

Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

A Knack for Facts Leads to "Jeopardy!"

by Vicki Cho Estrada

Sandy Hall, MSNc, RN-BC, manager of the Versant™ RN Residency in Pediatrics at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, has a knack for remembering random facts, fortified by years of playing Trivial Pursuit with her family. Her talent was recently on display on a bigger stage when she appeared as a contestant on "Jeopardy!"

Hall, an avid fan of the long-running TV game show, decided to take the online test in April 2015. "I knew the odds were against me—over 100,000 people take the show's online test every year, and from those who pass, only about 400 people get selected," she says.

She was notified of an audition two months later and demonstrated her ability to quickly think on her feet—thanks to her many years working as a nurse—through a mock game with two other potential contestants. By August, Hall received word that she had been selected as a contestant,

but due to scheduling conflicts, she wasn't slated to tape the show until December.

That gave her time to study. Hall went on websites dedicated to preparing for the show and brushed up on a variety of topics, from Shakespeare and U.S. presidents to bodies of water and state nicknames. "I tried to learn all the U.S. senators and that almost broke me," she says.

By the show's taping, she felt prepared, but nervous. Her biggest fear was that there would be a medical category, and she would embarrass herself in front of her CHLA peers. But that didn't happen. Instead, there were such categories as TV sitcoms, literature, unconventional warriors and even "Rotten Tomatoes" (all about tomatoes).

One of the trickier things for Hall was getting used to the game buzzer. "If you buzz too soon, you get locked out for a quarter of a second. I knew



Sandy Hall, MSNc, RN-BC, with Alex Trebek on "Jeopardy!"

the answers to 80 to 90 percent of the questions, but unless you can get buzzed in, knowing the answer isn't enough."

During the show, which aired in January, Hall won a Daily Double, but had the incorrect answer in Final Jeopardy, placing third and winning a consolation prize of \$1,000. She adds, "Obviously, I would've liked to have won, but I'm proud I held my own. ... It was a blast." ■

Nurses in Action

Marilyn Mills: Using Her Culinary Skills for Good

by Vicki Cho Estrada



Marilyn Mills, RN, BSN, NE-BC, CRN, BC

Whether it's preparing a full Greek dinner with spinach spanakopita, gyro and tzatziki sauce or a Hawaiian feast with a kalua pig roasted in an underground pit, Marilyn Mills, RN, BSN, NE-BC, CRN, BC, can cook up a storm.

Mills, a nursing manager in Radiology, has been using her culinary skills to not only feed her family,

but also to help a variety of worthy causes. She has prepared more than 40 elaborate meals feeding 60 to 120 people for school and church fundraisers and nonprofit organizations.

"I like to be creative and make something people haven't tried before," says Mills, a self-taught chef and a certified food handler. "I want to surprise them; my goal is always to give them an experience and good food."

Her foray into cooking for large crowds began 32 years ago when her daughter's school wanted to hold a father-daughter banquet, but couldn't afford a caterer. Mills stepped in and planned the menu, shopped for groceries and prepared dinner for 120 people in the school's kitchen, charging only for supplies.

She later made meals for school fundraisers, weekend camps and nonprofit groups, including a carb-loading dinner for Up and Running Again,

which helps homeless individuals and at-risk youth improve their lives by training for, and completing, a half-marathon. For the past few years, she has also prepared all the food for the annual brunch and lunch with Children's Hospital Los Angeles' chief nursing officer during National Nurses Week.

Mills scours recipe books and watches YouTube videos to get menu ideas and cooking tips. Unlike other chefs, she doesn't test recipes before serving food items, and says, "Fortunately, I haven't had any total flops."

According to Mills, there are similarities between nursing and preparing meals for large groups. "The organizational skills and planning that I use every day in my job carries over into cooking. When you prepare large meals, you have to be organized and follow a timetable. You use these skills as a nurse as well. And, like nursing, anything can change when you're cooking, so you have to be flexible." ■

On the Move

Embracing the Call to Fitness With a Sense of Play and Purpose

by Candace Pearson



Sue Bugsch, MSN, RNC-NIC

As a busy nurse and mom, Sue Bugsch, MSN, RNC-NIC, an education manager in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU), just couldn't make the time for exercise. "I think I was afraid to get started," she says.

