

Foothills community celebrates the joining of USC and Verdugo Hills Hospital

By Celine Petrossian

More than 700 members of the Foothills community joined the wide array of cardinal-and-gold-themed festivities at the USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Wellness Celebration on Sept. 28 on the USC-VHH campus. The event celebrated the new affiliation of the two organizations.

“I’m terribly in favor of the new partnership,” said Sunland resident Bob Pinkston, who attended the event with his wife Diane. “I love USC. Verdugo Hills has been a great hospital and the association with USC is a step up. All of my three children were born at this hospital.”

From cholesterol and bone density screenings administered by the USC School of Pharmacy students to balance and blood pressure screenings provided by the USC-VHH clinical staff, community members received their health check-ups and met many of the members of the Trojan Family. Car seat safety, hands-on CPR training and infection control methods were also among the educational activities offered at the event.

Debbie Walsh, the new CEO of USC-VHH, welcomed the crowd to the celebration. “This partnership provides everyone who lives in the Foothills community the same great services and care from the physicians and staff you know and trust,” she said, “but also

expands access to specialty services that a world-class academic medical center can offer.”

Event participants also enjoyed a visit by the USC Trojan Marching Band and USC Song Girls, and had an opportunity to take photos with Traveler, USC’s mascot. In addition, the Radio Disney road crew entertained children of all ages with games and prizes.

Other exhibitors included the Keck Medical Center of USC, Glendale Healthy Kids, Glendale Police and Fire Departments, and Crescenta Valley Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition.

Suzy Jacobs, executive director of Crescenta Valley Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition, said the new partnership between USC and Verdugo Hills Hospital is great for the community. “The hospital was already a great community resource, and now it’s even better,” she said.

The integration of Verdugo Hills Hospital into Keck Medicine of USC creates a unique opportunity for exceptional patient care in the community through synergies that enhance the strengths of both organizations. Keck Medicine of USC includes the Keck Medical Center of USC, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Right: Debbie Walsh, the recently appointed CEO of USC Verdugo Hills Hospital, welcomes the Foothills community to the USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Wellness Celebration.

Below: Hands-on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for adults and children was among the many offerings for the community at the Sept. 28 event.



Photos/Paul Edward Robison



Keck Medicine of USC opens diagnostic and treatment center for children with hearing loss

By Alison Trinidad

Hearing loss among children is a major challenge for pediatricians and parents. According to the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, children who are hard of hearing often find it much more difficult to learn vocabulary, grammar and word order.

No single treatment is the answer, however. To offer patients and their families comprehensive clinical care backed by innovative research, Keck Medicine of USC recently opened the USC Center for Childhood Communication on the campus of John Tracy Clinic, 806 W. Adams Blvd., in Los Angeles. Pediatric audiology and speech pathology specialists began seeing patients on Oct. 1.

The new center provides audiology and speech language pathology services to children with hearing loss from birth to adulthood, including access to national clinical trials and state-of-the-art rehabilitative care.

The center builds on the world-renowned clinical and scientific expertise of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery at Keck Medicine of USC.

“Research and clinical innovation go hand in hand at the Keck School of Medicine,” said Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA, dean of the Keck School. “We are enthusiastic about the opening of this new center.”

The center is the result of the hard work and dedication of many departments university-wide, according to Coreen Rodgers, MBA, CPA, chief operating officer of the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “Coordination for the logistics of starting things up in just 10 days’ time has been a massive task between legal, USC Care, marketing, the audiologists and USC real estate,” she said. “We wanted to provide continuity of care for these children, setting up a location where audiologists could see patients and have access to both clinical and

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Strengthening the community, one good neighbor at a time

By Sara Reeve

How many high school students voluntarily give up many of their Saturdays just to go to school? Every year, more than 185 Los Angeles students do just that, in the USC Med-COR program, funded in part thanks to the USC Good Neighbors Campaign.

USC’s staff, faculty and friends can pledge to help organizations that improve the community by promoting better health and educational opportunities in the areas surrounding both the Health Sciences and University Park Campuses.

The 2013 USC Good Neighbors Campaign kicked off on Oct. 1 and runs through the end of the month. Begun in 1994, the USC Good Neighbors Campaign encourages USC faculty and staff to contribute a portion of their paychecks to support programs through grants from USC Neighborhood Outreach (UNO) and United Way.

Fifty UNO grants were

awarded in June 2013 to partnership programs developed between the university and local community organizations. Of those 50, 23 grants went to programs surrounding the Health Sciences Campus community.

