

Extra: Lives Outside the Hospital

A Taste of Billboard Fame

by Vicki Cho Estrada

It was her passion for singing that helped Emy Sayud, RN, BSN, (6 West) pay for her nursing education—a passion that she continues to share with her patients at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and on stage.

Singing and performing since childhood, Sayud attended the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, an audition-only school setting that resembles the 1980s hit television show, *Fame*. She was a member of the vocal jazz ensemble when Josh Groban, a Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter and an alumnus of the high school, asked the group to sing back-up vocals on his Billboard-topping song, "You Raise Me Up."

"It was a great experience for young artists," says Sayud, who met famed producer David Foster in addition to Groban.

Following high school, Sayud considered pursuing a professional singing career but decided on

nursing "because it was a profession that would allow me to give back and help others while also allowing me to continue my passion for singing as a hobby."

In fact, she learned early on in her nursing career that there are similarities between nursing and singing. "Nursing heals and so does singing. Music can play a huge part in the healing process," says Sayud, who helped pay for her nursing education by performing at weddings and private parties.

Today, Sayud, who uses "Lala" as her stage name, practices singing every day and performs at paid events about six times a year. She also sings at churches and works in Loma Linda as assistant choir director for the Master's Call Choir and choir director for the International Children's Choir. For three months a year, she choreographs and directs the latter group's summer and holiday musicals.



Emy Sayud, RN, BSN

While singing has provided many rewards and experiences, it also helps her manage the strain of working with critically ill patients suffering from gastrointestinal, liver and kidney conditions. "It helps me beat stress," says Sayud, who often helps her young patients fall asleep with a song. "When I sing, it makes me feel alive." ■

Volunteers In Action

A Camper at Heart

by Vicki Cho Estrada



Barbara Britt, RN, MSN (r) with camper and patient, Jordan Vincent

Thirty years ago, Barbara Britt, RN, MSN, learned about a new summer camp for children with cancer and immediately signed on as a

camp nurse. Since then, she not only hasn't missed a date with summer campers, but has expanded her volunteer duties to include year-round weekend, family and bereavement camps.

Britt, a nurse care manager in Hematology-Oncology, has been involved with Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times since it was created in 1982. The nonprofit organization has several free sleep-away camps for children with cancer and their family members to promote campers' self-esteem, confidence and friendships in a medically supervised environment.

She volunteers four to six times a year at a camp in the San Jacinto Mountains, where her duties include administering medications, providing central venous catheter care, tending to scrapes and bruises and more.

"One of the things that keeps me coming back to camp is it's too important in these kids' lives not to make the commitment," says Britt. "Camp is a

transformational process for these kids and if we don't have doctors and nurses, the camp can't exist." She notes that at least half of the campers are Children's Hospital Los Angeles patients.

Britt served on Camp Ronald McDonald's board from 1985 to 2009. Five years ago, through her work with We Can, a parent-run organization for children with brain tumors, she began facilitating workshops on bereavement and other topics for parents of children with brain tumors in conjunction with the camp.

The special bonds with campers and hospital patients bring Britt back to camp year after year. "There's nothing like coming back to the hospital and running into one of the kids you shared good times with at camp," she says. "That bond remains and you're instantly reminded of a place that was fun." ■

The Journey Continues

Nurses take the lead in preparing patients for the adult world *by Candace Pearson*



Diabetes nurses, Anna Bitting, RN, BSN, CDE (l), Barbara Hollen, RN, MPH, CDE, Mary McCarthy, RN, CDE and Kailee Roeser, RN, BSN

Today, 90 percent of children with special health care needs survive into adulthood. One in 640 Americans between 20 and 39 is a childhood cancer survivor. And, nationwide, 500,000 to 750,000 children with a chronic condition enter adulthood each year—all statistics unimaginable a short while ago.

This changing reality has put new emphasis on transition planning—placing nurses front-and-center in guiding patients and families to make the move from a pediatric setting to adult care and adult concerns.

“We didn’t have the challenge of transition planning so much when I started in oncology,” says Kathleen Ruccione, MPH, RN, FAAN, co-director, the Hematology-Oncology Psychosocial and Education (HOPE) Program, and director of



Cecily Betz, PhD, RN, FAAN

of the HOPE Resource Center, Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “It’s an issue that has grown with improvements in survival.”

