

NEW  
SECTION



# MOTIVATIONS

The Frontline of Philanthropy at Einstein Montefiore



## IN THIS ISSUE

42 A Message from the President  
of the Alumni Association  
Board of Governors

43 Continued Connection

44 Spotlight

48 Other Lives

50 Your Impact

53 Class Notes

To learn more, please visit  
[montefiore.org/fundforme](http://montefiore.org/fundforme) and  
[einstein.yu.edu/donors/fundforme](http://einstein.yu.edu/donors/fundforme)

## MOTIVATIONS

A Message from the President of the  
Alumni Association Board of Governors:

### JANINA R. GALLER, M.D. '72



As president of the Alumni Association Board of Governors, I witness many traditions that make Einstein Montefiore such a powerful institution. One of my favorites is Match Day, which occurs every March in honor of our fourth-year medical students. At noon, after a ceremonial gong toll, students tear open envelopes alongside their peers in Lubin Dining Hall to learn where they will continue their education

as resident physicians. Seeing these students, hearing their stories and experiencing the excitement of *their* excitement is a wonderful reminder that we—fellow alumni, friends, donors, volunteers, faculty, staff and community members—are working toward the same goals: to heal, to teach, to discover and to advance the health and social justice of the communities we serve.

I am pleased to add to Einstein Montefiore's long list of traditions with this inaugural issue of *Motivations*, the office of development's new section within *Einstein* magazine dedicated to the frontline of philanthropy. In the following pages, we highlight some of the distinctive people and programs you help support, from caring for pediatric patients and their families at the Rose F. Kennedy Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center to the innovations in our 3D surgical laboratory to the doctors and alumni who champion our mission. My hope is that you see yourself—and, just as important, the impact of your relationship with us—in these stories, and feel pride in both where we've come from and where we're headed.

Initiatives such as Match Day and *Motivations* are great examples of how we celebrate our commitment to the excellence, innovation and humanism embedded in Einstein Montefiore's history. These ideals form the foundation of a great academic medical center—and they are, indeed, our greatest traditions.

With warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Janina R. Galler MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.



## CONTINUED CONNECTION: BRADLEY SOMER<sup>M.D.</sup> '96

**O**n the last possible day to postmark medical school applications in 1991, would-be doctor Bradley Somer banged on the door of a closed FedEx office on Manhattan's 42nd Street. A custodian finally heard him, opened the door and let him drop the applications off. It was worth the effort. Dr. Somer joined the Einstein class of 1996 and is now a medical oncologist at West Cancer Center, a nationally recognized cancer treatment center in Memphis, TN.

### A DIFFICULT PATH

His career path was far from easy. In September of his second year at Einstein—just four months after his wife gave birth to their first child—Dr. Somer was diagnosed with testicular cancer. During treatment, he experienced firsthand what it meant to be a great doctor by observing both those who treated him and his Einstein professors, including Stephen Lazar, Ed.D., former assistant dean; Victor Schuster, M.D., senior vice dean, Ted and Florence Baumritter Chair in Medicine and an attending physician in nephrology at Montefiore; and William

Frishman, M.D., an adjunct clinical professor of medicine. “Dr. Frishman stayed with me the entire time I waited to go in for surgery,” recalls Dr. Somer. “It was inspiring.”

Throughout treatment, Dr. Somer missed just one exam cycle, and returned to his classes determined to stay on track. Support from Einstein's faculty, he says, helped him succeed during the rest of his time on campus. “Einstein showed me the path,” he says. In 1996, with perfect course scores and an award for “outstanding scholarship, devotion to patient care and concern for colleagues,” Dr. Somer graduated from Einstein.

During his residency at the University of Pennsylvania, he was assigned to a leukemia and bone marrow transplant center. The knowledge he gained at Einstein helped him excel at hematology, deepening his passion for cancer care. After his residency, he moved to Memphis with his growing family, raised five children and joined the West Cancer Center. While serving as the center's medical oncologist, he also holds several executive posts and teaches at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.



