Image Is Everything
Meet the Staff of General Radiology

FEATURED INSIDE

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Much has happened in the field of radiology since German scientist Wilhelm Roentgen discovered the x-ray in 1895. Today medical imaging is essential to almost every patient’s care at MSKCC. Imaging tests—such as x-rays, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and positron emission tomography (PET)—are now used to diagnose disease, to monitor a patient’s response to treatment, and to determine whether patients remain cancer-free after therapy is finished.

"Virtually every patient at MSKCC passes through our doors at some point during their care, and most more than once," explained Christopher Allen, Supervisor, General Radiology. "It’s our job to get them in and out as quickly as possible and with as much compassion as we can.”

Mr. Allen oversees a staff of nearly two dozen people that includes radiologic technologists, receptionists, film librarians, quality assurance technologists, and radiology aides. (See sidebar for more about radiologic technologists.) Working around the clock, they typically complete some 5,700 exams for approximately 4,500 patients each month.

Radiologic technologists perform most imaging procedures in the General Radiology suite in the Enid A. Haupt Pavilion, while other procedures (such as those conducted with portable chest x-rays) are done at the patient’s bedside or in operating and procedure rooms. The staff also handles the medical imaging needs of patients from the Surgical Day Hospital, the Urgent Care Center, and the Sidney Kimmel Center for Prostate and Urologic Cancers.

In addition, radiologic technologists oversee the use of the O-arm® Surgical Imaging System—a doughnut-shaped x-ray machine that can be “wrapped” around a patient on the operating table. This technology allows the staff to take 2-D and 3-D images of a patient during an operation, which are helpful for guiding surgery.

One of the biggest changes in radiology has been the progression from film to digital imaging. This advance has not only increased the quality of the resulting images, but also vastly improved the speed and efficiency with which doctors can access radiologic exams.

Such evolving technology improves patient care, but also means that radiologic technologists must be constantly learning. “It’s important for our staff to remain well-rounded and educated about new procedures,” explained Larry Walker, Manager, General Radiology. “Some people pick up new things faster than others. We’re sensitive to this, and provide the instruction our technologists need to understand and learn the latest technology, which changes daily.” Technologists are initially trained to take x-rays and can acquire additional training and licensing to perform ultrasound, CT, MRI, and nuclear medicine scans (such as PET).

Radiologic technologists enter the field for different reasons. For Kenny Tate, Lead Technologist and Flow Coordinator, a broken bone in his hand led to a new career. “I got into a conversation with the technologist taking my x-rays, and by the time he was done, he had convinced me to check out the field,” recalled Mr. Tate, who has worked at MSKCC for 22 years. “There’s a silver lining in every cloud, right?”
Today he coordinates the department’s daily work flow and monitors and maintains equipment and supplies. “I enjoy and take great pride in knowing that what I do on a daily basis helps patients to receive optimal care as quickly and as kindly as possible,” said Mr. Tate.

Andria Castaneda, a Radiologic Technologist I who has worked at MSKCC since 2008, chose this field because it combines her love of technology and her desire to work with patients. “I’ve always been fascinated by the human body. Becoming a radiologic technologist gave me an opportunity to explore my interests while working in a field that is ever expanding,” she maintained. “I get great satisfaction from interacting with my colleagues, our patients, and their families. We treat each and every patient with the highest level of sensitivity and professionalism.”

“I like meeting the many different patients we care for,” added Nathalie St. Jean, who began working in the MSKCC film library in 2009 and became a Radiologic Technologist I in 2010. “Seeing what they are going through makes me feel very grateful about my life. We try to make their time with us as positive as possible.” Ms. St. Jean’s skill and compassion earned her the distinction of Radiologic Technologist of the Year at MSKCC in 2012.

Staff members of General Radiology know they are an important part of each patient’s multidisciplinary health care team. “What I like most about my job is being part of a group of dedicated professionals who help patients with their diagnosis and treatment,” said Shawn O’Toole, Lead Technologist, who coordinates all image-guided intrathecal procedures (such as spinal taps). “I work closely with patients’ primary health care teams and staff members from pharmacy, radiation oncology, CT scanning, and interventional radiology. Together we are able to provide our patients with the quality of care expected at an institution like MSKCC.”

Mr. O’Toole has worked at MSKCC since 2000. He decided to become a radiologic technologist while in the U.S. Navy. “As a Hospital Corpsman, you get to work in many different areas of medicine. One area that interested me was radiology,” he recalled. “I found the science behind imaging exciting, and the benefits of imaging even more interesting.” After transferring from his first duty station, he had the opportunity to attend x-ray school. “I knew this skill would transfer well when I left the military, so I jumped at the chance to become an x-ray technologist,” Mr. O’Toole noted.

Patients who come to General Radiology may feel fearful or anxious about an exam or what it may reveal. Staff members are sensitive to patients’ feelings and try to create an atmosphere of calm and reassurance.

“Many people have a fear of radiation. It is my job to reassure them that they are not going to ‘glow in the dark,’ as some of them tell me they fear,” explained Kay Leslie, a Radiologic Technologist II who takes x-rays. Pediatric patients may fear the large imaging machines needed to diagnose and monitor the growth of a tumor. “Some children are very brave, and some are very scared, which is quite understandable. It’s a huge fight they are fighting. We try to give them stickers when they are finished,” she added.

