

# The Weekly



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## Hospital wedding is family's dream come true

By Diana Seyb

Ever since she was a little girl, Tiffany Lowe has always wanted her grandfather, a pastor, to perform her wedding ceremony.

But when Lowe initially planned her fall nuptials this year, she did not count on one hitch—her grandmother, Susan Lawson, was admitted to USC University Hospital with leukemia, and her grandfather was not prepared to leave her side for the wedding.

“When she was first admitted, we were told she might have only several weeks or months to live,” said Retta Jane Hill, the bride’s mother. Hill called more than a dozen extended family members with the grave news, and 15 relatives arrived in Los Angeles shortly after to see Lawson. Lucky for them, Lawson’s case took a turn for the better—her leukemia was, in fact, curable.

With the great news about Lawson’s recovery and a host of family members already in Los Angeles, Hill made a suggestion to her daughter: “Why not have grandpa marry you in the hospital?”

So in May, Lowe’s family enlisted the help of hospital employees Jane Ruiterman, a clinical social worker at USC University Hospital,



From left, groom Christopher Lowe, Don Lawson (holding his 2-year-old great-grandson who served as ring bearer), bride Tiffany Lowe, and grandmother and USC University Hospital patient Susan Lawson relax after the wedding.

and Diane Lapa, director of patient relations and concierge services, to plan a “dream” wedding.

“It was a labor of love and dedication to make their dream happen,” Ruiterman said, adding that the hospital’s nutrition services made a wedding cake and food for the festivities. The hospital also provided wedding favors and decorated the ninth floor’s waiting room the day of the

ceremony, she said. “I was literally on cloud nine with all the grandkids here,” said Lawson. “I was totally amazed that the hospital could do anything like this. The nurses and staff were all so encouraging and helpful in arranging things. I am so happy that it all worked out.”

Despite restrictions on children visiting patients on the floor, hospital leaders even made special arrangements to

allow Lowe’s 2-year-old son to serve as the ring bearer. Hill was the maid of honor and Lowe’s uncle walked her down the aisle—the floor’s hallway.

“I cannot thank the staff and everyone at the hospital enough who helped make this happen,” said Lowe, who will still carry out plans for a larger wedding next month. “Everyone was very uplifting and encouraging. ... My grandmother got to dress up for the ceremony. And I was able to wear the lace cap that she wore at her own wedding.”

This is not the first time the USC hospitals have accommodated a wedding for patients. In July, staff pulled together artificial flowers, decorations and a bridal bouquet for another patient and his bride.

“The amount of emotion and care that was involved on both of these occasions was truly touching,” said Sevanne Sarkis, administrative director of patient experience. “I’m so proud of our staff, who came together as one tight-knit community to go the extra mile for our patients. Sometimes, it’s not just about the clinical care. It’s about all the other little things that we can do to let our patients know they are part of our Trojan Family.”

**‘I was literally on cloud nine with all the grandkids here. I was totally amazed that the hospital could do anything like this.’**

**—USC University Hospital patient Susan Lawson**

## USC School of Pharmacy announces Quintiles gift supporting pharmaceutical and regulatory innovation

By Kukla Vera

The USC School of Pharmacy has received a gift from Quintiles to establish the Quintiles Chair in Pharmaceutical and Regulatory Innovation and the Quintiles International Lecture Series, both to be housed at the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics at USC.

“The Quintiles Chair will allow USC to recruit a world-class faculty expert with the interdisciplinary knowledge of both health economics and regulatory policy,” said USC President C. L. Max Nikias. “As USC builds collaborations between these two vital areas, the Quintiles gift will advance the university’s research and scholarship in ways that will significantly shape the future of health care.”

Quintiles Transnational is a pharmaceutical services company offering clinical, commercial, consulting and capital services.

The Schaeffer Center at USC, a collaboration between the USC

School of Pharmacy and the USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development, will house the Quintiles Chair. The Schaeffer Center is recognized as one of the nation’s premier centers for innovative, independent research contributing to health policy development.