### A GREAT START

Reflecting on his decades-long medical career, Dr. Somer credits his Einstein training for his accomplishments. His passion for helping Einstein set new standards for excellence in education and clinical care continues today: Dr. Somer is a champion of the Albert Einstein Cancer Center, a philanthropist and an alumni convener for the Einstein community.

“The caliber of support I received at Einstein is hard to match,” he says. “I give back to the school so that other students can receive the same support and care that my professors, peers and the leadership showed to me.”

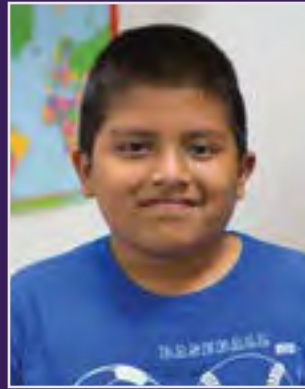
Two of Dr. Somer's children recently took the Medical College Admission Test. He hopes their applications make it to Einstein long before the deadline.

# SPOTLIGHT: A NEW ERA FOR RFK CERC

**S**erenity entered the world drug-exposed and endured a chaotic childhood. When her daughter Pearl was born 15 years ago, Serenity feared she wouldn't know how to be a good mother. She came to Einstein Montefiore's Rose F. Kennedy Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (RFK CERC) to learn how to care for and support her child in a way her own mother never could. Serenity attended RFK CERC's intensive parent-child program to explore new ways of reading, singing and communicating with Pearl.

A few years later, she gave birth to Jayden and noticed that he wasn't developing as Pearl had. RFK CERC's developmental behavioral pediatrician and speech-language team soon made a diagnosis of autism.

More than 7,000 infants, children and parents visit RFK CERC every year. Families like Serenity's come to address problems related to childhood development, behavior and trauma.





## MOTIVATIONS



Nancy Tarshis, M.A., M.S., supervisor of RFK CERC's Speech and Language Services, with two patients.

"If you have a child with a disability, we have something here that could be useful to you, regardless of the child's age or issues," says Theodore Kastner, M.D., M.S., director of RFK CERC.

RFK CERC has provided those resources to children and their parents for more than 50 years, offering a full range of services from speech therapy to dentistry. "We view each person in a holistic way, rather than as a set of symptoms or problems," says Anne Murphy, Ph.D., clinical director of RFK CERC.

### WELCOME TO "HEALTH HOME"

The Affordable Care Act allowed the New York State Department of Health to launch a new program called Medicaid Health Homes, aimed at extending healthcare to more children and families. Health Homes are not actual physical spaces but rather an approach to coordinating care using comprehensive care managers, who

**With the Montefiore Health Home, RFK CERC is poised to help thousands more parents like Serenity take good care of their children.**

serve as patients' guides through a complex healthcare system. RFK CERC opened the Montefiore Health Home in December 2016; it was the first Health Home in New York State.

In the past, if a child had a developmental disability or a mental illness and also was diagnosed with a chronic illness or HIV, he or she might have two or three separate case managers, each writing a separate care plan for the medical problem the manager oversaw. Reconciling these siloed plans proved inefficient and complicated, leading to suboptimal care.

Now, with Health Homes, each family partners with one central care manager responsible for helping that family with everything it needs, from primary care to housing. The result: less-frequent trips to the emergency room, fewer days in the hospital, improved quality of care and lower overall healthcare costs.

Dr. Murphy points to the Montefiore Health Home care managers as key to helping families cope with the stresses of poverty and mental and physical illness. "The vision of RFK CERC is to keep children at home with their parents," she says. "Care managers bring the work we already do here and take it into people's homes."

Some 24,000 Bronx children are eligible for Health Home care, according to Dr. Kastner. "When we opened, we served 40 of those kids. We think we can build our capacity to serve nearly 1,000 this year. The biggest challenge for us is going to be raising capital to hire the staff and get them in place."

