

## Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

# Olympic Weightlifting Brings Strength, Discipline and Stress Relief

By Candace Pearson

Alvin Rocha, MSN, RN, CPN, recently lifted 120 kg (264 lbs) above his head—and he's not done yet. Rocha's passion is Olympic weightlifting, one of the oldest Olympic sports, which debuted at the first official Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

The sport tests his limits, mentally and physically. "I enjoy the work you have to put in to achieve the heavier weights," says Rocha, Nurse Care Manager in the Heart Institute's Pediatric Pulmonary Hypertension Program.

Olympic weightlifting teaches him discipline and patience. "As long as you're pushing forward, committing to improving your technique, you will get better," he says.

His current weight is 200 pounds for the "snatch"—a move in which the weightlifter lifts the barbell

from the floor to overhead in one single movement. In the two-part "clean and jerk," he lifts the barbell from the floor to his shoulders, then from his shoulders to overhead.

His next goal is to one day qualify for a Master's national level competition.

Rocha has always gravitated to highly technical sports. In high school, he competed in shot put and discus. He trains four days a week in Olympic weightlifting under the watchful eyes of a coach. On his off days, he works on recovery cardio and flexibility. He tests his skills in competitions twice a year.

After a shift of high-intensity nursing, the sport is "a great way to de-stress and clear my mind," he says. "It changes my focus."



Alvin Rocha, MSN, RN, CPN

Weightlifting relates to nursing in another way. "You learn what you can push through," adds Rocha. "You know you've talked yourself through challenges before and you can do it again." ■

## Nurses in Action

# Inspiring and Encouraging Others Like Her

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Martha Salmon, BSN, RN, CPN

age 12, Salmon says, "statistically, I shouldn't have made it as a Hispanic, pregnant teen who needed to work full-time while in school."

Lacking role models and guidance, she vowed that once she became a nurse, she would inspire and encourage other Hispanics to pursue a career in nursing and support others in the profession. That led her to create Latina, RN in 2018.

"Latina, RN is a networking empowerment movement for all Latinx in nursing. There's a large nursing community, but not a specific community for Latina nurses. So, I wanted to build that community, create a place of support and help others reach their goals," she says.

Salmon launched a website, [latinaRN.com](http://latinaRN.com), where she sells merchandise, including T-shirts, baseball

caps and stickers, with "Latina, RN" and "Latino, RN" emblazoned across the front. She has sold more than 1,000 T-shirts, with several bulk orders placed through National Association of Hispanic Nurses chapters in Los Angeles, New Jersey and Chicago, which sell the T-shirts to their members.

Her LatinaRNofficial account on Instagram, with more than 2,000 followers, encourages Latina nurses to post pictures and share stories of how they made it. "There are many stories about their immigrant parents coming to this country for a better life and how they chose nursing because they want to give back to others," she says.

Salmon adds, "Latina, RN is a way to make others feel good about what they're doing and let them know there are others like them." ■

The journey Martha Salmon, BSN, RN, CPN (6 West), took to the nursing profession wasn't easy. Although she dreamed of becoming a nurse since

# Cultivating an Environment Where Nurses Thrive

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Left to right: Emily Gray, RN; Danielle Arbios, RN; and Julia Nordstrom, RN

During her 22 years at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Edahrline Salas, MA, RN, NP-BC, HACP, CLSSGB, CPPS, CPHRM, has had several opportunities to develop and hone her leadership skills.

She was a curriculum administrator for the Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics, co-chaired CHLA's inaugural Educational and Professional Development Council, and helped lead efforts to enhance patient safety and hospital processes as a program manager in the Quality Improvement and Patient Safety department.

"My journey from staff nurse to program manager has been paved with a lot of varying opportunities provided by the hospital to learn, collaborate and achieve various experiences, which have made me a well-rounded leader of various initiatives throughout the years," says Salas, an Infection Prevention and Control Manager.

"During my career, fellow staff members and managers have encouraged and helped me to develop and acquire new skills, from leading meetings, teams and even initiatives. Being supported by leadership has been really helpful,"

adds Salas. She even recently won a "Better, Faster, Cheaper" Innovation Challenge with Margaux Chan, BSN, RN, CPN (Clinical Education), to improve delivery and tracking of microlearning educational activities via a mobile platform.

