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Monmouth

HEALTH & LIFE

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A SHORE THING
15 BEACHES TO HIT THIS SUMMER

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IN LONG BRANCH

YOUR GUIDE TO
BIKING, BOATING,
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THE OUTDOOR ISSUE

✱
SUN & SMILES
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VOLUME 20 ISSUE 3 | JUNE/JULY 2022



YOU HAVE THE POWER

Fitness expert and Peloton pro Robin Arzón brings a message to match the positive energy of Monmouth Medical Center's Power of Pink fundraiser.

The 27th Annual Power of Pink Luncheon, a premiere fund-raising luncheon for Cancer Services at Monmouth Medical Center (MMC), will feature keynote speaker Robin Arzón, Vice President of Fitness Programming at Peloton.

An avid ultra-marathon runner, best-selling author and global fitness leader, Arzón's life mission is to redefine, reform and rethink possibility through movement. This year the event is co-chaired by Sima Yakoby Epstein and Debbie Menkowitz, along with boutique co-chairs Jessica Buchner and Michelle Kutsak.

The luncheon, presented by dedicated MMC Foundation community leaders who make up the Leon Hess Cancer Center Council, will be held on Thursday, July 21, at the Rumson waterfront home of Mary and John M. Kiely. John M. Kiely is the CEO of the Kiely Family of Companies, Tinton Falls.

Arzón's message to individuals is to focus on what you can do rather than on any limitations. In 2020, she was named one of the most influential people on *Fortune* magazine's 40 Under 40 list, and in 2021, she became the first-ever recipient of *Glamour* magazine's Daring to Disrupt Award.

"The RWJBarnabas Health motto 'Let's Be Healthy Together' fits perfectly with Robin's joy of movement and its transformative powers," says Caitlin Olson, Regional Vice President of Development for MMC and its southern campus. "Her powerful and positive message is in keeping with our healthcare system's mission to ensure people of all ages have the means and ability to live healthier, more fulfilling lives."

One of the Foundation's flagship events, the Power of Pink Luncheon raises funds to enhance

the care delivered to oncology patients at MMC, and its dedicated volunteers have raised more than \$6,000,000 to benefit the hospital's Leon Hess Cancer Center. This year, proceeds from the event will benefit the development of innovative cancer services at the new Vogel Medical Campus in Tinton Falls.

Two widely respected RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region oncology physician experts, including board-certified internal medicine physi-

cian and medical oncologist, Seth D. Cohen, M.D., Regional Director of Oncology Services for the RWJBarnabas Health Southern Region, and Richard S. Lazzaro, M.D., FACS, Southern Region Chief of Thoracic Surgery, will discuss the new regional thoracic oncology program that is bringing state-of-the-art treatment to patients, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. The Leon Hess Cancer Center is the region's only facility designated as an Academic Comprehensive Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons' Commis-

sion on Cancer. MMC provides close-to-home access to the most advanced treatment options and clinical trials.

"Our new cancer center will bring innovative and expansive cancer care and programs to help our patients continue to live life to the fullest, from treatment through survivorship," says Eric Carney, President and CEO of both MMC and Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus.

"This is possible in part because of the work and generosity of the Leon Hess Cancer Center Council; they have been a wonderful partner to Monmouth Medical Center."

"The RWJBarnabas Health motto 'Let's Be Healthy Together' fits perfectly with Robin's joy of movement and its transformative powers. Her powerful and positive message is in keeping with our healthcare system's mission to ensure people of all ages have the means and ability to live healthier, more fulfilling lives."

— Caitlin Olson, Regional Vice President of Development for Monmouth Medical Center

Robin Arzón, Vice President of Fitness Programming at Peloton, will be the keynote speaker at the 27th Annual Power of Pink Luncheon in July.



To purchase a ticket or reserve a table for this year's Power of Pink Luncheon, or for more information, visit rwjbh.org/POP.

{ IN GOOD HEALTH }

A SPECIAL DELIVERY AND

After nearly two days of labor, a Lumberton woman and newborn are living easy thanks to Monmouth



This page: Jayme Gordano with her husband, Joseph, and newborn son, Westin. In addition to Westin, the Gordano's family size recently grew with the addition of new puppy Chloe, pictured opposite page. "The puppy is on a strict training schedule; on the other hand, the baby doesn't fuss much!" Jayme jokes.

