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UNIVERSITY SCULPTURE UNVEILED

'Who Touched Me?' sculpture unveiled at Loma Linda University

By James Ponder

One of the most electrifying incidents in the New Testament recently came to life on the campus of Loma Linda University when a larger-than-life sculpture depicting Christ and the woman who touched His garment in faith was unveiled at the north entrance to the Centennial Complex on Wednesday, October 20, 2010.

Titled "Who Touched Me?" in honor of the story recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the new work of art is the result of a collaboration between philanthropist Reuben Matiko, MD, and sculptor Alan Collins.

Several other individuals were also involved in overseeing the project, creating the sculpture or installing it at its permanent location: members of the LLU president's committee and dean's council; the foundry artisans of Monterey Sculpture Center in Marina, California; installation specialists Ethan Johnston and Jesse Cortez who drove the giant bronze statues from the Monterey Peninsula and installed them at LLU; and Robert Cole and his team of LLU maintenance workers who kept the

installation under wraps until the unveiling and dedication ceremonies.

At the ceremony, Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, president of the university, welcomed the audience and said the sculptural installation "has been a long time in coming." He pointed out that sculptor Alan Collins—who was detained by inclement weather at San Francisco International Airport—was approached several years ago by Dr. Matiko to create a sculpture that would memorialize the incident described in Matthew chapter 9 and Luke chapter 8.

Mr. Collins is well known in Loma Linda as the artist responsible for the Good Samaritan sculpture on the campus mall between Prince Hall and the University Church.

B. Lyn Behrens, MBBS, president emerita, followed Dr. Hart's welcome with some reflections on the meaning of the sculpture.

She said the story of the nameless woman whose touch of faith 2,000 years ago brought health and healing to her body continues to bear silent witness, and serves the dual purpose of reminder and invitation today.

It is a reminder, she noted, that Christ is the source of all true healing and wholeness, and an invitation to find ourselves in the story.

"Let us not be part of the anxious crowd, or the skeptics," Dr. Behrens admonished. "The invitation is to receive Christ as our personal Messiah."

Since Dr. Matiko was unable to attend the service due to a health issue, his son Jim Matiko, MD, read the words of a poem his father wrote in response to the conclusion of the story from Matthew 9:22:

*Christ's sacred words verity tell.
For twelve worrisome years she
grievously bled.
Her doctors didn't succeed—alibis
probably said.
Her FAITH, a spiritual essence,
distinctly divine,
So readily provided ample courage to
her spine.*

Dr. Hart noted that the poem will be inscribed on a plaque and placed at the base of the installation.

The ceremony assumed a poignant aura when Dr. Hart informed the audience that Dr. Matiko has reached a turning point in his life because of advancing age. Dr. Matiko, who is in his 90s, is unable to get out as much as he would like to because of problems with his knees.

When it came time for the unveiling of the sculpture, Marilyn Herrmann, PhD, RN, dean, School of Nursing, and Jeff Cao, MD, professor of pathology and human anatomy, School of Medicine, struggled with the considerable bulk of the blue, satin-like cloth shielding the sculpture.

Moments later, workmen stepped forward to help fold the large cloth. The audience erupted in applause as the sculpture was revealed.

After allowing a few moments for photographs, four individuals stepped to the microphone to memorialize the occasion and discuss the significance



As the cameras record the occasion for posterity, Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, president of Loma Linda University, addresses attendees at the unveiling and dedication ceremony for the "Who Touched Me?" sculpture installation at the north entrance of the Centennial Complex. Absent from the October 20, 2010, event was sculptor Alan Collins and philanthropist Reuben Matiko, MD. Dr. Matiko was unable to attend due to health issues, and Mr. Collins was stuck in San Francisco International Airport waiting for the weather to clear.

of the sculpture to the students, faculty, patients, and community.

David Ward, MD, a resident in the department of family medicine, spoke for the students. He shared the story of how a Loma Linda physician eased the end-of-life transition for one of his patients by singing hymns to the man in his final moments.

"At LLU," Dr. Ward concluded, "we are taught how to diagnose and treat illness, but we are also taught how to reach out and touch Jesus and receive His healing power."

In his role as official representative of the LLU faculty, Leonard Bailey, MD, distinguished professor at the School of Medicine, said he is thrilled and honored to be part of this event. He thanked Mr. Collins and Dr. Matiko for "this beautiful sculpture," calling it "a stunning portrayal about humility and faith." He concluded by reciting the lyrics to Bill and Gloria Gaither's song "He Touched Me."

Monique Crouser, the mother of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital patient Tristen Crouser, shared her views on what the healing ministry of the university means to her personally. "My son has been battling cancer for such a long time," she shared. "Saul, one of our chaplains [referring to Saul Silva, MA] has been with us every step of the

way. He has just continued praying and praying for us."

She said the faith-based legacy of Loma Linda University "has been an inspiration to us. There is definitely Someone up there looking after us."

In his remarks, Lowell Cooper, MDiv, MPH, chair of the Board of Trustees, suggested that "a picture is worth a thousand words, and depending on who is speaking, maybe ten thousand."

He transitioned to the serious, noting that there are moments when words obscure meaning and silence leads to deeper understanding. He said that "we contemplate life's deepest questions in silence," and expressed his hope that this sculpture would provoke many silent encounters in the years to come as students, faculty, and members of the community come face to face with the meaning of the story. "Jesus Christ stands before us as the Pattern Man," Elder Cooper concluded. "His love, pure and simple, blessed all who came within the circle of its influence. We are to do the same."

In his concluding prayer, Wil Alexander, PhD, emeritus professor in the School of Religion, and professor of family medicine in the School of Medicine, said to God that

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Although inclement weather delayed his flight from San Francisco, sculptor Alan Collins (pictured in the photo to the right of Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, LLU president) was finally able to see his latest sculpture in place. Titled "Who Touched Me?" and depicting the biblical story of the woman who touched Christ's garment in order to be healed, the sculpture resides near the north entrance to the Centennial Complex.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Organizers of the health fair take a break from the day's events. From left are Pastor Eliezer Benavides of Redlands Hispanic Adventist Church; Pastor Kyle Allen of Mentone Adventist Church; James Trott, DDS, MPH, MS, assistant professor, dental education services, Loma Linda University; and Martin Ekoumou, MD, MPH, church elder at Redlands Hispanic Adventist Church and founder of Don't Lose Hope—Personal Health Ministry.