One of the programs to receive funding is the Med-COR program. Originally founded in 1970, Med-COR, which stands for Medical Counseling Organizing and Recruiting, works with high school students of color to help prepare them for careers in the health professions.

“The Med-COR program exposes underrepresented minorities living in inner-city communities of Los Angeles to health professional careers and helps them become competitively eligible for admission to top universities,” said Joyce Richey, PhD, director of the USC Med-COR program. “The process of attaining

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‘We wanted to create a continuity of care for these children, ... where audiologists could see patients and have access to both clinical and research resources.’

—Coreen Rodgers, MBA, chief operating officer, Keck School of Medicine of USC

HEARING: New center provides comprehensive clinical, research resources

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research resources targeted for a pediatric population.”

Fully staffed by USC faculty, the center is able to test the degree and type of hearing loss a child may have; fit assistive devices such as hearing aids, bone conduction devices and cochlear implants; and assess listening and communication skill development. It also will participate in various National Institutes of Health-funded research projects that focus on hearing and speech development, in hopes of developing innovative technologies and procedures for people with profound hearing loss.

“With the right care, young children with hearing loss can achieve developmental, academic and social outcomes commensurate with their hearing peers,” said John K. Niparko, MD, professor and chair of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery. “Our center fills a regional gap, integrating research, clinical services and education to serve families with special needs.”

The center is located on the first floor of John

Tracy Clinic (JTC), which was founded in 1943 and is a leading diagnostic and education center for young children with hearing loss in the world. John Tracy Clinic’s integrated services include pediatric audiology, community hearing screening, parent-infant programming, an auditory-verbal preschool, counseling and child development, parent distance education, and an accredited master’s degree and credential program.

“Without the John Tracy Clinic, we could never have gotten up and running so quickly,” said Rodgers. “We’ve already seen patients at the JTC facilities, and we are now building a full audiology clinic on-site with four hearing booths, family therapy rooms and a second floor with offices for research facilities and staff, all due to open Jan. 1, 2014.”

“We are pleased to have our two remarkable institutions under one roof,” added Gaston Kent, president and CEO of John Tracy Clinic. “Our proximity will be a tremendous asset to children with hearing loss and we look forward to a long and collaborative relationship.”

The USC Center for Childhood Communication is the latest addition to the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, which recently recruited four physicians specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders that affect hearing, balance, speech, swallowing, sleep and facial function. The department is home to preeminent surgeons who have unparalleled experience in cochlear implantation — Niparko and Rick A. Friedman, MD, PhD, together have performed nearly 2,000 cochlear implants — including advanced surgical techniques and multidisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation.

“Keck Medicine of USC is growing its network and expanding its reach to meet the needs of the community at large,” said Tom Jackiewicz, MPH, senior vice president and CEO of USC Health. “We are pleased to have these hearing and speech specialists join the Trojan Family. Their expertise and experience in clinical care and research will be invaluable in building a first-class center for patients with hearing loss.”

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Sept. 24 broadcast on CBS News *This Morning* featured an interview with **David Agus**, MD, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, about research showing that when mice were infected with a common parasite, they appear to lose their fear of cats.

A Sept. 23 episode of *The Doctors* featured an interview with **Armand Dorian**, MD, clinical associate professor of emergency medicine at the Keck School, about odd cases he’s treated in the emergency room.

A Sept. 23 article in *Science Codex* featured research by **Si-Yi Chen**, MD, PhD, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School, and Keck School student **Vijayalakshmi Nandakumar** on how natural killer (NK) cells in the human body can be manipulated by epigenetics. These cells can be used to contain the spread of tumors. “While scientists all around the world are working on developing new drugs using NK cells, none of the drugs in development focuses on epigenetic regulation of the cells,” Chen said in the article. “To date, there are no elaborate reports linking an epigenetic phenomenon to natural killer cell development,” Nandakumar added. The research by the two was also featured by *Nature Medicine*, *Medical News Today*, *Medical Xpress*, *Health Canal* and *RedOrbit*.

A Sept. 22 report in *SingularityHub* quoted **Sharon Orrange**, MD, assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School, about Calico, a company focused on aging and related diseases.

