

Keck/LAC+USC surgical team returns from ‘desperate’ Haiti

By Leslie Ridgeway

After six days in Haiti providing surgical and medical care to hundreds of badly injured earthquake victims, nine of the 10-member USC/L.A. County Haiti Medical Aid Team returned Jan. 22 to Los Angeles.

The team, led by Ramon Cestero, a Keck School of Medicine of USC fellow and trauma surgeon at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, was among the first medical responders in Port-au-Prince after the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake, which has claimed more than 150,000 lives.

The plight of the Haitian people was felt acutely by the 10th member of the team, Henri Ford, a native of Haiti and dean of medical education for the Keck School. Ford, chief of surgery for Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, flew to Haiti several hours ahead of the rest of the team.

Within two days of his arrival, Ford was enlisted to perform surgery on a six-year-old boy aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Carl Vinson, and later performed surgery with Sanjay Gupta, CNN chief medical correspondent, on a young girl with a head wound. Ford was photographed with Gupta by *LIFE* magazine during the surgery.

“Many people (hundreds if not thousands) living outside the clinic,” Ford wrote on Jan. 19 after moving to a clinic near the earthquake epicenter. “Some have been waiting to see a doctor since



Above, Karyn Embrey performs spinal anesthesia while Kara Hammons (in background, right) provides lighting at night at a make-shift Israeli hospital in Haiti. Right, patients on cots line the airport hospital in Haiti upon arrival the Keck/LA County+USC team.



the (Jan. 12) earthquake. The stories we are hearing are gut-wrenching...”

Surgical ICU nurse Claudel Thamas of LAC+USC, also a Haiti native, found the trip a sobering experience, but also a chance to help people in desperate need.

“It was a tremendous opportunity to serve and be an ambassador for the American people, and to show kindness and compassion to the

Haitians,” he said. “There was a tear in my eye when we had to leave.”

The team came together early on Friday, Jan. 15, when

Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito; Demetrios Demetriades, director of trauma and surgical critical care for the

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‘Working in austere conditions, very long days and nights, and with limited supplies and equipment made for a challenging experience.’

—Ramon Cestero, a Keck School of Medicine fellow and trauma surgeon at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center

Herman Ostrow Donates \$35 million to USC Dentistry



Steve Cohn

From left, USC President Steven B. Sample, donor Herman Ostrow and dental dean Avishai Sadan at the Jan. 20 gift ceremony.

Herman Ostrow, a USC trustee, alumnus and lifelong Southern Californian, has donated \$35 million to USC for its School of Dentistry.

The gift was announced Jan. 20 by USC President Steven B. Sample at a gala unveiling ceremony at the Norris Dental Science Center on the University Park campus.

In recognition of the gift—believed to be the largest individual donation to a dental school in the United States—the school has been renamed the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC, Sample announced.

“This magnificent gift will be a powerful catalyst for innovations and improvements in human health and for building on USC’s long tradition of leadership in dentistry,” Sample said. “Since the school’s founding in 1897, USC’s dental programs have

contributed significantly to oral health in our region, our nation and the world by educating the best practitioners, by advancing scientific research and by providing dental care to underserved members of our community.”

The gift will be pivotal in raising the school to the next level of effectiveness, by providing resources to renovate and improve clinical facilities, to bring in new faculty members, to continue to support dental and craniofacial research, to enhance service programs in downtown Los Angeles and to attract and retain the best students, according to Avishai Sadan, dean of the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC.

“We are grateful and proud that an alumnus of our school has chosen us to carry his legacy,” Sadan said. “Our

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Getting to the Core of stem cell research

By Ryan Ball

Researchers and students got a chance to check out the Keck School of Medicine’s new and improved Stem Cell Core during an open house held on Jan. 14.

Newly refurbished with funding from the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine, the comprehensive support facility provides quality-controlled cells and supplies equipment, laboratory space, technical assistance and training to researchers in the field of stem cell research.

Designed to standardize and accelerate stem cell research at USC, the Stem Cell Core offers assistance and training to investigators work-

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USC University Hospital honored for heart transplant excellence

By Meghan Lewit

USC University Hospital received a Heart Transplant Excellence Award from the independent health care ratings organization Health Grades, ranking among the top 1 percent of hospitals in the U.S. that perform heart transplants.

