



Ricardo Carrasco III

Students, faculty and staff members from the Health Sciences Campus volunteer April 9 at the Keck Medicine Health Pavilion at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the University Park Campus.

Exploring health at book festival

Thousands of visitors heard about healthy living practices and learned about their own health at the Keck Medicine Health Pavilion during the 21st annual *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books, held April 9-10 on the University Park Campus. Students, faculty and staff volunteers from across the Health Sciences Campus conducted a variety of health screenings, such as blood pressure screenings and dental exams, as well as information sessions aimed at promoting health and hygiene.

One student's involvement extended beyond volunteering on April 10, though, as third-year USC School of Pharmacy student Ruth Madievsky read from her debut book of poetry, *Emergency Brake*, at the Festival of Books Poetry Stage.



Adam Frederick Phillips



Ricardo Carrasco III

At top: USC School of Pharmacy student Ruth Madievsky reads on the Poetry Stage.

Above: Attendees fill out paperwork at the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute Mobile Eye Clinic.

At left: Raj Dasgupta, right, talks to attendees at the Health Pavilion.



Ricardo Carrasco III

Researcher awarded \$7.1M grant

By **Ellin Kavanagh**

Tracy C. Grikscheit, MD, a principal investigator with USC Stem Cell and The Saban Research Institute of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, has received a \$7.1 million grant from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Translational Research program to develop a cellular therapy for the treatment of nerve disorders of the digestive system.



Cristy Lyral

Tracy Grikscheit

These disorders, called enteric neuropathies, include degenerative neuromuscular conditions as well as those caused by a deficient or missing nerve supply to the intestines. Currently, in many cases the only treatment is removing segments of intestine that do not have a properly formed nervous system.

"Our goal is to develop an 'off the shelf' cellular therapy to treat enteric neuropathies before patients require surgery or to rescue patients who still have symptoms following surgery," said Grikscheit, who is also an associate professor of surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

See **GRANT**, page 3

Medical team launches fight against sepsis

By **Douglas Morino**

Keck Medicine of USC is taking a collaborative approach to diagnose and treat sepsis.

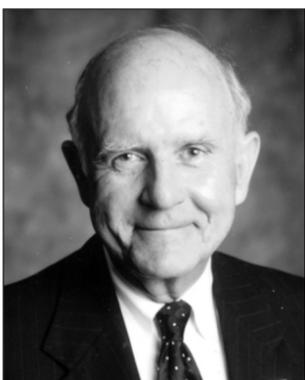
Sepsis is the body's overwhelming and life-threatening response to infection, which can lead to tissue damage, organ failure and death. Sepsis kills about 258,000 Americans each year and is the leading cause of death in U.S. hospitals, according to data published by the Sepsis Alliance.

The chances of a patient surviving sepsis can double with early recognition and treatment. Early detection and prompt intervention is key in creating positive patient outcomes.

"Fighting Sepsis" is an interdisciplinary team representing the three hospitals of Keck Medicine. Team members, including nurses, physicians, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, laboratory, quality,

See **SEPSIS**, page 2

In memoriam: Joseph P. Van Der Meulen, former Keck School dean



Joseph P. Van der Meulen

By **Amanda Busick**

Professor Emeritus Joseph P. Van Der Meulen, MD, former USC vice president for health affairs, died April 6 after a long battle with Parkinson disease. He was 86.

Van Der Meulen was recruited to the Keck School of Medicine of USC in 1971 as chair of the Department of Neurology and chief neurologist at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center. As

chair, he worked closely with the Departments of Neurosurgery and Radiology to promote neuroscience alongside clinical neurology. According to many colleagues, he was committed to building teams to bring the best of science to the patient's bedside.

"His compassion and acumen as a neurologist, his integrity and respect for all persons, and his vision and grace as a senior statesman

inspired all who crossed his path," said Helena Chui, MD, chair of the Department of Neurology at the Keck School.

