

## Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

### Licensed to Thrill for Adrenaline Seeker

By Vicki Cho Estrada

Laura Tice, BSN, RN, CPN, 5 East, has always been a thrill seeker. She has bungee-jumped in South Africa, cage-dived with great white sharks and scuba-dived off the coast of Bali and in other exotic locations.

So, when her boyfriend asked if she was interested in getting a skydiving license, Tice replied, "Why not? That sounds like fun!"

Tice, who went on a tandem skydive with an instructor two years ago, loved the idea of mastering the skills to perform solo jumps from 12,500 feet above ground level and freefall at a rate of about 100 miles per hour before landing.

To receive her "A" U.S. Parachute Association license, she had to undergo basic training, including how to exit an aircraft, how to fly

freefall and how to control a parachute during the descent and landing. She also had to complete 25 jumps and pass written and oral exams.

"With the first seven jumps, you have someone holding on to you when you exit the plane. Then when you're ready to open the parachute, they let go and you're in control of your wind speed, direction and navigating the air space," Tice says.

"The most nerve-racking part is when the plane is gaining altitude, the door is open and it's freezing. You feel butterflies," she adds, but notes that "being a nurse helps me to stay calm and think clearly when the adrenaline is flowing."

While the freefall and parachute down to land take less than five minutes, Tice says, "it's the coolest feeling flying through the air. It's an



Laura Tice, BSN, RN, CPN

experience that very few people are willing to have. It's a sense of accomplishment." ■

## Nurses in Action

### Passion for Connecting and Helping Abroad

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Allison Lee, BSN, RN, during a medical mission in Cambodia

Since Allison Lee, BSN, RN, 5 West, joined Children's Hospital Los Angeles two years ago, she has been on four medical missions in Cambodia and Mexico. These are in addition

to the four medical missions she went on while attending nursing school.

"What keeps me going back is I have a connection to the people I see; it's not something I can easily let go of," says Lee, who volunteers with Global Medical Missions Alliance, an organization comprised of Christian health care students and professionals. "I want to use the skill set I have to do active service, not just here at Children's Hospital, but for people in other countries who don't have the resources."

Last summer, Lee was part of a medical team that traveled to two villages in Cambodia to provide free health care to about 200 villagers who suffered from a range of ailments, including diabetes, chronic pain, gastrointestinal illness and dental issues. The group created makeshift health clinics in the villages, bringing basic medical and dental equipment and

supplies, such as syringes, medications and blood pressure monitors.

Unlike past medical missions, where her primary responsibilities were focused on patient care, Lee took on a leadership role and oversaw pre-trip planning, logistics, supplies, patient intake, staffing, student training and more.

She has grown accustomed to working under less-than-ideal conditions during her trips.

"I'm emotionally prepared to see anything," Lee says. "We also have tough patients at Children's Hospital—chronic cases that tug at the heart. I feel thankful to be where I am and to have a skill set that can help others. These experiences make me more humble and more appreciative. I hope they make me a better nurse." ■

# PASSIONATE PASTIMES

by Candace Pearson

## Nurses across Children's Hospital and bring multiple rewards



Loni Chartan, MSN, RN, CPEN, NEA-BC

Listening to violin music has always made Loni Chartan, MSN, RN, CPEN, NEA-BC, feel “anchored to the earth.” So when she turned 55 three years ago, Chartan started thinking about “the things I had wanted to do but said no to because they scared me.” Top of her list: learning to play the violin.

Last year, Chartan, Operations Manager in the Maurice Marciano Family Foundation Emergency Department and Trauma Center, started taking lessons. “Now I can’t imagine not playing,” she says. “I go home a ball of stress and shut myself in our spare room, now the music room. It’s the best self-care I’ve ever done.”

For Chartan’s obsession—like those of nurses across Children’s Hospital Los Angeles—the word “hobby” hardly suffices. Even “interest” won’t do. These are passions of the highest order. They are one part fun, one part serious study and 100 percent stress busting.



Gloria Verret, BSN, RN, CPN (top left), with her hula class

Gloria Verret, BSN, RN, CPN, loved dancing socially, but had never taken a class until her daughter gifted her with a dance card to a local studio. Now Verret is front and center for weekly classes in hula and belly dancing.