The top-rated hospitals for organ transplantation based on patient outcomes were identified for the first time by HealthGrades and are now available at www.healthgrades.com.

USC University Hospital was one of only two heart transplant centers to receive the award out of 141 hospitals that were evaluated in the category. USC University Hospital was also the only Southern California hospital included in the ratings.

“We are very proud that our heart transplant program has been ranked in the top one percent nationally based on our consistently high survival rate,” said Vaughn A. Starnes, chairman of the Department of Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and surgeon-in-chief of USC University Hospital. “The award highlights the excellent work of our surgeons and staff and the program’s ongoing dedication to our patients.”

Hospitals with transplant programs received HealthGrades Transplant Excellence Awards if they had a statistically significantly higher three-year survival rate than the national average, based on data calculated by the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR).

Award recipients also had to have wait-list mortality that was either not significantly different than expected or that was significantly lower than expected based on SRTR calculations.

Of the 266 hospitals evaluated, 20 hospitals received the award for 22 programs performing liver, kidney, heart or lung transplantation.

“The heart transplant program started in 1993 with the philosophy that we would focus on creating the highest quality transplant center that was not only concerned with getting the patient through the high-risk operation and peri-operative period, but that would also ensure that these complex patients would receive state-of-the-art long term care,” said Mark Barr, co-director of cardiothoracic transplantation and associate professor of surgery at the Keck School of Medicine. “The award from Health-

Grades recognizes the importance of survival beyond the first year, which is obviously something that the patients and their families are also concerned with. The fact that we have had statistically better results than the national average over multiple years highlights the tremendous team effort and organization that is involved in maintaining a successful transplant program.”

A large part of the program’s strength is the ability to apply clinical and translational research directly to patient care, which has had a definite positive effect on patient outcomes, he noted.

Hospital CEO Mitch Creem noted that USC University Hospital was also recently listed as one of the

top hospitals in the nation by *Consumer Reports* magazine.

“People look to consumer-focused Web sites like healthgrades.com for information that will assist them in making more informed choices for their health care,” Creem said. “We’re very pleased to see a continuing trend of USC University Hospital being recognized for providing outstanding patient care.”

USC University Hospital is a private, 411-bed acute care hospital staffed by The Doctors of USC, who are also faculty at Keck School of Medicine of USC. The USC heart transplantation program provides transplant services for patients with end-stage cardiac disease for whom other medical or surgical therapies are not advisable.

‘We are very proud that our heart transplant program has been ranked in the top one percent nationally based on our consistently high survival rate.’

—Vaughn A. Starnes, chairman of the Department of Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and surgeon-in-chief of USC University Hospital

Etcetera

Jonathan Samet, Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, and **Edward Crandall**, chair of the Department of Medicine, Hastings Professor and Norris Chair of Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine have been named to a National Academies committee. The pair will help develop and monitor a research strategy for environmental, health and safety aspects of engineered nanomaterials. Samet and Crandall were named to the committee on Dec. 30. Samet will chair the committee.

Joy Garrison Cauffman, professor emerita of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has been inducted into the College of Education and Human Ecology’s Hall of Fame at Ohio State University.

Cauffman, a three-time graduate of Ohio State, was the first female tenured professor in the Keck School’s Department of Family Medicine. She retired in 1996 but continued her research and recently completed a 10-year study to determine the effect of continuing medical education on physician performance and patient health care outcomes.

The award recognizes Cauffman’s body of work, including her studies in the 1980s of screening techniques for precancerous lesions or colorectal cancer. Her results, published in the 1990s, changed the advice physicians gave their patients around the world. Her pioneering research into the use of sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy contributed to a significant

decrease in deaths attributed to the disease.

Donna Elliott, associate dean for student affairs, has been named a recipient of the 2010 Raising Our Voices—Women Leaders in Medicine award.

The award was created by the American Medical Student Association in 2007 to recognize women physicians and educators who serve as role models, teachers, highly accomplished professionals and sources of inspiration for women who are currently in their medical training. Medical students across the country nominate potential recipients, and no more than six women nationally are chosen to receive the award.

Elliott will receive the award at the 2010 AMSA National Convention in Anaheim in March.

