

Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

Testing His Skills on a Legendary Trail Run

By Candace Pearson

Justin Lee, BSN, RN, CNOR, stood on a peak several thousand feet high in the French Alps, on the last day of what would be a 106-mile trail run, gazing into the distance at the town where he and his fellow runners started their adventure just five days earlier.

"We were seeing the finish line," says Lee. "It was humbling, rewarding and one of the most joyful feelings I've ever had."

Lee, an Ophthalmology Nurse Coordinator in the operating room for the Children's Hospital Los Angeles Vision Center, is a dedicated hiker who took up running as one of his "COVID hobbies."

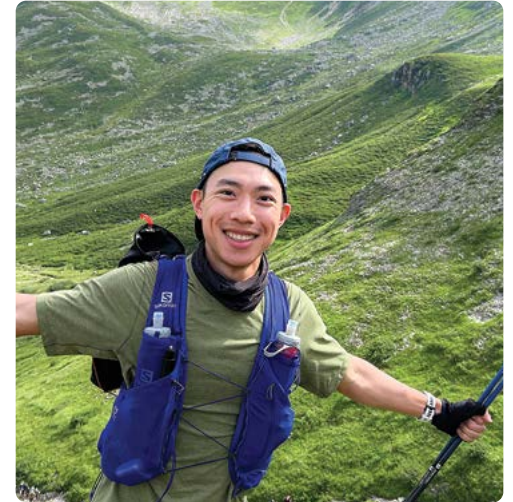
In August 2023, he combined the two passions by trail running the legendary Tour du Mont Blanc, a historic trail that took him across France, Italy and Switzerland and around the Mont-Blanc

massif, home to Western Europe's highest peak, averaging 15,700 feet in elevation. "I wanted to challenge myself," says Lee, "and discover what I'm capable of."

Along with a crew of like-minded athletes, he averaged 20 miles daily, bunking down in "refuges"—huts and other sleeping quarters along the route.

The "insanely beautiful" terrain was rugged, with alternating glaciers, tall mountains and forest greenery.

Pre-Mont Blanc, Lee spent months acclimating himself with high-elevation training at Mount Baldy and in the San Bernardino Mountains. He started and ended his run in Chamonix, France, logging about 106 miles and 35,000 feet in elevation gain in six days.



Justin Lee, BSN, RN, CNOR, on the Tour du Mont Blanc

The result: "I have more energy, strength and confidence," he says. "It definitely benefits my work as a nurse."

He hasn't lost his taste for running or heights—he's now training for a 100K (62-mile) ultramarathon in Big Bear this fall. ■

Nurses in Action

Volunteering to Bring Back Children's Smiles

By Candace Pearson



Arley Garcia, BSN, RN, CAPA, in Escuintla, Guatemala

Getting to the Operation Smile screening in Escuintla, Guatemala, had taken the young mother several days and multiple forms of transportation. She told Arley Garcia, BSN, RN, CAPA, that she

had walked, ridden a donkey and taken two buses and a taxi to find help for her 13-month-old son, who had a severe cleft defect.

"The mom was so thankful, it touched my heart," says Garcia, part of the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. "And we were able to fully repair her little boy."

Garcia has been making at least one medical mission trip a year for the nonprofit since July 2022. This summer will mark her fifth trip—destination still unknown. Because she is bilingual, Garcia has been invited to serve in Spanish-speaking countries. In addition to Guatemala, her passport is stamped with Mexico and Paraguay.

The missions have ranged from smaller, weeklong trips focused on repairing cleft lips and palates to a two-and-a-half week trip with almost 300 patients that included tonsillectomies and rhinoplasties. "The

settings can be urban or rural, from a hospital with very few supplies to fully stocked pediatric units complete with intensive care and recovery areas," says Garcia.

She chose to volunteer with Operation Smile because of her PACU recovery experience. "I really like taking care of children with cleft lips and palates because it's life-changing for them."

The medical teams she joins arrive from around the world but somehow manage to come together as a cohesive crew—as Garcia says, "one more beautiful thing about the mission trips."

Another mother she met had to sell her family's cattle to travel for care. At such moments Garcia says she realizes "I'm so fortunate to be where I am and able to help people who don't have what I have." ■

Rasheedah Pickett, Physical Therapy Supervisor



Rasheedah Pickett, PT, DPT, CBIS, CLT-LANA

How do you collaborate with nurses?

