include bypass surgery or angioplasty during which a catheter is inserted into the blocked artery and a balloon is inflated to improve blood flow. A small, expandable tube or stent may be placed in a blood vessel to help keep it open. Medications to dissolve blood clots that block an artery may also be used.

In addition to high cholesterol, risk factors for PAD include smoking, diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. Those over 50 and those with a family history of PAD, heart disease or stroke are also at greater risk of PAD.

"PAD can range from silent to lifestyle limiting symptoms to gangrene and amputation to, in worst case scenarios, death," Bhatti said. "It's a very unrecognized and underdiagnosed problem. People often attribute their symptoms to old age, their spine or their conditioning. If you have any symptoms in your lower extremities, you should be evaluated by a vascular surgeon." PAD is also a marker for blockages in arteries elsewhere in the body, such as the carotid and coronary arteries, which can lead to strokes and heart attacks.

Luc said he wishes he had had the procedure on his left leg earlier. "My advice is when you can't walk very far because of pain, see a doctor right away," he said, also praising the care he received while at Mather Hospital.

Now he's ready to get out and enjoy the warmer weather. "I'm looking forward to walking without pain, getting back to the little things you never think of," he said. "It will allow me to work out in the yard, especially now that it's springtime." ☺

Find a Physician

Search for primary care physicians and specialists in your area at matherhospital.org/physician



Should You Be Screened for Vascular Disease?

According to the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS), vascular disease is among the leading causes of death in the United States. Millions of Americans are at risk, but because the disease is generally asymptomatic until a catastrophic event occurs, many are unaware.

Certain factors increase the risk of vascular disease including:

- increasing age
- male gender
- white race, smoking
- family history of aneurysms
- history of other vascular aneurysms
- hypertension
- atherosclerotic diseases
- cerebrovascular disease
- high cholesterol

Talk to your physician about these screenings:

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

- One-time ultrasound screening for AAA is recommended for all men 65 years and older. Screening men as early as 55 years is appropriate for those with a family history of AAA.
- One-time ultrasound screening for AAA is recommended for all women at or older than 65 years with a family history of AAA or who have smoked.

Stroke Risk

- Ultrasound scan of the carotid arteries to assess stroke risk.


Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

- Blood pressure measurements in the legs to identify PAD and risk of heart disease. ☺

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Low Dose CT Screening Can Detect Lung Cancer at its Earliest Stage

It had been more than 14 years since Barbara Swilosky quit smoking when a postcard arrived offering lung cancer screening for smokers and ex-smokers at Mather Hospital. "I was going to throw it away," said Swilosky, 61, of Flanders, but her longtime partner urged her to follow up. Recalling how her younger brother had died at age 55 of lung cancer after years of smoking, Swilosky met with her doctor and received a prescription for a screening which involved a low-radiation dose CT scan at Mather Hospital. Mather Hospital has been offering lung cancer screening for over a year and is accredited by the American College of Radiology as a designated screening center. The program has lowered the radiation dose to the lowest possible level, now averaging below 1 mSv. (A CT of the abdomen and pelvis averages about 10 mSv.)



Barbara Swilosky

Swilosky's screening showed a nodule, and she was referred to pulmonologist Daniel Baram, MD for further evaluation. Though many nodules found during screening are not cancerous and can be safely followed, her nodule was deemed suspicious for cancer and she underwent further testing.

On November 18, 2014 – fifteen years and a day from the day she stopped smoking – Swilosky underwent surgery with thoracic surgeon Gregory Brevetti, MD. Using the latest surgical techniques including intraoperative electronavigational tattoo marking and video assisted thoracoscopic surgery, the nodule was biopsied and shown to be cancer; Brevetti completed the surgery by removing the upper lobe of her right lung.

Swilosky considers herself very fortunate. "The lymph

nodes they removed all came back negative. I needed no chemotherapy or radiation," she said. "I feel like my younger brother was watching over me." Her chance of cure is very high given the early stage at which she was diagnosed.

For more information about Mather's Lung Cancer Screening Program, contact Eileen Zaoutis, RN, nurse navigator at 631-686-2500. ☎

Should You Be Screened?

You should consider having a lung cancer screening if you are:

- 55-80 years old AND have smoked at least one pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years or more and currently smoke or quit in the last 15 years.
- A smoker as young as 50 with additional risk factors and have smoked at least one pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years.

