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RMC Hosts Major Chemical Warfare Exercises

Rabin Medical Center (RMC) was chosen as the first hospital in Israel to host an extensive drill that evaluated IDF's changed approach regarding the evacuation and treatment of casualties in the event of chemical warfare. This particular exercise, which took place in June, 2004, was the first of its kind in Israel. It incorporated more than 300 IDF soldiers who simulated the wounded victims and hundreds of other related professionals: medical, fire, police, Ministry of Health and Mogen David Adom ambulances.

This exercise will assist Israel in its effort to be fully prepared to respond to massive casualty disasters in the event of any kind of chemical attack and to reduce the loss of life from such an incident. As one of only six level-one trauma centers in Israel and the leading hospital in many medical specialties, Rabin Medical Center is proud to continue to assure that its leadership and resources are at the highest level of preparation in all manner of emergencies.

BABIES, BABIES, EVERYWHERE...

While the Athens Olympics were in full gear, RMC's Beilinson Hospital set its own record. Within a 24 hour period, 42 births were recorded at the Maternity Unit in the Women's Health Center, as reported by its Director, Prof. Dov Feldberg. They kept coming, one after another, and joy radiated everywhere. There were approximately two births per hour, double the birth rate on a regular day, and staff members who were on call were asked to "come to the rescue" and assist at the births. At the end of the day, the Maternity Department was fully booked and the staff coined the department "Baby Land."



RMC articles by Shellie Wislitzki

OCTOBER 2004

Rudy Giuliani, Larry King, and Celebrities Highlight AFRMC's Fifth New York Gala Dinner- December 7th - Alfred E. Mann to be Honored, Bruce Mosler to Chair



Rudolph Giuliani

As has been true the past four years, the 2004 Gala Dinner, to be held at The Pierre on December 7th, will feature an exciting program and great food. The entire event will have a new look and include a very different program than in past years.

The Dinner's Keynote Speaker Rudolph Giuliani, was elected the 107th mayor of the City of New York in 1993, after a campaign focusing on quality of life, combating crime and improving business and education. He was re-elected by a wide margin in 1997, carrying four out of New York City's five boroughs. On September 11, 2001, America suffered the worst attack in its history when terrorists crashed planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Mayor Giuliani immediately began leading the recovery of New York as it faced its darkest hour. For his efforts,

he was named Person of the Year by Time magazine, knighted by the Queen of England, dubbed "Rudy the Rock" by French President Jaques Chirac, and former first lady Nancy Reagan presented him with the Ronald Reagan Presidential Freedom Award.



Alfred E. Mann

AFRMC is most honored to be able to pay tribute at the 2004 Dinner to Alfred E. Mann, one of American Jewry's most generous philanthropists and Zionists. Mr. Mann, a biomedical researcher and developer, serves as Chairman of the Board and CEO of MannKind Corporation, a diversified biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel therapeutics and drug delivery technologies for treatment of diabetes, cancer, autoimmune and inflammatory diseases. He also developed and or manufactured: implantable medication infusion systems; long term glucose monitoring systems; a prosthetic artificial pancreas; a visual prosthesis to restore sight to the blind; implantable hearing aids; and numerous other medical products as well as aerospace and military components.

Mr. Mann is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Alfred Mann Foundation and of the Alfred Mann Institute at the University of Southern California, medical research foundations founded and endowed principally by [please turn to page 3](#)

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AFRMC Names Dr. Joshua Eli Plaut Executive Director

Barry Cohen, Chair of the Board of AFRMC, is delighted to announce, following an extensive search, the appointment of Dr. Joshua Eli Plaut as Executive Director. Dr. Plaut, an eminent Israeli-American scholar and community leader, brings a wealth of management and development experience to AFRMC, having most recently served as the Executive Director at the Center for Jewish History in New York, Jewish Outreach Consultant for the John Kerry for President Campaign, and as the leader for Jewish institutional life at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Dr. Joshua Plaut

Commenting on the appointment, Mr. Cohen said, "Dr. Plaut's years as a manager of large non-profit organizations, his substantial development experience, and the depth of his ties to Israel and to the American Jewish leadership, make him an outstanding choice to carry on the superb work of our outgoing Executive Director, Burton Lazarow. Burt's experience and dedication established AFRMC among the ranks of American Jewish philanthropy, and Dr. Plaut's strong leadership will see [please turn to page 4](#)

The Critical Contributions of Research at RMC

While Rabin Medical Center prides itself on being a leader in advanced treatment, superior medical care and the use of modern technology, medical research has also always been given a major focus of attention. (See related research articles in this issue of Vital Signs.)