School of Dentistry meets community members during health fair

Contributed report

Loma Linda University School of Dentistry teamed up with several area churches for a community health fair, held Sunday, September

19, 2010. The event registered more than 250 people of the cities of Redlands and Mentone.

This holistic health promotion event drew together the members of the Redlands Hispanic

LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

New weight-loss program begins at LLU Drayson Center

By Heather Reifsnnyder

A new weight-loss program is now being offered at the Drayson Center. Take Shape for Life is a 12-week program designed to teach participants how to lose excess pounds without the all-too-often subsequent weight regain. Participants can join at any time.

All participants in this comprehensive plan receive a complete lifestyle assessment, fitness assessment, body composition analysis, and support-group meetings. A three-month membership to Drayson Center is also included.

"This program deals with the social, psychological, and medical issues of weight loss using techniques and activities that help people develop a new and healthy lifestyle," says

director and preventive care specialist Hildemar Dos Santos, MD, DrPH. "Like the name 'Take Shape for Life' says, we help people lose weight to have a richer life for the rest of their life."

Additional options in the program, depending on the package chosen, include sessions with a personal trainer, medical massage, nutritional counseling, individual sessions with a preventive care specialist, and glucose/lipid panel testing. Four packages are available ranging in price from \$235 to \$1,080.

The support groups are led by health professionals—nurses, psychologists, and LLU psychology students, and both specialists and doctoral students in preventive care. The discipline of preventive care focuses on measures that can prevent sicknesses before they happen,

rather than later treating the symptoms of an illness that could possibly have been avoided, such as heart disease or diabetes.

Participants may also opt to add a comprehensive medical examination at the Loma Linda University Center for Health Promotion, or to join the Medifast plan of meal replacement, which has proved successful in helping people to lose weight.

For more information about Take Shape for Life, call (909) 558-8690.

Take Shape for Life is organized by Loma Linda University Drayson Center, Drayson Center Wellness Clinic, School of Public Health preventive care program, and the Center for Health Promotion.

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"We read in Your word that the clouds are the dust underneath Your feet, and so You walk among us today." Dr. Alexander thanked the Creator for the gifts "that have brought all this about," and commented that the woman depicted in the sculpture reached out in faith. "You have called us to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ," he concluded. "Your power is the source today as it was then. Each of us is touched by Your love. Some day, in the not-too-distant future, may the meaning of the sculpture come to life in our hearts."

The ceremony adjourned when Dr. Hart announced that a plaque containing the Gospel account of the woman's encounter with Jesus will be unveiled at the site in the next few weeks.

Besides Alan Collins and Dr. Matiko, two other men who played a large and influential role in bringing the sculpture to Loma Linda Univer-

sity were not present at the ceremony.

Jesse Cortez and Ethan Johnston—the skilled artisans from the Monterey Sculpture Center who installed the sculptures on Friday, October 15, 2010—were back in Monterey. Although unnoticed, the contributions of these two men are substantial: They drove the sculpture from Salinas on Thursday, October 14, 2010.

Unloading the sculpture components, they drilled holes in the surrounding concrete, setting two pairs screws into the feet of the figures, stabilizing them in place, spot-welding the joints where the woman's hand contacts Christ's garment, and expertly blending the final patina to cover the welds.

Not long after the conclusion of the ceremony, Alan Collins arrived on campus. His thoughts on the conception and creation of the statue will be featured in an upcoming edition of *Today*.

MEDIA OUTREACH

Emmy award-winning Loma Linda 360° to resume in November

By Dustin R. Jones, MA

Just five short months after receiving an Emmy Award, Loma Linda 360° begins its third season. As the official show of Loma Linda University and Loma Linda University Medical Center, Loma Linda 360° takes you where the action is happening.

Premiering on KVCR on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. starting November 15, the show depicts amazing but true stories of how lives are being changed right here in the Inland Empire.

Scheduled for this fall, the series will feature

Adventist Church, Mentone Adventist Church, Mentone Hispanic Adventist Group, and Don't Lose Hope (DLH)—Personal Health Ministry. These members went out into their local communities, knocking on doors and inviting neighbors, friends, and relatives to attend the event.

The services that were available to community members were diverse and educational: the Loma Linda University Dental Mobile Clinic conducted free dental screening; San

LLU's work in Haiti and the touching story of a young boy trapped under the rubble for two days waiting for help. Also scheduled is "Stephanie's Heart," the unbelievable story of Baby Fae and the heart of a baboon and how that story captured America's attention in 1984.

For more information on these and the other stories taking place at Loma Linda University, check out the website at <www.llu.edu/video> and follow LLU on Facebook at <www.facebook.com/lomalindauniversity>. Loma Linda 360° is also available on LLBN and the Hope Channel. Check your local listings for channel and availability.

Bernardino department of public health created HIV/AIDS awareness among youth, adults, and elderly; Southern California Edison had valuable information on its innovative health programs; and San Bernardino Fire Department in Mentone had a fire engine present and provided safety education materials to people.

Additionally, DLH mobilized a variety of local volunteer health professionals including physicians, dentists, nurses, preventive care specialists, psychologists, counselors, health educators, dietitians, the students of Four-D College in Colton, and selected health improvement vendors who provided broad-based health promotion and education in both English and Spanish.

These health professionals addressed people's issues physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Low-income attendees with significant clinical findings who did not have insurance were referred to regional no-cost clinics for follow-ups and further medical and dental care.

There was also a kid's zone set up with jumpers to entertain children and youth. Free healthy meals cooked by the members of the organizing churches and DLH were served to 480 people.

"This fair turned out to be a great blessing to all the attendees and the organizing team of churches and various institutions," says Martin Ekoumou, MD, MPH, church elder at Redlands Hispanic Adventist Church and founder of Don't Lose Hope—Personal Health Ministry.



With help from Robert Cole (white shirt, facing camera), a construction superintendent at Loma Linda University, sculpture installers Ethan Johnston (left) and Jesse Cortez (right) move the weighty form of Christ onto a large piece of foam before the immense bronze sculpture was installed at the north entrance to the Centennial Complex on Friday, October 15, 2010. The pair of workmen drove the two-piece statuary installation from the Monterey Peninsula the night before.

HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCHER

Former summer research participant Gabriel Linares wins NIH post-doctoral fellowship

By James Ponder

Gabriel Linares, a former participant in the summer research program offered to local high school students by the Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine (CHDMM) at the LLU School of Medicine, will soon be heading to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for a post-doctoral fellowship.

The story of his pilgrimage from San Geronio High School to the NIH underscores the value of the summer research program in helping motivated Inland Empire students transform their interest in science into productive careers in biomedical research, medicine, and related fields.

Although he had two distinct interests growing up—politics and science—Gabriel says the turning point occurred when his grandfather suffered a stroke.

“I remember going to the hospital to visit my grandfather and observing the treatments he received for his condition,” Mr. Linares shares. “Unfortunately, he passed away about eight months later, but that spiked my interest in wanting to learn about medicine.”

Gabriel’s parents saw an advertisement in the San Bernardino County *Sun* newspaper inviting local high school students to get involved in the summer research program at the CHDMM. Unfortunately, Gabriel was only a sophomore in high school at the time, and students had to be at least a junior to apply.

“So they saved the ad for me,” he says of his parents, Robert and Lillian Linares, a planner for the County of Riverside and a school librarian, respectively. “I applied to the program the next year.”

After attending a meeting in which prospective participants and their parents were apprised of the program’s objectives and introduced to the faculty and staff, Gabriel went home hoping his application would be accepted. A few days later, he received good news: he had been selected to attend the program in the summer of 1997. He could hardly have been happier had he won the lottery.

“Marino De Leon was my mentor,” he says of the CHDMM director. “When I was in his lab that summer, we were studying an epidermal, fatty acid-binding protein called DA11, and its role in nerve regeneration.”

Gabriel was impressed by the fact that Dr. De Leon—who holds a PhD in neurobiology and also directs the initiative for maximizing student diversity at Loma Linda University—did not patronize the young scholars, but instead allowed them to conduct biomedical research at a very high level.

For his part, Dr. De Leon remembers Gabriel as a very dedicated researcher.

“Gabriel was an outstanding student from the start,” he observes. “I met him when he was in high school and he’s been very consistent ever since, not only in his grades and academic performance, but also in his interpersonal relationships with other students and the faculty and staff. He took an interest in the

other students, and mentored many of them in the program.”

Gabriel returned to the summer research program at the CHDMM in 1998. “That second summer, we continued working in the same area of research,” he recalls.

After graduating from San Geronio High School in San Bernardino and completing two summers of research at LLU, Gabriel was accepted into the University of California at Davis.

During the summer of 2002, he returned to LLU for an undergraduate research project under the tutelage of Michael Lilly, MD, professor of microbiology and molecular genetics. “My project consisted of characterizing S18 human ribosomal protein as an autoantigen in prostate cancer patients,” he recalls. He earned a bachelor of science degree in neurobiology, physiology, and behavior from the University of California, Davis, in 2003.

Currently, Gabriel is back at Loma Linda University finishing the requirements for a PhD degree in physiology. He’s conducting his research in the laboratory of Subburaman Mohan, PhD, director of the musculoskeletal disease center at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center in Loma Linda, and research professor in the departments of biochemistry and physiology at LLU School of Medicine.

The NIH isn’t the only organization to appreciate the value of Gabriel’s work. He recently won the outstanding abstract award at the 92nd annual meeting of the Endocrine Society in San Diego this June. He also received the young investigator award at the 32nd annual research conference of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research, which was held last week in Toronto.

After he graduates with his PhD from LLU in the spring of 2011, Mr. Linares will move to Bethesda, Maryland, where he will devote the next three to five years to his NIH fellowship.

During that time, he will work in a molecular neurobiology lab within the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the NIH. “The main theme of the lab’s work is focused on understanding the molecular mechanisms underpinning neurodegeneration and neuroprotection.

“For my long-term goal, I’d like to become a professor at a university, develop my own research program, and teach as well,” he adds. The experience of watching his grandfather succumb to a stroke influenced his choice of subject. “My research focus will be in the area of neuroscience—probably stroke, Alzheimer’s, or Parkinson’s.”

When he’s not bent over a microscope or textbook, Gabriel is involved in some form of athletics.

“I like to exercise and play sports,” he shares. “My favorites are basketball, running, and hiking on different trails. I also enjoy the martial arts. I am a first degree black belt in tang soo do karate.”

Not surprisingly, Gabriel has a few pointers for high school students interested in a career in science. “Keep an open mind,” he advises. “Try to get involved in a research lab where you can gain first-hand experience. Don’t be afraid to ask a lot of questions; one of the signs of an intelligent person is the ability to ask questions. Study hard, keep your grades up, but try to be a well-rounded person in all aspects of your life, including extracurricular. And apply to the program here at LLU.

“This is an excellent program,” he concludes. “Dr. Marino De Leon, Dr. Carlos Casiano, and Dr. Daisy De Leon have done an outstanding job in training the next generation of biomedical research scientists!”

Dr. De Leon says Gabriel’s achievements place him in a very rarified atmosphere reserved for only the highest levels of science scholarship. “An NIH post-doctoral fellowship is a coveted, highly competitive award,” Dr. De Leon asserts. “They only grant them to a handful of highly promising young scientists nationwide. We are very proud of Gabriel Linares!”



Gabriel Linares, a graduate of San Geronio High School in San Bernardino and two-time participant in the summer research program offered by the Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine of the LLU School of Medicine, recently won a three- to five-year postdoctoral fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.



Students, faculty, and staff of the summer research program of the Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine at the LLU School of Medicine gathered on the lawn in July for a group portrait. According to David Erghelegiu, MA, MBA, project manager, a total of 52 students from four separate programs composed the 2010 summer research team.

SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Major shift takes place in School of Dentistry orientation programs

By Doug Hackleman

A major shift in the dentistry program brought entering students to the campus two weeks earlier than usual and paired them with George Lessard, PhD, emeritus professor, dental education services.

His objective: streamline the biochemical foundations of physiology course to include topics with specific dental applications.

Dr. Lessard selected 10 “hot topics,” including water, acids, enzymes, and metabolism, to become the core of the biochemistry course he designed, aware that for students this would be a review of what they had already studied to fulfill dental school prerequisites.

“Here is how we look at metabolism as dentists,” he would say. “There’s nothing new in the course except the application to dentistry.”