Each morning we coordinate with nursing staff to check on the patient's status. We also communicate with each nurse after treatment sessions to let them know the patient's progress or any medical issues that we noticed. We coordinate training to ensure nursing staff are using the proper supportive equipment to help patients become stronger and more mobile. Often the nurses are directly involved with the treatment sessions, ensuring the lines and medical equipment attached to the patient are safe and secure during mobilization.

What is the best part of your job?

Bringing hope and aspirations back into patients' lives. Working with children with disabilities, some do not know any other life. I love expanding their horizons and showing the patients and families things they didn't think were possible. Children bring a natural joy and playfulness to everyday life.

How did you end up in this field?

I gravitated toward physical therapy because I enjoy the amount of one-on-one time therapists get to spend with each patient. While providing them with therapy to get them stronger, we are also learning about their personalities and their lives. Knowing what brings a person joy is important to their healing.

Can you share a memorable CHLA story?

One of my most memorable stories is working with a patient who was on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) and severely ill in intensive care for two to three months. When she woke up, she had no muscle control and required total care. She had lost interest in therapy, reporting it was too hard and she didn't see herself getting any better. We asked her what she enjoyed doing and she said cooking for her family. We told her that if she could work on sitting up, we would take her to the kitchen so she could cook for her family. She was really motivated by that idea, and over several months she got strong enough to sit in a chair. We surprised her with a cooking party with her family.

We even took her to our therapy garden so she could pick some fresh herbs and veggies. She made cookies and a traditional soup. We gathered in the garden, and she was able to eat and visit with her family, who she hadn't been able to see for months. Everyone was crying. It was a joyous moment.

Supporting Bedside Nurses Virtually

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Sarah Adkins, RN, Duque 5



Helen Varga, RN, 6 West

Bedside nurses on two Medical-Surgical units at Children's Hospital Los Angeles are spending more time caring for patients and less time handling administrative tasks, thanks to a new virtual nursing pilot program.

CHLA is among the first pediatric hospitals in the country to test virtual nursing. Launched in January, the pilot features a pool of 20 off-site CHLA nurses providing support to Duque 5 and 6 West bedside nurses. Working closely with bedside nurses, virtual nurses handle such duties as admission and discharge, background verification, medication reconciliation and more.

"Nurses can spend more time with patients since they have someone supporting them and doing some of these time-consuming tasks," says CHLA Director of Acute Care Services Gayle Luker, MSN, RN, CPN, NEA-BC, who serves as the program's nurse leader. "Because our virtual nurses are also bedside nurses on these units, they can use their clinical experience in a different way."

In February 2023, Luker and representatives from 6 West, Information Systems and the Innovation Studio visited Houston Methodist Hospital to learn about the hospital's virtual nursing program. Shortly thereafter, about 50 CHLA employees, including nurses and nurse managers, began laying the groundwork for the pilot.

"We wanted to ensure nurses were involved in the planning and execution," adds Luker, noting the program's project manager shadowed bedside nurses to understand workflows and learn what tasks could be handled by remote nurses.

There were some logistical issues to resolve, such as connecting virtual nurses—who are currently based across the street from CHLA in front of computers and wearing headsets—with patients via video calls on iPads, and coordinating work orders between remote and bedside nurses. So far, the pilot is receiving positive feedback from nurses, patients and families.

"The use of a virtual nurse has helped me at the bedside by offering a flexible method of discharge for the patient family while I can focus on my other patients and their ongoing needs," says Norma Renteria Salazar, MSN-Ed, RN, CPN, Duque 5. "Families have enjoyed the one-on-one time with the virtual nurse, whereas sometimes as bedside nurses, we get distracted with our phone ringing or other patients needing our attention."

"Helping with admitting or discharging a patient so bedside nurses can focus on patient care is my main goal," adds Sandra Briseno, BSN, RN, Duque 5. "As a bedside nurse, I have firsthand experience on the amount of time that is saved when the virtual nurse gathers information or provides education to families. I love being able to experience both roles and encourage my colleagues to utilize virtual nursing whenever possible."

After the pilot concludes this spring, the next step is to expand virtual nursing to other CHLA units and specialty areas and establish a hub for virtual nurses to work from, allowing them to serve more than one unit at a time. "Virtual nursing is reimagining where and how inpatient care is being delivered," Luker says. ■

Publications

Brenda Barnum (Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): "Conflict Over Death by Neurologic Criteria: Caution, Consent and Nursing Considerations," *American Journal of Bioethics*, January 2023; "E-walks Bring Ethics to the Bedside: A Nurse Ethicist's Reflections," *Nursing Ethics*, August 2023.

