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## TODAY - April 18, 2013

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# Center for Perinatal Biology anniversary draws internationally acclaimed scientists to LLU

By James Ponder

Some of the best-known names in perinatal research—including a Nobel Laureate and scientists from all over the world—converged on Loma Linda University for a daylong symposium to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Center for Perinatal Biology on Monday, February 11.

Many of the internationally esteemed researchers made it clear that they came to the meeting to honor the lifetime achievements and productive career of Lawrence D. Longo, MD, founder and long-time director of the center.

Ferid Murad, MD, PhD, the 1998 Nobel Prize recipient for medicine or physiology, who is currently a professor at George Washington University, presented the keynote address.

“I think it’s really intriguing that the center has developed over the years because of one individual who had a mission and an idea,” noted Dr. Murad, whose appearance at the symposium was made possible through the efforts of Lubo Zhang, PhD, interim director of the center, and Gautam Chaudhuri, MD, PhD, chair of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

International invitees flew in from Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay. American dignitaries arrived from California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Washington, DC, and Wisconsin.

Six of the attendees are past presidents of the Society for Gynecologic Investiga-



Above: Lawrence D. Longo, MD, Lubo Zhang, PhD, and John R.G. Challis, PhD, DSc, celebrate the 40th anniversary celebration for the Center for Perinatal Biology on Monday, February 11. Dr. Longo is founder and emeritus director of the center, Dr. Zhang is interim director, and Dr. Challis is university professor emeritus at the University of Toronto. Right: Many internationally recognized scientists flew in from around the world to attend the daylong event. Several of the world’s leading authorities from the fields of prenatal and perinatal developmental biology and maternal-fetal physiology attended the symposium. The event recognized four decades of extraordinary leadership by Dr. Longo, founder and emeritus director of the center.



tion. Several more are former students or colleagues of Dr. Longo or other center faculty. A third group came because they have been inspired by the center’s extensive publications program.

But regardless of why they attended, the fact that so many of the guests are recognized leaders in the fields of prenatal and perinatal developmental biology and

maternal-fetal physiology only underscores the reputation of Dr. Longo, the center, and Loma Linda University.

In his welcome to the event, Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH, president of Loma Linda University Health, recounted Dr. Longo’s graduation from the LLU School of Medicine as a member of the class of 1954, his mission service in Nigeria, and his role in research for many decades.

“Through all those years,” Dr. Hart observed, “it was Dr. Longo’s steady influence, working quietly in an unobtrusive way in his laboratories, that continued to be the guiding star for research at Loma Linda.”

In his presentation, Roger Hadley, MD, dean of the LLU School of Medicine, cited Dr. Longo’s international reputation.

“Dr. Longo is known worldwide, certainly among academic medical centers,” he noted, citing Valerie M. Parisi, MD, MPH, MBA, dean of medicine at Wayne State University, as an example.

“Whenever I see her,” Dr. Hadley shared, “she asks, ‘How’s my favorite researcher? How’s my favorite person—Dr. Longo?’”

After showing a picture of Dr. Longo presenting an award to a colleague, Dr. Hadley said, “We would be giving awards to Dr. Longo, but he received every one we have by the time he was 23 years old. We have nothing left.”

Dr. Hadley pointed out that Dr. Longo served under seven deans, trained more than 100 post-doctoral students from 20 different countries, published more than 200 papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals, and brought more than \$100 million dollars in extramural funding to LLU. Even

so, the dean said that last figure it isn’t the highest number associated with Dr. Longo’s life and career.

“Infinity,” he concluded, “is the amount of prestige brought to Loma Linda University by Dr. Longo, and the lives benefited by the center’s research.”

After noting that joining Dr. Longo’s team in 1993 was the best decision of his career, Lubo Zhang, PhD, said that Dr. Longo’s research projects have been continuously funded for more than 40 years.

“He is the one of the longest continuously funded physician investigators in the history of the NIH,” Dr. Zhang noted, speaking of the National Institutes of Health. “Under Dr. Longo’s guidance, the center has developed into a world-class research center that contributes to national and international leadership in research.”

When he took the podium, Steven M. Yellon, PhD, associate director of the center, stated the obvious.

“I believe your heartfelt enthusiasm about this gathering and the remarkably rapid response to the invitation last summer reflects the strong relationships each of you has with Dr. Longo,” he said. “This is a remarkable accomplishment. In some ways, this can be thought of as nothing short of a miracle.”

Dr. Yellon pointed out that although Dr. Longo has faced countless obstacles throughout his lengthy career, he has remained optimistic, often repeating his signature maxim to “persevere.”

“Although there have been some dark days,” Dr. Yellon acknowledged, “a familiar

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## LLUMC CEO recognized for leadership, vision, commitment

By Nancy Yuen

On Tuesday, March 12, 2013, the National Health Foundation presented Ruthita J. Fike, MA, CEO and administrator of Loma Linda University Medical Center and executive vice president for hospital affairs, Loma Linda University Health, with the Ludlam-Gamble Award for leadership, vision, and commitment.

Ms. Fike is the first woman selected to receive the award.

During a tribute dinner attended by more than 300 leaders and executives in the health care industry, the National Health Foundation (NHF) in association with the Hospital Association of Southern California, recognized and celebrated Ms. Fike for her leadership in the community.

In addition to recognizing a leader in health care, funds raised during the annual event support the NHF mission to improve and enhance the health of the underserved

by developing and supporting innovative programs. The March 12 event was the most successful fundraiser to date, and was held at Pandora on Green in Pasadena, California.



Ruthita Fike was recently honored for her leadership skills by NHF.

## Chan Shun fund helps LLUSD graduates serve internationally

By James Ponder

Thanks in part to the generosity of the Chan Shun International Foundation, Inc., graduates of the Loma Linda University School of Dentistry can take advantage of a novel way to pay off their student loans while meeting the needs of underprivileged people in the Third World.

Doyle Nick, DDS, director of the office of international affairs at Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, says the deferred mission appointee program is successful because it benefits the school, the students, the Church, and the people of the world.

After graduation, students who have been accepted into the program are matched with Adventist dental clinics in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia. A similar program is available for graduates of the LLU School of Medicine.

Since dental school is one of the most expensive professional educations—considerably costlier than medical school—many students emerge from school with heavy loan indebtedness.

However, students who serve as mission dentists long enough after joining the deferred mission appointee program may have all of their student loans amortized. In addition, the program offers a monthly stipend to help with living expenses while participants are still in school.

“As a basic rule of thumb, someone who borrows at a reasonable rate, has their college paid off when they come to dental school, and serves for two five-year terms may have their debts taken care of,” Dr. Nick says. He adds that some dentists opt

to serve only five years and pay a portion of their loans themselves, while others choose to stay much longer than their term. A few have devoted their entire careers to international service as a result of the program.

The loan amortization is funded and arranged by Loma Linda University and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at the rate of 50 percent. The Chan Shun International Foundation, Inc., takes care of 40 percent of their loans.

“The final 10 percent is paid by the dental clinic that hosts the dentist, or historically, by the National Association of Seventh-day Adventist Dentists,” Dr. Nick explains.

In addition to his responsibilities at the school, Dr. Nick also serves as associate director for dental affairs at the health ministries department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He points out that, while participating dentists are employees of the denomination during their term of service, they are responsible to the calling institution.

“There was a time when the Church sent out a lot of missionaries,” Dr. Nick observes, “but the mission program has slowly evaporated over the years. Then they started reconstituting some of this thanks to Dr. Hart and Dr. Chan Shun. They deserve a lot of appreciation for that.”

He refers to the efforts of Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH, president of Loma Linda University Health, and the late Chan Shun, the Hong Kong philanthropist who founded Crocodile Garments, Ltd., in 1952 and expanded it to become one of the largest clothing firms in the world.

In gratitude for his success, Dr. Chan Shun supported numerous philanthropic



Dental education starts early for Meg DuVall, who will turn two this July. Her daddy, Michael, a 2012 graduate of the Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, serves as clinic director of the Seventh-day Adventist dental clinic on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean. Meg seems eager to learn.

endeavors in medicine, education and culture. The Chan Shun Pavilion at Loma Linda University is named in his honor. The self-proclaimed “steward of the Lord” insisted “the worthiness of the cause, not the benefit to the donor” is the most important aspect of giving.

Recent LLUSD graduate Michael DuVall, DDS, is a very grateful beneficiary of Dr. Chan Shun’s generosity through the deferred mission appointee program.

“I have the privilege of serving as clinic director of the Seventh-day Adventist dental clinic in St. Kitts, West Indies,”

Dr. DuVall reports. “We signed up for the program my first year in dental school and I graduated from Loma Linda University in May 2012. My family and I moved from California to the 18-mile-long island in the east Caribbean the following September.”

Dr. DuVall’s family includes wife Yuki, a graduate in elementary education from Southern Adventist University, and daughter Megumi.

“Yuki taught at Loma Linda Academy for three years while I was in dental school,” he adds. “She became a stay-at-home mom

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## How Adventist health care saved Hai Le twice

By James Ponder

Hai Le says Adventist health care saved him twice.

The first incident occurred in 1968 when an Adventist physician saved Hai and Muoi, his wife, from losing their infant son to a malicious illness. The second took place this year when the James M. Slater, MD, Proton Treatment and Research Center at Loma Linda University Medical Center saved the 70-year-old Hai from prostate cancer.

“My son got sick in Vietnam,” Hai recalls, “during the Tet Offensive. He was

only two months old when he became very, very sick and couldn’t keep anything down.”

Hai and Muoi didn’t know what to do. They couldn’t get the boy to a doctor because the fighting, launched by communist forces against more than 100 South Vietnamese cities and villages, was too intense.

“He had terrible diarrhea and vomiting,” Hai remembers. “He was so skinny. The only food he could keep down was rice soup.”

When the violence subsided four or five months later, the frantic couple took the boy to one local physician after another, but to no avail. “They couldn’t figure out what

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Hai and Muoi Le are grateful for two lifesaving interventions from Adventist health care. The first occurred in 1968 when an Adventist physician saved their son from a malicious illness; the second in 2013 when proton therapy at Loma Linda University Medical Center saved Mr. Le from prostate cancer.