A native of Barbados, Ms. Leslie began working at MSKCC 25 years ago as a patient escort, and then as a receptionist in General Radiology before beginning her career as a radiologic technologist. “Our jobs support the mission of MSKCC by making sure the patient is the first priority,” she concluded. “By being an important part of our team and making them feel comfortable, we’re able to give them the best cancer care anywhere.”

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL RADIOLOGY STAFF INCLUDE:

Herbert Alvarado – Radiologic Technologist I
Donnah Barrow – Radiologic Technologist I
Glen Bloomfield – Radiologic Technologist I
Carlton Bonterre – Radiologic Technologist II
Michael Coronel – Radiologic Technologist I
Sucre DelRio – Radiologic Technologist III
Samuel Dwomoh – Radiologic Technologist I
Mirian Fernandez – Radiologic Technologist I
Stephen Gray – Radiologic Technologist I
Mayeline Griffin – Radiologic Technologist I
Hamlet Jaquez – Radiologic Technologist I
Gregory Langdon – Supervisor
Theresa Marshall – Radiologic Technologist I
Sherley Merveille – Radiologic Technologist II
Mikhail Mordkovich – Radiologic Technologist II
Louis Norrington – Radiologic Technologist III
Lester Ortiz – Supervisor
Paul Ramsay – Radiologic Technologist I
Daniel Rodriguez – Radiologic Technologist III
Edgundo Romano – Radiologic Technologist I
Music Therapists Strike a Chord with Patients

Holly Mentzer, LCAT, MT-BC, entered the patient’s room and sensed that he was feeling down. She asked the patient, who was recovering from a disfiguring head and neck surgery, what kind of music he liked. “Metallica,” he wrote on his white board. She laughed, his eyes smiled, and they agreed on something she could play for him that day: music by Neil Young.

He could not sing along, but he could sway to the music of her acoustic guitar. By the end of their time together, he was playing air guitar. “He went from being withdrawn to feeling exuberant,” Ms. Mentzer recalled. “I felt good knowing that I changed his day.”

Such is the power of music therapy, which can promote relaxation, ease anxiety, encourage self-expression, minimize pain perception, and reduce feelings of isolation. Ms. Mentzer is one of four professionally trained music therapists at MSKCC, who can be seen pushing carts laden with guitars and other instruments through the halls of Memorial Hospital. Patients may participate—singing along or beating a drum, for example—or they may choose just to listen.

As part of the Integrative Medicine Service, MSKCC’s music therapists help reduce anxiety as patients prepare for surgery, provide respite and social interaction for inpatients, ease a patient’s waking after surgery, accompany massage and physical therapists when they provide care, and deliver comfort to patients in the intensive care unit. They sing in the Pediatric Day Hospital as part of the weekly music and dance group, and lead group sessions in the Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Patient Recreation Pavilion. They also work with Child Life Specialists to support children undergoing potentially uncomfortable or frightening procedures.

Patients and their families may request a session themselves, or their nurses or other health care providers may submit a request. The Integrative Medicine Service schedules the sessions, which generally last from 20 to 45 minutes, depending on a patient’s needs. Sessions are offered to patients free of charge, thanks to funding from the Gabrielle’s Angel Foundation—an organization created by Gabrielle’s daughter, Gabrielle Rich Aouad, who succumbed to acute myelogenous leukemia in 1996.

Music therapists come to the profession from all walks of life. Many are professionally trained musicians. To become music therapists, they complete a graduate-level course of study and an internship before earning national certification as board-certified music therapists (MT-BC). In New York, they can also become Licensed Creative Arts Therapists (LCAT). All of MSKCC’s music therapists pursued their graduate education at New York University, and several interned at MSKCC before becoming staff members.

Alessandro Ricciarelli, LCAT, MT-BC, who studied at Berklee College of Music in Boston, has performed and composed music as a jazz guitarist. When he began volunteering at MSKCC in 2001, he observed music therapy in action and thought it might be a fulfilling way to connect with patients. After completing the NYU program, he began working at MSKCC in 2006. “It’s emotionally rewarding to work so intimately with patients,” he maintained. “And the music is helpful for us, too. As we give therapy to patients, we give it to ourselves.”

The family of one patient who passed away told her nurses that even when she didn’t want anything else, she always accepted visits from Mr. Ricciarelli. The brother of another patient told him, “You transform hospital time into human time.”

Music therapy often yields benefits for families as well as patients. “Music can be very unifying for the family because it gives them an opportunity to contribute to their loved one’s care when there is nothing else they can do,” explained Karen Popkin, LCAT, MT-BC, who has led the Music Therapy Program at MSKCC since 2006, and who studied music education at Ohio University. “People share their love of music and important events in their lives and welcome us into their families.”

“Music can be a safe way to help patients and their families open up to each other and share their feelings,” added Ms. Mentzer, who studied at The Juilliard School and has worked at MSKCC since 2009. “Sometimes playing a song from a patient’s wedding can spark happy memories and move a family to tears.”

Patients react differently to music therapy sessions depending on their culture and age, what they’re being treated for, and how they’re feeling in any given moment. Sometimes, a patient may not feel up to having a session just then. And sometimes the therapist has to cut a session short if a patient’s doctors or nurses come in. So flexibility is key. “We always assess where someone is in each moment so we can decide what to provide, or determine if it might be better for us to return at another time,” said Ms. Popkin.