Sally Danto (Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery): "My Baby Has a Tongue-Tie: Should I Have it Released?" Decision Aid, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute online, 2023.

Bianca Salvetti (Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine): "Prioritizing Gender-Affirming Care for Youth: The Role of Pediatric-Focused Clinicians," *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, March 2024; "Through the Looking Glass: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging: A Call for Action from the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners," *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, March 2024; "NAPNAP Position Statement Regarding Access to Reproductive Health Care," *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, March/April 2024; **Salvetti** and **Elizabeth Kidde** (Hematology-Oncology): "Gender-Affirming Care in a Transgender Young Woman With Li-Fraumeni Syndrome: A Case Report," *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, March-April 2024.

Hui-Wen Sato (Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "The Pitfalls of Being the 'Nice' Patient: A Nurse's Perspective," *American Journal of Nursing Blog*, "Off the Charts," February 2024.

Kathy Van Allen (Fetal and Neonatal Institute): "Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN): 2023 Year in Review," *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, published online November 2023.

Presentations

Ashley Anderson, Stephanie Brady, Warren Debuayan and **Heather Thomas** (Patient Care Services Education and Onboarding): "Putting ACTION into New Graduate Curriculum," SPN Los Angeles Chapter Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 2023.

Kathleen Anulao (Vision Center): "Impact of Preoperative Education Video in Pediatric Ophthalmology on Parent Satisfaction," poster presentation, Annual UCLA Nursing Science and Innovation Conference, May 2023.

Jennifer Baird (Nursing Leadership) and **Melanie Guerrero** (Nursing Professional Development): "Use of Design Thinking to Reimagine an RN Residency Program," American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Magnet/Pathway Conference, Chicago, October 2023.

Brenda Barnum (NICCU): "Empowering Nursing Voices: Ethical Excellence and Moral Agency,"

SPN Los Angeles Chapter Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 2023.

Warren Debuayan, Maria Medina-Velasco and **Yesenia Navarro-Pais** (Patient Care Services Education and Onboarding): "Would a One-Year Ambulatory Care Specialty Transition-to-Practice Program Prepare New Graduate Registered Nurses for Success in the Outpatient Clinical Setting?" poster presentation, American Association of Ambulatory Care Nursing conference, Chicago, April 2024.

Debbie Harris (Hematology-Oncology) and **Cat Schaefer** (retired): "Stop the Bleed Workshop," National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Conference, Denver, March 2024.

Cheryl Jaingue (ECMO): "Rectal Versus Esophageal Temperature Monitoring during Whole-body Cooling," Academy of Neonatal Nursing 10th ANNUAL Symposium for Nurse Leaders, Las Vegas, September 2023.

Danielle Long (PICU) and **Julia Srivastava** (Cardiology): "Cumulative Stress Debriefings: An Evidence-Based Intervention to Combat Compassion Fatigue," SPN Los Angeles Chapter Annual Conference, Los Angeles, October 2023.

Trish McMahon Peterson (Hematology-Oncology): "Progress and Peril," West Coast Sickle Cell Conference, California Endowment Center, Los Angeles, June 2023.

Bianca Salvetti (Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine): "LGBTQIA Youth Health" and "Gender Development," pediatric nurse practitioner graduate program, virtual lectures, UCLA School of Nursing, February 2024.

Hui-Wen Sato (PICU): "Practitioner, Parent, Patient," End Well 2023 Symposium, Los Angeles, November 2023.

Kathy Van Allen (Fetal and Neonatal Institute): Podium/virtual presentations – "Pediatric Nurses Emerging from COVID-19: Navigating our Current Reality," SPN Los Angeles Chapter Meeting, Los Angeles, June 2023; "Responding to the Challenges Facing Pediatric Nursing," SPN National Webinar, July 2023; **Van Allen** and **Jennifer Baird** (Nursing Leadership): "Nursing Specialty Showcase Panelist," National Student Nurses' Association Mid-Year Conference, San Diego, November 2023. Poster presentation – "Building Social Capital: Empowering NICU Nurse Leaders," Association of California Nurse Leaders Annual Conference, Monterey, CA, February 2024.

