



MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital

ThinkFirst Greater Washington Puts Traumatic Injury Prevention First

Melons are teaching D.C. second graders a critical lesson: Think First. Think before you act and ask, "Is this going to hurt me?"

"We explain that the brain is like a melon," says MedStar NRH Physical Therapist Ann Onzik. "Then we put a bike helmet on the melon and throw it hard against the floor where it sits unharmed. Then we take the helmet off, throw it on the floor again, smashing it into pieces. You can hear a collective 'ugh' from the kids."

The demonstration vividly illustrates what can happen to unprotected brains in a bike accident. Then the classroom of 30-plus children are fitted with free bike helmets.

"It is part of a MedStar NRH and MedStar Washington Hospital Center program to teach brain and spine injury prevention to kids and adults as ThinkFirst's Greater Washington, a part of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation," says J.J. Current, MedStar WHC Trauma Prevention/Outreach Coordinator.

"Our helmet-fitting is an important component of bike safety curriculum for D.C. second graders," explains Community Relations Director Joan Joyce. "In three years, we've given away 1,000 helmets."

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Letter From the President

At MedStar NRH, our mission is to help people with disabling illness or injury reach their highest level of functioning. Our role is to help prevent disabling injuries, as well. Through ThinkFirst we are educating children and adults about simple actions they can take to protect themselves.

The program, a partnership with our sister hospital MedStar Washington Hospital Center, demonstrates the value of collaboration with local government, non-profit organizations and educational institutions to enact real change and make a significant difference in the health and well-being of the community we serve.

Sincerely,

John D. Rockwood

President, MedStar National Rehabilitation Network
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health



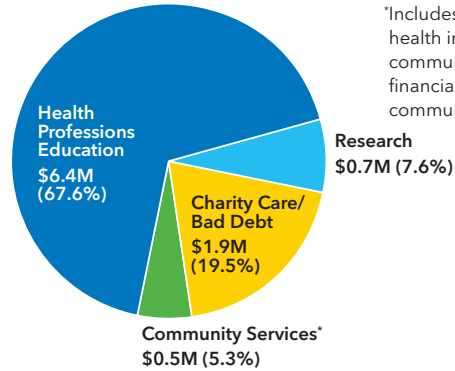
From Infants to Seniors

In area YMCAs, another D.C. school partnership is turning an after-school program into valuable safety training for kids. “An all-volunteer army of educators from MedStar NRH and WHC conduct five weeks of classes on a variety of safety issues,” says Heidi Armonda, RN, volunteer founder of ThinkFirst D.C. “We also offer safety programs to kids around various parts of D.C., including a program we conducted with children who live in District affordable housing.”

In September 2018, the first Falls Prevention Day held at MedStar NRH in conjunction with the D.C. Office of Aging provided seniors with education and screening aimed at reducing their risk of accidental falls. “MedStar NRH team members screened participants for mobility, hearing and visual issues, and University of Maryland pharmacy students reviewed their medication,” says Current.

“We screened 20 people,” says Onzik. “Now we’re making this an annual event in celebration of National Falls Prevention Day. We are also going to provide high schoolers with gun safety education using compelling speakers such as MedStar NRH’s own Harsh Thakker, whose paraplegia is the result of a gunshot wound.”

2018 Community Benefit Contribution: \$9.5M



*Includes subsidies, community health improvement services, community building activities, financial contributions, and community benefit operations.

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