Music therapy can also serve an important role during end-of-life care. Taryn Thomas, MT-BC—who taught herself to play piano with her church’s gospel choir in Mamaroneck, New York, and has worked at MSKCC since 2009 (the same year she received her master’s degree from NYU)—played piano and sang a hymn as one patient took her last breath. “It was very powerful to be part of that transition for her, and to help her family connect with their faith in that moment,” she recalled.

Music Therapists Strike a Chord (continued on page 5)
Cancer treatment often means giving up a certain amount of control over one’s health, and music therapy gives patients choices at a time when they may feel they don’t have many. Ms. Popkin concluded, “Anything that enables a person to participate in their own care provides an opportunity for empowerment.”

Music (and Musicians) Everywhere

In addition to the therapeutic benefits music provides, music also brings joy to the maker. (Perhaps that’s why music is “played”?) Just ask a few of the MSKCC employees who consider their time well spent when they join with colleagues from MSKCC and other area medical institutions to play and sing with the Music and Medicine Orchestra and Chorus.

The Music and Medicine Initiative was founded in 2009 by Dr. David Shapiro and Dr. Richard Kogan of Weill Cornell Medical College, who noticed that a large number of medical school applicants were also serious musicians. The Music and Medicine Initiative was initially created to give students a musical outlet during their medical training. Eventually, the founders decided to open it up to the Tri-Institutional community in an effort to allow health care professionals at other institutions to continue their musical lives and, in doing so, enrich their personal and professional lives.

The Music and Medicine Orchestra and Chorus, featuring more than 90 musicians and singers, including several from MSKCC, performed Mozart’s Requiem in October 2012 at St. Bartholomew’s Church in Manhattan. This concert, the group’s first, was a fundraiser for the Weill Cornell Community Clinic, a student-run free clinic. The next concert will take place on May 22 at 7:00 PM in Caspary Auditorium at Rockefeller University.

Maureen Flaherty, Administrative Secretary in Pathology, and Dr. Kim Kramer, Associate Attending in Pediatrics, both sang soprano with the chorus last October and plan to participate in the May concert as well. “Being in the chorus was a fabulous experience,” said Dr. Kramer. “My ten-year-old daughter sang in the soprano section, too. It was so much fun!”

Ms. Flaherty agreed. “It is a joy to sing with this group,” she enthused. “And knowing that the proceeds [from the October concert] were going to a free clinic made it even more rewarding.” In addition to the October concert, she joined the chorus last December in caroling throughout Weill Cornell. “Singing in the pediatric ward made my Christmas,” she added.

Nicola Buchanan, Program Associate in the Office of Diversity and the Office of Faculty Development, sings alto in the chorus, having discovered her voice after years of reluctant study of piano and flute. She learned about Music and Medicine in January 2012, when Dr. Laura Liberman, Director of the Office of Faculty Development, hosted the department’s annual concert for faculty. The concert featured Dr. Kogan, who is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell and a classically trained pianist. Dr. Kogan is also artistic director of Music and Medicine—and, to burnish his musical credentials even more, a former Harvard roommate of famed cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

“I learned at the concert that they [Music and Medicine] were inviting people from the Tri-Institutional community to join the Mozart concert that was coming up in October, and I jumped at the chance,” said Ms. Buchanan. “We started rehearsing, once a week, in July,” she recalled. “At first, it sounded pretty rough, but it came together in the end and the concert was just beautiful. I really loved it!”

Grace Tang, PhD, Radiotherapy Physicist II, first heard about Music and Medicine when the call for musicians went out prior to the October concert. She remembers being amazed at the sight of so many talented musicians and singers from multiple institutions, including MSKCC, gathered for the auditions. “It’s very exciting for the musicians at MSKCC to have the opportunity to join together and play such fantastic music for a good cause,” she said.

Music has always been a part of Dr. Tang’s life. A classically trained pianist since the age of six, she now plays the viola for the Music and Medicine Orchestra. “I picked up the viola in my early teens when my brother started playing the violin,” Dr. Tang recalled. “I played with several city and county youth orchestras in the UK, where I’m from, as well as the University of London Symphony Orchestra.”

Dr. Tang will soon join the New York Repertory Orchestra under the direction of David Leibowitz, who conducted Music and Medicine at the concert in October.

Joining Dr. Tang in the Music and Medicine strings section is Caraline Craig, Research Study Assistant II in the MSKCC Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Ms. Craig plays violin, an instrument she has studied since the age of eight, and, like her colleagues, is looking forward to participating in the Music and Medicine concert in May. “When the opportunity to play with the Music and Medicine Orchestra,” she said, “I jumped at the chance.”

Staff members interested in scheduling a music therapy session for their patients can call 646-888-0888. Call 212-639-5978 for information about group music sessions in the Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Patient Recreation Pavilion.
Music Orchestra came up, I was thrilled! I picked up my violin and started practicing right away,” said Ms. Craig. “Performing at St. Bart’s with a room full of musicians of such extraordinary talent and enthusiasm was an honor.”

Dr. Alan Engelberg, Associate Attending Physician, Employee Health and Wellness Services, plays trombone in the orchestra. Dr. Engelberg grew up in Chicago, steeped in the traditions of jazz, and comes from a musical family—his brother is a trumpeter and a bandleader. “I knew I couldn’t be as good as him, so I went into medicine,” he said, his tongue-in-cheek reply when asked if he had ever considered a career as a musician, like his brother.

