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USU Faculty, Students Volunteer with Mobile Medical Clinic

By MC3 Jeff Hopkins
Assistant Editor, Office of External Affairs

Faculty and school of medicine students from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) provided health screenings to underprivileged and uninsured patients as part of a community outreach program, April 16.

CDR Mark Stephens, MC, USN, associate professor for USU’s Department of Family Medicine, together with 2LT Anneliese Germain, USA, SOM Class of 2009 and ENS Mark Cruz, USN, SOM Class of 2011, volunteered with Mobile Medical Care, Inc. to provide medical examinations to medically underserved patients in the local area.

The clinic was held in Montgomery County public housing. In the community kitchen, the students practiced their patient intake skills, getting their patients’ histories and discussing their conditions. Two small exam rooms were available for privacy during physicals.

Stephens, previously volunteered with Mobile-Med from 1999-2002 before a permanent change of station took him away from the area; he has since returned and said he finds volunteering with Mobile-med a rewarding task.

“A lot of these people are immigrants whose families have brought them to the U.S.,” Stephens said. “Some of them are unhappy, and few of them have insurance, so it’s a great feeling...”

See MOBILE, Pg. 6

USU Wins ‘Most Innovative Campaign Technique’

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) was awarded “Most Innovative Campaign Technique” for their combination of multimedia and community exposure during the 2007 National Capital Area Combined Federal Campaign’s Communications Contest. Pictured here, CPT Nicholas Horton, USA, USU’s Army company commander receives the award on behalf of the university during the CFC awards ceremony at the U.S. Postal Service National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., April 4; Horton served as one of USU’s CFC Key Workers during the 2007 Campaign.
Medical Students Present G3 to Elementary Students

By MC3 Jeff Hopkins
Assistant Editor, Office of External Affairs

A mixture of first- and second-year school of medicine students of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) visited Lakewood Elementary School in Rockville, Md. to put on a G3 presentation, April 18.

The program, abbreviated as “G3,” is an hour-long program run entirely by USU SOM students, in which the students visit local elementary schools and teach fourth and fifth graders about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise, as well as to instill in the elementary students a basic familiarity with physiology.

“G3,” is a growing program which budded off of a nation-wide program that my classmate 2LT Rebecca Ortolano has worked with in the past, in which kids go to camp for a week to learn about good exercise technique, good dieting and general physiology issues,” said 2d Lt Tom Skinner, USAF, the second year SOM student in charge of organizing the program. “We were looking for an opportunity to get involved with the community, so we found a way to boil it down to simple subjects for us to go to an elementary school and give a one hour presentation.”

The presenters decide what the content they present will be; they choose one of the three categories and put their own presentation together for the children, Skinner said.

“‘The program’s content comes from the volunteers,’ he said. ‘We give them some direction, like ‘we want you to teach them how to read a nutrition label’ and the volunteers take it from there. They do all the hard work and figure out what they want the kids to take away from this course.”

Skinner said the elementary students seem to enjoy the program, and that it provides them an opportunity to see things most elementary students may not get to see during their elementary education.

“It seems like the kids really like it,” Skinner said. “They are at the age where anything out of the ordinary is interesting to them. The nutrition segment is neat because they get to handle the boxes and they can compare the food labels with each other. It’s something I think they can have fun with when they go to the grocery store, when they look at a label and say, ‘calories, we want that number small’ so they can show their parents, ‘hey look what I learned. The children are pretty hyperactive, so they really get into the exercise portion; they’re up and running in place, doing push ups and sit-ups and baseball. I think we probably make the people teaching class below us a little upset, but they have a good time. The anatomy aspect winds up being kind of a shock, or gross wow factor; they get to see things they may or may not have seen before. For instance, we bring in a big plastic model of a human, a plasticized heart so they can see what it looks like on the inside, some healthy and diseased lungs, so we can demonstrate the hazards of smoking, and they usually

GSN Nurse Anesthesia Program Ranked Sixth in Nation

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences’ (USU) Graduate School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia program ranked sixth nationally for the second consecutive year according to the 2009 Edition of U.S. News and World Report.

“This is quite an accomplishment for the nurse anesthesia program that admitted its first students in 1994,” said Air Force Lt Col Adrienne Hartgerink, Nurse Anesthesia Program director. “Last year we were thrilled that our program was recognized. To be ranked a second time just solidifies the outstanding contributions of both the graduate school of nursing and the anesthesia program. It is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of the USU faculty and students from all services.”

