Ontario's first CyberKnife technology coming to Juravinski Cancer Centre

While 2009 was challenging in many ways, Hamilton Health Sciences has recorded numerous achievements over the course of the year. These included:

- Opening of the RBC Child & Youth Mental Health Unit, a much needed inpatient facility that is the region’s first
- Completion of the Regional Rehabilitation Centre and David Bradley Cardiac Vascular & Stroke Research Institute, two new buildings at the General site that will help both of these crucial programs flourish
- World and provincial firsts in molecular breast imaging and CyberKnife radiosurgery technology at the Juravinski Cancer Centre and Henderson Hospital
- Opening of the Alexander Pavilion at St. Peter’s Hospital, a novel facility that was designed and built to accommodate the special needs of people with Alzheimer’s
- Rollout of eCARE, our organization’s electronic health record.

These accomplishments grow from teamwork and the contributions each individual staff member makes, whether it be the nurse checking vital signs, a cleaner scrubbing equipment, or a surgeon extracting a tumour. It all adds up to success and, most importantly, to outstanding patient care.

While we marked many important milestones in 2009, it was also a difficult year when it came to finances. In order to balance our budget, we needed to find $25 million in cost savings. Through detailed research and consultation with staff, physicians and suppliers, we found opportunities to save on both the short and long term. A fundamental element of this effort was working more efficiently than ever.

I wish I could say that we are through it, and that 2010 would focus solely on more achievements, but in health care, the only ‘constant’ is change, and there are more changes and challenges ahead.

The Ontario government has revealed that the province is suffering from an unprecedented deficit, and it is clear that hospital funding will be reduced. In order to balance our budget, we will do all we can to continue providing the care that we currently offer. In our 2009 fiscal year, we made the acquisition of the CyberKnife possible, but in 2010, it was also a difficult year when it came to finances. In order to balance our budget, we needed to find $25 million in cost savings. Through detailed research and consultation with staff, physicians and suppliers, we found opportunities for savings and made changes that are helping us function more efficiently than ever.

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“We have built a world for the healthiest, the young and the fitted,” said Dr. Patricia Moore, gerontologist and designer. “What we don’t see is that design disables. People begin to fail because the system has failed them. I remember watching my grandmother trying to make dinner for her family. She went to open the fridge door but couldn’t because of her arthritis. She could not get to a basic necessity, food, to survive.”

Dr. Moore, a leading authority on consumer lifespan behaviour and requirements, was invited to speak at Hamilton Health Sciences in November. Her visit was sponsored by the Dr. Judith R. Meeks Lecture Endowment Fund through Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation. The day-long event, in partnership with The Hamilton Spectator, included a President’s Breakfast for donors, a community and health care leader’s lunch, a staff educational event, and a community forum.

Dr. Moore’s visit coincided with the launch of Hamilton Health Sciences’ Enhancing Lives and Optimizing Healthcare for Seniors corporate initiative. Over time, this initiative will provide an opportunity for HHS staff and physicians to reaffirm the importance of patients throughout their lifespan, gain a better appreciation for the developmental stages of older adulthood and issues of aging, and transform the way that care is provided to seniors.

One of Dr. Moore’s most notable achievements was a unique and daring experiment that allowed her to live as an 80-year-old woman. From 1979 to 1982, Dr. Moore visited 116 cities disguised as a senior (pictured). She was reproducing an experiment originally conducted by gerontologist and designer Dr. Patricia Moore.

One of Dr. Moore’s most notable achievements was a unique and daring experiment that allowed her to live as an 80-year-old woman.

Following this experience, Dr. Moore dedicated her life’s work to creating environments, systems and products that allow individuals to live with dignity.

“We disable people in the normal course of life,” she said. “We blame our elders and say that they are broken or incapable but the fault is our own.”

Dr. Moore’s inspirational story and the Enhancing Lives and Optimizing Healthcare for Seniors initiative was shared more broadly in our region thanks to Carmelina Prete, a reporter with The Hamilton Spectator. With the help of HHS’ Anne Pizzacalla, Clinical Nurse Specialist and Elder Life Specialist; Erin Stirling, Social Worker and Elder Life Specialist; and Theatre Aquarius makeup artist Anne Mcgly, 36-year-old Carmelina went undercover as a senior in Hamilton, and then wrote about the challenges of everyday life for seniors in the newspaper.

