

Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

Committed to Serve His Country

By Vicki Cho Estrada

Mike Le, BSN, PHN, RN, wakes up at 4 a.m. every workday, allowing time to work out, relax and feel centered before starting his 7 a.m. shift at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. It's among the many routines he has picked up since joining the U.S. Army Reserves six years ago.

Le, who works in CHLA's Operating Room, is a first lieutenant and Medical Services Officer in the Reserves, responsible for "ensuring that medical personnel are ready to deploy anywhere in the world," he says, adding, "If deployed, we can serve and operate as a small field hospital. We also work to ensure equipment and vehicles, from ambulances to armored vehicles, are ready to go at any time."

Last summer, he added platoon leader to his responsibilities, where he works alongside a sergeant and oversees platoon operations,

including the safety and training of 60-100 Reserve soldiers.

Most days after working at CHLA, he can be found on his computer, making plans for drills, training exercises and equipment. Le spends one weekend a month on duty and two weeks a year in training. He was looking forward to his first deployment to Canada last year, but plans were scrapped due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Of his commitment to the military, Le says, "It's a lot of time from my personal life, but it's my duty to serve my country till my time's up," adding he's gained confidence and leadership skills that serve him well at CHLA and in the nursing profession. In January, Le became a board member on the American Nurses Association Commission of Accreditation.



Mike Le, BSN, PHN, RN

"My work with the Reserves has helped me remain calm under fire. When I see hecticness and stress, I run to it rather than run away from it. As a nurse, that's so vital. When things go wrong, it's up to a nurse and doctor to have a steady hand to save a patient." ■

Nurses in Action

Switch From Sales to Nursing Brings Happiness

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Larry Sears, BSN, RN

Larry Sears, BSN, RN, had long considered a career in health care. His mother suffered from heart issues and died of a heart attack in 2008. He remembers thinking, "If I ever went into health

care, I'd want to help people like my mom." However, as the years went by, Sears went in a different direction and worked in real estate, property management and pharmaceutical sales. But he couldn't get over the feeling that he made the wrong career choice. "I was afraid to stop working and go to school full-time to become a nurse," he says.

Finally, feeling dissatisfied after 10 years as a sales professional, he quit his job in 2018 and moved to Las Vegas to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to obtain a nursing degree. Two years later, he graduated and was accepted into Children's Hospital Los Angeles' Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics program.

Once he made the decision to pursue nursing, "my goal was to work in cardiac care," says Sears, who fondly remembers the cardiac nurses

and physicians who cared for his mom. Now working in CHLA's Heart Institute, his only regret is not starting his nursing career sooner.

"It's the first job where I feel good about what I'm doing. I feel happy when I'm talking to patients, when I see patients getting better, then going home. All those things are fantastic. I'm super grateful."

His years of cold calls and closing sales benefit him as a nurse, he says. "In sales, I was familiar with being in uncomfortable situations and turning things around. I also knew how to approach people and communicate with them. That helps me quite a bit in nursing.

"I think my mom would be proud of me," he continues. "She would've encouraged me to do it sooner." ■

Nurses Get Creative for Peace of Mind During

By Candace Pearson



Sheila Kun, MS, RN, CPN, FCCP

A happy workaholic with 45 years at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Sheila Kun, MS, RN, CPN, FCCP (Pulmonology), never had downtime for pursuits like gardening. In fact, with her busy nursing, research and conference schedule, she rarely even saw her backyard.

Then she confronted the stresses and empty stretches of the COVID-19 lockdown and found that honing her green thumb might be good for her soul—and her sanity.

"The garden was a mess," says Kun, "but I quickly learned different plants want different things. You have to customize your care, just like you do with a patient."



Shawn Turley, BSN, RN

Now, her once-neglected yard blooms with tomatoes, chili and lemon mint. She even rescued two failing orchids donated by a neighbor. "It's so satisfying," says Kun.

Nurses across Children's Hospital Los Angeles have found creative ways to boost their spirits and stay productive during the pandemic. They're building furniture, opening businesses, discovering their artistic skills and paddling the Pacific.

