



Community Heartbeat

ACMC: Serving all Ages & Stages

Birthing Center Reborn

Giving birth will never be easy, but Alameda County Medical Center is committed to making the most memorable experience of every mother's life as comfortable as possible. In the past three years, 4,062 babies were born at Highland Hospital.



Large photo: Postpartum Nurse Jeanette holds twin baby girls born at Highland on November 1st. Smaller photos: Other babies recently born at the Bright Beginnings Birthing Center, Jim Dennis Photography.

In recent months, our Bright Beginnings Birthing Center embarked upon a complete makeover. New paint, new furniture, even new showers are being installed in the center located on the 9th floor of Highland Hospital.

The new look is all in the name of creating a more family-friendly atmosphere where mother and baby stay together in the same room, and the new father is welcome to spend the night in one of the new comfortable recliners.

"We wanted to create a birthing experience that welcomed the family and made the whole experience as relaxed as possible," said Chief Nurse Executive Kim Horton. "Our staff is committed to making this a memorable experience for everyone involved."

ACMC already boasts the largest midwife staff in the East Bay offering new mothers help with bonding, breastfeeding and care of their newborns. Physicians are available on site 24 hours a day to

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Fall Prevention Center Reduces Fall Risk for Seniors



Alameda County Medical Center's new Fall Prevention Center, opened in March 2010, has received rave reviews from patients and doctors for tackling the chief cause of why otherwise-healthy seniors end up in the hospital.

"We intervene earlier," explained Stefania Kaplanes, the Center's founder and coordinator. "We want to stop seniors from falling in the first place, rather than pick up the pieces after the tumble."

More than 73,000 older Californians were admitted to the hospital in 2006 due to injuries that resulted from a fall. According to

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A patient at the Fall Prevention Center, Mr. Thomas, receives a Balance and Gait Screening (left) and a Medication Review from a Clinical Pharmacist (right) on his visit to the Center, with the goal of staying healthy and independent in the community.

Onward to Nursing and Medical Schools



Former ACMC volunteers with Jason Pokorny, Volunteer Program Manager, in front of Samuel Merritt School of Nursing: (L to R): Miriam Barrere, Gabriela Kremer, Richelle Passadore, Aimee Olson

"The place" to discover whether a passion for patient care can become a career in medicine turns out to be the volunteer corps at Alameda County Medical Center.

During 2010, a record number of nursing and medical school students got their start on the frontlines of Oakland's premier hospital as ACMC volunteers.

"We have developed a solid

reputation within the student community as the place to gain valuable experience and develop skills," said Jason Pokorny, program manager of ACMC's Volunteer Services Department.

At ACMC, volunteers experience everything from holding a patient's hand before surgery, to watching a surgeon restart a heart, to witnessing a newborn's first gasp for air. While volunteers can be found in all parts of the hospital, most honed their skills serving in either the maternity ward or the emergency room for stints that ranged from one year to five.

One volunteer, Ellen Wei, said that while she learned much from her clinical experiences at Highland, her most valuable lesson was about human nature.

"I learned how to work with others, how to lead, how to fol-

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Words from Wright

Alameda County Medical Center never rests on its laurels—we are engaged in a constant process of improving services for patients at all ages and stages of life, from newborns to older adults. Profiled here are the most recent examples of these improvements. ACMC is upgrading and remodeling its labor and delivery floor at Highland Hospital to make our patients' birthing experience more relaxed, homelike and memorable. Our innovative new Fall Prevention Center fills a previously unmet need for an outpatient one-stop center to help high-risk older adults avoid falls and remain independent.

In a deep showing of support, the community has given generously to our Foundation's Heart-to-Heart Campaign, which has recently been completed to bring a state of the art angiography/cardiac catheterization suite to ACMC.

Last year, community members in our Volunteer Department logged over 2,200 hours monthly. Even in these times of economic hardship, our volunteer program grew by 20% last year. It is gratifying to see our young volunteers develop a passion for a career in health care. This issue we showcase 26 volunteers who were accepted for fall 2010 into nursing programs and medical schools.

The 100 Families art project is a unique collaboration, sponsored by the Alameda County Arts Commission that brought neighborhood adults and children to our hospital to work with noted artists to create a beautiful mural. Please visit the mural adorning the fence around Highland's construction site.

Another meaningful community connection is the Grub Box Program where we work with People's Grocery to bring healthy fresh produce to both our employees at a Highland Hospital distribution site and low income communities. These are a few of the many ways that ACMC builds connections with the community.