“Dr. Moore’s enthusiasm and compassion for treating all individuals, and in particular seniors, as equals was inspiring,” said Donna Cripps, President of St. Peter’s Hospital. “She truly set the stage for our corporate initiative, which will allow all seniors to experience care in a way that they deserve - care that acknowledges individuality, respects dignity and celebrates the richness of each life.”

Dressing the part – 36-year-old Carmelina Prete, a reporter with The Hamilton Spectator, recently went undercover as a senior (pictured). She was reproducing an experiment originally conducted by gerontologist and designer Dr. Patricia Moore.

CHILDHOOD CANCER DOCTOR RECEIVES NOTABLE PRIZE

Dr. Ronnie Barr, a pediatric oncologist at McMaster Children’s Hospital, recently won a prestigious prize from the Canadian Cancer Society.

Dr. Barr is known nationally and internationally for his work in the field of pediatric oncology, and as co-author and author of seven books and more than 250 scientific articles. He is also a professor of pediatrics, pathology and medicine at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

He is one of the editors of the first definitive document of incidence, survival and mortality of 15- to 29-year-olds with malignant disease and also co-edited the first textbook on cancer in adolescents and young adults.

“I’m absolutely thrilled to have received this award,” said Dr. Barr. “I’ve been studying cancer in young people for quite some time and it’s nice to have that work recognized through this prestigious award.”

The prize comes with $2,000 for Dr. Barr and $20,000 for his research.

Dedicated doctor – Dr. Ronnie Barr, pediatric oncologist, meets with Avery Lachapelle, 10, who has been a patient of Dr. Barr since he was just one year old.
“This morning it is all about babies, precious babies,” said Sophia Aggelonitis, Hamilton Mountain MPP. Sophia was joined by Ted Mihalek, MPP for A исторic Consumer Services and MPP for A astore D undas F lmbourough W estdale, at 1,000,000 Health Sciences to announce that the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) will invest in 43 new neonatal intensive care beds across Ontario.

The ministry is providing $2.9 million in start-up funding and $4 million annually for McMaster Children’s Hospital (MCH) to open and maintain eight additional beds on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The NICU at MCH currently has 42 funded beds and is the largest in Ontario, serving as a hub for the region extending to Brantford, Kitchener, Niagara and Oakville. Last year, the unit admitted about 950 babies, but unfortunately, had to send more than 60 of them to hospitals outside the region because there were not enough beds available.

“The hope is that with this funding we won’t be turning away any more babies,” said Anna Marie Smith, Clinical Manager of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

When this announcement was made in the NICU on December 22, emotions could be seen on everyone in the room. Dr. Christopher Fusch, Director of Neonatology, expressed it well. “This is like Christmas for us. It means a great deal to our unit. This is about caring for our babies and their families.”

“Getting stronger every day – Christopher and Joshua Monahan received kisses and cuddles from neonatal nurses and doctors at the announcement. They are seen here with their primary nurse Marion Dekker, (far left) and their parents Mark and Jeanette Monahan.”

Ministry funding is a welcomed gift for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Special evening remembers children who have died at McMaster Children’s Hospital

Over the past nine years, a special group of McMaster Children’s Hospital staff, including social workers, nurses, chaplains and doctors, has developed a unique way of helping families deal with the death of their children.

Dr. John Watts, Neonatologist at McMaster Children’s Hospital and Professor and Associate Chair, Education, in the Department of Pediatrics at McMaster University, is the architect of the “An Evening of Remembrance” event held each year at McMaster Children’s Hospital.

After attending a session on bereavement at the Canadian Pediatric Society in Montreal 10 years ago and learning that a few other hospitals had introduced the idea of a memorial service, it became apparent to John that, although the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) was doing good work at the time of death and immediately afterwards, they saw relatively little of the parents later on.