With \$25 million in endowment funding, RFK CERC can bring 100 additional care managers into CERC's already strong programs and provide the onboarding, training and access to resources they need. Dr. Kastner projects that the Health Home program will be self-sustaining after this initial start-up phase.

RFK CERC has helped Serenity become a different kind of parent to her children. Pearl is thriving in high school, and Jayden, now 12, still comes to RFK CERC every Friday before school for speech therapy. With the Montefiore Health Home, RFK CERC is poised to help thousands more parents like Serenity take good care of their children.



## RFK CERC by the Numbers

7,000

families served  
every year

50,000

visits annually

100<sup>+</sup>

professionals

50<sup>+</sup>

years of service to children  
and families

14

clinical programs,  
including pediatrics,  
special-needs dentistry  
and psychology

60

clinicians trained each year  
to treat intellectual and  
developmental disabilities



MOTIVATIONS

OTHER LIVES:

# DR. DAVID ALTSCHUL

"The louder the better," says Dr. Altschul of the band's musical philosophy.



**T**he guitar hanging on his office wall explains why David Altschul, M.D., practices at Montefiore.

During his neurosurgery residency at Montefiore, Dr. Altschul was moonlighting as the lead singer and guitarist of a garage-rock band called the Red Herrings. That piqued the interest of David Gordon, M.D., who helped train Dr. Altschul during his residency and was a fellow guitar player. “We made a friendly agreement,” says Dr. Altschul, laughing. “He’d help me get a job here, and I’d help him get into the band—and it worked out.”

## AFTER-HOURS JAMMING

When Dr. Altschul—now an attending physician of neurological surgery at Montefiore and an assistant professor of neurosurgery and of radiology at Einstein—started his new job, both neurosurgeons brought their guitars into the hospital. “David was down the hall from me, so we would jam together between seeing patients or after hours,” says Dr. Altschul.

With two physicians and an architect on guitar, a computer programmer on bass and a Wall Street bond trader on drums, the Red Herrings rank as one of New York City’s best-educated bands. The group draws its inspiration from a wide range of musical genres, including blues, reggae and garage rock, with influences as diverse as Jack White, Radiohead, the Ramones and Bob Marley. “The louder the better,” says Dr. Altschul of the band’s musical philosophy. The Red Herrings play at clubs on Manhattan’s Lower East Side.

Dr. Altschul grew up learning to play the piano, but switched to guitar in his late teens. He loved playing



Dr. Altschul with his band the Red Herrings rocking out at Arlene’s Grocery.

guitar-driven songs by artists such as Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix. When he started medical school at the State University of New York’s Downstate Medical Center in 2002, Dr. Altschul formed his first band with two childhood friends, and the Red Herrings were born. His brother, Kurt, later joined the band as a guitar player.

The Red Herrings compose all their own songs and have recorded 30 of them to date. Dr. Altschul writes the lyrics—a task that has gotten more challenging over the years. He is married to Dr. Dorothea Altschul, a neurointerventionalist at Columbia, and the couple has three children, ages 2 to 6. “It’s easy to write lyrics when you’re young and single and experiencing the angst of dating and breaking up a lot,” he says. “But my life is pretty great right now.”

## STILL PLAYING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

One of the Red Herrings’ latest songs, “Going Gray,” explores a new topic



for the 15-year-old group. “It’s amazing to me that the band is still alive and kicking given how busy we all are,” says Dr. Altschul, noting that all the members now have families and careers. “But it’s cathartic for us. Whenever we haven’t gotten together for too long a time, we all get itchy and say, ‘We need to play right now.’”

The group’s growing fan base includes actor Bruce Willis. Dr. Gordon is a close friend of Willis’ and has even appeared in some of the action star’s films. “It’s really wild when he comes to our gigs,” says Dr. Altschul. “The place is packed with our family and friends—and then there’s Bruce Willis! It’s a lot of fun.”

