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Overcoming: Resilience in the Face of Life's Adversity

Loma Linda University Health

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH



OVERCOMING

**RESILIENCE IN THE FACE
OF LIFE'S ADVERSITY**

with special annual report section



**LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY
HEALTH**



/ Opening shot /

COURTNEY RYAN, a member of Loma Linda University Health Team PossAbilities, shoots a swish from the free-throw line during a workout in December. She was to represent the United States on the women's wheelchair basketball team at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Plans are now in place for 2021. See her story on page 30.





OVERCOMING

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE
OF LIFE'S ADVERSITY

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH
PROVIDES HOPE TO THOSE FACING
MAJOR HEALTH CHALLENGES.

FEATURES

6 COVID-19 and our response	10 Advocating for racial equality
20 5 questions with Ihab Dorotta, MD	24 Healing, advocating against acid attacks
28 Superman's student support	30 PossAbilities athlete makes U.S. Paralympic team
34 Overcoming addiction	

DEPARTMENTS

<i>From our President</i> 4 Renewing our commitment	<i>News</i> 12 Clinical and campus news	<i>Alumni</i> 40 Serving in the U.S. and abroad	<i>Annual Report</i> 44 The fiscal year's people and status
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**LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY
HEALTH**

/ From our President /



Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH
PRESIDENT,
LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH

Renewing our commitment

THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES AND EVENTS

The last few months have seen both uncertainty and courage, fear and confidence, as Loma Linda University Health and the world have faced the challenge of not only a pandemic but financial disruptions and social discord. During such societal unrest, we're called upon to not only care for our own but also serve our community, both locally and globally. An organization of this size does not easily ramp up new strategies or initiatives unless there are careful planning and processes already in place.

So it is no surprise that Loma Linda University Health reached deep into its own soul and resources to meet each of these crises with carefully nuanced responses. Managing the COVID-19 pandemic utilized our health professionals in ways for which they were well prepared for. With special techniques, creative clinical processes, and adequate resources, we have managed the pandemic well so far, but with an uncertain future still before us.

The financial pressure on hospitals and universities has also been immense. Unfortunately, we had to furlough some staff, limit expenditures, and readjust budgets to meet this challenge. While it is still too early to claim victory, the emerging trends are positive. Our patients are back, hospital beds are full, and students are once again walking the campus and spending time in our wards and clinics. We have all adjusted to the special protective measures that can limit the spread of this virus.

Responding to the social dysfunction in this country has been especially challenging. We have always sought to be a special haven for people of all backgrounds, a place where each is viewed as a child of God with their own unique characteristics and opportunities. The last few months have given us a chance to review our relationships, renew our commitments, and take stock of how well we are doing. We have invited personal stories to be shared of minor slights and outright racism, of unconscious bias and hurtful inferences playing out on our own campus. We have accepted the fact that we are not there yet, with both personal and institutional inventories being undertaken. Our understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion must reach new levels, and to do this we recommit ourselves in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Our motto, "To Make Man Whole," and our recently integrated core values of Compassion, Excellence, Humility, Integrity, Justice, Teamwork and Wholeness will continue to exemplify what we stand for and what we strive to inculcate in our faculty, staff and students. Lofty goals to be sure, but certainly worthy of our aspirations. Join me in these commitments that will serve as a strong foundation as we confront this time of global chaos and confusion. ■

THE PIVOT

COVID-19 AFFECTED NEARLY THE WHOLE WORLD, TAKING LIVES, DENTING ECONOMIES, AND PLACING NUMEROUS COMMUNITIES ON LOCKDOWN. LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH RESPONDED TO SERVE ITS STUDENTS AND PATIENTS IN THE INLAND EMPIRE.

BY ANSEL OLIVER



Medical staff pray on the Medical Center's helipad in April.



Sara Martinez, a nurse in the Loma Linda University Medical Center Emergency Department, remembers a physician bursting into the room during a trauma and ordering everyone to get out.

A new strain of infectious disease was beginning to make headlines from China, and hospital administration had just implemented new screening protocols. She and other ED staff left the room, scrambling to find enough equipment beyond the typical masks many wore. A core number of staff stayed in the room, working to save a man from dying. No one knew if he had been exposed to the new virus: SARS-CoV2, which causes COVID-19.

Within an hour, more supplies had been sent from Central Supply. "I remember that was a really big deal," Martinez recalls of the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak. "From then on, we as a team had what we needed, and I've felt very taken care of during this time."

It's been an adjustment for Martinez and her team, with harder days and hotter days over the summer in the ED. "I've had to remind myself that we're all going through this together — co-workers, management, leadership ... we're all figuring it out."

2020 has been the year of The Pivot.

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of the world, Loma Linda University Health

administrators quickly braced for major change across campus. Workflows were adjusted in its hospitals on how to screen and care for patients suspected to have the virus. Plans for online learning and telemedicine were dramatically accelerated — within weeks for some systems, within days for others. Frontline healthcare providers geared up with new personal protective equipment, university professors started teaching their classes online, finance executives negotiated reimbursements with insurance companies for new methods of telemedicine and IT executives scrambled to roll out new technology for providers faster than they ever thought possible.

Leaders now look back at what was a scramble to adjust and see collaboration as the key to the organization's success through the pandemic's acceleration back in February and March.

But challenges took a toll. The first wave of patients with COVID-19 took longer to manifest than expected, and government mandates halting elective procedures placed a significant strain on finances, which led to cutbacks of budget and staff in nearly every department. Some employees worked far more hours per month than usual, while others were sent home with no work available. And numerous community members feared to leave their homes and suffered by not seeking care they otherwise would have received. In a few patient rooms, those suffering with COVID-19 often had to do so alone because of visitor restrictions. It was in those instances that a nurse or physician, wearing full protective attire, was the only support person on hand for a critically-ill patient.

The organization has come through the ongoing pandemic and response, even as it and healthcare institutions as a whole continue to adapt with the ongoing struggle of COVID-19. Moving forward, several things to come out of The Pivot are here to stay. New options of telemedicine are offering patients more choices for how they receive care. Students have increased options for how and where they learn. And a renewed appreciation for teamwork that became apparent throughout campus has inspired leaders to know that their teams are ready for whatever challenges and opportunities may lay ahead.

"It was wonderful to see how the team came together to make adjustments during this challenging time," says President Richard Hart, MD, DrPH. "Various infectious diseases have



Front-line medical staff have worn extensive personal protective equipment since the pandemic began.

Adrian Cotton, MD, chief of medical operations, speaks at an on-campus community forum about COVID-19 in February.

PHOTO BY ANSEL OLIVER



A tent was placed outside the Emergency Department at Loma Linda University Medical Center – Murrieta in April.



always been around, yet COVID-19 has proven to be challenging. I have confidence that it will be brought under control and that healthcare experts will be able to continue minimizing its impact.”

In January, teams at Loma Linda University Health involving infection control and epidemiology began meeting weekly to be aware of what was happening in China and Italy and how, or even if, Southern California might be affected. Loma Linda University Health leaders coordinated with health officials from two counties to schedule a COVID-19 community dialogue to be held on campus one evening in February. Some wondered if the upcoming event was even necessary — the disease had only spread regionally, and some forum organizers wondered if media attention would by then have moved on to other matters. Hart even touched on this issue when he stood up to introduce the evening’s dialogue to the audience in the auditorium and online. But by then, the disease had

indeed gone to nearly every part of the globe.

Meetings of top leaders to review COVID-19 procedures and updates transitioned to daily, and a central command center was set up in a room in Children’s Hospital before moving to an administration conference room. That command center soon went virtual as many support teams began to work from home in March. More than 250 people were on that daily Zoom meeting for months. Leaders developed a system-wide plan consisting of eight phases or numerous scenarios on how to hold and treat from a few patients to hundreds with a disease of which little was known.

“Once you have a plan, the fear factor drops dramatically,” says Adrian Cotton, MD, chief of medical operations. “One of the things I noticed early on is that people here who needed to be involved got involved and all pitched in to develop that plan. It’s a 100% team effort here. It’s been super cool to see.”

In the Medical Center, unit 6100 became the acute care unit for COVID-19 patients, with overflow into 6200, and unit 4700 became the COVID-19 ICU with overflow into 7200. Supply chain leaders knew after the busy 2018 flu season to have extra stock of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies on hand.

“When we started to see cases of COVID-19 increase, we weren’t scrambling for supplies like a lot of other healthcare facilities were doing,” says Joshua Lund, assistant vice president of supply chain management.

Lund credits his team’s resolve to overcome this incredible stress during those long days to the relationships the organization has had with its suppliers, and generous donations from around the world. Even as the pandemic unfolded, Loma Linda University Health never ran out of personal protective equipment.

“I think there were a lot of unknowns regarding the virus, and I think we really came together as an



organization to take on the challenges,” Lund says.

