



TODAY

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Loma Linda University Cancer Center receives 2017 ACCC Innovator Award

By Genesis Gonzalez

Loma Linda University (LLU) Cancer Center is a recipient of the 2017 ACCC Innovator Award, presented by the Association of Community Cancer Centers, for its innovative program, “A Perfect Fit: Mentoring Experienced RNs to Meet Oncology Clinic Demand.”

The Innovator Awards recognize members exhibiting forward-thinking and pioneering programs that improve access, quality and/or cost-effectiveness of cancer care delivery.

LLU Cancer Center created its program to encourage career development and specialization in oncology as an effective alternative to minimize staffing shortages.

During the ACCC 34th Oncology Conference held Oct. 18-20 in Nashville, TN, Lexine Thall, MN, RN-BC, AOCN®, director of patient care at LLU Cancer Center, and Kristina Chase, BSN, RN, OCN®, supervisor of patient care at Loma Linda University Health Beaumont-Banning, accepted the award on the Center’s behalf.

While at the conference, Thall and Chase had the opportunity to share with various health care organizations how they overcame staffing shortages by thinking outside-the-box.

“Our aim was to provide a mentorship program in conjunction with vetted education tools to develop these RNs professionally and alleviate our staffing crisis,” Thall said.

The pilot program launched in 2014 following an analysis of appointment types and RN skill level needed for each visit type. The results showed that 40 percent of the Cancer Center’s supportive care therapies (e.g. hydration, blood transfusions) did not require an RN with chemotherapy skills and oncology experience. The information



offered a unique opportunity to fill RN vacancies with experienced non-oncology nurses and create a pathway for RNs to obtain their Oncology Nursing Society (ONS)/Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) Chemotherapy Biotherapy Certificate.

“It has given many nurses an opportunity to gain experience in a specialty area for which many employers may not be willing to bear the educational costs,” Thall said.

Through the mentorship program, 100 percent of participants have attained the ONS/ONCC Chemotherapy/Biotherapy Provider Card. Additionally, 90 percent of the participants attaining the Chemotherapy/Biotherapy

(From left) ACCC President Mark S. Soberman, MD, MBA, FACS, Lexine Thall, MN, RN-BC, AOCN®, director of patient care at LLU Cancer Center, Kristina Chase, BSN, RN, OCN®, supervisor of patient care at Loma Linda University Health Beaumont-Banning and ACCC Executive Director Christian G. Downs, MHA, JD.

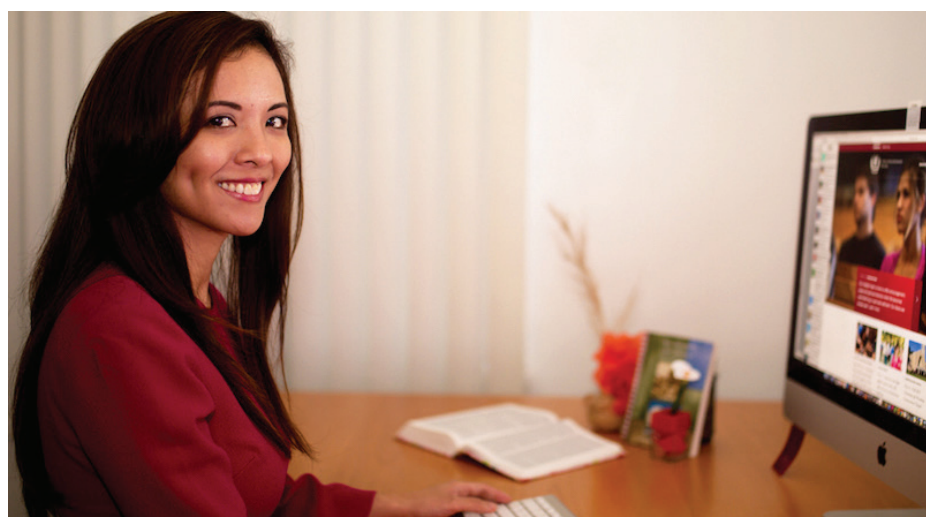
Provider Card have remained with the organization.

For more information on Loma Linda University Cancer Center, visit cancer-center.lomalindahealth.org or email cancer@llu.edu.

Modern Healthcare recognizes Angela Lalas as 2017 Up and Comer

By James Ponder

Modern Healthcare, the industry’s leading source of health care business and policy news, research and information, has named Angela Lalas, MBA, senior vice president for finance at Loma Linda University Health, to its list of Up and Comers for 2017.



Angela Lalas, MBA, senior vice president for finance at Loma Linda University Health, is a nationally-recognized leader in health care finance.

This year, the publication selected 15 outstanding individuals from among thousands of health care executives in the United States age 40 and younger. In choosing the 37-year-old Lalas, Modern Healthcare reported that she provides financial oversight for the \$2 billion, 1,071-bed academic health system.

The publication also pointed out that under her financial leadership, the hospitals have improved financial performance for two consecutive years, citing an increase in combined net operating income from \$14.4 million in 2014 to \$104.7 million in 2016.

Lalas has previously been recognized as a Rising Star in Healthcare — in both 2016 and 2017 — by Becker’s Hospital Review, and as a 150 Hospital and Health System CFOs to Know in 2016, also by Becker’s Hospital Review.

Loma Linda University Health President Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH, said the latest honor for Lalas is a testament to her knowledge and ability to navigate the financial challenges in the health care field.