But after a diagnosis of breast cancer and six years of cancer medication, Bugsch felt like she "was 85 years old." Things had to change, and she remembers the day they did—Oct. 5, 2015, when she went to a yoga class. She hasn't turned back since. In fact, she recently completed a challenge of 31 yoga classes in 30 days.

"It's changed my life," says Bugsch. "For me, yoga is extremely relaxing and energizing." Its benefits extend on the job and off, says Bugsch, a self-described Type A personality. "Yoga helps me think before I react."

Throughout Children's Hospital Los Angeles, nurses are on the move. They're biking, kickboxing, hiking, dunking, swimming, jiu-jitsuing, weight lifting and catching waves, all in the name of keeping fit—body, mind and spirit.

"You've got to build self-care into how you roll every day—it's got to be part of your clinical practice or you can get burned out and lose your passion," says Beth Fitzpatrick, LCSW, manager of the Employee Assistance Program. In January, the program kicked off a 4 million-step challenge, Walk the Wonders, which has 69 cross-disciplinary teams competing for prizes and the glory of winning.

Phyllis D'Ambra, MPA, RN, nurse consultant in Orthopaedics, is a member of the Funny Bones #2 team. She used to run marathons. Starting at age 40, she logged 11 long-distance races, but now age 69, she says her "difficult knees and hips" prefer power walking. Each weekday, she logs three miles before and after work, and another seven miles on the job. Weekends, she walks 10 miles both Saturday and Sunday.

"In a fast-paced outpatient department, we're bombarded all the time," she says. "By keeping fit, you can be calmer in responding." D'Ambra also credits her walking regimen with making her the only one of her siblings who hasn't had cardiac problems.

For many nurses, the great outdoors provides a fun cardio playground. Delilah Dees, RN, BSN, public health nurse and case manager in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit, hikes in Griffith Park or Runyon Canyon after work two or three days a week, and tries out different terrains and trails on weekends. She uses the Meetup app to find like-minded hikers. "You're out in the fresh air, clearing your mind, and not taking the stress of the job home," says Dees. "Plus, it's free!" Finding a physical outlet is not only key to your health, it supports good nursing, she adds. "We need balance to be able to help the families who need us."

Jeffrey Altizer, RN, BSN, Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit, also finds his release on a hilly trail—riding a mountain bike he built himself. He's

explored several western states, and routinely navigates the rocky, steep paths of the San Gabriel Mountains. "You need good insurance and good technical skills," he jokes. Mountain biking helps give him added focus and confidence as a nurse. "You learn how you can challenge yourself and be rewarded for hard work," he says. Plus, "you get to enjoy the simplicity of what's around you."

Mary Ellen Farr, RN, Surgical Admitting, swims four mornings a week with the U.S. Masters, a nonprofit organization comprised of adult swim teams, and competes in ocean swimming races in Hawaii and Southern California. This will be her 19th consecutive year competing in the Pier-to-Pier Race (Hermosa to Manhattan Beach). Swimming teaches her to be disciplined in every aspect of her life, she says. "And it gives me more clarity throughout the day." It can provide a jolt of joy, too. On a recent ocean swim, she was joined by a friendly coach—a seal.

The blue Pacific also works its magic on Bernadette Perttula, RN, BSN, Operating Room, who started surfing at 16. To stay in shape to catch waves, she does aquatic conditioning at a local pool. Being on the longboard "is my alone time," she says. "It gives me perspective." She sees many parallels with her job. "In the ocean, you need to be able to anticipate what is coming and adapt to unexpected changes," she explains. "The same is true with nursing. When something happens, you move from what you know and do your best."



Jeffrey Altizer, RN, BSN

A Conversation With ... Debbie Jury, NP (Pain Service)



Debbie Jury, NP, with CHLA therapy dogs

Your path to nursing: In high school I needed a summer job and there was an opening at a nursing home to work the evening shift. After spending three summers with these geriatric patients, I was hooked on nursing. It wasn't until nursing school that I realized my passion was to work with children.

The best worst decision of your life: Moving to L.A. I was expecting a "Beach Boys" experience—endless summers and total relaxation. Instead I found smog, traffic, long commutes and astronomically high prices. I wondered why I left all of my friends and family for a job that paid 3 cents more an hour. But once I made it through the first year at CHLA, my view completely changed. CHLA has offered me endless opportunities to advance my career. I currently hold my dream job as a nurse practitioner in Pain Service and overseeing our Amerman Family Foundation Dog Therapy Program. I met wonderful new friends while never losing my old ones and I moved up the coast to a beach city. I really am living the California dream.

