

## Extra-CHLA: LIVES OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL

### On The Fast Track

by Candace Pearson

All nurses have to learn to think and react quickly. **Afton Schrimpf, RN, (6East)** has honed these skills in a slightly different way – as a professional bicycle motocross (BMX) racer.

“In both nursing and racing, you have to handle pressure,” notes Schrimpf, who joined Children’s Hospital Los Angeles in 2008 after graduating from nursing school. “For me, they also share a similar adrenaline rush.”

An avid athlete, she became intrigued at age 13 with her younger brother’s BMX bike. “I thought it was cool,” she recalls. “I never thought it would go this far.”

She became a professional three years ago, after having won numerous state and national competitions over 11 years as an

amateur. Schrimpf races for the Speedline/Supercross team (a BMX component manufacturer), which is co-sponsored by Fly Racing. She’s known for her fast sprints and her skill at “manualing,” or riding on her back tire to increase speed between jumps on the 1,200-foot track.

Only the top BMX racers earn enough money, usually from sponsorships, to make racing their sole career. Most women in the sport have second jobs. Until this year, Schrimpf raced in one or two competitions per month all over the country. Her bikes and gear are provided, but she pays her traveling expenses.

Now, she’s cutting back on racing, but she can’t imagine giving up riding altogether. She trains several times a week to keep her muscles in quick-fire condition – essential with a typical race only lasting about 30



Afton Schrimpf, RN

seconds. Practicing sprints “is a great stress-buster after a 12-hour shift,” she says.

On 6East, her patients include children with neurological, gastrointestinal and orthopaedic conditions. Occasionally, she’ll meet a child with a bike-related injury and can easily relate. While in nursing school and training for the Olympic trials, she tore a ligament in her knee. She’s also

broken her hand and several ribs, and had numerous scrapes and bruises.

Her patients love to hear her racing stories – another instance when her two careers intersect. “I always use the opportunity,” she says, “to reinforce the importance of a wearing a helmet.”

## Volunteers IN ACTION

### A World of Caring

by Candace Pearson

If it’s true that travel teaches us about ourselves, then Susie Ross, RN, learned volumes during nearly six months with the international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in 2010.

On her trip, she found out she could supervise other nurses, even though she’d never done it before, and that she could overcome a fear of public speaking when absolutely necessary.

“I’ve always wanted to do humanitarian work,” says Ross, 5East, who was inspired by her father’s experiences as a young man volunteering in the Peace Corps.



Susie Ross, RN, (bottom row, second from the left) in Haiti with Haitian nurses and physicians

Born and raised in France, Ross grew up hearing about MSF, which was created by doctors and journalists in France in 1971. Today, the nonprofit organization provides emergency medical assistance in nearly 60 nations around the world.

Last July, Ross took a leave of absence from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles to travel to an MSF malnutrition and pediatric project in the process of closing down in the Central African Republic. In October, MSF asked her to join its team in Haiti, responding to an epidemic outbreak of cholera.

Flying over Haiti, Ross saw a “beautiful, tropical island.” Soon, she took in a more devastating sight: children and adults with cholera packing the beds and hallways of a hospital in Saint-Marc, a coastal port town two hours north of Port-au-Prince.

In MSF the “expats,” or expatriate staff, works alongside local professionals who provide patient care. There, Ross supervised about 85 nurses and 65 nursing assistants, training them in rehydration and other protocols. “It was satisfying to see the nurses absorb what we taught them,” says Ross.

Over six weeks, the Saint-Marc facility treated some 9,000 patients – and Ross confronted her shyness about speaking before large groups. After leading one training session, she says, “I found more confidence than I thought I had.”

She returned home in December, grateful for well-stocked grocery stores and technologies like IV pumps. Now back on 5East, she appreciates the insights she has gained. “In the field, you have problem-solving skills you don’t realize,” she says. “You just have to use your imagination and you can come up with a solution.”

# Nurse Practitioners Create a Bridge Between Physicians and Nurses

by Vicki Cho Estrada



Andrea Parker, RN, MSN, CPNP-AC

It's 6 a.m. and **Andrea Parker**, RN, MSN, CPNP-AC, is starting patient rounds in pediatric surgery. For the next hour-and-a-half, she visits pre- and post-operative patients with a team comprised of an attending surgeon, a surgical fellow, a resident and two inpatient surgical nurse practitioners.