Dennis Gillings, founder and chair of Quintiles, commented, “The Quintiles Chair and International Lecture Series have the potential to drive true innovation and create exciting new dialogue in global health. I’m delighted that we are able to support the Schaeffer Center and USC School of Pharmacy in this worthwhile endeavor.”

In the last decade, the regulatory environment for biopharmaceutical products has greatly shifted as a truly global marketplace has emerged. The gift provides an opportunity to look at potential efficiencies that facilitate the arrival of products to market in a cost-effective way while

See **QUINTILES**, page 3

## Prominent researcher on public health and law joins Keck School of Medicine

By Leslie Ridgeway

Global health pioneer Sofia Gruskin has joined the Keck School of Medicine as professor of preventive medicine at the USC Institute for Global Health, and a joint appointment in the USC Gould School of Law.

Gruskin, a leading researcher on health and human rights, comes to USC from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Gruskin’s background includes 25 years of academic and policy research in public health, law and human rights. She will lead the Program on Global Health and Human Rights at the USC Institute for Global Health.

“Her appointment is the culmination of a concerted search for an eminent scholar who can promote practical and effective responses to global public health challenges through the innovative application of human rights concepts, norms, standards and methods to address structural barriers,” said Keck

School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

At USC, Gruskin’s research will focus on identifying and addressing legal, policy and systemic barriers that impede

access to public health services, especially for hard to reach populations.

“We have to recognize that law impacts health, and we need to know when law is harming and when it needs to change,” said Gruskin. “What should be done to be sure you can access what you need, when you need it, no matter where you are or who you are? How do we change health systems so they are supportive

of the health and human rights of all populations?”

An associate professor and director of the Program on International Health and Human Rights in the Harvard School of Public Health for 17 years, Gruskin said she came to USC because the university has the right people, environment and

See **GRUSKIN**, page 3



Sofia Gruskin



# Forum speakers explore the arts and science of brain disease

By Ina Fried

After violinist Robert Gupta performed at a Los Angeles-area mental health facility, a patient told him that it was the first time she had stopped shaking in 20 years. The profound effects of music and art on the emotions can be important avenues for treatment of mental illness, speakers said Aug. 25 at a forum in the art gallery of the Keck School of Medicine's Institute for Genetic Medicine.

Gupta, who is a member of the L.A. Philharmonic, worked on research projects in neurobiology as an undergraduate. He curates and directs a free outreach concert series called The Street Symphony for underserved communities throughout Southern California. "Music speaks across barriers," he said. "Music engages and unifies us and humanizes us."

Playing for the mentally ill "can bring them back from a dark place. The music is healing and redemptive," Gupta said.

Attempting to understand the origin of psychiatric disorders, researchers have found that many genes are involved in schizophrenia. Oleg V. Evgrafov, assistant professor of research in the Department of Psychiatry and the Behavioral Sciences at the Keck School, is working with a consortium that is building a map of gene expression in the human brain at several stages of development.

"I think all of us have different ways of processing

and perceiving data and different ways of thinking," Evgrafov said. "We try to help people to overcome their [mental health] problems by understanding the molecular basis of diseases."

Discussing the use of research-based music therapy to support psychosocial, mental and physical well being were: Robert C. McAllister, dean, The Colburn School of Performing Arts in Los Angeles, and music therapy professors Anita Louise Steele, Ohio University; Dale B. Taylor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; and Ronald M. Borczon, California State University, Northridge.

The forum on "Functional Recovery from Brain Disease via the Arts and Sciences" was presented in conjunction with "Bear on a Hot Tin Roof," a series of paintings on exhibit in the art gallery through Oct. 28. The artist Vincent Sabella went through childhood with undiagnosed schizophrenia. He expresses through his paintings the journey of hallucinations, voices and fears that he experienced as



Sara Reeve

From left, violinist Robert Gupta, artist Vincent Sabella and USC scientist Oleg V. Evgrafov appear with a painting (background) by Sabella on the theme of schizophrenia.

a child and has confronted as an adult.