Nurses at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles are helping to set the national conversation about transition planning. Ruccione, who founded the LIFE (Long-term Information, Follow-up and Evaluation) Survivorship and Transition Program, has co-authored two books on survivorship, including “Childhood Cancer Survivors: A Practical Guide to Your Future.”

Cecily Betz, PhD, RN, FAAN, co-authored the influential 2007 textbook, “Promoting Health Care Transitions for Adolescents with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities.” She wrote her first article about the need for transition planning in 1998. The idea met with some resistance then.

“Now this is such a concern that people are not only willing to listen, but want to develop and implement programs,” says Betz, research director at the University of Southern California (USC) University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Children’s Hospital.

Building Blocks

Programs are springing up throughout Children’s Hospital, with nurses at the core. Betz heads up a year-old Health Care Transition Planning Clinic for patients with spina bifida. Represented on the interdisciplinary team are social work, nutrition, occupational and physical therapy and clinical care.

Betz begins talking about transition to patients as young as 10 to assess their knowledge of their conditions and self-management skills—“the building blocks of being a competent health care consumer,” she says.

Ideally, transition planning for children with chronic illnesses should start at diagnosis, says Lori Marshall, PhD, RN, administrator of Patient/Family Education and Resources. “Over time, the goal is for teens and young adults to manage their own care,” she explains. “If they can’t physically do that, then they can participate in the decision-making.”

Under Marshall’s lead, the Helen and Bill Close Family Resource Center is collaborating with the Division of Adolescent Medicine to launch a Youth Academy in 2012, which will offer courses to 15- to 17-year-olds and their families in such topics as navigating adult health care, insurance and independent living skills. Plans call for peer mentors for patients and care coaches for parents.

In addition, the hospital has added information about transition planning to its GetWellNetwork on bedside computers. Patients and their families can read tips categorized by age.



William Kenny, RN, BSN

Transition vs. Transfer

Transition planning goes beyond transfer of care. “We’re looking at the whole person—their education, career interests, dreams,” says William Kenny, RN, BSN.

Kenny is the lead nurse in iVOICE, a new transitions clinic in Children’s Hospital’s Teenage and Young Adult Health Center. The acronym stands for “Vocation and career, Outcomes, Individual, Care and Empowerment and education.”

Risk Management

Teens are referred to iVOICE by subspecialty units within the hospital. Each patient completes a self-assessment of their medical know-how and a list of their health care providers, medications, significant medical dates and emergency contacts. Kenny guides them through practice calls to the pharmacy.



Lori Marshall, PhD, RN (l), Tere Jones, RN, CPN

Making the Leap

About 40 percent of diabetes patients at Children’s Hospital are teens and young adults. Education starts at day one, thanks to a team that includes diabetes care managers Louise Brancale, RN, Barbara Hollen, RN, MPH, CDE, Mary McCarthy, RN, CDE, and Maria (Susy) Nuques, RN, BSN, along with nurse educators Kailee Roeser, RN, BSN, and Cassandra Song, RN, BSN.

The team holds an annual College Prep Night for 10th and 11th graders that touches on campus health care, self-care and issues of college life such as alcohol use. “We see some kids who get overwhelmed with the initial freedom of college,” says Brancale, “and others who have ups and downs but generally manage the transition well.” It can be difficult to find adult practitioners willing

to take on patients who may have multiple diagnoses, complicated conditions and limited financial resources.

For diabetes, one answer has been the LEAP (Let’s Empower and Prepare) Program. In the year-old pilot program, “graduating” Children’s Hospital patients are seen at the LEAP T1D Transition Clinic at LAC+USC Medical Center. For adult survivors of childhood cancer, the solution may come in an innovative joint program that Children’s Hospital recently developed with Providence St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank. The hospital’s LIFE Program now runs a monthly clinic at Providence St. Joseph to help transition its patients to the adult setting.

LIFE team members have begun using the word “transition” at every step of a child’s care. “We’ve cured them, but we also want to help them achieve their goals,” says Kasey Rangan, MSN, CPNP, who specializes in neural tumors.

Natural Role

Tere Jones, RN, CPN, a clinical care coordinator in the Medical/Surgical unit, says bedside nurses are key players in this evolution.

“What each bedside nurse does here on a daily basis makes a difference in what happens when that child or family leaves the hospital,” says Jones, who is collaborating with Marshall on the Youth Academy.