After the six-member team assesses each patient, Parker's day shifts into high gear. She conducts physical exams, writes drug and therapy prescriptions, orders and interprets lab tests, writes discharge summaries, arranges home care supplies, coordinates activities with nurses and clinical care coordinators, counsels and educates patients and more.

Parker, one of 68 nurse practitioners, or NPs, at CHLA, characterizes her role as "a bridge between physicians and nursing. We have a nursing and patient care background, but we also understand the mindset of a physician and medicine," she says. "We have a foot in both camps, which allows us to look at the whole patient – not just focus on a specialty – to coordinate care."

At CHLA, nurse practitioners often serve as the primary care provider for many pediatric populations, according to **Mary Dee Hacker**, RN, MBA, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer. "They work in collaboration with sub-

specialty physicians in both acute care and ambulatory care practice."

NPs are registered nurses who have earned either a master's or doctorate degree and passed a national board certification in their area of specialty, such as pediatrics or acute care. Their nursing experience and advanced education allow them to diagnose and treat acute and chronic illness and disease, and they customarily see patients ahead of physicians.

As an NP in surgical admitting, **Beatrice Chun**, RN, MSN, CPNP, serves as "the eyes for the anesthesiologist before a child goes into the operating room, whether it's a tonsillectomy or a more involved procedure," she says. Every child gets a thorough physical exam including an airway assessment prior to surgery.

Chun performs pre-anesthesia screening for patients scheduled for surgery, which includes evaluating the patient's medical history. Patients being seen in subspecialties such as cardiology, pulmonology or endocrinology are managed in conjunction with the anesthesiologist and their CHLA specialist.

Less hands-on than a bedside nurse, Chun focuses on the patient having a smooth transition into the operating room. The surgical experience should be a pleasant one and as stress-free as



Karla Haynes, RN, MPH, MS, CPNP

possible for the patients and their families. "I always wanted to be an advanced practice nurse, formulating patients' plans of care, but still be able to interact with patients and families," says Chun, who received care from a nurse practitioner as a teenager.

Similarly, **Karla Haynes**, RN, MPH, MS, CPNP, was interested in a "bigger picture" nursing role. Her patients in craniofacial surgery mostly suffer from cleft lip or palate, and she meets weekly with an interdisciplinary team comprised of dentists, orthodontists, audiologists, plastic surgeons and others to carry out the plan of care.

"A great deal of my time is involved with care coordination and looking at patients' health from head to toe," says Haynes, who likens her job to that of a quarterback – "directing plays and passing the ball to other specialists."

"We work closely with surgeons, who are focused on the surgical components, while we manage the medical side – it's a complementary relationship," she adds. "They'll defer to us on medical issues. For example, if we tell them a patient is not ready for surgery because of a health condition, they'll postpone it."



While NPs don't have the same level of patient interaction as a bedside nurse, they can form strong bonds with patients and families. **Sue Matich**, RN, MSN, CPNP, grew very close to one of her patients, an 11-year-old boy who suffers from neurofibromatosis, a disorder that causes tumors to grow on or in the body.

"He came in every three months for an MRI with anesthesia and always gave the nurses a big plate of brownies and endeared himself to everyone," says Matich, an NP in radiology and anesthesiology. Soon after meeting the young boy and his family, she joined a team with



(Pictured Left): Beatrice Chun, RN, MSN, CPNP

## Leader, Mentor, Researcher

by Candace Pearson

other radiology nurses to participate in a 5K fundraiser for neurofibromatosis research.

This year, the nurses will be participating in their third consecutive walk. In addition to visiting the young patient and his family at the annual fundraiser, Match sees them once a quarter when they come to the hospital for his MRI. She also participates in fundraisers for another patient, who suffers from retinoblastoma, a rare eye cancer.

Last year, **Kim Rinauro**, RN, MSN, FNP, an NP in gastroenterology, realized the bond she shared with a patient's



Kim Rinauro, RN, MSN, FNP

**Alan Hermanson**, MSN, FNP, ACP, who spent 32 years as an NP in the Emergency Department of another medical facility and in occupational health settings before joining CHLA's Employee Health Services in 2004, says, "being a nurse practitioner is the best thing that ever happened to me.

"You get to do a little bit of everything – you have the holistic patient approach that nurses get and you get to be involved in all aspects of medicine," says Hermanson, whose duties as Employee Health Services manager include diagnosing and treating workers' compensation injuries and illnesses.