Best regards,

Wright Lassiter, III, Chief Executive Officer

Fall Prevention Center

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the Stop Falls Network California, non-fatal fall injuries in California cost about \$2.4 billion dollars a year.

The Fall Prevention Center is a one stop program providing seniors with the multiple interventions needed to reduce fall risk. The Center treats patients identified as "at risk," as well as those who otherwise would be treated and released after a minor fall, only to fall again.

The center is staffed by injury prevention coordinators, physical therapists and clinical pharmacists, with geriatric and trauma doctors available as needed. Each client is assigned a case manager and trauma nurse if necessary.

"Our clients have been grateful and even amazed by the one-on-one approach and our dedication to their well-being," Kaplanes said. "They are so relieved by the opportunity to discuss their fears with staff that are ready and eager to help."

The program offers:

- Balance and gait screening from a physical therapist, with a referral to outpatient physical therapy if needed
- Medication review from a clinical pharmacist
- Education about how to prevent falls
- Nutrition advice for healthy meals
- Exercise tools such as pedometer to encourage walking, a deck of playing cards with prevention messages and a dynaband to help with strengthening exercises
- A manual with tips on how to modify homes to prevent falls and resources to call to install safety devices such as grab bars
- A form sent to the client's doctor outlining the results and recommendations for additional services if needed

"Falls are one accident that is entirely preventable and at Highland Hospital we want make sure that they are prevented," Kaplanes said.

Not only has the Fall Prevention Center caught the eye of Congress and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, but other hospitals have expressed interest in replicating the model and establishing their own centers.

For more information, contact Kaplanes at (510) 535-7648 or skaplanes@acmedctr.org.

Active in Our Community



ACMC Staff Provides Medical Care at the Oakland Marathon 2011

ACMC was once again the Medical Sponsor of the Oakland Marathon! Runners experienced another perfect event at the 2nd annual Oakland Running Festival, March 26th and 27th. Dr. Bob Savio and Michel Bunker-Alberts, FNP, kicked off the week-end by participating in the Twilight Run on Saturday at Jack London Square with dozens of Highland pediatric clinic families (middle photo). Wear-

ACMC Volunteers

low and most importantly, how to listen," said Wei, who is a med student at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich. "These are lessons that will help me throughout the rest of my medical career."

Another former volunteer worked throughout the San Francisco Bay Area's medical community for three years.



Former volunteer Ellen Wei, in front of Detroit Receiving Hospital, declared her experiences at Highland to be "the most rewarding and enriching I have ever had on my path to medical school."

But Jules Vieux, now a medical student at the University of California-Davis, said he found his time at Highland helping underserved populations to be the most rewarding and the most educational largely because of the staff. "The Highland staff taught, supported and appreciated the volunteers while we helped attend to the needs of patients," explained Vieux.

Seung Pak, a medical school student at the University of Wisconsin, credits his time at

ACMC for teaching him how to relate to patients.

"I know that if I hadn't volunteered at Highland's ER, it would have taken more time and effort for me to get used to seeing patients," Pak said. "I think that having gained experience interacting with patients is helping me tremendously here."

It didn't take Richelle Passadore long to appreciate her tenure at ACMC. During her second week of nursing school, she was already grateful for the experience she gained volunteering in the Emergency Room.

"I am able to connect what I have learned in the classroom to specific illnesses that I witnessed firsthand when I was a volunteer," Passadore said. "My time at ACMC raised my comfort level to be able to work in a clinical setting."

Pokorny said he couldn't be more proud of all the volunteers who have furthered their careers in medicine as a result of their experiences at ACMC.

"It's exciting to see a volunteer come into the program and transform into a person with a passion to be a physician or a nurse," he said. "2010 has been a year for the record books."

For more information about the Volunteer Services Department, click on the volunteer web page at www.acmedctr.org or call (510) 437-8363.

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Former Volunteers Enrolled 2010 Nursing School

1. Cal State East Bay: Laura Davis, BSN
2. Columbia: Julia Shams, NP
3. Johns Hopkins: Hyo-Jung Kim, BSN, Allison Yee, BSN
4. Samuel Merritt College: Miriam Barrere, BSN, Kristina Ennix, BSN, Gabriela Kremer, NP, Denys Myakota, BSN, Aimee Olson, BSN, Richelle Passadore, BSN
5. San Francisco State: Fesseha Adhana, BSN