Dermatologist discusses the science of cellular water at USC

By Amy E. Hamaker
Hydration is vital for a well-functioning body. USC faculty, staff and students had the opportunity to learn more about “the science of cellular water” by the originator of the concept, Howard Murad, MD.
Murad, an associate clinical professor of medicine at UCLA and CEO/founder of skin care product company Murad Inc., visited the Health Sciences Campus on Aug. 29 to present “An Integrated Cellular Strategy for Optimizing Whole Body Health.”
Introduced by Marc Weigensberg, MD, associate professor of clinical pediatrics and director of USC’s Institute of Integrative Health, Murad’s lecture focused on the concept of whole-body health, and the skin’s connection to every system within the body.
“As a dermatologist, I have no acne patients,” explained Murad. “I have patients who have acne. It’s a difference in understanding a patient as a whole person, rather than as a disease. We tend to categorize patients rather than viewing them as a whole person.”
He also noted that the skin conditions he sees in his clinical practice are often symptoms related to comorbidities, including digestion, lack of energy, poor sleep and chronic disease.

Murad explained that his science of cellular water theory states that people go from a state of full hydration to a state of low hydration as they age, and that this change in condition affects cell health and regeneration. “After reviewing more than 300 different theories of aging,” he said, “I found that all of them had to do with one thing: dehydration.”
Murad recommended a three-pronged approach to look better (using targeted topical skin care), live better (making careful choices of food and dietary supplements) and feel better (put yourself first and manage the impact of stress).



Dermatologist and skin care manufacturer Howard Murad shares his theory of the science of cellular water.

The Weekly

Next Issue: Oct. 25

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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40 USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center

Part of the Keck School of Medicine of USC

Did you know?
Epigenetics is a burgeoning field with deep roots at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. The study of changes in genes that do not alter the DNA sequence, epigenetics demonstrates that cancer stems from genetic changes and that nonhereditary factors can lead to abnormal gene expression resulting in cancer.
In 1980, Peter Jones, PhD, DSc, former cancer center director and distinguished professor of urology and biochemistry and molecular biology at the Keck School of Medicine, and his research team discovered the benefits of the epigenetic drug azacitidine for leukemia patients. The drug causes profound changes in gene expression and inhibits DNA methylation, which can lock genes in the “off” position.
In 2008, with the support of the Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation, USC Norris opened the USC Epigenome Center, one of the first institutions in the country devoted to advancing epigenetic research. “The field has exploded in every measurable way, from the number of scientists working in this field, to the ways in which epigenetics has been found to be at the basis of many biological processes,” said Peter Laird, PhD, center director.

Two grants totaling \$1.1 million assist pacesetting programs at USC

By Amy E. Hamaker
The foremost mission of the UniHealth Foundation, an independent private health care foundation founded in 1998, is to support pacesetting programs that positively impact health in the communities it serves. Two recent grants from the foundation totaling \$1.1 million will help support vital programs at USC that are making a real difference to the Health Sciences Campus community and its patients.

The first is a grant of \$500,000 over two years to the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center to support the Adolescent and Young Adult Program (AYA@USC).

AYA@USC, in collaboration with Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, was created specifically to meet the needs of cancer patients between the ages of 15 and 39. The National Cancer Institute estimates that 70,000 U.S. adolescents and young adults are diagnosed with cancer each year, and survival rates for this population have not improved in almost 30 years. AYA@USC tailors many existing clinical programs, expands social services and strengthens and expands research with a focus on the distinct needs of AYA@USC patients.

The grant will help the program, co-led by Stuart Siegel, MD, associate director for pediatric oncology at the

cancer center and professor/vice chair of pediatrics at the Keck School, and Debu Tripathy, MD, professor of medicine at the Keck School, to implement the Clinical Core for AYA@USC.

“The UniHealth grant will help us launch the clinical end of the program,” explained Siegel. “We will be able to implement a database to allow us to see the population of AYAs with cancer in the USC system, assess their support needs and make sure they get them in a timely fashion, ensure that each medical team has a champion for the correct protocols and treatments evolving for this age group, and who can identify research protocols that are available.”

The second grant totals \$600,000 over three years to provide support for restructuring graduate medical education (GME). The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which accredits all GME institutions and programs, recently implemented a major transformation for seven core specialties in GME structure and focus. This change is called the Next GME Accreditation System (NAS). Accreditation will be mainly dependent on patient safety and quality improvement outcomes. Changes in the remaining 19 core specialties will be implemented in July 2014.

The grant will help Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education Lawrence Opas maintain the meritori-



Joel Milan

Patients of Keck Medicine’s AYA@USC Program, pictured here during a recent surfing expedition, will be helped through a recent grant by the UniHealth Foundation.

ous GME accreditation cycles for the Keck School’s 57 residency programs. Opas and his team will be able to secure the personnel needed to educate and supervise residents and faculty in innovative patient safety/quality improvement initiatives, monitor outcomes and disseminate best practices through national publications.