A Boston native, Van Der Meulen received his medical degree cum laude from Boston University and served his internship in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital in New York. He received his neurology training at the Harvard Neurological Unit

of Boston City Hospital. He subsequently spent two years in Stockholm, Sweden, at the Karolinska Nobel Institute for Neurophysiology with Ragnar Granit, a Nobel laureate.

Van Der Meulen then served as an associate in neurology at Harvard University and as an associate professor of neurology and biomedical engineering at Case Western

See **IN MEMORIAM**, page 3

Neuroanesthesiologist recognized for international work

By Melissa Masatani

For decades after leaving the former Soviet Union, Vladimir Zelman, MD, PhD, worked to expand and promote the Russian scientific community, organizing international exchanges between scientists and supporting his former colleagues as they advanced in research and medicine.

Now, the Keck School of Medicine of USC professor and co-chair of the Department of Anesthesiology has been recognized for his efforts promoting international scientific collaboration by a national organization.

Zelman recently received the Russian American Science Association-USA's George Gamow Award, "for his seminal contributions to anesthesiology, neurology and neurological surgery and tireless efforts to promote best scientific practices in Russia," the award states.

"The award was established by the Russian American Science Association to recognize outstanding scientific contributions of Russian-speaking diaspora and efforts to promote international recognition of Russian science and Russian heritage," wrote Vladimir Shiltsev, PhD, RASA Gamow Award Selection Committee chair.

The award was named after Gamow, a Russian-American physicist who fled the Soviet Union and was known for his role in the development of the big bang theory as well as his work helping interpret the genetic code following the discovery of DNA structure.

"I think after so many years of my work, that I am proud that I received this award, named after Gamow, because I see that cooperation is important for international relationships," said Zelman, who is a member of the Russian National Academy of Sciences. "Science research doesn't have borders. Any disputes between leaders can happen but the relationship between the Russian academic community and the American needs to continue because this is for human well-being and human health."

Zelman was a young professor when he left the former Soviet Union as the personal physician of businessman Armand Hammer, MD. After spending four years at UCLA, Zelman joined the Keck School in the early 1980s and has been a tireless promoter of collaborations between the university and scientists in Russia.

"USC is really well known in



From left, Vladimir Shiltsev, director, Accelerator Physics Center at the Fermi National Accelerator Center, Vladimir Zelman, and Nikolay Vasilyav, president of RASA-USA and staff scientist at Boston Children's Hospital, pose at the annual RASA-USA Conference in November at George Washington University.

Russia and other former Soviet Union countries, as a permanent base of exchange," Zelman said. "Many of our leaders, including several former deans, have visited the former Soviet Union with me and many prominent Russians have come here, and we are working on joint ventures in science, art and other developments."

In addition to his work with Russian scientists and developments in the field of brain protection and anesthesiology, Zelman has established a distinguished and endowed lecture-series, which is in its sixth year and recently hosted a discussion with former NASA astronaut Garrett Reisman.



USC School of Pharmacy students direct visitors to the 2016 Health and Fitness Fair, held March 27 at Hazard Park.

Health fair unites students, community at Hazard Park

By Brian Manahan

An early morning sun was shining at Hazard Park on a recent Saturday, as several USC student groups and staff volunteers prepared for the 2016 Health and Fitness Expo, sponsored by the USC Good Neighbors Campaign.

Representatives from the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, the USC Pharmacy School, American Pharmacy Student Alliance, Phi Delta Chi, USC Graduate Student Government, USC Roski Eye Institute and the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC joined representatives from the USC Norris Comprehen-

sive Cancer Center, Keck Hospital of USC, USC Department of Public Safety and trained promotoras from the Ramona Gardens Women's Health Initiative for the activities, held March 27 at Hazard Park.

Activities included an Easter celebration organized by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and free health screenings for blood pressure, body fat analysis, diabetes testing and eye exams.

USC Physical Therapy staff and students who also run the USC Fit Families Program began performing a series of tests to assess each participant's functional strength, balance, flexibility, and aerobic fitness.