Tell us something that would surprise your coworkers: I used to be an avid skydiver. I quit shortly after I sustained a pelvic fracture when my chute did not deploy properly, and I had to resort to my reserve in an area close to a river.

What sets your heart on fire: My little rescue dogs, Ruff and Tumble

Favorite quote: "Life is tough, my darling, but so are you."

Hashtag that best describes you: #BeachLife

Best day-off spot: Shopping at Nordstrom

Can't stop listening to: Jimmy Buffett

Favorite movie: "The English Patient"

Personal motto: If it doesn't nourish your soul, get rid of it.

Comfort food: Any snack that's salty or spicy

Guilty pleasure: Watching Investigation Discovery TV

What would you tell your high school self: You've got this.



Patricia Tejada, RN

Hilda Rodriguez, RN, BSN, 4 East, tried the whole range of fitness classes—spinning, aerobics, Pilates, yoga, boot camp, ab classes. "I was bored," she says, until she got addicted to CrossFit, a high-intensity workout that combines elements of cardio, weightlifting, gymnastics, core training and more.

Without CrossFit testing her limits several times a week, says Rodriguez, "I don't function normally. I'm on edge, irritable." Most of all, CrossFit teaches her to stay positive. "When things seem rough, you can still get to your goal. Crossfit helps me clear my mind, refocus and keep pushing."

Patricia Tejada, RN, clinical analyst on the KIDS Team, was a dedicated volleyball player from elementary school through college. Several years ago, the sport reentered her life when she started co-coaching her son's team. Now she plays weekly on two teams, one women's and one co-ed, at McCambridge Recreation Center in Burbank.



Marvin Mangahis, RN, BSN

"It's a great stress reliever, hitting that ball," says Tejada, who at 5-foot-1-inch primarily functions as a "setter"—setting up shots—and also serves and receives. She loves the game's strategy, energy and camaraderie. "The teamwork is very much like nursing," she says. "You have your skill set but you also rely on your teammates."

Marvin Mangahis, RN, BSN, Quality Department, found his passion in Brazilian jiu-jitsu when searching for a martial art for his son. The combat sport teaches a smaller person how to defend against a larger adversary using leverage and technique. Forty-five pounds lighter since he started, Mangahis is now a certified jiu-jitsu instructor. "It has changed my mindset about my health," he notes. There's a bonus. "My wife says I'm a much calmer person now."



Melanie Guerrero, MSN, RN, CPN

Melanie Guerrero, MSN, RN, CPN, clinical manager of Cardiovascular Acute Care, is equally devoted to the martial arts she practices—kickboxing and boxing. Already a "sporty person," she was diagnosed with gestational diabetes during her second pregnancy. So she stepped things up by joining a kickboxing gym and is now hitting the bag and sparring one-on-one. Armed with new skills, she feels "more capable of protecting myself," she says, and gets upset if she misses her workouts for even a day or two. "It gives me much more stamina at work and with my kids."

Bugsch is continuing her healing yoga journey. "Exercise once seemed impossible," she says. "Now I build my schedule around it. The trick is finding something you love." ■

Celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of CHLA nurses

Publications

Elizabeth Daley and **Nida Oriza** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit): "Tetralogy of Fallot With Absent Pulmonary Valve" and "Total Anomalous Pulmonary Venous Return," congenital heart defect guidelines, Society of Pediatric Cardiovascular Nurses and Pediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Society websites, February 2016.

Catherine Goodhue (Pediatric Surgery): "Childhood Liver Disease Research Network (ChILDRen) – Total Serum Bilirubin Within 3 months of Hepatoportocenterostomy Predicts Short-term Outcomes in Biliary Atresia," *Journal of Pediatrics*, ePub ahead of print, Dec. 23, 2015.

Monica Horn (Heart Institute): "Pediatric Cardiac 'Prehab,'" *International Society for Heart & Lung Transplantation, Links Newsletter*, January 2016.

Sue Matich (Interventional Radiology): "Just Pediatrics: Is Anesthesia Safe for My Baby?" *Journal of Radiology Nursing*, December 2015.

Nancy Pike (Cardiothoracic Surgery): "Alterations of Cardiovascular Function in Children," book chapter in *Understanding Pathophysiology, Sixth Edition*, Mosby, Inc., February 2016.