A team of students from the USC Primary Care Physician Assistant Program competed against other state programs at the California Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA) state conference and won the coveted “Challenge Bowl” trophy with a score of 70-40 in the final round. The team consisted of five PA students: Crystal Rene de Cotret, Eric Briones, Hillary Runnels, Christine Lu and Lauren Meyer. The students competed against PA program student representatives from Samuel Merritt University, Riverside Community, Touro University, San Joaquin Valley College and Charles R. Drew University. This marks the return of the trophy to USC, an achievement that was last earned 10 years ago.

OSTROW: ‘Proud to give my name and support’ to school

Continued from page 1
tradition of excellence in clinical education, research and community outreach; our world-renowned, dedicated faculty and staff; and loyal alumni such as Dr. Ostrow will safeguard the lofty reputation of the school for decades to come.”

Ostrow, who earned his D.D.S. from USC in 1945, has a history of hard work and entrepreneurship. He spent 17 years practicing dentistry, including both private practice and service in the Army Dental Corps, before delving into Los Angeles construction and the real estate market. He also enjoys growing rare fruit trees.

“I’m proud to give my support and my

name to the USC School of Dentistry, an institution with a well-earned reputation for excellence,” Ostrow said. “I am thrilled that my legacy will provide tomorrow’s talented professionals with opportunities to achieve great successes.”

The Ostrow School of Dentistry’s traditional curricula include the Doctor of Dental Surgery program, the Baccalaureate in Dental Hygiene program and several postdoctoral programs in dental specialties. Other available degrees include combined D.D.S./M.B.A. and D.D.S./M.S. programs, gerontology programs, master’s and Ph.D. opportunities in the craniofacial biology program and the Advanced Standing Program for International Dentists.

The Weekly

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The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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HAITI: Orthopedic injuries are common, as are infections due to delays in medical care

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Keck School; and Cestero met to discuss assembling a team. Within 24 hours, the team was chosen, supplies were packed, and the team was on its way to Los Angeles International Airport via a Trojan Transportation tram.

The team was flown from Miami, Fla., to Haiti on a private jet sponsored by Project Medishare Haiti and the University of Miami Global Institute.

“As part of a response team from the University of Miami during Hurricane Katrina, I learned that aid must arrive

quickly to do any good,” said Puliafito. “Thousands of people are suffering from broken bones, internal injuries and other trauma. The trauma team from LAC+USC is one of the most experienced in the United States. We will do whatever we can, right now, to help the victims survive and recover.”

The team’s first assignment was with the Israeli Defense Force, which had set up a fully functioning field hospital near a soccer stadium in Port-au-Prince.

After three days of performing triage, orthopedic surgery,

Keck School’s response to the tragedy in Haiti

All USC faculty, staff and students are invited to attend “The Keck School of Medicine of USC’s Response to the Tragedy in Haiti” from 4–5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, at Mayer Auditorium in the Keith Administration Building.

Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito will moderate a discussion about the USC/Los Angeles County Haiti Medical Aid Team’s experiences providing surgical and medical assistance to earthquake victims.

Henri Ford, vice dean of medical education for the Keck School and chief of pediatric surgery, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, and Ramon Cestero, Keck School fellow and trauma surgeon at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, will make presentations on the team’s work in Haiti.

For more information, call (323) 442-2830. RSVP online at www.usc.edu/esvp Code: Haiti

trauma care, anesthesia and emergency care at the IDF facility, the team’s services were requested at a field hospital 10 miles from the Port-au-Prince airport.

Many victims suffered orthopedic injuries, mainly open fractures that became infected due to delays in medical care.

Amputations were common, as were cases of rhabdomyolysis, a condition that affects the kidneys and stems from being trapped in rubble for days.

The team treated one woman who had been given up for dead by many, but was found after six days by her persistent husband. The woman had been trapped by her hand and had several fingers amputated.

While it was difficult to see so many people in such dire conditions, team members returned to the U.S. with a newfound respect for each other and their skills, and a sense of accomplishment.

“I think one of the main lessons learned by our group was the true value of teamwork,” Cestero said. “Working in austere conditions, very long days and nights, and with limited supplies and equipment made for a challenging experience. But our reliance on each other’s skills, attributes and attitudes allowed us to succeed in providing both medical and surgical care to the Haitian people. In addition, I think we all learned just how gratifying it is to have the opportunity to help people—really help people—who are truly in need.”