“We had always recognized that bereavement in the case of children is not something that can be resolved quickly and certainly not easily,” said John. “It is a particularly devastating event for a family to have a child die, whether that child has been with them for 10 years or 10 minutes.”

The evening of Remembrance, which is a secular, multi-faith, multicultural event, is a time when the families of those children who passed away at McMaster Children’s Hospital can come together with the staff once again.

“IT is important for parents to know that the hospital staff has not forgotten them,” said John. “They become very close to the members of the staff in many cases, particularly with older children. They find a lot of relief and a lot of gratitude for just simple things that recognize that this death wasn’t just something that happened but that the staff remember and care.”

The evening includes parents lighting candles for their lost children, a series of non-denominational readings by An Evening of Remembrance committee members, parents and siblings, and a musical performance by the Hamilton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. All of these elements bring a sense of comfort to those in attendance.

The opportunity for the parents to meet with each other and share similar feelings and difficulties is something for which they are particularly grateful. Coming back to the hospital and seeing other parents who are in a similar situation gives them a great deal of relief and is very positive for the family.
A tale of strength, inspiration and generosity

Misch Weisz's candid journey through pancreatic cancer and his refusal to stop living life to its fullest were inspirational to anyone who knew him and many who didn't.

Upon being diagnosed with stage four pancreatic cancer on September 11, 2007, Misch was expected to live no more than five months. Using a combination of conventional cancer treatment and alternative medicine, including Chinese herbal medicine, Misch lived more than two years after his diagnosis.

Misch had always surprised people with his success in business and in life. Some might call it good fortune, others would call it creating his own luck. Although he had a thirst for learning and studied political science at McMaster University and business at Mohawk College, he never finished to earn a degree or diploma. He preferred to learn on his own and used the knowledge he acquired about electronic banking through his job at the Hamilton-Wentworth Credit Union as a stepping stone to his own success.

A testament to his entrepreneurial spirit, Misch went from raising his two children alone on welfare after his first marriage broke up, to starting up an ATM transaction processing company called TNS Smart Network Inc. in 1996, going on to become a millionaire.

As a society, we tend to ignore our mortality. "As I'm dying, I focus on living. I'm in control of my death and I'm planning for it," Misch said during his illness.

He started a blog during his treatment to keep his friends and family informed of how he was doing. He heard from many people he didn't know who were encouraged by his openness and his strength. A comment on his blog after his passing stated: "RIP Mr. Weisz...I never knew you but you inspired me to live my life a different way."

Misch also hoped to inspire people in other ways. He donated more than $3 million to charity, including $500,000 to the YMCA, $250,000 to Woodview Children's Mental Health and Autism Services, and $500,000 to the Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC).

"I do this to inspire others to reflect on their values and invest back into society," said Misch. Is generous donation to the JCC will be used toward the purchase of a Cyberknife Robotic Radiosurgery System. Cyberknife technology involves no cuts or incisions. It destroys diseased tissue by focusing precise beams of high-energy radiation on the tumor site. It is designed for treating the most complex tumors such as cancers of the lung, spine, pancreas or brain. The JCC will be the first centre in Ontario and the second in Canada to utilize this type of technology. The rest of the funding for the $3 million system comes from SC Johnson and Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation.

"Misch was grateful for the treatment and care he received at the Juravinski Cancer Centre," said Connie Weisz. Unfortunately, his cancer had progressed too far and he wasn't able to be cured. He would be happy to know that his monetary contribution toward the Cyberknife will help to treat many cancer patients for years to come."

Misch Weisz is survived by Connie, his children Danielle and Nathan, his parents Emmy and Erich and his brother Guido.

New 2G Child and Youth Clinic opens at McMaster Children's Hospital

Three mothers each held a child in their arms, and one by one walked up to the podium to tell their stories at the official opening of MCMer Children's Hospital's new 2G Child and Youth Clinic.

Meshel Baines explained how a complicated birth left her son Lucas with little use of his left arm. "He may never know the extent of his injury except what we tell him about it," she said, thanking the staff of MCMer Children's Hospital's Brachial Plexus clinic for changing the course of three-year-old Lucas's life through surgery and occupational therapy.