Professional Achievements

Phyllis D'Ambra (Jackie and Gene Autry Orthopedic Center): Coordinated virtual school screening program in Ethiopia via Zoom, October 2023.

Paula Belson (Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine): Awarded research grant from American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA) for her study, "Cognitive Outcomes and Anesthesia Exposure in Adolescent and Young Adult Retinoblastoma Survivors," July 2023; and inducted into the Fellows of the AANA, August 2023.

Debra Browne (Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition): Received award from Association of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition Nurses, Fall 2023.

Edward Cruz (6 West): Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Award, July 2023; joined Clinical Practice Committee, October 2023.

Feri Kiani (PICU): Will be presented with the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) Circle of Excellence Award, AACN National Teaching Institute and Critical Care Exposition, Denver, May 2024.

Nicole Ramirez (6 West): Clinical Excellence Award, Azusa Pacific University, December 2023.

DAISY Awards/Individual:

Mary Kate Henke (Duque 5), January 2023; **Kristyn Richards** (NICCU), February 2023; **Roland Merida** (Pulmonary), March 2023; **Liana Lorusso** (Helen and Max Rosenthal Cardiovascular Acute Care Unit), April 2023; **Erika Reyes** (Cardiovascular Acute), May 2023; **Niña Nacpil** (Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit), June 2023; **Louise Erdman** (D6 Rehab), July 2023; **Majella Doherty** (6 East), August 2023; **Cassidy Herro** (CTICU), September 2023; **Faith Matthews** (Patricia and John Merrell Bone Marrow Transplant Unit), October 2023; **Zulema Vega** (Nephrology), November 2023; **Neha Mehta** (Surgical Admitting), December 2023; **Melissa Lee** (D6 Rehab), January 2024; **Grace Snyder** (Maurice Marciano Family Foundation Emergency Department and Trauma Center), February 2024; **Wendy Ho** (4 West), March 2024; **Meery Panlilio** (Operating Room), April 2024.

DAISY Team Award:

Liver Transplant Program (Team Leader: **Stephanie Johnson**), November 2023.

Academic Achievements

BSN: **Nicole Ramirez** (6 West), magna cum laude.

DNP: **Kathleen Anulao** (Vision Center).

MSN: **Christina He** (Las Madras Simulation Center); **Maria Medina-Velasco** (PCS Education and Onboarding).

MSN-FNP: **Margaret Lisa Atmodjo** (Wound Ostomy).

MSN Nursing Leadership and Management: **Alma Ramirez** (Fetal-Maternal Center).

MSN PMP-AC: **Teresa Renteria** (Wound Ostomy).

Promotions

Care Coordination System Lead: **Justice Narisma** (Clinical Services).

CN III: **Beth Aguado** (4 East).

Nurse Care Manager: **Alice Koopmans** (Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism).

Nursing Professional Development Lead: **Ashley Anderson** and **Lynnette Ramos** (PCS Education and Onboarding).

Sr. Nursing Professional Development Specialist: **Kelsie Tice** (PCS Education and Onboarding).

NPD III: **Elissa Singson** (Infectious Diseases).

RN III: **Torrey Arlon** (4 West); **Cynthia Cardenas** (Bone Marrow Transplant); **Michelle Criger** (4 East); **Ari Dugas** (5 East); **Bethany Elliot** (Radiology); **Nicholas Homeyer** (CTICU); **Denise Kong** (PACU); **Emma Lowerison** (PICU); **Kayla McKenna** (Infusion Center); **Catherine Moore** (PICU); **Rachel Passantino** (5 East); **Chris Peterka** (Heart Institute); **Arielle Rodriguez** (Emergency Department); **Anne Toffoli** (NICCU); **Cassandre Walsh** (Infusion Center); **Sean Zumel** (Duque Med/Surg).

RN IV: **Irene Aberin** (4 East); **Megan Jensen** (Float Team); **Elysia Weiner** (Cardiovascular Acute).

Certifications

CCRN: **Romyna Santos** (D6 Rehab); **Christina Velasco** (D6 Rehab).

CLC: **Carly DePew** (NICCU); **Sarah Hartwig** (NICCU); **Jillian Smith** (NICCU).

CPN: **Edward Cruz** (6 West); **Alyssa Forero** (6 East); **Alice Koopmans** (Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism); **Kristen Kupanoff** (6 East); **Tiffany Renkenberger** (D6 Rehab); **Savannah Rogers** (6 East); **Yesenia Seaborne** (D6 Rehab); **Natalina Ungaro** (6 East); **Amanda Wiles** (6 East).