From its beginning, RMC has been at the forefront in academic activity and research and our physicians were among the founders of the Tel Aviv University Sackler School of Medicine. As an affiliate of the University, our researchers work in close cooperation with the Medical School, as well as with other medical and research institutes in Israel and abroad. Many of RMC's research projects are carried out in joint cooperation with worldwide organizations, such as the European Union and the World Health Organization, including projects on diabetes in pregnancy, which are directed by Prof. Moshe Hod, Director of RMC's Maternal Fetal Medicine Division of the Women's Comprehensive Health Center. (See article in this newsletter on Prof. Hod titled, "China Seeks RMC's Advice on Baby Care".)

Many original research projects are undertaken each year. Every department is intensely involved in research activities and over 250 research papers are

published yearly. The prestigious Felsenstein Medical Research Center with its 50 modern research laboratories is located on our campus and RMC's finest researchers use these facilities.

RMC has been credited with many scientific breakthroughs. Most recently, the Department of Neurology headed by Prof. E. Melamed made great strides in its work on Parkinson's Disease and Prof. B. Fisch, Director of the In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Department, has received international recognition for his research regarding egg preservation and maturation in cancer patients.

Research is a vital tool that must be nurtured and encouraged in order for RMC to fulfill its commitment to excellence in all areas of medical practice. In working toward this goal, AFRMC has chosen research as its area of focus for the Annual New York Dinner to take place on December 7th at the Pierre Hotel. I shall look forward to seeing all of RMC's friends there. I believe that there are no limits to what we can achieve together, and that the continued dedication, generosity and commitment of our American friends is fundamental to our success.



*Dr. Dan Oppenheim
CEO of RMC*

RMC Publishes New Research Report

The latest issue of the Rabin Medical Center Research Report is now available on the Internet, at the Rabin Medical Center Site (www.rmc.org.il). The Research Report provides an in-depth look into the many academic activities as well as the impressive research carried out by all the various departments on both campuses of Rabin Medical Center. Please take a look.

International Research Cooperation

As a leader in the field of medical research, RMC is honored to report that Prof. Leonard Leibovici, Director of one of the departments of medicine at RMC, has been chosen by the European Community to direct an international research project. The goal of this very important project is to develop a worldwide, computerized system that will improve medical decision-making and prevent medical errors.

The majority of data and knowledge needed to reach an accurate medical decision are most often stored in the electronic universe, but are not available for use. This project will gather all the accessible information, to create an innovational computer system, easily available for use in patient care, greatly improving medical decision-making. This research

project will be funded at a cost of 2.65 million euro, by the European Information Society Technologies, and will be investigated in collaboration with several major, prestigious, European medical bodies.

China Seeks RMC's Advice on Baby Care

China's policy of one child per family has taken on new meaning as they actively pursue their efforts to ensure that each child will be born as healthy as possible.

Aiming toward this goal, Prof. Moshe Hod, the head of the Maternal Fetal Medicine Division (MFMD), at RMC, and one of the world leaders in this field, was recently invited to Shanghai, as a guest of Renji Hospital, the number one Maternity and Infant Hospital in Shanghai, a city of

17 million citizens with 80,000 births per year. This is in comparison to Israel, a country of only 6 million, which has more than 140,000 births yearly. The MFMD at RMC is the only World Health Organization (WHO) collaboration center for quality development and management in prenatal care in Europe, and its staff train and lecture all over the world. Prof. Hod made a presentation at a seminar in Shanghai, and he looks forward to further cooperation between the two countries.



Prof. Moshe Hod consulting with his Shanghai colleagues.