Salas is among the many CHLA nurses who are thriving as leaders, thanks to a culture that promotes advancement and developmental opportunities. Whether it's giving nurses a chance



Edahrline Salas, MA, RN, NP-BC, HACP, CLSSGB, CPPS, CPHRM

to serve on a council or committee, launch an initiative to enhance self- or patient care, or gain new leadership skills, the hospital is known for cultivating an environment where nurses grow and succeed.

Susan Santner, MSN, RN (5 East), who has worked at CHLA for 45 years and retired this past spring, has taken a personal interest in helping nurses develop leadership skills. She has mentored and inspired nurses in the unit to set career goals, and many have gone on to hold leadership positions at the hospital.

"As my role evolved, I became more focused on developing staff and helping them learn and grow. I give them what they need to do their jobs and help them feel accomplished and highly regarded. When you start as a new nurse, you learn from other nurses. And once you learn, you teach others," says Santner, who has taught leadership classes at West Coast University, Mount St. Mary's University and California State University, Los Angeles.

She says her "servant leadership" style—which takes an approach to serve employees by prioritizing their needs—is reinforced by CHLA's culture. "The environment is so extraordinary. The administration is always very supportive by providing staff the resources and tools they need to do their jobs and do them well."

Santner adds, "We have a strong team of leaders at CHLA who provide the structure and engagement and encourage nurses to help each other and get involved in a council or committee. This really helps them grow."

Carol Okuhara, MN, RN, FNP-BC, CPNP-AC, has also helped pave the way for nurses to gain increasing responsibilities. She was one of the first nurse practitioners to work at CHLA in the 1990s and the first one to participate on a cardiothoracic surgery team providing medical management to patients in the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU).

"At the time, there was some misunderstanding about the role of a nurse practitioner, and I faced initial challenges," says Okuhara, who has been a nurse practitioner for 26 of her 32 years at CHLA. "Nurse practitioners in critical care weren't really acknowledged, and staff had to gain trust in me. Once they knew what we were about and how we could care for patients, they were very onboard with the role."



# rive and Grow

With her unique experience in the CTICU, she was the first nurse practitioner invited to participate in a three-year leadership program at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. "In the early days, it was only for fellows, then they opened it up to nurses. There's a lot of different avenues for leadership and training and different ways the hospital supports nurses."

"It's great to be part of a team where you are acknowledged as a leader and for what you bring to the hospital overall," Okuhara adds, attributing her early success to the trust and support from CTICU surgeons and the program administrator.

**"We've had amazing mentors and always had people who believed in us. They listened to our ideas and believed we could make a difference."** – Danielle Arbios

Danielle Arbios, MSN, RN, PHN, CCRN, CNL, the Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), who joined CHLA in 2017, has seen firsthand how the hospital encourages leadership opportunities for nurses.

Arbios, Emily Gray, BSN, RN, CCRN, and Julia Nordstrom, BSN, RN, CCRN, launched a program, which began as an RN Residency



Carol Okuhara, MN, RN, FNP-BC, CPNP-AC

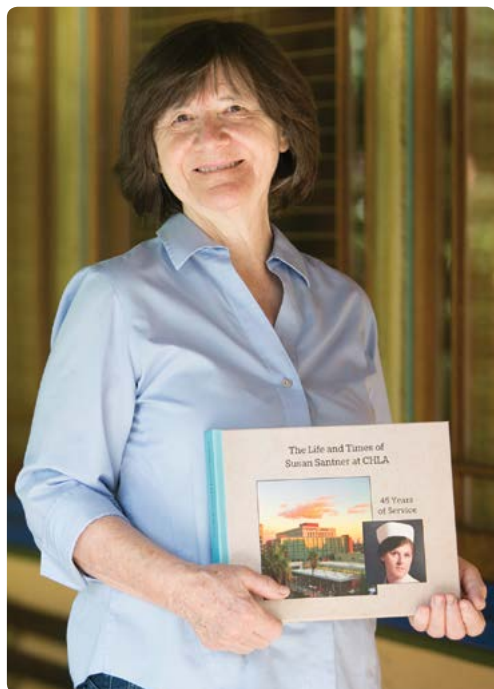
evidence-based practice project, to help counter compassion fatigue in the PICU.

They came up with the idea of holding cumulative stress debriefing sessions after learning the high rate of compassion fatigue facing nurses in critical-care areas. "We take care of some of the sickest patients in the hospital. Compassion fatigue is not only in the PICU, but everywhere at CHLA. Everyone's feeling it the same way and sometimes we don't talk about it," Arbios says.