While the work can be challenging, these nurse practitioners say there are many rewards, including autonomy, developing bonds with patients and families and being part of a team.

"One of the things that makes our jobs unique to Children's Hospital is there are phenomenal specialists in every area for us to collaborate with," adds Haynes. "We're surrounded by good physicians and nurses. Our patients benefit when there are so many strong members on a team."



Sue Match, RN, MSN, CPNP

family when she received a page from the mother of the 15-year-old boy. The mother asked Rinauro to go to her son's hospital room as he was dying from a bacterial blood infection.

"I saw him monthly for three and a half years as a home TPN (total parenteral nutrition, in which a patient is fed intravenously) patient," says Rinauro, who is also coordinator of the home TPN program, part of gastroenterology's Intestinal Rehabilitation (IR) Program at CHLA. "The family allowed the physician and myself from the IR team to be in his room in his final hours. It made me realize the important role we played in their lives."



Nida Sulit-Oriza, RN

When Children's Hospital Los Angeles opened its Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) in 1993, **Nida Sulit-Oriza**, RN, signed on with the founding staff.

Ten years earlier, she had joined CHLA in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and almost immediately, "my heart went out to the heart patients," she recalls.

Today, the charge nurse remains excited by the evolution of cardiac care and evidence-based practice. "I'm in a place where there are always new things to learn," she says, "and I can make a difference for other nurses, patients and families."

That includes getting to know some parents even before they deliver, thanks to advances in fetal diagnosis. It's a relationship she treasures. "Our role is to make sure families know they are not alone and to support them in the decisions they must make."

Sulit-Oriza willingly takes on new roles as leader, mentor and researcher. "I like the challenges of being involved in transforming best-care practices at the bedside," she says.

"Nida deserves recognition for her exceptional performance in helping to improve CTICU patient care outcomes through her work with various process improvement activities," says Clinical Manager **Florida Imperial-Perez**, RN, MN, CS.

Sulit-Oriza's passion and curiosity led her to undertake clinical research in the 1990s. Currently training as a research fellow, her interests include staff collaboration in reducing and preventing hospital-acquired infections and improving clinical practices in arterial blood pressure monitoring. Every two years, she facilitates a "Road to Leadership" workshop in the CTICU, which seeks to help staff develop their leadership potentials and eventually become CTICU charge nurses. She also strongly supports Patient Care Services (PCS) Collaborative Governance, which increases staff involvement and accountability.

Sulit-Oriza co-chairs the hospital-wide PCS Clinical Practice Council, a multidisciplinary group involved in policies and procedures, clinical documentation, professional ladder and professional scopes of practice. She says, "It has opened my eyes to the strength of staff-driven decision making and empowerment to control our practice."

Inside the CTICU, yellow stars dot one window, each bearing the name of a staff member and his or her primary qualities. Sulit-Oriza's star reads: "Role model, servant, leader, compassionate, loving, efficient, dependable, brings out the best in you."

She smiles. "I just try to do my best. CHLA has been good to me all these 27 years, and I am here to stay and give back what I can."

# Flo Sheet Chronicles

## PROFESSIONAL MILESTONES

**Nancy Blake**, RN, (PCS Director, Critical Care Services) received the 2011 Excellence in Education Award from the Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN) during the annual SPN Convention in Las Vegas, Nev. in April 2011. She was also a guest lecturer in January 2011 for master's students at UCLA speaking on the "Professional Roles of the Nurse." In February 2011, she spoke at the Nursing Consortium of South Florida, a group of nurse executives, managers and deans of nursing schools, on "Healthy Work Environments;" at the Los Angeles AACN Conference at UCLA on "Leading Others in Nursing;" at the Sacramento AACN Conference at UC Davis on "Healthy Work Environments" and "Protecting Yourself from Health Care Liability." Nancy and **Kathleen Stevenson**, RN, (PCS Disaster Resource Center) also spoke at the Los Angeles County Trauma Conference on "Pediatric Disaster Surge Planning."

The Quality Council's Patient Safety Sub-committee had a poster presentation on their project, "Medicus (Please Don't) Interrupt-Us," a multidisciplinary patient safety project designed to reduce medication errors, at the NACHRI Conference in Baltimore, Md., in March 2011. The nurses involved were: **Diane Grade**, RN, (4East), **Willow Voytko**, RN, (4West), **Kathy Wafer**, RN, (Float Pool), **Sherry Nolan**, RN, (5East).