Five-year-old Ally Miano looked out from her mother Lisa O'Donnell's arms as she described a child who had had 100 or so small seizures a day at age two, but had been seizure-free for nearly two years now, thanks to care provided by the neurology clinic.

And Christina McNaughton drew smiles as she asked her diabetic son Owen, age 2, if he wanted to show to this crowd of about 100 hospital staff the insulin pump strapped to his belly, something that is easing the struggle for their young family.

The new 2G clinic will serve these children and over 15,000 more each year through its more than 20 pediatric ambulatory clinics. Each moved into the bright new space beside the hospital's front entrance in the two weeks following the December 17 official opening.

A cuddly surprise – From left: Lucas Baines, Ally Molino and Owen McNaughton clutch the teddy bears they received for helping to officially open the 2G Child and Youth Clinic on December 17.
HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES AND HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCES FOUNDATION

HHS cancer program staff recognized for improving care for palliative patients

Staff and physicians from Hamilton Health Sciences were recently recognized by the Cancer System Quality Council, Canadian Cancer Society and Cancer Care Ontario for three initiatives: the Tertiary Acute Palliative Care Unit (TAPCU), the Oncology Response Coordinator, and the Oncology Triage Tool.

These three initiatives show how providing better patient management and improved end-of-life care reduces the need for patients to use the Emergency Department for support. This improves both the quality of care and treats patients who are very sick in a more sensitive and caring way.

“From the patient and family’s perspective, enhancing the quality of life at the end of life is a critical and final opportunity for the health care system. People have almost unanimously expressed the desire for this care to occur at home or in-home-like settings,” said Dr. Sharon Russell, palliative care physician at HHS.

Despite this, there are times when the symptoms occurring at the end of life are of such severity that they require management in an acute care setting. The Tertiary Acute Palliative Care Unit (TAPCU) was created to meet the unique needs of this group of patients.

“The TAPCU strives to make hospitalization as comfortable, dignified and short as possible. By creating a centre of expertise in palliative care, TAPCU staff has been able to decrease ED visits for patients requiring admission, decrease use of unnecessary and invasive testing and shorten hospital length of stay,” said Dr. Russell.

The TAPCU currently consists of six designated beds on the medical oncology ward. The interdisciplinary team includes academic palliative care physicians, social work, chaplaincy, pharmacy and nursing. All of the staff work, chaplaincy, pharmacy and nursing. All of the staff

A message from the Chair of the Board, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation

On behalf of the board of directors of Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, I’d like to thank you for your support in 2009.

Despite a challenging economic climate, our Foundation was truly blessed to have the strong support of our donor community.

We celebrated several major achievements last year: the grand openings of the RBC Child & Youth Mental Health Unit at McMaster Children’s Hospital; the Alexander Pavilion at St. Peter’s Hospital; and the Regional Rehabilitation Centre at Hamilton General. These brand new facilities provide modern, specialized care settings for our patients.

This year, we look forward to the completion of phase one of the Henderson Hospital redevelopment, and the grand opening of the David Braley Cardiac, Vascular and Stroke Research Institute at Hamilton General.

I hope you are as proud as I am of what your support has accomplished. On behalf of our board and our staff I wish you and yours good health and happiness in 2010.

Congratulations to Taylor and the Madge Group!

A budding young philanthropist and the organizer of an annual charity golf tournament were recognized in November at a special celebration marking National Philanthropy Day®.

Taylor DeCoste is an 11-year-old with a passion for helping others. From a very young age, Taylor has spent a lot of time at McMaster Children’s Hospital. He has a kidney disorder and a muscle disease that affects the use of his legs and fingers.

When he was just six, Taylor decided he wanted to help the hospital, so he held a garage sale and penny drive, which raised $653. Since then, Taylor has raised almost $3,000 for Mac Kids.

“I can’t think of a more deserving group of supporters,” said Dr. Bill Evans, President of the Juravinski Cancer Centre. “They have been working hard for so many years to raise funds for breast cancer research at the Juravinski Cancer Centre. This past year marked the 17th year of the event. To date, the tournament has raised more than $100,000.

Congratulations to Taylor and the Madge Group!