In 2018, the team approached unit managers about conducting stress debriefings for PICU nurses. "Our managers were extremely supportive, and we started holding sessions in our conference room once a month, facilitated by the physician wellness coordinator and a bedside PICU nurse," Arbios says.

The unit now holds two sessions a month, with morning, afternoon, evening and midnight sessions to accommodate various shifts, and is open to all PICU staff. The program is being expanded to other areas at CHLA after receiving an evidenced-based practice grant from the hospital's Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research.

"The program has exploded beyond my wildest dreams," adds Arbios. "CHLA promotes a culture of excellence and support. We've had amazing mentors and always had people who believed in us. They listened to our ideas and believed we could make a difference." ■



Susan Santner, MSN, RN

## A Conversation With ...

Gina Kemp, RN, and  
Bryan Okoli, RN

The two nurses give us a behind-the-scenes peek into their new celebrity after being featured on CHLA billboards and in television and ad campaigns.



Gina Kemp, RN (4 West and Nursing Excellence), and Bryan Okoli, RN (BMT), featured in the ad campaign along with Julie Jaffray, MD

### First thought when you saw yourself on the billboard?

**Gina:** I had been an actor for years without much success before becoming a nurse, so finally seeing myself on a billboard on Sunset Boulevard was hilarious. My grandma would have said, "However you get there, kid!"

**Bryan:** I could get used to this!

### Best part of this experience?

**Gina:** It was a huge honor to be a public face of CHLA. But honestly, coming back to work an hour later with a full face of on-camera makeup made me laugh. The charge nurse didn't realize I had gone to the photo shoot, and she later said she just thought I was really working it with my makeup that day!

**Bryan:** It was a new experience for me, so I was a bit nervous but excited. It was fun to get a brief view into the process that goes into filming in general, and getting a commercial made.

### Funny comments from colleagues or friends and family?

**Gina:** My community in Redondo Beach responded so sweetly. Our building managers hung the full-page ad from the *Los Angeles Times* up by the mailboxes, and families from my daughter's school would text me when they saw the ads. My daughter saw the TV commercial during one of her shows and got so excited: "Mommy, you did so goood!"

**Bryan:** My dad called to tell me that there was this guy doing commercials for my work that looked just like me and wondered if I knew his name. It was a funny conversation explaining that I was the guy in the commercial. He gets very animated when excited.

### Best hashtag to describe this experience.

**Gina:** #wegothis, of course!

**Bryan:** #differentbutok

### Thinking about a side gig in show biz?

**Gina:** Been there, done that. I went to Northwestern University and studied performance studies. I had a career in regional theatre and in voiceover. But no more show biz for me.

**Bryan:** I'm always open to offers.

## Celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of CHLA nurses

### Publications

**Paula Belson** (Anesthesiology): "A Review of Literature on Health-Related Quality of Life of Retinoblastoma Survivors," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, March/April 2020.

**Maria Bautista Durand** (Surgery): "Identifying Targets to Improve Coding of Child Physical Abuse at a Pediatric Trauma Center," first author, *Journal of Trauma Nursing*, September-October 2019.

**Anna Evans** (Interventional Radiology), **Jennifer Baird** (Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research) and **Paula Murray** (Hematology-Oncology): "Nausea in Numbers: Electronic Medical Record Nausea and Vomiting Assessment for Children with Cancer," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, January 2020.

**Katie Meyer** (Disaster Resource Center): "Decontamination," textbook chapter, *Nursing Management of Pediatric Disaster*; publisher: Springer, 2020.

**Gina Newman** (Hematology-Oncology): "Thrombosis: Risk Factors Among Pediatric Patients with Cancer," *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, February 2020.

### Presentations

**Danielle Arbios** and **Emily Gray** (Ahmanson Foundation Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Rest 'n' Reflect: Implementing Cumulative Stress Debriefings to Combat Compassion Fatigue in the PICU," poster presentation, Leadership Symposium, American Association of Critical Care Nurses Chapter at UCLA, Los Angeles, February 2020.

**Jennifer Baird** (Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research): "The CANDLE Collaborative: A Novel Approach for Growing Improvement Capacity," poster presentation, Institute for Healthcare Improvement Quality Forum, Orlando, FL, December 2019.

**Stephanie Davis** and **Sophia Padilla** (Patricia and John Merrell Bone Marrow Transplant Unit): "An Institutional Approach to Enhance Caregiver Discharge Education on a High Acuity Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Care Unit," poster presentation, chosen as a Round Table discussion, 2020 Transplant & Cellular Therapy Meetings, combined sessions of the American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy and the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research, Orlando, FL, February 2020.

