



Even longtime employees know how hard it is to find your way around Children's Hospital Boston. The buildings have been erected and connected over the last 135 years, creating a maze of hallways, elevators, staircases and doors that don't always go where it seems they should.

So how do you help the many visitors to Children's get to their destination? If you're **Greg Fredo, Carol Sayles, Todd Katzman, and Karen Dias**, you start the **Ask me!** Program, which stations hospital employees in the Main Lobby and at the top of the Pavilion staircase to help people get where they're going and answer any questions they have. In just four months, the program has gone from non-existent to indispensable.

"One of the program's goals is to provide staff who work in non-patient care areas an opportunity to connect with our patients, families and other visitors," says Sayles, who is the director of the International Center. "It's been really gratifying to hear the positive feedback not only from visitors, but also from the **Ask me!** volunteers. The program has just been a win-win any way you measure it."

On October 1, the second phase of **Ask me!** will begin, so *Children's News* decided to take a look at what's made it so successful and to put out a call for more volunteers.

## So you want to volunteer...

If you're interested in being an **Ask me!** volunteer, you must attend:

One of the following orientation sessions:

September 14, 8 to 9:30 a.m.

September 19, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

September 28, noon to 1:30 p.m.

and

One of the following hospital tours:

September 15, noon to 1 p.m.

September 21, 9 to 10 a.m.

September 22, 3 to 4 p.m.

September 27, noon to 1 p.m.

To sign up to be an **Ask me!** volunteer, go to NetLearning on the home page of the intranet and search for Ask Me! For more information, contact one of the program coordinators below:

**Greg Fredo**, ext. 5-8713  
greg.fredo@childrens.harvard.edu

**Todd Katzman**, ext. 5-4022  
todd.katzman@childrens.harvard.edu

**Carol Sayles**, ext. 5-8929  
carol.sayles@childrens.harvard.edu

**Trenace Jackson** (pictured), an administrative associate in Cardiology, is a people-person. And having been at the hospital for 22 years, she certainly knows her way around its many buildings. "Ask me! is a great program," she says. "I would certainly encourage other employees to volunteer."

**Ambulatory Administrative Coordinator Todd Krupp** (pictured) has been an **Ask me!** volunteer since the program's inception. "When families come to Children's, they're often already under huge amounts of stress due to their child's medical issues," he says. "Hopefully, we help alleviate the added stress of finding their way around the hospital."



*"The program has given me and those who participate a real sense of making a difference in a patient's experience. It feels really good when you help someone find their way, and on their way out they stop and thank you for helping them."*

—**TODD KATZMAN**,  
Administrator for the Department of Surgery

## Ask me! by the numbers

- 1** hour. The new length of an **Ask me!** shift. They used to be two hours each.
- 105** Current number of **Ask me!** volunteers.
- 8** a.m. to **3** p.m. **New hours Monday to Friday that Ask me! volunteers are working.**
- 60** The number of new volunteers needed to keep **Ask me!** running, given these new hours.
- 31** Number of departments that currently boast **Ask me!** volunteers.

## Ask me! anything. Well, maybe not anything...

A compendium of actual **Ask me!** moments:

I think you've misread the t-shirt

*Apparently thinking the program's name is 'Ask Me Out!', several visitors have asked volunteers on dates.*

You might try the cafeteria

*A husband, while jokingly arguing with his spouse about where they were going in the hospital, asked a volunteer where he could find a new wife.*

Go up the stairs and take a left past self-actualization. It will be on your right.

*A volunteer asked a passing employee if she could help him find something. He said, "Yes. Inner peace and contentment."*

Sure, but I'd prefer to keep it professional

*One common Ask Me! question: "Can I ask you anything?"*

What is this, a Jeopardy tryout?

*One volunteer was asked by a young girl if she knew the capital of Illinois. She responded, "Chicago," but the girl triumphantly replied: "No. It's Springfield!"*