“Angela is a leader who exemplifies excellence, integrity and professionalism in everything she does,” Hart said. “She is a valued asset to this organization, and we are proud of her accomplishments.”

Lalas, who grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist family, told the publication that her choice of career in health care was a matter of faith, and that it is in the health care industry that she is able to positively impact the most lives.

“I help support our providers in delivering top-quality care through faithful fiscal stewardship,” she said. She added that she is honored and humbled to be chosen to represent Loma Linda University Health on the Modern Healthcare list.

“I am so grateful to God for blessing me with the privilege of serving with an outstanding team of mentors, colleagues, and coworkers here at Loma Linda,” Lalas said.

The complete list is available at <http://www.modernhealthcare.com/community/up-and-comers/2017/>.

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Liver transplant program director Dr. Michael Volk named “2017 Healthcare Visionary”

By Heather Reifsnyder

The American Liver Foundation bestowed the “2017 Healthcare Visionary” upon Michael Volk, MD, medical director of the liver transplantation program at Loma Linda University Health, an award that underscores his nationally recognized contributions to the fields of hepatology, gastroenterology and effective health care delivery.

He received the award during the foundation’s annual Flavors Culinary Experience fundraising gala in Orange County on Oct. 15.

Volk has spearheaded regional growth and advancement of hepatology and liver transplant care and research since joining the Loma Linda University Health Transplantation Institute in early 2015. He streamlined two liver service operations into one, and the institute now has five hepatologists caring for liver patients from the Inland Empire and nearby desert regions, eastern Orange County and southern Nevada. The institute has roughly doubled the number of liver transplants it performs annually.

Under Volk’s leadership, Loma Linda University Health opened a satellite liver clinic in Las Vegas in February 2017, minimizing travel needs for Nevada hepatology patients. Now, these patients receive all their pre- and post-surgical care close to home, only coming to Loma Linda for the surgery and recovery period. So far, three Las Vegas-area patients have undergone liver transplant under this process.

To provide similar benefit, in January 2018 the Transplantation Institute will open a satellite liver service clinic in Irvine, CA, for patients in Orange County.

Coinciding with Liver Awareness Month and Liver Cancer Awareness Month, the Flavors Culinary Experience gala offered Volk the opportunity to speak about a topic vital to the health of liver patients and one of his research fields — supporting caregivers in their essential role as a family member or friend of a very ill loved one.

“We cannot effectively treat our liver patients if, in between visits, they don’t receive optimal home care and assistance with health maintenance tasks such as getting lab tests and filling prescriptions,” he said.

Volk spearheaded the creation of an educational website for caregivers of liver disease patients — found at cirrhosis-caregivers.com — while he was at University of Michigan Medicine. Cirrhosis is the end-stage of all liver diseases of any cause.

The website’s five-part video series equips caregivers

with the knowledge they need to provide care to their loved one, navigate the health care system, and care for their own needs at the same time.

In addition to his medical degree, Volk holds a master of science degree in health and health care research. He spends about 20 percent of his time conducting research, mainly on cirrhosis and health care delivery. He has published 19 research papers since joining Loma Linda University Health and more than 90 during his career.

The Transplantation Institute is currently conducting two clinical studies, with Volk as principal investigator, extramurally funded by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases and the Patient-Centered Outcome Research Institute.

Volk has published about the stigma of liver disease and its endpoint of cirrhosis. “People assume it’s self-inflicted. Very often it’s not,” he said.

Liver disease has numerous causes — including cancer, hepatitis C, fatty liver disease, excessive alcohol use or hereditary conditions — and sometimes no cause.

Volk notes, however, that lifestyle practices including exercising, eating a healthy diet and — if a person drinks, limiting consumption to one alcoholic beverage daily for women or two for men — can assist in maintaining a healthy liver.

This is the second consecutive year that a Loma Linda University Health Transplantation Institute physician received the “Healthcare Visionary” award from the American Liver Foundation at the Flavors Culinary Experience gala. In 2016, Michael de Vera, MD, director of the Transplantation Institute, also received the honor.

Loma Linda University Health is this year celebrating 50 years of transplantation, which began in 1967 when surgeon Louis Smith, MD, successfully transplanted a kidney to save the life of a male patient who had been on dialysis for 100 days.

Fifty years after this first kidney transplant in inland Southern California, Loma Linda University Health’s Transplantation Institute remains the regional leader in comprehensive transplant care for children and adults.



Michael Volk, MD, receives his Healthcare Visionary award from celebrity chef Jamie Gwen, who emceed the Flavors Culinary Experience Orange County gala on Oct. 15 that raised funds for the American Liver Foundation. (Photo by M.Haight Photography)

Business incubator lands second research grant

By Kristen Hwang and James Ponder

A month after receiving its first research grant, n³eight, LLC, the new business incubator at Loma Linda University Health, has been awarded a second grant, this time to develop a promising new treatment for the deadliest form of childhood cancer, a subtype of acute lymphoblastic leukemia known as B-ALL.

The grant, a \$299,999 Phase 1 SBIR award from the National Institutes of Health, goes to Elf Zone, Inc., a woman-owned business that is one of eight startup firms at the incubator. SBIR stands for small business innovation research, a federal program designed to support small businesses conducting research and development projects with commercial potential.