From One Generation to the Next

It is said that those who learn from their parents about the gift of giving are most likely to open their hearts to those in need, so it is no surprise that Assaf and Tamar Onn, the children of Tzipi and



In a picture commemorating the gift made by their children to the Womens Comprehensive Health Center (WCHC) at RMC, the proud parents, David (a member of the Board of AFRMC) and Tzipi Onn, flank their children, Assaf and Tamar Onn, second and third from the left, and Prof. Dov Feldberg, Director of the WCHC, and Naomi Zanhandler, Maternity Department Head Nurse.

David Onn, longtime friends of RMC, have chosen to follow in their parents footsteps. Assaf and Tamar recently donated audiovisual equipment to the Maternity Department at the Women's Health Center at RMC, which is directed by Prof. Dov Feldberg. This equipment will be an important addition to the courses given by RMC's nurses to new mothers on proper care of their newborns. The gift of giving is a most fitting way to symbolize the strong family bond between the Onn children and their parents.

Fated to Live...

Molly Yona was born with Cystic Fibrosis. At 19 years of age, she had to have her left lung removed and, when barely 26, her right lung began to fail as well. Hardly able to breathe, the doctors gave her no more than a year to live if no matching lung donor was found. There was also the question of whether she would even sustain such an operation during which she would have no support from a second lung. Thankfully a lung donor was found, and, for the first time ever in Israel, such a lung transplant was carried out at Rabin Medical Center,

This most delicate and difficult operation at RMC was coordinated by Professor Mordechai Kramer, Director of Pulmonary Medicine and Molly's attending physician since childhood, and performed by Dr. Alon Stamler, Senior Member of the Cardiothoracic Surgery Department. There were severe complications during and after the operation, and 3 days later, her condition deteriorated and she had to undergo two further operations when the doctors thought they were losing her.

However, two weeks following the transplant, Molly regained her strength, and, though she will need constant medical supervision and medication, there is no doubt that she has been given a new lease on life. Prof. Kramer says that Molly is an unbelievably optimistic, courageous person, and even at her lowest point she never stopped smiling. He hopes that she will be able to return to a normal way of life and even become pregnant. For most of us breathing is just a part of living, but for Molly, every breath is a real breath of fresh air.

Linear Accelerators Purchased for Cancer Center Opening

In preparation for the December 20th 2004 opening of the Davidoff Center (DC), at Rabin Medical Center, two state-of-the-art Linear Accelerators for the Radiotherapy Unit have been purchased from a leading US based company. A linear accelerator is the most effective and most commonly used device for external beam radiation treatments for patients with cancer. It delivers a uniform dose of high-energy radiation to the region of the patient's tumor, and can destroy the cancer cells, while sparing the surrounding normal tissue.



The current Radiotherapy Unit at RMC is the largest in Israel today, with about two hundred patients treated daily, both adults and children, and a total of 110,000 radiotherapy fields delivered annually. The current unit has three old linear accelerators, one of them frequently malfunctioning, often causing delays or cancellation of appointments while patients wait in an overcrowded waiting room. These new accelerators will allow the unit to offer maximum availability, efficiency, and, most of all, comfort to cancer patients requiring radiotherapy treatment. The Radiotherapy Unit, along with all the other departments at the DC will now be in a better position to offer patients the most advanced cutting-edge treatments available in order to combat this life-threatening disease.

Keeping Stress to a Minimum

In a country where, sadly enough, stress is our middle name, the new anti-stress workshops being offered at Beilinson hospital are a blessing in disguise. The workshops, entitled, "How to Stay Calm in a Stressful World," are open to the general public and incorporate Tai Chi, Meditation and other techniques in an effort to teach people how to remain calm in stressful situations.

The workshops include only two sessions, perfect for a population always on the run, that educate the participants toward a less stressful, healthier lifestyle. During the workshops, the participants simulate their reactions to day-by-day stressful situations and are taught how to use their inner strength and personal capabilities to handle their stress in a more constructive and peaceful manner. There are very few people who could not benefit from this very welcome service that Beilinson Hospital is now offering.