Loma Linda University Health followed the state’s requirement of canceling all elective procedures starting March 17, yet the steady stream of patients testing positive for COVID-19 didn’t hit until July.

Back in early March, it became clear to Faculty Medical Group physician leaders that seeing 3,000 patients a day in-person was no longer feasible. What had begun months earlier as a gradual transition switching to telemedicine turned into nearly half of the 1,000 providers switching within two weeks. That meant providing technology and training for staff at 35 clinics, as well as rolling out technology in pop-up tents for COVID-19 testing of drive-through patients. At one point, one testing site was swabbing a patient every 50 seconds from their car.

“It was incredible cooperation of our physician teams, nursing teams and billing office teams to be able to pull off this switch,” says Anthony Hilliard, MD, chief operations officer of the

Faculty Medical Group. “I see this increasing focus on healthcare being delivered through technology as the new paradigm for the future.”

Also in early March, university administrators made the decision to shift spring quarter classes to an online format and implement safety measures in the cafeteria and dormitories.

One major challenge included the Licensing Committee for Medical Education mandate that all medical students rotating in a hospital setting be pulled from those rotations for several months, so university officials made other arrangements for students to complete their requirements before graduation.

When the summer started, things were back on track in most cases, albeit with some modifications. The schools of Medicine and Nursing had their students back in rotations. In the School of Dentistry clinic, every other treatment station had been deactivated, and practitioners were wearing full PPE, including face shields.

While some students are still concerned about coming back on campus, most are eager to return, says Hart, the university president.

“We had a few students who were hesitant to return, so we have done what we can to make sure they can get anything they need online.”

In Hart’s view, it’s important for healthcare students to learn how to live and work safely amid infections. “I’ve been managing infectious diseases all my life, so I have full confidence we’ll eventually get COVID-19 under control,” he says.

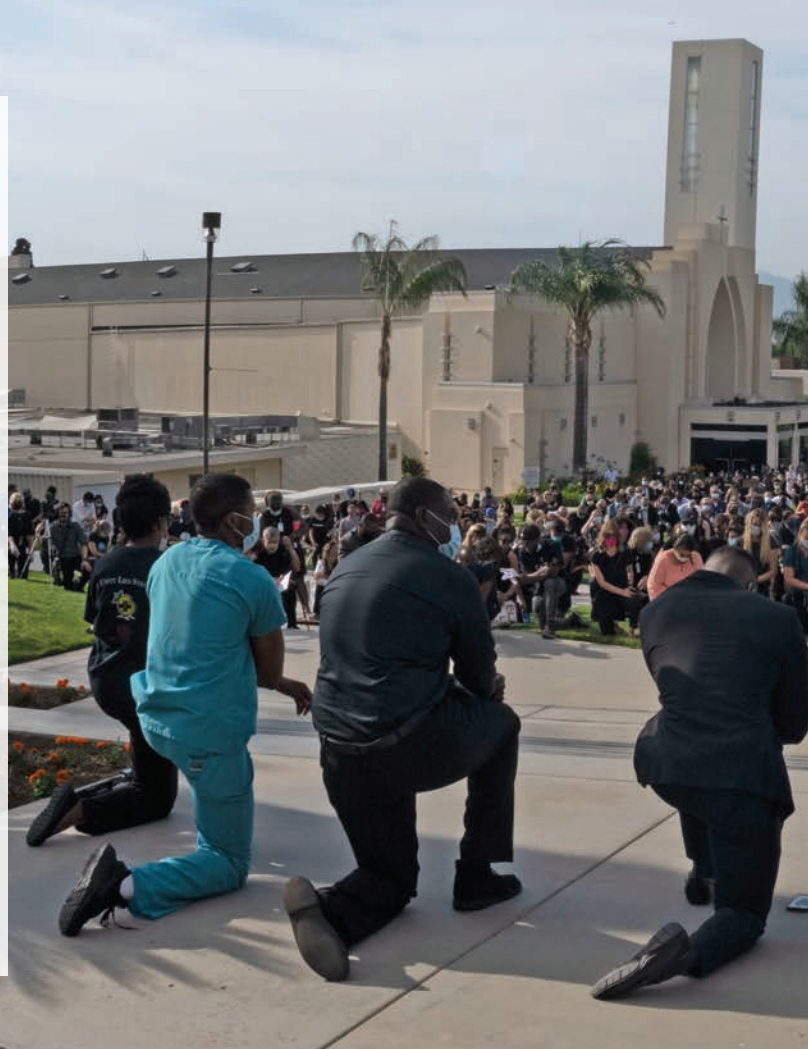
Future options for the university after the pandemic could include remote campuses, allowing Loma Linda University students to earn a degree from an accredited center in another state. Also, telemedicine will continue to develop new and innovative ways of offering care to patients, both here locally and throughout California.

“We’ll continue to pivot,” Hart says. ■

STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS TOOK A KNEE

UNIVERSITY'S JUNE 2 SOLIDARITY VIGIL WAS A CONTEMPLATIVE EVENT ON RACE RELATIONS

BY LARRY BECKER



Months into the forced isolation of the Coronavirus pandemic, the tragic death of George Floyd and others from the African American community brought together numerous Loma Linda University students to reflect on their personal reactions to these societal issues. Recognizing the pain being felt by many of their students, School of Medicine faculty and administration approached students, asking for ways they could be supportive.

From that demonstration of concern, Shevel DaCosta Davis (SM '22) and Simone De Shields (SM '22), after conversations with several student colleagues, began to formulate a response. Those early conversations eventually grew to what became the Black-Out Solidarity Vigil, a time for students, faculty and administrators from across the organization to come together to reflect and acknowledge the personal and community-wide ramifications of George Floyd's death.

With administrative support for the event affirmed by Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, president of Loma Linda University Health, careful plans coalesced into a programmed experience of prayer, contemplation and

response to racial inequities in American society. Event planners eventually included representatives from the Black Health Professional Student Association, which represents students from all eight Loma Linda University schools, the Student National Medical Association, the Institute for Community and Academic Partners, and University Spiritual Care. Dilys Brooks, MA, MDiv, university chaplain, served as a mentor to the students and liaison with the university during the run-up to the vigil.

Hundreds from the Loma Linda University Health community gathered on the lawn in front of the School of Medicine building late in the afternoon of June 2. Invitations and event promotion were limited to students, faculty and staff. Many wore all black clothing to the event as a sign of unity, while universal use of facemasks acknowledged the reality of the pandemic. Some carried homemade signs reflecting their frustrations and their support of Black lives.

The event's reverential contemplation of issues of race relations stood as a stark contrast to the thousands of more publicized

street protests taking place across the country, including one just blocks away from the campus in San Bernardino.

Adrienne Greene, (SM '23), Kristoff Foster (SM '21), Shaunrick Stoll (SM '23), and Chibuikem Erundu (SP '22) joined Simone and Shevel as key event coordinators. Statements revealing the difficulties of coping with racism and the enormous pain of losing community members to police brutality were vividly shared. They also challenged Loma Linda University Health to consider how it deals with racial inequities. The event included 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence, the period of time that George Floyd was pinned down by police. And that silence had a powerful impact for those in attendance.

The silence stood out as a key moment in the event for Chaplain Brooks, who attended the event with her husband and children.

"As we knelt, I had a clear line of vision for my 14-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter," Brooks recalled. "Wracked with grief, fear, and deep sadness, I sobbed as I thought of the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. I mourned for these strangers knowing that



PHOTO BY ART KROETZ

it could happen to either of my children or husband.”

The vigil and society’s broader Black Lives Matter movement added focus to discussions already underway within the organization. Much of senior leadership attended the event, and in the time since the vigil, leaders are working to develop the next steps for the organization in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

According to Hart, the vigil accelerated the discussion of those issues.

“Loma Linda University Health must be a safe haven for all people, where diversities are valued and emotional reactions to differences avoided,” Hart said. “While retaining our uniqueness as a Christian community, we must continue to increase our understanding of the variations of the human experience, whether ethnic, cultural, physical, faith-based or other.”

Toward that end, Hart had established a Diversity Council five years ago to examine all forms of diversity, including issues of bias training, policies and institutional processes. Utilizing a story-telling methodology, the

council’s efforts took on increased urgency in the vigil’s aftermath.

“It’s important we not lose the momentum from this event,” said Trevor Wright, MHA, chief operating officer for Loma Linda University Medical Center and a member of the Diversity Council. “We need to determine what meaningful actions can be taken to move the needle in the understanding of these issues within Loma Linda University Health.”

Part of that effort will include a working group established to examine Loma Linda University Health’s culture of diversity and propose approaches that will foster a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice, and introducing grace, education, and accountability to the diversity discussion. Lizette Norton, MHA, vice president for human resource management, is leading the working group, which will develop a strategic plan with specific goals established for the initial 12 months, one to three years, and four to seven years.