**Colleene Young**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) gave two lectures at the Pediatric Critical Care Nursing Conference in San Diego in October 2010: "Hemofiltration Case Studies" and "ScVO<sub>2</sub> Monitoring: Revealing What Traditional Vital Signs May Not." She also gave a presentation on "Nurse Responsibilities and Clinical Decision-Making When Caring for Critically Ill Pediatric Patients Requiring Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy" at the European Academy of Paediatric Societies in Copenhagen, Denmark, in October 2010 and at the Sixth World Congress on Pediatric Critical Care in Sydney, Australia, in March 2011.

**Fran Blayne**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) presented a lecture, "Acute Kidney Injury: Investigating an Old Criminal with a New Tool," at the Pediatric Critical Care Nursing Conference in San Diego in October 2010. At the same conference, **David Schmidt**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) presented two lectures: "CVVHDF: A Nurse Run Program" and "Busting BSI in the PICU."

**Meghan Middleton**, RN, (MAGIK Pain Service) lectured at the UCLA School of Nursing on "Pain Assessment and Management" for second-year PNP students and to the CHLA RN Residency class on "Epidural Management and Nerve Block Therapy" in January 2011.

**Debbie Jury**, RN, (MAGIK Pain Service) lectured at the Liatus Education Day in December 2010 on "Epidural and Nerve Block Therapy" in the pediatric population.

**Noreen Clarke**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) and **Susan Cline**, RN, (Emergency Department) presented "Maka's Story: Bringing International Health Care to our Hometown," at the National Magnet Conference in Phoenix, Ariz., in October 2010.

**Liz Daley**, RN, and **Lucy Dautrich**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) gave a poster presentation, "Staff Initiated Unit-Based Continuing Education After RN Residency," at the NACHRI Conference in Baltimore, Md., in March 2011.

**Sandra Watcher**, RN, (Rheumatology) presented a lecture, "Making the Complex Simple: Teaching our Pediatric Patients," was a facilitator for the Infusion Therapy Networking Session and served as a moderator at the American College of Rheumatology's (ACR) Scientific Conference in Atlanta, Ga., in November 2010. She was also the planning chair for the pre-conference course, "Immunology and Biologics," at the SOTA Conference in April 2011 in Chicago, Ill.

**Cat Goodhue**, RN, (Trauma) had two publications: "Disaster and Mass Casualty Events in the Pediatric Population," in *Seminars in Pediatric Surgery* in November 2010 and "Disaster Preparedness Among Medical Students: A Survey Assessment," in the *American Journal of Disaster Medicine* in September/October 2010. She also

presented a lecture on "Genetics and the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner," to the UCLA PNP Program in February 2011.

**Maki Okada**, RN, and **Kasey Rangan**, RN, (Hematology/Oncology) gave a poster presentation, "Development of a Follow-up Program for Adult Survivors of Childhood Cancer: A Joint Initiative of Children's Hospital Los Angeles and Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center," at the Lance Armstrong Foundation LiveSTRONG Young Adult Alliance Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, in November 2010.

**Vanessa Guerrero**, RN, (Radiology) presented "Radiology: An Overview of the Eight Radiology Modalities at CHLA" at PCS Grand Rounds in December 2010.

**Ria Yeh**, RN, (House Supervisor) was the keynote speaker at Los Angeles City College's Fall 2010 Nurse Pinning Ceremony.

**Sue Matich**, RN, (Radiology) is the editor for the column "Just Pediatrics," for the *Journal of Radiology Nursing* for 2011.

**Linda Camacho**, RN, (6North), wrote an article, "Recognizing Moral Distress: Steps to Recovery," which was published in the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses' newsletter and also in the SPN newsletter.

**Zulema Vega**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) was featured in the article, "My Specialty: Pediatric Nursing," in *Working Nurse Magazine*, December 2010.

**Barbara Britt**, RN, (Hematology/Oncology) was CHLA's nominee for the Hospital Hero Awards ceremony in Los Angeles in November 2010.

**Beth Harrison**, RN, (Ambulatory Care) was presented with the hospital's GEM Award (Going the Extra Mile) in March 2011.

**Susan Hunt**, RN, took on the newly established position of nurse consultant for MAGIK Pain Service and Comfort and Palliative Care Service in December 2010.