The forum was co-hosted by Emergency USA.

The topic evolved from a prior presentation by McAllister, Taylor and Steele at the 22nd Annual Society for the Arts in Healthcare International Conference.

## Professor receives three grants to tackle neurological issues

By Kukla Vera

Treating emotional disorders is a complex undertaking, and often the therapies can cause additional problems for those affected.

With the help of funding from three new grants, Marco Bortolato, research assistant professor of pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences at the USC School of Pharmacy, will be able to search for viable alternatives to these therapies through the mechanisms that underlie the positive effects and distinguishing these from the unwanted side effects existing drugs can cause.

Bortolato recently received a two-year, \$445,500 R21 grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for the project, "Interactions of

MAO A with Vulnerability Factors for Aggression." He will work in collaboration with Jean Shih, the Boyd P. and Elsie D. Welin Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences, and postdoctoral students Simone Tambaro and Sean Godar.

This grant will enable Bortolato to study how aggression develops in animal models. Although it is known that the factors that lead to aggression are stress, male hormones and low levels of monoamine oxidase-A (MAO-A), the neurobiological processes that cause the aggression to present itself have yet to be discovered. "Most aggression research studies the three risk factors individually, but this study takes a holistic approach," explained Bortolato.

Bortolato hypothesizes that the neurobiological mechanisms that cause aggressive behavior are the same mechanisms that are triggered when aggression is prevented. In his lab, Bortolato has shown that finasteride (brand names Propecia and Proscar), a male hormone blocker commonly used to treat inflamed prostate in older patients, stops aggression in older patients, but is not a viable treatment for adolescents. He hopes that understanding the neurobiology behind how finasteride works will lead to an alternative treatment.

Bortolato has also received funding for two additional projects for which he is a co-investigator: funding from part of a four-year \$572,000 grant

from the European Union for the COST project, "Structure-Based Drug Design for Diagnosis and Treatment of Neurological Diseases," and a \$105,000 grant from the Manitoba Health Research Council for the project, "A Neurodevelopmental Model of Adolescent Cannabinoid Exposure."

The European Union project is a collaboration among the eight countries in the European Union and the United States and Australia; Bortolato will act as a consultant for translational science. The three-year grant will start in the chemical component phase, and Bortolato will be responsible for testing once

the project reaches the pharmacological testing phase.

The grant focuses on the use of enzyme inhibitors (neurotransmitters and hormones) that tackle co-morbid neurodegenerative and psychological diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, which is often co-morbid with impulse diseases and gambling addictions that often come as a result of the dopamine treatments used to control Parkinson's.

"The goal of this study is to find therapies that work on the double diagnosis: either one drug that tackles both, or a combination of drugs that work synergistically to improve quality of life," said Bortolato.

## USC Alumni Association honors volunteers for service, dedication

By Amy E. Hamaker

The USC Alumni Association has announced the recipients to be honored with USC's Volunteer Recognition Awards. The 2011 recipients will be honored for their dedication and service to the university at a dinner to be held on Sept. 16.

Volunteer Recognition Award recipients are comprised of volunteers from alumni clubs and organizations with affiliations throughout the university. Honorees from the Health Sciences Campus include:

President's Award:

- George Beattie Stoneman, Keck School of Medicine, USC Alumni Association Board of Governors

Widney Alumni House Awards:

- Leyda Cuzzo, USC University Hospital Guild
- Shawn Phipps, USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
- Courtney Pucci-Babcock, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center Auxiliary

The President's Award is given to individuals in recognition of their extraordinary leadership, service, achievement and overall contributions to USC. The Widney Alumni House Awards recognize USC volunteers for their loyalty, support and dedication to the university and the Trojan Family.