HHS supporters honoured at National Philanthropy Day

A budding young philanthropist and the organizers of an annual charity golf tournament were honoured in November at a special celebration marking National Philanthropy Day®.

The day is celebrated around the world to pay tribute to the great contributions that philanthropy and those who are active in charitable causes make to our communities and our world.

National Philanthropy Day® is supported by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). AFP’s Golden Horseshoe Chapter named Taylor DeCoste “Youth Philanthropist of the Year” and the Madge Group was awarded “Community Group Philanthropist of the Year” for the Hamilton region.

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Donors get A Closer Look

A unique series of events organized by Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation offers donors the opportunity to experience what goes on behind the closed doors of some of the hospital’s busiest and most critical departments.

During last fall’s A Closer Look tours, participants saw firsthand how their support is making a difference as they interacted directly with doctors and other frontline staff while learning about the latest advances in treatment.

Guests of the Hamilton General Hospital event chose between a tour of the Emergency Department, Operating Room, Nuclear Medicine Lab, Electrophysiology Lab, or the new Regional Rehabilitation Centre. Stops on the Juravinski Cancer Centre/Henderson General Hospital’s tour included the Diagnostic Imaging Department, the Operating Room, the Radiation Therapy Area, Research, or discussion with Dr. Bill Evans, President of the JCC.

Pearl Veenema, President & CEO of Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation said, “A Closer Look provides our donors with exclusive access to areas of the hospital that are normally restricted to patients and medical professionals. When they can pick up some of the tools used in surgery, perform an ultrasound test, or take part in a candid discussion with a cancer expert, then they can make the connection between their support and how it impacts patient care and research. We’re looking forward to hosting more of our donors in 2010, and we’re especially looking forward to bringing A Closer Look to St. Peter’s Hospital for the first time.”

Dr. Adrian Yaffe, 1912-2009

Dr. Adrian Yaffe was respected and recognized within the cardiology community and at Hamilton General Hospital as a visionary.

Dr. Yaffe graduated from Queen’s University Medical School in 1936, and began his medical career in England. He returned to Ontario in 1948, setting up practice in internal medicine and cardiology in Hamilton. Four years later, in a basement laboratory at Hamilton General Hospital, the young Dr. Yaffe, along with Drs. Alan McNabb and Jack Sibley, performed Hamilton’s first cardiac catheterization. This was an extraordinary accomplishment at a time when it was widely believed that injecting dye into a coronary artery would lead to sudden death.

He and his colleagues continued to break new ground in cardiology, and in 1977, a full-fledged cardiac surgery program was established at Hamilton General Hospital. In 2005, the Heart Unit was expanded and renamed the Dofasco Heart Investigation Unit. Last year, doctors performed 6,982 cardiac catheterization procedures in the HIU, the highest volume in the province.

Dr. Yaffe gave up his practice in 1989, but continued to participate in medical rounds at the hospital a couple of times each week. Sadly, Dr. Yaffe passed away on October 12, 2009, at the age of 97. He leaves behind three children—Martin, Helen and John, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild, along with his sister, Ruby. He also leaves a legacy that, even today, echoes in the halls of Hamilton General Hospital.

Dr. Yaffe leaves a legacy that, even today, echoes in the halls of Hamilton General Hospital.

To honour the pioneering work of Dr. Yaffe, the Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation created the Adrian Yaffe Society, which recognizes donors to the Cardiac, Vascular & Stroke Program at Hamilton General Hospital.

A view from the top – Guests get an exclusive look at the rooftop helipad during the Hamilton General Hospital’s A Closer Look event.

Donors get A Closer Look

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Like the pros – From left: Dr. Wesley Stephen, Chief of General Surgery, HHS, assists Paul Sakulauskas, former Chair of the Board, Juravinski Cancer Centre Foundation and Louis Bologo, council member with the Juravinski Cancer Centre Foundation, as they try their hand at simulated laparoscopic surgery in one of the Henderson’s operating rooms.
Olympic flame warms hearts at McMaster Children's Hospital

As the Olympic flame makes its way to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, it made a special stop at McMaster Children's Hospital.