FNPC: **Margaret Lisa Atmodjo** (Wound Ostomy).

NPD-BC: **Maria Medina Velasco** (PCS Education and Onboarding).

RN-ELBW certification: **Alisa Nelson** (NICCU).

Personal Accomplishments

Babies

Kaitlin Bennett (4 East); **Lexi Benavente** (6 East); **Nerilin Colman** (D6Rehab); **Warren Debuayan** (PCS Education and Onboarding); **Ivone Martinez** (6 East); **Kristen Mendoza** (PCS Education and Onboarding); **Briana Monaco** (6 West); **Merisha Shrestha** (D6 Rehab); **Libni Sis** (6 East).

Community

Armando Dominguez, **Tigran Galadzhyan**, **Jonathan Lengson** and **David Pichardo** (Vascular Access Team): Participated in L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Bike Ride, Los Angeles, February 2024.

Feri Kiani (PICU): Ran half-marathon, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, June 2023.

Elizabeth Kiddie (Hematology-Oncology): Ran half-marathon, Disneyland, Anaheim, CA, January 2024.

Marie Reyes (ECMO): Participated in Rebelle Rally, first women's off-road navigation rally raid in U.S. California and Nevada deserts, October 2023.

Volunteering

CHLA Nurse Anesthetists (Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine): Volunteers, Project Angel Food, National Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologists (CRNA) Week, Hollywood, CA, January 2024.

Lisa Buckley (Hematology-Oncology): Organized toy drive, Redondo Beach, CA, November/December 2023.

Cheryl Jaingue (ECMO): Organized community outreach event for Project Angel Food as chair, Professional Development and Recognition Council, with members from all four Collaborative Governance Councils, Los Angeles, June 2023.

Feri Kiani (PICU): Volunteer, Project Angel Food, June 2023; also, CHLA Community Wellness Event, October 2023.

Amanda Kristensen (5 East): Volunteer summer camp nurse, Camp Kasem, which supports children affected by a parent's cancer, summer 2023.

Sandra Lee (PICU): Volunteer, Reading to Kids, ongoing since fall 2023.

Alisa Nelson (NICCU): Organized charity softball tournament for HeartWorks, nonprofit that develops, tests and delivers new therapies for congenital heart defects, Burbank, CA, February 2024.

Kelsey Whitaker (Wound Ostomy): Volunteer, Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, for over 10 years, Mountain Center, CA; volunteer, Crohn's and Colitis Foundation Camp Oasis, Mountain Center, CA, June 2023. ■

*With thanks to **Gina Kemp** (Nursing Excellence) and **Doris Lymbertos** (Clinical Services Administration) for helping to gather items for this section. Please send your accomplishments to DLymbertos@chla.usc.edu.*

A Conversation With ... Amy Girguis, Lactation Consultant, Clinical Nutrition and Lactation



Amy Girguis, MSN, RN, IBCLC, CPN, CPST

Best #hashtag to describe you: #itsallconnected

Favorite day-off spot: Either a coffee shop or an airport (departures, of course!)

Who influenced you to become a nurse? When I was 16 I shadowed an OB who was delivering babies in a clinic in Haiti. I'd been vaguely interested in health care before then, but that cemented it.

Why a lactation consultant? Human milk is amazing and lactation can seem like magic when things go well and baby is latching and milk is flowing. But for so many parents this isn't their experience, so I get to offer the education, the science behind the magic and the support they need to reach their goals.

What makes working at CHLA special? That the whole facility is devoted to the care of children and their families, and that the people who work here are here for the mission.

If you weren't a nurse, what would you be? Some sort of international aid worker.

Advice for nurses just starting out? If you don't feel the passion or aren't loving your job anymore, then make the changes you need until you regain your passion. I've now been at CHLA for almost 20 years and I can honestly say I love it!

Best life advice? Find the place where your greatest passion intersects with the needs of the world and spend your energy there.

The best worst decision of your life? Trying to raise children and focus on career ... Impossibly hard but so worth it!