Skiing injuries to her hips and knees left her waking up in pain. “Dancing has helped get rid of all that,” says Verret, Patient Family Educator in the CHLA Family Resource Center. She loves everything about it—from the ancient Hawaiian chants she learns to dressing up and performing with fellow students. “Dance is a hard workout for the brain and body, but so fun it doesn’t feel like work,” says Verret.



Tess Narciso, BSN, RN

Tess Narciso, BSN, RN, 6 West, used to run Tough Mudder mud races, but cleaned up her act to start snowboarding four winters ago. The best advice Narciso got from a snowboarding pro: “Don’t be afraid to lean in.” The tip helps beyond the physics of the board, she says. “Lean in’ definitely mirrors a lot of things in my life.”

Once terrified of heights, she is building up her speed on the slopes. Being in nature is rejuvenating, adds Narciso, “and a good way to ‘practice’ outside of work how to challenge myself.”



Erin Grade, MSN, RN, PHN (left), with her mom, Diane Grade, BSN, RN, CPON

Erin Grade, MSN, RN, PHN, 6 West, started skiing around age 2, thanks to her mother, Diane Grade, BSN, RN, CPON, Operations Manager on 4 East. “I remember being fearless,” says Erin. She loves “all water—liquid or frozen.” Her graduate school graduation present from her parents: a pair of ski boots.

The whole family skis together. “It’s my release,” says Diane Grade. She hardly slowed down even three years ago, when she tumbled, broke seven ribs, punctured a lung and was helicoptered off the mountain.

Erika Cheung, BSN, RN, CPN, Float Team, finds her release in a weekly indoor volleyball league. As the setter, Cheung gets the ball in position for the front row to strike. “You have to deliver a good ball to hit, and when you do, it’s very satisfying,” says Cheung. More satisfying: Everyone plays for charity, not trophies, donating 10 percent of all winnings. Cheung suggested CHLA as her team’s charity, and the hospital has reaped the rewards.



Eva Dunbar, BSN, RN, CCRN

Eva Dunbar’s favorite sport—football—took her in 2018 to Bermuda, where her team, Women’s “Flag Football Network USA,” won the world championship.

Players get knocked down in the contact sport, but tackling is forbidden. Playing both offensive and defensive lineman, Dunbar, BSN, RN, CCRN, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, is an expert at blocking and at pulling flags.

“Girls from all different backgrounds come together with the same passion for the sport,” says Dunbar, who played intramural football in college. She and her teammates will travel with Team USA to Puerto Rico in February for another championship game.

For some nurses, self-expression is the ideal pastime. Anna Pasquarella, BSN, RN, CPHON,

## Los Angeles engage in hobbies that inspire total immersion



Anna Pasquarella, BSN, RN, CPHON, with her son Bert

Bone Marrow Transplant, started seriously taking photos at 11 years old. A decade ago, she was a travel nurse at CHLA while photographing folk, Americana and indie rock bands at night at L.A. venues.

In 2012, she joined the staff at CHLA. Her work now includes family portraiture, and her coworkers are among her subjects. "There's a lot of art in nursing and a lot of science in photography," Pasquarella says. "It's fun to go back and forth."

Jeralyn Duarte, BSN, RN, Clinical Research Nurse in Endocrinology, has experimented with various art mediums and now focuses on oil painting. She favors landscapes, both earthbound and galactic, though she also creates Jackson Pollock-style abstracts.

When stressed, Duarte concentrates on colors and textures "and everything else zones out," she says. Though she shares her work with friends and family, the end product doesn't matter as much as the process.

Being able to give something she's made also inspires the machine embroidery and quilting of Marilyn Mills, BSN, RN, CRN, NE-BC, Operations Manager in Radiology.

Her embroidered sayings, blessings, plaques, holiday scenes and aprons can be found across the hospital in staff gifts, retirement honors and Nurses Week awards. She invents her own

designs, eschewing patterns. "Seeing something come together is fulfilling," Mills says.

John Biscocho, BSN, RN, CPN, 5 West, shares his sense of adventure with friends and colleagues as a devotee of escape rooms. In these team-based puzzles, participants are "trapped" inside a room or series of rooms and given riddles and clues to find their way out.

"It's a great team-building experience," says Biscocho, who has completed about 60 escapes. His favorite: Secret Agent. "It's a thrill having to use your wits to open locks and doors and solve the puzzle."

