

Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

Savoring Paradise on the Mainland

by Vicki Cho Estrada

Sophia Lim, RN, BSN, loves everything about Hawaii—the breathtaking, natural beauty, the warm tropical climate and the rich traditions and customs. After vacationing there on a nearly annual basis for several years, she decided to savor a piece of paradise on the mainland.

Lim, who works in Radiology, enrolled in a hula dancing class near her home in Montebello in 2006 and was immediately hooked. She was drawn to the elegant dance moves that combine rotating hips and rocking footsteps with flowing hand gestures and fingers to convey a story, although Lim admits she hardly resembled the graceful hula dancers in Hawaii when she first started.

“Hula looks easy, but it’s not. You have to go with the music and your hand has to be at a certain position, facing a certain direction, while your body is at a different direction and your feet are

doing something else. You’re doing multiple things at once,” says Lim, who joined Children’s Hospital Los Angeles in 1990.

She spends nearly seven hours a week on her hobby, which includes a weekly dance class, dance rehearsals, studying song verses and practicing hula moves on her own. She also performs at an annual hula show in La Cañada as well as a half-dozen community events a year through her dance studio, *Halau Hula 'O Kawahineali'inoho'ikeanueue'elua*, or “Royal Ladies Sitting on the Rainbow.”

Lim enjoys the muscle-toning exercise, the “hula sisterhood” and the colorful costumes, which provide context for hula dances. “If a song is about the ocean, for example, we wear blue and green; if it’s about land and mountains, we wear beige and brown; red signifies love,” she says, adding, “and sometimes, we wear grass skirts.”



Sophia Lim, RN, BSN

Hula dancing also offers a release from her job working with cancer patients undergoing MRIs and CT scans. “Working as a nurse and providing care to really sick patients can be quite stressful,” she says. “Studying hula, which includes the language, culture and music, gives me a greater balance in my life and helps me be a better nurse.” ■

Volunteers In Action

Preserving History

by Candace Pearson



Kathy Ruccione, MPH, RN, CPON, FAAN

For Kathy Ruccione, MPH, RN, CPON, FAAN, one trick to knowing where you’re headed is knowing where you’ve come from.

It’s why she has lovingly preserved a brick from the original east wing of the “old” Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, where she was a student

nurse and where the Division of Hematology-Oncology was housed when she was recruited here.

And it’s why she collects postcards depicting Southern California hospitals in the early 1900s. “That was when people sent postcards the way we send text messages,” says Ruccione, co-director of the Hematology-Oncology Psychosocial and Education (HOPE) Program in the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases.

Her passion for nursing’s roots fuels her involvement with the nonprofit Western Conservancy of Nursing History (WCNH) as a member of its Board of Directors. Housed at the Azusa Pacific University School of Nursing, the WCNH is dedicated to preserving the history of the nursing profession in the western United States.

“We need to know these stories,” says Ruccione. “We need to know whose shoulders we stand on, that others will stand on going forward.” The region contributed significantly to nursing’s professional development, she adds. “Nurses

here weren’t just waiting for the Nightingale Movement to come West.”

The WCNH, founded by Phyllis Esslinger, RN, MSN, is one of the first attempts to document that history. One of the “coolest things” in the WCNH collection, says Ruccione, is a gray and red cape worn by student nurses at the now closed Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing, her alma mater. “I covet that,” she confesses.

Ruccione is gathering materials on nursing history at Children’s Hospital with four members of the Recruitment and Retention Council—Kelli Anderson, RN, BSN, (Heart Institute), Brenda Gallardo, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit), Sue Martinez, RN, (5 East), and Sherry Nolan, RN, MSN, CNS, CPN, clinical manager (5 East).

When completed, the materials will be part of a display about the hospital’s history being coordinated by Bonnie McClure, a member of the Board of Trustees and chairman of the Associates and Affiliates. ■

In Tandem:

Nurses partner with other specialists to provide unparalleled care *by Elena F. Epstein*

As Camille Susca, RN, (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) prepares her patients for surgery, she can sense a heightened level of anxiety for some.