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voice in the hallways has provided considerable encouragement by saying, ‘It will be OK.’ And it has.”

Other symposium presenters who hailed Dr. Longo’s achievements included:

- Gautam Chaudhuri, MD, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles
- Kent L. Thornburg, PhD, Oregon Health and Science University
- Frederick Naftolin, MD, DPhil, New York University
- John R.G. Challis, PhD, DSc, University of Toronto
- Robert A. Brace, PhD, Oregon Health and Science University
- Peter W. Nathanielsz, MD, PhD, DSc, University of Texas
- Ronald R. Magness, PhD, University of Wisconsin
- Frederik K. Lotgering, MD, PhD, Radboud University, the Netherlands
- Justo G. Alonzo, MD, University of Uruguay
- W. John Wilbur, MD, PhD, National Library of Medicine, Maryland
- Dino A. Giussani, PhD, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
- Satyaseelan Packianathan, MD, PhD, University of Mississippi; and
- Vaughn A. Browne, MD, PhD, University of Colorado

Near the end of the day, Vaughn A. Browne, MD, PhD, offered his personal recollections of Dr. Longo’s formative influence in his life and career.

“It is a tremendous honor to be here today and to participate in this amazing celebration of the life of a great man,” Dr. Browne began. “Dr. Longo and his colleagues insisted on the highest level of academic rigor, careful attention to writing, and a thorough knowledge and understanding of research methods and literature.

“I will always remember Dr. Longo’s

intensely focused, disciplined, tireless, persistent, and all-consuming efforts to practice, encourage, and promote serious scholarship,” he continued.

“I am deeply indebted today to my college and medical school professors, my residency professors, but especially to Dr. Larry Longo and Dr. Ray Gilbert, and the team at the Center for Perinatal Biology,” Dr. Browne shared. “They provided me with the skills, the experience, and the background needed to be successful in a career in academic medicine. I am deeply honored to be here to say, ‘Il Professore, thank you. Thank you for helping a young man achieve his dream.’”

As the symposium came to an end, Dr. Longo himself took the microphone. Not surprisingly, he credited others for the remarkable success of the center.

“To say that this is all overwhelming and breathtaking is rather the understatement of the week,” he began. “I’m so honored by you all coming. I thank Lubo and Charlie and Steve and the rest of the faculty in the center for organizing this 40th anniversary, and that’s what I see it as, just four decades of work; nothing to do with me, really.

“I hope we can all continue to work, to maintain our focus, and to do good science, and have it be socially relevant, and have that be our legacy for the future,” Dr. Longo added. “Nothing in my life has prepared me for any of the kindness and enthusiasm and love and generosity that you’ve all shown by coming here, many of you from halfway around the world. It’s a wonderful honor and tribute and I love you all—just keep doing great things. Thank you!”

Proceedings of the meeting will be published by *Springer Science* at the end of this year under the title, “Symposium of the 40th Anniversary of the Center for Perinatal Biology at Loma Linda University: Honoring Lawrence D. Longo, MD for Four Decades of Extraordinary Leadership.”

## Research coordinators retreat focuses on their contributions to research

By James Ponder

The Clinical Trial Center of Loma Linda University hosted a retreat for 28 clinical research coordinators and four guest participants at the Kimberly Crest Carriage House in Redlands on Friday, January 18.

According to Amy L. Casey, MBA, assistant director of the center, retreat participants spent the day discovering their excellence and exploring how their work supports the university mission “to make man whole.”

“The retreat served as a time for the coordinators to come together and discover what a pivotal role they play at our institution,” notes Linda Wu, director of the center and emcee for the retreat.

To help them do that, a number of speakers and facilitators addressed the coordinators at the event. First up was Dilys Brooks, MDiv, associate chaplain, who presented what Ms. Casey called “a most invigorating” devotional.

David Wren, MHA, CEO of LLU Health Care, delivered the key address of the day in which he discussed the foundational role of research and highlighted the importance of research coordinators to the overall

infrastructure. Using the analogy of a three-legged stool, Mr. Wren pegged research, education, and health care as essential pillars on which the university rests.

In discussing the importance of personal values in shaping the culture of an organization, Barbara Sharp, executive director for professional development, noted that values, though held internally, express themselves in everyday actions and are as individual as DNA; collectively, personal values become the unique DNA of LLU.

During the morning, attendees stayed fresh and alert by participating in a treasure hunt through Prospect Park. Some of the treasures—a string of pearls, a gold chain, a cross, and a diamond—were strewn throughout the environment.

Returning to Carriage House, the group heard Lila Dalton, associate director of operations, explain that the items found on the treasure hunt represent four critical traits of clinical research coordinators: the pearls represent wisdom, the chain stands for flexibility, the cross symbolizes compassion, and the diamond points to integrity.

To help participants visualize the results of their work, Ms. Casey placed a series of eight large posters around the room, each showcasing a different drug or medical

device that LLU researchers helped bring into the world for the benefit of patients.

Research coordinator Cindy Kronbeck shared a variety of comments received from patients whose lives have been positively impacted by the work of

research coordinators.

“I thank God and I bless everyone for helping me with my eyesight,” wrote one participant in an eye study the center conducted. “I was not able to see, and it impaired me to do my daily activities. This study has brought my life back, and I feel a sense of security and freedom.”

“I was in a study for lupus,” another participant wrote. “My coordinator was

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After spending the morning discovering their excellence and exploring how their work supports the Loma Linda University Health mission, research coordinators headed outdoors for a group photo. The retreat was held January 18 at Kimberly Crest Carriage House in Redlands.

## How Adventist health care saved Hai Le twice ...

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was wrong,” he says.

Fortunately, Hai’s good friend Phil Billingsley knew a doctor at the Adventist hospital in Saigon.

“He treated him for a week,” Hai says, “and my son got completely well.”

More than four decades would pass before Adventist health care would figure prominently in Hai’s life again.

In the meantime, Hai and Phil found a way to make money and help the American troops at the same time. The enterprising duo opened a company providing air conditioner repair, motor rewinding, and heavy equipment maintenance for the American Embassy.

“I worked with the Vietnamese employees,” Hai recalls, “and Phil with the Americans.”

With plenty of work, they brought in Hai’s dad to manage the shop, and the business soon became a success. That wasn’t true, however, for the war effort.

“On April 28, 1975, the American embassy called us to say that any individuals who had worked for the Americans would be killed when the Viet Cong took over Saigon,” Hai shares. “We were told we had to evacuate. But I wanted to stay and fight the communists, so I decided not to go.”

Phil had a different take on the situation. “What am I going to do with 150 Vietnamese evacuees when I don’t speak Vietnamese?” he implored Hai.

Because of his concern for his friend, Hai agreed to immigrate to America. That same afternoon, his father permanently closed the air conditioning shop.

“And bam, just like that, we were out of

there!” Hai remembers, snapping his fingers for emphasis. “We didn’t take anything. We just left.”

When Hai and his employees arrived at Saigon airport the next morning, exploding rockets turned the scene into a combat zone.

“It was terrifying,” he remembers. “I had 30 employees and members of their families; it was about 150 people. We had to be careful, rockets were coming down like rain.”

As one particular barrage blew up around them, everybody dropped to the ground. “I lay face up,” Hai says, “and saw a patrol plane get shot out of the sky. One American Marine was asleep in a hammock and a rocket landed on him.”

The next day, April 30, a large helicopter arrived to pick up Hai and his group and transport them to the U.S.S. *Okinawa*, anchored in the South China Sea.

Fast-forward 38 years and Hai and Muoi are living in Phoenix, Arizona. They also own a ranch in Kentucky where they raise chickens for research, not for eating, and a farm in Florida where they raise tilapia, a species of freshwater fish, and tropical fruit.

“My main medical care is in Phoenix,” he explains, “but when I’m in Kentucky, I go see Dr. Perry. He’s a great doctor. About nine months ago, he said, ‘Wait a minute, Hai. Why is your PSA raised up? It doesn’t look right.’”

“You have to do something,” Dr. Perry continued. A few weeks later, as Hai was leaving Kentucky for Arizona, Dr. Perry had some straightforward instructions: “Whatever you do, do not have surgery.”

A month later, Hai returned to his primary physician at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona, who performed a biopsy and diagnosed a non-aggressive form of prostate cancer. He told Hai to return for a second biopsy in six months.

This time the news was not good. “You’ve got to do something,” the doctor said. He suggested surgery, but in light of Dr. Perry’s advice, Hai asked about proton therapy.

“If you want to do proton,” the doctor said, “go to Loma Linda.”

A few weeks later, Hai was transporting a truckload of baby fish to his hatchery in Florida when he got a call from Loma Linda on a Wednesday afternoon. “We can see

you this Friday at 7:00 a.m.,” he was told.

Hai dropped the fish at the nursery, then called the airline and arranged to fly to Phoenix the next day. Friday morning, he and Muoi left very early and drove five hours to Loma Linda, arriving right on time.

“December 4, 2011, was when I started treatment at Loma Linda University Medical Center,” he remembers. “I got the hormone shots and then drove home.”

What impressed Hai and Muoi the most about Loma Linda was not the length of the commute, but rather the balanced care he received.

“In Loma Linda, they have a well-rounded approach—spiritually, mentally, and physically,” he observes. “It’s different there. When I first arrived, I was terrified, shaking, very scared. But after awhile, I felt right at home.”

Two people made a big impression on Hai. The first was Tiara Zalsos, a registered nurse in the LLU Cancer Center.

“When Tiara gives you a hormone shot, it doesn’t hurt at all,” Hai discloses. “I have to come back to Loma Linda every three months for the next two years to get the shot; I hope to get Tiara every time.”

The second was J. Lynn Martell, DMin, director of special services for the department of radiation medicine, and leader of the weekly support group Hai and Muoi attended.

“I owe my life to the man,” Hai insists. “I told him this is the second time the Seventh-day Adventist Church saved me. He keeps telling me it’s more than coincidence. I think it was meant to be.”