Dr. Engelberg never traveled far from his love of music, always finding places to rehearse and groups to play with since entering the medical field. While he was a student at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, he belonged to the Doctor’s Orchestra of New York, rehearsing at the old Stuyvesant High School, as well as the Bronx Symphony Orchestra, and performed at various spots around New York City. Today, he plays with the Big Band Sound Jazz Orchestra, a 20-piece jazz orchestra based in Poughkeepsie, as well as Music and Medicine. When asked if there was some connection between musicians and medical practitioners that might explain the supposedly high number of musicians among health care professionals, he replied simply, "Music is fun.” Sometimes the obvious answer is the right one.

Are you a musician or singer interested in performing with the Music and Medicine Orchestra and Chorus? You can learn more and join the mailing list by visiting www.weill.cornell.edu/music. And don’t miss Music and Medicine’s upcoming concert on May 22 at 7:00 PM in Caspary Auditorium at Rockefeller University.

DID YOU KNOW…

Congress has increased the monthly pre-tax commuter benefit limits for transit and parking expenses for 2013? The new limit is $245 per month for public transit, up from $125 per month in 2012! The parking limit also increased, from $240 in 2012 to $245 in 2013.

What does this mean for you? If you take a subway, bus, or commuter train (like Metro-North or Long Island Railroad) to work, you can set aside up to $245 pre-tax every month to cover your commuting expenses. And the same goes for parking expenses: If you pay to park your car as part of your commute, you can set aside the same amount, pre-tax, to cover the costs of parking. If your commute to work includes parking and transit expenses, you can take advantage of both options.

The Commuter Spending Account (CSA) Program provides several features, including:

- Easy online enrollment
- The ability to receive convenient home delivery of your monthly transit pass or voucher (MetroCard or train ticket)
- A prepaid Commuter Check Card that offers flexibility with eligible transit purchases
- Direct payment to your parking facility
- The ability to manage your account online
- A great way to save on your taxes by lowering your taxable income

Here’s an example: Jane’s annual eligible pay is $50,000 and she contributes $2,940 a year to a CSA—the maximum currently allowed. As a result, her taxable income goes down to $47,060, which saves her $960 in taxes*. *This is a sample tax savings based on 2013 rates for a single taxpayer with no dependents. Actual savings will vary based on your individual tax situation. Please consult a tax professional for more information.

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<th>With CSA</th>
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A few other points to keep in mind:

- Pre-tax transit and/or parking deductions are taken from the first paycheck of each month. You may want to plan ahead initially to prepare for that monthly deduction.
- Like other spending accounts, there is a “use it or lose it” rule under the IRS—while you can carry your CSA balances over from year to year, there are no refunds for unused balances if you lose your eligibility for the program (by retiring, or otherwise separating from MSKCC).

ADP is the vendor that manages the CSA for MSKCC employees. You can enroll in the CSA program at any time by going to myspendingaccount.adp.com. Or, log on to CONNECT/Self Service/Benefits/Commuter Spending Account, and click on the ADP website link.

Questions about Commuter Spending Accounts? Please call ADP at 800-301-7558 or HR Services at 646-227-3456.
Like Mother, Like Daughter: Nurses Keep It All in the Family

“Mom, let me tell you about my night!” It’s not an unusual way for Julie Kleber to start a morning conversation with her mother, Elaine Llanos. But she wasn’t telling her mother about a new nightclub, or the fun she had with her friends. Instead, Ms. Kleber was talking about being a night nurse on the eighth floor of Memorial Hospital, where she cares for patients undergoing bone marrow transplants. And Ms. Llanos understands quite well what her daughter is talking about. That’s because she, too, is a nurse at Memorial Hospital, and has been for over 30 years.

Elaine Llanos and Julie Kleber are just two of several mother-daughter pairs working as nurses at MSKCC. Like one big family, coworkers who know the mothers often look out for their daughters as they make their way in their new careers. Mothers and daughters exemplify the multigenerational nature of nursing, and are literal examples of MSKCC’s nursing family.

In this issue, we invite you to meet some of them.

TESS LOPEZ AND NICOLE CHUA

Nicole Chua, CNI, BSN, RN, has heard about MSKCC all her life, and remembers going to several nurses’ holiday parties at Memorial Hospital. She also recalls how fondly her mother, Tess Lopez, CNIV, BSN, OCN, RN, has spoken about her job. “She has always been so happy and so knowledgeable,” said Ms. Chua of her mother, who started working as a nurse at MSKCC in 1988 and is now a Clinical Nurse IV on M19. Ms. Chua started college at New York University with the intention of becoming a graphic designer. But after her first year, she began reading about nursing, volunteering, and taking other classes. She changed her major to nursing, studying at Adelphi University.

During the summer after her junior year, Ms. Chua participated in MSKCC’s Clinical Assistant Program (CAP), which provides nursing students with ten weeks of education and training. Last year, she began working as a Clinical Nurse I on M5, where she cares for patients with genitourinary and lung cancers.

“When she was young, she wanted to be a vet. Then in high school, she wanted to be an artist,” said Ms. Lopez, who went to nursing school in her native Philippines and came to the United States in 1985. “I was happy when she chose nursing. It’s a very demanding career, but also very rewarding.”