"This is a very stressful time and a lot of kids become terrified," she says.

When Susca sees Doug Leffin, Child Life specialist, with his array of toys and games walking into the unit, she has a knowing smile. Leffin kneels down, he smiles, he high-fives, he talks in a way a child will understand. He brings out a doll and takes its blood pressure. He talks about how drinking the "happy juice" helps you fall asleep during surgery.



Child Life specialist Doug Leffin (l) and Camille Susca, RN

Susca and Leffin work in tandem to ensure that the patients and families have all the support they need. The hospital's Child Life specialists are specifically trained to assess children's anxiety levels in a health care setting and to ease their fears using developmentally appropriate language, as well as games and toys.

"Our goal is to build a rapport with the children," says Leffin. "Before a surgery, a lot of kids are thinking, 'What if I don't wake up after the surgery?' 'What if I'm not really asleep and I can still feel pain?' We help them feel comfortable and secure."

The collaborative relationship between Susca and Leffin is just one example of the teamwork that takes place every day in every unit of Children's Hospital among nurses and other specialists.

"What makes this hospital so special is that no one has to work alone," says Mary Dee Hacker, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, vice president of

Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer. "We have an incredible group of professionals who collaborate, brainstorm ideas and share the latest research to provide the best care for our patients."

Since nurses spend the most time with patients, they work in unison with a wide variety of other specialists throughout their shift—pharmacists, Child Life specialists, social workers, art and music therapists, chaplains, registered dietitians, lab and imaging technicians and physical, occupational and speech therapists.

A Knowledge Exchange

"We learn a lot from one another," says Maxine Ogbaa, RN, BSN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit), who often works closely with occupational therapists (OTs) to help babies born in distress learn to eat and handle touch, sound and other sensory stimulation. The OTs play a critical role in the development of these fragile premature infants. They evaluate muscle tone, reflexes, quality of movement, coping skills and level of interaction and offer innovative treatment techniques.

An occupational therapist's expertise is helping patients gain independence in daily living skills. For Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit babies, the most important daily activity they often need to learn is eating. "Our babies have experienced a lot of negative oral stimuli, with 70-80 percent intubated," says Ogbaa. "We work hard with the OTs to prevent a baby going home with a feeding tube."

Cheryl Garden, OT/L, CLE, provides these babies with a range of oral exercises to develop their feeding skills, focusing on important suck-swallow-breath coordination, while nurturing the baby to remain calm during the feeding. For premature infants, over-stimulation is a critical concern with many babies showing a negative physical reaction, such as a drop in heart rate, explains Garden. Knowing how to position and touch the baby, decreasing the noise and dimming the lights in the room are all factors that help these tiny patients adapt better to their environment.

"We have an amazing collaboration with the nurses," says Garden. "It's a very holistic way to come together and figure out how to best meet the needs of these fragile babies."

Collaboration and Communication

The nurses and the pharmacists in the Children's Hospital's Cancer Day Hospital work in constant collaboration to meet the intricate medication needs of the high volume of patients receiving chemotherapy or other intravenous medications. "The nurses are truly our partners in preventing errors," says Teresa Rushing, PharmD, pharmacist in the Day Hospital. "We're so familiar with each other and our work patterns, that when something is off, we feel it."

The pharmacists and nurses are intrinsically aware that children are particularly vulnerable to adverse drug reactions because of the difficulty in calculating dosages by weight or mass and the narrow ranges of many medications used in pediatric patients.



Cheryl Garden, OT/L, CLE (l) and Maxine Ogbaa, RN, BSN

NICCU Quilt Project



Belinda Sia, RN, (I), Maria Lapinid, RN, BSN, CPON, and Teresa Rushing, PharmD

"We ask a lot of questions about the meds and what we should expect," says Maria Lapinid, RN, BSN, CPON, (Hematology-Oncology). "Nurses are the last person to check the medication before it's administered; we're the last link in the team."