SEPSIS: Team is first system-wide effort

Continued from page 1

IT professionals and administrators, have come together to develop the Keck Medicine sepsis screening and early management policy. The sepsis team is considered the first system-wide quality and patient safety initiative for Keck Medicine.

"Sepsis is a widespread problem at health care facilities across the U.S.," said Stephanie L. Hall, MD, MHA, chief medical officer of Keck Medicine and associate dean of clinical affairs,

Keck School of Medicine of USC. "This dedicated interdisciplinary team will help ensure we can rapidly respond and intervene to improve patient outcomes."

The interdisciplinary team has crafted processes that were written to ensure exceptional care to patients while following federal (CMS) guidelines mandating that sepsis measures be implemented at health care institutions across the U.S. Starting this month, code sepsis teams will respond to patients who develop severe sepsis.

Calendar of Events

Friday, April 22

6:30 a.m. USC Department of Anesthesiology Grand Rounds. "Incentive Systems in Medicine," David Lubarsky, MD, MBA, University of Miami Health System. McKibben Lecture Hall, Room 256.

8:30 a.m. Hastings Center for Pulmonary Research Seminar. "Long-Term Consequences of Perinatal Lung Inflammation: Implications for Adult Pulmonary Care," Rose M. Viscardi, MD, University of Maryland. IRD 734. Info: Elva Rubio, (323) 226-7923, elvarubi@usc.edu

Noon. Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology and Center for the Study of Blood Diseases Grand Rounds. "The 2016 Donald I. Feinstein, MD, Distinguished Lectureship: Car T Cell Therapy: From Blood To Brain," Stephen J. Forman, MD, City of Hope Medical Center. LAC+USC Medical Center Inpatient Tower Conference Room B. Info: Carolyn Castellanos, (323) 865-3913, castellanos_c@med.usc.edu

Saturday, April 23

7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. USC Office of Continuing Medical Education. "2016 USC Spine Symposium," Patrick Hsieh, MD, and Mark Spoonamore, MD. JW Marriott, Downtown Los Angeles. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, usccme@usc.edu. Registration: <http://www.usc.edu/cme>

8 a.m.-4 p.m. Department of Medicine: division of endocrinology, and Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery Continuing Medical Education. "Annual Southern California Pituitary Symposium at USC," John David Carmichael, MD. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, <http://www.usc.edu/cme>

Monday, April 25

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar Series Seminar. "Adaptive Homeostasis in Health, Disease, and Aging," Kelvin J.A. Davies, PhD, DSc. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Mary Jane Chua, (323) 442-7732, maryjane.chua@med.usc.edu

8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Department of Radiology. "Molecular Imaging Center Presents: cGMP Cyclotron Facility & Translational Imaging Open House," Harkness Auditorium. Info and RSVP: Madlen Aladadyan,

(323) 442-3858, <http://micopenhouse.eventbrite.com/>

Wednesday, April 27

Noon. The Saban Research Institute Seminar. "Roles of Endothelins in Establishment of Peripheral Nervous System," Takako Makita, PhD. Auditorium, Saban Research Building, 4661 Sunset Blvd. Info: Ritu Gill, (323) 361-8715, tecpad@chla.usc.edu, <http://chla.org/tecpad>

Thursday, April 28

6 p.m. Orthopaedic Surgery Grand Rounds. "Special Grand Rounds — Stem Cells and Cartilage Repair: All You Need To Know," C. Thomas Vangsness, MD, and Denise Evseenko, MD, PhD. Aresty Auditorium. Info: RSVP: Sylvia Suarez, (323) 226-7204, sylvia@usc.edu

Thursday-Saturday, April 28-30

7 a.m.-5:45 p.m. Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Continuing Medical Education. "The Masters Series: Techniques in Arthritis Surgery 2016," Lawrence D. Dorr, MD. The L.A. Hotel Downtown. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, usccme@usc.edu. Registration: <http://www.usc.edu/cme>