While still living in Vietnam, Hai saw a Clint Eastwood movie in which the actor had a farm with chickens, and snow on the hills. “I thought, ‘This is heaven!’” he shares. “Now I have chickens on my ranch in Kentucky, plus a home in Arizona, and a farm in Florida. It’s all pretty amazing for a kid from Vietnam.”

“I would like to express my gratitude and greatest appreciation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Hai concludes. “Please forward my best regards to all the staff members at Loma Linda University Medical Center, but especially to Dr. Martell, Tiara Zalsos, and the proton and photon therapy staff members. They are terrific!”

## Chan Shun fund helps LLUSD graduates serve internationally ...

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when Meg was born July 2, 2011.”

Things haven’t exactly been boring for the DuVall family of late.

“The program allowed us to have quite an exciting year,” he shares. “We were blessed to be able to visit our families in Washington State and Japan before leaving. In addition, we attended the Mission Institute in Brazil, where we grew spiritually and gained new perspectives on missions. We now have a solid support network of fellow missionaries and new friends all over the world.”

In addition to providing dental care for islanders, Dr. DuVall has been updating the clinic’s procedures and helping out with evangelism.

“I have been trying to bring the clinic into the 21st century,” he reports. “Through some limited clinic funds and many donations, I have been able to digitize the clinic’s records and practice management system. I have also started to integrate diode laser technology into the practice.”

Dr. DuVall enjoyed giving a weekly talk on dental health during an evangelistic crusade. “It’s a blessing to be involved in evangelism,” he notes, “and to help educate the public.”

“None of this would have happened if I hadn’t signed up for the deferred mission appointee program,” he says. “I was given a monthly stipend while still in school, which helped with living expenses, and now the General Conference is making my loan payments. Having this financial support is a great feeling, and has allowed us to go and serve in the mission field right out of school.”

“We believe the Adventist dental clinic gives us the unique opportunity to interact and to build relationships with people here on the island,” he concludes. “We pray and hope that the clinic will be a place where the Holy Spirit can work through us to plant seeds of the Gospel in people’s hearts. It has been a whirlwind of a year with so many changes, but we feel so blessed to be able to serve God here in the Caribbean.”

## My campus event brings minority high school students to Loma Linda University

By James Ponder

A quarterly event hosted by Loma Linda University is giving minority high school students from Sherman Indian High School in Riverside and the BLU Educational Foundation in San Bernardino a chance to learn about career opportunities in the health professions.

According to Temidayo Ogunrinu, coordinator for the My Campus event in the LLU office of Community Academic Partners in Service, the program seeks to inspire, motivate, and educate minority students with the goal of increasing minority representation in health care.

"In order to do this," Ms. Ogunrinu explains, "CAPS collaborates with the eight professional schools within Loma Linda University to plan interactive activities that will give high school students a better understanding of what the professions are about."

The events are valuable, Ms. Ogunrinu says, because they provide interactive learning opportunities.

"The opportunity to personally engage through one-on-one interaction with Loma Linda University students is particularly unique," she notes. "This offers youth the opportunity to hear about other health professions besides the ones highlighted during the event, and also provides practical information and first-hand experience with what it is like to be a student pursuing a particular health profession."

At a recent session, the minority students attended presentations by professors and students of the LLU Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy. In one session, they blended common chemicals together to make their own hand sanitizer gel. In another, second-year pharmacy student Ray Rajagukguk shared his incredible personal pilgrimage from a life of poverty to pursuing his PharmD degree at LLU.

"If I can succeed, anyone can succeed!" Mr. Rajagukguk told the students.

Amma Wiafe, a junior at Redlands High School, heard about the My Campus program from a teacher.

"I am interested in the medical field, and I know it is what God is calling me to do," Ms. Wiafe says. "In middle school, I found myself being drawn to medicine. I dedicated an entire day to researching various types of medical careers. One in particular drew my attention, obstetrics and gynecology. From that day forward, I knew I wanted to work in that particular field of medicine, either as a doctor or a nurse practitioner."

Ms. Wiafe found the speed-mentoring segment of the My Campus event especially beneficial.

"I was personally able to have one-on-one sessions with Loma Linda students from different schools," she says. "I had the opportunity to ask all the questions my heart desired. A couple of students who were in the School of Nursing and the School of Medicine told me their next rota-

tion is obstetrics and gynecology.

"They proceeded to give me their contacts so I could communicate with them if I have any questions about their clinical rotations," she continues. "They also told me I could contact them if I wanted advice, to get to know them, and learn about their motivations, or simply because I needed someone to talk to."

Ms. Ogunrinu notes that the next ses-

sion of My Campus, which will take place on Sunday, April 21, in the fourth floor conference room of the Centennial Complex, will feature students and faculty from the LLU Schools of Dentistry and Medicine.

"The most important aspects of these events are the motivational factors the LLU students share," she adds. "They encourage participants to overcome any obstacle that comes before them."

For Ms. Wiafe, it all adds up to a very meaningful experience.

"After taking part in My Campus," Ms. Wiafe observes, "I know I am headed in the right direction."



Inland Empire high school students Amma Wiafe (left) and Maheli Pena proudly display the hand sanitizer gel they made during an interactive demonstration during the My Campus event at Loma Linda University in February. The event is held on a quarterly basis to introduce minority students to health careers.

## Apprenticeship Bridge to College event draws future scientists to LLU

By James Ponder

A select group of Inland Empire high school students, parents, and high school officials attended the Apprenticeship Bridge to College (ABC) Invitational program, which allows students to serve as research interns at the Loma Linda University health disparities summer research program.

The program is designed to allow students to participate in an academic research project under the tutelage of a faculty mentor. The ABC Invitational event took place on Monday, April 1, in Wong Kerlee International Conference Center at LLU.

At the meeting, the audience listened

to a keynote presentation from Roger Hadley, MD, dean of LLU School of Medicine, about the importance of biomedical research in the practice of medicine.

Marino A. De Leon, PhD, director of the LLU Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine, noted that all ABC program alumni from previous sessions have enrolled in—and are on track to complete—college, and 67 percent of them have already graduated with a degree in one of the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

"The ABC program is an established pipeline to doctoral programs at Loma Linda University and its School of Medicine," Dr. DeLeon observed. "The program's objective is

to increase diversity in the biomedical workforce, and increase the number of physicians

and physician-scientists committed to working in the underserved communities of the Inland Empire region. We are very proud of the fact that 61 percent of ABC participants who enroll in doctoral programs at Loma Linda University currently matriculate."



An Inland Empire high school student (right) had the opportunity to ask three Loma Linda University doctoral students about careers in the health professions during a recent session of the Apprenticeship to College program. The doctoral students are (from left) MD/PhD student Kathia Cordero, and PhD students Christina Cajigas and Leanne Woods.

## Information systems team bleeds to help others

By James Ponder

"My heart bleeds for you" may be a common romantic cliché, but according to DP Harris, PhD, vice president for information systems at Loma Linda University, it's an idea members of his department take seriously.

"This is the second time we have donated at LifeStream, the blood bank in San Bernardino," Dr. Harris explains. "We usually try to give back to the community in some way at Christmas, but this winter, we also went on February 12, just in time for Valentine's Day."

The decision to give blood—as exemplified by Dr. Harris and the more than 20 members of his staff who donated this year—is one way to transfer the mission of Loma Linda University Health, "to make man whole," out of the realm of the ideological into practical reality. Dr. Harris reports

that three or four members of his staff had never given blood before.

Computer technician Carina Miyashiro was among the first-timers. She had offered to donate once before, but had been turned down because of her weight.

"That was 12 years ago," she explains. "They said I was underweight. But I've had kids since then."

Despite her earlier determination to be a donor, Ms. Miyashiro still felt a bit nervous this time around.

"When Dr. Harris announced that our group was going to donate," she reports, "a co-worker said, 'You should do it.' But I was afraid I would pass out."

Nevertheless, Ms. Miyashiro bit her lip and rolled up her sleeves, expecting the worst.

"I was scared," she shares, "but actually it was fine. It didn't hurt."

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## Research coordinators retreat ♦ ♦ ♦

*Continued from page 3*  
very helpful. I appreciated her dedication to the study."

The perspective of the study participant was the focus of a presentation by A. Dean Sherzai, MD, PhD, director of research in the department of neurology, who reminded the group how much their work means to the people who are looking for a breakthrough or cure for the disease or condition that brought them to participate in a clinical study. Speaking on behalf of principal investigators across the LLU campus, Dr. Sherzai said research coordinators are a "critical asset" in the search for

a cure to countless diseases.

At the conclusion of the morning, each research coordinator was called to the front of the room while a note of recognition was read aloud. The notes were written by principal investigators the coordinators have worked with, and described their individual strengths. Amid vigorous applause from their peers, each coordinator was pinned with a gold star emblazoned with the word "excellence."

Participants went home armed with new awareness of the value they bring to the organization as well as a heightened appreciation of what they mean to the study participants they work with.

# New Women's Cancer and Surgical Oncology Center opens at LLUMC

Contributed report

**B**elieving that coordination and communication are central to good health outcomes, Loma Linda University Medical Center opened its new Women's Cancer and Surgical Oncology Center on Wednesday, March 20. The center brings together gynecology and surgical oncologists with medical and radiation oncologists—all under one roof.

"Bringing everyone together—both physically and figuratively—helps ensure comprehensive, seamless care for the

patient," said center director Mark Reeves, MD, PhD, during the ceremony. "We've designed the center to encourage coordination and communication among all participants in a patient's treatment—including physicians, nurses, therapists, surgeons, counselors, and the patients and their families themselves." He adds, "The center also continues Loma Linda's strong, historical commitment to medical research and assures patients have access to the latest advances in the prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer."

Under this design, the individualized

treatment plan for each patient is based on collective input by medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists, as well as pathologists and radiologists—an entire team of specialists. It takes into account not only the patient's diagnosis but also values and life circumstances.

Helping implement this treatment plan is a team of specially trained nurse navigators. The nurses help guide patients through the continuum of care and provide them with the support and education they need to prepare for surgery and long-term monitoring. The center further encourages the involvement of families during the course of treatment, including clinical as well as educational visits.