Kimberly Payne, PhD, CEO of Elf Zone, Inc, searches for better treatments for a deadly form of childhood cancer. (photo by Kristen Hwang)

Michael Samardzija, PhD, JD, associate vice president of research affairs, welcomes the news of the second grant. “We are extremely pleased to learn of this new grant coming so soon after we announced the first one,” Samardzija said. He noted that two other companies may soon join the eight already established at n³eight, LLC.

Kimberly Payne, PhD, CEO of Elf Zone and director of translational research at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, says the grant will help develop a promising new treatment for B-ALL.

The discovery that led to the grant came as an ironic surprise to Payne and colleagues. Three years ago, graduate student Olivia Francis informed Payne that data they were generating revealed the opposite of what they were expecting to find.

The team had been studying the effect of adding a cytokine growth factor, TSLP, to a B-ALL subtype that produces too many TSLP receptors. Payne explains that immature white blood cells, including leukemia cells, rely on the growth factor to proliferate. As a result, she and Francis were expecting to see leukemia spreading faster as a result of the increased dosage of TSLP. But after reviewing the data, Payne had the team test the opposite hypothesis.

When they did, the first experiment showed the leukemia had almost disappeared. Four subsequent experiments confirmed the same finding: feeding B-ALL cells too much TSLP caused them to die instead of thrive. It also allowed healthy white blood cells to take their place. “This was totally unexpected. I was skeptical until each new experiment showed the same result,” Payne said.

The data was so promising that Payne formed Elf Zone to bring the unexpected therapy to market if further testing, including clinical trials, proves as successful as her initial studies. She is eager to find a better treatment for B-ALL, which she claims is not only the most common childhood cancer, but also the deadliest.

Payne points out that many people think science has already cured B-ALL because about 80 percent of children who get it are cured. While she admits that’s a better cure rate than is currently available for almost any other kind of cancer, she insists it’s not good enough. “When this leukemia relapses, half of the kids die and that hasn’t changed in 30 years,” she says.

Pathologists' Assistant Program receives excellent accreditation summation

By Larry Kidder

Three individuals representing the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) visited one of the newest programs on the Loma Linda University campus recently. They were intent on evaluating the School of Medicine's pathologists' assistant program, which graduated its first class with master of health science (MHS) degrees in September 2017.

"We find no deficiencies in the program," Robert Cottrell, MHS, program director of the pathologists' assistant program at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut, shared in his summation. "We want to commend the program for its strengths, including its emphasis on teaching and clinical experience, enthusiastic students, graduates who are well-prepared for the workplace, and strong institutional support."

Peter Hu, PhD, MLS, program director of DMS programs at University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center's The School of Health Professions, was impressed by the fact that every meeting he had with various groups was very well-attended, and participants were engaged and positive.

Pam Vollmer, BS, PA, education coordinator for the pathologists' assistant program at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, added that the Loma Linda program was her first site visit and "the bar has been set very high" for future programs she would likely visit. The term "flagship program" was also used to describe Loma Linda University's pathologists' assistant program.

Cottrell informed those present that the program would most likely receive final word of official NAACLS accreditation in April 2018, following review by several more official entities. However, accreditation could come sooner, depending on a number of factors.

The successful accreditation visit is evidence that Loma Linda's program is meeting the high standards of NAACLS, as well as a reflection of the diligent work done by a number of individuals, including program director Cheryl Germain, MHS; Michael Weitzel, MHS, clinical coordinator; Jeremy Deisch, MD, medical director; and Paul Herrmann, MD, department chair of pathology and human anatomy, School of Medicine.

"We're looking for great things from our pathologists' assistant program," said Roger Hadley, MD, dean of the School of Medicine, in a wrap-up session following the summation. "With such a positive report, we are truly free to design the future of the program and help establish the profession."



Martha Green, right, enjoys a laugh with Najwa Medina, center, and Kerry Heinrich, JD, CEO of Loma Linda University Medical Center, at the 18th annual Dishes for Wishes fundraiser. (photo by Don Finch)

Martha Green's surprising announcement during fundraiser for Children's Hospital

By James Ponder

Inland Empire celebrity chef Martha Green did a surprising about-face while emceeding the 18th annual Dishes for Wishes fundraiser for Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. The event, which was held Oct. 11 at the National Orange Show Events Center in San Bernardino, is presented by the Big Hearts for Little Hearts Loma Linda Guild.

The flamboyant Green, who has served as mistress of ceremonies since the first Dishes for Wishes in 1999, elicited silence when she told the estimated 350 guests she intended to retire from the event following her 75th birthday next year.

Moments later, however, Green reversed her decision when Kerry Heinrich, JD, CEO of Loma Linda University Medical Center, told her the new Children's Hospital tower is expected to open in 2020. On hearing Green's promise to stay on until 2020, the crowd responded with spontaneous applause.

Green was her colorful, ebullient self throughout the evening, joking with law enforcement officers who waited tables during the dinner and carrying on an extended repartee with guest speaker Courtney B. Martin, DO, director of the Total Care Birth Center at Children's Hospital.

Green got a huge laugh from the audience when she called guild co-founders Dixie Watkins and Eloise Habekost to the stage and presented them each a commemorative apron. She said the pair recently went to the home of the seamstress who makes the aprons, only to discover that she was not at home. What's worse, the gate had locked behind them and since it can only be opened from inside the house, Watkins was forced to climb the fence, open the gate and let Habekost out.

The heart of the event is a cooking class in which chefs from notable Inland Empire restaurants demonstrate one or more of their signature dishes while local police and sheriff's department officers serve the dishes to the guests. Diners, in turn, festoon their waiters with dollar bills, all of which benefit the hospital.