Lapinid and Belinda Sia, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) are the nurse liaisons for the Pharmacy, working together to set up guidelines to help nurses better understand the flow and sequence of medication preparation and administration. Other nurses in the unit have also worked with Pharmacy to create standardized chemotherapy orders to ensure all necessary checkpoints are included.

A Source of Strength

In the high-intensity setting of Children's Hospital, patients, families and nurses themselves at times need someone to just listen, maybe hold their hand, offer a warm embrace and simply be present.

Janie Ito, staff chaplain, is that calming presence. She makes rounds throughout the hospital or comes specifically to visit a certain patient or family when called upon.

"In our intensive care setting, we really rely on the chaplains," says Allie Currid, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit). "They become our right hand."

The chaplains are available to meet all the spiritual needs of the patients and families, including providing symbolic foods during a holiday, saying prayers when requested and offering comfort and support.

"I always talk to the nurses first to assess the needs of the families," says Ito. "The nurses are

our best resource; they have the pulse on the family. A lot of issues can come up, like a mom who's really angry with God and is struggling to maintain her faith."

Ito and Currid worked closely together recently as they helped a family whose little boy was dying. "He was in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit for months and he started to slowly deteriorate and it was very hard for the parents to grasp that he was not going to survive," recalls Ito. "Allie and I worked together to guide this family through a very difficult journey."

Not only are the chaplains a source of comfort for the patients and families, but also for the nurses. "Our jobs are stressful, especially when a child on our unit doesn't survive," says Currid. "The chaplains are here for us, too, offering us a shoulder to cry on, a hug and peaceful thoughts." ■



Allie Currid, RN, (I) with Chaplain Janie Ito



Rosin Atashian, RN (I), Peggy Hoyt, RN, Carol Taketomo, PharmD, Nancy McKeon, RN, Mary Dee Hacker, RN, Lisa Coffman, RN, Cyndi Atkinson, RN, Sheila Kun, RN, and Lisa Saspa-Jimenez, RN

Quilts—they quintessentially feel like home. Capturing the warmth and comfort of colorful pieces of fabric artfully sewn together was what inspired Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU) nurses to begin stitching. They wanted their unit in the new Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion to feel cozy and welcoming.

The project started four years ago and today, 11 quilts hang in the NICCU, four displayed in the unit's entrance, two in the lactation rooms and the rest along the hallway. Not only did NICCU nurses create whimsical squares, but so did neonatologists, pediatric surgeons, pharmacists, occupational and physical therapists, nutritionists, social workers, nurse practitioners and members of the Associates and Affiliates. Mary Dee Hacker, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer, put together three squares as well.

A book featuring the quilts and one of the actual quilts will be displayed at the upcoming American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet Conference, Oct. 10-12 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Children's Hospital Los Angeles is one of nine co-host hospitals of the conference, which attracts close to 8,000 nurses from throughout the country.

"It's exciting to share this project because it really brought the unit together," says Cyndi Atkinson, RNC, BSN, a retired NICCU nurse and co-volunteer coordinator for the Magnet Conference.

Peggy Hoyt, RN, BSN, MHA, (NICCU) was the force behind the project and actually sewed all the squares together to create the 11 quilts. Each piece tells a different story—gingerbread men holding hands around the world; tiny hands and feet; ice cream cones; the United States flag; little kittens who lost their mittens; a big heart filled with patchwork. Together, they are the fabric of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. ■

Professional Milestones

Ale Briseno, RN, Gena Favero, RN, and Cindy Rowlett, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) presented a poster, "Professionalism: Actions Speak Louder than Words," at the Society of Pediatric Nurses Conference in Austin, Texas in April 2012.

Colleene Young, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) presented, "Thar She Blows! Intra-Abdominal Hypertension and Intra-Abdominal Compartment Syndrome," and "Being Beacon: How to Write and Maintain it. Being the First PICU Awarded Beacon of Excellence in 2011," at the American Association of Critical Care Nurses' National Teaching Institute and Critical Care Exposition in Orlando, Fla., in May 2012.