Shawn Turley, BSN, RN (Patricia and John Merrell Bone Marrow Transplant Unit), found inspiration in a hanging swing chair. An internet search revealed its expensive price tag. So she simply built one—despite having never used a power tool.

Brimming with optimism, Turley Googled building plans, borrowed her brother-in-law's miter saw (with a quick lesson), ordered wood and set to work. "It was a lot of trial and error," says Turley, who was eight months pregnant at the time.



Brenda Barnum, MA, RN

The result—a twin-bed-sized swing—holds the whole family. "It felt good to have an achievable goal," says Turley, "to sweat it out and see a finished product."

When Brenda Barnum, MA, RN (Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit), won the NICCU Christmas cookie contest with her craveable jam bars in 2018, baking was a hobby. Barnum began experimenting with new flavors and in January 2020, her son helped her open an Instagram account—@jambarsbyBB. At first, sales were slow but, with delicious word-of-mouth, soon caught fire.



Amanda Price, BSN, RN, CPN (left), and Tabitha Schwartz, RN, CCRN

Nurses, doctors, social workers and other CHLA staff started buying the homemade bars, now in 20 flavors, including caramel apple drizzle and white chocolate raspberry. Other orders came in from all over the U.S., including 700 bars for a drive-through graduation and 900 bars for a corporate employee event.

Barnum, who's been cooking since the age of 10, says her baking isn't just business. "It's a fun way to stay connected to people and bring them some joy."

Sisters Tabitha Schwartz, RN, CCRN (Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit), and Amanda Price, BSN, RN, CPN (Duque Med-Surg), merged their talents on Instagram @Sister.sisterhandcrafted. Schwartz, a long-time woodworker, specializes in custom cutting boards. Price's passion is sweet making, from cake pops to sugar cookies to hot cocoa bombs.

"I've always been a do-it-yourself kind of person," says Schwartz. "It gives me a sense of accomplishment and I don't miss being out and about as much."

Price, a mom of three, appreciates the peace of mind baking provides, and having an outlet she can share with her sister. "And we're making others happy, too."

Rachel Bornstein, MSN, RN (NICCU), and Lynnette Ramos, MSN, RN (5 West), also found a major quarantine stress reliever in handcrafts.

Bornstein took her love of painting to a new canvas—tie-dye clothing. Initially, she sold

Pandemic

100-plus sweatshirts to raise money for the Black Lives Matter movement. Buoyed by that success, she started making more tie-dye pieces, including tees, bandanas, socks and hats (@thedyedreamer). "Mixing colors and creating the patterns takes my mind off of work and COVID-19," says Bornstein, who's coming up with new designs.

A collector of enamel pins, Ramos couldn't find any for her specialty, so she created a pink-heart design that reads "Pediatrics." She makes other acrylic and metal pins, along with vinyl decals for water bottles and coffee cups and embroidered badge reels, all in her store on Etsy.com (CraftsbyElleCee).

Ramos escapes into her craft room, turns up the music and leaves the world behind. "We've been under stress all year, with so many unknowns," she says. "This is my self-care. I'm not as worried about other things going on."

Pandemic art making came from a particularly personal source for Amanda Forest, MSN, BFA, RN (Bone Marrow Transplant)—her new baby, Wilhelmina James. Separated by COVID-19 from her and her husband's family, Forest, who has a bachelor's degree in film, picked up a Nikon D7500 DSLR camera her husband gave her.

Soon she had assembled a slew of props to pose Willa in a carved pumpkin "diaper," Cupid wings and an Elf on a Shelf costume. "It's very therapeutic," says Forest, "a chance to do something for myself and my family, so I don't feel



Amanda Forest, MSN, BFA, RN

so isolated." The only problem? Every once and a while, "my model starts crawling away."

When Cat Goodhue, MSN, NP, RN (Pediatric Surgery), needs a break, she heads straight for the ocean with her paddleboard. She's an aficionado of prone paddleboarding, in which the athlete lies face-down on the paddleboard and uses his or her arms to paddle.