Guild treasurer Penny Moores said that this year's event raised more than \$63,000. The monies came from the sale of admission tickets, corporate and individual sponsorships, proceeds from the opportunity drawing and a percentage of sales from the gift boutique vendors. Moores praised one donor, who wished to remain anonymous, for a gift of \$15,000. Funds raised this year will go toward the purchase of two new neonatal heart monitors and other selected equipment for the Total Care Birth Center.

Guild President Lynn Sleeth said she was pleased with how the event turned out. "The whole thing was amazing," she said, praising the law enforcement officers, Teen Challenge representatives, the nursing administration staff who staffed the kitchen, and all the other volunteers who worked behind the scenes to make it a success.

Sleeth said the combination of Green's quick wit and the creative genius of Dishes for Wishes coordinator Angie Temple marks the annual fundraiser as the "crème de la crème" of guild activities.

"No one works harder from start to finish than Angie," Sleeth said, pointing out that Temple has coordinated the event for the past seven years, developing themes, coordinating décor ideas, and working with members of the board and local chefs. "She is so generous of her time, talents and finances. She does this all with a loving heart and beautiful smile, too," Sleeth said.

Sleeth also expressed relief that Green had changed her mind. "Martha has been doing this for the better part of two decades," she said. "I can't imagine this event without her."

Seeds of Hope event focuses on erasing stigma of mental illness

Recording Artist Michelle Williams visits Loma Linda University Health, shares her advocacy for mental health causes

By Larry Becker

Michelle Williams, former member of Destiny's Child and a Grammy award-winning singer and songwriter, believes her faith in God combined with professional therapy were instrumental in her battle with depression, she said during her presentation at the 10th Seeds of Hope celebration, which benefits the Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center.

Seeds of Hope focuses on the importance of mental health as a key factor in whole person care. Participants in the annual event seek to dispel the stigma surrounding the mental health field. Held in the Loma Linda University Health Centennial Complex on Oct. 12, the 2017 Seeds of Hope featured success stories of two past patients and the presentation of the first Behavioral Health Champion Award.

Williams shared memories of her childhood church and faith experiences. She also recounted key moments in her career path, ultimately receiving critical acclaim as a member of Destiny's Child with Beyoncé Knowles and Kelly Rowland. Her music career continues as a solo artist, along with her interests in acting, business and design.

"Growing up I was a sad, wounded little girl," she said. "I was bullied in school; I internalized things; I had years of practice in church learning how to show everything was okay on the outside.

In her twenties, Williams came to believe she might be depressed, but it was not until her thirties that she sought help through therapy. In 2013 she bravely went public with her mental health issues.

"It's a journey of ups and downs," Williams said. "But I'm thankful to God that I'm able to share my story. Thank you to every social worker, every clinical therapist, every physician."

Williams recently accepted a role as an ambassador for the Office on Women's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She has used this platform to become a champion for mental health causes. Williams toured the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital and Behavioral Medicine Center on the afternoon of the Seeds of Hope. Her visit focused on learning how the two facilities help patients with specific behavioral issues.

"I am an advocate for mental health," she said. "I am happy to speak out and to help erase the stigma of mental illness. I hope what I share helps others suffering from mental health issues."

The Behavioral Medicine Center has provided support to those living with mental illness for more than a quarter of a century. Edward Field, MBA, vice president for the Behavioral Medicine Center, shared statistics about the current needs for mental health support:

- 1 in 4 people will have a diagnosable mental illness in their lifetime
- Approximately 1 in 5 men and 1 in 12 women develop alcohol dependence during their lifetime
- There is a suicide every 15 minutes
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for ages 15-24

"While those statistics are staggering, the BMC continues to offer hope to those dealing with family conflict, substance use issues, depression, anxiety, stress, self-harm, out-of-control behavior and school problems," Field said. "During the past year our skilled care teams have provided for more than 26,000 days of inpatient treatment and over 38,000 visits to our outpatient programs."

Field shared that the funds raised during the previous Seeds of Hope events had provided 250 scholarships to help the BMC provide treatment to those with limited or no access to insurance.

"Your partnership is vital to us as we work to reduce stigma and provide education, recovery, and hope to our communities," Field said.

The long-term success stories of two former patients demonstrated the benefits of the whole person care approach the BMC offers.

Jamie Rocha's treatment through the Behavioral Medicine Center's detox program included therapy with her family, which played a key role in her recovery. Overcoming an addiction to prescription pills as a result of a motor vehicle accident in her youth, Rocha has become more involved as a mother and wife. She believes the best five years of her life have happened since her treatment.

"The Behavioral Medicine Center is like a lifeboat. What happened here saved my life and my family," Rocha said. "It helped my husband and children understand and deal with my addiction, and brought us closer together.

"With the disease of addiction there's a stigma about it being something you can't control," Rocha said. "I hope that people who are new in recovery can look at me and see that recovery is possible. You can get your life back."

Troy Mondragon has been through in- and out-patient programs at the BMC. His therapy has helped him deal with alcohol abuse, emotional problems, suicidal thoughts and depression.



Seeds of Hope featured speaker Michelle Williams shares her story. Williams is a former member of Destiny's Child and a successful solo artist.

Representatives from the RSB Harbinger Corporation accept the BMC's first Behavioral Health Champion Award.