"We also place high value in the non-medical dimensions of care," Dr. Reeves remarked during the ceremony. "As a result, our center focuses on treating the whole person through support groups,

exercise programs, access/referral to social work, dietitians, psychological services, spiritual support, and other long-term needs of each patient."

To help patients better understand their diagnosis, a user-friendly cancer resource center—supported by a cancer resource coordinator—has been created to provide the latest information from the American Cancer Society and other well-respected sources. In addition, a cancer help kiosk, linked directly to the National Cancer Institute database, allows patients and families to easily access comprehensive cancer information, including treatment options, potential side effects, medications, and supportive care. This portion of the new center was made possible by Stater Bros. Charities and Inland Women Fighting Cancer.

Through their efforts, the new resource center will help provide patients and others in the region with a place to receive nutritional, spiritual, psychological, and appearance support, as well as other informational resources to better help them understand and manage cancer.

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LLUH officials release butterflies during the center's dedication. Taking part in the ceremony are (from left): Mark Reeves, MD, PhD, LLU Cancer Center director; Jerry Slater, MD, chair, department of radiation medicine; C.S. Chen, MD, PhD, chief, medical oncology/hematology; Carlos Garberoglio, MD, chair, surgery department; Roger Hadley, MD, LLU School of Medicine dean; Judy Chatigny, MSN, LLU Cancer Center executive director; Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, LLUH president; and Ruthita Fike, MA, LLUMC CEO.

## Information systems team bleeds to help others ...

Continued from page 4

The American Red Cross points out that volunteer blood donors play a vitally important role in safeguarding the public health.

Last summer, the organization announced that blood supplies were at their lowest levels in 15 years. In the summer of 2009, critical blood shortages forced the cancellation of elective surgeries in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Philadelphia.

Because certain life-saving procedures, such as chemotherapy, heart surgery, and organ transplants, require large amounts of blood, LifeStream sponsors the "BLead

by Example" campaign, which emphasizes regular blood donation as an important community service.

Dr. Harris feels good about the information systems team's willingness to help others in the community in this way.

"It's gratifying to me to see so many of my staff willing to give this amount of energy back to the community," he says. "We are pleased to help provide such a vital resource to the people of the Inland Empire."

Ms. Miyashiro hesitates a moment when asked if she will do it again next year.

"Most likely," she says. "Yeah, I would."



Ten of the more than 20 members of the Loma Linda University information systems team who gave blood on February 12 strike a pose on the steps of the Founders Plaza. According to DP Harris, PhD, vice president for information systems (center of three men in back row), this is the second time the group donated to LifeStream, the blood bank in San Bernardino.

# New scholarship honors legacy of Gertrude Haussler and Maxine Darling at LLUSN

By James Ponder

**A** scholarship has been established at the Loma Linda University School of Nursing to help graduate students in management and leadership.

The Gertrude Haussler and Maxine Darling Scholarship Fund serves as a memorial to Ms. Haussler and a living tribute to Ms. Darling. The two nursing professionals devoted their lives in service to humanity.

Gertrude Haussler, MS, served Loma Linda University Medical Center in a variety of roles. After moving to the Inland Empire from Portland, Oregon, in 1956, she worked as supervisor of the operating room. Shortly after, she began studying at the School of Nursing, and graduated with her master's degree in nursing administration in 1960.

In 1962, Ms. Haussler was appointed assistant director for nursing service in the Loma Linda Sanitarium and Hospital, now LLU Medical Center. In 1967, the year the organization was renamed, she helped move the hospital from its former location on the hill to the current site. That same year, she was promoted to associate director of nursing.

In 1969, Ms. Haussler was named assistant administrator at LLU Medical Center,

and in 1981, she advanced to the position of vice president.

A sidebar article to an interview with Ms. Haussler in the January to March, 1982, edition of *Nurse in Action*—the flagship publication, at that time, of the Medical Center nursing division—reports Ms. Haussler was proud of her position and title.

"It represents a first for recognition of the role of the nurse and of women in the administration of this particular health care center," the article noted.

In the interview, Ms. Haussler prognosticated on the future of her profession in words that ring true 25 years later.

"The nursing profession is not static," she observed. "Change has become an essential characteristic of our times because the challenges confronting nurses are significant. Nursing has successfully weathered many, many changes and will face more in the future. Hopefully, nurses will use these challenges to initiate a far-reaching reassessment of their role and place in the health care system."

"I am proud of the unstinting efforts of our nursing staff in providing and coordinating patient care," she concluded. "It is time nurses at LLUMC allow themselves to

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Maxine Darling, MS (front row center, white hair), got a little surprise from 150 of her closest friends at her 86th birthday in September 2012. Not only did they fete her with a surprise party, but they also contributed \$7,000 towards the Gertrude Haussler and Maxine Darling scholarship fund at Loma Linda University School of Nursing.

## Lessons I learned in Haiti

By Adam Lorenzetti, MD,  
orthopedic resident

As I approach my last year of residency at Loma Linda University Medical Center, I've realized that one of my most influential experiences occurred thousands of miles away.

While I have a varied travel experience including visits to a number of third-world countries, none have compared to the devastation I surveyed as my taxi traveled the streets of Port-au-Prince on the way to Hopital Adventiste d'Haiti in the Carrefour neighborhood.

Although I passed by more than a year after the earthquake, I noticed the countless tent villages, the collapsed presidential palace, ever-present rubble, and abandoned cars that made it feel like only a few months.

The trip was organized by Scott Nelson, MD, assistant professor of orthopedic surgery, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, who not only staffed the hospital in the days after the earthquake but also stayed for the next year. He frequently returns, bringing us residents with him.

One of the main reasons I chose Loma Linda for my residency was the opportunity to experience rotations abroad during my training—not only to provide a service that can change lives, but also to remind myself how lucky we all are and what I take for granted at home.

The first day and a half of our trip was spent reorganizing and sorting the hospital's orthopedic equipment and supplies. Dr. Nelson's trips are notorious for generating a whirlwind of cases, with many complicated cases saved for him. We had to know exactly where everything was.

I was surprised to see the mountain of plates, screws, implants, and tools that had all arrived after the earthquake and remained. For a facility to have such a diverse inventory and yet reside in one of the world's poorest countries was amazing. The hospital was prepared for almost anyone who came through the door and was tested on a daily basis.

Our first day's schedule in the operating room (OR) was busy, and we weren't able to get through every case in one day. But that was pretty much the way it went for the 10 days we were there. We often worked to midnight, since we felt pressure to help as many as possible before we left, and some may have to wait months for another opportunity.

However, we had a great time keeping everything running and troubleshooting the occasional hiccup. The fluctuating power supply made things interesting, as did wearing our lead aprons in 100-degree heat. We put ice packs under our hats and down our shirts. Golf cart batteries in the back powered backup lights while we operated at night. Stretching our supplies and innovating when problems arose were great learning experiences.

My trip lasted four weeks, and I was able to work with several teams and experience a variety of different situations throughout my stay. Loma Linda University alumnus Dr. Gerald King, from North Carolina, and Dr. Ron Anderson, from Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles, were there for week two. Both had been to Haiti before and brought a wealth of experience. During week three, a group of general orthopedists from Appleton, Wisconsin, arrived. Since this was their first international mission trip, I found that I was the most up-to-date pediatric orthopedist on site, with a total of one month at Loma Linda and two weeks in Haiti.

The clinic never ceased to present rare and interesting cases, leaving all of us scratching our heads from time to time. Unfortunately, a number of cases were left for the next subspecialist to come. Our cases ranged from chronically dislocated hips to fungating foot masses, and even several cases of macrodactyly—a fairly rare condition where toes or fingers are abnormally large due to the overgrowth of underlying bone and soft tissue.

Dr. Lee Zuckerman, tumor specialist at Loma Linda, arrived during week four to help with backlogged cases. Several tumor cases were waiting for him, including osteochondromas and fungating foot masses, and an enormous forearm tumor. We spent about six hours removing a tumor to save the hand, removing one of two bones and leaving only a wisp of the second.

I was also able to spend time with Dr. Terry Dietrich, a Loma Linda alumnus, who took over for a year following Dr. Nelson. Dr. Francelex Alexis, from the medical school at Université d'Etat d'Haïti, is still working at the hospital along with an LLU School of Medicine alumnus, Dr. James Matiko from Arrowhead Orthopedics, and a group of residents, medical students, translators, and nurses.

My time spent outside of the operating room impacted me the most. Seeing the



Dr. Nelson's team (standing, from left): Zeno Charles Marcel, MD, Universidad de Montemorelos; author Adam Lorenzetti, MD, orthopedic resident, LLU Health; James Matiko, MD, Arrowhead Orthopedics/San Bernardino; Dr. Nelson's nurse from Dominican Republic; Scott Nelson, MD, assistant professor of orthopedics, LLU School of Medicine; Adeel Husain, MD; Ken Kuck, LLUMC scrub tech (partial view); Maria Adrienne, MD, anesthesiologist, and (crouching) Jonathan Mills, LLU School of Medicine student.



A group of Haitian children cluster around Dr. Adam Lorenzetti. One of them snaps a photo of Dr. Lorenzetti with his own camera.

patience and efforts of the Haitians who traveled days to the clinic, often arriving at night and sleeping on the benches waiting to be seen the next day, was amazing. For a people who have suffered so much, it was astonishing to see how much they had endured. They had waited months for injuries to be treated, receiving only Tylenol after large surgeries (we didn't have narcotics other than morphine). There were no complaints—just thanks for being treated.

I learned to think on my feet and improvise, which is vital to the survival of Hopital Adventiste d'Haiti as it continues to treat the people it serves with the highest level of care possible. It was a great and lasting experience, and I can't adequately thank Dr. Nelson, Dr. Dietrich, all of the long-term volunteers, and the short-term volunteers I was able to work with, and who truly keep this much-needed facility alive.