The moments can be small, such as when a patient manages his own insulin or asks a question during an exam. “When a teen follows through on what they’ve learned,” says Betz, “and takes ownership of their own health care, that is wonderful.” ■



Karen Prommer, RN, MS, CPHRM

Enhancing patient care and safety is the ultimate goal of the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Risk Management Department. Through an integrated hospital-wide process of education, training and communication, the team seeks to reduce the frequency and severity of injury to patients, families and visitors.

Karen Prommer, RN, MS, CPHRM, is director of Risk Management for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Medical Group. Her training as a pediatric nurse and a certified professional in health care risk management gives her a unique and valuable perspective in promoting quality of care and patient safety. Her position reports jointly to both hospital administration and medical group leadership. This dual role has proven to be beneficial in mitigating both human and financial loss.

Prommer, for example, coordinates with the Versant® RN Residency in Pediatrics to educate new graduates on documentation and communication. She works with managers in Patient Care Services (PCS), nurse leaders, the safety officer, facility director and patient relations director to evaluate any safety issues or concerns about the hospital environment. She has coordinated several innovative topics for PCS grand rounds, worked with both Patient Relations and Facilities in changing the carpet in the Cheryl and Haim Saban Story Corner and helped purchase items to educate the nurses on different skill sets.

“My greatest satisfaction comes from implementing positive changes that directly impact the well-being of our patients and their families,” says Prommer. “We can make a difference when we work as a team.” ■



LIFE team members, Kasey Rangan, RN, MSN, CPNP (l), Yael (Ellie) Rosenthal, RN, MSN, CPNP, Kathy Ruccione, MPH, RN, FAAN and Maki Okada, RN, MS, CPNP

Support for Breastfeeding Moms

by Elena F. Epstein



Mary Dee Hacker, RN, MBA, FAAN, NEA-BC, vice president, Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer

Welcome to our redesigned *FloSheet*, marking the nine-year anniversary of this publication created to celebrate the lives and accomplishments of our extraordinary nurses. Our focus in this issue is the future.

Creating a better future for our patients has always been a priority for our nurses. They are at the forefront of enhancing our hospital environment and programs to guide and support our patients as they grow into young adults. Transition planning is a natural component of our nurses' daily routine—whether at the bedside teaching a young mom how to nurse her critically ill infant or talking to high school seniors about managing their diabetes while away at college.

Our new Helen and Bill Close Family Resource Center located on the first floor of the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion is another example of our commitment to education. This is a place where families and community members can come to gain greater insight into medical issues, illnesses or injuries.

By collaborating closely with our patients and their families to help them learn to manage their illnesses and injuries, we give them the most precious gift—*independence*. As we work tirelessly to heal our young patients' bodies, we never lose sight of the importance of nurturing their spirits. We're well aware of the life-altering diagnoses that take place daily in our hospital. But we also know how important it is for our patients to continue to play, dance, shoot baskets, listen to music, draw and dream about their future. Their adult life is waiting for them and we must give them the confidence to take charge of that life. ■



Lindsay Gamache, RN, (NICCU) (r) helps new mom Arienne Campbell and baby Colin

As a mom, Sonja Alli-Casella, RN, BSN, RNC-NIC, CLE, operations manager in the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit (NICCU), knew breastfeeding was the best nutrition for her two children. She's now a passionate advocate for educating other women, even moms whose babies are born critically ill or premature.

Alli-Casella is part of a grass-roots effort within Children's Hospital Los Angeles to create greater awareness and support for breastfeeding. In 2009, three hospital pediatric residents, Christine Bottrell, MD, MPH, Jonathan Goldfinger, MD, MPH, and Megan Mariner, MD, spearheaded LATCH NOW—Lactation and Teaching at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center and Network of WICs (federally-funded health and nutrition programs for women, infants and children)—to improve breastfeeding rates in the community.

"The benefits are enormous," says Bottrell. "Breast milk builds immunity, helps mature the digestive system and lungs and promotes brain development."

The residents teamed up with Linda Heller, MS, RD, CSP, CLE, the hospital's clinical nutrition manager, to create hospital-wide standards and a consistent pro-breastfeeding support system. They formed a coalition of nurses, dietitians and rehabilitation specialists. The NICCU nurses were the first in the hospital to be recognized with a LATCH NOW Award in November 2011 for their unit's breastfeeding support efforts.

For moms of NICCU babies, breastfeeding can be a challenging experience. "These babies look so fragile that a lot of our moms are afraid to touch them," says Alli-Casella. "Our nurses work closely with each mom to boost her confidence."