To supplement the academic focus during three weeks of orientation, the 104 newly arrived students attended lectures by key personnel: Ronald Dailey, PhD, executive associate dean, School of Dentistry, on professionalism; Graham Stacey, PhD, associate dean, student affairs, on ethics; Lane Thomsen, DDS, MS, chair, oral diagnosis, radiology, and pathology, School of Dentistry, on the history of dentistry; and 14 practicing professionals on dental pursuit areas—“just in case you want to start thinking about a specialty on the far end of these four years.”

Although organizing staff for a restorative class during orientation was not possible, laboratory sessions were designed to move students quickly into the authentic task of getting their fingers wet.

In four laboratory sessions orienting them to

EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

LLU Medical Center employee wins world championship boxing title

By James Ponder

Kaliesha “Wild Wild” West, an information host at Loma Linda University Medical Center, recently won the World Boxing Organization’s (WBO) Female Bantamweight Champion of the World title.

Ms. West took the title after a seventh-round knockout in her September 18, 2010, fight against Angel Gladney at Staples Center in Los Angeles. In the process, she became the first world champion in any sport to hail from the greater Riverside area, according to one reporter at <www.thesweetscience.com/>.

At first glance, the connection between the University’s mission “To make man whole” and Ms. West’s pugilistic pummelings might seem a bit contradictory.

But Ms. West sees boxing as healthy athletic outlet—one that requires a consistent pattern of self-discipline, conditioning, and training—and posits herself as a positive role model.

“I like being someone young women can look up to,” she shares. “It’s very important to set an example of doing what’s right, not what’s wrong. I take my responsibility to be a mentor very seriously.” One way she does that is by assisting an organization called Bad Girls Boxing as an advisor and supporter. The group seeks to reshape and rebuild the lives of young women by redirecting their negative energy into positive outlets.

Ms. West says that preparing for a major fight, such as her recent title bout, requires an immense amount of preparation. “When I’m training for a fight, I train six days a week and I run seven,” she says. “Running is every day. I do hard runs and I’ll do light runs. If I didn’t run, my weight would fluctuate.”

A light run, as she describes it, might be a couple of miles on level ground, but a hard run would consist of two runs up and down Mt. Rubidoux. “It’s one and a half miles up and one and a half miles down,” she explains. “I do that twice on Sundays for a total of six miles.”

Running is only part of her training regimen. She also works at the gym and travels to Los Angeles to spar with professional boxers several pounds heavier than herself. Ms. West believes that choosing large sparring partners gives her a competitive edge when she steps into the ring against opponents her own size.

“The women I spar with are always telling me that if I can hold my own against them, I won’t have any trouble with people my own size,” she says.

Right now, Ms. West is taking time off from her rigorous training schedule to relax through the winter holiday season before resuming training early next year. That doesn’t mean she’ll neglect working out entirely; it just means she’ll only run three days a week instead of seven.

Winning the WBO world championship is a dream she’s nurtured since childhood. As reported in the June 30, 2008, edition of *Today*, Kaliesha has been a boxing enthusiast as long as she can remember.

“We have videos of my father boxing when I was four or five years old,” she explains. “In the background, you can hear me yelling, ‘Come on, Dad! Hit him! Hit him! Hit him!’ I’ve always been interested in fighting.”

Ms. West began training with her father—former professional boxer and current fight coach Juan West—when she was 10 years old. Although he’s enormously proud of his world champion daughter now, Juan initially didn’t want his little girl to fight at all. Boxing was his dream for his son Marco. But Marco liked golf, not boxing, and Ms. West inherited the fighting spirit from her dad.

She went so far as to adopt her professional nickname from Juan. “He used to fight as Juan ‘Wild Wild’ West,” she recalls. “I liked the idea of keeping the family fight name alive, so I’m Kaliesha ‘Wild Wild’ West.”

Her road to the top hasn’t been easy. Once she convinced Juan she was serious about fighting, Kaliesha set her sights on the National Golden



Kaliesha “Wild Wild” West proudly displays her World Boxing Organization title belt after the organization proclaimed her the Female Bantamweight Champion of the World following a knockout fight at Staples Center on September 18, 2010. Ms. West—who is the first world champion in any sport to hail from the greater Riverside area—works as an information host at Loma Linda University Medical Center. “The first person I thanked was God,” Ms. West shares. She plans to retire from boxing at age 30.

Gloves and Junior Olympics titles. In 1999, she won the Junior Olympics title for the first time—a feat she repeated every year until 2004. In 2002, she won her division in the National Golden Gloves competition. From that day forward, her all-pervasive goal was to win the world title.

Now that she’s got it, Ms. West explains that she isn’t the only female bantamweight champion of the world. Even though she’s ranked No. 1 in the WBO ratings, she is listed as the No. 4 bantamweight fighter internationally. That’s because other organizations—including the World Boxing Council, European Boxing Union, Women’s Boxing Alliance, and Women’s International Boxing Federation—have their own ranking systems.

Ms. West is not the least bit intimidated by the fact that she’s not currently the undisputed world champion; instead, she sees the presence of three fighters ahead of her as a challenge. She has absolutely no doubt she will one day stand on top of the heap.

Kaliesha’s powerful self-confidence gives her a mental edge whenever she steps into the ring. “The biggest rush is the come-out,” she explains. “My music’s going, and I’m pumped up. When we come to the center for the rules, we tap hands to start the fight. The other fighters try to stare me down, but I always look ‘em dead in the eyes until they look away. I never turn away first.”

In addition to serving as a role model for girls and young women, the perk of professional boxing that Kaliesha enjoys the most is international travel. So far, she’s fought in Denmark, Mexico, and, most recently, Peru.

Getting to see other cultures first-hand is a great source of satisfaction.

“I loved Peru!” she exudes. “The best food, clearest waters, there’s not so much poverty there or extreme wealth, but they’re very proud of what they have. Nearly everyone there is naturally beautiful. I loved it!”

The regulations for bantamweight fighters require them to maintain a weight between 115 and 118 pounds. Weigh-ins are typically the day before the fight, and boxers who are overweight at that time have two hours to drop the requisite pounds or face penalties. Kaliesha tries to come in on the low side of the limit so she can enjoy a chocolate shake or other sweet treat before the fight.