Cat Goodhue, MSN, NP, RN

With her pod of friends, she completed 22 miles across the Catalina Channel to Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro. Despite beaches being closed, Goodhue logged 105 ocean miles in one month, often hitting the waves four days a week. She's encountered dolphins, whales, a sea lion that attacked her board and huge swells. "It's so healing to be out on the water," says Goodhue. "You never know what you're going to see."

As Cub Scout Den Leader of Pack 225, Joy Ericson, RN, CPN (Duque Med-Surg) loved organizing events and outings. Then, "everything in my life got canceled," she says. "I had to figure out how to keep my sanity."

That meant transforming once-outdoor gatherings into online or safe-distancing versions, such as a virtual visit to a National Park and a drive-through trick-or-treat. At a virtual campout, families put up tents in their backyards or living rooms, sang silly songs and performed skits. For Ericson, her 8-year-old twins, Isaac and Kathryn, and their fellow Cub Scouts, the focus was on fun.

"Whatever we're going through," says Ericson, "we can still have goals and meaningful ways to interact with each other." ■

A Conversation With ...

Suzanne Taylor, EdD, MSN, RN, NP-BC, Wisdom Worker



Suzanne with husband, Jay, on a medical mission trip in Malawi, Africa.

Favorite part of your job before and now: When I was at the bedside in the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU), I loved taking on challenging families to see how I could alter their hospital experience. I learned the power that a nurse has and to see how even making small changes in an attitude, daily routine or listening skills could make a major impact on a family's relationship with CHLA. Later in my career as an educator, my most favorite part of my job was developing a curriculum. I never had so much enjoyment as when I was creating course materials to teach a class, and those who know me know that always included videos and music.

Who influenced you to become a nurse? All the nurses at Children's Hospital Oakland during the years I was a volunteer there.

If you weren't a nurse, what would you be: Police officer

Best #hashtag to describe you: #lonestaratheart

Advice for nurses just starting out:

1) Be open to every opportunity that presents itself to you and take advantage of all there is to learn. What opportunities are there on your unit? What kinds of patients have you not yet taken care of but want to? What can you teach others? What can you do to support your unit? 2) Start making plans now to pursue your master's degree within the next couple of years. After getting a few years of experience, you will be well-positioned to obtain a graduate degree, and then take advantage of the doors that will open to you because of it.

Favorite day-off spot: Catalina

Your personal motto: A bad day in Texas is still better than a good day anywhere else.

Favorite comfort food: Popcorn

The best worst decision of your life: Retirement. The best decision because it is wonderful to finally have time to do all the things I want to do while relaxing and spending time with my husband. The worst decision because, how do you give up doing the things you love the most—education and nursing at CHLA?

Celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of CHLA nurses

Publications

Paula Belson (Anesthesiology): "A Review of Literature on Health-Related Quality of Life of Retinoblastoma Survivors," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, March/April 2020.

Maria Bautista-Durand (Trauma Program): "Moving Toward Standardized Pediatric Performance Improvement Measures in Child Physical Abuse: A Modified Delphi Approach," *Journal of Trauma Nursing*, September/October 2020.

Rhonda Foster (Clinical Services): "Tips for Coaching Career Advancement," *Nursing Management*, January 2021.

Catherine Goodhue (Pediatric Surgery): "Pneumonectomy for Pediatric Tumors—a Pediatric Surgical Oncology Research Collaborative Study," *Annals of Surgery*, March 2020; "Implications of Tumor Characteristics and Treatment Modality on Local Recurrence and Functional Outcomes in Children with Chest Wall Sarcoma," *Annals of Surgery*, November 2020; co-editor, *Nursing Management of Pediatric Disaster*, Springer Nature, 2020.

Sarah Green (Hematology-Oncology): "Addressing Healthcare Professional Burnout: a Quality Improvement Intervention," *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing*, June 2020.

George Higgins (Anesthesiology): "Caesarean Section for Trisomy 18 in a Non-Viable Fetus," *The International Student Journal of Nurse Anesthesia*, Summer 2020.