Jayme Gordano had a busy spring, what with a newborn baby and a new golden retriever puppy to look after.

Her son, Westin, has been easy-going thus far, but labor and delivery of her first child was far from simple.

Gordano, 31, a dance instructor and former part-time restaurant server and

bartender, lives in Lumberton with her husband, Joseph, 33, who works in analytics for Janssen Pharmaceuticals. Her pregnancy was going along nicely until October 2021, when she noticed blood in her urine. During an office visit, a growth was detected in her bladder, and when it was surgically removed in January, pa-

thology revealed it was cancerous. Beyond regular monitoring, no other treatment was required.

"It was a blessing in disguise," she says, because the prenatal ultrasound found the tumor early.

At the same time, Gordano's blood pressure was beginning to rise, a warn-

A HAPPY ENDING

Medical Center's doctors and nurses.



ing sign of pre-eclampsia. Her ob/gyn, Rahab Khalil, M.D., decided to schedule her for induction in late February, a few weeks ahead of her March 4 due date. Two health scares during pregnancy are challenging enough, but Gordano then had a third: A week before her induction, doctors noticed and removed a cancerous skin

lesion, stage 0 melanoma. Fortunately, it also was caught early, and required no other treatment.

She stopped her restaurant work on Feb. 5, as her delivery date approached. Then, at a regularly scheduled doctor's office visit on Feb. 16th, her blood pressure was very high. She was sent to Monmouth Medical Center (MMC) to induce labor.

MMC, which has been a Level III Regional Perinatal Center since that designation was first created nearly 60 years ago, has built and maintained one of the safest obstetrical and gynecologic practices in the nation. It is also one of the busiest: More than 6,200 babies are born at this hospital annually, more than any other facility in Monmouth and Ocean counties.

Because of the hypertension, Gordano was having severe headaches, and she was given magnesium supplements to prevent seizures. She was induced at 8 p.m. on Feb. 16.

"The nurse came in the room, and she felt something else was going wrong," Gordano says. Dr. Khalil discovered that the umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck, and so she had to expedite the vaginal delivery. "The actual birthing experience was a lot," she says understatedly. "The doc-

tors saved him; they were great."

Baby Westin was born at 1:08 p.m. on Feb. 18th—but Gordano's troubles weren't over. The day after the birth, doctors found that her uterus was full of blood clots, which had to be expressed.

She was in the hospital two days after the birth. "Because of the pre-eclampsia I couldn't sit up—I would black out," she recalls. "I needed a bladder catheter because of an epidural and I couldn't get out of bed."

She credits MMC's nursing and physician staff with controlling her headaches with medication, removing the stitches from her skin cancer surgery and, eventually, motivating her to get out of bed.

"These nurses went above and beyond for me," Gordano says. "The nurses did everything they could to make sure I was OK and feeling as comfortable as I should."

After discharge, she was on blood pressure medications for two to three weeks, and her entire body was swollen. "But I'm fine now," she says.

She hopes to begin teaching dance again in the summer—she teaches acrobatic, jazz, hip-hop, "everything really," at three different dance studios.

Westin is fine too. "He's great, meeting all his markers, gaining weight," she says. "He's getting his chubby cheeks."

"He's getting his chubby cheeks."

How did she get through all these travails?

"The mother instinct was, I will be fine, just keep going to the doctor and being seen," she says. "I wanted to make sure my baby was healthy, to do everything I could. My husband was there the whole time, and when the doctors told me about the blood clots, he made simple analogies about what they would do. Obviously it was a lot more than that. He was trying to put me at ease."

Despite the difficulties, she says she is thinking about having another child. "The first two weeks [after giving birth] I said, 'I don't want more kids,'" she says. "But Westin's so great, so cute—I might be open to it."



To learn more about maternity services at Eisenberg Family Center Labor and Delivery Unit at Monmouth Medical Center, call 732.923.5024.

BACK TO LIFE

Monmouth Medical Center's renowned Joint Replacement and Spine Center gives patients a new lease on life.

Toms River resident Elizabeth Monge with her husband, Jose, enjoy a vacation in Italy just two months after she had two discs replaced in her back.