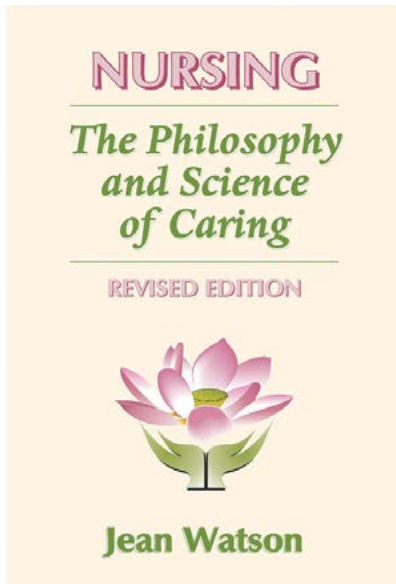
Tell us something that would surprise your coworkers. That my cupcake just won FIRST PLACE in our department's annual Cupcake Wars.

What sets your heart on fire? I am passionate about doing my part to remove barriers that prevent women and girls (especially those who have been marginalized) from being empowered to live their lives to the fullest.

What would you tell your high school self? You got this!

Caring Science: Helping You Be Your Best Self

By Candace Pearson



“We all went into this profession to care for patients and families—it fills us up. With the foundation of Caring Science, we can feel even more resoundingly connected to that,” says Priya Meyer, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, NP-BC, PCNS-BC, Senior Nursing and Clinical Strategy Manager at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

Caring Science—based on the Theory of Human Caring—was developed as a theoretical foundation for professional nursing practice by Jean Watson, RN, PhD, an internationally recognized nurse theorist and nursing professor.

Caring Science programs already have been adopted by nursing teams across the country. They have now made it to Nursing at CHLA, introduced by Kelly M. Johnson, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, who joined the hospital in April 2023.

“The language of Caring Science gives us a framework for what we do as nurses and how we do it,” says Meyer.

“Having a common language for caring is key,” says Jennifer Baird, PhD, MPH, MSW, RN, NEA-BC, NP-BC, CPN, Executive Director and Associate Chief Nursing Officer, Professional Practice, Innovation, and Outcomes, “because we all intuit how to provide caring a little bit differently. Language grounds our practice in theory.”

Dr. Watson outlines 10 Caritas Processes in Caring Science, which are meant to give nurses tools to better care for themselves and patients and families. Caritas comes from the Latin word meaning caring, compassion and love.

The Caritas Processes include practicing kindness, compassion and equanimity with yourself and

others; being authentically present and sensitive to yourself and others; developing loving, trusting, caring relationships; and creating a healing environment.

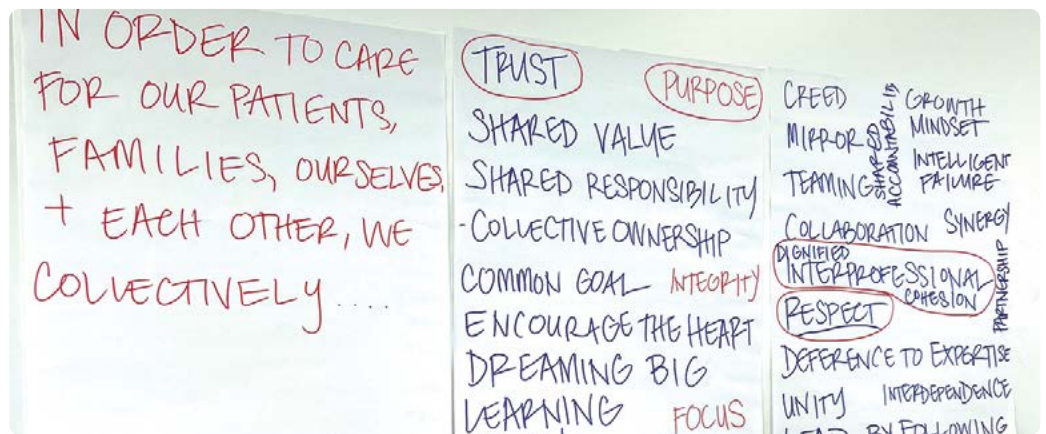
Planning Retreat

Caring Science kicked off at CHLA in January 2024 with a three-day planning retreat hosted by Nursing. Every department within Patient Care Services was invited to send representatives. More than 80 CHLA team members attended.

On the first day, attendees reflected on what team members experienced over the past three-plus years—the pandemic years. They also shared moments of exceptional care they have witnessed.

The participants did a deep dive into the Caritas Processes, led by Christine Griffin, PhD, RN, NP-BC, Director of Caring Science and Nursing Practice at Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. “She helped bring the language down to the caring work we do every day,” says Meyer.