**Jennifer Flores**, **Susan Tuano**, **Kelly Purcell**, **Mikoto Nakamichi** and **Donna De Guzman** (Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): "Guess What's Coming to a NICCU Winter Wonderland ... Breast Milk for Oral Care," poster presentation, won "Most Informational" award, CHLA Education Fair, October 2019.

**Sarah Ann Keil Heinonen** (Pulmonology): "A Potpourri of Pediatric Cardiology for Primary Care," podium presentation, Annual Regional Advanced Practice Nursing Conference, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAP-NAP), Los Angeles Chapter, April 2019, and "The Expert Role of the DNP-Prepared Nurse: Impacting Health Care Systems, Bench to Bedside, Classroom to Boardroom," podium presentation, 12th National Doctors of Nursing Practice Conference, Washington, D.C., August 2019.

**Sheila Kun** (Pulmonology): "Home Management of Tracheostomy Emergencies, Management of a Tracheostomy: Before Placement, Before Home and During Emergencies," podium presentation, 2019 Annual CHEST Meeting, New Orleans, October 2019.

**Mary McCulley** (Pain Medicine): "Peer-to-Peer

Mentorship: Easing Transition for Newly Hired APNs in the Hospital Setting," poster presentation, 2019 Advanced Practice Symposium, CHLA Nurse Practitioner Week, November 2019.

*Versant RN Residency Evidence-Based Poster Presentations, CHLA, February 2020:*

**Shayda Abadi**, **Lindsey Armstrong**, **Shakara Gales** and **Jessica Yupangui** (5 West): "Exploring Remedies to Microbial Dysbiosis in Mechanically Ventilated Patients."

**Alexis Akeyson**, **Jennifer Alvarez-Cardenas**, **Kayley Barron**, **Xzasha Dixon**, **Erica Figueroa** and **Annette Gonzalez** (Maurice Marciano Family Foundation Emergency Department and Trauma Center): "Implementation of a Teach-Back Method for Discharge Instructions in a Pediatric Emergency Department."

**Valerie Arellano**, **Alina San**, **Brianne Stitt** and **Jenna Thompson** (4 East): "Bereavement Support in Pediatric Oncology Patient Families."

**Hannah Bae**, **Natalie Mata**, **Jamie MacDonald**, **Allician Perez** and **Tori Romero** (NICCU): "The Discontinuation of Alarms During the Active Death and Dying Process in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit."

**Constance Colvin**, **Brittany Allen**, **Samantha Wilkin** and **Sabrina Yep** (PICU): "Using Skin Barriers to Prevent C-collar Related Pressure Injuries."

**Adrienne Cruz**, **Justine Cortez**, **Kaitlin Hardcastle**, **Idaliz Javier**, **Kayla Plotnick**, **Diana Xicotencatl** (Margie and Robert E. Petersen Foundation Rehabilitation Center): "CBD Oil and Management of Epilepsy in Pediatric Patients."

**Dominique Dueker**, **David Santamaria**, **Kyla Morwood** and **Bernadette Tombo** (Heart Institute): "Intensive Care Unit Liberation Through Family-Centered Care."

**Arianna Dugas**, **Jennifer Fehr** and **Gilliane Rivera** (5 East): "Pulse Oximetry Monitoring in Infants With Bronchiolitis."

**Madison Fischer**, **Sarah Klahr**, **Robin Mertens**, **Angelica Pascencia** and **Malia Servito** (PICU): "We're Better Together: A Standardized Approach to Increasing Family Participation in Patient Care in the Pediatric ICU"

**Rebecca Flores** and **Hannah Ruotsala** (6 West): "Impact of Bedside Shift Report on Patient Safety, Patient and Nurse Satisfaction."

**Ryan Franco** and **Shawna Tice** (4 West): "Evaluation of the Available Evidence-Based Research on Medicinal Cannabis Use in Pediatric Oncology Patients."

**Kenidi Gales**, **Jessica Licea**, **Paul Meza** and **Simonne Brissenden** (6 East): "Mindfulness as a Method of Pain Management in Post-Operative Patients."

**Katherine Kuhlman** and **Victoria Noble** (Operating Room): "Masking the Smell: The Use of Lip Balm During Anesthesia Induction in the Operating Room."