An Intensive Dream

To simply look at the new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at RMC's Beilinson Hospital, it's hard to believe that within the walls are some of the most critically ill patients in the hospital. Prof. Pierre Singer, Director of the ICU, had a vision of a unit that would set new standards for medical care, incorporating superior, innovative medical treatment and sophisticated technology in a unique architectural setting. Thanks to the generosity of a caring donor, his dream slowly became a reality, and the final results are nothing less than spectacular. The story was recently featured in the prestigious *Architectural Digest*.

Many factors were taken into consideration in the design of the new facility, the major one being to help reduce the infection rate among the patients. In the past, there were several patients in each room, and family members came in droves often refusing to leave their loved ones even for a moment. Consequently, the infection rates were high, often causing deterioration in the patient's condition.

To deal with this problem individual rooms were constructed, that were open to view, and each one was fully equipped with all the necessary medical equipment, and spaced around a central nursing station where each patient is to be under constant observation and fully monitored. There is even a viewing window, with a telephone, through which family members and friends can communicate with the patient and find comfort in knowing that everything is being done and the best medical care is being given. A small area, with all the amenities, was built for family members so they now have a place where they



A room in the new Intensive Care Unit.

can congregate and even sleep close to their loved ones without interfering with staff and the well being of the patient.

Prof. Singer is also proud of the Unit's advanced computerized system, in which every detail of medical information is stored and available to the hospital staff. There are no papers anywhere to be seen, making it the first fully computerized, paperless medical department in Israel.

This ICU has set an example for other Israeli hospitals, and several hospital directors have come to study this unit and have expressed their admiration of the unit. The unit also has developed a relationship with Montefiore Medical Center in New York, RMC's sister hospital, whose medical students come to train in Israel under the leadership of Prof. Singer. RMC's Intensive Care Unit is a shining example of what is possible when one doctor's dream collides with someone else's overwhelming belief and generosity.

Minister of Health Visits RMC

The Israeli Minister of Health, Dani Naveh, recently visited RMC where he officiated at the opening ceremony of the newly renovated Intensive Coronary Care Unit, part of the Cardiology Department, directed by Prof. Alexander Battler. He was truly impressed by what he saw



Officiating at the opening of the new ICU at RMC are, left to right, Health Minister, Dani Naveh; CEO of Clalit Health Services, Zeev Vurembrand and the Director of the Department of Cardiology, Professor Alexander Battler.

and spoke of his high regard for RMC. The transformation of this unit has had a major effect on improving all aspects of medical care for both the patients and the staff and is a welcome and needed addition to RMC's outstanding medical facility.

Dedicated Volunteers at RMC

Mordechai and Noga Shapiro are united not only in marriage but also by their true sense of giving. For many years they have been active volunteers at RMC, opening their hearts and comforting patients in their time of need. Mordechai volunteers in the recovery room and was recently awarded a Medal of Recognition from Clalit Health Services for his volunteer work, while Noga divides her time between The Heart Institute, the Emergency Room and the Friends of RMC, where she has become an integral part of the lives of the patients and the staff. These are just two of many such dedicated volunteers serving the patients at RMC.

Breathing Easy

Once again, the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, under the leadership of Prof. Bernardo Vidne, has proven its medical skill and expertise.

A lung transplant was performed at RMC on a 58 year old man who only 5 years ago underwent a major heart and lung transplant. The man, a father of three, began suffering a year ago from a disease caused by a chronic rejection in one of his previously transplanted lungs. The operation, carried out by Dr. Milton Saute, Director of the Thoracic Surgery Unit, Dr. Gidi Sahar, Director of the Transplantation Unit, and Dr. Benny Medalion, senior heart surgeon, was an extremely difficult and complicated procedure since it involved a replacement of an already transplanted lung. After the successful operation, the patient's wife said, "There are no words to express my sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to RMC's staff who once again saved my husband's life. The saving of a life is the most noble and precious gift one human can give to another, and for that I am forever in your debt".

This is the 92nd lung transplant performed by the staff of the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery at RMC and the third lung replacement. There seem to be no limits to their abilities in resolving the most challenging and difficult medical complications. For many, they are life's miracle workers.