With a record of 13 wins, one loss, and two ties, Ms. West faces the future with big plans. “I’d like to retire at 30,” she reveals. “Most fighters fight until they’re 45, but I want to quit at 30 and live my life. My heart is in entertainment, being a motivational speaker and talking. I’m so comfortable and relaxed, I’d enjoy doing that the rest of my life. But while I’m young, I’m going to follow my dreams and stick to boxing.”

The next step will be a warm-up bout of six to eight rounds next spring. After that, she’ll get ready to defend her WBO world title next summer. Right now, Kaliesha’s still savoring her hard-won victory. “When I won, I felt a lot of stress and weight lifted off my back because I accomplished something that I’d been talking about for so long,” she shares. “The first person I thanked was God for guiding me to go so far. The feeling you get is inexplicable happiness!”



Kaliesha “Wild Wild” West (third from left)—the World Boxing Organization’s Female Bantamweight Champion of the World and information host at Loma Linda University Medical Center—strikes a triumphant pose with members of her entourage moments after receiving an official proclamation from the City of Moreno Valley honoring her for winning the world title and serving as a positive role model for young women. (Left to right): friend Nicole Fabla; Team West member Lorin Chivotkin; Ms. West and her title belt; stepmother Jasmine West; father, former boxing champion and trainer Juan “Wild Wild” West; sisters Javona and Jazmine West; friend Mark Fabela; and friend Karen Fabela. The little girl underneath Kaliesha’s proclamation is baby sister Jayla, whom Kaliesha describes as “the most hyperactive child in the world!”

CONSERVATION RESEARCH

LLU professor conducts turtle conservation research in Honduras

Contributed report

Sea turtle populations are under severe threat in all coastal waters of Honduras. The problem has been that, up until recently, little was being done to provide protection to the five species of sea turtles that feed and reproduce in these waters.

Honduras is especially rich in sea turtle diversity, having five of the seven species of sea turtles on the planet. This puts Honduras and the coastal areas where sea turtles are found in the enviable position of having a rich resource in biodiversity and potential benefit to local communities.

However, in the past, no real research and only a few scattered, uncoordinated conservation efforts have taken place in the country since Archie Carr—a pioneer turtle researcher, and one of the first people to make notes on sea turtles in Honduras—walked these coasts in the early 1960s.

But things are changing. In March 2006, Stephen G. Dunbar, PhD, associate professor of earth and biological sciences at Loma Linda University, began a study of juvenile hawksbills (also known as “Carey”) on the island of Roatán. With assistance from the Reef House Resort and work by LLU graduate student Melissa Berube, the project has provided data to suggest that the study site is in need of special protection as an area of concern for juvenile hawksbills.

“These young turtles are spending many years in the same area, and that means they need special recognition and protection to keep them and their habitats from being destroyed by overdevelopment, overfishing, and poaching,” Dr. Dunbar says.

In 2007, after recognizing the lack of data and conservation efforts in Honduras, Dr. Dunbar formed the Protective Turtle Ecology Center for Training, Outreach, and Research (ProTECTOR), a not-for-profit, non-government organization specifically dedicated to researching sea turtles in the waters of Honduras, as well as promoting their conservation and restoration.

“The north coast of Honduras was historically

recognized as one of only seven major nesting areas in the Caribbean for hawksbills and other sea turtle species,” Dr. Dunbar continues. “Now, we know almost nothing about what is going on with their population numbers. What we do know is that all sea turtle numbers around Honduras are way down and continuing to decline.”

Under the direction of Dr. Dunbar and his country director, Lidia Salinas, ProTECTOR is starting to make a difference.

“While we still have so little information, we’re beginning to coordinate efforts around the country,” Dr. Dunbar reports.

One of the biggest discoveries he’s made is the recognition that he can’t help sea turtles or the marine environment unless, as he says, he’s also “helping the communities that rely on the turtles and their eggs as sources of income and food.”

To address this problem, ProTECTOR is working through local organizations, such as the Pequeño Proyecto Desarrollo (PPD), to solicit funds to help communities like El Venado and Punta Ratón on the Gulf of Fonseca, and Flowers Bay in Roatán, to develop programs that will introduce more environmental education (especially regarding sea turtles), eco-tourism, craft development, and micro-business.

Dr. Dunbar has a certain confidence when he says, “People can make a better living from keeping turtles alive than from selling the eggs and killing the turtles for meat, and that’s the only way everyone—the turtles, the communities, the conservationists—can all win.”

Still, this isn’t easy work because many aspects of local community development need to be based on scientific research.

“We’re working in Roatán, and have started projects with the Bay Islands Conservation Association (BICA) in Utila,” Dr. Dunbar elaborates. “We’re also working on plans to start projects with the Roatán Marine Park, with Cayos Cochinos, and with the Foundation for Cuero y Salado Wildlife Reserve (FUCSA).”



This hawksbill turtle, part of Dr. Dunbar’s research program, is released with its radio transmitter and will provide valuable migration information.

Eventually, his team hopes to start projects in communities along the entire north coast and throughout all the Bay Islands.

“I’m also really looking forward to when we can collaborate with the people working on leatherback conservation in the Mosquitia,” he affirms. “These are people undertaking heroic efforts, and I’d like to contribute what I can to help.”

The ProTECTOR team has been working on the south coast of Honduras for the past four years during the “veda” period of the egg harvesting program that goes on there. The team has worked with the community of Punta Ratón since 2007.

“We’re thankful to the community of Punta Ratón and the COPROTOGOLF for working with us through the past years, and we look forward to further collaboration with them in the future,” Dr. Dunbar explains.

This year, ProTECTOR also launched a new project with the community of El Venado, and will continue working with this community in the future.

“Right now, I’m most excited about launching sea turtle satellite tags for the very first time in Honduras,” Dr. Dunbar shares, with a smile.

He adds, “We have no idea where any of the turtle species come from to nest in Honduras, or where they go after mating and nesting, but we’re about to find out with these satellite tags.”

The satellite transmitter Dr. Dunbar launched

on Thursday, September 23, was attached to an olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) turtle that nested on the beach at Punta Ratón.

“We had hoped to launch another at El Venado, but weather, time, and transportation issues were all against us this time,” Dr. Dunbar details. “We’ve named the turtle ‘Erica’ after the secretary of the ‘Comite’ at Punta Ratón. Now Erica will carry this transmitter on her shell for as long as possible.