Jace Vargas-Weisser, BSN, RN, CPN, Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, has made his own Halloween costumes since college. When he and his husband, Eric, brought their costume trunks together nine years ago, they only needed a closet to store the contents. Soon, however, "we needed an entire room," says Vargas-Weisser.

And what a "ridiculous room," he adds. Friends and family can dive into a bead wall, boa station and shelves of hats and wigs, plus seemingly endless costumes. "Our home," says Vargas-Weisser, "is filled with lots of laughter." ■



Jace Vargas-Weisser, BSN, RN, CPN, in his costume room

## A Conversation With ...

Jamie Duly, MSN, NP  
CT Surgery, Heart Institute



Jamie Duly, MSN, NP, with her husband, Bryan, and daughters Sawyer and Reese

**Favorite book:** I love psychological thrillers.

**Who influenced you to become a nurse?** Nursing found me. I didn't know any nurses. I had just found out that what I thought I was going to do was not going to happen. I heard myself say, "Nursing school it is" in my head.

**What makes working at CHLA special?** CHLA is a magical place; people come here looking for hope. You can feel it when you walk in the doors, when you work next to people who all have the same desire to give their best for these kids and their families.

**Favorite part of your job:** Working with my second family. I work with the coolest people who have cheered me on through school and continue to as I start this new role as a nurse practitioner.

**Advice for nurses just starting out:** Find a senior nurse you trust and ask all your questions. You are not meant to know everything. It's OK to be scared. The fear tells me you understand how important these kiddos are and that you want to do what is best.

**Best life advice:** Be nice. Real, authentic nice.

**Your personal motto:** Be cool—stay in school.

**Favorite comfort food:** Mashed potatoes and stuffing? Street tacos? An Old Fashioned? There are lots for many occasions.

**Guilty pleasure:** Watching "Grey's Anatomy."

**The best worst decision of your life:** Going back to school for my master's. It was a lot of hard work and my kids were small when I started (ages 3 and 5). But it was a good example for my girls. They watched me put a lot of hard work into a goal to achieve something great.

**Tell us something that would surprise your coworkers:** I used to be my high school mascot. I was a bulldog.

**What do you love to do when not working?** Go to the beach, go beach camping or garden. I secretly think I am a master fiddle-leaf fig grower, and I like to name them after celebrities, like the "Notorious F.I.G." and "Figgy Ferg."

**What sets your heart on fire:** My kids!

**What would you tell your high school self:** Go with the flow because it ends up being exactly what it is supposed to be and so much better.

## Celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of CHLA nurses

### Publications

**Allan Cresencia** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit): "Low-Dose Dexmedetomidine as an Adjuvant to Propofol Infusion for Children in MRI: A Double-Cohort Study," *Pediatric Anesthesia*, April 2018.

**Anna Evans** (Interventional Radiology), **Cassie Garretson** (Hematology-Oncology) and **Mary Baron Nelson** (Hematology-Oncology): "The Use of Aromatherapy to Reduce Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea in Children With Cancer: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, online June 2018, in print October/November 2018.

**Anna Evans** (Interventional Radiology), **Kellie Loera** (Surgical Admitting), **Deborah Harris** (Hematology-Oncology), **Susan Carson** (Hematology-Oncology), **Leticia Boutros** (Surgical Admitting) and **Carol Okuhara** (Cardiology): "Development, Implementation and Satisfaction With a Nurse Practitioner Professional Ladder: A Children's Hospital Experience," *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, September 2018.

**Grace Magaling** (Heart Institute): "Pediatric Fellowship Course: Procedures Module," *Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN)*, March 2018.

**Rica Morzov** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit): "Pediatric Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome Incidence and Epidemiology (PARDIE): An International, Observational Study," co-author, member of CHLA Pediatric ARDS research team, *Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, October 2018.

**Anne Nord** (Hematology-Oncology): "Challenges in the Management of the Transgender Patient With Sickle Cell Disease," *American Journal of Hematology*, August 2018.

**Hui-Wen Sato** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Building Healthier Workplaces by Giving Space for Work-Related Grief," *American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Advanced Critical Care*, Fall 2018.

**Jessica Ward** (Institute of Nursing and Interprofessional Research): "Parent Psychological and Physical Health Outcomes in Pediatric Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation," *Cancer Nursing*, October 2018.