Ask your primary care physician if a lung screening can benefit you. When considering a facility for the screening, check that it has:

- ✓ Designation by the American College of Radiology for lung screenings
- ✓ 320-slice CT scanner that utilizes low-dose radiation
- ✓ Nurse navigator
- ✓ Multidisciplinary team in the event of positive finding
- ✓ Lung Cancer Alliance Screening Center of Excellence membership. ☎

Healthy Competition Benefits Fortunato Breast Health Center



Doctors and faculty members from Mather Hospital's Internal Medicine Residency Program put their collective muscle to good use in March. They participated in a Push-Up Competition in support of the Fortunato Breast Health Center. The 10-minute contest raised more than \$1,100 for the Breast Center. The Fortunato Breast Health Center performed 10,423 mammograms in 2014. ☎



Are you at risk of developing lymphedema?

If you've had cancer and you've had lymph nodes removed, you may be at risk of developing lymphedema, a swelling of the limbs due to an interruption of the lymphatic circulation. Attend Mather Hospital's free lymphedema screening and educational program **Saturday, May 30, 10 am in Conference Rooms 1 & 2 to find out more.**

Call 631-686-7648 to register.

Town of Brookhaven Honors Dr. Kolasa

Alice Kolasa, DO, (center) Director of the Palliative Medicine Program at Mather Hospital was honored by the Town of Brookhaven in the category of medicine at its annual Women's Recognition Awards. Kolasa joined the Mather staff in 2012 as the founding director of the program, which provides care for terminally or chronically ill patients and support for family and caregivers by coordinating care. Attending the ceremony were Phyllis Macchio, APN, Palliative Medicine Nurse Practitioner, and Mather Hospital President Kenneth Roberts. ☎



Volunteering is Good for the Heart

A 2014 study by Carnegie Mellon University found that adults 50 and older who volunteered on a regular basis were less likely to develop high blood pressure than non-volunteers. This latest study supports earlier studies on the benefits of volunteering which found:

- Americans over age 60 who volunteer reported lower disability and higher levels of well-being relative to non-volunteers (Morrow-Howell, et al., 2003)
- Volunteers experienced increased brain activity and the preservation of cognitive function (Carlson et al., 2009)
- After two years, volunteers had reduced levels of depression and functional limitations while a similar-aged control group had increases in both categories (Hong and Morrow-Howell, 2010)

To explore volunteer opportunities at Mather Hospital, contact the Volunteer Services Department at 631-476-2873 or visit matherhospital.org/volunteer. ☎



MJM Plumbing raised more than \$4,000 for the Families Walk & Run for Hope during the Rocky Point St. Patrick's Parade. The Mangam family—Jim, Sr., Jim, Mike and Bill—encouraged passersby to make contributions. Emily Mangam and her friends (shown left) raised money by making and selling hair ribbons. Also supporting the effort were My Country 96.1 radio, Diamond Security, Echo Interiors, MS Air, TRITEC Building Company, A1 Reliable Demolition, Robert DeRosa Masonry and Hot Hair in Coram. ☎

THANK YOU!

Resolve Diabetes, Sleep Apnea & Hypertension With Weight Loss Surgery

Arif Ahmad, MD, Director of the Bariatric Center of Excellence at Mather Hospital, leads free informational seminars on weight loss surgery. Please call 631-686-7990 to reserve your seat today.

Monday, June 1, 7:00 pm, Mather, Conference Rooms 3,4 & 5

Tuesday, June 9, 6:30 pm, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Saturday, June 20, 10 am, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Saturday, July 11, 11 am, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Wednesday, July 22, 6:30 pm, 1228 East Main Street, Riverhead

Tuesday, July 28, 6:30 pm, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Tuesday, August 11, 6:30 pm, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Wednesday, August 19, 6:30 pm, 1228 East Main Street, Riverhead

Tuesday, August 25, 6:30 pm, Mather, Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Schedule is subject to change.

Free valet parking available at Mather Hospital for seminar attendees.

For more information, additional dates and/or registration, call 631-686-7990 or visit matherhospital.org/bariatrics. ☎

Mather Hospital's 2015

The Great Money Ball Drop Raffle

\$10,000 Grand Prize!

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Ball Drop – June 1, 2015

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To order chances and review all Raffle Rules and Regulations online:

matherhospital.org/moneyball or call (631)476-2723

Winner is responsible for all fees and taxes associated with the acceptance of the prize. In the event that less than 500 golf balls are sold by May 26, 2015, the drawing becomes an 80/20 drawing with the winner receiving 80 percent of the total dollar amount of net proceeds.
Raffle license ID #47-202-180-07439