Judy Sherif (Emergency Transport Team): Guidelines for Air and Ground Transport of Neonatal and Pediatric Patients, Fourth Edition (paperback), contributing author; publisher: American Academy of Pediatrics, December 2015.

Presentations

Leticia Boutros (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit): Los Angeles Cash for College-CHAMPS Health Professionals Panel, November 2015; CHAMPS Nursing Careers Presenter, St. Mary's Academy, January 2016.

Susan Carson (Hematology-Oncology): "Transition Issues for Thalassemia and Other Chronic Care Patients," Diversity in Medicine Class, University of California, Irvine, February 2016.

Nancy Chang (Endocrinology): "Understanding Barriers to Self-Management Among Latino Adolescents With Type 2 Diabetes," *Ellipse Global Study Coordinator Symposium*, Rome, Italy, January 2016.

Robert Giesler and **Cynthia Triana** (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): "Perfecting NICCU's PIV Practice, Eliminating PIV-Related Ulcers on Our Little Ones," Coastal California Association of Neonatal Nurses Conference, February 2016.

Catherine Goodhue (Pediatric Surgery): "Qualitative Assessment of Simulation-Based Training for Pediatric Trauma Resuscitation," American College of Surgeons Southern California Chapter, January 2016; "Disaster Preparedness in Families With Total Parenteral Nutrition-Dependent Children: Can We Make a Difference?" Abstract of Distinction, American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, January 2016; "Genetics and the Pediatric Nurse Practitioner," lecture, pediatric nurse practitioner students, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), February 2016; "Tummy Trauma: Risk Factors, Evaluation, Diagnostic Testing and Management of Common Injuries," lecture, 37th Annual Conference on Pediatric Health Care, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, March 2016.

Susan Hunt (Pain Service): "Epidural Management," two lectures for 6 North Rehab, February 2016.

Deborah Jury (Pain Service): "The Effect of Animal-Assisted Therapy on Pain Medication Use After Joint Replacement Surgery," *Nurse Practitioner Journal Club*, November 2015; "Pediatric Pain Assessment and Management in the Outpatient Setting," three-hour lecture to UCLA nurse practitioner students, January 2016; "Pediatric Effective Pain Management and Interventional Pain Therapies," course for RN Transition Program, February 2016.

Justin Lee (Operating Room): "Evidence-Based Project on Double-Gloving in the OR," *Children's Hospital Los Angeles*, January 2016.

Vicki Lin and **Gloria Verret** (6 West): "Innovative Generational Approach to Peer Mentoring for New Graduate Nurses," podium presentation, National Mentoring Institute Conference, January 2016.

Amy Steffe Lohmann (Anesthesiology/Radiology): "Reductions of Same-Day Anesthesia Cancellations in

Radiology," poster presentation, University of Alabama at Birmingham, DNP Intensive, March 2016.

Sandra Mintz (Rheumatology): "Utilization and Education of Nurse Practitioners in Pediatric Rheumatology," poster presentation, American College of Rheumatology/Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals (ACR/ARHP) Annual Meeting, November 2015.

Nancy Pike (Cardiothoracic Surgery): "Cognitive Impairment in Adolescents with Congenital Heart Disease Detected Using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment Test," winner, Best Abstract, European Society of Cardiology, London, England, September 2015; "Brain Injury in Adolescents with Single Ventricle Heart Disease Compared to Healthy Controls," abstract, American Heart Association Scientific Sessions, November 2015, and "Predictors of Memory Deficits in Adolescents and Young Adults With Congenital Heart Disease." Also moderator for Neurodevelopmental Outcomes Session, Association for European Paediatric Cardiology Conference, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, March 2016.

Bianca Salvetti (Adolescent Medicine): "Health Providers Panel: Accessing Trans-Friendly Health Care," panel, 2nd Asterisk Trans* Conference, University of California, Riverside, February 2016.

Fourth Annual West Coast Sickle Cell Nursing Conference, "Putting Evidence into Practice," Children's Hospital Los Angeles, September 2015: Planning Committee members—**Susan Carson**, **Debbie Harris**, **Trish Peterson**, **Jami Vander Wielen**. Discussion/Presentations—**Trish Peterson**, "The Evolution of Chronic Pain in Sickle Cell"; **Debbie Harris**, "Implementation of 'Evidence-Based Management of Sickle Cell Disease Guidelines.'" Speakers: **Anne Nord**, "History of Research on Sickle Cell Disease and the Unique Challenges With This Patient Population"; **Susan Carson**, "Current Concepts in Chelation: Treating Iron Overload in Sickle Cell Patients Today"; **Debbie Harris**, "Family Panel: The Price of Sickle Cell Disease: Examining Not Only Medical Expenses, but Also Personal Costs" (Hematology-Oncology).