What advice did Ms. Lopez give her daughter when Ms. Chua began working at MSKCC? “She told me to be extra understanding, patient, and kind with patients and their families, who are usually under stress, and to be respectful of my coworkers,” said Ms. Chua. “She added that to provide good quality care, excellent teamwork is necessary. As a new nurse here, it’s definitely helpful to have a mother who has been doing this for so long. I take everything she tells me and I use it. I have so many questions, and I hope to learn as much as she knows.”

“We got closer when she switched to nursing,” added Ms. Lopez. “She calls me more now than she did before she started working here. I am so proud of her.”

GINNY PFEIFER AND CHRISTINE PFEIFER

When Christine Pfeifer, CNII, BSN, OCN, RN, was young, her mother, Ginny Pfeifer, CNIV, BSN, OCN, CWOCN, RN, and her firefighter father shared childcare responsibilities so that Mrs. Pfeifer could work two shifts a week as a nurse at Memorial Hospital. Years later, mother and daughter sometimes commute to the city together from Middle Village, Queens—where they live five minutes apart—when their nursing shifts at MSKCC overlap.

Mrs. Pfeifer, a Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse on M5, trained at SUNY Downstate College of Nursing and has worked at MSKCC since 1979. “I always heard it was a great place to work and saw how happy she was,” said her daughter. “She showed kindness and compassion at work, and carried those qualities back home to us.

Like Mother, Like Daughter (continued on page 8)
“The advice she gave me that I found most helpful in caring for cancer patients was to always be myself. I am excited to follow the same path as my mother.”

—Christine Pfeifer

When Ms. Pfeifer started working at MSKCC, her mother prepared her with some comforting words of wisdom. “The advice she gave me that I found most helpful in caring for cancer patients was to always be myself,” said Ms. Pfeifer. “She told me to be confident in my skills and compassionate in delivering care to my patients. I am excited to follow the same path as my mother.”

“Memorial Sloan-Kettering has been such a big part of my life and is something that I love,” concluded Mrs. Pfeifer. “To have my daughter working here, too, is so wonderful.”

ELAINE LLANOS AND JULIE KLEBER

Although Elaine Llanos, CNIV, MSN, OCN, RN, and Julie Kleber, CNII, BSN, RN, are mother and daughter, Ms. Kleber noted it was not her mother’s career that convinced her to pursue nursing. “In my sophomore year of high school, I took biology and loved it,” she explained. “In an introduction to nursing program sponsored by a pharmaceutical company, I began volunteering in healthcare near my home in Suffern, New York. I earned my nursing degree from Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, playing college basketball along the way, and began working at MSKCC in 2011. “I was a little surprised she chose nursing. I thought she’d go into something athletic,” said Ms. Llanos, who was educated at Niagara University and began working at MSKCC in 1981. She is now an ambulatory infusion nurse in the Experimental Therapeutics Center at MSK 53rd Street. “It’s very heartwarming to know my daughter is doing what I do. It gives us a lot to talk about.”

Those chats often occur in the morning, when Ms. Kleber is returning home from a night shift on M8 and Ms. Llanos is on her way into work. “I bounce things off of her all the time,” said Ms. Kleber. “She gives me great advice. One thing she says is, ‘We can’t always cure, but we can always care.’ That’s been very helpful.”

“It’s been a great opportunity for me to mentor her,” added Ms. Llanos, who recently earned her master’s degree in nursing education. “Memorial Sloan-Kettering is an excellent place to start building the foundation of a nursing career. Nursing here has been great for me, and it’s wonderful that Julie will have the same opportunities.”

Patient Satisfaction Survey, Fourth Quarter 2012

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Outpatient Report:

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MSKLIFE: A PUBLICATION FOR THE STAFF OF MEMORIAL SLOAN-KETTERING CANCER CENTER MARCH 2013 / 8
EMPLOYEE PROFILE: DESERT HORSE-GRANT

Creating Opportunity, Leading the Way

There is a saying among the Native American Sioux that advises, “Do not only point out the way, but lead the way.” Desert Horse-Grant, Administrator of the Brain Tumor Center, has been taking that to heart by creating educational opportunities at MSKCC for aspiring Native American scholars.

There are many young Native Americans who will be the first in their families to attend college, and can benefit from guidance on their academic journey. Ms. Horse-Grant, from the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) tribe of South Dakota, knows she was fortunate to be brought up in a family where education was a priority: She spent her early years living on the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where her mother was studying for a graduate degree in education.

As a high school student, Ms. Horse-Grant pursued a National Institutes of Health–funded internship at the Harvard School of Public Health. She completed her undergraduate education at Stanford University, where she majored in comparative studies in race and ethnicity, with a focus on health status.

During her time at Stanford, which has one of the strongest Native American studies programs in the country, she wrote an honors thesis on health disparities research and health care policy, and began mentoring young people. For example, Ms. Horse-Grant participated in a program at Stanford to provide SAT tutoring to underrepresented minority high school students, all of whom wound up going to college. “If you show students the way and help them learn how to study, you can help them get into college,” she maintained.

As a college student, she also interned at the Indian Health Service in Washington, DC, where she discussed health disparity issues with then–Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher. While in Washington, she met Dr. Harold Varmus, who at that time was President of MSKCC, and who offered her a position at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in 2000.