## From living in a hallway to becoming a pharmacy student at Loma Linda University

By James Ponder

For second-year LLU School of Pharmacy student Ray Rajagukguk, the line between poverty and success is the difference between renting a hallway and living in a very nice home.

For the first few years of his life, Ray and his family were so poor they couldn't afford a room, so they rented a hallway behind a Jakarta, Indonesia, restaurant. They had the place to themselves at night, but shared the space with restaurant staff during the day.

"Frankly, I don't remember that part of my life," Ray shares, "but my parents told me about it. We lived there two or three years."

Although his parents had just finished college, his father had a hard time finding a suitable job. His mother stayed home with Ray and his older brother, Sany.

After his father found work as an auditor, the family saved enough money to move into a house.

"My first memory was triggered by looking at photos of that house," Ray says. "I remember the enjoyment of having tiles on the floor. In a hot country like Indonesia, tiles feel cool on your feet."

When he was 10 or 11, the family moved again—this time to a house his father designed.

"I remember the difference in structure, design, and size," he says. "My parents still live there. It's a lot bigger and nicer."

When Sany was 15 and Ray was 14, their father sent them to America.

"He wanted us to get an education and make it in life," Ray shares. "At first, we lived with my aunt and her family in Redlands. Eventually we lived on our own. My mom would go back and forth between Indonesia and here, checking on us."

Ray discovered he was at a big disadvantage when he arrived at Redlands High School.

"I didn't know English," he shares. "My counselor put me in French class, so I was

having to learn two new languages at once, carrying two dictionaries."

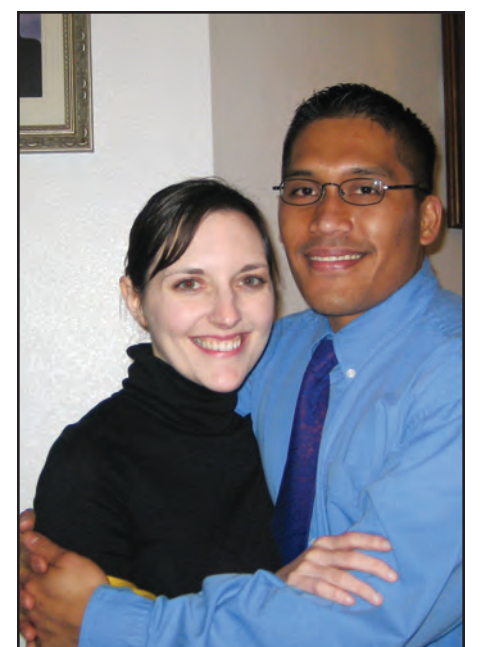
Due to his small size and limited English, Ray found himself the target of bullies. "I realized I had to take care of myself," he says.

Ray vividly remembers the triggering event. "I was cornered by this bully in the locker room and he was slapping my face," he recalls. "A classmate yelled at the bully and told him to leave me alone. The guy who was yelling was smaller than me, but strong. He was good at the P.E. exercises. That's when I realized that the appearance of strength was important."

Before coming to America, Ray had never applied himself academically. "I was always one of the bottom three students in my class," he discloses.

He paid close attention, however, when his dad explained that although he would send money to help the boys out, he wouldn't be there in person.

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Ray Rajagukguk, pictured here with girlfriend Angela Palmer, knows how to turn hard work and determination into substantial success. Born into a very poor family in Indonesia, Ray is currently in his second year at Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy.

In your e-mail every  
Thursday

## News of the Week

The only source for campus-wide announcements



For your announcements to be considered for inclusion in News of the Week, submit them through your vice president to the VIP website (for Medical Center news) or through your dean to On Campus (for University news).

## U.S. Representative Gary Miller visits LLUH campus



On Tuesday, April 2, Congressman Gary Miller (left), U.S. Representative for the 31st District, spent the morning at Loma Linda University Health, learning about the important roles the institution serves in his district. Rep. Miller met with LLUH leadership, including Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH (right), LLUH president, then toured the James M. Slater, MD, Proton Treatment and Research Center, the first hospital-based proton treatment facility in the world. "I am glad that I had the opportunity to meet with the leaders of this fine university," commented Rep. Miller during his visit. "It is a true gem here in the 31st District, providing students with a quality, first-class education, and supporting thousands of jobs here in the Inland Empire."

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Dr. Ellsworth and Mrs. Barbara Wareham

## Women's Cancer and Surgical Oncology Center opens ...

*Continued from page 5*

"By locating this resource center within the clinic itself, patients can take advantage of this learning opportunity while waiting to see their physician," says center executive director Judy Chatigny, MSN. "We also offer an electronic patient portal that allows patients to make their own physician appointments at a time convenient for them, provides them with access to their medical records, and allows them to e-mail questions directly to their physician."

The center is designed to be a comforting environment, bringing nature indoors through the use of soothing color palette, artwork focused on nature, and elements, fabrics, and furnishings selected to be more hospitable and less hospital, wood flooring to minimize noise, private rooms, and carefully placed furniture and computer screens to ensure privacy.

Adjacent to the medical and surgical center is the James M. Slater, MD, Proton Treatment and Research Center, the first hospital-based proton therapy center in the world. Established in 1990, the center today uses proven-effective proton beam technology for many types of cancers, and it has treated more patients than any other proton treatment center in the world.

The cancer center is part of a comprehensive health system that composes Loma Linda University Health and is widely respected as a health care leader, pioneering work in such areas as organ transplants, proton treatment for cancers, cardiac care, physical rehabilitation, and acute pediatric and adult care, as well as treatments for chemical dependence and other behavioral disorders. The health system—which includes Loma Linda University Medical Center and Children's Hospital, LLUMC—East Campus, Behavioral Medicine Center, Heart & Surgical Hospital, LLUMC—Murrieta, and physician clinics—collectively sees more than 30,000 inpatients and 1.5 million outpatient visits a year. More information may be accessed at <[www.lomalindahealth.org](http://www.lomalindahealth.org)>.



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH



## LLU researchers discover better acute-care surgery service model

By James Ponder

A team of six researchers from Loma Linda University Medical Center recently found that a new acute care surgery service model saves time, reduces complications, improves patient outcomes, cuts costs, and requires shorter hospital stays for patients in need of emergency surgery.

Findings of the study were recently integrated into the curriculum for continuing education classes offered by the American College of Surgeons.

The researchers—Robert F. Cubas, MD; Nephtali Gomez, MD; Samuel Rodriguez, MD; Morcos Wanis, MD; Arun Sivandam, MS; and Carlos A. Garberoglio, MD—set out to create an alternative to the traditional model in hopes that it might produce better outcomes.

As surgeon Nephtali Gomez, MD, explains it, the traditional model calls for the surgeon on call to handle incoming emergency surgical cases in between seeing patients in the office and performing elective procedures. A downside of the traditional model is that patients who come to

the hospital for emergency surgery often must wait long periods of time before being evaluated by a surgeon, sometimes with negative results.

“The problem is,” Dr. Gomez notes, “the old method is too interruptive for patients and surgeons. It’s not fair for either of them.”

In July 2010, convinced that the traditional model was flawed, members of the team set up a new model in which a surgeon is dedicated to the emergency department and acute inpatient surgical consults alone for the duration of the shift.

“With our new plan,” Dr. Gomez adds, “the surgeon covering the call has no clinic duties and no elective cases scheduled during this time.”

It looked like a win-win situation, but to make sure, the team crunched the numbers on the old method and the new. Since the two most common types of non-trauma surgical diagnoses seen in the emergency department are acute appendicitis (inflammation of the appendix) and acute cholecystitis (inflammation of the gallbladder), the team limited the survey to patients with those ailments.

## New scholarship honors legacy of Gertrude Haussler and Maxine Darling at LLUSN ...

Continued from page 5

feel good about nursing and their endeavors to make it better.”

When she retired in the late 1980s—“probably 1989,” her long-term friend Maxine Darling says—Ms. Haussler assisted in the operating room at the Medical Center.

“She took care of the paperwork, and set up policies and procedures in the OR,” Ms. Darling recalls. “She also helped establish a protocol for evaluating patients before they went into surgery, taking vitals, and making sure they were ready.”

Ms. Haussler passed away on March 19, 2012, not quite a month before her 91st birthday.

Ms. Darling first crossed paths with Ms. Haussler in 1949 in Portland, Oregon.

“I had just finished the diploma program at the old Portland Sanitarium,” Ms. Darling says, “and Gertrude was already working in the operating room as the head nurse. We hit it off right away and became good friends. She was the silent type, and I yak all the time.”

“Gertrude wasn’t a lifelong Adventist,” Ms. Darling continues. “Her uncle worked at Walla Walla Academy and he enticed them to take her into the school of nursing at Portland San even though she wasn’t a member of the church. She took Bible classes there and joined the Church.”

A few years later, eager to further her own nursing education, Ms. Darling relocated to Loma Linda and went to work in the operating room while completing her master’s degree in nursing administration at the School of Nursing.

“I taught at the school for five years,” Ms. Darling notes. “I taught a class in operating room technique. That was a long time ago. They gave me a ‘thingie’ with Florence Nightingale’s lamp on it in recognition of those years—some kind of a plaque or award.”

Unlike some Oregonians, who complain about the dry climate of the Inland Empire, Ms. Haussler and Ms. Darling developed an affinity for the mountains and deserts of Southern California.

“We loved to go camping in the High Sierras and out in the desert,” Ms. Darling shares. “After a while, we fell in with a bunch of adventurers from San Diego who liked to ride dune buggies. I bought a 1968 VW bug and had it converted into a dune buggy. I’ve still got it. We had a grand time!”

Ms. Darling loves to go fishing. When asked about the biggest fish she ever caught, she recalls landing a 50-pound King Salmon with no help whatsoever from the captain of the boat.

“He was kind of selfish,” she recalls. “He said, ‘You paid for the trip, so you reel it in.’ That was kind of mean! Anyway, the fish put up a big fight, but Gertrude and I worked together and managed to bring it in.”

Working together one final time, the two friends decided to pool their resources and establish a scholarship to help future generations of nursing professionals. After Ms. Haussler’s passing, Ms. Darling contacted Marilyn Herrmann, PhD, dean of the LLU School of Nursing, to set up the fund.