Wright believes part of the progress on diversity issues comes as the organization,

from top to bottom, increasingly reflects the diversity of the surrounding community.

“I have always found understanding differences in all facets makes an organization more richly nuanced and stronger than when it is homogenous,” Wright said. “The work group’s program is a good one. We are at a moment where we have an opportunity to make understanding and appreciating differences something the entire organization continues to develop.” ■



PHOTO BY JONATHAN DAVIDSON

University chaplain Dilys Brooks, MA, MDiv, leads in prayer during the solidarity vigil in June.

MEDICAL CENTER, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL EARN PRESTIGIOUS MAGNET RECOGNITION



PHOTO BY SHEANN BRANDON

Loma Linda University Medical Center and Loma Linda University Children's Hospital have earned Magnet recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

Magnet is a voluntary credentialing program for hospitals to recognize excellence in nursing and is the highest honor a healthcare organization can receive for professional nursing practice. This is the first time either of the two Loma Linda hospitals received the prestigious distinction. Only 9% of the more than 6,000 healthcare organizations in the United States have been evaluated as worthy of this designation.

Helen Staples-Evans, DNP, RN, NE-BC, senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Loma Linda University Medical Center, thanked the ANCC for their commitment to excellence and for the recognition, but attributes the honor to the nursing staff.

"I hope each of our nurses will reflect on the incredible work they do each day," Staples-Evans said. "We have long prided ourselves on the level of care here, but achieving Magnet status publicly recognizes

the excellent patient care that is delivered by some of the best nurses in the world."

Sherry Nolfie, RN, MSN, chief nursing officer at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, said this award speaks to the level of care our Children's Hospital offers.

"The passion our nurses show for patients and for each other truly touches my heart," Nolfie said. "We feel deeply grateful for each person who contributed to this moment. We know the tremendous teamwork this journey required, and we look forward to working alongside this team as we continue this journey — embracing change, improving patient outcomes and living out our mission on a daily basis."

After surveying the Medical Center April 6–8, and the Children's Hospital May 12–14, the ANCC Commission on Magnet Recognition voted unanimously on both hospitals' designation. While most hospitals seeking Magnet status spend five to seven years doing so, the Medical Center and Children's Hospital completed their applications in less than three years.

Kerry Heinrich, JD, CEO of Loma Linda University Health hospitals, said this designation honors the entire nursing

team that comes to work every day focused on doing their very best for each of their patients.

"I have personally seen the efforts our nurses demonstrate every day to meet the healthcare needs of the people of this community," Heinrich said. "Our nurses collaborate and innovate in ways that have resulted in numerous improvements in how we deliver care and improve patient satisfaction. It's those efforts and so many more that proved to the Magnet evaluation team that our nurses' professionalism and superior patient outcomes were deserving of this designation."

Scott Perryman, MBA, senior vice president and administrator of Children's Hospital, said the work could not have been done without the team.

"Because our nurses are in sync not only with one another, but with the other providers they work with daily," Perryman said, "they're able to provide a degree of care that displays excellence in medicine that they themselves would want for their own families." ■



PHOTO BY ANSEL OLIVER

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY CANCER CENTER ANNOUNCES THREE NEW RESEARCH DIRECTORS

Loma Linda University Cancer Center has appointed three cancer researchers to lead the center's commitment to premium cancer care through development of new methods of discovery and treatment.

Frankis Almaguel, MD, PhD, will serve as director of the Molecular Imaging and Therapeutics Research Program; Kim Payne, PhD, will serve as director of the Pediatric Leukemia Research Program; and Pramil Singh, DrPH, will serve as director of the Tobacco Cessation Research Program.

Cancer Center director Mark E. Reeves, PhD, MD, said the new appointments are instrumental in the organization's drive to improve treatment and diagnosis of patients, create resources for tobacco cessation and identify a cure for pediatric leukemia. Reeves believes the three new leaders will successfully address quests for cures and advance diagnostics and treatment.

MORE ABOUT THE THREE NEW DIRECTORS

Almaguel's goal for the Molecular Imaging and Therapeutics Research Program is increasing the use of lifesaving precision medicine for identifying cancer cells and treatment. Molecular imaging includes the use of cancer-specific biomarkers to indicate the severity or presence of the disease. Once the cancer is identified, the same biomarkers designed to identify the cancer cells are modified to destroy the tumors without killing healthy cells.

Through the Pediatric Leukemia Research Program, Payne is working to find a cure for pediatric leukemia — in particular, a cure for one very aggressive type of B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (B-ALL). This type of B-ALL is one of the deadliest cancers in children, and it disproportionately targets Hispanic children with Native American

ancestry — a significant patient group at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

Singh's focus at the transdisciplinary Tobacco Cessation Research program is to identify innovative cessation methods locally and globally for a primary disease burden in the U.S.: tobacco. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of tobacco control research has grown. Program faculty have responded by publishing NIH-funded research linking smoked tobacco to infectious disease in rural Asia. The program has received grant funding from several NIH institutes and is working with the Pfizer Foundation to conduct a smoking cessation trial in Mongolia. ■

CANNED, COOKED TOMATOES CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF PROSTATE CANCER



ISTOCKPHOTO

Cooked tomatoes may reduce the risk of prostate cancer, according to a recent study conducted by researchers at Loma Linda University Health.

“Tomato Consumption and Intake of Lycopene as Predictors of the Incidence of Prostate Cancer: The Adventist Health Study-2,” published in February 2020 by Cancer Causes and Control found, that men consuming canned and cooked tomatoes five to six times per week had a 28% decreased risk of prostate cancer compared with men who never consumed this food.

Gary Fraser, MBChB, PhD, said the effect was still significant even after adjusting for a number of potential confounders, including ethnicity, education, obesity, exercise levels, alcohol consumption and others.

“Interestingly, the decreased risk was only seen in those men who ate canned and cooked tomatoes,” Fraser said.

To examine how tomato consumption might impact the development of prostate

cancer, the researchers looked for significant relationships between diet and prostate cancer in nearly 28,000 Adventist men in the U.S.

While all tomatoes and tomato-based products contain lycopene, studies have shown that lycopene is absorbed at different rates depending on the product consumed. Lycopene bioavailability is higher when tomatoes have been heated or cooked, and especially if cooked with oil. Processing tomatoes in this way contributes to the separation of the lycopene from the carrier proteins.

Researchers will continue to look at various tomato products and their potential to reduce prostate cancer risk. Fraser added, “Men concerned about developing prostate cancer could consider adding cooked and canned tomatoes to their diet on a regular basis.”

The Adventist Health Study is funded in part through the generosity of the Ardmore Institute of Health. ■

UNHEALTHY FOODS LEAD TO PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS



ISTOCKPHOTO

Poor mental health is linked with poor diet quality — regardless of personal characteristics such as gender, education, age, marital status and income level.

The study led by Jim E. Banta, PhD, MPH, associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health, revealed that California adults who consumed more unhealthy food were also more likely to report symptoms of either moderate or severe psychological distress than their peers who consume a healthier diet. The International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition reported the findings.

“This and other studies like it could have big implications for treatments in behavioral medicine,” Banta said. “Perhaps the time has come for us to take a closer look at the role of diet in mental health, because it could be that healthy diet choices contribute to mental health. ■



PHOTO BY JANELLE RINGER

EXPANDED SPACE OPENED FOR UNIQUE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

The MEND program at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center has relocated to a larger facility in Redlands in response to the region's surging demand for treatment programs for patients and families dealing with chronic health issues. MEND supports patients and their families in maintaining or regaining emotional health and balance during significant medical illness or treatment. Enrollment in the program has tripled in the past 18 months.

Ken Ramirez, chairman for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, has

strongly supported the MEND program since 2011, allowing many families to benefit from the program through scholarship support.

"Ken's support has not only allowed the program to grow more quickly but has opened the doors to children and families who would not have otherwise had access to treatment," said Edward Field, MBA, vice president and administrator of the Behavioral Medicine Center.

The program was developed in 2010 to provide support and mental health services

to individuals with chronic illnesses. Chronic illness is often associated with many mental health, individual, familial and social stressors that can limit the medical treatment's success. The MEND program teaches families how to work together to provide a healing environment for the family and the individual patient. The program also teaches both children and adults how to build resiliency in the face of chronic illness. ■

HOW PEDIATRICIANS ARE IMPROVING LITERACY AMONG YOUNGEST PATIENTS



ISTOCKPHOTO

Loma Linda University Health pediatricians are working with the First 5 San Bernardino initiative to help improve literacy rates of children in the community.