Second Annual Advanced Practice Nursing Symposium, Advancing the Art & Science, November 2015—**Susan Carson** (Hematology-Oncology), event chair. Speakers—**Catherine Goodhue** (Pediatric Surgery): "Development of an Intestinal Rehabilitation Disaster Toolkit for Families With Special Needs"; **Mary Dee Hacker** (Patient Care Services): "APN Research at CHLA and the New Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research"; **Karla Haynes** (Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery): "Making the Most of Prenatal Counseling Opportunities"; **Anna Evans** (Hematology-Oncology): "The Use of Aromatherapy to Reduce Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea in Children With Cancer"; **Debbie Harris** (Hematology-Oncology): "Mentoring Programs for Nurse Practitioners: We're All in This Together"; **Kacey Rangan** (Hematology-Oncology): "New Exercise Recommendations for Pediatric Cancer Survivors"; Mentoring Panel: **Trish Peterson**, **Candy Yu**, **Mary Beth Vingelen**, **Kacey Rangan** (Hematology-Oncology), as well as **Karla Haynes** (Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery).

Professional Achievements

Barbara Gross (Heart Institute): Elected Treasurer for the Society of Pediatric Cardiovascular Nurses (SPCN).

Sheila Kun (Pulmonary): Voted member of the Home-Based Mechanical Ventilation and Neuromuscular Disease NetWorks Steering Committee, CHEST Network—American College of Chest Physicians, Research Advisory Board, CCHS (congenital central hypoventilation syndrome) Family Network, November 2015.

Sandra Mintz (Rheumatology): Appointed ARHP eLearning Chair, ACR Committee on Education Member, ARHP Executive Committee Invited Guest, November 2015; appointed American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Appraiser for Rheumatology Certification, December 2015.

Mary Baron Nelson (Hematology-Oncology): Named co-chairperson, Advance Practice Nurse Group, and **Nichole Buswell** (Medical Genetics), appointed secretary, December 2016.

DAISY Award: **Jiffy Ellashek** (Pulmonology), January 2016; **Nanora Thompson** (Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine), February 2016; **Katheryne Martinez** (5 West), March 2016.

Recognition

Anna Kitabjian (6 East): Association of California Nurse Leaders Float Scholarship, January 2016.

Academic Achievements

BSN: **Janice McKenzie** (Nephrology), magna cum laude; **Maria Padua** (Endocrinology); **Veronica Wallace** (Radiology); **Polin Yousefzadeh** (5 West).

DNP: **Gwen Kimball** (Bone Marrow Transplant), Doctor of Nursing Practice – Health Care Systems Leadership.

MSN: **Victoria Duncombe** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit), Nursing Education; **Linda Kelso** (Radiology); **Lauren Paz** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit).

Certifications

CNOR: **Justin Armour**, **Marisa Baskin**, **Jessica Bodan**, **Kelly Estrada**, **Janet Farris** and **Allison Fell** (Operating Room).

CPN: **Mariam Alhakim** (6 West); **Theresa Burgess** (Float Pool); **Natalie Drorbaugh** (Cardiovascular Acute Care); **Catherine Garza**, (Cardiovascular Acute Care); **Stephanie Gill** (5 East); **Xiaoqing Huang** (5 West); **Emily McDonald** (Radiology); **Kara Medina** (6 West); **Maureen Nelson** (5 East); **Tracy Olson** (Float Pool); **Alvin Rocha** (Cardiovascular Acute Care); **Johanna Stoakes** (5 East); **Carmen Urbayan** (5 West).

NE-BC: **Marilyn Mills** (Radiology)

ONC: **Christine Wu** (4 West)

RN III: **Maureen Nelson** (5 East); Kathleen Palas (6 West)

RN IV: **Johanna Navia** (4 East)

VA-BC: **Terrie Ballard** (Vascular Access)

Promotions

Mira Ahn (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit and Surgical Admitting), Education Liaison; **Leticia Boutros** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit), Interim PACU Manager; **Brandi Bowen**, Day Shift Lead, and **Cynthia DeRynn Thompson**, Lead Nurse, Night (Duque 5 West); **Grace Magaling** (Heart Institute), Education Coordinator; **Lauren Paz** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit), Clinical Nurse Leader; **Camille Susca** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit), PACU Lead RN; **Polin Yousefzadeh** (5 West), Interim Education Manager; **Nida Oriza** and **Carlos Pena**, Lead Nurse, Day; **Kathleen Anticevich** and **Carol Cadaver**, both Lead Nurse, Night (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit).