### ON THE WEB:

To listen to the Red Herrings, check out their website: [www.theredherringslive.com](http://www.theredherringslive.com)



MOTIVATIONS

YOUR IMPACT:

# SURGERY *in* 3D

**T**he mechanical arm spins in its case, applying thin deposits of resin. Several hours later, the distinct shape of a human spine begins to emerge: 33 vertebrae and the soft discs that separate them. The 3D printer has created an exact replica of a patient's backbone.

The Montefiore Einstein 3D Laboratory has been making surgery easier for doctors and patients since the spring of 2017. It helps surgeons envision, plan and conduct complex operations more precisely than ever before—anticipating challenges, reducing risk during surgery and, ideally, improving outcomes for patients. The lab's co-directors are Oren Tepper, M.D., the director of craniofacial and aesthetic surgery at Montefiore and an assistant professor of surgery at Einstein, and Evan Garfein, M.D., an associate professor of surgery at Einstein and the chief of the division of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Montefiore.

Consider surgery for scoliosis, a curvature of the spine. Before the development of the 3D lab, orthopedic surgeons correcting this condition could see the patient's spine only from the back, and only during the operation itself. But now, says Dr. Tepper, 3D models allow surgeons to get a 360° view before they begin to operate.

### HELPING CONJOINED TWINS

Montefiore's use of 3D models has also helped correct congenital jaw deformities by allowing doctors to build anatomically accurate implants, and to

perform surgeries to repair childhood deformities of the skull. For example, 3D modeling contributed greatly to the successful separation of conjoined twins Jadon and Anias McDonald in 2016. James Goodrich, M.D., Ph.D., the chief of the division of pediatric neurosurgery at Children's Hospital at Montefiore and a professor in the Leo M. Davidoff Department of Neurological Surgery at Einstein, led the 27-hour procedure. Before separating the twins, Dr. Goodrich—an expert in conjoined-twin surgery—and his colleagues used 3D modeling to help plan the operation. Now, more than 18 months after their procedure, the McDonald twins are thriving toddlers.

The creation of 3D models starts with computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and 3D digital images. Technicians take those images and use special

The 3D lab helps surgeons envision, plan and conduct complex operations more precisely than ever before—anticipating challenges and reducing risk during surgery.



1. A freshly produced 3D backbone model;  
2. A 3D model like this one aided the McDonald twins' separation.



software to turn them into 3D anatomical renderings, which they send to Montefiore's 3D printer. The whole process—from consultation to imaging to virtual modeling to printing—can take as little as a few hours or as much as a full day, depending on the model's complexity.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Einstein students and fellows already benefit from the educational opportunities the 3D lab offers. An updated curriculum ensures that scientists and researchers use 3D models to educate future surgeons. Pediatric cardiology fellows recently examined models, built from scans of Montefiore patients, that covered a range of heart conditions—some so rare that the fellows might encounter them only once or twice during their training.

The 3D lab is expanding its scope beyond the surgery department; it now works with orthopedics, urology and cardiology to benefit the entire Einstein Montefiore community—with additional partners welcome. “We’re hoping that people will come to the 3D lab with their designs—and not just those for anatomical models,” says Dr. Tepper. “If you have an idea for a splint or a hand-washing station, the lab can print a prototype for testing. That kind of help can really speed innovation.”

1. 3D lab co-directors Oren Tepper, M.D., left, and Evan Garfein, M.D.; 2. CT is the first phase in creating a 3D model; 3-4. 3D models for surgical preparation and training.





# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

**Melvin Shapiro, M.D. '60**, has retired after 50 years as a gastroenterologist. In addition to practicing clinical gastroenterology and endoscopy, he has developed multimedia endoscopic teaching and educational programs for national and international gastrointestinal societies. Highlights of his career include serving as an officer of the World Organizations of Endoscopy and Gastroenterology and as president of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. He and his wife, Bobbie, have three sons and five grandchildren. The couple lives in Encino, CA.