Troy Mondragon says the BMC gave him understanding, empowerment, and hope.

(photos by Don Finch)



"I wouldn't be alive today without the help I received at the Behavioral Medicine Center," Mondragon said.

Today he is a mental health advocate and holds a Master's Degree in social work. Crafton Hills College named Mondragon as an outstanding alumnus of the year in 2017. He was appointed by Supervisor James Ramos to serve on the San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Commission, and plans to someday complete requirements to become a licensed Clinical Social Worker.

"The BMC gave me a safe place and provided understanding, empowerment, accountability and hope," Mondragon said.

While many have supported the Behavioral Medicine Center's work over its 26-year history, event organizers selected this milestone 10th Seeds of Hope event to inaugurate the Behavioral Health Champion Award. For nearly 30 years, RSB Harbinger Corporation provided affordable housing to mentally ill clients who could live independently. Founded in Riverside, California, in 1987, the corporation served until 2015, when its board elected to cease operations. RSB Harbinger selected the BMC to receive a portion of its assets, making a gift of \$128,000 to be used as scholarships or assistance for patients who do not have insurance to cover needed treatment for mental illness.

"There is hope for those living with mental illness and substance use issues," said Field, the center's administrator. "The Behavioral Medicine Center's caring team offers highly structured and therapeutic programs in an atmosphere of trust and support — a 'safe place' for people can address a variety of issues.

"Seeds of Hope' events provide us with opportunities to introduce potential supporters to the BMC's mission — planting hope in each of our patients' and families' lives," Field said. "We thank those who believe in this mission, and help us continue being a place of hope to those who need our help."

Study finds new benefit for consuming nuts

Including nuts in diet can lead to beneficial brainwave frequencies

By James Ponder

A new study by researchers at Loma Linda University Health has found that eating nuts on a regular basis strengthens brainwave frequencies associated with cognition, healing, learning, memory and other key brain functions. An abstract of the study — which was presented in the nutrition section of the Experimental Biology 2017 meetings in San Diego, California, and published in *The FASEB Journal* — may be accessed online at http://www.fasebj.org/content/31/1_Supplement/636.24

In the study — which is titled “Nuts and brain: Effects of eating nuts on changing electroencephalograph brainwaves” — researchers found that some nuts stimulated some brain frequencies more than others. Pistachios, for instance, produced the greatest gamma wave response, which is critical for enhancing cognitive processing, information retention, learning, perception and rapid eye movement during sleep. Peanuts, which are actually legumes, but were part of the study, produced the highest delta response, which is associated with healthy immunity, natural healing, and deep sleep.

The study’s principal investigator, Lee Berk, DrPH, MPH, associate dean for research at the LLU School of Allied Health Professions, said that while researchers found variances between the six nut varieties tested, all of them were high in beneficial antioxidants, with walnuts containing the highest antioxidant concentrations of all.

Prior studies have demonstrated that nuts benefit the body in several significant ways: protecting the heart, fighting cancer, reducing inflammation and slowing the aging process. But Berk said he believes too little research has focused on how they affect the brain.

“This study provides significant beneficial findings by demonstrating that nuts are as good for



A new study from Loma Linda University Health finds that pistachios and other nuts support brain health.

your brain as they are for the rest of your body,” Berk said. He expects future studies will reveal that they make additional contributions to the brain and nervous system.

To gather research data on nut consumption and the brain, Berk — who is best known for four decades of research into the health benefits of happiness and laughter, as well as a cluster of recent studies on the antioxidants in dark chocolate — assembled a team of 13 researchers to explore the effects of regular nut consumption on brainwave activity.

In the introduction to the study, the team

noted that different nuts contain different types of antioxidants. What they didn’t know, however, was whether different nut antioxidants had different modulatory effects on brainwave frequencies response.

To find out, Berk and his colleagues tested the effects of consuming nuts on frequency modulations inside the brain. He said the human brain produces five separate types of waves — delta, theta, alpha, beta and gamma — and that each wave produces its own frequency and occupies its own bandwidth. “Sort of like radio stations on a dial,” he said.

The team developed a pilot study using consenting subjects who consumed almonds, cashews, peanuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts. Electroencephalograms (EEG) were taken to measure the strength of brainwave signals. EEG wave band activity was then recorded from nine regions of the scalp associated with cerebral cortical function.

Michael Samardzija, PhD, JD, associate vice president for research affairs, says Loma Linda University researchers have been discovering the health benefits of nuts for decades. He cites multiple studies conducted by Joan Sabatè, MD, DrPH, and other School of Public Health researchers which have demonstrated that nuts promote cardiovascular health, cancer prevention and healthy aging.

“These results coming from Dr. Berk’s research at the School of Allied Health Professions show that nuts can now be considered one of the superfoods helping to support brain health,” Samardzija said.

Hospital leadership join forces to pull 116,000-pound plane at San Bernardino Airfest

by Briana Pastorino

Two 116,000-pound airplanes were pulled across the tarmac at San Bernardino International Airport during the 3rd annual SBD Fest, Sunday, Oct. 22, raising more than \$2,000 for Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital (LLUCH).

After a minute-and-a-half of pulling, the red team, composed of San Bernardino County and Loma Linda Fire Departments, and representatives from LLUCH, took home bragging rights of pulling their plane the farthest.

The SB Strong Plane Pull welcomed two teams — the aforementioned red team, and the green team, made up of members of the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department. Each team lined up on 100-foot ropes attached to a 116,000 pound, 757 aircraft to compete to see who could pull the plane the farthest in 90 seconds.

