

# BRIGHTON MEDICAL CENTER Quarterly

S U M M E R / F A L L 1 9 9 3

## October 9 "Family Affair" One-Stop Shopping for Community Services

Children can try out a stethoscope, take their blood pressure or bring their teddy bear in for a check up. Parents can learn about daycare services, aerobics classes, drug prevention and a wide range of other social and educational services available to families in the Greater Portland area.

It all happens October 9 when the day-long "Family Affair" sponsored by Brighton Medical Center, University of Southern Maine (USM) Childcare Services and the YWCA will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the USM Gymnasium. The event is a first for the three organizations, who have teamed up to offer families a day of fun and health education.

Festivities will also include entertainment, face painting, finger painting and more than 50 exhibits by community organizations.

One of the more popular exhibits promises to be the "Teddy Bear Clinic," a mock doctor's office where children can bring their favorite doll or stuffed animal for a check-up.

"We want health care to be interesting, not scary," says Dennise Whitley, vice president for community services at Brighton Medical Center. "Kids like to touch things. When they're able to touch and feel the kinds of equipment we have here at the hospital, they're less afraid."

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## Jacuzzi Provides Needed Relief to Women in Labor

When Linda Smit was in labor last April and a nurse asked if she wanted to take advantage of Brighton's new jacuzzi, she didn't know how it could possibly help the pain.

"I was very skeptical," said Smit, of Biddeford. But she agreed, reluctantly, to get into the large whirlpool in the maternity unit. "I didn't think it would help at all."

But after being helped into the tepid, 100-degree tub, she suddenly became a believer.

"The minute I sat in that jacuzzi, the pains stopped. The minute I got out, they started again," Smit said.

But in addition to the pain relief, the jacuzzi had actually speeded up her labor. "When I got in, I was 4 or 5 centimeters dilated," Smit said. "When I got out 20 minutes later, they checked me and I was 7. And the contractions were coming harder and harder."

Soon after, she gave birth to a 9-pound, 10-ounce baby boy.

"I was in labor a total of four hours. I'm convinced the jacuzzi relaxed me. It was so nice — they turned the lights down for me. It wasn't even like being in labor," she added.

In the past 15 years, water therapy has been used to help women in labor relax and speed up contractions. In the buoyancy of heated water women experience support for tense muscles. That increased comfort translates into less anxiety and reduced adrenaline production, which decreases pain.

The first in Southern Maine, Brighton installed the jacuzzi earlier this year, remodeling an equipment



Regina Chaisson, an obstetrics registered nurse tends to one of the many women who choose to take advantage of Brighton's new jacuzzi in the maternity unit.

room on the maternity floor to make room for the large whirlpool.

Women in labor can sit in the large, two-person tub for up to 20 minutes at a time. But the water therapy stops short of delivery. Unlike the Leboyer method made famous in the 1970s where women actually give birth in water, the jacuzzi is used only as a relaxation tool during labor.

Although women are advised during pregnancy to avoid hot tubs, the jacuzzi at Brighton is kept tepid enough to not harm the mother or child.

"We also use the jacuzzi to rule out false labor," says Regina Chaisson, an OB registered nurse (RN). Because the jacuzzi seems to speed up contractions, women who come in thinking they are in labor can get in the whirlpool to determine whether the contractions are real or not."

"When they get out and we check them, and there's no change in the cervix, we know it's false labor," says Chaisson.

Fewer women use pain medications when in the whirlpool because the hydrotherapy can produce the same effect as medications do in reducing pain.

The jacuzzi is used about 10 times a week, Chaisson says, and about 75 percent of the women having babies at Brighton now take advantage of the whirlpool.

"We're the first hospital in the area to have one," she added. "Other area hospitals have taken an interest in the jacuzzi and even made site visits."

Although pain medication is always available, Chaisson says the jacuzzi is advantageous because while it controls the pain it also speeds up labor, which means less overall discomfort.

"We try this first to prolong giving pain medication that sometimes prolongs labor," she said. "And many women have said it's the only thing that made them comfortable during labor. Patients know a lot more than they used to about childbirth. We're seeing less drugs and more awareness of how to manage the pain."

