Dr. Lona Mody helps lead Big Hearts for Seniors fundraising effort

Dr. Lona Mody, MD, associate professor of internal medicine at the U-M Geriatrics Center, took to the streets of Ann Arbor on Sunday, June 9, 2013 to show her support for Big Hearts for Seniors (BHS), a collaborative group of five UMHS organizations serving seniors in Washtenaw County. Dr. Mody ran the Ann Arbor Marathon half marathon with a time of 2 hours 42 minutes. Equally impressive, she raised over $2000 for this great cause through personal fundraising efforts.

BHS supports five community-based UMHS outreach programs: Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels, Housing Bureau for Seniors, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Silver Club Memory Loss Programs, and Turner Senior Resource Center (TSRC). These groups have collaborated on annual fundraisers since 2006. This year, BHS formed a 73 person team and came close to meeting the goal of raising $25,000. While these programs receive support from the University of Michigan Health System, all rely heavily on fundraising to cover the costs of providing crucial services. The team had a beautiful day for the event and many participants pledged to race again in 2014.

Through her work as a geriatrician, Dr. Mody thinks about the wellbeing of older adults on a daily basis. She became involved with BHS this year when she saw a fit between her love of running and UMHS programs serving seniors in the community. “Big Hearts for Seniors is a group of people from programs who work hard to improve quality of life for older adults in a variety of ways” said Dr. Mody. She hopes to involve more of her colleagues in the future. “It’s a great way to stay healthy and do something positive for our community.”

BHS was also happy to welcome honorary team member Jerry Johncock who serves as an inspiration to seniors everywhere. Jerry celebrated his 85th birthday on race day by finishing his 115th marathon; he will now be the 85-89 year old national record holder. Mr. Johncock ran the event with two sons and two grandsons. Rachel Dewees, Director of TSRC met the family during the race weekend. “This family is beyond inspirational. Three generations running a marathon together to celebrate Jerry is moving. BHS was honored have him on our team of 70+ runners and walkers.”

As of this time, the BHS team is just shy of its fundraising goal. Though the event has passed, it is not too late to show your support of Dr. Mody and BHS. If you would like to donate, you may do so online at www.giving.umich.edu/give/med-bhfs-tsrrc (please write Dr. Mody’s name in the Comments section) or send a check to Big Hearts for Seniors-UM, 2401 Plymouth Rd, Suite C, 48105. In addition, if you would like to participate on the team in the future, please contact Dr. Mody.