Team members were: Henri Ford, Ramon Cestero, Howard Belzberg, David Dromsky, Karyn Embrey, Kara Hammons, Mira Lenzini, Edward Newton, Andrew Tang and Claudel Thamas.

Campus fundraiser for Haiti wants the shirt on your back

By Ina Fried

As the people of Haiti continue to face major health needs after the devastating earthquake earlier this month, students on USC’s Health Sciences Campus have taken action to help.

They are selling specially designed T-shirts with the proceeds donated to Partners in Health. Working in Haiti for more than 20 years, Partners in Health brings modern medical care to poor communities in nine countries around the world.

The T-shirts are being sold for a donation of \$10 or more at:

- Keck School of Medicine Admissions Office, KAM 100C, during business hours
- The HSC Graduate Program Student Senate (GPSS) Office, Seaver Residence Hall, 101A, noon-1 p.m.
- The Quad area, noon-1 p.m., weather permitting.

“We will continue sale of the shirts for at least a couple of weeks. We also are working with the student government at the University Park Campus to organize sales of the T-shirts there,” said John Mahajan, GPSS HSC Community Service Chair. “We’re optimistic about the possibility of making a significant contribution. In our first hour of sales on the Quad, we raised over \$800.”

Designed by Aaron-Ross Jimenez, a Master of Public Health student at Keck, the shirt shows a map of Haiti with the USC logo and the slogan, “Help Haiti Fight On!” The shirt was printed at a reduced cost by Homeboy Industries, a nonprofit organization that assists at-risk and formerly gang-involved youth to become positive and contributing members of society through job placement, training and education.

For more information or to order shirts for delivery on the Health Sciences Campus, contact Mahajan at jpmahaja@usc.edu.



Jessica Bear, co-president of Associated Students of the School of Medicine, helps sell T-shirts in a student effort to raise money for medical care in Haiti.

Sara Reeve

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Jan. 22 widely carried HealthDay News article reported research led by postdoctoral research fellow **Thomas Winder**, working in the lab of **Heinz-Josef Lenz**. The research suggests that an inherited genetic trait may be linked to more aggressive cases of stomach cancer. The article ran in *U.S. News & World Report*, *BusinessWeek*, MSN Health and *The Palm Beach Post*.

A Jan. 19 *New York Daily News* article quoted professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of the division of reproductive endocrinology and infertility **Richard Paulson** about a British woman who gave birth to twin boys after 25 years of IVF treatments.

A Jan. 17 *Los Angeles Times* article covered the nine-member medical team of Keck School doctors and Los Angeles County nurses who left on Jan. 16

to provide medical aid in earthquake-devastated Haiti. The medical team received extensive media coverage. A second *Los Angeles Times* story reported that vice dean for medical education **Henri Ford** performed abdominal surgery on a six-year-old boy and assisted CNN’s Sanjay Gupta in removing a piece of brick from a young girl’s skull and brain aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier Carl Vinson, docked off the Haitian coast. A third *L.A. Times* story, the Associated Press, *LIFE Magazine*, KABC-TV, KTLA-TV, KCBS-TV/KCAL-TV, KPCC-FM, Fox-11, Univision, *La Opinion*, *L.A. Weekly*, KNX-FM, Annenberg TV News, the *Daily Trojan*, Wave Newspapers, the *Beverly Hills Courier* and *AAMC Report* also covered the team’s relief efforts in Haiti.

On Jan. 17 KNBC-TV’s “Sunday L.A.” interviewed associate professor of research at the Department of Preventive Medicine **Donna Spruijt-Metz** and USC

Engineering Professor **Shri Narayanan** about the development of wireless sensors to monitor overweight teens as part of the fight against childhood obesity.

A Jan. 14 *The Economist* article quoted chief of cardiovascular medicine **Leslie Saxon** about Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis, which plans to secure exclusive licenses and options on drug-delivery technologies developed by Proteus Biomedical.

A Jan. 13 *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin* news item noted that USC has launched an advertising campaign to market its private hospitals to consumers.