"It's not a cure-all," says Maile Roper, D.O., one of the family practitioners on the "Brighton Babies" maternity unit. "But anything that relaxes women in labor is helpful —

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# Volunteers—the Best and the Brightest Contribution at Brighton

**V**olunteering with Cape Elizabeth Rescue wasn't exciting enough for Bill Simons, a trained emergency medical technician (EMT) who retired from banking in 1984 and moved to Maine from Massachusetts.

So he became a volunteer in the emergency room (ER) at Brighton Medical Center.

"I requested the ER," said Simons. "I love it in there because there's such a variety of cases coming in. And you get to be with patients."

Simons now spends two days a week in the ER, helping the emergency room nurses, doctors and staff replace supplies, make up stretchers, check oxygen tanks and take vital signs. As an EMT with more than 100 hours of training, he can do more than most volunteers and relishes the additional responsibility.

"They need me," says the witty but dedicated volunteer. Always thinking of a good line, his response was quick and direct when asked why men should volunteer at Brighton.

"The wife needs her space," said Simons. Then he got serious. "No, it's very hard after working 35 or 40 years to retire and suddenly do nothing. Volunteering is great because if I want to take off to travel, I can. When you draw a paycheck, they own you."

Formerly a personnel director at a bank in Massachusetts, Simons said he initially became an EMT to be able to better serve his company and its employees in an emergency situation.

"Then I thought it was silly to have the training, but do nothing with it, so I volunteered at Cape Rescue," Simons added, who is still involved with the organization but no longer as an active member.

One of 70 volunteers at Brighton Medical Center, Simons has found what others who put in anywhere from three to 25 hours a week at the

hospital find—that volunteering at Brighton Medical Center can be an unexpectedly rewarding experience.

Irene McCarthy has been coming in to help type and file for 10 years. Now a regular with the marketing department, Irene used to go from department to department, helping out wherever she could in a clerical area. Unlike Simons, Irene didn't want to deal directly with patients.

"I didn't really feel capable of dealing with patients," says the retired legal secretary. "And once they found out I could type and file, that's what I've done."

Irene also came into Brighton in search of something more in her retirement.

"I knew there had to be more than chasing the dust around the house," says Irene, who prefers Brighton because of the small, friendly atmosphere.

"They really appreciate you here," she added. "It's like a second family. I'd

get lost in a bigger hospital."

Community Relations Director Jane Torres, who oversees the volunteer program at Brighton, says the program is designed to give back to the many volunteers who give to Brighton.

For example, in addition to training and an orientation, volunteers are given a free meal pass, free parking, membership to the credit union and

are formally recognized each April for their contribution.

New volunteers are always needed and Torres says the application process is a simple one. Applicants fill out a questionnaire, have an interview and then, if there is an appropriate opening, are placed and provided with an orientation session.

"Right now, we need volunteers in the transport area, front desk and in clerical," said Torres. "Because Brighton is smaller, people aren't as intimidated as they may be in a larger facility. A hospital isn't a frightening place. It's like a family."

To learn more about volunteering at Brighton, persons may call the volunteer office at 879-8035 for an application.

No one type of person makes the best volunteer, although Torres says the retired "have a lot to offer and have a lot of energy." She also said she's seen an increase in the number of men volunteering in recent years, who now make up about a fourth of the Brighton volunteers. "They're a great addition to the team," she said.

Another vital part of the volunteer program at Brighton are the Telephone Pioneers, a group of active and retired telephone workers who perform a variety of community service functions in Maine, with chapters throughout the U.S. For Brighton, they install the Lifeline emergency response units that enable those with a medical condition to call for help.

Blair Cummings, 68, a retired forecaster for New England Telephone, says the best part of volunteering in the program is meeting all the people who Brighton serves.

"A person gets a lot of self-satisfaction out of it," Cummings said. "You're helping people who really need it."

A Telephone Pioneer since 1950, Cummings also started the Vial of Life program in Portland in 1979. He now volunteers on an on-call basis, along with three other pioneers, installing the Lifeline units and explaining to new subscribers how they work.

Howard Skillings began volunteering after a 20-year career in banking. A former vice president of Maine Savings Bank, Skillings joined Brighton less than a year ago and already works four days a week.

"I've always liked to be busy," says the former executive who took an early retirement option when the bank went under.

"I was too young to retire, but I wanted to do something," said Skillings, 58. "I had some time on my hands and I hadn't found what I really wanted to do jobwise."

He chose volunteering at Brighton because "a hospital is like a community and I like people and dealing with people." He also volunteers at Maine Medical Center and for Regional Transportation.