Medical School

1. Chicago Medical School: Abel Wu
2. Emory: Kevin Yee
3. Johns Hopkins: Jason Norman, Arman Zaman
4. Medical College of Wisconsin: Lance Patel
5. Tulane: Caroline Adams
6. UC Davis: Jules Vieaux
7. UCLA: Joan Choi, Jenny Ryu
8. Univ. of Nevada: David Lee
9. Univ. S. Florida: Jeff Hoida
10. Univ. of Toledo College of Medicine: Elisa Chu
11. Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison School of Medicine: Seung Pak
12. Washington St. Louis: Leslie Chiang
13. Wayne State University: Ellen Wei

Mural Project Created Through 100 Families

Art can happen anywhere—even on a wall surrounding a construction site. The Alameda County Arts Commission is working with local families to create a mural for the fence surrounding Highland Hospital during construction. The Arts Commission established a new project as part of its on-going program 100 Families Alameda County: Art and Social Change. The project's goal is to bring together ten multigenerational families from the Highland community to enliven, celebrate, and strengthen the power and health of families and community through the inspiring and transformative process of making art. This program contributes to Alameda County's vision to be one of the best counties in which to live, work, and do business

Highland Hospital neighborhood families participating in a 100 Families project to create a new community mural. Photos © Sibila Savage Photography 2010.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Highland Infusion Center

Sometimes all it takes is a hug.

Other times it's a cup of tea and a warm quilt. It's all in the name of making cancer patients comfortable when they receive chemotherapy at Alameda County Medical Center.

"Before each session, we ask our patients for what we can do



Infusion Center nurse Angela checks on a patient who has just completed her chemotherapy to assure that she is comfortable.

to help, they ask for hot tea, soup, blankets or even hugs," explained Fefe Tequame, nurse manager of the ACMC Infusion Center located at Highland Hospital. "Chemotherapy is a vital part of treatment for patients diagnosed with cancer, but it doesn't have to be stressful."

ACMC is part of a national trend to treat cancer patients in an outpatient setting—rather than in the hospital. Before the center

opened, cancer patients received the eight-hour IV treatments in beds designated for hospital patients. But in 2006, ACMC renovated the Infusion Center with an eye to lower stress levels in patients who are anxious about the daylong process. Walls were painted in soothing tones of blue and yellow and soft lighting was installed in each of the 11 bays where the infusions occur.

"Patients spend up to eight hours receiving infusions, so the environment greatly contributes to their comfort level and their overall care," Tequame said. "Our staff works hard on a daily basis to make patients comfortable."

"Thank you! Each day that I come to the infusion lab, I am in a different mood, sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes sleepy, sometimes talkative. But I love to come here to see all of you and get to say something to you or hear you say something to me. This illness is very hard- it is not like getting a broken leg. I thank you for everyday you are helping me heal," said patient A.W.

The Infusion Center also offers families and friends an orientation that explains the diagnosis and treatment before



Staff of the Infusion Center gather at the Center's Nursing Station. ACMC's Infusion Center staff is well-known throughout the community for their clinical knowledge and compassion.

chemotherapy begins. Tequame said the orientation has not only reduced anxiety, but also helps patients learn to manage their symptoms. She also has noticed that the more a patient's family knows, the better they can help their loved one through chemotherapy. "We want families to understand the process so they can assist our patients," she said.

Since the center opened, it has served 5,000 patients each year. Referrals are made from the Highland Hematology-Oncology Clinic and other ACMC ambulatory care clinics.

The Infusion Center is open from 8 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Parking spaces have been reserved in the Vallecito parking lot near the center, or patients can be dropped off and picked up in the same place.

For more information, call (510) 437-8385. ☑



Wearing ACMC t-shirts, the family members including children and parents crossed the starting line together in the 5K run. On Sunday morning ACMC doctors, nurses and other clinical staff began arriving at 6:00 AM to their assigned medical stations, providing onsite care and cheering the runners on through the grueling marathon route. Over 40 ACMC volunteers joined the Medical Team and staffed seven medical stations along the route.

More photos are available at the new "ACMC in the Community" page at www.acmedctr.org.

Grub Boxes for Healthy Eating

Eating healthy has gotten a whole lot easier as a result of a partnership between the People's Grocery and the Alameda County Medical Center (ACMC) to provide fresh produce to families in need.

Everyone knows fruits and vegetables are part of a healthy diet, but low-income families often struggle to find such foods in neighborhoods that are short on grocery stores. To help, the People's Grocery has been providing "Grub Boxes" of fruits and vegetables grown on nearby farms and urban gardens since 2003.

Families participating in the food stamp (EBT) program can receive the Grub Box at a discounted rate of \$15, containing up to 16 pounds of seasonal produce. The newest way to join is through the Highland Pediatric Clinic. The clinic is now recruiting families struggling with pediatric obesity for a pilot project that provides a weekly Grub Box as well as nutrition education and cooking/food preparation support.

