



GENERATIONS + NORTHERN MANHATTAN HEALTH NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

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May 6, 2011

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LINCOLN HOSPITAL CELEBRATES GRAND RE-OPENING OF PEDIATRIC'S HEADS UP! READING PROGRAM

*New York Yankees, MetroPlus Health Plan and Volunteers Recognized for
Outstanding Contributions to Children's Health and Literacy*

Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center held a grand re-opening of its Pediatric Heads Up! Reading Room, marking its 11th anniversary of the hospital's Literacy Program. The event, held at the Pediatric Ambulatory Care Clinic on May 6, 2011, recognized the exceptional contributions of the New York Yankees, MetroPlus Health Plan, as well as the volunteer grandparents who read to the children.

“Today's re-opening is especially important because it signifies Lincoln's commitment to giving our patients the best medical treatment when they are in our care, and additionally helping them with the life skills they need to be successful adults,” said Iris R. Jimenez-Hernandez, Network Senior Vice President and Lincoln Hospital Executive Director.

She added, “Research has shown that reading difficulties and illiteracy contribute to school failure, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, drug use and other problems that impact our community. The partnerships of the Heads Up! Pediatric Literacy Program, the New York Yankees and MetroPlus are invaluable in our efforts to improve the future of our children.”

Since August 2000, Lincoln's Heads Up! Reading Program has addressed the problems of inadequate language development and illiteracy which are prevalent among the lower income children we serve. Each year, during well-child visits, our pediatricians provide brand new, age appropriate books to nearly 10,000 Lincoln Hospital patients under the age of five. Volunteer foster grandparents read to the children and work diligently with the parents to teach and encourage them to read to their kids. This year, MetroPlus Health Plan has generously donated \$10,000 as our corporate sponsor to enable the purchase of books for one year.

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“Our pediatricians believe in the importance of early reading to stimulate timely language development and to establish a joy for reading,” said Dr. Katherine Szema, Chief of the Pediatric Ambulatory Clinic. “Early reading leads to life-long language and literacy skills and nurtures future achievements in school and beyond. We are greatly indebted to Brian Smith, New York Yankees Senior Vice President of Corporate and Community Relations, and to MetroPlus Health Plan for their support of our children’s health and well-being.”

Statistics indicate that 34% of all American children enter school lacking the basic language skills necessary to learn to read. Heads Up!, a literacy program involving the Reach Out and Read Program and RIF (Reading is Fundamental), prepares America’s youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to “prescribe” books and encourage families to read together.

Joining today’s ceremony, Mary J. Ward, PhD, Founder and Program Director of Heads Up! Pediatric Literacy Program, said, “Early childhood is the critical time for literacy intervention. We can say to parents with confidence that reading aloud greatly benefits children and prepares them for success. We are pleased to have Lincoln Hospital’s pediatricians as members of a cadre of dedicated health professionals who make literacy a standard part of well-child visits for children under five years old. At Heads Up! we consider the whole child, and are thrilled and thankful that MetroPlus shares our vision.”

Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, located at 234 E. 149th Street in the Bronx, is a 347-bed, acute care level 1 trauma center with the busiest single site emergency department in the region. The hospital emphasizes primary care and specialty medicine and uses the latest advances in medical science. Lincoln Hospital is a member of the Generations+/Northern Manhattan Health Network, a healthcare conglomerate which is part of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), is a \$6.3 billion integrated healthcare delivery system and the largest municipal healthcare organization in the country. HHC serves 1.3 million New Yorkers every year and nearly 450,000 who are uninsured. HHC provides medical, mental health and substance abuse services through its 11 acute care hospitals, four skilled nursing facilities, six large diagnostic and treatment centers and more than 80 community based clinics. HHC Health and Home Care also provide health services at home for New Yorkers. To learn more about HHC, visit www.nyc.gov/hhc.

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