Jenny Johnston (Patricia and John Merrell Bone Marrow Transplant Unit): "Feasibility of Asynchronous Video-Based Telemedicine in the Diagnosis and Management of Pediatric Blepharoptosis," *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*, January 2021.

Anna Kitabjian (Care Coordination): "Treatment and Management of Torus Fractures in Pediatric Patients," *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, January 2020.

Sheila Kun (Pulmonology): "Pediatric Home Mechanical Ventilation Emergency Responses for Home Caregivers and Nurses," *Journal of Pulmonology and Clinical Research*, November 2020.

June Nicole Rees (4 East) and **Diane Altounji** (4 West): "An End-of-Life Care Educational Series to Improve Staff Knowledge and Comfort Levels," *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing*, December 2020.

Susan Reid (Hematology-Oncology): "T-Cell Replete Myeloablative Haploidentical Bone Marrow Transplantation is an Effective Option for Pediatric and Young Adult Patients with High-Risk Hematologic Malignancies," *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, June 2020.

Jessica Ward (Clinical Services Education and Research): "Comparison of child self-report and parent proxy-report of symptoms," *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, October 2020.

Presentations

Melissa Anderson, Ashley Anderson, Norma Corona, Paula Guzman, Adriana Savadjan, Natalie Talamantes, Alysse Thomas and Karin Tuan (Operating Room): "Mass Casualty Incident: Don't Forget about the OR/Collaborating with the Trauma Program," poster presentation, Western Pediatric Trauma Conference (WPTC), virtual, July 2020.

Hyunah (Hannah) Bae (Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): "The Discontinuation of Alarms during the Active Death and Dying Process in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit," Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN), online conference, December 2020.

Paula Belson (Anesthesiology): "Cognition and Anesthesia Exposure in Adolescent and Young Adult Retinoblastoma Survivors," poster presentation, UCLA School of Nursing Research Day, May 2020.

Jasroop Dhir and Michael Le (Operating Room): "Decreasing Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting Through Aromatherapy," Association of periOperative

Registered Nurses (AORN) Virtual Conference, April 2020.

Catherine Goodhue (Pediatric Surgery): "Benefits and Barriers to Pediatric Trauma Follow-up Care," abstract, CHLA Clinical Services Research Day, and as poster presentation, Huntington Hospital 3rd Annual Nursing Research Conference, March 2020; "Pediatric Trauma Injuries: Subtle Signs, Significant Finds," lecture, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Virtual Conference, June 2020.

Yvette Goodridge (Pain Management): "Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Pediatric Headaches," poster presentation, UCLA School of Nursing Research Day, third-place recognition, May 2020.

Sarah Green (Hematology-Oncology): "Promoting Well-being and Resilience of Pediatric Oncology Advance Practice," presentation, 44th Conference of Association of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Nurses (APHON), virtual, September 2020.

Debbie Harris (Hematology-Oncology): "Job Satisfaction Among Nurse Practitioners at a Pediatric Free-Standing Medical Center: A Mixed-Methods Study," poster presentation, Huntington Hospital 3rd Annual Nursing Research Conference, March 2020; and, as abstract with **Catherine Goodhue** (Pediatric Surgery), at the same event; **Harris and Anne Nord** (Hematology-Oncology): "Teens/AYA with Sickle Cell Disease—Transition Workshop," Cayenne Wellness Center & Children's Foundation, virtual, January 2021.

Sarah Heinonen (Pulmonology): Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia lecture, UCLA PNP students, Los Angeles, November 2020.

Deborah Jury (Pain Management): "Pain Management Techniques for Pediatric Patients in the Acute Care Hospital and ICU Setting for the Acute Care NP," videotaped lecture, UCLA nurse practitioner students, November 2020.

Jacquelyn Keegan, Erin Cooper, Jennifer Donkin and Wendy Leung (Hematology-Oncology): "Project CLOT: Comprehensive Learning Outcomes for Thrombosis," poster presentation, APHON, Virtual Conference, September 2020.