Leticia Boutros, CPNP, (Surgical Admitting) was a guest speaker at the 18th annual Adelante Mujer Latina Conference in Pasadena in April 2012.

Barbara Britt, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) was featured in a Column One *Los Angeles Times* article, "In tune with their needs for 40 years, nurse Barbara Britt has helped children and their families cope with cancer," published in May 2012.

The RN Remedies bloggers received the prestigious Gold Award from the Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Association in April 2012 as part of their annual review of the best work in the health care industry.

Felicia Romagnoli, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) shaved her head and raised \$1,075 for pediatric cancer research during the St. Baldrick's Foundation fundraising event hosted by the LAPD and LAFD, at the LAFD Firestation 89 in North Hollywood in March 2012.

Several nurses presented posters at the Society of Pediatric Nurses 22nd Annual Convention in Houston, Texas in April 2012. **Nancy Blake, RN,** (Critical Care Services) was awarded first place in the research posters category for her presentation, "The Relationship Between Nurses' Work Environment and Patient and Nurse Outcomes." Nurses presented with the People's Choice Award were: **Sherry Nolan, RN,** (5 East), **Cheryl McCauley, RN,** (5 West) and **Kristine Gawley, RN,** (6 East): "Medicus (Please Don't) Interrupt Us: Decreasing Medication Errors by Decreasing Distractions." **Ruth Paul, RN, Susan Santner, RN,** and **Ani Burr, RN,** (5 East): "Maintaining Morale and Teamwork During a Time of Transition." **Alejandra Briseno, RN, Gena Favero, RN, and Cindy Rowlett, RN,** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Professionalism: Actions Speak Louder Than Words." **Flora Yuen, RN, Yesenia Duarte, RN, and Irma Quijano, RN,** (6 East): "Cultural Implications in the Implementation of an Infant Safe Sleep Initiative." Other nurses presenting posters were: **Cathy Kissinger, RN,** (6 East) and **Phyllis D'Ambra, RN,** (Children's Orthopaedic Center): "A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Care of Patients Undergoing Spinal Fusion for Idiopathic Scoliosis." **Gloria Verret, RN,** (6 West), and **Phan Dang, RN,** (6 North): "Hospital-Wide Unit Huddles to Improve Communication, Patient Safety and Staff Satisfaction." **Jennifer Huson, CPNP,** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Utilizing Nursing in a Unique Environment to Address an Underserved Population."

Brenda Barnum, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) co-presented a breakout session, "Here We Go Round: Navigating the Ethics of Care for Chronically Ill Children" at the 19th annual Collaborative Ethics Conference: Ethics of Caring in Los Angeles in March 2012.

Gloria Verret, RN, (6 West) presented to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Pediatric Interest Committee regarding pediatric nursing at Children's Hospital Los Angeles in May 2012.

David Davis, RN, (Patient Care Services) and **Dave Tan, RN,** (Quality Improvement and Patient Safety) presented, "Engaging the Front Line Staff in Quality and Patient Safety," to the Quality and Safety Leaders Forum of the Children's Hospital Association in San Diego in May 2012.

Sheila Kun, RN, (Pulmonology) gave a poster presentation, "Knowledge of Home Health Nurses on Pediatric Emergency Tracheostomy and Ventilator Care" at the

American Thoracic Society International Conference in San Francisco in May 2012. She gave an oral and poster presentation, "Surviving the Night: Independent Living for CCHS Young Adults," and presented a break-out session, "Preparing for Achieving Adult Independence for CCHS/CHS patients age 15+," at the International Conference on Primary Central Hypoventilation in Warsaw, Poland in April 2012. She co-authored "End-of-life Discussions and Advance Care Planning for Children on Long-Term Assisted Ventilation with Life-Limiting Conditions," for the *Journal of Palliative Care* published in March 2012.

Diane Altounji, RN, (4 West) received the Kathy Ruccione Award for Nursing Excellence in Pediatric Oncology at the Southern California Association of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Nurses Conference in Indian Wells, Calif., in May 2012.