Many babies brought to Children's Hospital have gastrointestinal, cardiac and respiratory problems, making feeding through the mouth impossible. Nurses often teach and encourage moms to pump their breast milk, which is then given to the babies through a feeding tube.

Susie Sham, RN, refers to herself as the "CEO of breast milk," because she coordinates all the storage, labeling and proper handling of breast milk that has been pumped by NICCU moms. "We have a dedicated refrigerator and freezer and we make sure the stock is current," she says.

In addition to the NICCU, the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit and 5 East treat babies and have also been proactive in creating a supportive environment for breastfeeding. "Nurses are key to the success of this program," says Heller.

Amy Girguis, RN, BSN, CLE, (5 East) agrees. "We're here 12 hours a day, so it's natural to build a rapport with moms," she says. "One of my favorite experiences is when a baby is finally ready to latch on and I help with positioning and then step back and watch the joy on the mom's face." ■

Professional Milestones

Kathy Ruccione, RN, (LIFE Program) was awarded a \$10,000 grant in January 2012 from the ONS Foundation and the Oncology Nursing Society, for her research proposal on "Iron, Anthracyclines and Cardiac Outcomes among Childhood Cancer Survivors."

Sue Martinez, RN, (5 East) was featured in the "My Specialty" section of *Working Nurse* magazine in December 2011.

Phan Dang, RN, (6 North) wrote an article, "Changing Lives – The Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit at Children's Hospital Los Angeles," published in the February/March 2012 issue of the *Rehabilitation Nursing Journal*.

Inge Morton, RN, (Emergency Department) is currently a reviewer validating the fourth edition of the *Emergency Nursing Pediatric Course Manual and Certification Test* for the Emergency Nurses Association.

Kelley Haley, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) was selected in December 2011 to be principal investigator for a controlled trial of acupressure to help treat chemotherapy-induced nausea.

Phyllis D'Ambra, RN, (Patient Care Services) was appointed assistant clinical professor of the School of Nursing at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in October 2011.

Kathy Wing, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) and **Sandra Mintz**, RN, (Rheumatology) were authors of "Biologic and Chemotherapeutic Therapy for the Non-Cancer Patient" for the Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON), and received the prestigious Gold Award in the 2011 Association TRENDS All Media Contest in November 2011.

A course for APHON, "Biologic and Chemotherapeutic Therapy for the Non-Cancer Pediatric Patient," developed by **Debbie Reid**, RN, (Hematology-Oncology), **Sandra Watcher**, RN, (Rheumatology) and **Kellie Loera**, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) was selected for the Gold Award for Best Educational Program in the 2011 Association TRENDS All Media Contest. They were honored at the 33rd annual Salute to Association Excellence in Washington, D.C., in February 2012.

Nancy Blake, RN, (Patient Care Services) participated in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention workgroup on Pediatric Critical Care Mass Casualty Guidelines in November 2011. She is also a reviewer for the *Critical Care Nurse Journal*.

Robin Goodman, RN, (Emergency Department) was appointed to the Pediatric Advisory Committee of the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency, is a pediatric representative to the Base Station Advisory Committee and is president-elect of the Pediatric Liaison Nurses of Los Angeles County as of January 2012.

Sandra Watcher, RN, (Rheumatology) presented "Rheumatic Disease in Children" for the UCLA Nurse Practitioner program in February 2012. She also gave podium presentations, "Toolbox" Needed for the Journey from Pediatrics to Adult Care" and "Improving Adherence in the Pediatric Patient" at the American College of Rheumatology/Association of Allied Health Professions Annual Scientific Meeting in Chicago in November 2011. She was the facilitator for a "Networking at Noon" infusion therapy discussion during the same conference. She also presented "Transition, Self-Advocacy and Schools" for the Young Adult Prime-Time Conference in Long Beach in October 2011.

Children's Hospital Los Angeles nurses presented posters at the Versant® RN Residency Client Conference in New Orleans in November 2011: **Ale Briseno**, RN, **Cindy Rowlett**, RN, and **Gena Favero**, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit): "Professionalism: Actions Speak Louder Than Words." **Liz Daley**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit): "Unit Based Continuing Education Post-RN Residency." **Norma Dansak**, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) and **Melanie Guerrero**, RN, (Cardiovascular Acute): "The Effects of the Versant® RN Residency Program as a Path to Professional Development

for Past RN Residents" and "Focused Mentoring: The Bridge to Patient Safety and Professional Development for Past RN Residents."