The U.S. News and World Report bases its nurse specialty rankings on peer assessment surveys sent to deans, administrators and/or faculty at accredited degree programs or schools in each discipline. Educators rate the academic quality of programs on a 5-point scale.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists are vital to the Federal Health System’s mission of delivering quality health care to eligible beneficiaries in the federal sector. Upon graduation from USU, nurse anesthetists provide safe, competent care, adhering to the highest practice standards. Anesthesia is practiced in a variety of settings, including modern, state of the art medical centers, in the field with Special Operations teams and ground forces, onboard ships, in the air, at overseas duty stations, and remote locations that are serviced by the Public Health Service. Independent practice and the ability to perform a wide variety of anesthetic techniques, including regional anesthesia, is expected.

The 30-month program consists of two phases. The 12-month didactic component conducted on the university campus provides the foundation upon which all academic and professional education is based. Courses provided are necessary for entrance into the clinical arena and include the basic sciences, nursing core courses, basic and advanced principles of anesthesia, basic and clinical pharmacology, and statistics and research methodology. Human patient simulation is extensively used to prepare students for clinical practice.

The eighteen-month Phase II clinical component focuses on critical thinking and the application of science and research to clinical anesthesia. Students are assigned to a military medical treatment facility as their primary clinical training site. The clinical phase is designed to progress the graduate student toward the goal of functional autonomy and independence in decision-making, appropriate to the student’s level of experience.

See G3, Pg. 5
Faculty Profile: Dr. Juanita Anders, Professor, APG

By Christine Creenan
Web Writer, Office of External Affairs

It was at one time regarded an injury without treatment options, but today Dr. Juanita Anders, a professor for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences’ (USU) Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics, is working diligently to advance spinal cord injury research. Her findings offer new hope for victims of SCI. SCI is a debilitating disease, rendering victims—in severe cases—completely immobile.

Anders’ studies show that light energy alters DNA and RNA expressions and the secondary injury responses including the inflammatory response, and facilitates axonal regeneration in the injured spinal cord. This non-invasive therapy uses wavelengths of light in the visible part of the spectrum to penetrate the body and support axonal re-growth and functional recovery. This important discovery has huge implications for the many sufferers of SCI.

Light therapy also has great potential as a treatment for brain injury and peripheral nerve injury. Anders was recently awarded a grant to investigate the effectiveness of light as a treatment for severe peripheral nerve injury. In severe injuries with loss of nerve tissue, the defect can be bridged by natural and synthetic conduits or nerve grafts or by inducing collateral sprouting from an adjacent nerve. However, even with these state-of-the-art microsurgical techniques, there is minimal recovery of sensation and motor function. Anders research will focus on the repair of severely damaged peripheral nerves by combining light therapy with two surgical methods currently used clinically to repair severely damaged peripheral nerves. This laser based non-invasive treatment has the potential to revolutionize post-traumatic/post-operotive peripheral nerve repair and functional recovery. Anders is also expanding her research treatment of brain injuries caused by blasts.

Anders’ research is particularly relevant to the USU community because of the American servicemember’s personal sacrifice for the safety of the nation. In war zones, there is an increase in brain and spinal cord injuries due to blasts. Also, a lack of armor for the appendages due to potential constraints on a soldier’s mobility has dramatically increased the number of soldiers with severe traumatic wounds to the limbs. Loss of large segments of nerves innervating the limbs, causing chronic loss of sensation and paralysis, are often associated with these wounds.

As a researcher, Anders is duly committed to curing these injuries. In keeping with the university’s mission, she is charged with caring for those in harm’s way. Her passion extends to the civilian community as well; she is actively involved in raising awareness and advocacy for the paralysis community.

A Letter from the New Director of Government and Community Relations

I’d like to begin by saying to those of you I’ve already met, thank you for the warm welcome. To those of you I’ve yet to meet – hello – my name is Jan Clark, and I am the university’s new director for government and community affairs.

My position in the university’s Office of External Affairs was created to build and maintain strong working relationships with key members of the general public, community members and groups, local organizations and entities, as well as federal, state and local governments. I will serve as the liaison between local community groups, elected and appointed officials and business leaders.

By definition, a liaison is ‘the exchange of information or the planning of joint efforts by two or more people or groups (often of military personnel)’ – a two-way street. I will need to provide the community with information about the issues, concerns, events and successes of the university in order to share who we are and what we do.

My job is to open two-way communication and develop partnerships and collaborations. In a nutshell, I plan to be a key communications link between USU and many of our external communities. This is quite a challenge and I cannot succeed without your support, input and advice. That’s where you come in.