**Colleene Young** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) and **Fran Blayney** (Clinical Services): "Multisystem Trauma," chapter authors, *AACN Core Curriculum for Pediatric High Acuity, Progressive and Critical Care, Third Edition*, 2018.

### Presentations

**Mehvish Abbasi**, **Anna Evans** and **Amy Lohmann** (Interventional Radiology) and **Ginny Than** (Imaging/Anesthesia): "Pediatric Interventional Radiology Guidelines for the Nursing Management of Patients With Deep Vein Thrombosis," poster presentation, Nurse Practitioner Symposium, CHLA, November 2018, and scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual SPN National Conference, Washington, D.C., April 2019.

**Danielle Arbios**, **Julia Nordstrom** and **Emily Gray** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Countering Compassion Fatigue: Implementing Cumulative Stress Debriefings in the PICU," poster presentation, CHLA Research Day, June 2018; CHLA Education Fair, October 2018, and Versant Client Conference, Charleston, SC, November 2018.

**Nancy Chang** (Endocrinology): "A New Clinic Model for Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes in Adolescents and Young Adults," poster presentation, American Association of Diabetes Educators, Baltimore, August 2018.

**Allan Cresencia** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit): "Lived Experiences of Perioperative Nurses Dealing with Pediatric Emergence Delirium: A Pilot Study," poster presentation, 29<sup>th</sup> International Nursing Research

Congress, Sigma Tau International Nursing Honor Society, Melbourne, Australia, July 2018.

**Anna Evans** (Interventional Radiology) and **Mary Beth Vingelen** (Hematology-Oncology): "Pediatric Oncology Nursing Practice," presentation, Nurse Practitioner Symposium, CHLA, November 2018.

**Anna Evans** (Interventional Radiology): "New Hope Through Clinical Trials in Low Grade Gliomas: From Diagnosis, Standard Treatment Modalities, to BRAF/MEK Inhibitors," co-presenter, and "Implementation of Nausea Assessment Into Pediatric Oncology Nursing Practice," poster presentation, 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference, Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON), Savannah, GA, September 2018.

**Monica Grover** and **Melissa Stewart** (4 West): "Let's Talk About Sex: Creating a Tool to Facilitate Nurse-Led Education for the Oncology AYA Population," APHON Annual Conference, Savannah, GA, September 2018; CHLA Education Fair, October 2018.

**Sandy Hall** and **Stephanie Brady** (Versant RN Residency): "The Transformative Power of a Transition RN Fellowship," podium presentation, 2018 American Nurses Credentialing Center Magnet Conference, Denver, October 2018; and "QSEN in Action: Building Teamwork and Collaboration Skills in New Graduate Nurses," Versant Client Conference, Charleston, SC, November 2018.

**Gwen Kimball** (Bone Marrow Transplant): "Safe Infant Sleep Adherence in an Acute Care Hospital," poster presentation, 2018 SPN Los Angeles Chapter Conference, Los Angeles, October 2018.

**Katie Meyer** (Disaster Resource Center): "Crisis Command," APEX award-winning app developed at CHLA, presentation, National Disaster Healthcare Coalition Conference, New Orleans, November 2018.

**Sandra Mintz** (Rheumatology): "Off-Label Successful Treatments and How It's Done," speaker, Rheumatology Nursing Society, Dallas, August 2018.

**Anne Nord** (Hematology-Oncology): "Hematology Transition/Navigation Into Adult Care," Hematology/Oncology Update Class, August 2018; and "The Role of the APRN With Transition to Adult Care," panel discussion, Nurse Practitioner Symposium, CHLA, November 2018.

**Cindy Rowlett** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Match Game: Aligning Learning Styles to Promote Safety," podium presentation, Versant Client Conference, Charleston, SC, November 2018.

**Hui-Wen Sato** (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Integrating Grief as a Practice of Resilience," podium presentation, 2018 SPN L.A. Chapter Conference, Los Angeles, October 2018; "Responding to the Aching Heart," co-presenter, podium presentation, American Society for Bioethics + Humanities 2018 Annual Conference, Anaheim, CA, October 2018; and "Gathering Data through the Art of Nursing: Communication as a Means Towards Patient Safety," podium presentation, Versant Client Conference, Charleston, SC, November 2018.

### Professional Achievements

**Michelle Katzman** (Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit): Received the GEM (Going-the-Extra-Mile) Award, August 2018.