Ms. Darling wasn’t counting on a substantial assist from 150 of her closest friends, but Dr. Herrmann insists that’s exactly what happened.

“Jeannie Burgdorff came up with the idea of asking everybody to contribute money for the scholarship fund instead of gifts,” Dr. Herrmann reports. “So they threw this great big party for Maxine’s 86th birthday last September and raised \$7,000 for the fund.”

Ms. Burgdorff, who serves as nurse manager of the sterile processing department at LLU Medical Center, says the party turned out very well.

“Maxine was shocked,” Ms. Burgdorff remembers. “She thought she was only going out for dinner with a couple of friends.”

“We are so grateful for the generosity of Ms. Haussler and Ms. Darling in remembering the School of Nursing in such a thoughtful manner,” Dr. Herrmann observes. “They dedicated decades of their lives to serving the needs of others. By establishing this scholarship, they are paving the way for motivated students to follow in their footsteps.”

In the first half of the study, researchers reviewed the charts of 133 patients who were evaluated in the emergency department from July 2009 to June 2010. During the first half, the traditional model was in use. The second half of the test involved a review of 155 patient charts from July 2010 to June 2011. The new model was used throughout the second half of the study.

Altogether, 175 of the tested patients underwent appendectomy (surgical removal of the appendix) and 114 underwent cholecystectomy (surgical removal of the gallbladder).

The results not only confirmed but exceeded researcher’s expectations.

Under the new model, surgeons evaluated patients an average of two hours and 19 minutes earlier than under the old. In addition, patients who needed surgery received it an average of 5.38 hours sooner than

those treated under the traditional model. The new model also produced seven fewer patients who suffered complications compared to the traditional model, and reduced the average length of stay in the hospital by an entire day.

The results were similar for patients requiring gallbladder removal. On average, they were evaluated by a surgeon 5.84 hours sooner than their peers treated under the traditional model, and arrived at the operating room for surgery an impressive 25.37 hours sooner. Additionally, the new model produced eight fewer patients with complications and reduced the average patient stay a full two days compared with the traditional model.

Together, these improvements mean patients were both evaluated and operated on sooner under the new acute care surgery model. They also experienced fewer complications and needed significantly shorter hospital stays.

Continued on page 9



A day at the beach affords Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy student Ray Rajagukguk and girlfriend Angela Palmer a chance to relax and spend time together. Ray grew up in a rented hallway behind a restaurant in Jakarta, Indonesia. Today he is preparing for a career as a pharmacist. Ray loves to share his encouraging story with high school students.

## From living in a hallway to becoming a pharmacy student at LLU ...

Continued from page 6

“If we wanted to get ahead,” Ray notes, “we would have to apply ourselves to the challenge.”

Ray got the message. When his counselor put him in an English-as-a-second-language class, Ray opted to take the regular tenth-grade English course instead. By the time he graduated, the fact that he had taken several advanced placement classes elevated his GPA to 4.15—better than a straight “A” average.

The high grades served Ray well the very next year when an unexpected crisis arose at the end of his first year at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas.

“I was in America on a tourist visa, which—if you overstay—you become an undocumented illegal,” he says. “The school got a letter from the Immigration and Naturalization Service saying I was going to be deported. My student advisor wrote a letter to the U.S. embassy in Indonesia, but I had to leave.”

Ray flew home without any assurance he would be allowed to return to the United States to finish his studies. When he landed in Indonesia, he and his dad went to the American embassy right away.

“It was disappointing at first,” he shares. “On the last interview, I practically begged the immigration officer to give me a second chance. I told the officer I was a good student and showed him my transcripts. When he saw my high school GPA, he approved my visa the same day. I was thankful to God that I had done my best!”

Ten years later, Ray completed a PhD degree in biochemistry at the University of Arkansas and moved to Pacific Union College to teach organic chemistry.

“I spent five years there,” he says. “During that time, I started wondering what if I had pursued medicine instead of biochemistry? But there’s not much chemistry in medicine; it’s mostly biology. That’s when I learned that pharmacy is a good marriage between chemistry and the health professions.”

Three or four years ago, while visiting friends in Georgia, he met Angela Palmer, a high school Spanish teacher, at a church social event. Ray asked her out and was delighted when she accepted. Their friendship has been growing ever since.

“She brings a lot of balance to me,” he shares. “She finished her bachelor of arts in English at Southern Adventist University in 2007. She’ll be resigning her teaching position and moving here next year.”

In 2010, he entered the doctor of pharmacy program at LLU. In addition to his studies, he loves sharing his personal story with high school students contemplating a career in the health sciences.

“The toughest part of the PharmD program is time management,” he tells them. “Not only are you expected to do well in your classes, you are also expected to serve the community. You have to manage your time very well.”

He ends his discourse to the students on an inspiring note.

“You can do it!” he insists. “I know you can. If I can make it, you can, too.”



Nephtali Gomez, MD, one of six LLUMC researchers who compared a traditional and a new model of acute care surgery service. The team found that in addition to saving \$362,000 over the course of the year it was tested, the new model saved time, reduced complications, improved patient outcomes, and required shorter hospital stays.

## LLU researchers discover better acute-care surgery service model ...

*Continued from page 8*

The team is gratified by the results of the test and eager to share the findings with other organizations interested in delivering better patient outcomes at lower cost in a shorter length of time.

Findings of the study were published in the November 2012 edition of the *Journal*

of the American College of Surgeons under the title "Outcomes in the management of appendicitis and cholecystitis in the setting of a new acute care surgery service model: impact on timing and cost."

An abstract of the study is available online at [www.journalacs.org/article/S1072-7515%2812%2900915-5/abstract](http://www.journalacs.org/article/S1072-7515%2812%2900915-5/abstract).

## School of Pharmacy alumnus to lead new pediatric residency program

By Stephen Vodhanel

A brand-new pediatric pharmacy residency program, only the third such program in the state of California, will begin in July 2013. The new residency program was made possible through a \$20,000 grant from Cardinal Health.

Leading the new residency program will be Nancy Chang, PharmD, a 2006 graduate of the Loma Linda University

School of Pharmacy.

The new residency will take place during the second post-graduate year (PGY2) for pharmacy students and will be centered at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

Efforts to establish a PGY2 pediatric residency have been the brainchild of the dean of the School of Pharmacy, Billy Hughes, PhD, as well as Paul Norris, PharmD, and Norm Hamada, PharmD, of LLU Medical Center.

The new pediatric residency program

was promoted during the California Society of Health-System Pharmacists seminar, held in Las Vegas in October 2012, as well as the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists midyear meetings, also in Las Vegas in December 2012.

Adding a PGY2 pediatric residency program was the natural next step for the School of Pharmacy. Drs. Norris and Hamada have been maturing the level of pharmacy services in both the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) and the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), and for several years pharmacy students have been completing clinical rotations in these specialties. Bill Brown, PharmD, has already been providing pediatric oncology pharmacy services at LLU Children's Hospital for more than 10 years.

As a member of the inaugural School of Pharmacy class of 2006, Dr. Chang was chosen as director for the PGY2 pediatric residency program for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, she experienced pediatric pharmacy as a resident pharmacist as well as a clinical pharmacist at LLUMC.

Dr. Chang has served as a clinical pharmacist at LLU Children's Hospital, specializing in the PICU. She also has vast experience working together with a large multi-disciplinary team, drawing upon the skills and knowledge of a variety of health care professionals throughout LLUMC.

For Dr. Chang, the role of director of the pediatric residency will be both challenging and rewarding. "We need to always work toward being part of a multi-disciplinary team that values pharmacists managing the drug treatment for our patients," she says. "And it is so very rewarding to see the kids transfer out of the PICU and then become well enough to be discharged home."

Accepting the position as director of the pediatric residency also comes with great responsibilities. "The most challenging aspect of being the director at this time is taking on the big roles of establishing a new program," she continues. "We must explore new areas where pharmacists can be effectively involved in the multi-disciplinary medical team dealing with patient care."

She predicts, "It will be important to provide opportunities for our resident pharmacists to network professionally across the Medical Center in a manner that emphasizes quality care. We have to do this and much more, while all the time staying focused on the mission of the Medical Center and the lives of the people we serve."

LLU Children's Hospital has pharmacy specialists in the NICU, PICU, cardiac transplant, and pediatric hematology/oncology areas. Pediatric pharmacy residents can expect to work closely with experienced pharmacists and other health care professionals within these pediatric specialty areas, as well as with a variety of specialties both in the inpatient and outpatient care settings.

## Pharmacy students take part in leadership

By Stephen Vodhanel

Four third-year PharmD students have taken on leadership roles in the Loma Linda University student association (LLUSA). A major goal of the organization is to plan events and activities that involve students across the campus, regardless of their professional programs or school affiliations.

"The LLU student association is about the interdisciplinary approach infused into each event," says LLUSA president and PharmD student Bishoy Tannious, "and continues well into the future with friendships and networking opportunities that last a lifetime."

LLUSA secretary and PharmD student Mayrim Torres sees a busy schedule ahead for the student association. "We are continuing to expand events with the goal of getting students excited about meeting fellow students from the many professional career paths across the university." She continues, "The student association is all about getting students together."

Public relations officer and PharmD student Vanessa Ardon appreciates the outreach aspect of LLUSA. "The LLU student

association also reaches into the community with social, spiritual, and career activities."

PharmD student Shari McClendon is LLUSA co-social vice president. "Serving with LLUSA is a great opportunity for students to experience leadership and volunteer

service opportunities," she points out.

The LLU School of Pharmacy currently has four students in LLUSA leadership roles out of a total of eleven positions. During the coming school year, PharmD students will serve in six LLUSA positions.



Four third-year PharmD students are serving in the Loma Linda University student association this school year: (from left) Shari McClendon, co-social vice president; Bishoy Tannious, president; Mayrim Torres, secretary; and Vanessa Ardon, public relations officer.