Barry Cohen
Chair, AFRMC

High Hopes

On December 7th, AFRMC will hold its fourth Annual Dinner at New York's Pierre Hotel. We are looking forward to offering a very special evening and, of course, hope all of our friends will be with us in support of research at RMC.

Our annual dinner will be taking place just two weeks before we celebrate the opening of the new Davidoff Center (DC) in Israel. All of you are directly responsible for helping to build this center by lending your support at AFRMC's 2001 annual dinner, which took place soon after 9/11 and was the first of my tenure. We should all be very proud of this accomplishment, and I hope that many American friends of RMC will join us in Israel to launch the Davidoff Center, which will undoubtedly be the pride of Israel in cancer research and treatment.

At this time, I'd like to extend our very warm wishes to Burt Lazarow as he retires from his post as Executive Director. We owe him a great debt of gratitude for all he has done to help AFRMC make tremendous strides, moving from a virtually unknown organization to one of the better known Israeli institutions, both here in New York City and throughout the country. We will miss his daily involvement, but look forward to an ongoing relationship.

We are very happy to welcome Joshua Eli Plaut, Ph.D., our new Executive Director, who has been on the job since September 1st. Joshua brings with him a most impressive background in fundraising and leadership experiences in the non-profit and Jewish worlds. We look forward to him ably taking over the reins, steering us even closer to the realization of our high hopes for AFRMC.

Visit Israel and Attend Gala Opening of RMC's New Davidoff Cancer Center - Dec. 15 to 23, 2004

AFRMC has scheduled a special trip to Israel, departing December 15, returning early morning on December 23 (extensions available.) Dr. Joshua Plaut, executive director of AFRMC will lead the Israel mission. In addition to visiting the hospital, participants will help celebrate the opening of the new Davidoff Center during two days of events- joining top celebrities and politicians. A unique itinerary has been planned, including visits to sites throughout Israel and meetings with Israeli dignitaries. Three nights in Jerusalem at the King David Hotel, followed by three nights at the Hilton in Tel Aviv. Cost of the trip is \$2200 with a supplement for single accommodations.

For physicians attending there will be an international symposium at RMC on Tuesday, December 21 on oncology and hemato-oncology. All friends of Rabin Medical Center are invited to participate in the trip. For further information, please contact AFRMC at 212 279 2522 or by email to jplaut@afrmc.org.

Advancing The Global Fight Against Cancer

With RMC treating one-fifth of Israel's cancer patients, it will now feature the new Davidoff Center, a unique cancer facility that has been planned as a national focus of excellence in the treatment, prevention and research of cancer. Consolidating all of RMC's existing oncology and hemato-oncology facilities, its highly experienced, dedicated staff will continue to offer top-quality care, together with state-of-the-art technology and novel treatment protocols.

The nine-floor Davidoff Center, opening on December 20, 2004, has been designed according to the most up-to-date hospital standards, based on the vision that harmonious, aesthetic healthcare environments emphasizing patient dignity will enhance healing and promote well being.

You are invited to be RMC's partners in the fight against cancer.

...continued from page 1 AFRMC'S FIFTH NEW YORK GALA DINNER

AFRMC

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Vital Signs is a publication of American Friends of Rabin Medical Center (AFRMC), Inc., a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, which is solely responsible for its contents. AFRMC was formed to educate Americans about the Rabin Medical Center (RMC), located in Petah Tikva, Israel, and to raise funds on behalf of the RMC. AFRMC's main office is 220 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1301, New York, NY 10001. Tel: (212) 279-2522, Fax (212) 279-0179, Email: afrmc@afrmc.org Website: www.afrmc.org

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From 2003 Dinner, Larry King, Hillary Clinton and Prime Minister John Major.

Mr. Mann. Mr. Mann holds B.A. and M.S. degrees in physics from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles and honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Southern California, The Johns Hopkins University and Western University.