Anna Kitabjian (Care Coordination): "It's Not All in Your Head," accepted for poster presentation at Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM) Conference, July 2020; cancelled due to COVID-19. To be published by PHM online.

Katie Kuhlman and Victoria Noble (Operating Room): "Masking the Smell: The Use of Lip Balm During Anesthesia Induction in the OR," poster presentation, Versant RN Residency new graduate virtual event, CHLA, February 2020.

Ruth Lemus (Heart Institute): "Case Scenarios" and "What Data Managers Want to Know About: Pre-Op Factors, Intraoperative Issues, Procedure Coding, Diagnosis Coding and Risk Factors," Society of Thoracic Surgeons Advances in Quality and Outcomes, virtual conference, October 2020.

Renee Lucci, Natalie Talamantes, Jess Reyes and Mayra Martinez (Operating Room): "Working Towards Employee Satisfaction Guaranteed," AORN Virtual Conference, April 2020.

Professional Achievements

Margaux Chan (Clinical Services Education and Research): Awarded a scholarship by SPN-Los Angeles Chapter to implement education program and transform SPN-LA conference to virtual event, December 2020.

Sarah Heinonen (Pulmonology): Assistant grant director/ PNP faculty for five-year, \$2 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to support Pediatric Pulmonary Centers leadership training, July 2020; also launched Pediatric Pulmonary PNP Fellowship, August 2020.

Amanda Silva (5 East): Scholarship, NAPNAP-LA Chapter, April 2020.

Kathleen Van-Allen (Fetal and Neonatal Institute): Named President-Elect, national SPN Board of Directors, April 2021.

Jessica Ward (Clinical Services Education and Research): Received a Core Laboratory Pilot Grant from The Saban Research Institute of \$12,559 for "Effect of Xylitol on Oral Microbiota, Bloodstream Infections and Mucositis Severity in Children Undergoing Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation," February 2020; also, Health Professional Career Development Award of \$60,000 for "Problem-Solving Skills Training for Parents of Children Undergoing Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation," July 2020.

Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit: Awarded Gold Beacon Award for Excellence for third time, American Association of Critical Care Nursing.

DAISY Awards: **David Pichardo** (Vascular Access Team), April 2020; **Megan Quinn** (6 East), May 2020; **Erika Dolezal** (5 West), June 2020; **Sophia Padilla** (Bone Marrow Transplant), July 2020; **Nazik Kambar** (Bone Marrow Transplant), August 2020; **Ani Yeremian** (Helen and Max Rosenthal Cardiovascular Acute Unit), September 2020; **Michelle Marrs** (Cardiovascular Acute), October 2020; **Margaret McCormick** (6 East), November 2020; **Meghan Drastal** (6 East), December 2020; **Dylan Dontanville** (6 East), December 2020.

Academic Achievements

DNP: **Jennifer DeVera** (Operating Room), **Yvette Goodridge** (Pain Medicine).

MPH: **Elizabeth Daley** (Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit).

MSN: **Teresa Archuleta** (Duque Med-Surg); **Mary Ellen Farr** (Surgical Admitting); **April Punsal Gacuya** (5 East); **Yanira Haston** (Heart Institute), nursing education; **Kim Lindstadt** (PICU), administration and leadership; **Norma Renteria** (Family Resource Center), nursing education; **Alexandra Rio** (5 West), nursing education; **Nicole Smith** (CTICU), nursing education.

Promotions

Charissa Altobar (Clinical Services Education and Research): Nursing Professional Development (NPD) Manager.

Teresa Archuleta (6 East): Supervisor.

Brenda Barnum (NICCU): Supervisor.

Alejandra Briseno (PICU): Supervisor.

Lisa Pettinato Buckley (Hematology-Oncology): Case Manager, Bone and Soft Tissue team.

Shiloe Cagle (Duque Med-Surg): Supervisor.

Madaline Deaconson (Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery): Ambulatory Supervisor.

Lou Ellen Fraser (Duque Med-Surg): Manager.