## Promotions and Certifications

**Erin Balek**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) – CLEC

**Jo Ann Barreras**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Maria Castro**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Margaux Chan**, RN, (Post Anesthesia Care Unit) – CPN

**James Cottrell**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**George Cruso**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Aileen DeGuzman**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Victoria Duncombe**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – CCRN

**Raulin Feria**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) – CPN

**Mariella Flores**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Natalie Goldman-Meritt**, RN, (5East) – CPN

**Ronda Habaradas**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – CCRN

**Debbie Hand**, RN, (Surgical Admitting) – CPN

**Armstrong Hao**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Kerri Hunter**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Martha Jarquin**, RN, (Radiology) – CPN

**Gayle Luker**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Marcia Massey-Nortflett**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Ashlei McCloud**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Allison McCune**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Victoria Miller**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Claire Meyer**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Jen Meyers**, RN, (Emergency Transport) – CNPT

**Alisa Nelson**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) – CLEC

**Amy Omuse**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Ramesh Radparvar**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN

**Vanessa Rios**, RN, (6North) – CPN

**Lisa Rosik**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) – CLEC

**John Rutland**, RN, (6East) – CPN

**Afton Schrimpf**, RN, (6East) – CPN

**Irina Tarasova**, RN, (5East) – CPN

**Felicia Termmel**, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN

**Teresa Tostado**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Chrystal Uy**, RN, (6West) – CPN

**Donna Vanca**, RN, (5West) – CPN

**Zulema Vega**, RN, (6North) – CPN

**Stephanie Valenzuela**, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN  
**Sarah Zanella**, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) – CPON  
**Diane Altounji**, RN, (4West) – RN IV  
**Jennifer Blayne**, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) – RN IV

**Emma Clark**, RN, (5West) – promoted to education manager

**LaVonda Hoover**, RN, (6East) – promoted to clinical manager

**William Kenny**, RN, (Adolescent Medicine) promoted to lead nurse

**Prim Jalanugraha**, RN, **Donna Vanca**, RN, **Polin Yousefzadeh**, RN, **Arnie Banez**, RN, **Judith Tighe**, RN, (5West) – promoted to unit leads

**Maria Dakan**, RN, **Amy Bishop**, RN, **Albert Bautista**, RN, **Charlene O'Brien**, RN, (5East) – promoted to unit leads  
**Esther Kang**, RN, (Rheumatology) – promoted to care manager

## Academic Degrees

**Dawna Willsey**, RN, (Preoperative Services) – Master's in Nursing Administration

**Brenda Barnum**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) – Master of Arts in Bioethics and Health Policy

**Jessica Christl**, RN, (5West) – BSN

## Daisy Award Recipients

**Christina Cruso**, RN, (Hematology/Oncology) – December

**Ann Alvarez**, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) – January

**Rosie Chavarria**, RN, **Laura Corrado**, RN, (Cardiology) – February

**Allie Dubon**, RN, (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit) – March

## LIFE CELEBRATIONS

### Babies

**Susan Carson**, RN, (Hematology) – girl

**Ivy Dolinski**, RN, (5East) – girl

**Juliet Goss**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) – boy

**Monica Grover**, RN, (4West) – girl

**Overly Hernandez**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) – girl

**Veronica Hernandez**, RN, (5West) – boy

**Jennifer Murray**, RN, (Comfort and Palliative Care) – twin boys

**Katie Meyer**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – boy

**Vanessa Rios**, RN, (6 North) – boy

**Jenny Steib**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – girl

**Cherry Dimaculangan Altobar**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) – married

**Karen Hudson**, RN, (Post Anesthesia Care Unit) – married

**Yolanda Won**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – married

## Retirement

**Becky Taroc**, RN, (5West) – 34 years

**Linda Allen**, RN, (5West) – 20 years

## Medical Missions

**Gena Favero**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – Haiti

**Elizabeth Martinez**, RN, (Radiology) – Ecuador

**Cathy Weinberg**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – Kenya

**Angela Hartley**, RN, and **Jon McKinnon**, RN, (Cardiac Surgery) – Ecuador

## Community Involvement

**Jennifer Huson**, RN, **Gena Favero**, RN, and **Ale Briseno**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) worked with the PICU Social Morale Committee for their third consecutive year to collect funds and purchased various toiletry items to fill backpacks during the holidays for the High Risk Youth Program, part of CHLA's Division of Adolescent Medicine.