Skillings, like other volunteers, is a welcome addition to the Brighton central transport unit where he handles phones and coordinates wheelchair transports throughout the hospital during his shift.

"It's quite rewarding," he says. "It really makes you appreciate what you have. I think more people should consider it. Giving back to the community is important."



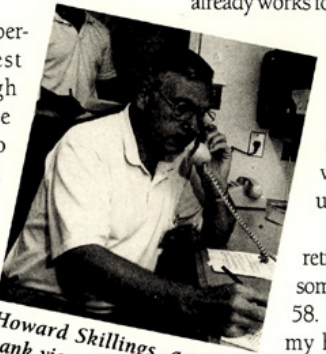
*Bill Simons is a retired banker and EMT who just can't quit. He volunteers in Brighton's emergency room.*



*Irene McCarthy has been volunteering at Brighton for 10 years. She provides clerical support for the marketing department.*



*Blair Cummings, a retired forecaster for New England Telephone, uses his years of experience to install Brighton's Lifeline units.*



*Howard Skillings, a retired bank vice president, now volunteers for Brighton's central transport unit.*





## Visiting Chefs Give Cafeteria a Flair for Food

Hospital cafeterias have come a long way since the days of meat, potato and green bean options. But Brighton has made theirs even more appealing by offering a gourmet lunch one day each month prepared by a visiting chef from the area.

Professional chefs from restaurants throughout Greater Portland and gourmet cooks among the Brighton staff are taking part in the hospital's "Visiting Chefs Day" offered on the third or fourth Wednesday of every month.

Imagine having pan-seared salmon fillets, fresh steamed fiddlehead ferns with walnuts and orange

butter, stir fry vegetables and russet potatoes. At a hospital? For \$3.50?

That's what staff and visitors were offered on the visiting chef day in May when the chef from the Channel Crossing Restaurant came to share his expertise with Brighton.

"It's a neat opportunity to break up the monotony that often occurs in a food service environment, no matter how much you try to vary the menu," says food service manager John Taylor, part of the Marriott team that supplies food service to Brighton.

"I thought it would be a good



idea to develop a network of other restaurants and hotels in the area, to also provide them with an opportunity for

the public to sample their menus," added Taylor.

A Marriott program, Taylor says the Brighton visiting chefs project has been so successful it will be featured in the next issue of "Marriott World," a publication with worldwide distribution.

"My district manager has also used the Brighton program as a model for other food service departments throughout the region," Taylor added.

When Back Bay Grill chef Mike Gaudette came to Brighton, the menu consisted of roasted breast of chicken with a choice of a red onion, vegetable or blue cheese cream sauce, roasted garlic whipped potatoes and fresh steamed parsnips.

"It was great. They've all been great," said Taylor. "And our staff line up to sample the food."

On visiting chefs day, about 475 people come through the cafeteria for the lunch time meal. On a normal day, that number is about 410.

"About twice as many people choose the hot entree on the day we have the gourmet meal than on normal days," Taylor says.

In the summer, due to the tourism demands on area restaurants, Brighton staff who are gourmet cooks provide the cooking and recipes. **■**

## Family Affair,

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The USM booth will give out information on the department's three daycare centers, after school programs, vacation camps and new programs for children with pervasive developmental disorders.

"Parents today need all the information they can get on the services available to them in the community," added Helene Gerstein-Sky, director of childcare services at USM. "Many couples where both spouses work don't have the time to research these issues on their own. This is like one-stop shopping."

The YWCA will provide a booth and demonstrations on aerobics and their other fitness programs.

"We're really glad to have a chance to take part in the event as it promotes the kind of health and fitness programs for families that we provide at the YWCA," said Joanne Sullivan, the YWCA public relations and membership director.

"Family Affair" exhibitors will cover health, education, cultural activities, fitness issues and social services programs.