In another exercise, groups of three brainstormed how the principles of Caring Science could be implemented on a practical level to support nurses.



Prioritizing Projects

A steering committee of nurses is prioritizing project ideas from the retreat. In addition to Johnson, Baird and Meyer, the committee includes Gina Kemp, BSN, RN, CPHON, interim manager of Nursing Excellence, Magnet Program Director; and Sandy Hall, DNP, MBA, RN, NP-BC, NEA-BC, EBPC, Director, Clinical Excellence.

“Our mission is to connect individual nurses with opportunities that fill them with joy and allow them to be their best selves,” says Meyer.

Under consideration are projects that encourage a daily gratitude practice at work, amplify awareness of what interdisciplinary colleagues bring to the medical team and create a digital calendar of

“human caring” offerings for employees to access. Priority No. 1 is a refresh of CHLA’s Professional Practice Model for Nursing to include a foundation of Caring Science. The committee plans to have a draft document to share with all nursing team members for their feedback by Nurse Week, May 6-12.

The committee also is identifying an initial cohort of eight nurses who want to serve as champions for Caring Science. They will participate in a six-month Caritas Coach Education Program.

“The language of Caring Science gives us a framework for what we do as nurses and how we do it.”

— Priya Meyer, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, NP-BC, PCNS-BC

Being That Safe Place

The committee views implementation of human caring theory as a multiyear process. The first year is education. The second is development, including aligning Caring Science with other programs in place at CHLA for well-being and emotional support of team members.

Year three will focus on support for scholarly research, while the fourth introduces the theory to other aspects of the organization, “with caring evident in the fabric of everything we do,” says Meyer. “This is a long-term strategy.”

What will Caring Science do for patients? “We hope human caring theory will help them feel even more cared for, with the knowledge this is a safe place for themselves and their families,” says Baird. “We have to be that safe place.”

The steering committee is “excited to have people get involved and engaged in the Caring Science program as it grows,” she adds. “Come join the excitement!” ■

FloSheet

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Bedside's Best

Coordinating Care for Liver Transplant Patients

By Vicki Cho Estrada



L-R: Stephanie Johnson, MBA, BSN, RN, CCTC (Liver Transplant Administrator) with Coordinators Elizabeth Farhat, BSN, RN; Holly Nagasugi, BSN, RN, CPN; Stephanie Kajohn, BSN, RN, CCRN; Meghan Dawson, BSN, RN

When Stephanie Johnson, MBA, BSN, RN, CCTC, Administrator, Transplant Services, joined Children's Hospital Los Angeles' Liver Transplant Program as its first nurse coordinator in 1998, there had only been three liver transplants performed at the hospital.

So when the program celebrated its 25th anniversary last fall with a gathering of past and present care team members, patients and families, and

achieved its 500th liver transplant in January, it was hard not to get emotional.

At the anniversary celebration, "it all came together from every walk of life," says Johnson, who served as a liver transplant coordinator for 12 years and now has administrative, clinical, regulatory and quality oversight for CHLA's heart, kidney, liver and intestinal transplant programs. "It's very humbling to know you have the ability to impact patients' and families' lives."

For seven years, Johnson was the only liver transplant nurse coordinator. Today, there are four nurse coordinators who are the hub of CHLA's liver transplant care team. They manage all aspects of a patient's care, from transplant referral and evaluation to coordinating surgery and ensuring all reports, medical diagnostics, lab work and documentation are completed, among other duties.

Nurse coordinators are the initial contact when a deceased donor's liver becomes available. They coordinate the organ procurement, set up transportation and schedule surgery with the surgeon and Operating Room—all within a short timeframe. They also guide families through the liver transplant process and follow patients through

the continuum of care, including helping them transition to an adult transplant care facility when they come of age.

These nurses have helped the Liver Transplant Program become one of the largest pediatric programs in the country, with CHLA performing approximately 25 to 30 liver transplants each year and achieving excellent outcomes. A third of the hospital's liver transplants are from living donors—often a parent, family member or anonymous donor—making CHLA a national leader in this area.

"Typically, when these patients come to us, they're very sick and poorly nourished with yellow skin," says Holly Nagasugi, BSN, RN, CPN, who has been a liver transplant nurse coordinator for nearly five years. "We see a real transformation after they get a transplant. They thrive, go to college, have kids ... They have a normal life that they otherwise wouldn't have had."

She adds, "Our team does our best to partner with families and give them the best quality of life possible." ■