Friday, April 29

6:30 a.m. USC Department of Anesthesiology Grand Rounds. "Surviving Sepsis," Samy Soliman, MD. McKibben Lecture Hall, Room 256

1:30 p.m. USC TCORS Lecture. "Vaporized Nicotine: Threat or Opportunity? Insights from Down Under," Ron Borland, PhD, Cancer Council Victoria and the University of Melbourne. Soto Street Building 1, Room 301. Info: Rhonda Ragab, (323) 442-8214, tcors@usc.edu

Saturday, April 30

6-8:30 p.m. USC Pacific Asia Museum Discussion. "Conversations@PAM: The Science of Acupuncture," the Rev. Jim Burklo, MDiv. USC Pacific Asia Museum. Info: (626) 449-2742, <http://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu>

Sunday, May 1

8 a.m. Keck Medicine of USC. "Congenital Heart Walk," Griffith Park. Info: Barbara DeMaria, bdemaria2@gmail.com, <http://bit.ly/1VQkBV2>

Notice: Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Timely submission does not guarantee publication in print. See more calendar entries at hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Submit items at tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc. Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.

New researcher interprets stem cell signals

By Cristy Lytal

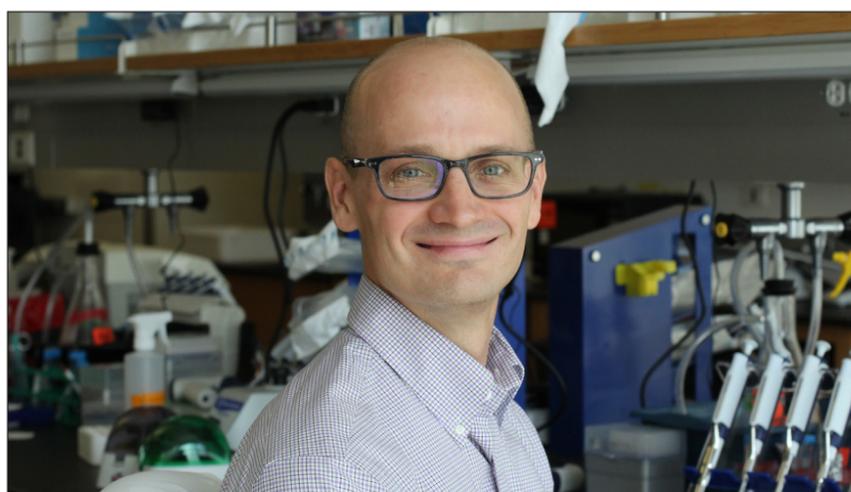
For Joseph T. Rodgers, PhD, the path to becoming an assistant professor of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine at USC began in the woods of Ohio.

“My dad is a chemical engineer, and he’s always been an outdoorsy person,” Rodgers said. “You just go off in the woods and all that goes along with that — fishing, catching frogs and turtles. That was certainly how everything started.”

Rodgers double-majored in biology and chemistry at the Jesuit-run John Carroll University. To this day, the philosophy of the Jesuits influences Rodgers, although he no longer considers himself formally religious.

“The main philosophy of the Jesuits is service,” he said. “My interpretation of service is expanding knowledge through research and education. That’s a main driving force of why I’m here today.”

He continued his commitment to expanding knowledge by attending graduate school at The Johns Hop-



Joseph T. Rodgers

kins University School of Medicine, where he earned a PhD in biochemistry, cellular and molecular biology.

Rodgers was the first graduate student in the laboratory of Pere Puigserver, PhD, who was just starting out. Together, they published a series of papers about metabolism.

When Puigserver moved his

laboratory to Harvard Medical School, Rodgers followed to conduct postdoctoral research.

He then completed a second postdoc in the laboratory of Tom Rando, MD, PhD, at the Stanford School of Medicine, where he began studying the signals the body uses to regulate stem cells’ metabolism and how this

affects stem cells’ ability to make and repair tissue.