A Jan. 12 segment on KPCC-FM’s “Patt Morrison” featured research being done at USC to study macular degeneration using transplanted retinal cells made from embryonic stem cells.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Monday, Feb. 1

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Suppression of Genomic Instability and Cancer by Chromatin Modifications,” Craig Bassing, Univ. of Pennsylvania. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Tuesday, Feb. 2

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Newest Insights into Diagnosis, Pathogenic Mechanisms, and Treatment of Inclusion-body Myositis,” Valerie Askanas, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

Noon. Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. “Endometrial Cancer Epidemiology: Updates from the Field,” Veronica Setiawan, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0801

Thursday, Feb. 4

Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Stem Cells and Cancer: Two Faces of Self Renewal,” Michael Clarke, Stanford. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Noon. “Identification of Signaling Pathways Critical for Higher Cognitive Functions,” Genevieve Konopka, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509

Friday, Feb. 5

11:45 a.m. “Illumina DNA Methylation Data: Selecting Features for Cluster Analysis,” Kimberly Siegmund, USC. NTT 4444. Info: (323) 442-1096

Monday, Feb. 8

Noon. “Secreted Semaphorins Control Spine Distribution and Morphogenesis in the Postnatal CNS,” Tracy Tran, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “The Role of TGF-beta in Lung Development and Disease,” Parviz Minoo, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Initiatives to Improve Mental Health Services for Latinos with Serious Mental Illness,” Steve Lopez, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Thursday, Feb. 11

Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Niche-mediated Regulation of Hematopoietic Stem cells in the Adult Bone Marrow,” Gregor Adams, USC. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, Feb. 12

8:30 a.m. Surgery Grand Rounds. “IPAA for CUC – The Operation, the Outcomes and the Future,” Bruce Wolff, Mayo Clinic. DOH 100. Info: (323) 865-3690

Tuesday, Feb. 16

Noon. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Spirituality, Faith and Post-traumatic Growth in Children and Adolescents,” Margaret Stuber, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

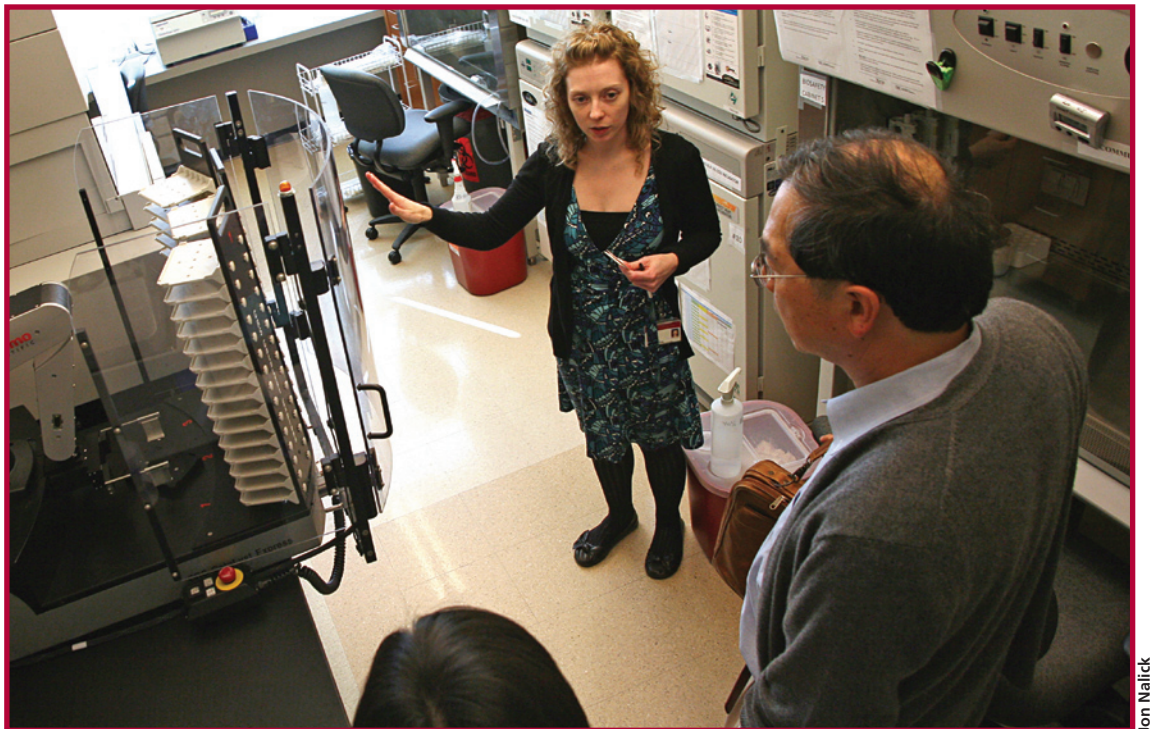
Noon. Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. “The Cancer Epigenome and Epigenetic Therapy,” Peter Jones, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0801