**Amy Lohmann** (Interventional Radiology): Began teaching in the University of California, Los Angeles, Doctor of Nursing Practice program, September 2018.

**Sandra Mintz** (Rheumatology): Assumed presidency of National Nursing Organization for Rheumatology Nurses after completing term as President of the Association of Rheumatology Professionals (ARP), a division of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). Now

immediate past president, serving on the ARP Executive Committee, and as Chair of ARP Membership and Nominations Committee and ACR Nominations and Appointments, November 2018.

**Nida Oriza**, **Melanie Guerrero** and **Aileen DeGuzman** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit): Organizers/facilitators, "Excellence in Congenital Cardiovascular Care, FONTAN Series II," the Heart Institute Sixth Annual Symposium, CHLA, October 2018.

DAISY Award winners: **Gail Covington** (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit), July 2018; **Norma Dansak** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit), August 2018; **Allyson Fredrickson** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit), September 2018; **Amy Bishop** (5 East), October 2018; **Jamie Arakelyan** (6 East), November 2018; **Kaitlin O'Rourke** (5 East), December 2018.

### Academic Achievements

BSN: **Cynthia Cardenas** (Bone Marrow Transplant), **Sandra Shepard** (Float Team).

MBA: **Jennifer Ly** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit).

MHA: **DeRynn Thompson** (Patient Blood Management Program).

MSN: **Katie Meyer** (Disaster Resource Center), Nursing Leadership; **Amy Parker** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit); **Ashley Steere** (Maurice Marciano Family Foundation Emergency Department and Trauma Center), Nursing Education.

### Certifications

AHN-BC: **Aeroshikha Rose Wolf** (Bone Marrow Transplant).

CPN: **Sarah Colaco** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit and Cardiovascular Acute), **Rocio Delgado** (5 East), **Rikki Hurtado** (6 West), **Michelle McAninch** (Bone Marrow Transplant), **Crystal Mendoza** (6 West), **Nancy Nowak** (Care Coordination).

CAPA: **Deanna Wofford** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit and Surgical Admitting).

CCRN: **Emily Gray** (5 East).

BMTCN: **Philberi Lose**, **Nathan Chan**, **Gem Liobbing**, **Sophia Padilla**, **Lorelei Dos Santos**, **Jodi Sampson-Simon** (Bone Marrow Transplant).

CPNP: **Jenny Johnson** (Bone Marrow Transplant).

### Promotions

**Leticia Alvarez-Cesareo** (Endocrinology): Certified Diabetes Educator.

**Nancy Chang** (Endocrinology): Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine of USC.

NP I: **Anne Nord** (Hematology-Oncology).

RN III: **Meagan Seredinki** (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit).

**Deanna Wofford** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit and Surgical Admitting): Clinical Educator.

*FloSheet is compiled with the assistance of Melanie Banuelos (Margie and Robert E. Petersen Foundation Rehabilitation Center). In addition, we would like to thank Debbie Jury (Pain Service) for her invaluable contributions. Thanks, as well, to all the nurses at CHLA who share items about their activities and accomplishments.*

*We look forward to hearing from you in the future!*



Nancy Lee, MSN, RN, NEA-BC  
Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer

When I first read the articles in this issue of *FloSheet*, it was during the early evening after a particularly long and trying day. These uplifting articles about our very own nurses were exactly what I needed that day. I told myself to keep these stories nearby and read them every time I need a reminder of why we do what we do.

As we begin a new year, the most overwhelming feeling I have is gratitude. Pure and simple. I'm grateful for each one of you and the impact you have every single day. Many of you have long commutes to work; you have families; you have your own kids; you have aging parents to care for. But you are here every day and night, giving our young patients your compassion, dedication and expertise.

I'm so proud to read about Lisa Coffman taking care of her former patient's son. There are few other hospitals that have the kind of longevity and retention of nurses that we do. It's incredible. I'm so moved when I hear Jamie Duly call her Children's Hospital Los Angeles coworkers her second family. Sandra Mintz and Allison Lee are impacting the lives of so many kids here at CHLA and around the world. And Laura Tice and all the nurses in the featured article remind us that our jobs are demanding, and we need some serious fun to keep us grounded and focused.