Recently, Rodgers’ team found that injury triggers the release of a molecule into the blood stream that puts stem cells throughout the body into a “high-alert” state, primed to repair and heal as needed. Eventually, doctors could prescribe some version of this molecule to patients before surgery, to soldiers before combat or to others likely to experience injury.

While he’s not in the laboratory, Rodgers likes gardening, doing aerial and acrobatic yoga, running marathons and participating in Ironman triathlons.

As a new assistant professor at USC, Rodgers is excited to continue uncovering the signals that instruct stem cells to build and repair tissue.

“This is a research area that’s ripe for somebody to tackle this question,” he said. “But also, I really hope to be an inspiring professor. There are a lot of really interesting things about science, and I just love this. And I hope to convey that to the students.”

IN MEMORIAM: Educator also was a neurologist at Navy Hospital

Continued from page 1

Reserve University in Cleveland. Van Der Meulen also served as a neurologist at the Navy Hospital at Camp Pendleton, where he also was assigned to pediatrics.

From 1977 until his retirement in 2008, Van Der Meulen served as vice president for health affairs for USC. While in this role he also served as dean of the medical school twice, 1985-86 and as interim dean from 1996-97.

For almost 30 years, Van Der Meulen acted as the university’s lead liaison to the County of Los Angeles on LAC+USC, leading contract negotiations on an annual basis.

“Dr. Van Der Meulen was a gifted scientist, clinician and leader who made enormous contributions to USC,” said Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim dean of the Keck School. “His tireless work to make the Keck School and USC flourish and thrive will have an impact on generations of medical students, graduate students, residents, fellows, staff and faculty. We are truly grateful to have had such a giant in our field lead us.”

Part of Van Der Meulen’s legacy at the Keck School is the Joseph P. Van Der Meulen Symposium for Clinical Neuroscience. Now in its 23rd year, the May 7 symposium will highlight advances in research and treatment for multiple sclerosis.

The Joseph P. Van Der Meulen Chair of Neurology, which resulted from a generous gift from the Pasarow family, is a tribute to Van Der Meulen’s dedication to clinical research and patient care.

“Added to his accomplishments, leadership and vision for the enterprise, was an elegance in dealing with other professionals that can serve as a model for us all,” said Steven Giannotta, MD, chair of the Department of Neurological Surgery at the Keck School.

Van Der Meulen is survived by his wife Ann, three daughters and sons-in-law, and 11 grandchildren.

Keck Hospital to participate in ICU study

By L. Alexis Young

Keck Hospital of USC is among 77 leading hospitals selected nationwide to participate in a campaign that aims to make the improvement of intensive care unit (ICU) outcomes as easy as A, B, C.

The Society of Critical Care Medicine, a nonprofit medical organization that promotes excellence and consistency in the practice of critical care, created the ICU Liberation Campaign to standardize and improve best practices in ICU’s across the nation.

The program focuses on implementation of six best practice protocols designated as A, B, C, D, E, F (A: Assess and manage pain; B: Both awake and spontaneous breathing; C: Choice of sedation; D: As-

sess and manage delirium; E: Early mobilization and exercise; F: Family engage and empower).

Despite global recognition that these protocols are ICU best practice, implementation nationally falls far short of expectations.

The goal of the campaign is to determine barriers to implementation and how best to address them in each of the 77 participating hospitals.

The 7 West Surgical ICU in Keck Hospital was selected for the campaign, under the direction of J. Perren Cobb, MD, director of Surgical Critical Care; Geoff Cariker, DPT, instructor of clinical physical therapy; and Kathrine Winnie, RN-BC, clinical nurse specialist.

Cobb is collaborating

with Keck Hospital’s departments of surgery, anesthesiology, medicine, nursing, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, pharmacy and social work.

The team will monitor the first 30 patients admitted to the 7 West Surgical ICU every month, for 18 months, to determine how best to implement the six clinical protocols and the impact of these protocols on patient outcomes. The other 76 ICU’s in the campaign are similarly entering data from their patients.