Dave Tan, RN, and **Kristine Gawley**, RN, (5 East) presented a poster, "Medicus (Please Don't) Interrupt Us," at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) conference in Orlando, Fla., in December 2011.

Gloria Verret, RN, (6 West) co-presented a poster on "Unit Huddles" for the National Safety Conference in Philadelphia, in November 2011. She also presented a lecture on "Launching a Journal Club to Promote Education and Teamwork in a New Unit" at Children's Hospital Los Angeles' Research Day in January 2012.

Meghan Middleton, RN, (MAGIK Pain Service) lectured on "Pain Assessment and Management" at the UCLA School of Nursing in February 2012.

Mary Nelson, PNP, (Radiology) was elected to the Board of Directors for APHON in September 2011.

Nancy Blake, RN, (Patient Care Services) presented a poster, "The Relationship of Healthy Work Environments (Communication, Collaboration, Leadership) and Patient and Nurse Outcomes," at the International Nursing Administration Research Conference in Denver in October 2011 and at the Association of California Nurse Leaders in Rancho Mirage, Calif., in February 2012. She also presented a lecture, "Roles of the Professional Nurse," to UCLA Masters of Science in Nursing students in January 2012.

Roy Tatlonghari, NP, (Employee Health Services) was elected to serve on the Board of the Southern California Association of Occupational Health Nurses beginning January 2012.

Rita Secola, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) gave an oral presentation, "Targeted Therapy in Pediatric Oncology," and a poster presentation, "Preliminary Results of a CVC Team Intervention Study," at the Society of International Pediatric Oncology Annual Conference in Auckland, New Zealand in October 2011. An article she co-wrote, "Targeting to Zero," was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* in January 2012.

Susan Carson, CPNP, (Thalassemia and Chronic Transfusion) presented "Management of Patients with Transfusional Iron Overload" to the AABB National Conference in San Diego in October 2011.

Sue Matich, CPNP, (Radiology/Anesthesia) had an article, "Radiation and the Pediatric Patient," published in the *Journal of Radiology Nursing* in December 2011.

Phyllis D'Ambra, RN, **Lisa Costantino**, RN, **Christel McRae**, RN, **Debbie Nobel**, RN, **Sue Benson**, RN, **Rachelle Rogan**, RN, **Sharon Wagner-Lees**, RN, **Dee Imai**, RN, **Nancy Hart**, RN, **Stephanie Johnson**, RN, **Mary Virgallito**, RN, and **Margaret Ecker**, RN, (Patient Care Services) contributed to a poster presentation, "Kids and Germs and the Ambulatory Setting: How Nurse Leaders Translated Inpatient Rules to Meet Outpatient Realities," that won third place at the Association of California Nurse Leaders Conference in Rancho Mirage, Calif., in February 2012.

Paula Belson, CRNA, (Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine), **Meghan Middleton**, RN, (MAGIK Pain Service) and **Leticia Boutros**, RN, (Surgical Admitting) were elected in February 2012 to lead the new Advanced Practice Nurse Group at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The group serves as a resource by providing leadership in practice through consultation, outcome-based research and analysis of issues affecting patient care.

Academic Degrees

Dixie Chelew, RN, (6 West) – MSN
Heidi Geary, FNP, (PICU) – MSN
Will Jackson, RN, (6 West) – MSN
Gwendolyn Kimball, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant/4 West) – MSN
Stefanie Valenzuela, RN, (Emergency Department) – BSN

Daisy Award Recipients

Jody Castrillon, RN, (Emergency Department) – November
Nida Oriza, RN, (Cardiothoracic) – January
Meghan Middleton, RN, (MAGIK Pain Service) – February
Chris Lins, RN, (5 East) – March
Bobby Hett, RN, (NICCU) – April

Certifications

Pam Duncan, RN, (Operating Room) – CNOR
Semhar Hailemichael, RN, (6 East) – CPN
Samar El Houry, RN, (6 East) – CPN
Kelley Haley, RN, (Hematology-Oncology) – SOCARA
Jen Huson, RN, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) – PNP
Jeanne Marshall, RN, (Float Pool) – CPN
Jessica Reyes, RN, (Operating Room) – CNOR
Holly Hurley West, RN, (Emergency Department) – CPN
Kristin Whitehouse, RN, (Emergency Department) – NPT-C