“UniHealth Foundation saw the successful development of the AYA Oncology Program at Providence St. Joseph Medical Center under Dr. Seigel’s capable leadership. We anticipate

that under the umbrella of a comprehensive cancer center, this program will continue to deliver meet the unique clinical needs of young adult cancer patients as well as survivors of childhood cancers,” said Mary Odell, UniHealth Foundation president. “We also value the important role Keck plays in graduate medical education and the provision of specialty clinical services to underserved residents of Los Angeles County. We hope our continued support will strengthen Keck’s capacity to meet the demands of the NAS.”

NEIGHBOR: USC neighborhoods benefit from UNO grants

Continued from Page 1
higher education can be intimidating for some minority students and their families, particularly first-generation college students. Med-COR has ensured that the student participants and their parents receive financial aid, academic advising and SAT preparation through a series of workshops. Parents are engaged and have organized a support group that meets monthly to receive helpful information about the program activities.”

The program currently serves 188 students from four local schools: Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High

School, King-Drew Medical Magnet High School, Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School and Van Nuys High School.

Richey believes strongly that Med-COR and the UNO grants that have helped to support the program send a positive message to the university’s surrounding communities.

“The UNO grants show that the university has taken an active role in solving some of the most pressing issues faced by the predominantly Latino and African American population surrounding the University Park and Health Sciences

Campuses,” said Richey, who is also an assistant dean of educational affairs and faculty at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “The USC partnership requirement with local organizations has allowed the university to collaborate with organization leaders to implement programs that will ultimately lead to improvements and overall wellness of the community.”

To date, the Good Neighbors Campaign has raised more than \$16 million to support more than 550 community partnership grants. For more information, visit <http://goodneighbors.usc.edu>.

The Weekly ETCETERA

The Keck School of Medicine of USC Parents Association is hosting two upcoming events as part of Trojan Family Weekend. “Mini-Medical School: A Day in the Life of Your Medical Student” will be held on Oct. 25, at Mayer Auditorium beginning at 12:30 p.m. The Trojan Family Tailgate will be held at Argue Plaza on the University Park Campus on Oct. 26. Register online at www.keck.usc.edu/TrojanFamilyWeekend. For more information, contact Teresa Whitaker at (626) 457-4207 or ksomalum@usc.edu.

Glenn T. Ault, MD, MEd, associate professor of surgery and residency program director for the division of colorectal surgery, has been elected to serve on the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. He will assist in reviewing candidate qualifications for practicing within the specialty.

The **Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute** has extended the deadline for individual pilot funding opportunities to Monday, Oct. 21. For more information or to apply, visit www.sc-ctsi.org/funding.

Pat Levitt, PhD, provost professor of neuroscience, psychiatry and pharmacy, has been elected as a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Election is granted based on professional achievement and interest, concern and involvement with critical public health issues.

Medical insurer Aetna has approved **Keck Hospital of USC’s lung transplant program** continuation as an Aetna Institute of Excellence (IE) after meeting extensive quality and cost-effectiveness criteria to participate in the IE program.

Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA, dean of the Keck School, has received the Innovator Award for Technology through the LA Health Care Awards, to be presented to Puliafito on Oct. 17.

The call for abstracts for **Innovations in Medical Education 2014** is now open. The submission deadline is Oct. 14 at 5 p.m. For submission and registration information, visit www.keck.usc.edu/en/Education/Department_of_Medical_Education/Conference.aspx.



Jon Nalick

PRETTY SURE THERE’S A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE — Salerni Collegium hosted its annual Kick-Off Dinner in Pasadena on Sept. 24, welcoming first-year medical students who joined the group, which raises funds for student scholarships. On hand were members of the Salerni Collegium Executive Board (from left): AJ Katz, Dan Gardner, MD, Michele Cannis, MD, Carmel Gardner, MD, Donna Pachorek, MD, Ashley Prosper, MD, John Osterkamp, MD, Brent Allen, MD, George Stoneman, MD, Ken Geller, MD, Greg Harlan, MD, and Donna Elliott, MD, EdD.

Calendar of Events

Find updated Calendar information online!
Visit www.theweekly.usc.edu every Friday
and search on “HSC Weekly Calendar.”