"It's the most comprehensive program of its kind," said Gerstein-Sky. **■**

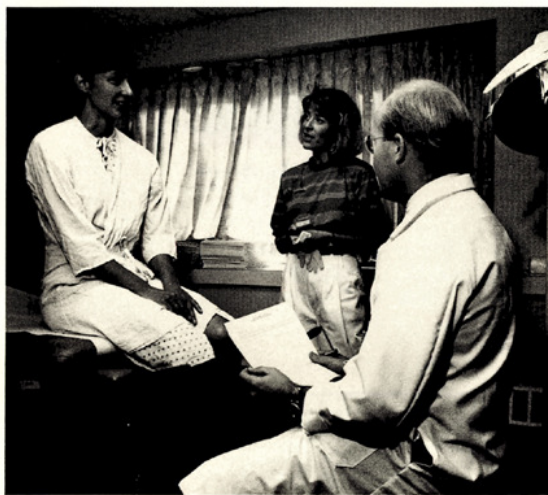
## October Events Focus on Fitness and Women's Health

October will be a busy month at Brighton. The hospital is one of the major sponsors of the Maine Marathon and Half Marathon and the Sports and Fitness Festival along with Maine Medical Center, Westbrook Hospital, New England Rehabilitation Hospital, University of Southern Maine (USM) Lifeline, Saucony Shoe, the Bay Club and Healthsource.

The sports and fitness festival will be held in conjunction with the Marathon and Half Marathon at the USM Gymnasium on October 2 and 3.

Seminars on health and nutrition and exhibits on sports equipment and apparel, along with cholesterol screening, blood pressure checks, Tai-chi and mountain climbing demonstrations are just some of the 96 exhibits planned for the symposium, according to race director Dave Shennan of the Maine Track Club.

Runners interested in registering for the October 3 marathons may call the race director, Dave Shennan, at 725-0716.



*Ben Russell, D.O., and Stephanie Cousins, R.N., consult patient Robin Walden, one of the many women participating in the last Women's Wellness Weekend.*

to make health care more affordable and accessible to women of all socioeconomic backgrounds, the Women's Wellness Weekend allows participants to see a doctor, have a pap smear, even get a mammography, all for one fee of \$25. Women with or without insurance can take advantage of the clinic.

This year, the appointments will be scheduled from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, October 22 and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, October 23. For additional information, call 879-8035.

As women's health issues have received more attention in recent years, more and more women are taking steps to ensure they are healthy. Events like this enable women

who perhaps have been delaying getting a check up to take care of it for one low fee. **■**

### WOMEN'S WELLNESS WEEKEND

Brighton will host its fourth Women's Wellness Weekend to be held October 22 and 23. In an effort



## Jacuzzi,

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whether it's a shower, intrathecal (spinal medications) or the jacuzzi. And we give everyone those options."

Dr. Roper says the type of woman who benefits the most from the jacuzzi tends to be the "one who wants to do everything right. She's read the books, she's learned the breathing. So when she gets into labor and it's so, so intense, she gets scared. And the more scared she gets, the more intense the labor. The jacuzzi works wonders to relax her."

Dr. Roper also says not all women should expect to gain the same benefits from the whirlpool. Each person manages pain in a different way.

"Our goal is to help women be comfortable in labor, whatever it takes," she added. "Because when they're comfortable, they'll have an easier, faster delivery with less medications. And that helps the baby." (1)

## ▼ 1993 Annual Appeal ▼

Dear Friend,

Brighton Medical Center's 1993 Annual Appeal is underway. This year's goal is \$80,000. With your help, we will be successful. Vast changes are looming on the health-care horizon this year. You have only to read or listen to the daily news to be aware of the dialogue that has intensified in the nation's Capitol and in our own State House in Augusta.

As the discussions continue, significant

changes in the health care delivery system are expected. During this time, Brighton Medical Center will continue to enhance those services and programs for which we have been praised. We are also ready to accept new challenges as we provide a more accessible, cost-effective quality family health care system.

Your gift to the 1993 Annual Appeal will assure that the appropriate resources will be available as we continue

to fulfill our commitment to our patients and the community.

The Brighton Medical Center Board of Trustees is made up of volunteers, business leaders and physicians. Join them in helping Brighton Medical Center continue to offer community services such as prenatal care for uninsured women and inexpensive preventive medical care screenings. Your contribution is important because it also helps us to fund

capital items and new medical equipment which will assist us now and in the future.

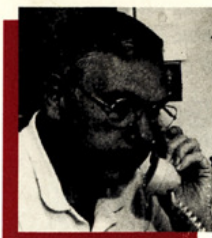
As we seek additional encouragement from new friends in the community, we continue to value the endorsement of those who have generously supported Brighton Medical Center through the years. Please send your contribution to the Brighton Medical Center Development Office, 335 Brighton Avenue, Portland, Maine 04102.

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