In 11 pediatric clinics throughout Loma Linda University Health, from Beaumont – Banning to SAC Health System in San Bernardino, children ages six months to 5 years receive an age-appropriate book during their well-child visit. Loma Linda University Health pediatricians have distributed 25,000 bilingual books through the Reach Out and Read program since 2017. Book topics include dental hygiene, nutrition, physical activity and relationship-building.

Loma Linda University Children’s Health pediatrician and School of Medicine professor, Marti Baum, MD, says reading to children beginning at birth and continuing at least through kindergarten is hugely beneficial.

“Behavioral evidence has shown that children who are read to, especially before school entry, experience stronger parent-child relationships, learn valuable language skills and increase their vocabulary and literacy skills,” Baum says. “For some of our patients, these books are the only ones they have in their language and might be the only books they have. The little ones and their families treasure them.” ■

NEWSWEEK NAMES LLUMC – MURRIETA AS A BEST MATERNITY CARE HOSPITAL

Loma Linda University Medical Center – Murrieta was named to Newsweek’s 2020 list of Best Maternity Care Hospitals. The distinction recognizes facilities that excel in providing care to mothers, newborns and their families, as verified by the 2019 Leapfrog Hospital Survey. Best Maternity Care Hospitals is part of Newsweek’s Best Health Care series.

Charles Yang, MD, chair of the Department of Obstetrics at Murrieta, said the team is honored to be acknowledged as among the best maternity care hospitals in the country.

“This recognition is an attribution of the talented and dedicated staff who ensure their patients are receiving the best possible care and outcomes every day,” Yang said.

LLUMC – Murrieta was one of fewer than 250 adult hospitals that provide maternity services to receive the prestigious accolade. LLUMC – Murrieta also joins an elite group of hospitals recognized for quality, including Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital, which was named a top Children’s Hospital three years in a row by The Leapfrog Group.

LLU Children’s Hospital also met Newsweek’s obstetric requirements, however only adult hospitals were reported for the recognition.

Hospitals named as a Best Maternity Care Hospital have fully met The Leapfrog Group’s standards for maternity care on evidence-based, nationally standardized metrics. This includes lower rates of early elective delivery, NTSV C-section, and episiotomy, as well as compliance with process measures, including newborn bilirubin screening prior to discharge and blood clot prevention techniques for mothers delivering via C-section. ■



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH HONORED FOR HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE, PATIENT-CENTERED CARE



ISTOCKPHOTO

Loma Linda University Health Care was one of just 28 physician organizations statewide to receive the 2019 Excellence in Healthcare Award from the Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA) for top performance on clinical quality, patient experience and cost measures.

A key component of IHA's statewide Align. Measure. Perform. (AMP) program, the Excellence in Healthcare Award recognizes physician organizations that perform in the top 50% in all three major AMP areas: clinical quality, patient experience and total cost of care.

Of the nearly 200 physician organizations statewide participating in the Align. Measure. Perform. program, fewer than 1 in 6 attained Excellence in Healthcare Award performance standards for 2019.

"We are pleased to receive this external recognition of our institution's accomplishments and extend our congratulations and appreciation to the entire Loma Linda University Health Care and quality management teams," said Richard Peverini, MD, CEO of Loma Linda University Health Care. ■



PHOTO BY JANELLE RINGER

PATIENT SAFETY EXPERT IN INLAND EMPIRE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS THE BEST IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Ihab Dorotta, MD, Loma Linda University Medical Center's chief of quality and patient safety, was named one of Becker's Hospital Review's 2020 list of "50 Patient Safety Experts to Know." Dorotta is the only patient safety expert in Southern California to receive the honor this year.

Dorotta oversees approximately 50 staff members who lead and participate in the development and implementation of system-wide patient safety measurement strategies. Those strategies include the development of real-time analytic capabilities that measure current practices and identify opportunities for improvement.

Under Dorotta's leadership, the hospital's Leapfrog recognition improved to Grade A for both the Adult Hospital and East Campus Hospital two years in a row. His leadership also led the way for improving the hospital's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services quality rating score to a three-star hospital. The improvement was primarily driven by a reduction in hospital-acquired infections and other inpatient complications. He was also able with his team to decrease readmissions, increase patient satisfaction and perform significantly better on quality pay-for-performance programs for the institution.

"It's an honor to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our team of physicians, nurses and experts to help realize these tremendous results to meet our top priority: saving the lives of our patients through a safe hospital environment," Dorotta says.

Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, president of Loma Linda University Health, says he has high regard for what Dorotta has accomplished for the organization.

"Ihab Dorotta has a true vision for what can be accomplished by our team to keep our patients safe from infection," Hart said. "His leadership focuses our entire system on constantly increasing our standards for excellent patient care." ■



ISTOCKPHOTO

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER AND EAST CAMPUS RECEIVE AN 'A' FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Loma Linda University Medical Center and East Campus were recognized nationally for achievements in patient safety and quality, receiving an 'A' for fall 2019 from The Leapfrog Group, an independent watchdog organization. The designations are widely considered as one of the most competitive honors American hospitals can receive.

This achievement follows the hospitals' spring 2019 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade A award. Kerry Heinrich, JD, CEO of Loma Linda University Medical Center, attributes these consecutive recognitions to the consistent dedication practiced by medical professionals at the hospitals to create a safe and healing environment for their patients every day.

"Leapfrog's awards to our Medical Center and East Campus recognize our entire organization's effort to provide our patients the safest possible care," Heinrich said. "Our hospitals work together to share information and best practices, and these A ratings affirm these efforts. The entire Inland Empire community benefits from Loma Linda University Health's culture of safety that Leapfrog has identified."

This is Loma Linda University Medical Center – East Campus' third consecutive A grade, earning the recognition in fall 2018 and spring and fall 2019. ■

LOMA LINDA PHYSICIAN SHARES VAPING DANGERS WITH LOCAL STUDENTS



PHOTO BY JANELLE RINGER

Loma Linda University Health physician Laren Tan, MD, has accepted a number of opportunities to speak with junior high and high school students about the dangers of vaping. The issue has stepped into the national spotlight as 54 deaths in 2019 were confirmed in connection with the use of electronic cigarettes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Tan is concerned with the health risks of vaping. The founder and director of Loma Linda University Health Comprehensive Program for Obstructive Airway Diseases treats the most severe pulmonary cases — everything from non-reversible asthma to dangerous high-blood pressure of the lungs to emphysema. Vaping, he says, has served as a gateway for teens to smoke rather than a tool for adults to quit.

“We don’t have all the data on the long-term effects of vaping on the body, but we do know that the short-term effects can be detrimental to lungs, especially in teens as their lungs are still developing,” Tan told an audience at La Sierra Academy. “If a teen already has underlying respiratory conditions, such as asthma, they could be at a greater risk of permanent damage or even death.” ■

9-YEAR-OLD RAISES MONEY FOR LOMA LINDA EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TEAM THROUGH BOOK OF POEM SALES



PHOTO BY HEATHER JACKSON

Matthew Rushing, 9, from Moreno Valley, delivered dozens of boxes of snacks to Loma Linda University Medical Center Emergency Department staff in May, aiming to lift their spirits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rushing raised more than \$400 by selling his book of poetry called “Poems for Hard Times.” He said he wanted to donate to Emergency Department workers at Loma Linda University Medical Center because his pediatrician works at Loma Linda University Health.

“It makes me sad to know people are dying because of COVID-19, and I wanted to find a way to thank all of the heroes working to save lives,” Rushing said. “I brought them snacks in case they are working so hard they are too busy to take a lunch break.”

His gift greatly encouraged the staff and brought a newfound sense of hope to the team, according to Loma Linda University Medical Center Emergency Department nurse Lesley O’Neill.

“At only 9 years old, Matthew demonstrated compassion and kindness in such a creative and thoughtful way,” O’Neill said. “We cannot thank him enough for his kind contribution to our team. We should all strive to be just like him during these challenging times.”

Emergency Department clinical nurse specialist Megan Duke agreed that seeing all the boxes he dropped off energized her to keep moving forward.

“Matthew is the real hero,” Duke said. “During these crazy times, the fact that there is a child out there who is so thoughtful to not only think of others but who actually works to help those he doesn’t know gives me so much hope.”

In addition to his donations at Loma Linda University Medical Center, Rushing donated to two fire departments and one police station in Moreno Valley. ■



5 QUESTIONS WITH IHAB DOROTTA

AS THE WORLD FACES A VIRAL PANDEMIC, THE CHIEF OF QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY USES HIS TRAINING TO KEEP PATIENTS SAFE

BY JANELLE RINGER

Unlike most high school freshman, Ihab Dorotta, MD, spent the summer after his ninth-grade year taking equivalency testing and preparing to become a medical doctor. By age 15, he was beginning medical school in Alexandria, Egypt. He graduated at 22 and two years later began a residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, where he served as the chief resident for the anesthesia department. After completing a fellowship, Dorotta came to Loma Linda University Health to work in critical care. In 2017, he accepted the position of chief of quality and patient safety.