Sarah Green (Clinical Services Education and Research): NPD Specialist.

Anna Hoffman (Surgery and Transplant): Coordinator.

Nancy Lavoi (PICU): Supervisor.

Justin Lee (Ophthalmology): Coordinator.

Renee Lucci (Operating Room): Supervisor.

Grace Magaling (Clinical Services Education and Research): Senior NPD Specialist.

Meery Panilio (Otolaryngology): Coordinator.

Andrea Rodrigues (Duque Med-Surg): Supervisor.

Kelsie Tice (Clinical Services Education and Research): NPD Specialist.

Karen Tuan (Operating Room): Supervisor.

Christine Uddin (Clinical Services Education and Research): NPD Specialist.

RN III: **Meghan Drastal** (6 East), **Aubrey Eggiman** (Float Team), **Zea Jacinto** (PICU), **Lisa Kinney** (4 West), **Patricia Mueller** (Float Team), **Hillary Tighe** (CTICU, Cardiovascular Acute).

Certifications
CAPA: **Araceli de Guzman, Arely Garcia, Damalie Kifuko and Jessica Vega** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit).
CNAMB: **Faye Ong** (Operating Room).
CNOR: **Margarita Absullo, Al Flores, Faye Ong, Jane Tomines and Fidelina Urbano** (Operating Room).
CPHON: **Caitlin Siegfried** (Float Team).
CPN: **Jaimee Krisanne Jamias** (Margie and Robert E. Petersen Foundation Rehabilitation Center), **Camille Montalbo** (Cardiovascular Acute).
FNP: **Jearely Pinedo** (5 West).
NPD-BC: **Margaux Chan** (Clinical Services Education and Research) and **Gwen Kimball** (Clinical Services Education and Research).
PCNB: **Mary Ellen Farr** (Surgical Admitting).
PNP: **April Punsal Gacuya** (5 East).

With thanks to **Doris Lymbertos** (Clinical Services Administration) and **Debbie Jury**, MSN, PNP-PC/AC, CNS, (Pain Management) for helping gather news items for this section.



Rhonda Foster, EdD, MPH, MS, RN, NEA-BC
Vice President, Patient Care; Chief Nursing Officer

The last 14 months have been long and hard on every care provider across the nation.

I have worked at many hospitals and there is no team that I would rather have gone through this unprecedented time with than the team right here at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Each of our team members has been actively engaging, adjusting and learning throughout this entire period of time. It's a testament to who each of us are and a testament to the value of our nursing colleagues.

What is truly amazing is how many things are providing me with opportunities for gratitude. In addition to having observed and been humbled to be a part of so many amazing instances of teamwork this year, I am grateful that:

- The foresight of our team members enabled us to begin conserving personal protective equipment early on in the pandemic.
- During county-wide and state-wide surges over the winter, we were fully able to support the patient care staffing needs at all times.
- We comprehensively implemented safe practices that protected and saved lives from COVID-19.
- The quick thinking of our Pathology and Laboratory Medicine department permitted us to provide on-site testing for COVID-19 from the beginning of the pandemic at no cost to our team members.
- The institution was willing to coordinate its efforts and support our overall resilience through the Better Together Program.

CHLA has a unique culture of celebration of one another. I am proud to be a part of a team that helped care for patients and each other during one of the toughest professional periods that many of us will encounter in our careers.

I continue to be grateful for the work that nurses do, and for our ability to fulfill a great mission of care, and attend to the needs of patients and families. ■

Teaming Up to Vaccinate Colleagues

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Sue Bugsch, MSN, RNC-NIC, NPD-BD (left), with Mary Kate Henke, BSN, RN, at CHLA's vaccination clinic.

After hearing a COVID-19 vaccine had been authorized, Children's Hospital Los Angeles Director of Clinical Services, Education and Research Jennifer Baird, PhD, MPH, MSW, RN, CPN, had an idea: What if her education team gave vaccinations to CHLA staff?