The Weekly

Next Issue: Sept. 23

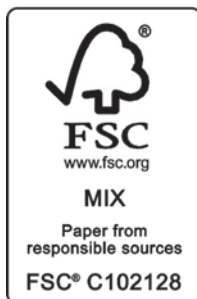
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# GRUSKIN: USC ‘already understands the need for inter-disciplinary efforts to support global health’

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attitude to support her work.

“What drew me here is the sense that everything is possible,” said the Los Angeles native. “The work I do bridges many fields, and my team is multidisciplinary. I am so excited about joining USC because it is a place that already understands the need for interdisciplinary efforts to support global health. This is a critical direction for the future.”

Jonathan Samet, director of the USC Institute for Global Health, noted Gruskin’s pioneering development of numerous tools to help people whose access to basic public health and medical services is impeded by laws, policies, practices or societal shame.

“Her lengthy experience in research, training, policy development and programmatic work with academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governmental organizations around the world will offer exciting new learning opportunities for USC students,” he said.

Gruskin’s focus on public health, human rights and law emerged during the early years of the AIDS crisis. Gruskin observed that around the world a broad range of rights were being restricted in the name of public health but without proper justification, resulting in widespread violations of rights with devastating health effects.

After completing a degree in sociology that focused on ethnomethodology from the University of California at Santa Cruz, Gruskin earned a juris doctor from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, and then went on to Columbia University to obtain a master’s degree in international affairs with specialization in public health and human rights.

As one example of the many facets of Gruskin’s research, she supports UNAIDS in producing the National Composite Policy Index, an instrument that collects data from governments worldwide about their HIV-related laws and policies. Gruskin and her team analyze how these laws and policies affect key populations living with and affected by HIV. UNAIDS then uses these results in collaboration with community groups and NGOs around the world to push for law reform.

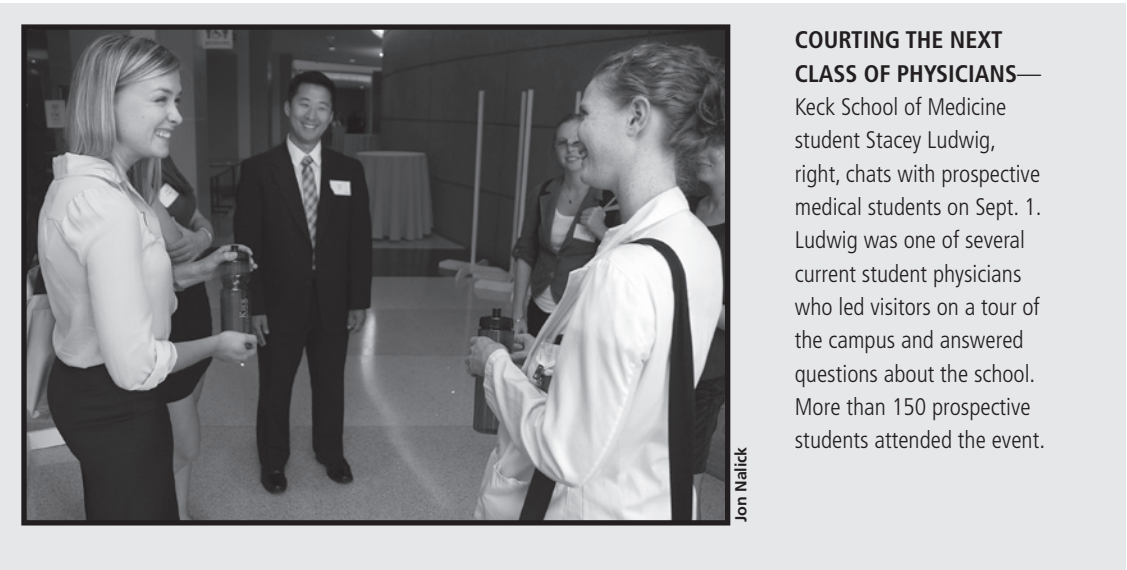
More generally, at USC Gruskin will build on her previous work related to sexual and reproductive health, child and adolescent health, and gender-based violence. Partnerships with faculty in the USC Gould School of Law and other schools at USC are on the horizon.