**Vanessa Martinez**, RN, (Emergency Department) has joined the Red Cross as a volunteer RN.

**Lesley Abcede**, RN, **Diane Vaughn**, RN, **Donna Vanca**, RN, **Jenny Star**, RN, **Margie Zega**, LVN, **Julie Hoss**, RN, and **Letty Avram**, RN, (5West) who work with diabetes patients, participated in the Step Out for Diabetes Walk at Universal Studios.

**Kim Tull**, RN, **Danielle Tait**, RN, and **Erika Dolezal**, RN, (5West) participated in the Nike Women's Marathon in San Francisco, Calif., in October 2010.



Mary Dee Hacker, RN, MBA, vice president, Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer

Being inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing was truly the honor of a lifetime for me. Spending the weekend in Washington, D.C., amongst the leaders of our profession, the people who have created the model of care we use every day, made me stop and not only take pride in my profession, but also acknowledge what a gift Children's Hospital Los Angeles has been in my life.

I would not be where I am professionally if I weren't working with a group of nurses who are so driven and passionate about quality patient care. After working at this hospital for 35 years, what I know for a fact is that nursing is a collaborative profession. We need each other and we need the physicians, the dietitians, the various therapists, the child life specialists, the music and the art specialists to be able to deliver great care. Each one of us is a part of the whole.

I also know that we must be absolutely committed to our own personal and professional growth. The Nurse Practitioners who share their stories in our Feature section are a wonderful example of our colleagues who are pursuing excellence through higher education and professional training. They are not alone. Nida Sulit-Oriza's dedication to quality improvement has created tremendous change in our delivery of care; our new nurse bloggers are taking our profession's core commitment to education and combining it with the Internet's remarkable power to reach families everywhere. Whether volunteering in different parts of the world, like Susie Ross, or pursuing a personal passion like Afton Schrimpf, our nurses are a diverse and extraordinary group who are continuously exploring, growing and learning.

While I'm so proud of all of our accomplishments, I remind myself that while yesterday was a good day and today is even better, tomorrow is dependent on each one of us. To create a better tomorrow for the young patients we care for, we must continue to be learners. We must continue to ask for feedback, to question the status quo, to take classes, to read, to study, to investigate, to discover.

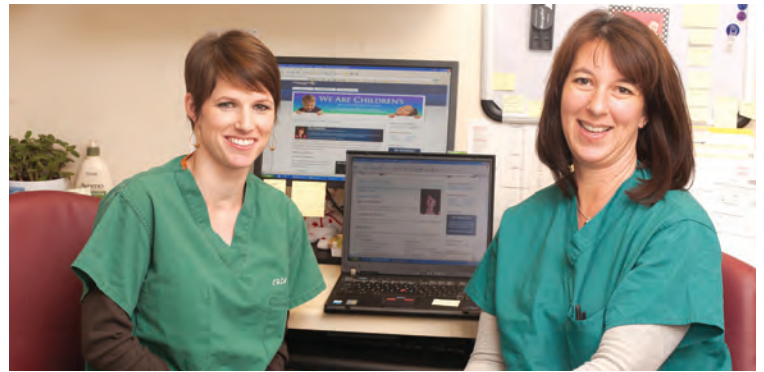
## RN Bloggers Create Dynamic Community Education Forum

by Elena Epstein

As a pediatric nurse, **Kelli Anderson, RN**, (Cardiac Catheterization Lab) is accustomed to family members, neighbors and friends asking her all types of child-related health and safety questions. As a mom of two teenage boys, the 22-year veteran nurse also has first-hand experience with topics that concern parents the most. Now Anderson, along with a select group of other Children's Hospital Los Angeles nurses, is sharing her vast knowledge in a more global and internet-savvy way – by blogging.

Anderson, **Jennifer Buchanan, RN**, (Cardiology) and **Deborah Braidic**, the hospital's manager of web content, are the creative forces behind the innovative "RN Remedies" blog series, launched by Children's Hospital in November 2010. Anderson and Buchanan are two of the site's most regular bloggers, writing on such diverse topics as car seat safety, safe dieting while breastfeeding, BPA in plastic bottles, onset of puberty and teens and texting. Four other experienced nurses were quick to join Kelli and Jennifer in blogging, writing about topics such as childhood obesity, flu symptoms and keeping a child calm while getting a shot.

"A large part of our job is educating the parents of our patients," says Buchanan, who has been working at Children's Hospital for the past four years and is also a certified lactation educator. Buchanan has been



(L-R) Jennifer Buchanan, RN, and Kelli Anderson, RN

working with children her whole life, enjoying previous roles as a camp counselor, snowboard instructor and patient care associate.