To date, I’ve met with members of the Bethesda/Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce and the Bethesda Urban Partnership and visited the National Institutes of Health, where I met with Mr. Dennis Coleman, community liaison. I also had a wonderful discussion with Mr. Ken Hartman, director of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, from whom I learned much about local community challenges and aspirations. Mr. Randy Schools, president of the NIH Recreation and Welfare Association, has also provided me with a wealth of information. I’ve attended a few after-hours meetings and events in the local community, and I’m learning a great deal, yet know I have a long way to go.

I have also had the opportunity to meet with several university members as well, and as I stated earlier, you have all been great, and have provided me with valuable information that I am still processing. However, I am anxious for more; I need your input and your guidance.

My goal is to provide updated information for every other edition of the USU Newsletter. I expect to write about what I am learning about activities in the surrounding communities as well concerns I hear about current issues, such as traffic and congestion. I also hope to tell our community members and organizations more about the university, our mission and our people.

As part of that I need to know what matters to you, what you’d like to see explored. I am not only new to USU but to the area as well, and I look upon this new position and my new residence in Maryland as an adventure. I’m out to discover USU, Montgomery County and beyond. So, though seldom does one get this opportunity, I’d like to offer it now – tell me where you’d like me to go. You read that right; “tell Jan where to go.” Email me at janet.clark@usuhs.mil. I look forward to meeting you.
Prior-service students of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) have already answered the call of personal sacrifice for their country. One such student has devoted almost two decades of service to the military before coming to USU.

Born in Chattanooga, Tenn., 1LT Gregory Philips, NC, USA, a student of USU’s Graduate School of Nursing, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia Class of 2011, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Nov. 9, 1980, and spent 10 months in the Delayed Entry Program before undergoing recruit training at Paris Island in August, 1981. Having spent three years in an Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps in high school, Phillips was promoted to Private First Class upon graduation from recruit training. He said the Marine Corps had always intrigued him, and that he was particularly impressed by the image they presented.

“I always thought the Marines looked impressive in their uniforms,” he said. “It seemed like it couldn’t get boring either, because in addition to your regular job, you were also a basic rifleman, so you’d go to the range for a week every year as well as perform your troop leading steps.”

Phillips said not only did the Marine Corps change him mentally, but physically as well.

“I was a small person growing up,” Philips said. “I only weighed 138 pounds coming out of high school, and I was only about 5’5”. Within four years I shot up to 5’6” and 176 pounds, so I gained quite a bit of mass, but I stayed at nine or 10 percent body fat.”

Phillips spent more than 17 years in the Marine Corps in a variety of positions. He began his career as an aviation electronics technician at Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C. He spent eight years there, following which he performed recruiting duty and went to school. Upon reenlisting, Phillips was stationed at MCAS New River in Jacksonville, N.C. During his time with the Marines, he deployed on the U.S.S. Wasp and the U.S.S. Saipan, as well as to Okinawa, Japan, and Haiti. In addition, Phillips has spent time in the U.S. Army National Guard.

Phillip’s interest in nursing sparked when his sister-in-law graduated from Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia school in 1989. He began to take college courses, and when he left the Marine Corps, he had attained an associates degree. He enrolled in 2000 at the University of Chattanooga’s School of Nursing. Upon his graduation in 2003, he worked in a level one trauma center in the burn unit for a year, following which he moved to the cardiac unit, and then surgical intensive care.

“At this point, I wanted to go to graduate school, but I didn’t want to be poor to do it,” Phillips said. “The Army offered me the best deal, so I took them up on it, and came to USU.”

Phillips said he enjoys USU’s environment, and the cohesiveness of the ideals of the university’s student body.

“I really like the environment,” Phillips said. “I’m surrounded by people with similar views and opinions of how the world should run. One thing I disliked about civilian schools is that all these kids who think they know all the answers to the world’s problems, when they have little experience under their belts. I like the people I go to school with, and all of my instructors are top notch.”

Phillips family has passed down a legacy of service, starting with his grandfather, who was a parachute packer for the U.S. Navy during World War II. Phillips has passed the legacy down to three of his five children; one of his sons is an Army combat medic, currently deployed to Bukka, Iraq, another is an aviation structural mechanic in the U.S. Navy. A third son spent four years in the U.S. Air Force as a lieutenant, and now serves in the North Carolina Air National Guard. Of his non-military children, he has a daughter who is a disc jockey in Boston, and another son also in Boston, who is currently deciding what he wants to do with his life. He met his wife, Bonnie of 17 years in North Carolina.

wind up asking a lot of questions.”

Skinner added that the medical students teaching the physiology portion have the most difficult job, because they field a lot of the children’s questions.