Promotions

Melanie Guerrero, RN, (CV Acute) – Clinical Manager
Gwendolyn Kimball, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant/4 West) – Education Manager
Monica Lopez, RN, (5 East) – RN III
Anthony Opimo, RN, (Radiation Oncology) – RN III
Pam Thomas, RN, (Float Pool) – House Supervisor

Life Celebrations

Babies

Miguel Aventino, RN, (PACU) – boy
David Barrios, RN, (6 East) – girl
Jennifer Bingham, RN, (Operating Room) – boy
Monica Calfa, RN, (Emergency Department) – boy
Jody Castrillon, RN, (Emergency Department) – boy
Monica Ciccarelli, RN, (6 West) – boy
Christina Cerda, RN, (6 West) – boy
Anna Evans, NP, (Hematology-Oncology) – girl
Rica Morzov, RN, (ACCM) – boy
Faye Ong, RN, (Operating Room) – boy
Jamie Orellana, RN, (Emergency Department) – boy
Soon Perez, RN, (6 East) – boy
Cara Wise, RN, (4 West) – boy

Marriages

Frances Jameson, RN, (6 West)
Felicia Tremmel Goraj, RN, (Float Pool)
Stefanie Valenzuela, RN, (Emergency Department)

Community Involvement

Corina Rico, RN, (Float Pool) volunteered on a surgical mission in Amman, Jordan with Operation Smile in December 2011.

Julie Fiore, RN, (5 East) volunteered at a blood donor drive in Valencia, Calif., in January 2012.

Kerri Hunter, RN, (Float Pool) is serving her third term as president of the Parent Teacher Association of her child's school.

Ale Briseno, RN, **Jen Huson**, PNP, (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) and **Christiane Lieu**, RN, (6 West) completed the Tinker Bell Half Marathon at Disneyland in January 2012.

Josie Lee-Razon, RN, (Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit) participated in the American Heart Association's Annual Heart Walk at the Rose Bowl in October 2011.

The following nurses participated in the Ridiculous Obstacle Challenge Race (ROC) in Pomona, Calif., in November 2011: **Albert Bautista**, RN, **Amy Hale**, RN, **Armando Dominguez**, LVN, **Emily Clark**, RN, **Leslie Greene**, RN, **Maria Dakan**, RN, **Monica Lopez**, RN, **Sandra Uribe**, LVN, **Stacy Paone**, RN, and **Sue Martinez**, RN, (5 East).

Kathy Wing, RN, (Bone Marrow Transplant Unit) earned a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do in November 2011.

FloSheet

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Bedside's Best

Transforming Lives Around the World

by Vicki Cho Estrada



Noreen Clarke, RN, MSN

Noreen Clarke, RN, MSN, has seen the devastation of war and extreme poverty in various parts of the world first hand: the 6-year-old girl from Zimbabwe with extensive burns on her face and

neck, the newborn baby from Bangladesh with severe clefting, the 11-year-old Iraqi boy who suffered massive injuries from a roadside bomb. Some of her patients are innocent bystanders in horrific accidents, while others are born with conditions in which survival past childhood isn't likely.

But as director of the International Craniofacial Children's Fund (ICCF) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, she is helping to transform their lives. The initiative is a privately funded, \$5 million project enabling children with severe craniofacial abnormalities and other serious health conditions from medically underserved countries to receive care.

The fund was created by an anonymous donor in 2007. Since then, Clarke has coordinated the surgical care for 74 patients from 28 countries to correct facial deformities such as severe clefting and wide-set eyes, congenital heart defects and severe scoliosis. She sets up appointments and tests prior to a patient's arrival and coordinates with nurse care managers during the child's hospital stay, which can range anywhere from a few weeks to several months.

"These patients have complicated conditions and are unable to receive the care they need in their countries," she says. "The surgeries at Children's Hospital give them a chance at a longer, healthier life."

Clarke works primarily with Mark Urata, MD, DDS, principal investigator of the fund and head of the Division of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery, and physicians in other specialized areas who determine which ICCF applicants can be successfully treated at Children's Hospital.

She also works with Mending Kids International (MKI), a nonprofit organization that partners with hospitals to provide surgical care to children worldwide. MKI refers patients to hospitals, arranges their travel and finds host families to provide a place to stay during the child's treatment.

"What I love most is the ability to make a difference in the lives of children and their families," says Clarke. ■