Bill Kenny, RN, (Adolescent Medicine) received the Morris and Mary Press Humanism Award for Nursing at Children's Hospital Los Angeles in March 2012.

Sherry Nolan, RN, (5 East) and **Diane Grade, RN,** (Patient Care Services) had a video and podium presentation, "Medicus (Please Don't) Interrupt Us: Reducing Medication Errors in an Inpatient Pediatric Setting by Decreasing Distractions" at the International Patient Safety Congress in Birmingham, England in May 2012. Nolan also gave an oral presentation on the same topic to staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London.

Sharee Anzaldo, RN, (Surgical Admitting) participated in the 2012 University of California Diversity Pipeline Initiative in April 2012. She also received the UCLA Health System Auxillary Scholarship in May 2012.

The following nurses contributed to the third edition of "Nursing Care of the Critically Ill Child" published in Spring 2012: **Fran Blayney, RN,** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit), **Laura Klee, RNC,** (Critical Care Services), **Nancy Pike, RN,** (Heart Institute), and **Beth Zemetra, RN,** (Heart Institute). **Nancy Blake, RN,** (Critical Care Services) was a reviewer.

Jace Vargas, RN, (Post Anesthesia Care Unit) was interviewed on camera in April 2012 for an upcoming movie promoting nursing by ONE Nursing.

The Emergency Department won first place overall in the Disaster Olympix in May 2012.

Susan M. Carson, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) gave a presentation on "The Role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist in a Comprehensive Thalassemia Clinic," at the Thalassemia Nursing Master Class in Hong Kong in February 2012. She also gave a presentation, "The Challenges Facing Adults with Sickle Cell Disease" to the nurses at Loma Linda Hospital in May 2012.

The Advanced Practice Nurses from Children's Hospital Los Angeles and NAPNAP-LA teamed up to host a successful conference at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center entitled, "Advancing Pediatric Nursing Care: A Day of Practice Updates," in March 2012. The following nurses gave presentations: **Catherine Goodhue, CPNP,** (Pediatric Surgery): "Cholestatic Liver Diseases in Infants and Children," **Kathleen Ruccione, MPH, RN,** (Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases): "Childhood Cancer Survivorship-Optimizing Health Outcomes in the Primary Care Setting," and **Kristi Westphal, RN,** (Surgery): "Welcome to the Drama of Pediatric Trauma: Recommendations for the Management of Minor Pediatric Trauma from an Office or Urgent Care Setting." The nurse practitioners on the conference planning committee were: **Goodhue, Leticia Boutros, CPNP,** (Surgical Admitting), **Anna Evans, CPNP, Maki Okada, CPNP, Paola Pederzoli, CPNP, Debbie Harris, CPNP,** (Hematology-Oncology), **Debbie Jury, CPNP,** and **Meghan Middleton, CPNP,** (Magik Pain Service).

Mary Baron Nelson, RN, (Radiology) presented "CNS Injury in Children with Brain Tumors Treated with Chemotherapy," at the International Nursing Conference on Child and Adolescent Cancer Survivorship in Williamsburg, Va. in June 2012.

Mary Moses, RN, Shinyi Tang, RN, and Dawn Landery, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) gave a

poster presentation, "To Maintain Retention on a High-Acuity Pediatric Hematopoietic Transplant Unit," at the European BMT Conference in Geneva, Switzerland in April 2012.

Nancy Pike, CPNP, (Cardiothoracic Surgery) was a co-author of "Early Developmental Outcome in Children With Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome and Related Anomalies: The Single Ventricle Reconstruction Trial," published in *Circulation, Journal of the American Heart Association* in May 2012.

The following nurses were finalists for *NurseWeek* Nursing Excellence Awards in May 2012: **Phan Dang, RN,** (6 North) and **Rachel Guzman, RN,** (5 West) for Patient and Staff Management; **Jennifer Huson, RN,** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) for Volunteerism and Service; **Sheila Kun, RN,** (Pulmonology) for Home, Community and Ambulatory Care; and **Inge Morton, RN,** (Emergency Department) for Education and Mentorship.