Wednesday, Feb. 17

Noon. 2010 Ctr. for Excellence in Teaching. “Learner-centered Teaching at a Research University,” Lawford Anderson, USC. KAM B21/23. Info: (213) 740-9040

Noon. “Signaling Between Synapse and Nucleus During Neuronal Plasticity,” Kelsey Martin, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.



Jon Nalick

Stem Cell Core Manager Victoria Fox conducts a tour at the Jan. 14 open house, explaining the need for a centralized stem cell facility on campus to facilitate large-scale research.

CORE: Facility is centerpiece of campus stem cell research

Continued from page 1

ing with pluripotent stem cells. In addition to supplying human cells, the team also grows the mouse embryonic fibroblast cells. Cell lines available will be expanded to meet demand.

According to Stem Cell Core manager Victoria Fox, the facility is absolutely vital to keeping USC at the forefront of stem cell research. “So many people have stopped this work purely because they don’t have the time to maintain the cells,” she said. “It’s very expensive and very time-consuming to maintain pluripotent stem cells, human or otherwise. If stem cell research is to occur on any large scale at USC, there has to be a centralized core facility for this.”

Martin Pera, director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, noted that the Core also aids labs like his own, which is established

in the area of stem cell research but doesn’t want to get bogged down in all of the day-to-day maintenance. He also pointed out the facility’s value to students at USC and other local institutions.

“We support a training program, for instance, with Pasadena City College, which is training people who are interested in going into stem cell research either for further education or for jobs in biotech,” Pera commented.

The Stem Cell Core is currently housed in Norris Research Tower–Lab 4513, but will relocate to the Broad CIRM Center when construction is completed. There, it will occupy its own floor, benefiting from more space and improved organization.

For more details on the Stem Cell Core, call (323) 442-7834 or contact Victoria Fox at victor-rif@med.usc.edu.

Keep those New Year’s resolutions with lifestyle redesign

By Ryan Ball

Trying to shed holiday pounds? Sacrificing wellness for work?

USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice wants to help faculty, staff, students and referred patients reach their health goals for the new year with Lifestyle Redesign groups starting this month on the Health Sciences Campus.

Though we work and learn in a health care environment, many of us do not do the things we need to do to maintain healthy lifestyles. Designed with that in mind, the Lifestyle Redesign groups focus on weight management, diabetes control, pain management, multiple sclerosis therapy and smoking cessation.

Participants stay on track with the aid of life coaching, peer support, role modeling and various activities that fit into busy schedules. A lunch-time Wellness Walkers group, for instance, meets each Tuesday and is free of charge. The Weight Management Program requires a co-pay from faculty and staff, but participants on the USC Network insurance plan will have the entire cost reimbursed if they lose weight by the

end of 90 days.

Camille Dieterle, director of Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice, said that with health care reform and the trend moving toward prevention wellness, “I really want the USC academic and medical community as a whole to know that USC is actually doing something about that already. We’re pretty established and we’re getting great outcomes.”

Those who are intimidated by the typical weight-loss regimen will find Lifestyle Redesign a refreshing alternative, Dieterle said: “It’s such an individual program that we want to find out what’s going to make it fun and exciting for each person. If the client’s not excited about it, it doesn’t really work.”

Occupational therapist Karen McNulty added, “Our clients are people who are sick of diets and want something realistic for a lifetime, not something that’s too good to be true.”

For more information, visit <http://ot.usc.edu/patient-care/faculty-practice>, or e-mail USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice at otfp@usc.edu.

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