Ms. Horse-Grant has had a longtime connection to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), traveling as a child to meetings with her mother, to AISES summer camp in junior high school, and later to conferences as a college student. Today she attends the AISES conference each year on behalf of MSKCC to talk with students about careers in health care, and how they can make the transition from college to their first jobs. “My whole life, I felt privileged to be exposed to academics and fortunate to have mentorship from Native American scientists, engineers, and elders, starting at an early age through the AISES conferences,” she said. “It was instilled in me to give back and to help pave the way for others.”

Since arriving at MSKCC, Ms. Horse-Grant has forged strong ties with laboratory investigators and was able to establish a formal summer laboratory internship for Native American students. Each year for the past five years, one Native American student has received the opportunity to work for eight weeks in an MSKCC research laboratory. In 2010, Heidi Trenholm, then a Stanford undergraduate, met Ms. Horse-Grant at the AISES Conference and was subsequently offered an internship with the Brain Tumor Center. Now a college graduate, she is a Research Study Assistant with the Gastric and Mixed Tumor Service.

“Desert gave me the courage to move to the East Coast and consider a career in research,” said Ms. Trenholm. “I am so glad that she continues to help other Native American students the way she has helped me.”

In addition to her work through AISES, Ms. Horse-Grant is publicizing opportunities in the health care field to other Native American organizations in New York City. She’s helped recruit students to the SKI Summer Undergraduate Research Program and the Louis V. Gerstner, Jr. Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and linked them with other educational opportunities for underrepresented minorities sponsored by the Office of Diversity Programs in Clinical Care, Research, and Training. To expose students in remote areas of the country to the research and procedures being done at MSKCC, she is now working to create educational videos to be made available on the Internet.

“Over the years, Desert has demonstrated a commitment to and passion for the work that we are doing within the Office of Diversity Programs,” said Melanie Steele, Program Administrator, Office of Diversity Programs in Clinical Care, Research, and Training and Office of Faculty Development. “She has made the time to support our training programs by mentoring students; our recruitment efforts by sharing information about MSKCC at national meetings and through her connections within the Native American community; and our community outreach efforts by serving as a conduit to groups such as the American Indian Community House of New York City. Her contributions to our efforts have been invaluable.”

“We are fortunate to have so many educational resources here,” concluded Ms. Horse-Grant. “It is gratifying to serve as a bridge between health care learning opportunities and the students who can benefit from them to ensure diversity in the next generation of health care leadership.”
KUDOS!

Celebrating the accomplishments of MSKCC and its staff

Do you need help with research? Looking for a particular article? Trying to find an image for publication? The MSKCC Library is at your disposal, now more than ever, with the launch of its new and improved website at https://library.mskcc.org. Check it out!

The site, which has a responsive web design that allows it to morph to fit a variety of devices, offers mobile compatibility with the Android, iPad, and iPhone. A prominent Search section allows a user to search all of the library’s content from the home page. In addition, users can access top databases and prominent journals, like Cancer, Nature, and Science.

A remote access link on the home page provides users with the ability to access content when they’re off campus, while placement of the Ask-A-Librarian link, phone number, and Chat link on the home page enables users to connect quickly and easily with a librarian. Other key features of the page include Science Sparks and Synapse, featuring highlights of MSKCC’s medical and research activities, and the News & Events section, which promotes new and upcoming library initiatives and projects.

“Developing a new library website was a team effort,” said Donna Gibson, Director of Library Services. “We used a variety of tools in order to learn what our users needed, and their feedback was essential for a successful outcome. Since our launch, we have received many positive responses to the look and feel of the new site. Most importantly, we have redefined the user experience as our website adapts and displays on the most popular mobile devices used at MSKCC.”

Congratulations to the MSKCC Library on a job well done!

MSKCC's Communication Skills Training and Research Laboratory reached a milestone in December 2012 when the Comskil Training Program trained its 1000th participant!

Based in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, under the direction of Carma Bylund, PhD, Associate Attending, the Comskil Training Program opened in 2005 and trained its first group of attending physicians in 2006. Since then, fellows, residents, nurses, and nurse practitioners have also participated in the program. Participants come from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital as well as other medical centers, both domestic and international. During the program, they engage in facilitator-led small-group role play, working with standardized patients (people who have been trained to act as patients), to improve their communication skills in challenging clinical situations. More than 95 MSKCC employees (attending physicians, nurses, and other staff) have acted as facilitators in the program.

The goals of the Communication Skills Training and Research Lab are twofold: to provide communication skills training to clinicians, and to develop research initiatives to further the field of clinician-patient communication. The program has received funding from the National Cancer Institute and several philanthropic foundations.

“The success of the Comskil Training Program is a testament to the health care providers and leaders at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center,” said Dr. Bylund. “It has been our privilege to work with many talented and compassionate attending physicians, fellows, nurses, and nurse practitioners over the past several years who care deeply about their patients and patients’ families, and want to give them the best care possible.”

Finally, we’re pleased to report that MSKLife was recognized by the MarCom Awards in late 2012. The MarCom Awards, sponsored by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, is a creative competition for any individual or company involved in the concept, writing, and design of print, visual, audio, and web materials and programs. For the previous year, MSKLife was recognized as a Gold Winner for two issues: the March 2012 issue, with a cover story on veterans at MSKCC, and the December 2011 issue, with a cover story about MSKCC receiving CEO Cancer Gold Standard accreditation. Two other issues, September 2012 and June 2012, were given Honorable Mention. Thanks to all of you for providing such fascinating story material!
Congratulations to MSKCC staff members who, during January, February, and March 2013, celebrated milestone anniversaries with the Center.