Joining the SBFD and LLFD were four representatives from Loma Linda University Health: Rachelle Bussell, senior VP of advancement; Lyndon Edwards, senior VP/administrator of Loma Linda University Medical Center adult services; Joe Perry, assistant VP of finance at LLUCH; and Jillian Payne, assistant VP of philanthropy.

San Bernardino County Fire Captain Mike McClintock told the San Bernardino Sun that LLUCH was a cause worth pulling for.

“There’s always a friendly rivalry between police and fire, but we’re partners in public safety and here to help each other no matter what,” McClintock said.

Loma Linda University Health representatives Rachelle Bussell, senior VP of advancement; Lyndon Edwards senior VP/administrator of Loma Linda University Medical Center adult services; Jillian Payne, assistant VP of philanthropy; and Joe Perry, assistant VP of finance at LLUCH, helped raise \$2,000 for Children’s Hospital, but they had to work for it. They were part of a team that helped pull an airplane across the tarmac at San Bernardino airport in October. (photos by Briana Pastorino)



Girl, running (and studying)

By Briana Pastorino

Two hours, thirty-seven minutes and 55 seconds. That's how long it took Joanna Reyes, a student at Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy, to run the Los Angeles Marathon on March 19, 2017. Her all-time best.

Coming in fourth place in the pro women race, she was the first American female to cross the finish line.

"I was shocked," Reyes says of her results. "I never imagined I would be running so fast so soon."

Learning to run (but just for fun)

Running marathons wasn't something Reyes ever really planned to do. Her family lived a healthy lifestyle, so exercising and good nutrition were nothing new to Reyes. But her focus first and foremost was education.

She didn't start running until joining the cross country team her freshman year of high school.

"My family was very supportive," Reyes says, "but education took precedence over sports because that's how I would succeed in life. Regardless of how good I was, I was passionate about running, but it was never more than just something to do for fun."

After high school, Reyes continued to run on the cross-country team for two seasons while attending San Jose State University. She admits that traveling to meets in addition to studying for her classes was stressful. "It was overwhelming," she says, "and I wasn't even that fast of a runner."

Reyes graduated from San Jose State University in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in biological science and immediately headed to Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy.

A career in health care (but still running)

Reyes always knew she wanted to pursue a career in health care. As for coming to Loma Linda, there were a lot of factors, she says, that influenced her decision.

Leading up to her acceptance to the class of 2019, Reyes enjoyed coming out for interviews with professors and staff. "Everyone was very friendly and demonstrated how much they cared for their students," she says. "They wanted to get to know me as a person and how I would contribute to the school."

Growing up a Christian, Reyes enjoyed the faith-based atmosphere of LLU. "The aspect of wholeness was very attractive and was already a big part of my life."

Since joining the other 325 students at LLU School of Pharmacy, Reyes has remained diligent in her studies, maintaining a 3.0 GPA and also interning at pharmacies for even more hands-on learning.

Once she earns her doctorate degree she's hoping to go into hospital pharmacy. "From what I've experienced interning at Loma Linda University Medical Center, I envision myself in that environment."

Running while at LLU was something she was planning to do on the side. "But over time my running improved, and the LA Marathon, well, that just sorta happened."

Marathon life

Three hours and eight minutes. That's the total time it took Reyes to run her first marathon in Santa Rosa in 2014. Since then, Reyes, a Northern California native, has run five other marathons and has progressively gotten better — with the exception of the Boston Marathon in 2015.

Reyes says finishing that race was daunting. "Rain, 40 degree temps and wind. It was a fight to finish."

Trying to keep a 12-minute mile for the last five miles in Boston was challenging, and it landed her in the medical tent with hypothermia and severe leg cramps. "But I finished, and I want to do it again."



LLU School of Pharmacy student Joanna Reyes after finishing the LA Marathon in 4th place.

Before running the LA Marathon, her personal best happened in 2016 at the San Francisco Marathon: two hours and 50 minutes.

Reyes runs every day. Even with the pressure of school and interning, she runs 80 miles a week — 100 during the summer.

This past summer, Reyes was part of an organized training session in Mammoth with other professional athletes and even Olympians from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

She was able to train with elite marathoner and Olympian Deena Kastor, who won the bronze medal in the 2004 Olympic Games, and her husband, Andrew Kastor, also a marathon runner.

"Training in Mammoth was challenging with the hills and thin air, but I believe it made me stronger," Reyes says. "I look to my next marathon with a positive mindset."

An Olympic vision

Training in Mammoth has done more than teach Reyes how to run faster and with more technique in hopes of making the 2020 Olympic Games.

Reyes says that getting to know and training with Olympians really excites the spirit within her. "I discovered their hidden strengths and fire within their souls," Reyes said. "An Olympian can appear ordinary, but they have that special switch they turn on during hard training and races allowing them to perform their best."

"I also have that switch."

Reyes says she was elated to be able to train with some of the world's best athletes in hopes of qualifying for the Olympic Marathon Trials.

"I thank God each day for the opportunities that have come my way."

Follow Joanna's training on her blog at joannagreyes.blogspot.com.

Board designates Michael Samardzija as institutional official for research

By James Ponder

Loma Linda University Health's board of trustees recently designated Michael Samardzija, PhD, JD, associate vice president of research affairs, as institutional official for research.