"I've had quite the journey to where I am today," Dorotta says. "I learned a lot along the way, and I'm thankful to be able to use those many lessons to help our community — especially in a time like this."

Since taking the role in 2017, Dorotta has helped the institution navigate one of the worst flu seasons of the past decade and applied that same knowledge to address COVID-19.

1 What falls under the role of a quality and patient safety officer?

Quality and patient safety are two distinct sciences. Patient safety refers to making sure patients do not acquire complications because of errors. Quality refers to maintaining positive clinical outcomes, patient experience, productivity, efficiency and process reliability.

For safety issues, we meet together in a multidisciplinary team to discuss any problems and do a root cause analysis to discover the contributing factors and create action plans necessary to mitigate that risk in the future.

On the other hand, quality is maintained by setting up systems and processes from the bottom up that will ensure we not only maintain patient safety but that the choices we make — whether diagnostic or therapeutic — are in the patient's best interest and lead to good outcomes.

2 How do you respond to the new challenges in patient safety?

First, someone in quality and patient safety needs to be agile and flexible with the ever-changing information from regulatory bodies — the county, the state and the federal government.

There's an urgency in reviewing the ever-changing information and to then articulate why we are doing what we're doing. The caution to not try new treatments before seeing scientific evidence has shown to be overall beneficial to our patients. We've been intentional about balancing evidence-based medicine and being early adopters of therapies that could provide promise and extra protection for our workforce. Loma Linda University Health has a long history of innovation, and even amid the new challenges, we've been able to research new therapies and medications to benefit our patients.

3 How could action be better than inaction in some cases?

In some circumstances, you want to be an early adopter. Our organization was the earliest adopter of universal masking — or giving everybody on-site a surgical mask. We were also quick to provide N95 masks to all providers caring for COVID-19-positive patients.

In other situations, you want to defer action — but that doesn't mean doing nothing. Our institution has worked to provide a more proven therapies, not just to the local community but to the nation. Our research teams have been hard at work to not only import the latest evidence-based medicine, but to export it as well.

We've worked hard to make sure treatments are tested and proven beneficial before we potentially begin using them. Physicians know it's vital to research new therapies and drugs, but in this crisis environment, we want to be early adopters of promising therapies that could save lives if they don't put the patient at any additional risk.

And as crucial as quick action is, in some cases, waiting can also benefit the patient. The decision not to use a treatment that may be dangerous but may help a patient keeps me up at night. It's hard to tell physicians who deeply care to hold back from offering every aggressive therapy, but in some cases, we see months later that inaction was the best action.

4 How have you seen the early action of the organization pay off?

We used the collective wisdom of our clinical leadership team to decide on the best course of action. Closing the hospitals to visitors, making sure we got the resources we would need, and reaching out to new sources to ensure we had enough PPE, were all early steps we took to ensure we were protected. Non-clinical departments like Philanthropy worked to get donations of face masks and food. With all of us getting together, there was a strong spirit of innovation.

The proactive planning to separate COVID-19 patients was also something that significantly limited workforce exposure. We specified some units where we could geographically cohort all our COVID-19 positive patients. We had providers from our ICU, acute care, and Emergency Department who stepped up to provide care for those patients. Since those patients were separated relatively early, the exposure of our broader workforce was limited.

5 How have people other than leaders responded?

Many people outside of the COVID-19 units also jumped into action, making homemade masks, 3D printed face shields, copperhead metal frames for intubation, the plexiglass hood for intubation, and more. Our information technology teams also worked tirelessly to ensure our patients' safety and comfort as we leaned on telehealth services to continue serving out patients. Each department stepped up to meet the challenges head on.

I think it speaks to human behavior. When some of us are faced with a problem, we look for solutions. I am incredibly proud to be part of an organization where people are exceptionally innovative in their approach to a stressful situation. ■



Overcoming

If one is to live a full and meaningful life, overcoming is necessary. Why? Because every life has challenges.

The kid who wants to play the piano learns that. The first year college student has to face that reality. The middle-aged person trying to run their first marathon runs headfirst into that truth. And the stories that follow underline in black and highlight in red that painful verity. Life is indeed full of challenges. A song from the 1940s contained the line: "Into each life some rain must fall." Dark days come to all. At some point, thunderclouds loom on every horizon. Not a single person

escapes the challenges that life throws our way.

Even the Bible does not promise an easy life. In fact, quite the opposite. Time and again, Scripture underlines the fact that trials are part of the fabric of life in this world. Jesus himself said, "In the world you will have trouble." But he didn't leave us with just that statement. He continued on to say, "But be of good cheer — I have overcome the world." (see John 16:33). In other words, in facing the worst that the world could throw his way, he overcame. And he is keen to aid us in overcoming when we face our challenges.

As you read these stories, take note of the courage and strength of the individuals who lived them. Admire their grit and determination. But don't stop with that. Proceed on to learn from them lessons on how to overcome. Draw encouragement for the facing of your own challenges. And, finally, recognize that God offers divine strength to one and all. And, because of that, we can all be overcomers no matter the challenge.

Randall L. Roberts, DMin, LMFT
Vice President for Spiritual Life and Mission
Loma Linda University Health



SURVIVOR

MONIKA KALIA IS USING HER STORY TO PUT A SPOTLIGHT ON VIOLENT ACID ATTACKS AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA AND WORLDWIDE

BY JANELLE RINGER

In 2002, television news anchor Monika Kalia at age 31 was the victim of an acid attack that severely disfigured her face and nearly killed her. Her attacker was her husband, from whom she sought a divorce after years of abuse. As she and her brother walked up the steps of the courthouse for the divorce proceedings, her husband and his friend leaped out from behind a column, throwing a glass of acid across her face and neck.

The acid burned through her skin, into her left eye, down to her chest and disintegrated her ear almost instantly. The deep chemical burn exposed her veins, causing her blood to gush out. “I didn’t feel afraid or confused — just blinding pain — so much so that I didn’t understand what was happening,” she says. “He thought it would kill me.”



Her brother rushed her to the hospital where, for nearly nine hours, doctors worked to save her life. Each blood transfusion they gave her during the process kept drying up because of the acid, and medical staff were unable to numb her for the procedure. "I can't even explain how painful the treatment was," she says. "In just a minute on those courthouse steps, my world had changed."

The attack ended her TV career and destroyed her confidence. For a while, it even took away her will to live.

Each year, thousands of people are attacked with acid, chiefly in Southern and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean, according to London-based Acid Survivors Trust International. These premeditated crimes are meant to cause lasting harm and disfigurement. While attacks happen to men, they most often are perpetrated against women and girls over things such as land and domestic disputes, rejecting marriage or turning down sexual advances. In countries such as Britain, hundreds of these attacks are committed each year, sometimes in mass attacks at nightclubs or by rival gangs.

In recent years, activists in several countries have sought to bring awareness of acid attacks and have lobbied lawmakers to ban the sale of industrial acid from being sold over-the-counter through direct-to-consumer retailers.

In Kalia's home nation of India, as many as 250 or more acid attacks are reported each year, according to Stop Acid Attacks, a New Delhi-based campaign. Some activists say many more go unreported, especially in rural areas where victims are more likely to die.

Today, Kalia, a native of India's northern state of Punjab, lives in Southern California thanks to the SAHARA agency, which helps abuse victims from Southern Asia. She receives ongoing treatment at Loma Linda University Health. When



she came to the United States in 2004, she was unable to find a surgeon who would accept her as a patient. Her face and neck were severely scarred, and her left ear was gone.

"No one would take my case," she recalls. "My injuries were so severe, and it felt like I was a lost cause. After months of being turned away by caregivers, she came across Subhas C. Gupta, MD, chair of the Department of Plastic Surgery at Loma Linda University Health. She has since undergone more than 30 surgeries on her face and neck.

"Dr. Gupta gave me hope. He has spent years giving me back what was taken from me."

While the mental and emotional impact of this act of violence is deeply rooted, the visible evidence of the attack has nearly vanished. Kalia has had 27 reconstructive procedures performed, rebuilding her confidence and restoring her previous appearance.

"I thank God for bringing me to a community that has taken care of me," she says.

Growing up in her hometown of Punjabi, India, Kalia became an accomplished singer, a dancer and an all-state athlete. Her greatest dream was to become a news anchor.

At 16, she was approached by a television network at her school. "They told me I was beautiful, and they asked me to audition for a role," she recalls. "I didn't take it very seriously at first. I thought, 'I'm sure they say this to everyone,' but it became real when they called to remind me about the audition the day before." She went to the audition and got the job.

From there, Kalia's career and reputation took off. She started college, got married and had two kids. "I thought my life was perfect," she says. "But then my husband began to abuse me."