**Howard Bruckner, M.D. '64**, lives in New York City, where he operates a freestanding cancer center and the MZB Foundation for Cancer Research ([bruckneroncology.com](http://bruckneroncology.com)). He publishes and reports on new methods of safely expanding applications for targeted drugs to improve the quality of response for various conditions, including just-confirmed cholangiocarcinoma and colon cancer.

## 1970s

**Jacob Ackerman, M.D. '71**, lives in Flushing, NY. He still enjoys seeing patients in his office and performing eye surgery, but has turned over the operation of his ambulatory surgery center to his son, Steven. Dr. Ackerman has 22 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He sends his best wishes to his classmates.

**Gary D. Rifkin, M.D. '71, F.A.C.P., F.I.D.S.A.**, chairs the department of medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford. Dr. Rifkin, who is also a professor of clinical medicine and infectious diseases, joined the college faculty in 1978. He has served as the vice chair and the acting chair of the department of medicine and has won several awards. He is board-certified in internal medicine and infectious diseases and is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Dr. Rifkin maintained a clinical practice in Rockford and served as a physician and epidemiologist at several local medical centers from 1978 to 2012.

**Robert Ritch, M.D. '72**, lives and practices in New York. In 2017, he received several awards, including the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology presidential award and the Joanne G. Angle Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology service award. He also gave the Mansour F. Armaly Lecture at the University of Iowa Glaucoma Conference and was selected as a member of the International Advisory Committee of ARVO-Asia, a conference held by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology in Brisbane, Australia.

**Roger Duvivier, M.D. '74, F.A.C.O.G.**, has served for several decades as a volunteer in Guatemala for WINGS, a nongovernmental organization. He is also a member

of the Antigua Guatemala Rotary International Club, which serves indigenous populations in need of clean water, sanitation services and education and reproductive healthcare. In March 2018, the Einstein office of diversity enhancement and the department of obstetrics & gynecology and women's health honored him by holding the fourth annual Duvivier Lecture. The keynote speaker was Albert Galaburda, M.D., a professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School and the director of the office of diversity and inclusion at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

**Maja Nowakowski, M.D. '74**, develops medical school curricula and teaches immunology at the State University of New York Downstate Medical Center. Her research focuses on human monocyte/macrophage activation and regulation of inflammatory responses in allergy/asthma and HIV-1 infection. Dr. Nowakowski's twin sons—born at Einstein!—are Mark Nowakowski, now a partner at KPMG LLP, a U.S. audit, tax and advisory firm, and David Nowakowski, director of research at Baring Asset Management. Mark lives in Decatur, GA, with his wife, Katie, and their sons Benjamin, 12, and Sebastian, 10. David lives in London with his wife, May, and their children Siri, 8, and Lucas, 6. Dr. Nowakowski's daughter, Tamara, is the operations manager at Zeel.com, an in-home massage service. She lives in Pittsburgh with her husband, Stephen McCormick.

## MOTIVATIONS

**Harold Pincus, M.D. '75**, is a professor and the vice chair of psychiatry and the co-director of the Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. He received the 2017 Institute of Living's Charles C. Burlingame Award for contributions to the field of psychiatry. Dr. Pincus also serves as the director of quality and outcomes research at New York–Presbyterian Hospital and as a senior scientist at the RAND Corporation. He lives in New York City.

**Steven Rosenberg, M.D. '75**, lives in Palm Beach, FL. He recently was appointed to a third term on the Florida Board of Medicine, and was elected chair of the Joint Committee on Marijuana. His daughter, Miranda, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Perelman Medical School, where she is serving her internship.

**Margo Vale, M.D. '75, and Michael Vale, M.D. '75**, are happy to announce the births of their grandchildren Charles Henry Vale on July 3, 2016, and Penelope Jane Rubin on February 25, 2017. Charles' parents are Eddie and Katey Vale of Chevy Chase, MD; Penelope Jane's parents are Judy Vale and Mike Rubin of Brooklyn, NY.