2018 was a great year for CHLA—the best in our history. We improved our quality standards while treating more patients than any other year. We also finished the year more financially sound than ever before. We were able to do all of this because of you.

Thank you for being the best team of nurses to work with and for making CHLA such a special place. I wish you all a year filled with joy. ■

## Leveraging Personal Experience to Help Patients Facing Rheumatological Disorders

By Candace Pearson



Sandra Mintz, MSN, RN-BC

As a freshman in high school, Sandra Mintz, MSN, RN-BC, Nurse Care Manager, Rheumatology, volunteered in the pediatrics unit at a local hospital and knew immediately she would become a nurse. Then, at 16, she collapsed in a school hallway and a doctor told her she was just a "stressed-out teenager."

A decade later, Mintz was in her third year of nursing and in the midst of holiday baking when she suddenly "didn't feel right." She couldn't raise her left arm.

Tests revealed Mintz had multiple sclerosis (MS), a diagnosis that finally explained her symptoms. Mintz began a journey that has enabled her to bring hard-won wisdom to all aspects of her nursing, from guiding patients to educating professionals, conducting research and embracing leadership roles.

Mintz and her physician took a chance on a newly approved medication, Copaxone, to treat her MS. More than two decades later, she remains in remission. Even so, she says, "People told me I couldn't do things. I disagreed."

She leverages her experience with a chronic autoimmune condition to help her patients—from teaching them about injections to sharing information they need about potential therapies.

"Much of what we do is ensure patients can make their own choices, and give them a sense of control." She tells them: "The disease is something you have. It doesn't have to define you."

Mintz joined Children's Hospital Los Angeles in 1998 as a charge nurse for 6N Rehab. She was asked to join the Division of Rheumatology in 2002. "It's a natural fit," she says.

She recently completed her term as president of the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals, a Division of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). Before stepping down in October, she steered the organization through a comprehensive evaluation, resulting in a name change to the Association of Rheumatology Professionals, the Interprofessional Division of the ACR.

The new name reflects the diversity of the organization, which represents over 22 professions from both academic and private practice settings, "and the team nature of our work," says Mintz.

Education is a high priority for Mintz, nationally and at CHLA. She helped start a support group in the Division in 2009 called Families Learning to Live With Rheumatic Diseases. She also collaborated with Hematology-Oncology to initiate a course for biological drugs and chemotherapy for non-cancer conditions, which has expanded to engage, train and mentor speakers throughout the hospital.

She finds time for research, with a recent focus on easing the transition of young adults to adult care. "I love digging in and helping to make things better," says Mintz. "The satisfaction is knowing I'm making it easier for those who follow me." ■

## FloSheet

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### Bedside's Best

# 35 years later, Lisa Coffman Cares for Former Patient's Son

By Vicki Cho Estrada



Lisa Coffman, BSN, RN (left), with Lindsay and baby Jonah

Lisa Coffman, BSN, RN, never forgot Lindsay, a patient with a rare disorder that affected her ability to breathe while sleeping. Coffman developed a bond with the newborn 35 years ago when she was Lindsay's primary care nurse at the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation

Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and later as her home health nurse when the hospital started its home ventilation program.

Their connection grew deeper this past spring when Coffman became the primary care nurse for Lindsay's son, Jonah. Like his mom, Jonah has congenital central hypoventilation syndrome (CCHS) and requires a tracheostomy and ventilator to help him breathe when he's asleep.

"When I found out her baby was in the NICCU, I knew I would care for him," says Coffman, noting that before reuniting with Lindsay this year, the family had stayed in touch through holiday cards and visits to CHLA. "It was surreal to sit and talk with Lindsay, her parents and her doctor again—this time not about her, but about her baby."

As she did years earlier with Jonah's grandparents, Coffman showed Lindsay and her husband,

Samson, how to change their son's tracheostomy tube and use a home ventilator. Coffman says the main difference in caring for Jonah is the equipment today is more advanced, more compact, lighter weight and has longer-lasting batteries, and more information is available about CCHS. While there's no cure for the condition, Jonah, like his mom, will eventually have a diaphragm pacing device implanted, eliminating the need for a ventilator.

Working in the NICCU for nearly four decades and caring for the most critically ill patients, Coffman says she has developed long-lasting bonds with patients "that don't disappear just because they're discharged. Treating Jonah and his mom with the same illness more than 30 years apart was one of the many highlights of my career." ■