After marrying at age 18, she soon saw a different side of her husband. Over the next several years, he tried to take her life five times. Each time, he would get arrested, and each time, he would make bail. After 13 years of continued abuse on herself and her two children, Kalia filed for divorce. "Societal pressure made me try to

work things out with him. But my family said they didn't feel my life was safe with him, and I agreed," she says.

In the hospital after the attack, after hours of emergency care, Kalia eventually saw herself in a mirror. She wanted to die. "I didn't recognize myself," she recalls. "I told the doctor to give me a lethal injection because I didn't want to live like that."

Kalia's mother told her she had to keep fighting and living for her children. "My mother kept reminding me that my children didn't have their father and that they can't lose their mother too," she says. "I knew I had to fight for them."

Shortly after the attack, Kalia's brother went to the police, and her ex-husband was arrested for attempted murder. According to Indian law, the penalty for attempted murder is seven years, but days and nights are counted separately, so his sentence lasted three and a half years. It was reduced to three for good behavior.

While he was in jail, Kalia decided it was not safe to stay in India. She could no longer work as a reporter and knew she needed to start over somewhere new. She came to the United States to seek treatment and asylum. She now lives with her children in Southern California. She also recently earned her license as an esthetician.

Now she's making plans to visit her native India to bring awareness of the prevalence of acid attacks in Southern Asia. Her plans to visit India will both promote her cause and honor her brother, who felt very affected by her attack. He passed away in 2019. "I've been asked to come back and share my story — both in honor of my brother and to bring attention to the prevalence of acid attacks in my community," she says.

"I want people to know that women are strong. We are resilient. We overcome, no matter the situation." ■

A KINDERGARTENER AND A CANCER SPECIALIST HELPED THIS PRINCIPAL BEAT CANCER

A SUPERMAN T-SHIRT AND THE RIGHT PHYSICIAN WERE A PERFECT MATCH

BY HEATHER JACKSON

When Jeff Sipos, an Etiwanda school district principal, opened the August 2019 school term, it was the first time in more than a year that he could greet his students with a handshake and not need to hide behind a protective mask.

"I am blessed to be alive and with my students," Sipos says. "Last August was a time I was never sure would happen."

Sipos had battled severe joint pain in his ankles and wrists for almost 15 years, which impacted his active lifestyle. Finally, in December 2017 a physician had Sipos take a blood test. His physician initially thought he had multicore myeloma.

Unfortunately, he was in so much pain he needed a second opinion, which brought Sipos into contact with Muhammad Omair Kamal, MD, a Loma Linda University Cancer Center medical oncologist.

"I call him my God-sent angel," Sipos says. "His expertise answered questions when no one else could and got me on the path to the care I needed."

Kamal suspected Sipos had Waldenström macroglobulinemia — a rare cancer diagnosed in just 1,500 people worldwide — but only a bone marrow biopsy could confirm it.

The biopsy confirmed Sipos had the rare cancer. Needing to begin chemotherapy infusion just a week after the diagnosis, Sipos told his students and staff about necessary changes to the way he would interact with them. He would have to wear a protective mask and give fist bumps instead of high fives and handshakes.

On the day before his first infusion treatment, kindergartener Jackson Todd would give Sipos an item that would carry him to the finish line of his cancer journey: a Superman t-shirt.

"All my son knew was that his principal was sick, and he wanted him to be strong," says Linda Frolich, Jackson's mother.

"Jackson told me, 'You are like Superman, Mr. Sipos. You are going to beat this,'" Sipos says. "He gave me one of the greatest gifts I could ever receive, a piece of hope wrapped up in that silly little shirt."

Sipos wore the shirt to every treatment until January 2019, when Kamal gave Sipos the news he was waiting for: he had no sign of disease.

Sipos is grateful for his community, family and friends who rallied around him during the hardest time in his life. He is also forever thankful for Kamal and the care he provided, even giving Kamal the Superman shirt to show his appreciation. ■





POSSABILITIES ATHLETE EMBRACES GOAL OF PARALYMPIC GOLD

COURTNEY RYAN, A MEMBER OF LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH TEAM POSSABILITIES, WILL COMPETE AT THE 2021 PARALYMPIC GAMES IN TOKYO

BY CASSANDRA WAGNER

It was the last minute of the play in the semifinal of the Lima 2019 Parapan American Games. The United States women's wheelchair basketball team was undefeated in their first four games in Peru and were poised to advance to the finals. For Courtney Ryan, this was the moment that would bring her one step closer to the U.S. competing at the Paralympic Games Tokyo, 2020. She rolled two lay-ups, extending the U.S.'s lead to 30, leading in their win against Argentina, 82-24, and

securing the team's place at the 2020 games. Though the games were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she's looking forward to the international competition's rescheduled games.

"The fact that we were able to successfully do that was huge," Ryan says. "We may have fallen short with placing silver, but that fueled the fire for us as we go into the Paralympic games. We had been training for a year to secure our spot."



Today, Ryan trains at her home in Tucson, Arizona, to compete at the 2020 Paralympic Games. With a year to train since qualifying, Ryan's weekly regimen consists of lifting weights three times, conditioning exercises three times and putting up 1,500 shots. She currently plays on the NWB Division III Tucson Lobos wheelchair basketball team.

Ryan, a member of Loma Linda University Health PossAbilities, an outreach program for those with permanent physical disabilities and veterans, has always had a passion for team sports. "It has always been important for me to have that team community and access to competitive sport," she says.

Ryan's passion for competition started at the age of four on the soccer fields of Chula Vista, California. Her love for the sport would lead her to play collegiate soccer at Metro State College of Denver. While attending school, she was part of the 2008 team that made it to the NCAA Division II Final Four and was awarded the First Team All-American.

"I was feeling pretty excited about coming into my junior season," she says. But one morning she woke up with tingling legs and pain in her back, attributing it to the high demands of playing at the collegiate level.

Hours later at an away game, Ryan experienced excruciating pain in her back, and her legs gave up on her. Doctors would later describe this as the moment

a blood clot burst in Ryan's spine near the T9 region, causing paralysis from the belly button down.

With her life immediately altered, Ryan was determined to find some form of normalcy to adjust to her new disability. A big part of that was using her competitive nature to rehabilitate and participate in adaptive sports, including cycling, canoeing, rugby, track, and eventually wheelchair basketball.

"Being involved with adaptive sports helped me find a community that knew what I was going through, and I was able to learn from them how to do the everyday things I needed to know how to do," Ryan says. "I was very fortunate that I was able to find my identity again in this community."

It was by chance in 2011 that Ryan would be introduced to the San Diego Hammers, a co-ed wheelchair basketball team and fall in love with the sport.

"I love how aggressive the sport is," Ryan says. "People sometimes see disability and they think that person is fragile. But then you go to watch a game like wheelchair basketball and you see people getting hit on the floor, chairs crashing and people shouting — that idea of fragile completely changes."

Ryan joined the San Diego Hammers and scored the winning shot at a tournament in Phoenix, catching the eye of the University of Arizona Wheelchair basketball coach. From 2012 to 2014 she played for the University of Arizona and pursued a bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Returning to California in 2014, Ryan took her passion for the sport to help fill a missing gap in California and sought to create an all-women's competitive wheelchair basketball team. Ryan reached out to PossAbilities, and, with their help, established Team PossAbilities Shield Maidens. Since its creation in 2015, the team has competed

in the National Wheelchair Basketball Women's Division and has attracted a wide variety of athletic talent that competes at national and international levels. With this partnership, Ryan continued to volunteer and mentor in the non-profit's programs. Through this community, she learned about the PossAbilities Paralympic program and how it supported athletes.

"The thing I appreciate about PossAbilities is the sense of community," Ryan says. "As an elite athlete it can be difficult sometimes, and it's amazing to know that they're not just financial support for me as an athlete. They care about me, and I can rely on them for emotional support, too."

By 2015, Ryan had entered fully to her Paralympic journey. Her athletic career with the sport has included winning two National Championships, four First Team All-Tournament awards, and making the first cut of the USA Women's Wheelchair Basketball Team, which with her help took home silver at the Parapan American Games Lima 2019 and advanced to the 2020 Paralympics.

"The highest recognition you can get as an athlete is to be part of an Olympic or Paralympic game," Ryan says. "It is the dream of every serious athlete to have that opportunity to represent and showcase yourself to the world how hard you have worked to get to that spot."

With her eyes set on winning Paralympic gold with her team, what are Ryan's other goals for the future? She hopes to continue making a difference in the para-athlete community with aspirations of starting a junior's wheelchair basketball program in California. "My life has been so deeply enriched by being an athlete," she says. "In the future, I hope to share my love for the sport and knowledge of adaptive athletics to coach the younger generation." ■

FINDING HEALING FOR THE LOVE OF A *Daughter*

WILSON WUN HAD LOST CONTROL
OF HIS LIFE; THE BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE
CENTER GAVE IT BACK TO HIM

BY JANELLE RINGER

Wilson Wun came to the Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center because his life was out of control. “I was drinking from the moment I woke up until the moment I went to bed,” he says. “I knew it was a problem, but I couldn’t stop.”