Bruce Mosler, President and CEO, Cushman and Wakefield, Inc. has graciously agreed to serve as chair of the 2004 Dinner. Honorary chairs of this year's Dinner include: U.S. Senators Clinton, Lautenberg, Lieberman, and Schumer; Israeli Ambassadors Ayalon and Gillerman; and, Mortimer B. Zuckerman. Metropolitan Opera star Sherill Milnes will be joined by other celebrities in entertaining the guests.

The proceeds of the Dinner and the Journal will be used to further critical research at Rabin Medical Center particularly in the area of in-vitro fertilization and other related departments of medical research.

Reservations should be made promptly, as seating is primarily determined by the date on which payment is received for tables and tickets. The deadline for Journal purchases is November 19 and will be strictly enforced as the Journal is being printed in Israel and shipping time is required.

Annual Florida AFRMC Dinner

Thursday, February 24, 2005

B'nai Torah Congregation

Boca Raton

A Bright Future Together

Together with my wife, Lori, and my son, Jonas, I want to express the pride and pleasure I take in my new role as Executive Director of AFRMC, and my confidence in our collective ability to take our support of Rabin Medical Center to new heights of achievement. Before I write another word, I must pay special tribute to the accomplishments of my predecessor, Burton Lazarow. Burt's important contributions have firmly established the reputation of AFRMC. Further, his generosity during this transition period, coupled with his manifest dedication to Rabin Medical Center, have helped to ensure that we, together with our dynamic, optimistic Chairman, Barry Cohen, and our distinguished board and friends, are poised to build upon his record of growth and development.

After a short tenure of only several days in my new position, I flew to Israel for a series of comprehensive discussions with Judit Solel, my counterpart at Friends of RMC. During these conversations, we explored, in depth, RMC's most pressing needs. I also had the



*Dr. Joshua E. Plaut
Executive Director*

opportunity to speak with a wide cross-section of the Center's management, physicians, and nurses. Most notable was my introduction to and meetings with RMC Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Dan Oppenheim, a man of profound dedication and resourcefulness. Professor Gabriel Dinari and Dr. Meir Lahav provided me with an overview of RMC's groundbreaking medical research, and yet, a dialogue with Dr. Ziv Rosenbaum, RMC's Deputy Director, revealed the Center's acute need for vital medical equipment. Finally, Dr. Eytan Wirtheim, Director of RMC's Golda Ha-Sharon campus, made manifest the high standard of care that permeates every aspect of operations at Israel's largest medical center. I came away profoundly impressed with the Center's management and staff. These dedicated professionals, both individually and collectively, are exemplar of the highest levels of professionalism. As such, they are truly a credit to the Rabin Medical Center and to the Jewish State.

In this, my first column, I would like to take a moment to tell you a bit about myself. I was born in Great Neck, New York into a Zionist family. My father, the late Rabbi Walter Plaut z"l, a refugee from Nazi Germany, was a freedom rider and a pioneering activist in the American civil rights movement. He was also the Rabbi of the Reform

synagogue in Great Neck, New York. After my father's passing, when I was a small child, my family made aliyah to Jerusalem, where I grew up.

My mother, Hadassah, who passed away last summer in New York, grew up with strong Zionist ideals. As a ten-year old in Detroit, she joined Hashomer Hatzair. Given the strong Zionism that flowed through the family, it was only natural for my mother to make aliyah in 1967 after my father's death. Though tempered with the sadness of events, my family's aliyah was the fulfillment of my mother's Zionist dream. I returned to the United States at the age of eighteen to pursue university studies, but went back to Jerusalem in 1980 to begin my master's degree in Jewish ethnic studies at Hebrew University in an Israeli program for Hebrew speakers. I always have maintained a home in Jerusalem, and I am thrilled that, just as Israel always has been at the forefront of my identity, now our efforts on behalf of RMC will place it at the forefront of my work.