In addition, ACMC employees can purchase Grub Boxes that are available for pick-up at Highland every Tuesday afternoon. Staff can buy a "sponsor box" for \$25 to support discounted produce for low-income families. Sponsors receive a box of fresh produce, and the good



Michele Bunker-Alberts, Grub Box site coordinator for Highland Hospital, with Elena Geels, Volunteer Coordinator for the Highland Grub Box program, display a bag of healthy fruits and vegetables delivered to the hospital for pick-up.

feeling that comes from helping to improve the health of their community.

"This is about creating a place where people can come for medical care, and also for health and wellness," said Michele Bunker-Alberts, Highland's Grub Box site coordinator.

"Everyone deserves safe and easy access to fresh, healthy, real food."

— Michele Bunker-Alberts

Along with the food, included in each box is a newsletter about nutrition and a list of recipes to help those who may not know

how to make kale or artichokes or brown rice taste good.

The program also offers job skills to West Oakland community members. An internship program teaches young people how to grow the food, pack it and distribute it. Students learn firsthand about nutrition, agriculture and entrepreneurship.

"By connecting communities, the Grub Boxes offer a way to engage everyone in the challenge to provide healthy food choices," said Nikki Henderson, Executive Director of People's Grocery.

To learn more about Grub Boxes, visit www.peoplesgrocery.org or email dannae@peoplesgrocery.org or (510) 652-7607, ext. 25. ☑

Alameda County: Art & Social Change



while fostering safe neighborhoods and thriving communities. The families worked with teaching artists Joaquin Newman and Eduardo Pineda during five workshops at Highland. Their art will be featured in a mural created by the artists that was unveiled in April.

The participating families were recruited through a process that included hand-delivering 300 flyers throughout the neighborhood, email invitations to neighborhood groups, and outreach to Bella Vista elementary school and community organizations. ☑

100 Families is presented in partnership with the New Beginnings Program, a public-private partnership benefiting Alameda County youth. Funding for this project is provided through the County's "Percent for Public Art" ordinance, Clark Construction, and Vanir Construction Management Services.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR OUTSTANDING CAREGIVERS

Alameda County Medical Center
Community Heartbeat

..... Credits

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ACMC Locations

Eastmont Wellness Center

Eastmont Mall, Suite 200
6955 Foothill Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 567-5700

Fairmont Hospital

15400 Foothill Blvd.
San Leandro, CA 94578
(510) 895-4200

Highland Hospital & Clinics

1411 East 31st Street
Oakland, CA 94602
(510) 437-4800

John George Psychiatric Pavilion

2060 Fairmont Drive
San Leandro, CA 94578
(510) 346-1300

Newark Health Center

6066 Civic Terrace Avenue
Newark, CA 94560
(510) 505-1600

Winton Wellness Center

24100 Amador Street, Ste. 250
Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 266-1700

ACMC recognized the following three Outstanding Caregivers of 2010 at a Foundation Gala in June 2010.

Tasha W. Thibodeaux



Tasha Thibodeaux has devoted her career to reducing the risk of HIV. Since joining ACMC's HIV Services Department in 1997, her mission has been to teach the community about how HIV is transmitted so that it can be prevented.

"Years ago, my best friend was infected with the HIV virus; so little was known, so many fears ran rampant. I imagined the insidious nature of the virus and I had to do something. Thus began my passion to educate, encouraging people to get screened and confront myths and stereotypes," stated Thibodeaux.

Thibodeaux currently serves as an HIV Prevention Specialist in Highland's Emergency Department where she educates patients about how to prevent the spread of HIV, how to get tested, and what to do with a positive result.

She participated in the pilot project for Ora-Quick Rapid HIV testing of Emergency Department patients and helped obtain federal and state grants for ACMC's HIV prevention services. Her work has involved HIV drop-in testing, HIV group and individual counseling, community HIV testing and prevention efforts.

In 2008, the Alameda County Office of AIDS recognized Thibodeaux for her work with their Community Service Award for education and prevention services. 📄

Dr. Judith Wofsy



Since Dr. Judith Wofsy began her career at Highland Hospital in 1979, she has created program after program aimed at building a stronger Medical Center.

Currently the Chief of Primary Care Internal Medicine, Dr. Wofsy began the Infectious Disease teaching service in 1980 and managed it for a decade—the early years of the AIDS crisis. In 1983, she and Dr. Linda Engelstadt founded the Primary Care track of the Internal Medicine Residency program.