“Hopefully, we’ll be able to follow her for a year or more, and see her come back to Punta Ratón in the future,” Dr. Dunbar indicates.

The transmitter will send GPS information to satellites orbiting the earth every few days, allowing Dunbar and his team to keep an eye on Erica wherever she roams.

An important objective of their efforts is to understand the migration routes these turtles follow, and to make efforts to protect them through heavy fishing areas.

A second objective is to engage other countries in whose waters the turtles may travel, creating international treaties that protect the turtles in both their home and nesting areas—which may be hundreds or even thousands of kilometers apart.

There is much yet to learn about these amazing animals. With the work of Dr. Dunbar and his ProTECTOR team, the research is off to a good start. For more information about ProTECTOR and its projects, go to <www.turtleprotector.org>.



Dr. Dunbar finishes the job of attaching the radio transmitter to Erica, a hawksbill turtle. Erica will soon be released and tracked by the ProTECTOR team.



Loma Linda University graduate student Melissa Berube was one of the first students to study sea turtles in Honduras. Her work has provided evidence for the need to secure special protection of the study area for both hawksbills and their marine habitats.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Professor joins LLU School of Pharmacy

By Jim Pinder

A new professor has joined the faculty in the School of Pharmacy. Jeany Kim Jun, PharmD, MPH, started on July 16, 2010, and will be a member of the pharmacotherapy and outcomes science department.

Dr. Jun received her bachelor of arts degree in Russian studies from the University of Cali-

fornia, Los Angeles, in 1995 and her master of public health degree in international health and health administration from Loma Linda University School of Public Health in 1997. She received her doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), School of Pharmacy in 2001. She went on to complete a residency in primary care pharmacy practice at the University of Southern California in 2002.

Dr. Jun joined Western University of Health Sciences College of Pharmacy in 2002 as an assistant professor of pharmacy practice and practiced at the Western University Medical Center in the primary care clinic as the clinical pharmacist for eight years.

During her time there, her main focus was on teaching diabetes and asthma management to the pharmacy students, and she held diabetes classes at the medical clinic in Spanish and English for the patients. She was recognized by the students as Preceptor of the Year in 2010.

Since joining Loma Linda University, Dr. Jun and her entire family moved to the Kingdom of Cambodia in August 2010 to



Jeany Kim Jun, PharmD, MPH

participate in mission work. Her family is part of a team of missionaries from Mission to the World (MTW) in Cambodia whose main priorities are church planting, discipleship, and mercy ministry.

Her husband, Alexander Jun, PhD, is professor of higher education at Azusa Pacific University and is doing research on Cambodian education.

Dr. Jeany Kim Jun is working at CSI/Mercy Medical Clinic as a pharmacist and participates in teaching national health care professional students. Furthermore, the medical team holds mobile medical clinics in the rural provinces of

Cambodia every month and works together with week-long short-term medical teams that come from the United States to provide medical care in the provinces. She is currently focusing her attention on learning the Khmer language and hopes to do research on the emerging problem of diabetes education and management for the people of Cambodia.

She currently resides in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, with her husband and three children, Natalia, age 9; Isaiah, age 6; and Jeremiah, age 4. She enjoys playing the piano and loves to play golf. She will be back in the United States for three weeks to teach her course in January 2011.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Kids Connection seeks mentors, volunteers, and matching funds

Contributed report

The Community Kids Connection music program (CKC-Music) needs mentors, volunteers, and matching funds for equipment and supplies.

Founded by Kathryn Knecht, PhD, associate professor in the Loma Linda University School

of Pharmacy, CKC-Music has been a successful part of the LLU student-led Healthy Neighborhoods Projects for the last three years, teaching young musicians between the ages of 3 and 17 to play violin, viola, cello, and piano.

CKC-Music recently offered two community performances in one week, and is looking to

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Dreaming of Afghanistan: the unique story of a School of Public Health alumnus ...

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care access in his home country. He worked closely with an IAM surgeon from Canada, and they would travel to remote communities in high elevations to provide care.

The Canadian surgeon had introduced Dr. Salam to Loma Linda, and in 2005, after Dr. Salam had left IAM to work as a government researcher for the Afghan Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Salam crossed paths with Loma Linda again.

At the time, Loma Linda had been visiting Afghanistan since 2004 to determine specifics about a new medical project for the country. Eventually, Loma Linda decided to bolster the services of WAKH and in turn provide a model of Afghan medical care, and following discussions with LLU president Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, among other GHI representatives, Dr. Salam in 2005 left the Ministry of Public Health to become the first director of WAKH during its affiliation with Loma Linda.

Loma Linda was originally invited by the Afghan government to work in Afghanistan due to Loma Linda's extensive background in the country. Loma Linda's relations with Afghanistan began in 1962, nearly 50 years ago, with representatives such as Gordon Hadley, MD, who oversaw projects at KMU. During this time, Dr. Hadley established the pathology department at KMU, and many of the health policy makers in Afghanistan were once his students.

Decades later, in 2005, Loma Linda began a new capacity-building project in Afghanistan. This type of project assists a society through improving its performance ability in a given area.

Because the Afghan government does not have the capacity to provide medical care for the country, it relies on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), whether Afghan or interna-

tional, to perform these services. Throughout Afghanistan, there are more than 1,500 NGOs that serve in this role.

Loma Linda University originally received a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and two months before Loma Linda's project at WAKH began, Dr. Salam, future director of WAKH, was contacted by Loma Linda due to his experience with the Ministry of Public Health, his 10-year background with WAKH, and his perspective as an Afghan citizen who had served throughout his country while being based in Kabul.

"Loma Linda had the necessary experience to improve the health care system in Afghanistan," recalls Dr. Salam. "And there were a lot of challenges, especially with culture and religion. How do you convince people to receive service from a Christian-based organization when the country is 99.9 percent Muslim?"

"That's not easy to ask of people," continues Dr. Salam, a devout Muslim, "especially with our country's history, including the Russian invasion that made our people keep a distance from foreigners. But because of Loma Linda's background with different countries, Loma Linda had a skill for respecting culture and engaging local people just so these people can improve themselves."