She brings strong connections to various international organizations including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNFPA, Amnesty International, Merck Company Foundation, Open Society Institute, as well as universities and local organizations in Brazil, Kenya, South Africa and Vietnam.

An emerging project is a large-scale intervention on reproductive and sexual rights, sponsored by the World Health Organization. Gruskin’s team is planning to work with five countries, testing an intervention designed to overcome the structural barriers to the use of family planning services.

Gruskin is a member of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee for the Outcome and Impact Evaluation of Global HIV/AIDS Programs Implemented Under the Lantos/Hyde Act of 2008 (PEPFAR) and is also a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the United Nations Global Commission on HIV and the Law.

She serves as an associate editor for *The American Journal of Public Health, Global Public Health, and Reproductive Health Matters*.



**COURTING THE NEXT CLASS OF PHYSICIANS—** Keck School of Medicine student Stacey Ludwig, right, chats with prospective medical students on Sept. 1. Ludwig was one of several current student physicians who led visitors on a tour of the campus and answered questions about the school. More than 150 prospective students attended the event.

# QUINTILES: Gift puts the Schaeffer Center at the forefront in understanding consequences of regulatory reform

Continued from page 1

still ensuring safety.

The USC School of Pharmacy houses the International Center for Regulatory Science, offering the world’s only professional doctorate in the discipline, as well as a master’s degree.

The program is directed by Frances Richmond, professor at the USC School of Pharmacy, who will also work with the eventual holder of the Quintiles Chair, along with other faculty and students in the program, as well as those at the Schaeffer Center.

“This is a gift that will allow USC to take two disciplines in which we are currently leaders—health economic policy and regulatory science—and meld the thinking to come up with real-world solutions to today’s challenges,” said USC School of Pharmacy Dean R. Pete Vanderveen. “This will be further enhanced through the lecture series.”

The Quintiles International Lecture Series will be directed by Dana P. Goldman, director of the Schaeffer Center at USC. The series provides a high-level international forum addressing pharmaceutical economics policy and regulatory issues. The intent of the series is to provide an open dialogue among international leaders who will work together in forming new methodologies that streamline the regulatory process and accelerate innovation.

“The Quintiles gift puts the Schaeffer Center at the forefront in understanding the long-term consequences of regulatory reform, both in the United States and abroad,” noted Goldman, the Norman Topping Chair in Medicine and Public Policy at USC.

The series will launch in Beijing, China, in June 2012 with a two-day conference on “Pharmaceutical Regulation and Innovation.”

The first day of the conference will focus on policy followed by a day on research. Co-sponsor of the conference is Peking University’s Guanghua School of Management.

A comprehensive search for the Quintiles Chair is currently under way.

# The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Sept. 3 article in *The New York Times* about wireless medical monitoring devices highlighted work by cardiologist **Leslie Saxon**, chief of the division of cardiovascular medicine and professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine. With a grant from the National Football League, Saxon will study one NFL team this fall, attaching a monitoring patch to each player for one week.

An Aug. 31 article in the *Los Angeles Times* featured a study led by **Myles Cockburn**, associate professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, who found an increased prevalence of prostate cancer among older men exposed to certain pesticides in the Central Valley. ABC News, McClatchy Newspapers, The *Fresno Bee* and KPCC-FM also covered the research.

An Aug. 30 story in *Miller-McCune* featured **Mark Humayun**, professor of biomedical engineering and cell and neurobiology at the Keck School of Medicine and USC Viterbi School of Engineering and associate director of research at the Doheny Retina Institute at USC. Humayun is the chief researcher behind the world’s first commercially available artificial retina, a breakthrough that helps the blind see. The story reported Humayun is adapting the technology for a range of other uses that he believes will affect far more people and spur the growth of the emerging field of bioelectronics.