5 Years

Monica Adu
Erik Aldahondo
Daniel P. Anderson
Pitsicia Andrade
Elaine Andreana
Marithza Apollon
Angela Arnold
Karen Ayres
Zhirong Bao
Kimarie Ann Boeger
Joseph J. Brana
Antennell Britt
Dexter Brown
Cindihaly B. Cabrera
Johanna Camino
Elena Caro
Michael Carter
Natasha Renee Carter
Maricia D. Casas
Jeffrey Paul Catalano
Kalyani Chadalavada
David Anthony Chan
Yu-Ming Chang
William Cheng
Hung C. Chi
Malgorzata Chrostowska
Shan Chang
Lisa Cintron
Icelda Clarke
Jonathan P. Clarke
Tanisha N. Clarke
Bradley Cohen
Courtney Coker
Evan Clark Coleman
Consuelo Concepcion
Yvette Cortes
Eric M. Cottington
William Croal
Annmarie Cox
Sarah Dallas
Annette Natasha Dawes
Erica Deachos
Tara Diaz
Lisa Marie Diffut
Malisa La-Toya Drayton
Alleyne R. Dukes
Judy L. Durham-Drakes
Rosalie L. Dy
John Dyson
Gauntlett T. Edwards
Esdras Exy
Alma Feliciano
Rosanna Ferrante
Villardouin Fortune
Kara Fraga
Jeffrey Francisquini
Leslie J. Freeman
Xiaomi Gao
Lauren Geib
Stephanie Geneus
Meghan Elizabeth Gerlach
Avani Dilip Giri
Rachel A. Gozin
Santos Gomez
Milagros G. Gordillo
Lisa Caserta Govoni
Dorothy E. Guzowski
Noel M. Hance
Christian Haro
Christine L. Hartley
Amy Robyn Hassel
Carlton Hayes
Gloria G. Herrera
Haley Hieronymus
Christina Hogan
Jae Huh
Edwina R. Hurley
Simone G. Hutchinson
Joanne Imperiale
Ayanna Isbell
Izabela Iwanowicz
Ryan Jaffe
Sarah Jewell
Shondel A. Joachim
Frederick A. Johnson
Veron Johnson
Eleni Stella Kalandranis
Julia Kaltschmidt
Joseph G. Kanik
Karmen Katz
Linde Kate Kennell
Shanika Ayshia Kerr
Neysa King
Jacquelyn E. Kochan
Heather Koehler
Elizabeth Kong
Susan H. Korte
Beverley K. Kruger
Kathleen Rose Kuhens
Sathia Rani Kumar
David Kavour
Jenny La
Stephanie Lacey
Sheena Dacquel Lacsina
Cynthia A. Lawrence-Bishop
Carol Lee
Katarzyna Lee
Angela Leslie
Lindon Liddell
Camille Lynn Lineberry
Alejandro Lizarra
Angelica R. Llarena
Kathleen S. Lopez
Luis Lopez
James P. Lozada
Daniel E. Lynch
Theodore Maitland
Elisa Malek
Brian Marr
Steven C. Martin
Bryan Mauro
Tiffany McLean
Kristen S. McNiff
Tanya Milan-Robertson
John A. Miller
Dagmara Karolina Mitchell
Shaunakay Mitchell
Gabriel Morel
Monica Morrow
Victor Mui
Michael R. Murphy
Savitha Nair
Karen Ochieng
Seth Owusu
O’dea Parson
Hamangi Patel
Jessica C. Perez
Raul Perez
John Petric
Brendan K. Phalan
Keith Phillip
Dalia Nathalie S. Pierre-Francois
Aisha Grace Pintor
Joseph Polo
Malgorzata Poltorak
Anthony Rainone
Katrina Rawlins
Carmela Bua Regina
Lena Rodriguez
Noelia Rodriguez
Randy S. Rodriguez
Marcia Scott
Chelsea Faye Seaberg
Irina Shishkov
Alyssa Simmons
Ravi Singh
Jonathan Sloan
Amanda Mary Smith
Flavia Melonia Smith
Ian Donovan Smith
Joni L. Smith
Yvonne Lee Smith
Mindy Sovel
James F. Stalard
Nicholas F. Stein
Marie Carole St. Julien
Arlene Stone
Destiny S. Straker
Rebecca Strang
Angemael Syl dor
Christine L. Taxeras
Khadijah Taylor
Lisa Marie Tesoriere
Dewayne David Thomas
Simone F. Thompson
Elvis Tolentino
Julio Torres
Carolyn Tricu-Chao
Kin Tse
Malgorzata Valdez
Lindsay Van Alstine
Carmen Velazquez
Nohemi Vidal
Antonietta Palaganas Viloria
Jacob Vinson
Lisa A. Vreeland
Abwyn Waldron
Tamiresha R. Walker
Jacquelyn Ward
Teresa Wastelowska
Richard O. Williams
Keisha Winkfield
Virginia Wynter
Guangli Yang
Afra Yehwalashet