Dr. Salam notes that according to the Afghan constitution, free health care is provided for citizens, yet this does not occur in Afghanistan, as patients pay from their own pockets. On the other hand, with Loma Linda's USAID grant, Loma Linda provided free services and about 90 percent of medications for patients at WAKH.

Loma Linda, moreover, enhanced the quality of services provided. New high-quality and technologically advanced equipment was purchased both in Afghanistan and abroad.

Also, employee performance improved as a result of increased salary. The standard government salary offered to health care employees was not enough for employees to support themselves, so they would only work part-time at WAKH. However, Loma Linda increased the salary and developed a reliable and experienced staff at WAKH.

Eventually, during Loma Linda's project, WAKH would serve 400,000 patients, more than 10 percent of Kabul's population.

After two years as director of WAKH, Dr. Salam was invited in 2007 to study in the MPH program at Loma Linda, and he retained his position at WAKH being temporarily on leave in the United States. Two years later, however, Dr. Salam resigned from his position at WAKH in September 2009 when he learned that Loma Linda's assignment and funding for the hospital was completed. Even though USAID provided additional funding for WAKH, LLU decided not to continue to manage the hospital because of the way funds would be processed in the future.

In 2009, USAID, which had previously provided grant funds to Loma Linda to provide health care services, began giving these same funds directly to the Afghan government instead of Loma Linda.

This course of action made it very difficult for Loma Linda to maintain its project with WAKH. It was uncertain how long it would take, if ever, for these funds to be allocated to WAKH. The decision to leave WAKH after nearly five years of work there was not easy for LLU or Dr. Salam.

"I'm not pessimistic about my country's system," states Dr. Salam. "But it isn't easy to just get funds back from the bureaucracy involved with government systems. And with medicine, you are dealing directly with patients, and if they don't receive medical services or medications on time, it is much more difficult than the delay of other types of services."

Since the termination of Loma Linda's project, Dr. Salam, still residing in the United States, continues to hear how things have changed for the worse at WAKH.

The same amount of funds is donated by USAID, yet as allocated by the Afghan government, the quality of service at WAKH has greatly diminished. Dr. Salam's previous colleagues regret informing him that they now have to ask patients to find their medications in the local market.

"I wish you had the opportunity to have visited WAKH while Loma Linda was there," Dr. Salam says. "And then to be over there now, and just see what we had and what we have now—it's totally different."

Though Loma Linda's contract to work in Afghanistan is now completed, the hope remains to return there one day.

Dr. Salam remains at Loma Linda, pursuing GIS studies while working at the GHI. Ultimately, he plans to return to his home country, and hopes that Loma Linda will join him when he returns.

"I greatly appreciate the work Loma Linda has done for our hospital [WAKH] and for the whole country," shares Dr. Salam. "They have an extensive background in the country, and most importantly, they know the policy makers and the officials in the Ministry of Public Health. My goal is to return to Afghanistan, and I'm here to ask Loma Linda to return as well."

Halfway across the globe from his family, Dr. Salam communicates with them mainly through phone. Still, he finds some solace in the fact that he now has a second family.

"The great message is that at Loma Linda, I feel like I'm home," confides Dr. Salam. "It's not easy with my kids being back in Afghanistan, but with the way people have treated me here at Loma Linda, this is a new family for me."

Continued from previous page
 schedule several additional recitals in the future. According to Dr. Knecht, CKC-Music plays an important role for increasing children's interest in music in a very underserved area of San Bernardino.

Recently, the Children's Fund of San Bernardino awarded the CKC-Music program a \$3,000 grant to match any funds raised specifically for equipment and supplies.

The CKC-Music program is a collaborative effort between music students at La Sierra University, LLU students, and community volunteers. "Some of the children learn music in school, but can't afford private lessons, and many do not even have access to music at all," states Dr. Knecht. The program is designed to benefit both children and their student mentors. Teaching in the community, especially with children, gives mentors valuable experience in developing necessary social skills for working with people. Good people skills are a powerful asset for students contemplating medical and health careers.

Currently, CKC-Music is seeking more piano and stringed instrument mentors, whether students or faculty at LLU. "Whether or not mentors realize that it's good for them, I think it's really important that they learn to see individuals in a community as real people," says Dr. Knecht. "It's vital that they see their circumstances and understand who they are, and not just look at them as patients who need their

blood pressure taken. Plus, volunteering at CKC-Music is a lot of fun!"

Individuals wishing to volunteer with CKC-Music are encouraged to contact the offices of Community Action Partners in Service (CAPS) for more information at (909) 651-5011. CKC-Music holds weekly practice sessions at the SACHS-Norton Clinic every Wednesday beginning at 4:30 p.m. Those wishing to donate funds are encouraged to contact CAPS or Dr. Knecht at (909) 558-7523.



One of the students in the Community Kids Connection music program founded by Kathryn Knecht, PhD, an associate professor in the Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy, tries his hand at the keyboard of an electronic piano.

Major shift takes place in School of Dentistry orientation programs ...

Continued from page 3
 the clinic, students alternated in the role of patient and dentist. Heidi Christenson, DDS, associate professor, oral diagnosis, radiology, and pathology, and Brian Novy, DDS, assistant professor, oral diagnosis, radiology, and pathology, provided students with hands-on experience to avoid a first-quarter experience of simply sitting down in a classroom and studying.

Initial instructions used kitchen vocabulary: "You need a mixing bowl, spatula, and zip lock bag." Donning gloves per the warning, "With glue on your hand, everything will stick to your hand the rest of the day," the students were about to take impressions on each other and pour them up.

Another warning from Dr. Novy, "If you're retaking impressions, stop at three and move to another partner. I'm not available to care for occlusal pain."

Novice dentists were soon emerging with their first impression efforts—as well as lopsided moustaches, goatees, and ear-nose-cheek-hair smudges and smears from excess dental materials.

Students with initial successful impressions turned to the task of making whitening trays.

At the end of three weeks, students were thinking "dental thoughts." Their revised first quarter, freed up because of the initial biochemistry course, permitted a shift of a course previously taught second quarter.

The clock was ticking, and the path to their chosen profession beckoned.

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 arrived at the event, and "in whatever way you feel comfortable, hold it in your hand, hold it close to your heart, and say a prayer that it may be a blessing. Say a prayer, a wish for recovery, for health, for a child being able to leave the hospital and go home. And then when you're ready, take that stone and place it in the red rocks around the playhouse. That way, your prayers and your wishes and your blessings will stay here forever and surround the children."