## Cultural immersion for physician assistants provides deepened understanding

Contributed report

According to the website for the master of physician assistant (MPA) degree program at the Loma Linda

University School of Allied Health Professions, students perform health care services with physician supervision as members of the health care team. As part of their preparation, they study anatomy, physical

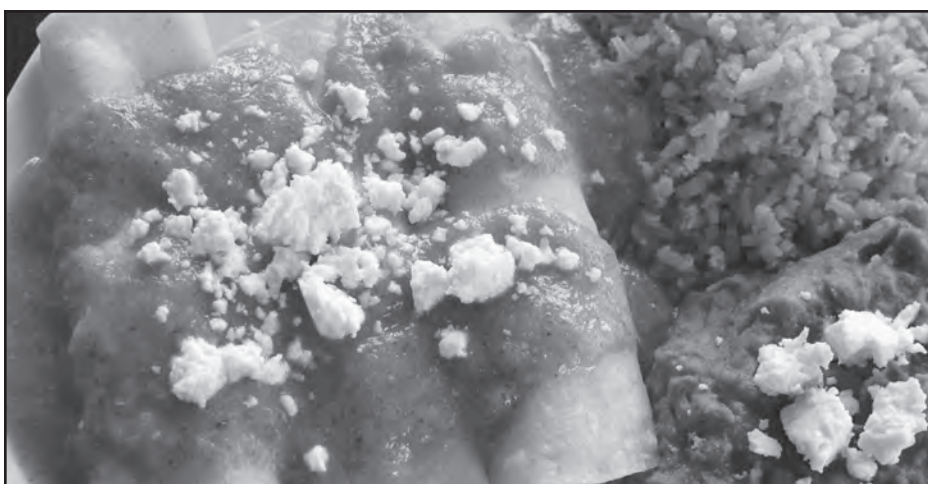
diagnosis, and evidence-based medicine. The course "Cultural Immersion for PAs" is also required.

A closer look at the MPA program philosophy provides an insight into why this course is included in the curriculum.

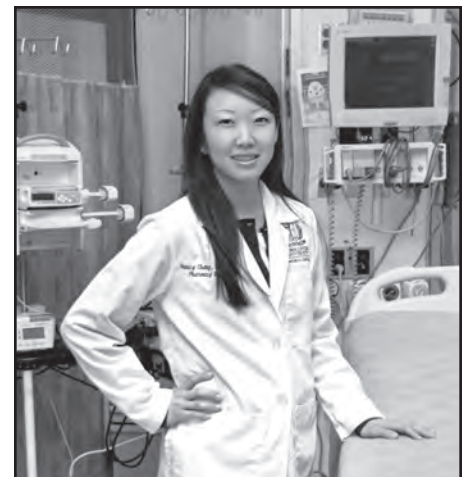
"[At LLU, the] master of physician assistant program was established ... to train physician assistants with an emphasis on primary care. It is our goal to prepare our students to serve others through the practice of medicine with both excellence and compassion. We feel it is important for our students to become culturally proficient, service-minded, and prepared to serve the community around them."

During the cultural immersion class, taken the second or third quarter of the students' first year, each student interacts with two Latino families. They assist in making meals, and they participate in family

*Please turn to page 10*



MPA students help prepare Latino food as part of their course experience.



Nancy Chang, PharmD, a 2006 graduate of the LLU School of Pharmacy, will head up the new pediatric residency program for PharmD students in their second post-graduate year (PGY2).

# Local high school educators learn about programs at LLU

By Larry Kidder

Nearly 20 educators from close to a dozen high schools in neighboring communities attended a daylong health academy and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) meeting on March 14.

Organized by the Loma Linda University Institute for Community Partnerships, the meeting was designed to familiarize the educators with opportunities for their students that are available at LLU, as well as how best to steer their students toward and prepare them for the health care professions.

“Loma Linda University is the only campus in the U.S. to have all of its health science schools on the same campus,” began Ronald Carter, PhD, provost of the university. “We have about 4,600 students from eight schools enrolled in programs ranging from certificates to post-doctoral fellowships, and we graduate approximately 1,200

health care professionals each year.”

Juan Carlos Belliard, PhD, assistant vice president for community partnerships and diversity, and associate professor of global health, explained the day’s activities and their purpose.

Presentations were made by representatives of LLU’s pipeline programs, which are designed to familiarize students with health care practice and research, as well as by five of the schools—Allied Health Professions, Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Public Health.

The high school educators also toured the LLU Medical Simulation Center mid-morning.

Attending the March 14 event were educators from Valley View High School (Moreno Valley), Barstow High School, Apple Valley High School, La Quinta High School, Citrus Valley High School (Redlands), the Academy for Academic Excellence (a charter K-12 school in Apple



Ronald Carter, PhD, provost of LLU, introduces area high school educators to Loma Linda University and its varied health science programs.

Valley), La Sierra High School (Riverside), Ramona High School, Vista del Lago High School, Redlands High School, and the San Bernardino Unified School District.

HOSA was founded in 1976, and has grown to 120,000 members through 47

chartered state associations and approximately 3,200 secondary and post-secondary/collegiate chapters as of 2010. Both the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Secondary School Principals have endorsed HOSA.

## Cultural immersion for physician assistants provides deepened understanding ...

Continued from page 9

celebrations. They attend church with their host families and meet their children and grandparents. They inquire about their work and hobbies and with each visit the students experience and learn about Latino culture.

While spending a minimum of 15 hours with each of their assigned families, the students talk about their religious beliefs and politics.

Shared experiences have included watching Spanish-language television and film, and reading newspapers.

The students also ask their host families about their medical histories.

“Though they seek medical attention here in the United States,” writes one student about his host family, “they told stories about traveling to Mexico for certain procedures and medicines.”

He continue, “There was a mix of modern medicine and homeopathic medicine. It was interesting to learn how they viewed the origins of their medical issues and their subsequent thought processes in addressing them.”

The success of this MPA program goal is expressed in the students’ own words.

Says another student, “There were countless invaluable lessons I could not have learned anywhere else. The families I met taught me to be a patient, understanding, and even more compassionate woman. They taught me to see the world from a different perspective—one that is warmer, more delicious, and even more vibrant than I had seen it before. They helped create a new spark in me, one that wants to learn and grow even more. I am forever grateful for this experience and hope to stay in touch with my families for years to come.”

A third student summarizes her experience this way: “This entire process has exceeded my expectations.

“I learned so much about the Hispanic culture in my short time with these families.”

She adds, “I look forward to using what I have learned to provide a more educated and understanding type of patient care to families from Hispanic cultures.”



*Mesfin Desta*  
Respiratory Care Practitioner 2



*Jerico Aldana*  
Perioperative Technician



*Noela Ndreka*  
Clinical Pharmacist

### Personal Spirit. Shared Values.

At Loma Linda, we know that diversity comes in many different forms – from our personal backgrounds, to our education, career choices, friends and hobbies. And we know that our strength as an organization depends on our talented, unique and diverse employees.

We celebrate our commitment to diversity and equal opportunity in the workplace and recognize that what makes us different is also part of what makes us a strong and cohesive community of caring professionals.

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*Cydney Love*  
RN



*Fernando Fierro*  
RN



*Regis Scaubart*  
RN



*Jessica Castaneda*  
Insurance Verification Representative

This workplace has been recognized by the American Heart Association for meeting criteria for employee wellness.



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## LLU students and faculty serve in Cameroon

By Alex Vercio

The day after Christmas 2012, 11 Loma Linda University students and four faculty members shuffled sleepily through airports in Cincinnati, Paris, and finally Douala, Cameroon, on their way to Buea Adventist Hospital in the southwest region of the country.

Cameroon is a teardrop-shaped country that borders Nigeria to the north and Equatorial Guinea to the south. Split between Britain and France after World War II, it became fully independent in 1961 and still retains a multilingual identity. It's been called "Africa in miniature" because of its varied geographical character. It is populated with many different tribes and languages.

The students on this mission trip came mostly from the LLU School of Behavioral Health, but students from the Schools of

Dentistry, Medicine, and Nursing also participated. There was also a Cameroonian contingent that joined the group. The LLU Global Nursing Council paid for two students from Cosendai Adventist University to join the team. The pair assisted in translation and provided insight into local perspectives.

As always, there were opportunities for learning for both the LLU and Cameroonian students. Working together on projects provided the perfect context for forming personal connections between developing health professionals from both continents.

There were three main events. A four-day health expo was held on the hospital grounds, where local residents were screened for a number of health indicators. Participants were given a "health passport" in which they recorded their blood pressure, body mass index, and other vital scores; they were then counseled on areas that



A group of 11 Loma Linda University students and four faculty members recently traveled to Cameroon to lend a hand at Buea Adventist Hospital. Working together on projects provided the perfect context for forming personal connections between developing health professionals from both continents.

## Mission to Haiti results in good will, improved health

Contributed report

Children and adults in Haiti continue to experience improved health as a result of projects planned and implemented by a group of Loma Linda University physicians and physician assistants, nurses, and students during a fall 2012 mission trip.

The mission was organized by Jordon Personius, a student in the physician assistant program, LLU School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP). Mr. Personius is president of Legacy International Response (LIR), a non-profit medical relief organization he founded in early 2010 after the devastating Haiti earthquake.

One project completed during the trip, the construction of a 7,000-gallon-per-day water filtration system, continues to improve the health of families living in Desdunes, Haiti.

"For the same cost that had been paid to purchase unsafe water," says Mr. Personius, "a self-sustainable business was put into place to provide access to clean water." According to Mr. Personius, the business, operated by local Haitian affiliates of LIR, "will help break the cycle of disease, and benefit the people of Desdunes for decades. Plans for future expansion are in the development stages."

While in Haiti, members of the 21-member team spent the majority of their 10-day mission in Desdunes and nearby Duclos in the Artibonite region. This region was the most heavily affected by the cholera epidemics that occurred after the earthquake that took 250,000 lives.

The team's visit is also helping prevent vision loss through the distribution of more

than 450 pairs of sunglasses. The sunglasses were collected during a drive at SAHP before the team left for Haiti. They were distributed to individuals in the community to help prevent cataracts, the leading cause of preventable blindness.