“There is significant variance in how patients do in intensive care units, even after controlling for how sick somebody is,” Cobb explained.

“There has been global acceptance that 100 percent compliance with

A-F protocols dramatically improves the value of the care we provide. Our goal is to get our quality as high as possible and get our costs as low as possible, thereby optimizing value.”

Compliance with the six protocols are expected to lead to decreased ventilator time, decreased ICU length of stay, improved return to normal brain function, increased independent functional status, improved patient and family satisfaction, and an increased survival rates.

At the end of the 18-month period, the data from the 77 ICU’s will be analyzed.

Cobb and his team will review the findings with other members of the campaign and report on lessons learned.

Electronic medical records adoption lauded

By L. Alexis Young

Keck Medicine of USC has reached a new level of completion with its electronic medical record (EMR) system, as HIMSS Analytics recently announced the medical group achieved Stage 6 on the EMR Adoption Model (EMRAM).

The model is a methodology for evaluating the progress and impact of electronic medical record systems

for hospitals in the HIMSS Analytics Database.

Hospitals can review the implementation and utilization of information technology applications through eight stages, aiming for Stage 7, which represents an advanced electronic patient record environment.

The more than 1,500 Stage 6 hospitals nationwide appear to have a significant advantage over com-

petitors for patient safety, clinician support and clinician recruitment, with almost fully automated/paperless medical records across most of the inpatient care settings, and have begun to create strategic alignments with their medical staff to effectively utilize information technology to improve the patient safety environment, according to information from HIMSS Analytics.

GRANT: Grikscheit aims to generate nerve cells that aid patients

Continued from page 1

Working with human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells that have the ability to develop into many human cell types, Grikscheit proposes to generate nerve cells from “superdonor” iPS cell lines that are immunologically matched to a large portion of the population. Because these cells would match many patients, Grikscheit hopes to reduce or remove

the requirement for immunosuppressive drugs that are often required for transplantation.

This cellular treatment, called Advanced Superdonor Cellular Enteric Neuropathy Therapy (ASCENT), could replace absent or diseased components of the enteric nervous system — the cause of medical conditions such as Hirschsprung disease. The work will

include collaboration with scientists at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, University of Michigan and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. Grant reviews made available publicly online praised the team as having “great expertise” and noted “the team could perhaps be the best in the world for this indication.”

“The goal of our translation program is to support the most promising stem

cell-based projects and to help them accelerate that research out of the lab and into the real world, such as a clinical trial where they can be tested in people,” said Jonathan Thomas, PhD, JD, chair of the CIRM Board. “The projects that our board approved are a great example of work that take innovative approaches to developing new therapies for a wide variety of diseases.”

HSC Newsmakers

A roundup of news items related to Keck Medicine of USC, which may include philanthropic donations, research grants, publication in academic journals and mentions in the news media:



Ricardo Carrasco III

From left, Ite Laird-Offringa, Stephen Gruber, Barbara Gitlitz and Art Ulene pose before the USC Norris Ambassadors Friends and Family Luncheon, held March 24 at Aresty Auditorium on the Health Sciences Campus.

USC Norris Ambassadors hear about lung cancer research

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING YOUNG emergent lung cancer was emphasized recently during a luncheon for the USC Norris Ambassadors on March 24. Barbara Gitlitz, MD, and Ite Laird-Offringa, PhD, gave a presentation on the genetic predisposition to lung cancer as well as answered audience questions at the Ambassadors Friends and Family Luncheon, which was hosted by Stephen B. Gruber, MD, PhD, MPH, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Art Ulene, MD, a longtime broadcast media medical expert. USC Norris Ambassadors promote and share the cancer center's mission.