Sunday, Oct. 13

4 – 7 p.m. Keck Hospital of USC Guild Benefit. “Celebrate an Afternoon Among the ‘Super Stars,’” former USC football players Shane Foley and Anthony Davis. Sports Museum of L.A., 1900 Main St., Los Angeles. \$75 per person. Info: Janie Fan, (626) 755-0955, Janie@jfinteriors.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 15

Noon. Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC. “Muscle Stem Cell Self-Renewal and Aging,” Andrew Brack, Center for Regenerative Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital. Broad CIRM Center Seminar Room. Info: (323) 442-8084

Thursday, Oct. 17

Noon – 1 p.m. Research Center for Liver Diseases. “Regulation of Intestinal Epithelial Integrity by ErbB4: Not Just Another Brick in the Wall,” Mark R. Frey, CHLA. Hastings Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1283

Friday, Oct. 18

8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. “Genomic Medicine: The Power and the Promise,” various speakers. Aresty Auditorium. Register by Oct. 7: www.keckapps.usc.edu/esvp (code: Genomic). Info: www.uscnorriscancer.usc.edu/40thsymposium

Saturday, Oct. 19

1 – 5 p.m. Bloomingdale’s Century City “Pink Party.” 10 percent of cosmetics sales go to USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Cosmetics on 1, 10250 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles. Info: (310) 772-2100

Sunday, Oct. 20

8 a.m. American Lung Association. Fight for Air Walk, sponsored by the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Third Street Promenade, 1351 3rd Street Promenade, Santa Monica. Info to register for walk: www.lung.org/associations/states/california

Tuesday, Oct. 22

8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Center for Applied Molecular Medicine Physical Sciences in Oncology Center. “Convergence of the Sciences 101: A Short Course on Integrating the Physical, Engineering and Biological Sciences in Medicine,” various speakers. Davidson Conference Center, UPC. Info: (323) 442-3849. Register by Oct. 17: www.usepsoc.org/ShortCourse

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Diabetes & Obesity Research Institute Seminar. “Does Sugar Consumption Contribute to the Epidemics of Metabolic Disease?” Kimber Stanhope, University of California, Davis. Harkness Auditorium, CSC 250. Info: www.dori.usc.edu

Thursday, Oct. 24

Noon – 1 p.m. Research Center for Liver Diseases. “Hepatitis C Virus Mediated Innate Immune Regulation,” Ratna Ray, St. Louis University. Hastings Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-1283

6:30 – 8:3- p.m. Health Matters Seminar. “Coronary Artery Disease and Heart Attack: Signs, Symptoms and Treatment Options,” Michael A. Gaglia, USC. University Club of Pasadena, 175 N. Oakland Ave. Info: (323) 442-2805; RSVP: www.usc.edu/esvp (code: HEALTHMATTERS10)

Friday, Oct. 25

8 a.m. Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Laboratory Evaluation of Thyroid Function,” Kathleen Kelly, UCLA. Norris Topping Tower, Conference Room 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

Noon – 1 p.m. Department of Medicine Grand Rounds. “Hypothermia After Cardiac Arrest,” Anita Ravi, USC. IPT Conference Room B. Info: (323) 226-7556

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 hscwkly@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.

Celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness this October

As part of its breast cancer awareness campaign, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center is offering specially designed breast cancer T-shirts for sale only through the end of October. Your purchase will promote breast cancer awareness while supporting breast cancer research at USC Norris.

Visit any USC Bookstore or hospital gift shop to get yours; you can also purchase one at www.uscbookstore.com/breast-cancer.

Additionally, on Oct. 26, get behind more than just the Trojan football team by celebrating breast cancer awareness at a USC Trojan football game. During halftime, USC Norris physicians, staff members, and former and current breast cancer patients will be recognized on the field as leaders in the fight against breast cancer.



KICKIN’ CANCER — A team of USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer staff members took to the streets to support the early detection and prevention of women’s cancers. The 12th annual Kickin’ Cancer 5K run/walk and family expo, held on Sept. 29, was held by the Lynne Cohen Foundation for Ovarian Cancer Research. The USC Norris team raised a total of \$5,535 for preventive care, collaboration and education for ovarian and breast cancer. Pictured here (top row): Nick Bertole, Lee McCabe, Brooke Glazer, Muna Deriane, Brian Finster, Carla Baker and John Baker; (bottom row) Charite Richter, Jacqueline Andrejich, Charlotte Baker, Bourke [the dog], Binh Ngo, MD, and Laurel Barosh.

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