Life Celebrations

Marriages

Heather Mehl (4 East); **Nicole San Pedro** (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit).

Births

Boys: **Lorren Lemmons** (Bone Marrow Transplant); **Marla Sabicer** (5 West); **Brittini Sanderson** (5 West); **Tina Yoshimura** (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit).

Girls: **Jennifer Buitrago** (Bone Marrow Transplant); **Kelley Dobard** (6 West); **Amy Franco** (5 West); **John Hulse** (Trauma Center); **Crystal Keeling** (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit); **Erika Ko** (Cardiothoracic Surgery); **Bonnie Lee** (Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit), twins; **Meghan Middleton** (Pain Service); **Elizabeth Miller** (Cardiothoracic Surgery); **Luzmarie Ramirez** (4 East); **Sharlene Williams** (5 West).

Community

Bea Chun (Surgical Admitting), her sixth L.A. Marathon, March 2016; **Amy Steffe Lohmann** (Anesthesiology/Radiology), Santa Clarita Half Marathon, November 2015; **Marites Narciso** (6 West), New Year's Eve Half Marathon and 5K Doubleheader Challenge, January 2016; **Jace Vargas-Weisser** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit), Disneyland Star Wars Rebel Challenge, 10K and Half Marathon, January 2016.

Nautica Malibu Triathlon, September 2015: **Katrina Lazo** (Float Team), running; **Marites Narciso** (6 West), swimming; **Susie Ross**, **Emily Clark**, **Sue Martinez**, **Maria Dakan** and **Carmen Reyes** (5 East).

FloSheet is compiled with the assistance of Karen Lampert (Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine). In addition, we would like to thank Debbie Jury (Pain Service) for her invaluable contributions. Thanks, as well, to all the nurses who share items about their activities and achievements.



Mary Dee Hacker, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer (right) with Nancy Lee, RN, MSN, NEA-BC

by Mary Dee Hacker

As many of you know, my happy place outside of the hospital is out in nature, either walking through Descanso Gardens or digging in my own backyard garden. Among the tall trees with the feel of the sun on my back, I recharge and reflect. Lately, I've been thinking a lot about all of you, the incredible nurses, who have been my colleagues, my family and my cohorts in a shared mission for more than four decades. I came to CHLA in 1975 as a young and inexperienced nurse. I have grown in more ways than I can possibly put into words, both professionally and personally. This hospital, the patients, the families and the incredible team of caregivers have changed me forever. Saying goodbye to all of you is not easy, but I take great comfort in knowing that our team will continue to thrive and flourish with Nancy Lee, RN, MSN, NEA-BC.

Nancy joins us from Stanford Hospital and Clinics, where she served most recently as chief nursing officer and vice president of Patient Care Services. Nancy oversaw the Division of Patient Care Services and was accountable for sustaining the highest standards of nursing practice, care and service delivery throughout the organization. She was responsible for the nursing research program and for sustaining a professional practice environment that earned Magnet designation. Most importantly, Nancy has the compassion and determination to continue to enhance CHLA's focus on research, patient care, advocacy and education.

I am so proud of the seeds we have planted together. We have put in the long hours and the hard work and we have never lost focus of why we are here doing this work. It's the kids. It will always be the kids. We work for them. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to build my career here. I thank you for your camaraderie, humor, unit potlucks, working on Christmas and Thanksgiving, your professionalism and intelligence, for always seeking greater knowledge, for being the calm for parents facing their greatest fear, and for never giving up and always showing up. ■

Longtime Bonds Help Nurses Advance Their Education

by Vicki Cho Estrada



Anna Kitabjian, BSN, RN, CPN, PHN

Anna Kitabjian, BSN, RN, CPN, PHN (6 East), never met Terry Varatta, a former nurse at Children's Hospital Los Angeles who is remembered for her vision and compassionate care. But she feels a connection 30 years after Varatta left the hospital.