The title conveys responsibility for several functions. Samardzija is the primary signatory on all grants, research-related contracts, clinical trial contracts, intellectual property documents, and official correspondence with government agencies, external sponsors and oversight agencies. In addition, he appoints members of research compliance committees such as the institutional animal care and use committee, the institutional review board, and the institutional biosafety committee.

Samardzija — who assumed his new responsibilities this year, replacing Anthony Zuccarelli, PhD, who retired — is an intellectual property attorney with more than 28 years of experience in the life sciences and clean technology sectors, equally divided at 14 years each as a research scientist and attorney.

The new designation means people looking for information about any aspect of research at Loma Linda University Health should contact Samardzija. "It's really simple. If you need assistance with anything related to human or animal research, contact me," he said. Samardzija may be reached by phone at 909-651-5920 or by email at msamardzija@llu.edu.





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Falling in L-O-V-E with dentistry

By Genesis Gonzalez

While growing up, Kylin Hamann spent summers in China living with various host families and studying Mandarin. During her sophomore year in high school she lived in Sichuan Province, immersing herself in its culture, people and language.

Kylin enjoys using Mandarin to communicate with her Chinese patients on the School of Dentistry's main clinic floor as well as at the Blessing Center in Redlands, California. At that student-run free dental clinic for the underserved, Kylin provides dental services each Tuesday to patients of all ages and backgrounds.

"It's a blessing to work alongside dedicated classmates who are passionate about serving others through dentistry," says the class of 2018 Loma Linda University School of Dentistry student. Kylin has come to view dentistry as more than a profession: it's a relationship with each patient built on trust and love.

"People truly are affected by their health and how they perceive their smile," says Kylin. "It is my goal to care for the person in a way that goes beyond the teeth." With every appointment, she takes the time to get to know her patients and to help them understand what is involved in the procedures they need.

Her commitment to provide compassionate care for every patient traces back to an early age. Kylin always admired the ability of her mother — Beth Hamann, DDS'85 — to balance work as a dentist while raising six children. "Her love for dentistry is evident. But more than that, her passion for connecting with people and building meaningful relationships is beautiful."

As Kylin matured, her mother would share stories from her education at the School of Dentistry, where one faculty member made a lasting impression. In Dr. Beth Hamann's first week as a dental student in 1981, a young professor walked up to the blackboard and wrote the word L-O-V-E. He told the class that if they were here for any other reason than to love patients, they should leave. This single indelible moment inspired Beth Hamann in a way that over the years nourished a similar inclination in her daughter.

Although Kylin had the option to attend several dental schools, she was drawn to the special place her mom always told her about — Loma Linda University School of Dentistry. "I wanted to find people like the young professor who inspired my mom so deeply."

Kylin arrived at the Loma Linda University campus not knowing anyone and was a little nervous at first, as most students are. During her initial visit to the Blessing Center, she was welcomed immediately by Mark Carpenter, DDS'80, who made her feel part of the team. She remembers how he took the time to get to know her and inquired about her interests. "You seem like you're a service-oriented



For Kylin Hamann, a fourth-year dental student at the School of Dentistry, compassion and care for others began at an early age.

person," he remarked. "I'd love for you to come back and be a part of the group." That evening Kylin called her mother to share how her day had gone and described how warmly she was received by her supervising clinician.

"This professor is so amazing. He made me feel so very welcome," Kylin exclaimed. Dr. Hamann was pleased to hear such positive news and very curious to know the dentist's name. When Kylin told her it was Dr. Carpenter, her mother's reaction was a joyful surprise: "That's the person I've been telling you about your whole life!"

Beyond her work at the Blessing Center, Kylin spends most of her time with classes and lab assignments. She relishes every opportunity to connect with faculty members and build relationships that inspire her professionally and personally. One of those who has played an integral role in her mentoring is Kwang "Peter" Chung, DDS'76, MA'81. "He will never compromise or settle when it comes to providing excellent care," she says. "It's an honor to attempt to follow in that legacy of love and clinical excellence that Loma Linda University School of Dentistry seems to cultivate."

As a fourth-year student, Kylin was selected to participate in the School of Dentistry's implant dentistry honors program for which she attends

classes taught by graduate implant and prosthodontic faculty members. The unique program offers her the opportunity to shadow and assist in various implant surgeries. "I get to learn from the best," she said.

For the past three summers, Kylin has provided dental care to families and children in Nicaragua as part of the School of Dentistry's Service Learning program. The repeat visits allow Kylin to know the children she's treated and watch their progress. She sees value in returning consistently to the same community and hopes to go back in the future. Also on her to-do list are dental mission trips to China.

Looking for balance in her life, Kylin will run the Chicago Marathon this October. She often starts her days at 4 a.m. with a run in the dark. "School can overtake your life, and it's hard to balance everything at times," she says. "Training for the marathon gives me incentive to find the time."

Kylin graduated in 2014 with her bachelor's degree, a dual major in biochemistry and Chinese, from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Following graduation next year from Loma Linda University, she will return home to Phoenix, Arizona, to partner professionally with her mother and her fiancé, Eric Chen, DDS'14, at the family's dental practice.

Eye Institute's Dunbar honored by San Bernardino County's Preschool Services Department

By Ansel Oliver

Jennifer Dunbar, MD, vice chair of the Loma Linda University Eye Institute, was presented with San Bernardino County's Preschool Services Department "Community Partner Award" earlier this year at the Ontario Convention Center.