Elizabeth Monge knew she was in good hands when she checked in for surgery at Monmouth Medical Center's Joint Replacement and Spine Center in mid-January. Just days before her procedure, the hospital received national recognition, achieving Joint Commission Disease Specific Certification for total hip, total knee and spine surgery. Admittedly though, accolades weren't on her mind—feeling better was her objective.

Flash back about two years prior, when the now 68-year-old Toms River resident began feeling a suspicious pain in her neck that eventually traveled down her left arm and into her fingers. The pain left her in such agony that she couldn't even sling a purse or bag over her shoulder.

"My doctors told me to go to physical therapy for it," she recalls, "but no one

really knew what was wrong until an orthopedist said I had a deteriorated disc in my back."

To help manage her condition, in late 2020, Monge's doctors administered an epidural steroid injection. The shot, a common treatment option for back pain, did the trick temporarily and kept Monge comfortable for roughly three to four months—then the suffering returned.

"The pain came back, and it was worse than before," she says. "I was on a series of medications and pills, but the pain was 24/7 this time. It was so bad at one point that I had to go to the emergency room because [the pain] was too much. I felt like I was going to have a heart attack from the pain."

A second epidural was administered in November 2021, but that injection, unlike the first, did not offer any reprieve. That's

when she was referred to MMC and Praveen Yalamanchili, M.D., orthopaedic spine surgeon, who recommended and then performed a cervical discectomy and fusion surgery in January of this year.

"He used grafts to replace and repair two discs in my back," she says.

About an hour after surgery in her recovery room, Monge caught herself stretching, arms fully extended and without pain. "I thought maybe the anesthesia was still in my body and that's why I didn't feel anything," she says, "but I felt so great."

Monmouth Medical Center's comprehensive, coordinated Spine Program delivers unparalleled expertise with the lowest infection and complication rates and outstanding outcomes," says Dr. Yalamanchili. "We offer individualized care plans for pain management and a designated inpatient unit that is staffed by nurses and therapists who specialize in the care of spine surgery patients.

Monge spent just one night in the hospital, which was required because of her age, before she was discharged. Other than minor post-

surgery soreness, which was remedied with acetaminophen, she no longer had any pain. Physical therapy sessions and follow-up appointments every six weeks ensured that Monge stayed on track for a full recovery.

"I perform the majority of my surgeries at Monmouth Medical Center due to the excellent care and results my patients experience," says Dr. Yalamanchili. "I have had many patients find life-changing relief after their treatment at the Spine Center."

The procedure immediately renewed Monge's life, so much that she jokes that "I felt like I didn't even need PT!"

"It's amazing how the surgery changed my life," she notes. "My posture got better, and even the incision for surgery was nice—it looks like [the scar] is even shrinking. Everything was just great."



For more information about Monmouth Medical Center, visit rwjbh.org/monmouth.

Raising the Bar for Safety and Care

I am proud to share that Monmouth Medical Center has achieved another “A” on the Spring 2022 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades report that was announced publicly in May. We are the only hospital in the region to receive an “A” Hospital Safety Score by the Leapfrog Group for 15 consecutive rating periods.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is a national distinction that recognizes our achievements in protecting patients from preventable harm and error in the hospital. Our 15 consecutive “A” grades demonstrate the commitment and intentional focus on safety and quality by all of our caregivers and recognizes the outstanding care we deliver to our patients and their families every day. This latest “A” comes on the heels of our inclusion on the *Newsweek* global list of Best Hospitals, and our third recognition as a Leapfrog Top Teaching Hospital.

At Monmouth Medical Center, our goal each and every day is zero events of preventable harm to our patients and employees. In order to achieve this goal, everyone—including those who do not provide direct patient care—is responsible for transforming the way we think and behave with regard to safety, error prevention and performance excellence.

The Leapfrog Group tells communities more about things like how well their hospitals prevent infections and encourages handwashing, how much they value patient safety by supporting strong health care teams and if they have protocols and standards in place for preventing errors. Its A, B, C, D or F letter grades are an easy way for consumers to choose the safest hospital to seek care and have quickly become the gold standard measure of patient safety. For more information on the Leapfrog Group and the spring 2022 scores, visit hospitalsafetyscore.org.



ERIC CARNEY
President and Chief Executive Officer
MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER
AND MONMOUTH MEDICAL CENTER
SOUTHERN CAMPUS