An Aug. 14 broadcast by Yahoo! News (Australia) interviewed **Pragna Patel**, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at the Keck School of Medicine, about her research on hypertrichosis and how it may help find the cure for baldness. The story also appeared on the network’s morning news show Sunrise, featuring a live interview with Patel.

A July 28 article by United Press International featured research led by **Dana Goldman**, professor in the USC School of Pharmacy and USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development and director of the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics. Goldman’s research shows that Americans’ health around age 50 is overwhelmingly the main contributor to shorter life spans in the United States; if levels of obesity, diabetes and hypertension in the U.S. dropped to European levels, the longevity discrepancy would disappear.

A July 21 broadcast on ABC News Bakersfield, Calif., affiliate KERO-TV featured surgeries by **Michael Bowdish**, assistant professor of surgery and director of the Mechanical Circulatory Support Program at USC University Hospital, to implant ventricular assist devices in patients with heart failure. The story reported that the procedure can help patients live longer while they wait to receive a donor organ, or simply improve their quality of life.

An article published by *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel’s most-read tabloid, and the Hebrew Israel news portal, Ynet, named Keck School of Medicine cardiologist **Uri Elkayam**, professor of medicine and obstetrics and gynecology, as one of the 100 most influential Israelis living in the United States. Of the 500,000 Israelis living in the U.S., Elkayam was selected in July as one of only three physicians included on the list. An English translation is available through Google at [tinyurl.com/43aup5u](http://tinyurl.com/43aup5u).



# Calendar of Events

This Calendar of Events is also online at [www.usc.edu/hscalendar](http://www.usc.edu/hscalendar) for the Health Sciences Campus community

## Sunday, Sept. 18

**7 a.m.** USC Liver Team Walk. Please join the USC Liver Team and raise awareness about liver disease and hepatitis. Ocean View Park, Santa Monica. Info: (323) 442-9626

**8:45 a.m.** “Kickin’ Cancer! 5K Walk/Run,” to raise awareness for the early detection and prevention of ovarian and breast cancer. San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood. Join the USC Norris team: (323) 865-0668

## Wednesday, Sept. 21

**8:30 a.m.** “Community Acquired Pneumonia,” Boris Medarov, USC. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

**Noon.** “The Molecular Basis of Alzheimer’s Vascular-mediated Neuronal Dysfunction,” Berislav Zlokovic, University of Rochester Medical Center. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

**Noon.** The Soul of Medicine. “Sublime Family Medicine: Drs. Jean & Todd Forman.” MCH 156. Free lunch. Info: (323) 442-1313

**Noon – 2 p.m.** Center for Excellence in Research. “Super-resolution Microscopy: An Introduction,” Susan Forsburg, USC. UPC: RRI 101. Info: (213) 740-6709

**Noon – 2 p.m.** Center for Excellence in Research. “Co-occurrence & Specificity of Substance & Behavioral Addictions,” Various speakers. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

## Wednesday, Sept. 21, and Thursday, Sept. 22

**7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.** USC Hospitals Annual Pain Management Symposium. Various speakers. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-8660

## Thursday, Sept. 22

**8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** 15th Annual Max R. Gaspar Vascular Symposium. “All Aorta from the Valve to Bifurcation,” Jack Cronenwett, Dartmouth. Millenium Biltmore Hotel. Info and Registration: (323) 442-2555

**Noon – 2 p.m.** Center for Excellence in Research. “Doing Micro History: The Kathy Fiscus Tragedy of 1949,” William Deverell,

USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

## Friday, Sept. 23

**8 a.m. – 5:20 p.m.** “Body Computing 5.0,” Leslie Saxon, USC. UPC: Town and Gown Banquet Hall. Info: (323) 442-6130

**8:30 a.m.** “Mitochondria in Lung Defense,” J. Bhat-tacharya, Columbia Univ. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

**Noon.** “Infectious Disease Clinical Pathological Conference,” Maria Ochoa, USC. IPT Conference Rm. D. Info: (323) 226-7504