On December 20, RBC brought the Olympic flame to the hospital as one of eight special stops across the country. RBC is a co-presenting sponsor of the Olympic Torch Relay and has a proud heritage of supporting community initiatives.

Hamilton Health Sciences staff and their families, along with a throng of community supporters, got up early to witness the flame's 7 a.m. arrival at McMaster Children's Hospital. The crowd cheered as Robert Korver, the father of an autistic son, carried the torch through the front doors of the hospital. A short welcome ceremony took place and then well-known philanthropist Charles Juravinski carried the torch as it made its exit from the hospital to continue on its journey.

"Witnessing the Olympic torch in person is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Dr. Peter Fitzgerald, President of McMaster Children's Hospital. "I'm grateful to RBC for bringing the torch here today so that our patients and their families could be part of such an amazing experience.

Following the formal ceremony, and as a special added bonus, the Vancouver Olympic Committee visited the children in the hospital who were not healthy enough to leave their rooms to join the celebration. Each child was given a pair of official Olympic red mittens and had the opportunity to see the real flame in a lantern and hold a replica torch. This experience lifted their spirits and even moved some parents to tears.

The Olympic Torch Relay will culminate at BC Place on February 12, 2010, with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron, signaling the start of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

This past October, friends and supporters of St. Peter's Hospital spent “An Evening in Barbados” at LiUNA Station. The 10th annual gala featured traditional Barbadian music and Bajan cuisine at the island-themed celebration. The event raised more than $50,000 to support the work of research fellow Dr. Monica Marchese, who is investigating treatment for Alzheimer's.

We are grateful for the support of the many sponsors and guests who made the gala such a success. A very special thank you to Ralph and Vicki Weekes. (Ralph was Gala Chair and is a member of the St. Peter's Hospital Fundraising Council and the HHS Foundation Board of Directors), and the planning committee, for their efforts in making this such a remarkable evening.

Gala raises $50,000 for St. Peter's Hospital

A great day — Philanthropist Charles Juravinski was given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to run with the Olympic torch.

Taking part in the festivities — Lyric Jarvis smiles as he holds a replica torch from his bed at McMaster Children's Hospital.

A night to remember — From left: Donna Cripps, President, St. Peter's Hospital; Craig Laviolette, Chair, Hamilton Health Sciences Board of Directors, and Vicki and Ralph Weekes, Co-Chairs of the 10th annual St. Peter's Gala.
The 2010 BRIGHT Run is scheduled for Saturday, September 11. Welcomed almost 1,000 participants who raised more than $250,000. The committee is grateful to everyone who supported the event. Last year’s inaugural BRIGHT Run on Saturday, September 19 to run or walk to raise funds for breast cancer research at the Juravinski Cancer Centre. The “BRIGHT” in BRIGHT Run stands for “Breast Cancer Research in Greater Hamilton Today.”

Barbara Miliari had a good reason to participate. “I had a very close friend go through this just last year and now I’m fighting cancer myself. I am proud to say that my head is held high and I will not let this beat me. I believe in a future without breast cancer!”

The “Breast Friends Team” – all 59 of them – walked for their friend Sandra and many other wives, mothers, daughters, sisters and friends who’ve been affected by breast cancer. They wanted to get the message out that “fighting cancer is hard; donating isn’t.”

At the end of the day, an incredible $420,000 had been raised. The BRIGHT Run executive encourages local and regional health care system that is strong, sustainable and coordinated.

Extensive planning involving hundreds of our staff members continues as we work towards realizing the goals of ABC. The major milestones will include:

- Opening of Phase 1A of the new Henderson – August 2010
- Hematology Oncology consolidation from MUMC to Henderson – August 2010
- Urgent Care Centre – planned opening early 2011
- Clinical Teaching Unit transfer from MUMC to Henderson – anticipated timeframe mid 2011
- Major clinical activity transfer – anticipated timeframe mid 2011

These ambitious projects and others, are enabling us to recruit the best and brightest health care professionals who are, in turn, helping to enhance health care in our region and create a healthier future for us all. I would like to thank them, our community, and our partners in the health sector, government and business, for your continued support as we embark on another successful year in 2010.