“The models really spark the kids interests, so they end up fielding questions that aren’t really teaching specific, but questions about the body in general,” Skinner said. “At this stage if you can spark an interest in something for them, they may end up following that interest.”

Skinner said the program is not only enjoyable for the elementary students, but it’s therapeutic and a confidence boost for the medical students as well.

“I think we love the idea of being confident enough in what we do and knowing what we know to be able to explain it to a young crowd,” Skinner said. “We’re hoping the program will be something that will really stick with the children.”

In addition to the practical knowledge and experience the elementary students bring home, the medical students have put together a pamphlet for the children to take home for their parents which details healthy snack ideas, easy exercise options like dancing in the kitchen, and general health and physiology tips like getting enough quality sleep and not eating before going to bed.

“We wanted it to be full of things that would establish good habits for the kids,” Skinner said.

Several first year SOM students shadowed the presenters to get a feel for the program, which Skinner said will be passed on to them. Whether the G3 program continues through the generations of USU students remains to be seen, as the decision to continue the program will rest with each new class of students.

“We’re trying to transition G3 over to the first years so next year they can continue the program,” he said. “We’re hoping maybe next year they’ll make some improvements upon it; the class of 2011 will hopefully like the idea enough to carry it on. We’d like to have more opportunities to present the program again before the end of the semester, but schedules are getting tighter, and the elementary students themselves are getting ready to take standardized tests.”

Skinner added that there was talk of making the program part of a fourth-year internship, in which a student would devote six-weeks to the program to make it a county-wide project; however, he added that at the moment, there are no concrete plans.
to be able to help them, and at the same time reinforce the lessons our students learn in the classroom, so we are grateful for our patients.”

And the patients are grateful for the treatment. Florinda Bellido, a woman who came in seeking treatment said she enjoys helping the students, and greatly appreciates the level of professionalism and sympathy she receives during care.

“I love helping the students,” she said. “This is my first time here, but the care is already so much better than at other places I have visited; I tried to explain my condition to another doctor, and he told me I was ‘just getting old,’ and that it was probably arthritis, but he never even gave me an examination. Doctor Stephens is very gentle and personable.”

Through participation in the clinic, students have the opportunity to reinforce their didactic lessons and help out their community; something which could not happen without the supervision of their instructors, for which Germain said she was very grateful.

“It’s hard for medical students to improve their skills without supervision,” Germain said. “Doctor Stephens has generously volunteered his time to supervise us, making this whole thing possible. The goal is to allow students to work with patients with no medical insurance; they’re really an underserved community with little to no access to health care.”

“- 2LT Anneliese Germain, USA

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Cruz said he appreciates the opportunity to volunteer and serve those with limited access to health care, as well as practice non-simulated medicine.

“I heard about the program through Commander Stephens during class,” Cruz said. “I was interested because I had been looking for opportunities to help out in the community.”

“I think it’s a great opportunity to gain clinical experience, since most of the time we as medical students have to practice on each other, with one person playing the doctor and the other acting as a patient with a medical condition. More importantly, the program allows us to help out the underprivileged.”

- 2LT Anneliese Germain, USA

Military personnel at USU participated in their respective services’ bi-annual physical fitness testing throughout the month of April. Each service’s test typically consists of push-ups, sit-ups and a run; two miles for the Army, and one and-a-half miles for the Navy and Air Force. Above, SSG’s Sherry Kwasnik, Pauline Sedano and Julie Weitz monitor Soldiers performing pushups for correct form and quantity during the Army Physical Fitness Test in the USU Student Lounge.
Dates to Remember

Clinical Simulation Manual Information: Richard Kyle’s Patient Simulation how-to manual, “Clinical Simulation: Operations, Engineering and Management” is available in USU’s Alumni Bookstore, as well as online at Amazon.com, and from Elsevier Book Sales’ website, elsevierdirect.com.

Basic Life Support Classes: Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers courses will be on the first and third Thursday of every month at 9 a.m. Seats are limited, so if you would like to attend a course, please contact mrogers@usuhs.mil for availability.

April 30: Seminar, “Spindle Assembly & Chromosome Movement in Mitosis” - Speaker will be Gary Gorbsky, Ph.D., chair of WH & Betty Phelps Chair, Developmental Biology, chair. Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology for the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation in Oklahoma City.