**Andrew M. Gross, M.D. '77, J.D.**, lives and works in Dallas, TX. His son, Michael, 27, just graduated from Southern Methodist University Law School and is engaged to be married. His daughter Dana, also 27, is a second-year resident at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and is planning a career in pulmonary/critical-care medicine. Dr. Gross' elder daughter,

Rachel, 32, is a senior associate at a Dallas law firm.

**Jerry O. Stern, M.D. '77**, retired from Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals as a vice president and the global therapeutic area head for virology and liver diseases. He and his wife, Robina, recently celebrated their 47th anniversary. The Sterns' elder granddaughter, Ava, a high school senior, has worked for the past two summers at Einstein in the lab of Dr. Richard Kitsis. Ava plans to apply to the Einstein M.D./Ph.D. program, and looks forward to a career in biomedical research. Their younger granddaughter, Olivia, is actively engaged in her high school's science research program.

## 1980s

**Paul Blanc, M.D. '82**, lives in San Francisco. His book, *Fake Silk: The Lethal History of Viscose Rayon* (Yale University Press, 2016), was awarded the 2017 Visellear Prize from the American Public Health Association for "Outstanding Book on the History of Public Health."

**Joel Cohen, M.D. '83**, recently left his senior faculty position in the department of neurology at Einstein Montefiore to join the stroke unit at Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, where he lives with his wife, Pearl, and their four children. The Cohens are proud to announce that their daughter, Sara, is engaged to Chanina Landesman of Givat Shmuel, Israel.

**Carl E. Rosenkilde, M.D. '85**, retired as a neurologist in February 2017. He lives in Mount Kisco, NY.

## STAY IN TOUCH

Keep your classmates up-to-date by submitting your news to *Einstein* magazine. We look forward to including you in our next issue. E-mail us at [alumni@einstein.yu.edu](mailto:alumni@einstein.yu.edu).

## 1990s

**Ronald S. Lubetsky, M.D. '91**, lives in Hollywood, FL. In October 2017, Dr. Lubetsky completed a fellowship in integrative medicine at the University of Arizona, Tucson. On March 24, 2017, Dr. Lubetsky and his wife welcomed their son Benjamin Emmanuel Uriel Lubetsky to their family.

**Carla Golden, M.D. '92**, works at the Oakland Children's Hospital and Research Center in the department of hematology/oncology, in Oakland, CA.

**Hugh Bases, M.D. '94**, serves as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician at the New York University School of Medicine. His wife, Randi Asher (Ferkau '95), is in private practice in New York City.

**Malini Sen, M.D. '95**, lives in Kolkata, India, and works at the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology. She is grateful to Einstein for helping shape her career as a scientist. Dr. Sen studies the mechanisms of pathogenesis in microbial infections and would love to hear from classmates with similar interests.

**Kristin E. Harkin, M.D. '97, F.A.C.E.P.**, lives in New Rochelle, NY, and serves as the chair of the New York State Board of Medicine.



"I feel empowered and deeply grateful for the scholarship that's allowing me to achieve all that is possible with an Einstein education."

– Hope Miodownik, Class of 2019

# HELP US TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

## Give to Einstein Montefiore's Fund for Medical Education

The students, researchers, campus leaders, volunteers and alumni at Einstein fuel an incredible legacy through the pursuit of scientific excellence at the heart of medicine. By supporting advanced curriculum building and cutting-edge models for teaching, learning and assessment, you build a strong foundation for the growth of our student body and faculty—enhancing the lives of our community for our community.

To give to our students, faculty and programs, visit:

<http://www.einstein.yu.edu/education/md-program/donate.aspx>

For more information, please contact the office of alumni relations at 718.430.2013 or [alumni@einstein.yu.edu](mailto:alumni@einstein.yu.edu).



**Montefiore**