**Lisa Ochoa** and **Marisa Cousino** (Float Team): "Healing Touch: Decreasing Pain and Anxiety in Children."

**James Peterka**, **Cassidy Herro**, **Vianca Towres** and **Nicole Perez** (Heart Institute): "Utilizing Massage Therapy to Reduce Uncontrolled Pain in Acutely Hospitalized Pediatric Cardiac Patients."

**Danielle Reid**, **Savannah Rogers** and **Amanda Wiles** (6 East): "Bristol Stool Chart: Does the Implementation of the Bristol Stool Chart Aid in Early Diagnosis of GI issues in Pediatric Patients?"

**David Zelaya**, **Taylor Doornbos**, **Coral Hernandez** and **Lauren Trajano** (BMT): "Making a C.

Difference: Implementing a Care Bundle for Immunocompromised Patients."

### Professional Achievement

**Jennifer Baird** (Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research): Awarded \$296,596 grant for the California Nurse-Led Discharge Learning (CANDLE) Collaborative – Phase II by the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, October 2019; start date January 2020.

**Deborah Jury** (Pain Medicine): Received \$20,000 grant from the Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research at CHLA, co-investigator, in collaboration with Pain Medicine and Adolescent Medicine for the study "Chronic Pain: Social Media Influence on Health Beliefs and Behaviors of Adolescents With Chronic Pain," January 2020; taught "Effective Pain Management" and "Regional Interventions," Versant RN Residency Program, CHLA, October and November 2019, respectively; and "Pain Management," to UCLA nurse practitioner students, Los Angeles, January 2020.

**Sheila Kun** (Pulmonology): Member of American Thoracic Society Post Prematurity Respiratory Disease Guideline committee, working on policy related to premature children with respiratory disease, February 2019.

**Sandra Mintz** (Rheumatology): Received President's Award, Association of Rheumatology Professionals, Interprofessional Division of the American College of Rheumatology, November 2019.

**Jennifer Pugh** (Clinical Services): Recognized as a "Young Professional Voice, Class of 2020," American Organization for Nursing Leadership, February 2020.

DAISY Award/Individual: **Alex Rios** (5 West), October 2019; **Cosette Langga** (Helen and Max Rosenthal Cardiovascular Acute Care Unit), November 2019; **Anne Casale** (6 East), December 2019; **Nick Homeyer** (Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit), January 2020; **Carly Pacer** (Rehabilitation Center), February 2020; **Trang Vu** (Cardiovascular Acute Care Unit), March 2020.

### Academic Achievement

MS: **Lynnette Ramos** (5 West), Nursing Education.

MSN: **Margaux Chan** (Clinical Education); **Erin Lowerhouse** (Rehabilitation Center).

DNP: **Mira Ahn** (Post Anesthesia Care Unit), Leadership and Management; **Sarah Green** (Hematology-Oncology).

### Promotions

**LaNice Berry** (Ambulatory): director, Ambulatory Nursing Services.

**Nancy Bridges** (Perioperative): director, Perioperative Services.

**Monica Goodwin** (Emergency Department): director, Emergency Department.

NPIII: **Sarah Ann Keil Heinonen** (Pulmonology).

RNIII: **Erika Cheung** (Float Team), **Chrystal Light** (Float Team), **Judy M. Ulloa** (BMT).

### Certifications

CCRN: **Danielle Arbios** (PICU).

CDE: **Shelly Baker** (Endocrinology).

C-NIC: **Kelly Purcell** (NICCU).

CNS and PNP-PC: **Erin Lowerhouse** (Rehabilitation Center).

CRN: **Sophia Lim** (Radiology).

RACR: **Andrée Mulia** (Human Resources).





Rhonda Foster, EdD, MPH, MS, RN, NEA-BC  
Vice President, Patient Care; Chief Nursing Officer

I write this column filled with many emotions. The world we knew has changed, but in the midst of all the unknowns my overriding feeling is immense gratitude. I'm honored to be a part of the CHLA team that has truly rallied together to keep our patients and families safe while facing a global pandemic. Our nurses had to quickly shift their practices and continue to show up with positivity and dedication, despite the constant worry about their own families' personal safety. Thank you for trusting us to keep you safe. I'm proud of our hospital for beginning medical screenings quickly, for having the foresight to stockpile adequate supplies of PPE years ago, and for diving into the scientific research to better understand COVID-19. The responsibilities we face are tremendous and our team consistently rises to the challenge.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, I find myself thinking about King Arthur's Camelot. I think about our unique place in time even more since the protests began for racial justice. I stood alongside our nurses, doctors, patient care providers and community members as part of the "White Coats for Black Lives" movement on a Friday in early June. As we stood together, lining both sides of Sunset Boulevard and nearby parking structures, I felt the commitment to this journey we are just beginning.

