



Community Memorial Health System

You wonder
what the
future holds
when you get
cancer.

"Asking 'Why me?'
is a waste of time
and energy.
My attitude was
to get a plan from
my doctors and
march on."

CARING

REAL LIFE, REAL HEALTH
IN VENTURA COUNTY

Louise Hart – Survivor

SPRING 2008



Gary Wilde
President & CEO

wilde thoughts

On a Mission to Benefit the Community

This special issue of *Caring* highlights a few examples of how we support the communities we serve, such as CMHS establishing a \$20,000 grant given to the Ojai Rotary Club in order to support the "Fit Kids" program. Fit Kids battles the national epidemic of childhood obesity right here in our own neighborhoods and schools through nutritional education and after-school fitness activities.

You will also read in these pages about our Auxiliary volunteers at both Community Memorial Hospital and Ojai Valley Community Hospital who have donated generous checks aimed at making a difference. More important than these monetary gifts, however, are the selfless gifts of time, energy and ever-present smiles they give on a daily basis to help our patients and staff. To be certain, their compassion and generosity in all respects is greatly appreciated and inspiring.

It is difficult to imagine someone more inspiring than Louise Hart, who joined Community Memorial Hospital's Auxiliary in 1963,

six months after it was formed. Indeed, for the past four and a half decades Louise has given of herself as a volunteer, but perhaps never more than she does inside these pages by openly sharing her courageous battles with cancer. Anyone who is diagnosed with cancer, or has a loved one or friend with this disease, will surely draw strength and inspiration from Louise, who has epitomized the advice she now offers others: "Remain positive and tell yourself, 'I can do this!'"

While a positive attitude is indeed paramount to battling cancer, it must be complemented with expert care. CMHS is ambitiously focused on offering a state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer program. Toward this aim we have proudly created our Cancer Resource Center on the Community Memorial Hospital campus. I encourage you to read about the CRC and how it has partnered with The Wellness Community to provide an array of support groups and educational programs.

Our Cancer Resource Center is currently

going through formal accreditation by the American College of Surgeons. This thorough process will culminate with an unannounced in-depth survey inspection in the coming months that will include sitting in on our Interdisciplinary Cancer Conference that brings together an extraordinary group of specialists to form a unique "team" to give cancer patients a complete breadth and depth of expertise on their options of care.

I would also like to take a moment here to welcome Reverend Curtis Hotchkiss to our CMHS family. We have always offered spiritual services to our patients, but now we will be able to do so in a more formal and wide-reaching way. Not only will Reverend Hotchkiss provide his services at both CMH and OVCH, he is reaching out to galvanize other faith leaders so he will be able to bring in any spiritual help a patient might request.

Whatever our individual faith, I believe we can all share in the belief that community service is a worthwhile mission.

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A Celebration of

Life



Sunday, April 20, the Breast Center at Community Memorial Hospital joined with SPA by Diane Loring, Inc., Buenaventura Art Association and Star Quality Events in “A Celebration of Life.” This special event brought together breast cancer survivors and individuals who are involved with programs aimed at fighting breast cancer.

Breast cancer survivors were offered hair and make-up sessions and learned about a new partnership with local artists that will result in exquisite artistic impressions associated with the cancer survivors’ experiences.

Guests had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Breast Center and learn about their program that provides free breast care treatment to individuals in our community who are uninsured or underinsured. Breast cancer has touched the lives of many people. Early detection and awareness is the key in the battle against this threatening disease, yet many women cannot afford to pay for these services. The Breast Center at Community Memorial Hospital offers an answer – complimentary early breast cancer detection and surgical intervention for all women who qualify. ♡

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Cancer Survivors Day

Sunday, June 1, 2008
CMH Cancer Resource Center
184 North Brent Street, Ventura
1:00 p.m.

For more information or to RSVP:
805/652-5459 or visit cmhshealth.org/rsvp

OVCH State of the Hospital Address

Thursday, June 12, 2008
St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Ojai
Refreshments: 4:45 p.m., Presentation: 5:00 p.m.
For more information or to RSVP:
805/640-2355 or visit cmhshealth.org/rsvp

NICU Golf Tournament

Friday, July 25, 2008
Sterling Hills, Camarillo
Benefits the CMH Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
For more information:
805/667-2881 or visit nicugolf.com

Benefactors’ Ball

Saturday, September 20, 2008
Ventura Beach Marriott, 6:00 p.m.
Proceeds benefit CMH through the
Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation.
For more information: 805/667-2881
or email foundation@cmhhospital.org

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Battling Cancer



with

“hart” & Co

Louise Hart’s nightmare began in early summer 2005 while enjoying lunch with her husband in their Solimar Beach home on a lovely Saturday.