Last year, Kitabjian received the Terry Varatta Memorial Scholarship, a fund established by the Varatta family exclusively for CHLA nurses who are pursuing a master's degree in nursing. She is among 28 recipients who have received the \$1,000 scholarship since the fund was created in 2007.

"I am so incredibly thankful for the Terry Varatta Scholarship as it has helped me pursue a master's degree in nursing. While I never had the privilege of meeting Terry, I know she was an amazing nurse, and so to have been awarded the scholarship she represents is an immense honor," says Kitabjian, who is on track to receive her degree from University of California, Los Angeles, in 2017.

The family started the fund in honor of Varatta, who worked at CHLA from 1965 to 1985. "Terry always spoke fondly of her time at CHLA and would tell stories of the many friends and relationships she made that were a part of her life and memories forever," says Joe Varatta. "We wanted to embrace and continue the legacy of those like Terry who consciously and fully give of themselves to heal those in need of medicine, kindness and humanity."

In addition to the Varatta Scholarship, which is awarded twice a year, the John E. Anderson

Endowment for Scholarships in Nursing is given to CHLA nurses who are working toward their master's and doctorate degrees. The \$2,000 annual scholarship was established in Anderson's memory in 2013 by his widow, CHLA Board of Trustees Chair Emerita Marion Anderson, a longtime hospital benefactor.

"John was always interested in the work that nurses do," Marion says. "He believed, as I do, that nurses are the core of what takes place in the hospital setting, from exceptional knowledge to compassionate care. John would be very pleased and proud of the great professionalism exhibited by our CHLA nurses each and every day. Education was and is extremely important to both of us, and what greater return could we hope for than an investment in our nurses."

Applicants for both scholarships must complete an application and essay and submit a letter of recommendation. The materials are blind-reviewed by a selection committee comprised of: Kara Medina, RN (6 West), Christie Laciste, RN (Rehabilitation), Stephanie Brady, RN (Versant RN Residency), Yvette Martinez, RN (Cardiovascular Acute), Mary Alice Gajo (Pharmacy) and Miguel Aventino, RN (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit).

"Scholarship recipients are from all areas of the hospital," says Suzanne Taylor, EdD, MSN, RN-BC, director of Clinical Education and Professional Development, who received the first John E. Anderson scholarship in 2013. "The scholarships mean so much because they are exclusively for CHLA nurses and recipients are selected by their peers." ■

FloSheet

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Bedside's Best

Serving the NICCU With Heart and Soul

by Elena F. Epstein



Robert Giesler, BSN, RN, RNC-NIC, RRT, CPST

Robert Giesler, BSN, RN, RNC-NIC, RRT, CPST, is a former Navy officer with a big heart for the tiniest, most fragile patients at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Giesler, a nurse in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU), began his career as a respiratory therapist, following in his father's footsteps. He served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm as a hospital foreman. The nurses he met while in the military became

an inspiration for Giesler, who decided to go back to school when he completed his service.

"I always loved science and medicine and after working with so many incredible nurses, I knew this was what I wanted to do," says Giesler, who earned his nursing credentials in 2002 and joined CHLA in 2004.

Giesler was also certain about the type of nursing he wanted to focus on—neonatal intensive care. "This is an intense environment," he says. "But these babies have their whole life ahead of them and we can make a huge difference."

In addition to his clinical work as a bedside nurse, Giesler has also been instrumental in developing an infant car safety program at CHLA. He was the first nurse at CHLA to be certified as a national child passenger safety technician. "As nurses, we spend a lot of time with our patients," he says. "When they are ready to go home, we want to make sure they are absolutely safe in the car leaving the hospital."

To balance the daily intensity of his job, Giesler, whose wife, Gigi, is also a NICCU nurse at CHLA, logs more than 1,500 miles a year on his bike. Camping, boating and fishing with this family are other favorite de-stressors. He also shares his insights into family life and staying healthy by blogging for CHLA's RN Remedies series.

As he talks about his career in the NICCU, the term "heart and soul" comes up a lot. Each one of these tiny babies has a profound impact on Giesler, who is a father of two teenage sons. As a nurse, he says he sees his role as the one consistent person the families can talk to. "When parents are scared, nurses become the voice of comfort. They are the ones who can bring calmness and hope to keep the family grounded."

What are his most rewarding moments? When the babies come back to visit as healthy, active kids enjoying school and everyday life. "Nothing can top that feeling," he says. ■