Debbie Jury, RN, (Magik Pain Service) was featured on Fox 11 News in June 2012 on a segment featuring pain management dogs. She was also featured on KTLA - Sophy's Spotlight on a segment featuring pet therapy dogs in May 2012.

Academic Degrees

Leticia Avram, RN, (5 West) - BSN
Nancy Blake, RN, (Critical Care Services) - PhD
Mary Baron Nelson, RN, (Radiology) - PhD
Marina Ramirez, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) - BSN

Daisy Award Recipients

Yvonne Hughes-Ganzon, RN, (6 North) - May
Katrina Ramos, RN, (CV Acute) - June

Certifications

Lynne Harris, RN, (Surgical Admitting) - CPNP
Meghan Jackson, RN, (5 East) - CPN
Phaedra Nguyen, RN, (Emergency Department) - CPEN

Promotions

Liberty Garcia, RN, (4 West) - RN III
Gina Terrazzino, RN, (Emergency Department) - unit lead

Life Celebrations

Babies

Carrie Collins, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) - boy
Desiree Navarro, RN, (5 East) - girl
Melissa Sanders, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) - girl
Meredith Shaw, RN, (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) - boy

Marriages

Jennifer Rish, RN, (Emergency Department)
Sarah Zannella, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit)

Community Involvement

Debbie Gueda, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) joined the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary in July 2012.

Chris Price, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) finished first at the Old Goats 50 Mile Trail Race in March 2012.

Phyllis D'Ambra, RN, (Children's Orthopaedic Center) went on a medical mission to Ghana to educate local nurses and prepare a new hospital through the Foundation of Orthopedics and Complex Spine in February 2012.

Marvin Mangahis, RN, (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) won a Silver Medal at the Pan-American Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Championships in March 2012.

The following nurses completed the Los Angeles Marathon in March 2012: **Beatrice Chun, CPNP,** (Surgical Admitting), **Linda Loiselle, RN,** (float pool), and 5 East nurses **Emily Clark, RN, Monica Lopez, RN, Maria Dakan, RN, Sue Martinez, RN,** and **Erin Schmidt, RN.**

Nancy Pike, RN, John Ayala, RN, Barbara Gross, RN, and **Carol Okuhara, RN,** (Heart Institute) completed the Alhambra Rotary Heart Walk in April 2012.



Mary Dee Hacker, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN
vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer

The art of quilt making requires patience, imagination, attention to detail and perseverance. What begins with random pieces of fabric and yarn transforms over time into a unique and beautiful creation. As I sewed patchwork pieces together for the quilt squares that now hang in our Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit, I thought about how these quilts tell our story.

The nursing profession has a rich history, providing the narrative of our true essence. You'll read in this issue about Kathy Ruccione and her group of volunteers' diligent efforts to preserve our past.

But, our story would not be complete without looking at how we are changing the future. Just like a quilt that brings different fabrics together, our nurses and hundreds of other professionals combine resources, share knowledge and innovate every day. The care of each child at Children's Hospital Los Angeles goes far beyond the work of one individual, as you'll read in this issue. Teamwork and collaboration is infused in every division of our hospital.

I'm so grateful and honored to work with professionals who are medical interpreters, animal-assisted therapists, registered dietitians, chaplains, Child Life specialists, social workers, pharmacists and art, music, speech, physical and occupational therapists. Together, we share our commitment, expert knowledge and scholarly research.

It is this level of collaboration that we will be showcasing on a national level during the Magnet Conference in October. Similar to our quilts that will be on display at the conference, our nurses shine in their singular individuality and compassion and their unwavering sense of a shared vision to provide a healthier future for all children. ■

The 'New' 6 North: Inspired by Common Bond

by Candace Pearson



Sharon Chinn, RN, CRRN (l), Pattie Soltero, RN, BSN, MAOM, and Phan Dang, RN

When you have a passion for something, being surrounded by people who share that enthusiasm isn't just pleasurable, it's productive inspiration.