April 30: Molecular & Cell Biology Seminar — Spindle Assembly & Chromosome Movement in Mitosis, at 3:30 p.m. in Lecture Room A. Presented by Gary Gorbsky, Ph.D. WH & Betty Phelps Chair, Developmental Biology, chair. Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology for Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

May 1: Lecture Room E - Practical Dermatology for Primary Care Providers Eighth Annual Course — This educational activity is designated for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, medical students, independent duty medical corpsmen and dermatology nurses. No special prerequisites are required to attend this educational activity. The topics will be structure and function of the skin; common bacterial, viral and fungal infections of the skin; benign growths and skin cancers; effects of sunlight; common cosmetic procedures; and when to refer to a dermatologist. Pre-registration is required. Attendance is limited to 140 applicants. Registration forms must be received by April 18. Cost: $10 for medical students (military or civilian), nursing students, and enlisted attendees; $35 for federal, state or local government employed (military or civilian) physicians, residents, nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants; and $100 for non-government civilian health care professionals. Amenities: no charge for parking; coffee provided at breaks; and a box lunch is available at no extra cost, or lunch may be purchased at the USU cafeteria in Building B. Questions may be directed to Katherine Hall, dermatology dept., USU, at (301) 295-9802 or by e-mail at katherine.hall@usuhs.mil.

May 1: Antietam Road March — The annual Antietam Road March will take place on May 1 beginning at 7 a.m. This march is an important lesson in medical history that allows students, faculty and staff the opportunity to witness the medical practices of the Civil War. It is preferable that all who attend this function wear only black backpacks. Further guidance will be disseminated as the date draws near.

May 2: AFRRI seminar — Title to be Announced. 11 a.m., at AFRRI room 3425. Presentation by Dr. Thomas B. Elliott, Ph.D., research microbiologist, Radiation Infection Treatment Program, AFRRI. For further questions, please contact Dr. Vijay K. Singh at (301) 295-2347 or email at singh@afrri.usuhs.mil.

May 5: Seminar, “Interactions Between Schistosomiasis and Immunodeficiency Viruses” - Speaker will be W. Evan Secor, Ph.D., research microbiologist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Parasitic Diseases. Lecture begins at 11:30 a.m. in Lecture Room A.

May 9: AFRRI seminar - The Identification of Genes Involved in Pituitary Tumorigenesis, at 11 a.m., at AFRRI room 3425. Presentation by Lynnette Cary, Ph.D., scientist, Henry M. Jackson Foundation. For further questions, please contact Dr. Vijay K. Singh at (301) 295-2347 or email at singh@afrri.usuhs.mil.

May 12: GSN Awards Ceremony and Reception — GSN Awards Ceremony from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. in the Sanford Auditorium. GSN Awards Reception from 5 - 6 p.m. in the Lobby of Building B.

May 15: Bldg. E Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony — USU will be having a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Building E May 15 at 10 a.m. The ceremony will be attended by senior leadership from within the university as well as DoD, congressional, state, and local government representatives. All members of the university community are invited to attend. A reception will follow the ceremony. For further questions or concerns, please contact Mr. John Frankenburg (OUA) at (301) 295-3665 or jfrankenburg@usuhs.mil.

May 17: DAR Hall- Class of 2008 Commencement Exercise — DAR Constitution Hall, 18th & D. St. NW, Washington, DC. P.O.C. University Affairs at 301-295-4796.

May 19: Seminar, “Regulation of Gene Expression During the Chlamydial Development Cycle” - Speaker will be Ming Tan, M.D., associate professor for University of California, Irvine’s Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics. Lecture begins at 11:30 a.m. in Lecture Room A.

June 6-8: Tom’s Run 2008 — Tom’s Run is a 200-mile fitness event in memory of CW24 Tom Brooks, USCG (Ret.), who contracted amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Each year teams of runners relay from Cumberland, Md. to Washington, D.C., and finish at USU. For sign-up information, contact SSgt Rogers at mrogers@usuhs.mil.

June 30: 1st Annual USU/HJF Symposium — The Military and Civilian Medicine Jointing Forces to Advance Research symposium will be held from 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Bethesda, Md. For more information, visit http://www.hjf.org/symposium, or call 301-294-1218.

July 10 – 25: 2008 Field Exercises: Operations Bushmaster and Kerkesner will be conducted July 10-25 at Fort Indiantown Gap, Penn. These exercises are unique to our University and require the support of all university uniformed personnel. Only emergency leave will be granted during this time frame as there are over 135 uniformed personnel (not including evaluators) needed to support this mission.

July 28 – Aug. 1: Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation Course: AFRRI will host the Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation (MEIR) Scientific Course from July 28 – Aug. 1. All personnel are invited and encouraged to attend. For more info, go to www.afrri.usuhs.mil for registration and information. CMEs/CNEs will be offered.

August 4-5: Board of Regents Quarterly Meeting — The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.