Kiran Dhanireddy appointed chief medical officer of USC Care

KECK SCHOOL OF MEDICINE faculty member and director of Pancreas Transplantation, Kiran Dhanireddy, MD, has been appointed chief medical officer of USC Care. Dhanireddy will serve as the lead clinical administrator, oversee quality and patient safety concerns, create and implement quality initiatives, and foster physician advocacy and engagement. He will also take lead on regulatory and policy matters. Dhanireddy will report administratively to Rod Hanners, CEO, Keck Medical Center of USC and COO, Keck Medicine of USC, and coordinate closely with the clinical chairs led by Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim dean of Keck School of Medicine of USC and president of USC Care. — **L. Alexis Young**



Kiran Dhanireddy

Ricardo Carrasco III

Register for the Greater Los Angeles Congenital Heart Walk

PARTICIPANTS ARE SOUGHT TO JOIN the Keck Medicine of USC team Trojan Hearts in the Greater Los Angeles Congenital Heart Walk at 8 a.m. May 1 at the Griffith Park Crystal Springs Picnic Area, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles. The team's goal is to raise \$3,000. The annual event is organized by the Adult Congenital Heart Association (ACHA) and The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF). For more information, email ashley.valentino@med.usc.edu and go to www.congenitalheartwalk.org to register or donate. — **Celine Petrossian**

Physicians learn about clinical otolaryngology breakthroughs

THE USC TINA AND RICK CARUSO DEPARTMENT of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery held an interdisciplinary continuing medical education course at the Huntington Library in San Marino on March 19, targeting physicians and allied health professionals. The welcome address was given by Rick Caruso, CEO of Caruso Affiliated. Attendees were educated on the latest breakthroughs in clinical otolaryngology and research innovations and had the opportunity to enjoy rare artifacts from the specialty. In addition, approximately 50 acoustic neuroma patients and families attended a USC Acoustic Neuroma Center Patient Wellness and Education Program hosted by Rick A. Friedman, MD, PhD, director of the USC Acoustic Neuroma Center, and Kristine Siwek, acoustic neuroma patient navigator.



Claire Norman

MUSIC AND MEDICINE: Award-winning bass-baritone Cedric Berry, left, looks at soprano Lisa Eden as she sings during a performance of *La Ci Darem La Mano* by Mozart, with piano accompaniment by Zora Mihailovich, at a Visions and Voices event titled, "Music and Medicine: Experiments and Explorations," held March 31 at Mayer Auditorium on the Health Sciences Campus. The event included several opera performances followed by a discussion about the ways music affects the mind, moderated by Berislav Zlokovic.

Study: Coffee consumption tied to lower risk of colorectal cancer

By Mary Dacuma

Whether you like your coffee black, decaf, half-caff or even instant, feel free to drink up because coffee consumption may decrease the risk of colorectal cancer, according to a new study.

Researchers from the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and others examined more than 5,100 men and women who had been diagnosed with colorectal cancer within the past six months. They also inspected an additional 4,000 men and women with no history of colorectal cancer to serve as a control group.

"We found that drinking coffee is associated with lower risk of colorectal cancer, and the more coffee consumed, the lower the risk," said Stephen Gruber, MD, PhD, MPH, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and senior author of the study. The research was published in the April issue of *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

Participants reported their daily consumption of boiled (espresso), instant, decaffeinated and filtered coffee, as well as their total intake of other liquids. A questionnaire also gathered information about many other factors that influence the risk of colorectal cancer, including family history of cancer, diet, physical activity and smoking.

After adjusting for known risk factors, the data showed that even moderate coffee consumption — between one to two servings a day — was associated with a 26 percent reduction in the odds of developing colorectal cancer. Moreover, the risk of developing colorectal cancer continued to decrease to up to 50 percent when participants drank more than 2.5 servings of coffee each day. The indication of decreased risk was seen across all types of coffee, both caffeinated and decaffeinated.



"We were somewhat surprised to see that caffeine did not seem to matter," Gruber said.

"This indicates that caffeine alone is not responsible for coffee's protective properties."

This extensive study was conducted by a research team led by Gad Rennert,

director of the Clalit National Israeli Cancer Control Center in Haifa, Israel, together with investigators at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer that is diagnosed in both men and women in the United States.

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