In addition, each of the physician assistant students gave a presentation on a public health topic. Their talks were translated into Creole by two Haitians who are also medical students. They were presented to more than 1,200 patients who visited a clinic hosted by the team over a six-day period and were videotaped. The videos are now being distributed to local communities.

The LLU team members worked in the clinic with the Haitian medical students, a community health nurse, and a Haitian team of 17 additional translators and security personnel.

The trip was cosponsored by Students for International Mission Service/Global Health Institute and the LLU department of physician assistant sciences.

The eight participating students from the PA class of 2013 represent nearly one third of the total class. They and LIR raised more than \$68,000 for the trip. In addition, the team brought 1,500 pounds of medication and medical supplies to Haiti.

On their last night, the team hosted a celebration and fed more than 550 children. They also distributed toys, stuffed animals, and toothbrushes and toothpaste to the children.

"It was a perfect end to a wonderful trip," says Mr. Personius, "getting to spend time with the children of Desdunes. Smiles and cheers filled the room and served as a reminder to us why we all went."

needed improvement.

As students counseled participants, they found that the health problems Cameroonians face are often different than those facing the population in the United States. For instance, in a city with few public bathrooms, people are hesitant to drink amounts of water that would require them to urinate often. Students and the participants worked together to find solutions to the unique challenges residents of Buea face. After the four days, around 500 Buea residents had undergone a health screening and received counseling.

The day after the expo, an HIV screening was conducted. The testing process is one that can be traumatic since the implications on an infected person's health are significant by themselves, but the added social stigma toward persons who test positive adds to the pressure of knowing one's status. Pre-counseling and post-counseling were provided for all who were tested.

Since many of the LLU students were from the School of Behavioral Health, they were able to practice their skills in counseling patients about the implications of being tested and how best to deal with the results.

Finally, the group visited two orphan-

ages, which provided a contrast in living conditions. The first orphanage, named Hoptec, houses 130 children who eat, sleep, play, and attend school there. The children were well provided for with school uniforms, food, books, and toys. The other orphanage, however, was clearly struggling. Located in a home, Grace of God orphanage provides care for just 24 orphans, but still struggles to provide basic essentials for the children who reside there. When asked what they need, administrators of the orphanage requested rice and beans. The LLU group brought those and additional gifts.

When told about the upcoming trip, students from the fifth grade class at Loma Linda Academy, taught by Mrs. Joanne Cleveland, decided they would like to contribute. The students raised money to make shirts and buy teddy bears for the children of the orphanage. In addition, each student made Christmas cards for the Cameroonian orphans and included their own picture. One of the cards started with the greeting "Dear Bestest Friend."

One insight emerged from the trip: despite differences in health problems, economic status, or geographical location, people are more alike than different.

## Heather Ferguson receives LLUSM Dean's Award



Heather Ferguson, a third-year MD/PhD student at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, receives the 2013 Dean's Award from Roger Hadley, MD, dean, while Penelope Duerksen-Hughes, PhD, associate dean for basic sciences, looks on. According to Dr. Duerksen-Hughes, Ms. Ferguson received the award for outstanding performance on the 2012 written comprehensive exam. "This examination involved selecting a problem, then developing a scientifically valid approach to address this problem and answer the question," Dr. Duerksen-Hughes explains. "Heather's performance demonstrates her development into a promising young scientist with the ability to make a difference." Ms. Ferguson is from Alberta, Canada.

## Innovative bariatric procedure helps patient eat normally again ...

Continued from page 12

chronic gastric leak before seeking help from Dr. Scharf.

The procedure using the Overstitch suturing device took approximately an hour and half and required no incision. Follow-up radiologic studies have shown that her fistula was indeed successfully repaired. Prior to this innovative procedure, patients were more likely to require laparoscopic or open surgery, and a week or more in the hospital to recover.

Ms. Ruvalcaba is already off her intravenous nutrition, and she is doing well on a modified diet.

Dr. Scharf estimates her full recovery will take about four weeks, when she can return to a normal diet.

"I'm so happy Dr. Scharf and his team were able to help me," Ms. Ruvalcaba shares. "It was the whole group—nurses, office staff, just everybody—who gave me a happy ending." She concludes, "My entire family is extremely grateful."

# Activities planned for golden anniversary of earth and biological sciences department

By Heather Reifsnnyder

The department of earth and biological sciences is celebrating its 50th anniversary April 21–27 with events including field trips, a wild animal vespers, and discussions on both creation and environmental stewardship. Schedule below.

The department's beginning dates to 1961 when several biologists from the basic science faculty in the School of Medicine proposed a doctoral program in biology for non-medical professionals.

The goals were threefold: to prepare science teachers who were trained with a biblical world view for Seventh-day Adventist schools and colleges; to develop a better understanding of the relationship between faith and science; and to provide basic science faculty members new avenues of research.

The Board of Trustees approved the new department of biology in December of 1961, and the first students arrived in the fall of 1962—three of them.

Since that beginning, enrollment has grown 16-fold to its present high of 50, and the department now also offers degrees in geology, environmental sciences, and natural sciences. Students can shape their degrees to fit their goals and interests.

The department's name has changed to earth and biological sciences, and its faculty are involved in research including studies on sea turtles, crabs, rattlesnakes, and venoms, and a variety of geology and paleontology topics.

"We're getting to be better known," says department chair Leonard Brand, PhD.

"Students value our programs because this is a unique place. At many other schools offering these degrees, anyone who asked a question about religion would be laughed out, but at LLU our students can talk about anything and ask any questions.

"This is the only place in the world where a Christian student can get a doctorate in biology or geology and study under faculty who accept the Bible," he continues.

"We're a creationist faculty. The students learn our viewpoint as well as secular viewpoints. They need to know what they're choosing and why."

In celebration of five decades of the intellectual openness and growth that have characterized the department of earth and biological sciences, the following events are planned and open to members of the LLU Health campus and other guests.

**Open house  
Sunday, April 21**

The 9:30 a.m. to noon open house will cover the department's past, current programs, and future. It takes place at Griggs Hall. From 11:00 to 12:00, there will be a presentation on the department's history and goals.

**Field trips  
Sunday, April 21**

Two trips will be offered starting at 1:00 p.m. One trip will study the geology of the Loma Linda area and the San Bernardino mountains, and the other will take participants to study animals at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area, located in Riverside County.



Sea turtles are among the endangered animals that are being studied by the Loma Linda University department of earth and biological sciences professors. The Christian's role as a steward of the earth will serve as the primary focus of the Friday and Saturday symposium.

It is essential for those wishing to join a field trip to e-mail their request to [ebs@llu.edu](mailto:ebs@llu.edu).

Entrusted> or call (909) 558-4530.

**Symposium on environmental stewardship  
Friday, April 26, and Saturday, April 27**

The symposium will be based on a new book called *Entrusted: Christians and Environmental Care*. One of the book's editors is Loma Linda University's Stephen Dunbar, PhD, associate professor in the earth and biological sciences department. The symposium takes place Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Centennial Complex's Damazo Amphitheater, and Sabbath afternoon, beginning at 2:00 p.m., at Randall Amphitheater.

For more details on the program and cost information, and to register, visit [www.LomaLindaBiodiversity.org/](http://www.LomaLindaBiodiversity.org/)

**Creation Sabbath school  
Saturday, April 27**

A special Sabbath school class devoted to creation and why it matters will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Damazo Amphitheater of the Centennial Complex.

**Wild animal vespers  
Saturday, April 27**

Evening vespers at the Loma Linda University Church will feature live animals and cover the topic "Wild Minds: Animals That Think." It will be led by William Hayes, PhD, professor in the department of earth and biological sciences, and other colleagues, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

## Innovative bariatric procedure helps patient eat normally again

By Larry Kidder

Nadith Ruvalcaba, age 39, was being fed intravenously and suffered recurring bouts of illness, surgeries, and hospitalizations—all because a previous surgical weight-loss procedure performed at another hospital had gone bad.

For the first time in the Inland Empire, Loma Linda surgeons used the Overstitch Endoscopic Suturing System to repair a gastric fistula—or leak—in Ms. Ruvalcaba's stomach that was causing her distress. The procedure required no incisions and she went home the same day.

Performing the groundbreaking procedure

at Loma Linda University Heart & Surgical Hospital were bariatric surgery director Keith Scharf, DO, and his partner, Marcos Michelotti, MD, assistant professor of surgery at LLU School of Medicine. Loma Linda University Health is among the first academic medical centers in California to successfully use the Overstitch device.

"Patients who undergo this treatment," Dr. Scharf explains, "can not only go home the same day, but they can typically return to normal daily activity as well." He adds, "It's a win-win."

Ms. Ruvalcaba had undergone two previous open surgeries to try to repair her

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During a follow-up appointment, Dr. Scharf updates Nadith Ruvalcaba on her progress since undergoing repair of a chronic fistula using the Overstitch Endoscopic Suturing System—the first such repair in the Inland Empire.



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Editor . . . . . Dustin R. Jones, MA  
[djones@llu.edu](mailto:djones@llu.edu)

Managing editor/layout . . . Larry Kidder, MA  
[lkidder@llu.edu](mailto:lkidder@llu.edu)

CORRESPONDENTS

Herbert Atienza  
[hatienza@llu.edu](mailto:hatienza@llu.edu)

Doug Hackleman, MA  
[dhackleman@llu.edu](mailto:dhackleman@llu.edu)

James Ponder  
[jlponder@llu.edu](mailto:jlponder@llu.edu)

Briana Pastorino  
[bpastorino@llu.edu](mailto:bpastorino@llu.edu)

Heather Reifsnnyder, MA  
[hreifsnnyder@llu.edu](mailto:hreifsnnyder@llu.edu)

Stephen Vodhanel, PhD  
[svodhanel@llu.edu](mailto:svodhanel@llu.edu)

Nancy Yuen, MPW  
[nyuen@llu.edu](mailto:nyuen@llu.edu)

*Have a story that's noteworthy? Send it to <[lluhnews@llu.edu](mailto:lluhnews@llu.edu)>*

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