Dunbar, a pediatric ophthalmologist, was selected for her work for the Vision Screening Program in partnering with the county to improve the wellbeing of children, empowering families, and strengthening the community.

Dunbar founded the George P. Cheng, MD, Children's Vision Screening Program in September 2015, which has since screened more than 12,600 children in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

The Cheng Family Foundation contributed to the effort to honor the late Cheng, who was an alumnus of the Loma Linda University School of Medicine and an ophthalmologist.

Dunbar also partnered with the Lions Clubs of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, which supply members to conduct the vision screenings at day cares, preschools and Head Start programs. Their mission is to promote vision development in children by providing free vision screenings and by connecting parents to a network of informed caregivers.

For more information about the Vision Screening program, visit LLUeyes.com/kids.



Jennifer Dunbar, MD

Building (a) Trust:

Bankers Yolanda and Dennis De La Paz Find Value in Planned Giving & Trust Services

By Lynn McDowell, JD, CSPG
Office of Planned Giving

When it comes to financial savvy, Dennis and Yolanda De La Paz have it covered. Both high-level bankers for their entire careers, Yolanda's talent was recognized in her first job out of university, when her employer paid for her graduate degree in banking. Yolanda retired as a senior vice president of commercial banking; Dennis, also a VP, was legendary for his ability to quickly spot the weakness in any balance sheet and was tapped by the FDIC to help sort through the 2008 banking crisis.

Their professional skills served them well in their private lives, too. Dennis' no-nonsense approach to the bottom line ensured there would be no compromise of their lifestyle when they retired. Then came the diagnosis: prostate cancer.

Applying the thorough, methodical approach that was his trademark, Dennis looked at the treatment methods available. He found Bob Marckini's book, *You Can Beat Prostate Cancer*, and concluded proton therapy was the only option for him, and Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) was the right place for it.

While a patient at the James M. Slater, MD Proton Treatment & Research Center, Dennis applied his strategic thinking to possible future scenarios. He wanted to make sure Yolanda and her family members were cared for, and his respect for LLUH was growing by the day. After discussing his thoughts with Yolanda, Dennis contacted LLUH's planned giving department.

"We found it very advantageous to work with Loma Linda," says Dennis. Todd Mekelburg, director of planned giving, was particularly helpful in coming up with different ways to achieve their goals of taking care of family and making a significant contribution to LLUH and its Vision 2020 Campaign.

Because of some bad experiences with attorneys, Dennis was hesitant to structure a charitable remainder trust — or any other kind of trust. But attorney Kenneth Iwakoshi, director of trust services, turned that all around for Dennis. "The more we got into the process, the more positive the experience became," says Dennis. Not only was Kenny pleasant and a good listener, Dennis and Yolanda knew from their professional lives that Kenny's legal work saved them several thousand dollars. "Kenny insisted we have our attorney review everything," recalls Dennis. "The detail we were able to get with Kenny was very good."

To top it off, the De La Pazes remained in complete control while they deliberated about who to benefit and the best structure for their trust—a process that spanned two years. The discussion was always congenial and accommodating of Yolanda's desire to include two other charities as beneficiaries of the trust. It was a big relief to them when LLUH agreed to be named successor trustee, acting as always, without fee.

"Working with Todd and Kenny was a phenomenal benefit," says Yolanda, who'd served on the board of White Memorial Medical Center, another Seventh-day Adventist healthcare institution. "I liked the idea of keeping it in the family."

"If you're going to have a trust," Dennis advises, "you should include a charity." Now in his fifth year of being cancer-free and maintaining the low Gleason scores that make his doctor smile, Dennis is glad he took the initiative to work with planned giving and trust services. The De La Pazes are money ahead and confident that they've saved their family a lot of stress.

Why a Charitable Remainder in a Living Trust?

The living trust allows the donor(s) to benefit from trust payouts while they are alive. If a charitable remainder clause is included, the donor can ensure that family or other persons benefit from trust payouts for as long as the donor specifies, and then a charity or charities get what remains in the trust. The family or other individuals can receive payments from the trust for their lives or for a specific number of years. When that period ends, what's left in the trust ("the remainder") passes to the charity or charities named.

"It's a win-win," says Dennis. "You take care of your family and help the Adventist family of charities," he says. It's clear he and Yolanda still feel good about their experience and happy with their decision: they've widened their circle of trust.

Not a bad result for a couple of veteran bankers.



Dennis and Yolanda De La Paz

Reportable Crimes

The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 requires colleges and universities across the United States to publish interim reports on campus crime activities. Listed below are the crimes reported for Loma Linda University Health for the month of September 2017:

Type of Crime	Number of Crimes	Place of Crime
Motor Vehicle Theft	3	P3; LL HLT Support Service; Griggs Hall
Burglary	1	LLU Health Support Services
Narcotics	1	LLUMC
Disturbance	2	Housekeeping Dept.; Children's Hosp.
Assault	3	Children's Hosp., East Campus; BMC
Threats	3	Mortensen Hall; Lot C; ER
Illegal Dumping	1	Campus
Pedestrian Check	1	R & L Thrift
Fire	1	SB Campus

You can assist the Loma Linda University Health department of security in maintaining a safe and secure environment by notifying security immediately at extension 9-1-1 if you see or know about a crime taking place.



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Have a newsworthy story? Visit news.llu.edu/news, click on the "Submit a story idea" bar, and complete the submission form.

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