"This blog allows us to get the information out to the community beyond our patients and their families," adds Buchanan, who began her nursing career in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit at Children's Hospital.

As Gallup's national survey indicates year after year, nurses are one of the most trusted professionals in the nation and Children's Hospital nurses are at the forefront of continuing education and cutting-edge research. The "RN Remedies" blog series, which features a new post each Monday morning, is starting to accumulate a steady core of followers. It receives approximately 1,000 hits each month and readers are encouraged to email questions or post comments, creating an intimate connection between the nurse bloggers and the readers.

"We're working on developing the blog and expanding it to reach a broader community," explains Braidic. "Our nurses have such great passion and dedication and we're so proud of them. This unique program really allows our nurses' voices to be heard."

As the site grows, Buchanan says she hopes to see more nurses start blogging. "We have so many experts at this hospital. We can be a great source of information for families everywhere."

Anderson, who also teaches puberty classes in elementary schools in her community, says she never thought she would be a "blogger," but likes the opportunity to reach out to people, educate the community and make a difference. "It's a whole new world," she says. "I was walking down the hall the other day and someone yelled out that they had just read my blog ... that's a great feeling."

Visit [WeareCHLA.org](http://WeareCHLA.org) for the RN Remedies blog.

## Getting to Know ... CHLA Dialysis Nurses



(Back L-R) Susanna Wong, RN, Ray Barajas, RN, Adan Carbajal, Joan Cuaresma, RN, Evelyn Rodas, Letty Alvarez-Cesareo, RN, Barbara O'Flynn, RN, Barbara Hall, RN, Dennis De LaCruz. (Front L-R) Alice Sanchez, RN, Evelyn Chan, LVN, Rachelle Rogan, RN. (Not pictured) Gwen Brown, RN, Anita Ramas, RN

The dialysis nurses of Children's Hospital Los Angeles work with a complex group of patients experiencing kidney disease. Within the Division of Nephrology, they specialize in both Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) and Hemodialysis (HD). PD is a process that clears the blood and removes extra fluid. During PD, blood is filtered inside the body using the body's own peritoneal membrane. HD uses an artificial kidney or dialyzer, which filters waste products, extra chemicals and water. Filtered blood is then returned to the body. Many patients are facing advanced, permanent kidney failure, requiring long-term care. These expert nurses are able to perform these complicated and life-saving procedures on various age groups, including newborns. The dialysis nurses care for approximately 60 patients per month (PD has 28-34 chronic outpatients and four to seven acute inpatients; HD has 25-27 chronic outpatients, three times per week, and one to three acute inpatients). These highly trained nurses have a significant breadth of pediatric dialysis experience and a special loyalty to CHLA. Five of the dialysis nurses have 30-35 years of experience at CHLA and two of the dialysis nurses have 20-25 years of experience at CHLA.

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Mary Dee Hacker RN, MBA  
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## Mary Dee Hacker Inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing

**Mary Dee Hacker**, RN, MBA, FAAN, vice president, Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer, received the prestigious honor of being inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing during the Academy's 37th Annual Meeting and Conference on Nov. 13, 2010, in Washington, DC. The Academy's Fellows represent the nation's most accomplished nurse leaders in education, management, practice and research.

"Receiving this recognition is truly an honor for me," says Hacker, who began her career at Children's Hospital Los Angeles in 1975 as a staff nurse. Her distinguished career includes many achievements and honors, including leading the hospital towards Magnet Recognition in 2008 and being the driving force behind the innovative Versant® RN Residency in Pediatrics Program, created in 1999 in response to the national nursing shortage. Hacker also received the Diane Cooper Lifetime Achievement Award from *NurseWeek* magazine in 2009, and was recognized in 1997 by *California Medicine* magazine as one of "California's 100 Most Interesting and Influential Healthcare Leaders." A frequent speaker at state, regional and national meetings, Hacker says she is committed to being a strong advocate for the nursing profession and improving the nation's health care system.



(L-R) Carol Taketomo, PharmD,  
Barbara Gross, RN, David Davis, RN,  
Mary Dee Hacker, RN, MBA, FAAN,  
Nancy Blake, RN

Hacker with Joanne Disch, PhD, RN,  
FAAN, president-elect of the  
American Academy of Nursing