**Noon.** Medicine Grand Rounds. “Sleep Disorders in the Elderly,” Maritza Calonga, USC. IPT Conference Rm. B. Info: (323) 226-7556

## Saturday, Sept. 24

**7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** KSOM Continuing Medical Education Symposium. “Multimodality Treatment of Brain Cancer: Current Concepts and Recent Advances,” Various speakers. Tuition is \$55 if received before noon 9/23/11; \$75 after. Los Angeles Marriott Hotel. Info: (800) 872-1119

## Tuesday, Sept. 27

**4:45 p.m. – 7 p.m.** Cancer Center Grand Rounds. New time and format. Joe Gray, Knight Cancer Institute, and Peter Laird, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0801

## Wednesday, Sept. 28

**8:30 a.m.** “Exercise 1,” Ami Oren, USC. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** Safety and Emergency Preparedness Fair. HSC Quad in front of Norris Medical Library. Info: (213) 740-3962

**4 p.m. – 6 p.m.** Center for Excellence in Research. “DoD/DoE/NASA Young Investigator Proposal Workshop,” James Murday, USC. UPC: RTH 526. Info: (213) 740-6709

## Thursday, Sept. 29

**9 a.m. – 3 p.m.** Ming Hsieh Institute Symposium. President Nikias will deliver the welcoming address. NRT Aresty Aud. RSVP deadline: Sept. 15. [usc.edu/esvp](http://usc.edu/esvp) (code hsieh)



Teresa Luong

Students at Loreto Street Elementary in Los Angeles show off the herbs and vegetables they grew last month as part of a program designed to add healthier foods to their diets.

## Health benefits linked to education in gardening, cooking and nutrition

By Leslie Ridgeway

Latino children who participated in an intervention gardening, nutrition and cooking program experienced significant health improvements, including lower body mass index (BMI) and lower blood pressure, according to a study by researchers from the Keck School of Medicine and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Public Health.

The research, led by Jaimie Davis, assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine of the Keck School, and Nicole Gatto of UCLA, resulted in a significant decrease in blood pressure, an increase in fiber intake and a drop in BMI and rate of weight gain among children who participated in the 12-week LA Sprouts program. According to Davis, this is the first research to look at the effects of a gardening program on obesity measures. The research was published in the August 2011 edition of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

“There has been a grassroots movement across America for a garden-based approach to nutrition, but not a lot of hard science on outcomes,” said Davis. “It surprised me that this intervention worked as well as some of our clinical metabolic studies. We’re happy that a more community-based intervention based on gardening and cooking worked so well.”

The study followed 100 mostly low-income Latino fourth and fifth graders at a

nearby Los Angeles elementary school who were participating in the LA’s BEST after-school enrichment program. LA Sprouts brought 34 students once a week to the Milagro Allegro Community Garden in Highland Park for 90-minute educational sessions focusing on cooking and nutrition lessons and gardening. Seventy other students were controls.

Students participating in LA Sprouts learned easy, healthy recipes and tips for adding healthier foods to their diets. A University of California Cooperative Extension master gardener taught students the basics of gardening. Students also were given vouchers by the Old LA Farmers Market and traveled monthly to the market to buy

fresh fruits and vegetables to take home to their families.

Students’ dietary habits, weight, blood pressure, attitudes toward food and classroom engagement were measured at the beginning and end of the 12 weeks. Compared to controls, the LA Sprouts kids charted a 5 percent decrease in diastolic blood pressure and a 22 percent increase in consumption of dietary fiber. Importantly, participating overweight children saw a 1 percent decrease in BMI compared to a 1 percent increase in BMI in the control group, while overweight LA Sprouts participants gained only two pounds compared to an average of more than four pounds by kids in the control group.

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**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 email to [ebalauw@usc.edu](mailto:ebalauw@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.

## In case of an emergency...

**Call the Emergency Information Phone: (213) 740-9233** The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

**Visit the USC Web: <http://emergency.usc.edu>** This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.