Every one of us at CHLA is a child advocate. Our world needs us to do more. The pandemic crisis, the public health threat, racism—these issues of disparity and inequality affect us all. And we are perfectly positioned to meet this moment and make a difference. Our daily actions have a tremendous impact in our community. We can and we will make a difference.

I ask you, what will you do today? ■

# The Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics Celebrates Its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By Candace Pearson



Left to right: RN Residency alumni Beth Zemetra, MHA, RN, NE-BC, and Charissa (Cherry) Altobar, MSML, BSN, RN, NPD-BC, NE-BC

Twenty years ago, Beth Zemetra, MHA, RN, NE-BC, was finishing nursing school when she learned that the place where she dreamed of working—Children's Hospital Los Angeles—was offering the first-ever residency training program for new nurse grads.

"It was such an exciting time, and finding out about this opportunity was special," says Zemetra, Operations Manager for the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU).

The innovative program solidified her decision to join the CTICU and "took away a lot of anxiety of wanting to work in such a high-acuity, specialized unit," she says.

Now celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Versant RN Residency in Pediatrics debuted in January 1999 and quickly became the national model for new nurse graduate residency programs.

Over two decades, the program has prepared more than 1,600 nurses at CHLA to enter the pediatric world, thanks to 22 weeks of comprehensive clinical and learning experiences, debriefings, mentoring and precepting. Today, more than 50 percent of CHLA's workforce is comprised of residency alumni.

Zemetra is one of five nurses still on staff at CHLA who were in the initial cohort of 21. "Knowing you were starting out your chosen career with an entire group of folks who could share those experiences added to its power," she says.

Just like today, the first participants "looped" to units other than their own to witness patients' experiences. They also met nursing leaders from throughout CHLA. "It engaged us and opened our eyes to the hospital as a whole," says Zemetra.

Cherry Altobar, MSML, BSN, RN, NPD-BC, NE-BC, manager of the Versant RN Residency, joined CHLA in 2007 as a new graduate in the CTICU. In 2018, she took on her current role. Her love for working with newer nurses was inspired by her residency experience. "I saw how being gifted with extensive clinical and emotional support through this challenging transition can truly make an impact on a nurse's career," she says.

Giving training "embedded in so much support," adds Altobar, "creates a culture that conveys how much we value nurses and care about their success." ■

# FloSheet

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## Bedside's Best

# Skin Champions Protect Patients from Pressure Injuries

By Candace Pearson



Natalie Dyer, BSN, RN, CCRN

Skin is the human body's largest organ, so it's only fitting that it takes an army to care for it. As one of 62 Skin Champions at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Natalie Dyer, BSN, RN, CCRN, is determined to advocate on behalf of this important body system and "do everything in our power to keep our patients safe."

CHLA launched its new Skin Champion Program in January 2019, at signs of an uptick in reportable pressure injuries across the hospital.

The Skin Champions—58 registered nurses and four respiratory therapists—serve as unit-based resources, experts and catalysts for building expertise in skin-injury prevention and improving standards of care. "The program's purpose isn't to empower 62 Skin Champions," says Dyer. "It's to empower bedside nurses throughout the hospital."

Dyer had been serving as a skin auditor for three years in the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU) when she heard about Skin Champions. "I was already invested," she says, "and excited about expanding my knowledge base."

In the CTICU, the risk of pressure injuries is complicated by patients' often-compromised immune systems and the use of many different medical devices. "We have patients who are

experiencing multiple organ failures, and that includes skin failure," says Dyer. "You can do everything according to evidence-based protocols and still have complications."

Each Skin Champion completed three-plus months of classes, based on the Wound Treatment Associate curriculum, under the guidance of CHLA's three Wound, Ostomy and Continence nurses (WOCN), including Teresa Renteria, BSN, RN, CWOCN. That education is ongoing, says Renteria, "allowing us to continually build on that foundation to support their growing expertise."

The multidisciplinary program has made a clear difference. From January 2019 to January 2020, CHLA reduced its pressure-injury rate by 75 percent.

Now armed with her specialized training, Dyer feels confident that she knows "how to pull together resources at CHLA and call on all the people who have invested in us." ■