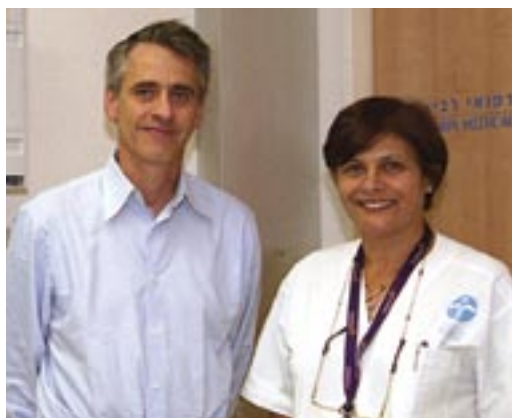
I have every expectation that, together with Barry Cohen, our distinguished Board of Directors, and the AFRMC staff, our efforts in the coming years will extend Burt Lazarow's roll call of achievement – and I look forward to joining you as we help take Rabin Medical Center from strength to strength.

...continued from page 1 AFRMC NAMES DR. JOSHUA ELI PLAUT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RMC January Miami 2005 Mini-Run: Proceeds to Cancer Research

Last winter a group of runners participated in the third annual Miami Tropical Mini-Marathon. They obtained sponsors and raised close to ten thousand dollars for RMC's Charles E. Trobman Data Research Center. The next run is scheduled for January 30, 2005, and, once again, under the leadership of Phyllis Trobman, the loyalists will run the half marathon, while others may run the full marathon and some just walk – all to help in the search for a cure for cancer and in support of the Data Research Center at RMC. They are seeking people to join them and to be sponsors of the run.

There will be a reception for runners (and walkers) hosted by the Trobman family, and special room rates have been arranged at a local hotel. Those interested in participating this year, or seeking more information, may call Mrs. Trobman at 856-795-0776, or AFRMC, at 212-279-2522, or, in Florida, call Desiree Trobman at 954-366-4100.



Dr. Joshua Plaut receives a tour of the Cardiac Unit's new intensive care wing by one of its nurses.

AFRMC consolidate and expand on those achievements.”

Dr. Plaut said, “I am proud to serve as the Executive Director of American Friends Rabin Medical Center, an organization whose efforts support one of Israel's most essential institutions. The Rabin Medical Center and its outstanding staff have cared for the citizens of Israel and the Middle East without regard to ethnicity or religion. As with its namesake, Rabin Medical Center stands for the best of Israel. It is an example of how the Jewish State

continues to be a light unto the nations.”

The scion of a prominent rabbinical and Zionist family, Dr. Joshua Eli Plaut holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew and Judaic Studies from New York University, received his rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, and, after attending grade school and high school in Israel, also earned degrees from UCLA, and Beloit College. He is the author of two critically acclaimed books.

During his tenure with the Center for Jewish History, Dr. Plaut managed an \$8.7 million annual budget and a 65-member staff, served as primary liaison to key donors, foundations, and government agencies, substantially expanded community engagement efforts, and established the Center as a focus of Jewish philanthropic activity in New York. Earlier in his career, Dr. Plaut was, for years, the Rabbi of the Martha's Vineyard Hebrew Congregation and Hillel Chaplain at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he built a strong foundation of experience and relationships in the world of Jewish and Israeli philanthropy.

Dr. Plaut is married to Lori Epstein-Plaut, an attorney. Their son, Jonas Plaut, is a student at the Abraham Joshua Heschel School in Manhattan.

Against All Odds ~ Gila's Story

As she proudly holds her first-born son, Gila Toker, an Ariel resident, seems like a normal 25-year-old mother, but nothing could be further from the truth. Gila suffers from a serious lung disease, and, since childhood, hospitals have been more than a familiar place to her. At 4 years of age she was diagnosed with Lupus Disease, where the immune system turns against parts of the body it is designed to protect. At age 9 her spleen had to be removed and she underwent chemotherapy. When she met her husband Rafi she cautioned him that life would be far from normal for them and soon after their engagement she was diagnosed with a lung disease that causes increased blood pressure in the lungs. According to her doctors pregnancy was out of the question, but, when Gila became pregnant in March 2003, she was overjoyed and believed that fate would not fail her. She had no intention of aborting this child, for her dream of becoming a mother outweighed the risks.