"I knew we had to mobilize quickly to staff a vaccination clinic," she says, noting COVID-19 cases were surging in Los Angeles County in December and the hospital was short-staffed due to quarantines. "My team is made up of nurses; they don't have patients because they're educators and researchers. From a workflow standpoint, they'd be able to support the effort without compromising patient care at the hospital."

Some staff members were excited about helping during these unprecedented times, while others were nervous since it had been a while since they had patient care responsibilities. After Baird noted the pandemic's toll and the hospital's needs, 30 education associates signed up for six- and 12-hour shifts.

Two skills labs were held to provide a refresher on giving vaccines, including using syringes and needles on oranges for practice. On Dec. 18, the clinic opened in the John Stauffer Conference Room with about a dozen education staff members giving vaccinations, and research and professional development associates handling check-ins and scheduling.

Sue Bugsch, MSN, RNC-NIC, NPD-BD, Senior Nursing Professional Development Specialist, recalls the emotions of that day. "I felt like I had purpose and was giving a gift of hope," says Bugsch, who had not worked at the bedside in 14 years. "The injection part was nothing. It all came back quickly as if no time had passed."

In January, new nursing residents began staffing the clinic, giving vaccinations and handling scheduling and registrations. "It's a win-win," Baird says, adding "RN residents would've had to further delay the start of their residency due to the pandemic and, instead, they're being employed using existing skills at the beginning of their career and helping us meet organizational needs."

"Working in the clinic is such a special experience because, not only is it amazing to be a part of this historical moment, but you can really feel the hope and joy in the room as we take a small step in protecting each other," says Mary Kate Henke, BSN, RN, who started her Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics program in January.

"As a new nurse who didn't expect to be graduating and starting a nursing career during a devastating pandemic, I feel very lucky and grateful to be able to meet and learn from the entire hospital staff," she says. "Being able to work in the clinic and administer vaccinations feels like a little bit of sunlight is starting to pierce through the dark clouds." ■

FloSheet

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Bedside's Best

The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit Expands to 2nd Site Under Nurse Practitioner-Led Team

By Candace Pearson



PICU NPs, led by Jennifer Huson, MSN, APRN, CPNP, CNS, sixth from left

The Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) is making history twice over with its expansion into a second location within Children's Hospital Los Angeles, led by the PICU's 11-member team of nurse practitioners (NPs).

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, Children's Hospital admissions had grown by nearly 50%

since the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion opened in 2011. "As the census continued to grow, we recognized the need to increase our number of critical care beds so we can care for every patient who needs us," says Jennifer Pugh, DNP, MSN, RN, CPNP, executive director, Advanced Practice and Critical Care.

Hospital leaders began planning two years ago to reactivate the PICU where it began in the hospital's George C. Page Building, in a space previously occupied by half of the Infusion Center. For veteran critical care nurses like PICU Clinical Services Manager Teri Loera, BSN, RN, NE-BC, the new unit was decidedly familiar. "You felt like you were going home," she says, "to the place where you grew up."

On Jan. 6, 2021, the fully upgraded PICU opened its doors, under the supervision of Lead NP Jennifer Huson, MSN, APRN, CPNP, CNS, and her crew. The unit began at 12 beds, with capacity for 18 as it grows. PICU nurses work in both locations.

Attending physicians are on call in the new unit, but residents and fellows don't rotate through.

"This model gives nurse practitioners added autonomy to make decisions and work closely with families," says Loera. The smaller size helps promote teamwork and communication, and families have already approved.

"Supporting this type of unit is a big investment for the hospital," says Pugh. "We are planning to track any differences in patient outcomes." The goal: to never have to turn anyone away.

The NP crew includes (L to R in photo at left): Sarah Meyer, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC; Kelcie Bragg, DNP, APRN, CPNP-AC; Debbie Garcia, MSN, APRN, CPNP; Lorena Smith, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC; Jesse Kay, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC; Jennifer Huson, Lead NP; Jackie O'Connell, MSN, MPH, APRN, PNP-BC; Jacqueline Hurtado, MSN, APRN, CPNP; and Sierra Hadley, MSN, APRN, CPNP-AC. ■