The worst, Wun says, came three days into his daughter’s life. At 8 a.m., he went to pick her up from the hospital, resolving to make it the whole day without drinking so he could drive his newborn daughter home.

However, when Wun got to the hospital, the nurse told him that his daughter was not ready for discharge. By noon, just four hours later, he had snuck down to the parking lot for a drink. “I always kept a bottle of whiskey in my car,” Wun recalls. By the time his daughter was ready to be discharged at 5 p.m., he’d already had about six shots of whiskey, he said.

Wun continued down this path for nearly another year.

At a doctor’s appointment 10 months after his daughter was born, Wun’s physician told him that if he continued down the same path, he would need a liver transplant. “That scared me,” he admits. “I could die, and the worst part of that was knowing I’d leave my daughter behind.”

Wun told his doctor he was ready to try anything to get control back. Wun entered the Behavioral Medicine Center in March of 2016. He spent five days in detox, followed by 30 days in outpatient care.

From the moment he walked into the Behavioral Medicine Center, he began a journey of healing — walking with the care team and making small but significant changes each step of the way. “After so long of living one way, the Behavioral Medicine Center showed me that there were

other options — a way to get control back,” he says.

Wun hopes to use his experience to help other alcoholics who are going through similar journeys. “My daughter is going on six years old now, and she has her father by her side,” he says.

“I loved alcohol more than my job, my friends, my family — everything. I spent 38 years of my life drinking. Because of the care at the Behavioral Medicine Center, I’ll spend the rest of my life being clean for myself and my family.” ■

// *Overcoming*



CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTERIORS OF THE NEW ADULT HOSPITAL TOWER AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL EXPANSION IS COMPLETE, AND CREWS ARE NOW WORKING TO FINISH THE INTERIOR FOR A MID-2021 OPENING. HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT THE NEW FACILITY.

THE ADULT TOWER STANDS **268** FEET, MAKING IT THE TALLEST HOSPITAL IN CALIFORNIA.

IS THE **TALLEST** BUILDING IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY.

5,100 TRUCKLOADS OF CONCRETE WERE USED TO POUR THE HOSPITAL FLOORS.

116 MILES OF PIPING FOR PLUMBING WAS USED — ENOUGH TO STRETCH A SINGLE PIPE FROM LOMA LINDA TO DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES AND BACK.

1,154 MILES OF WIRING WILL RUN THROUGH THE BUILDING, ENOUGH TO EXTEND FROM LOMA LINDA TO SEATTLE.

THE ENTIRE PROJECT REQUIRED APPROXIMATELY **27,000** TONS OF STEEL, EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT 13,103 AVERAGE SIZE CARS.





THE AMOUNT OF STEEL USED IN THE PROJECT COULD BUILD **4.75** EIFFEL TOWERS.

IF **ALL OF THE STEEL** USED IN THE PROJECT WERE MELTED DOWN INTO A 1-INCH DIAMETER CABLE, IT WOULD STRETCH FROM LOMA LINDA TO NEW YORK CITY, WITH 300 MILES TO SPARE.

4,200 DOORS ARE BEING INSTALLED IN THE HOSPITAL.

APPROXIMATELY **9,200** GALLONS OF PAINT WILL BE USED IN THE PROJECT.

FOR MORE ABOUT THE CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT, VISIT LLUVISION2020.ORG.

LOMA LINDA COUPLE'S GIFT SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN TWO SCHOOLS

LIFELONG CAREERS IN EDUCATION MOTIVATE EDMOND
AND ELLA HADDAD TO ENDOW SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS FOR
STUDENTS WITH TIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST

BY LARRY BECKER



A lifetime committed to higher education combined with a desire to support international students studying public health have inspired Edmond and Ella Haddad to establish a new endowed scholarship fund at Loma Linda University School of Public Health.

“God has been very good to us, and it was His intention in both of our lives that we teach in Adventist institutions,” Edmond said. “We believe education should be open to anyone wanting to really learn. The best way to invest in young people is through education.”

Both Haddads have been part of Loma Linda University’s faculty or administration for a number of years. Edmond served for 13 years as associate dean for graduate studies beginning in 1994. When the School of Graduate Studies transitioned to the faculty of graduate studies, he became a special assistant to the university provost. Edmond retired in 2009.

Ella first came to Loma Linda University as a student in the School of Public Health, earning her Doctorate of Public Health in 1979. After teaching at Middle East College for several years, Ella returned to the School of Public Health as a faculty member teaching nutrition.

Not surprisingly, the couple met as students, in 1949. They were both eighth-graders at Middle East College, and both were outstanding students. After completing high school, Ella came to the United States to attend La Sierra College in 1954. When she returned to Lebanon for a summer, the couple married, and both returned to La Sierra to continue their education. They’ve been married for 63 years.

Both Edmond and Ella came to the United States to study. By working hard, both were able to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees without financial assistance. They saw a change in higher education’s cost when their children began entering college.

“Our oldest son was a U.S. citizen, so he was able to qualify for a range of aid,” Ella said. “Our other children needed loans and aid, but couldn’t get assistance. Only expensive private loans were available to them.” Supporting international students became an important priority for the Haddads.

The couple first established a scholarship at Loma Linda University School of Dentistry in 1994. That fund honored their youngest son, Labeeb, who tragically lost his life as a result of injuries sustained in an off-road vehicle accident. He was a third-year dental student at the time of his accident.

The couple recently donated a piece of property to the university with the intent that proceeds from that property’s sale be dedicated to student scholarships. The property was sold in 2018, and proceeds will support two scholarship endowments.

The new endowment, the Edmond and Ella Haddad International Student Scholarship, has been established in the School of Public Health. Edmond says it’s his desire that the new fund honors Ella Haddad’s work as a professor there. That scholarship will be awarded with a preference toward students studying nutrition. The first student recipient will be selected this year. The remaining proceeds from the property sale will be added to the existing Labeeb Haddad Memorial Scholarship in the School of Dentistry. Students from the Middle East will be the primary beneficiaries of these scholarships. The scholarship can also support students descended from Middle East families.

“We want the opportunity to continue education being open to faithful young Adventists coming from the Middle East to study at Loma Linda University,” Edmond said. “We hope that one day when they are able, students who receive these scholarships will do something similar.”

“Though School of Public Health graduates may not make as much as from some other schools, sharing information on preventing disease through nutrition is very important,” Ella said. “Interest in nutrition is growing in the Middle East. We really do need Loma Linda graduates to work in the Middle East.”

For information on how to support worthy students by establishing an endowed scholarship fund or other planned gifts at Loma Linda University, contact Todd Mekelburg at legacy@llu.edu or 909-558-4553. ■

BLOOD BROTHER

ALUMNUS DEXTER EMOTO HAS DONATED NEARLY 120 GALLONS OF BLOOD AND PLASMA

BY LARRY BECKER



PHOTO BY JANELLE RINGER

Dexter Emoto, RN, a post-anesthesia care unit and recovery room nurse at Loma Linda University Health, has been honored for his lifelong commitment to donating blood. Representatives from Fresenius Kabi, an organization that specializes in lifesaving medicines and technologies, inducted Emoto into its national Donation Hall of Fame during a special ceremony held at Lifestream in November 2019.

Emoto has donated nearly 120 gallons, making him one of the highest blood donors in the western United States. That blood has helped 1,500 – 2,000 individuals, estimates Lifestream, a nonprofit blood donation center that serves more than 80 hospitals and medical facilities in six southern California counties.

Emoto started donating his blood in 1974 while he was attending Pacific Union College in California's Napa Valley. "I've always had a passion for helping people, and at the time, I simply hoped someone could benefit from my donation," he says. "Ever since, I've just wanted to share my blood with someone in need."

Emoto began routinely donating blood at Lifestream in San Bernardino, California, in the early 1980s. "I realized I could benefit the patients in my local hospital by donating," he says. "Almost all of my donations have come to Loma Linda University Medical Center, where it goes to the patients I care for daily."

After graduating from Loma Linda University School of Nursing in 1977, Emoto first worked internationally as a volunteer nurse in the operating room of Japan's Kobe Adventist Hospital. Returning to Loma Linda University Health full-time in 1984, he served across the spectrum of patient care from neurosurgery to operating room

before focusing his service in the post-anesthesia recovery room where he has served for the past 30 years.

Emoto also acts as a mentor for student nurses, believing that the authentic faculty support provided to students has been a cornerstone strength of the school for generations. "Nothing worth having is easy. The gifts of the faculty are revealed in the challenges these students face," Emoto says. "Faculty members care for students here and it shows. It's no different than when I was a student 40 years ago."