10 Years

Stephanie T. Abrahams
Jennifer R. Allen
Joel G. Allen
Samuel D. Allen
Komal Amin
Onyemachi A. Anke
Elaine C. Appollo
Maria Arevalo
David R. Artz
George Ayob
Miriam Berkovic
Donna M. Boccamazzo
Rooigam Boomrad
Sonya Bowen
Roderick Brown
Emily Campbell
Neil T. Campbell
Dawn Carter
Morrel Ceres
Mellene E. Chambers
Adrienne Chavis
Gino Cheiffallo
Michelle Hae-Chung Chiu
Nihar K. Chopdar
Daniel Cimtron
Cheryl Co
Ilina Colon-Rivera
Jennifer P. Concej
Kathleen E. Conway
Paul Cortellesi
Denise Cruz
Kenneth H. Cubert
Laverne O. Cumberbatch
Amita Dave
Marc Del Signore
Dennis Dzuyag
Advia A. Ebanks
Barbara Edouard
Elena B. Elkin
Gemina Felix
James T. Finan
Claudine Finkle
Robert J. Finney
Kalio S. Fonville
Ronson Forde
Rita C. Francis
Virgilio Garcell
Jeanette Garcia
Katryn A. Goodman
Ruthann Gordon
Carol Grima
Christine Marie Haley
Altan Hallil
Christopher Hernandez
Mehdi Heywood
Kerry-Ann Holman
George M. Horvath
Kendra Hutchinson
Maria Rosalia I. Jimenez
Amid Joshi
JungShim Kang
Jill S. Kaplan
Marcia Judith Katz
Renee Keaton
Mylene King
Momchil V. Kolev
Kyle Kregg
Steven B. Lazan
Nancy Lee
Mario Leitao
Marty L. Lewis
Jian Liang
Hans Gosta Lilja
Angelo Lopez
Gladys Lopez
Sharon M. Lynch
Fung Ming Alex Mak
Stelios Maravelakis
Robert Markuske
Naomi D. Maxwell
Margaret McCormick
Asia S. McCoy
Natasha A. McLeod
Mercy Mena
Renee Montague
Sonja Murphy

MSK Anniversaries (continued on page 12)
ON THE HORIZON:

Research Administrators’ Professional Day
March 22

Administrative Professionals Week
April 21 – 27

Compliance and Ethics Week
May 5 – 11

Nurses Week
May 6 – 12

25 Years
Gloria E. Aboelela
Jhony Alfred
Joaquin Altamirano
Jose A. Ayala-Martinez
Norma J. Bennett
Janet Bermudez
Edwin Colon
Cecil Cooper
María T. Coppini
Cynthia Delaney
Deborah Dottallevi
Girvin A. Drakes
Paul D. Edwards
Indrawattie Ferraro
Scott Freeswick
Susan Gillespie
Kathleen Marie Harrington
Andrea Kancz
Welsey A. Kerr
Frank M. Lewis
Ma Teresita B. Lopez
Joseph Michielli
Barbara J. Modzelewski
Maryellen O’Sullivan
David M. Panseck
Annette V. Pined mez
Hilda Quintanilla
Molserrat Ramkelawan
Gloria M. Reid
Catherine D. Ricks
Eileen Sussman

20 Years
Patricia Albanese
Cleone A. Alborton
Emma A. Bolina
Carlton Bonterre
Anthony C. Brayboy
Paulette Brown
Masaya Chong Tong
Mary Ann Connor
Hector M. Cota
Cecily Cruz
Glynis Daly
Marlyn George
Winifred Loreto Halayko
Rachel A. Heftier
Alera R. Huckins
Arnel Laxamana
Diane Leone
Leonard C. Mason
Christine McGrade
Beatris M. Milliman
Maria Delia Oandasan
Clare Ochiogrosso
Karen E. Paul
Eileen Rizada
Deborah Rizzo-Wiettin
Marilou B. Rodulfo
Andrea J. Schaeffer
Salio Sefovic
Diane Simon
Thomas E. Springer
Elyn Renee Stubbfield
Jerrold B. Tetzner
Veronica C. Thomas

15 Years
Lauren Aho
Robert G. Alexander
Marina Asner
Cheong Baek
Carol L. Bailey
Brendan T. Bonner
Oleg Borukhov
Rinchshor Bowen
Zoya Brokman
Christopher Michael Brooks
Theresa H. Brunner
Zenia Q. Bunyi
Theresa Carpenter
Lillian E. Catucci
Diane Cancinimio-Bordelon
Mark L. Cimring
Sarah B. Costello
Robert Dayton
Michelle G. Dew
Suruj P. Dookran
James M. Doon
Yusuf E. Erdi
Noel Escriva
Sa David Fathimi
Deidre Fell-O’Brien
David Freberg
Charles Edward Gillen
Rafael Gurtzelashvili
Jean Hall
Valerie D. Heard
Beatrice T. Huste
Christina Seura Iovino
Enide Jean-Baptiste
Stanley C. Jeremiah
Angela Y. Job

Gordana Vukman-Pacheco
Anne M. Walsh
Virrel Williams
Valerie C. C. Winter

30 Years
Georgina Galloza
Scharmaine Harley
Everett H. Harrison
Rose C. Leviatsakos
Alira N. Salmon

35 Years
Lorna Barnett
Frank Blum
Desiree F. Brown
Frank Busanic
David Cheng
Robert Dorsa
Julian Fomeca
Edward Mahoney
Jackie L. Norman
Lorna P. Sinclair
Marion Wright

40 Years
Eustace Martin
Kelvin F. Peters

45 Years
Karen V. Allison

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MSK Anniversaries (continued from page 11)

Karen V. Allison

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MSKLife
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

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