That's the discovery being experienced in the "new" 6 North, which has been exclusively engaged in acute rehabilitation services since July 17, 2011, when the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion opened at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Prior to that momentous day, 6 North had been a blended unit since 1996, handling both acute rehabilitation and medical/surgical patients. The mix created a diverse and interesting patient population but a split focus for staff.

The approaches to patient care were simply different. "In rehab, you're encouraging the patient's independence, using the skills and patient-family education brought by all the therapy disciplines in our toolbox," says Sharon Chinn, RN, CRRN, PCS director on 6 North.

Watching their medical/surgical colleagues depart 6 North last year posed a challenge for the remaining staff. The exodus broke up teams and brought concern that 6 North might be forgotten as the only inpatient unit left in the old building.

Soon, however, the benefits of having a singular identity became clear. "Our nurses have really owned the specialty of rehab," says Pattie Soltero, RN, BSN, MAOM, operations manager.

That ownership includes participating in professional organizations like the Association

of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN); testing new equipment, medicines and ways to reduce medication errors; writing abstracts; and generally getting the word out that acute rehabilitation services at Children's Hospital are among the best anywhere.

"Our renewed focus allows us to grow and to be more competitive with the rest of the country," says Phan Dang, RN, education manager.

The concentration has made it easier to recruit nurses dedicated to pediatric rehabilitation. "It's great for families, because everyone is speaking the same language," says Chinn.

In its evolution, 6 North has gained a number of distinctions, including being one of the few units nationwide that handles acute chemotherapy for patients with cancer and rheumatic diseases.

The unit welcomed its first heart transplant patient three years ago and took in its first liver transplant patient last November.

Those patients are cared for by a team that defines "interdisciplinary," and includes physical, occupational and speech therapists, social workers, Child Life specialists and many others.

This October, 6 North staff plan to amp up their networking at the annual ARN Conference. "We want to let the world know pediatric rehab is a big deal," says Dang, "especially here at Children's Hospital." ■

FloSheet

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Bedside's Best

Code Urgent: Improving Emergency Outcomes for Kids

by Candace Pearson



Robin Goodman, RN

Kids aren't little adults when they show up at an emergency department—they have special needs, and Robin Goodman, RN, is determined to educate emergency departments throughout the city on improving outcomes for all kids.

Goodman is the pediatric liaison nurse (PdLN) for Children's Hospital Los Angeles. As a group,

PdLNs are key players in the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency.

Goodman joined The Maurice Marciano Family Foundation Emergency Department and Trauma Center at Children's Hospital in 2001. The moment she stepped into the fast-paced environment, she says, "I felt at home." In 2004, she took on the PdLN role. "This is what I'm passionate about," adds Goodman, designated instructor of emergency pediatric nursing by the Emergency Nurses Association.

She represents the hospital at regular meetings with fellow PdLNs countywide, and sits on two influential committees—the Pediatric Advisory Council, which counsels the Emergency Medical Services Agency on pediatric issues, and the Base Hospital Advisory Council (base hospitals assist with 911 standards of care development).

She recently was one of five PdLNs who partici-

parted in data collection for a Pediatric Readiness Project. She surveyed all emergency departments across the state that receive patients via the 911 system to assess their current readiness level when caring for a pediatric patient.

Only 43 out of 73 hospitals in Los Angeles County that receive emergency patients are designated Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics, or EDAP hospitals.

To qualify, an EDAP hospital like Children's Hospital must meet specific requirements for staff training, support services, pediatric-specific equipment, supplies, procedures and protocols. For example, at least 75 percent of emergency department nurses must be certified in Pediatric Advanced Life Support. At Children's Hospital, 100 percent are.

She's excited by the opportunity to influence child health and safety. "If you're a parent, you want to take your child to a place with the best education, training and practices," she adds. "We're trying to teach the community the difference." ■