Mao Kimura was considering a potential nursing career when he felt Emoto's influence. Kimura envisioned combining nursing with his desire to share Christ with others. Emoto related how both callings can intertwine, and that Loma Linda University would be a place that would nurture that integration of care and ministry.

Following his 2017 School of Nursing graduation, Kimura began working as a medical-surgical nurse at Loma Linda University Medical Center. He credits Emoto's mentorship as an important part of his education. "Dexter is very humble in everything he does," Kimura says. "He doesn't take the credit for being the one who brought me here but he was a huge part of my nursing journey. If it weren't for Dexter, I wouldn't be here today. He's the reason I first came to the School of Nursing."

Emoto regularly encourages nursing students to commit themselves to becoming regular blood donors. "I want future nurses to know that the blood they hang is coming from a volunteer," he said. "People who give blood do so because they have a passion for helping people. Those donations could save someone's friend or family member." ■

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST HIGHLIGHTS AUTISTIC STUDENT MUSICIANS IN AWARD-WINNING FILM

BY ANSEL OLIVER

Robin Miller Ungar, a speech-language pathologist and 1976 graduate of the School of Allied Health Professions, produced a short documentary on student musicians on the autism spectrum. In August, the film premiered and won an audience award at the online 29th annual Woods Hole Film Festival in Massachusetts.

A childhood friend had approached her about documenting an upcoming concert in which student autistic musicians collaborate with music students from their Maryland community. She jumped at the opportunity to make a film on the topic, having devoted much of her professional practice to treating clients with communication challenges.

The film, "As We Are," celebrates both the differences and the common goals of all the musicians involved in one evening's special performance.

"The story really seems to resonate with audiences," Ungar says. "I hear from so many people that the film has really touched their hearts. It's about being human and the connectivity that brings us together through music."

A year before that concert, Robin's first short documentary, "Soy Cubana," was released. The film tells the story of an a cappella female quartet from Santiago de Cuba. It screened at 60 film festivals, won 10 awards and led to the Vocal Vidas coming to the U.S. in 2017 to perform in Los Angeles. The filming continued and is currently in completion as a feature length documentary about their incredible journey and performances here.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBIN MILLER UNGAR



Unger notes that while the quartet did not speak English, they could connect with people through their music.

"Looking back, I am struck that the two projects have a similar theme," Ungar says. "Music can be such a beautiful and real way of connecting. To quote the folk singer Pete Seeger, 'When words fail, try music.'" ■



ALUMNA'S MINISTRY EXPANDS TO LARGER FACILITY TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS IN MEXICO

BY LARRY BECKER



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SARAH MAYER



Sarah Mayer, PA, moved with her husband to Baja California, Mexico, for a short-term volunteer stint in 2008. It's now more than a dozen years later, and their healthcare ministry to local residents in need has undergone several expansions.

Mayer, co-founder and medical director of Siloé Ministries, says the new Siloé Wellness Center — which began as a two-room clinic under the stairwell of a local church — is now a 6,000-square foot facility dedicated to offering medical and dental care, health education, family counseling and recreation programs.

The facility in the city of La Misión is now home to eight healthcare providers, up from three when the ministry launched in 2008. The new wellness center was constructed in collaboration with Strong Tower Ministries, a non-profit organization focused on orphaned children living in Baja. They began their partnership in 2015.

“We created this clinic because we wanted to provide whole person care, and now we can help even more people in this community,” Mayer says.

The growth includes a full-time doctor, an additional dentist and dental assistant, a nutritionist and a nurse educator. The new space will have the capacity to host educational classes, cooking and nutrition seminars. Additions also include a prayer and counseling room as well as an outdoor park and recreation area.

A variety of visiting practitioners and specialists spend anywhere from several hours to several weeks volunteering their time, and more than 40 have served during the past two years, Mayer says.

“When we crafted the vision for the Wellness Center, we always wanted it to be more than a clinic,” Mayer says. After spending over eight years at the original site, Mayer had become deeply rooted in the community, learning about the specific health issues that existed.

Today, the center has become a Loma Linda University mission trip site, one of the favorite locations for students to visit and gain international experience.

Mayer began Siloé Ministries with her husband in 2008, naming the ministry Siloé, which is Spanish for “Siloam,” a nod to the Pool of Siloam referenced in John 9 where Jesus sent a blind man to wash his eyes to restore his sight.

After graduating from the School of Allied Health Professions’ physician assistant program in 2005, Mayer accepted a job in Southern California. From the start of her career, her passion was for underserved Hispanic communities.

Fueled by this passion, Mayer and her husband moved to La Misión for what they expected to be a six-month commitment volunteering at an orphanage. But as the duo became more involved with the local community, they realized the dire need for quality healthcare. Their commitment has now stretched over a decade.

Many from the community had limited access to care before the ministry. The emerging ministry drew not only patients, but volunteers as well.

“Medical and dental volunteers from the United States and Mexico took notice and began to support the ministry with materials, supplies and by volunteering their time,” Mayer said.

Mayer credits her education and clinical experience at Loma Linda University for equipping her to practice in a variety of settings. Her background as a student and employee gave her experience with the Spanish-speaking population, preparing her for many of the cultural differences between Mexico and the U.S.

Despite these differences, Mayer found the health concerns of the La Misión community similar to those of the Hispanic population in the U.S., such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, poor nutrition, inadequate dental care and a lack of health education.

Mayer hopes the Wellness Center will function to provide medical and dental care to those in need, increase awareness and education of how lifestyle choices affect health, and provide spiritual counseling and prayer for individuals and families. ■

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BY THE NUMBERS

Outpatient visits
July 2019 – June 2020:

984,004

Students
in Fall 2020:

4,514

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY HEALTH FINANCIAL SUMMARY JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020

We earned:	
Clinical activities	\$2,680,023,499
Academic activities	\$280,344,500
Total Net Revenue	2,960,367,999
We spent:	
Clinical activities	\$2,645,270,557
Academic activities	\$336,925,000
Total Expenses	\$5,982,195,557
Changes in unrestricted, temporary and permanent restricted net assets	\$171,885,000
Transfers and other adjustments	-\$70,729,085
Increase in net assets	\$79,328,357

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/ Parting Shot /



PHOTO BY COSMIN COSMA

Just a couple of days after Christmas 2019, Loma Linda enjoyed one of its legendary wintertime days. A storm had pulled out of the area overnight, leaving this beautiful winter vista. The palm tree in the foreground and the snow-dusted San Bernardino mountains in the distance define the contrasts of living here. On campus, sharp contrasts are in evidence as well. Loma Linda University Health's new adult hospital and Children's Hospital towers have already permanently altered the landscape of the city. More than twice as tall as the iconic cloverleaf medical center building to the left, the new facilities will be home to groundbreaking new approaches to healthcare, serving both California's Inland Empire region and patients from around the world.

/ Vision 2020 /



THANK YOU, SUPPORTERS!

In July 2014, the Loma Linda University Health community made a commitment to a project that promised to change the future of healthcare and education.

With the announcement of a \$100-million gift by Dennis and Carol Troesh, Loma Linda University Health accepted the challenge of Vision 2020: The Campaign for a Whole Tomorrow.

On day 1 of the Vision 2020 journey, a goal of \$360 million awaited. And thanks to your generosity and the support of many, we are closer to the finish line of the Campaign every day.

As 2020 and the Campaign come to a close, you have helped us make a greater impact than we could have imagined. Vision 2020 has been supported through almost 364,000 gifts from more than 50,000 donors.

Loma Linda University Health, our community and world will be forever changed through the Vision 2020 campaign. The impressive new 16-story Adult Hospital and 9-story Children's Hospital tower made possible in part by Vision 2020 will change for the better how we provide healthcare to our community and the world. University students will benefit from scholarships, research, faculty development,

and the learning opportunities the new hospitals make possible. Through our research focus, initiatives like the Adventist Health Study, genomics, and cures for cancer were expanded by Vision 2020, and will continue to be. Vision 2020 also expanded our healthcare and education reach by supporting a significant new clinical facility in Indio and creating new career pathways for underserved communities through the San Manuel Gateway College.

The success of the Vision 2020 is only possible because of your partnership. Support is invaluable to the completion of our new hospital towers as we navigate the increased urgency to expand and meet the needs of our community, alleviate the financial strains of school for our students, and equip our researchers to meet the growing health needs of tomorrow. The Campaign officially concludes at the end of 2020. Help us cross the finish line at llu.org/giving.

Many years from now, Vision 2020 will stand with the significant moments in Loma Linda University Health history. And thanks to you, our mission of continuing the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ will continue to impact the world.



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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

homecoming
is going virtual

Thursday, March 4 – Monday, March 8

2021

llu.edu/homecoming