Before his dedicatory prayer, Gerald R. Winslow, PhD, vice president for mission and culture, said that when children come to the hospital, the playhouse "will be a sign that we love them, that we have hope for them, and that we want them to get the most out of the time they're here." In his prayer, he thanked the Creator for the generosity behind the gift of Imagination Manor.

"Thank You for HomeAid and all the people who made this possible," Dr. Winslow prayed.

"Thank You especially for Steve and Denise who had this idea, and pursued it." He concluded by asking that the playhouse be a blessing to the children and a reminder to the rest of us to find a way to help.

Following the prayer, everyone was dismissed to enter the playhouse. Adults were heard "oohing and aahing" about how beautiful and elegant it is, but the children at the event were hardly heard from at all. They were much too busy inside Imagination Manor, climbing up to the loft, relaxing in the spacious living room, making sure dolls were sitting up straight, and trying on flowery hats. In the timeless way of children everywhere, it took no more than a heartbeat for them to move right in and start playing house.

As the afternoon came to an end, a trail of engraved stones flanked the outskirts of Imagination Manor, bearing the prayers and good wishes of attendees at the remarkable structure's inauguration.



Clintiana Mitchell (left) and Amber Keith found the spacious interior of Imagination Manor very much to their liking at the conclusion of the October 4, 2010, ribbon-cutting ceremony for the 5,800-pound playhouse. Imagination Manor was donated by Steve and Denise Hertel in the hope that it would be a place where hospitalized children could forget their worries and just have fun. From the looks of these two smiles, it appears the wish is coming true.



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CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Rain fails to dampen spirits at Imagination Manor grand opening

By James Ponder

Cold rain failed to dampen the spirits of approximately 100 friends of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (LLUCH) who celebrated the grand opening of Imagination Manor—the gigantic playhouse recently donated to the hospital by Steve and Denise Hertel—on Monday, October 4, 2010.

In his welcome, Zareh Sarrafian, MBA, senior vice president and administrator of LLUCH, recalled how he first met the Hertels.

"I was attending a fundraising event four years ago where a number of these miniature homes were being auctioned off," he remembers. "This unit came up, it was auctioned off, there was a pause, and then a comment from a gentleman in the audience who said, 'I would like to donate this unit to Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.'"

Mr. Sarrafian says Imagination Manor will be a place of hope for hospitalized children. "This will be a place where they can come and play and dream, and know that hopefully one day soon they'll be back home."

It took a small army of volunteers to bring the playhouse to Children's Hospital. Mr. Sarrafian specifically thanked John Adams, former president of HomeAid, an organization of housing developers that builds homes for the homeless of the community, and also expressed apprecia-

tion to the following vendors for donating their time, energy, and resources to the task of installing the playhouse at the south entrance to LLUCH:

- ABS Consulting
- Brennan Electric
- Climatec
- Consolidated Electrical Distributors, Inc. of San Bernardino
- Gateway Concrete
- GKK Works
- Loma Linda University Medical Center Construction Management
- Loma Linda University Landscaping
- Loma Linda University Medical Center Warehouse
- Mike McHenry
- MTI
- Noble Construction
- Robertson's Ready Mix
- Serfass & Company
- Simplex Grinnell
- Sparling
- United Site Services
- Watermarke Properties

Scott Larson, a representative of HomeAid Inland Empire, followed Mr. Sarrafian's comments by noting that his organization is excited that the playhouse the Hertels purchased will be accessible to so many children.

"Most of the time," he said, "these playhouses end up in someone's backyard, but not for the



Four years after deciding to donate a mammoth playhouse for the children of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, Steve and Denise Hertel finally got to see their dream come true when Imagination Manor was officially opened on Monday, October 4, 2010. Despite a steady downpour during the dedication ceremonies, the rain let up just in time for the ribbon cutting. Steve Hertel is executive director of parking and transportation for Loma Linda University. Denise Hertel is a member of the board of Big Hearts for Little Hearts Loma Linda Guild and other charitable organizations.

public use of providing hope for the children like this one here."

When it was his turn to speak, Steve Hertel attributed the success of the entire project—from dream through completion—to divine intervention. He recalled a comment he made to Denise at the HomeAid auction where they met Zareh Sarrafian four years ago.

"I turned to Denise and said, 'What would you think if we bought a playhouse and donated it to Children's Hospital?' She nodded, she smiled, and I knew we were on. The two of us were like kids in a candy store going through all the houses."

Unfortunately, the Hertels lost the bid on each playhouse they selected. "I said, 'Oh well, we tried,'" Mr. Hertel remembers. "Denise says, 'Maybe next year.'" And here's the divine

intervention: they go to the opportunity drawing, draw the ticket for this playhouse, and the man who won it is one of the members of the BIA (Building Industry Association) and the members start hounding him to give the playhouse back to HomeAid to auction off. "Four and a half minutes later, Denise and I are the proud owners of Imagination Manor," he adds.

"The auctioneer comes down and says, 'I'm so glad you got that!' And I'm thinking, 'Wow, that woman only paused for a hundredth of a second thinking about her bid, and he sold us that playhouse!' I think Someone had a hand in that. The Lord knew this was important."

When it came her turn to speak, Denise Hertel invited members of the audience to take the engraved stone they had been given when they

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INTERNATIONAL ALUMNUS

Dreaming of Afghanistan: the unique story of a School of Public Health alumnus

By Nathan Lang

Abdullah Salam is a dedicated man. Having graduated with a master's in public health (MPH) from Loma Linda University School of Public Health (SPH) in 2010, he hasn't seen his family for two years.

Currently, he serves as geoinformatics systems (GIS) coordinator for the LLU Global Health Institute (GHI). Dr. Salam is also an orthopedic surgeon, but hasn't practiced since his arrival in the United States.

In his home country of Afghanistan, Dr. Salam first came in contact with Loma Linda while working for another Christian organization, International Assistance Mission (IAM). By then, he had studied at the leading medical school in his country, Kabul Medical University (KMU), and completed his residency at one of the country's major hospitals, Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital (WAKH) in Kabul.

Following his residency, Dr. Salam joined the IAM team. With them, he helped spread health

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Abdullah Salam has not been able to see his family in two years. He hopes to return to Afghanistan in the near future.



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