At Rabin Medical Center she was kept under the watchful eye of Prof. Mordechai Kramer, Director of the Institute of Pulmonary Medicine and Prof. Moshe Hod, Director of The Maternal-Fetal Medicine Division, who were more than skeptical- and not without reason. They were aware that there was more than a 50% chance of danger, often fatal, to both the mother and her unborn fetus. Yet, without hesitation, Gila told them she was ready to take any and all risks in the hope of a miracle, and nobody could deny her optimism and her belief.

Most of her pregnancy was spent in RMC's Maternal-Fetal Division, where she was under constant supervision. At one point she suffered from an infection and had to undergo treatment that required x-rays which could affect the fetus. At 31 weeks the fetus stopped developing and she was rushed to the operating room to have a cesarean section in a race to save her and the baby. Against all medical odds she gave birth to a son, now a healthy 5-month-old baby. She recalls that during the birth she was so obsessed to hear her child's voice that she woke up for a few minutes to hear his first cries, and all her pain seemed to vanish. She believes it was her determination and the doctors at Rabin Medical Center, especially Prof. Hod and the staff of the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Division, that made a nearly impossible dream come true.

A Hole In The Heart

It seems there is never a dull moment in the Cardiology Department of RMC where under the direction of Dr. Alexander Battler, a very innovative and sophisticated catheterization technique is now being performed at the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Unit. Headed by Dr. Rafael Hirsch, this is the only unit in Israel specifically designated to treat adult congenital heart defects. It was established 10 years ago and now has more than 1,300 patients under its care, a relatively high number in comparison to Israel's population.

This unique catheterization method is designed to close off the membranous type of ventricular heart defect (MVSD), the most common congenital heart defect, which accounts for 25% of all those discovered soon after birth. Though parents are assured that this condition has no clinical significance and the small hole may close by itself, a small percentage of people are not as lucky and in adulthood suffer from heart ailments, mainly heart failure and rhythm problems, which may cause an increasing limitation in their lifestyle and even shorten their life span. Until very recently, the only option was open-heart surgery, but now, thanks to this new catheter based procedure, there is an alternative, which significantly reduces the risk to the patient, who is released from the hospital the following day.

One patient who recently benefited was Hanna Avraham, a 57-year-old woman, who suffered from MVSD and, though restricted in her everyday life, was afraid to undergo complicated open-heart surgery. After Dr. Hirsch and his team performed this inventive procedure it is hard to believe how her life changed almost overnight and she is feeling stronger everyday.

For Dr. Hirsch, the success of this technique is measured by people like Hanna who no longer need to suffer and have avoided complex surgery. The Adult Congenital Heart Disease Unit began using this technique, the latest non-surgical approach to seal the opening in the heart, very early in comparison to worldwide use, once again showing that RMC aims to be at the forefront in medical advancement.

What a Weekend: Transplant Marathon

It's hard to believe, but during the weekend of August 7th, 11 organ transplants were performed within 36 hours at Rabin Medical Center's Beilinson Hospital. It was an incredible number.

When four donors became available, it was natural that RMC, as the leader in organ transplantation in Israel, would carry out the majority of the transplants. It became a "transplant marathon," as doctors worked around the clock to successfully perform the transplants, which included two hearts, three lungs, two livers and four kidneys.

This was done under the inspiring leadership of Prof. Bernardo Vidne, Director of the Cardiothoracic Surgery Department and Prof. Eytan Mor, Director of the Organ Transplantation Department and coordinated by Prof. Mordechai Kramer, Director of Pulmonary Medicine and Dr. Gideon Sahar, Director of the Heart Transplant Unit. Over 100 staff at RMC was involved in this major transplantation operation, which was handled meticulously at the superior standards maintained at RMC.

One of the three heart transplants was especially significant to RMC, since a new heart was given to Edmond Peretz, who only five months ago, at Beilinson Hospital, was the first patient in Israel to undergo a mobile artificial heart implantation. Edmond Peretz had been carrying his heart in a portable suitcase while waiting for a human donor- and it came sooner than hoped for.

In addition, over the same weekend, two emergency open heart surgeries and two major lung operations were performed. This was much more than just another weekend at RMC, it was a life saving marathon.



Pictured with one of the recipients of a transplant during the marathon weekend are, from left, Prof. Mordechai Kramer and Dr. Gideon Sahar.