Dr. Wofsy stated, "It has been so rewarding to train general internists who have gone on to practice in underserved communities. I also am committed to supporting faculty and residents in becoming better teachers so our efforts will continue far into the future. I hope I have helped patients, residents and colleagues over the years. I know I have received a great deal back from all of them."

Dr. Wofsy was a founding member of ACMC's Antibiotic Utilization Committee to combat antibiotic resistance and create guidelines for appropriate use. This project won a National Association of Public Hospitals' top honor, the Healthy Future Award, in 2000.

Dr. Wofsy teaches clinical seminars at ACMC and other academic programs, and is a clinical professor of medicine at UCSF. 📄

Michele Bunker-Alberts



Family Nurse Practitioner Michele Bunker-Alberts is known to mothers in the Bright Beginnings Birthing Center for her cheery smile and helpful tips on breastfeeding.

An International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant, Bunker-Alberts developed ACMC's breastfeeding program. She helped initiate efforts to receive the "Baby-Friendly Designation" for successful breastfeeding, which leads to recognition by the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund.

"A mother's decision to breastfeed affects her baby's health as well as her own. Mothers who breastfeed have lower rates of diabetes, obesity, and certain types of cancers. Infants who are breastfed have lower rates of childhood infections including diabetes, obesity and asthma. Breastfeeding promotion affects our communities now and in the future," said Bunker-Alberts.

In 2004, Bunker-Alberts completed her thesis on breastfeeding for low-income women and received her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of California-San Francisco.

She recently completed a fellowship with the California Health Care Foundation and was accepted into the national Disparities Leadership Program. In 2009, she was honored with the Nurse Practitioner Healthcare Foundation award. 📄

Shuttle News



A free shuttle bus is now available for patients and their families visiting Fairmont Hospital and John George Psychiatric Pavilion. The Alameda County shuttle runs between Bayfair BART in San Leandro, the two ACMC facilities and Bayfair Mall. Hours of operation are weekdays from 6:30 AM to 7 PM. Departure times from the BART loading zone are 10, 30 and 50 minutes past the hour. The final bus will leave BART at 6:30 PM.

All Aboard! 📄

Birthing Center

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care for mothers and their newborns.

For the babies who must spend time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, ACMC has renovated the entire unit to create a more pleasant environment where babies receive top-notch care. Mother-baby sleep rooms are located across the hall so new mothers can be close to their babies while the little ones grow.

To welcome the newcomer to the world, ACMC offers to treat the whole family to a celebratory dinner and cake. Gifts to the newborn include a t-shirt, picture and footprint of the newborn suitable for framing, and the most important of all—diapers!

To check out all the changes, sign up for a tour of the Birthing Center by calling (510) 437-4278. See our birthing center virtual tour, which is coming later this year at www.acmedctr.org. 📄

Heart-to-Heart Campaign Reaches Goal



After more than two years of fundraising, the Heart-to-Heart Campaign reached its \$2.7 million goal to outfit a state-of-the-art combination angiography/cardiac catheterization lab at Highland Hospital, to be called the Interventional Services Suite.

"We are overjoyed to have met our goal!" said Cherlyn Spencer,

Executive Director of the Alameda County Health Care Foundation. "Our deep gratitude goes to all those who supported the campaign and helped bring this essential equipment to our community."

Since 2008, the foundation has made raising money for the Interventional Services Suite equipment its goal. Soliciting money from philanthropic foundations, corporations, faith-based organizations, physicians and employees, the foundation was rewarded for its efforts when the goal was reached in November, a month before the target date of December.



The Foundation board members presented a check to the Medical Center for \$864,000 to cover the construction-related costs of the angiography suite installation.

Not only will ACMC's current patients suffering from cardiac conditions benefit, but trauma patients will receive state of the art interventional radiology procedures in the new suite. Dr. Barry Simon, Chief of Emergency Medicine, said doctors have been solidly behind the Heart-to-Heart Campaign knowing how much patients will benefit from the life-saving diagnostic and treatment tools.

"Providers from every department are eager to see this equipment up and running," Dr. Simon said. "This will enable us to improve

access to care, as well as the quality and timeliness of care."

The Interventional Services Suite, located on the 3rd floor of the Koret Building in the Radiology Department, was completed in March 2011 and will open once staff have been trained and licensing has been approved. The lab is expected to open for patient care in late spring/early summer. After the suite is fully operational, ACMC plans to seek designation as a STEMI Receiving Center for patients suffering from heart attacks, who are now sent to other hospitals.

For more information about the Alameda County Health Care Foundation or to donate, visit the website, www.achcf.org. 📄