“All of the sudden I had a sharp pain from my jaw to my ear,” Louise recalls. “I said, ‘Ooh, that hurts.’ I honestly thought it was just a bad earache.”

She was only half right: it was bad. Cancer. Specifically, squamous cell carcinoma – a malignancy near the larynx (throat box) – which Dr. Arthur Peters, an otolaryngologist at Community Memorial Hospital, diagnosed the following week by a biopsy.

“It was startling,” says Dr. William (Bill) Hart, Louise’s husband of 56 years.

“Shocking,” echoes Louise, whose weight during the ensuing ordeal dropped below 90 pounds. “I did not expect to get a diagnosis of cancer. I had no other pain symptoms.”

Adding to the severity of the news was the similarity of it: A decade earlier, the couple’s

only child, Karen, learned that what she thought was a pulled thigh muscle was in fact a rare bone cancer – fibrosarcoma – of the femur. After multiple therapies of radiation and chemotherapy, Karen lost her courageous three-year battle at age 39.

“Her [diagnosis] hit me harder than my own,” Louise shares. “Emotionally it’s so much more difficult going through this with your child. It’s out of life’s proper sequence.”

In addition, Bill had serious health issues last year. He underwent surgery for malignant melanoma. Then, a routine colonoscopy revealed colon cancer. A colon resection was successful. Louise scoffs at the notion of asking, “Why us?” or “Why me?”

“Heavens no!” says Louise, daughter of a Lutheran minister. “Why me? is a waste of time and energy. My attitude was to get a game plan from my doctors and march on.”

The first marching orders from Dr. Peters were to go to UCLA Medical Center for a

consultation with Dr. Elliot Abemayor, Chief of Head and Neck Surgery.

“We were very fearful about the proximity of the cancer to her voice box,” explains Dr. Hart, a longtime cardiologist at CMH who is now retired; he also taught cardiology at UCLA for 23 years. Dr. Abemayor determined that Louise’s larynx did not have to be removed, a single ray of sunshine among the storm clouds because it meant her voice might be saved.

Dr. Abemayor recommended radiation followed by chemotherapy. When Dr. Hart inquired if the best course of action, given the rare form and difficult location of the cancer, would be to receive the therapies at renowned UCLA Medical Center rather than at Community Memorial Hospital, Dr. Abemayor posed his own question: Who would you have doing the radiation there?

“Dr. Tom Fogel,” answered Bill.

We refer patients to him, explained Dr. Abemayor. There’s no need for Louise to come

here, she'll get equally expert care at CMH.

Because of the precision required, Louise needed to wear a custom-made mesh mask which was then bolted to the table in order to keep her head perfectly still for the entire 35-minute duration of each radiation session – thirty-five sessions in all over the ensuing seven weeks. To ensure a tight fit with zero wiggle room, Louise's waist-length hair needed to be cut off before the mask was formed. As evidence of the snugness, the mask has lipstick stains from pressing down on her mouth.

"It was quite confining, but I can't complain," allows Louise. "I was fortunate not to have too much trouble at all."

Actually, she had a couple of major side effects that surely merited complaint: the radiation affected her salivary glands, reducing her saliva and making swallowing difficult. Radiation therapy of the head and neck can also be hard on the teeth. In addition, she lost her voice for more than six months.

"We tend to take speech and ease of communication for granted," Bill offers.

holds when you get cancer," Louise shares, tears coming as she continues. "We lost our dear Karen [to cancer in 1997], so I did not have a child to be concerned about."

Louise, sitting on a couch in her living room, pauses. She looks at the surrounding pictures of her late daughter and of Karen's now-teenaged daughter, Kirsten. Then Louise looks over at her husband, gathers her composure, and resumes: "I had Bill by my side and I just tried to take each day as it came. There's not much point in not having a great outlook, now is there? That doesn't help you or the people around you."

Gradually, Louise regained her energy; her voice grew stronger; her hair grew back. After nearly two years, a state-of-the-art PET Scan at CMH found no evidence of abnormality or recurrence, and she was given the best news possible. "I was cured," Louise says.

The rainbow didn't last long. Out to dinner with friends on April 21, 2007, to celebrate Bill's 77th birthday, Louise once again suddenly found herself unable to swallow, though there was no pain. Once again, cancer. This time in the up-

"I got along fine," she says. "I'm just happy I didn't lose my voice this time."

In truth, Louise's voice had never fully returned. She can no longer sing. This is a great loss for someone who grew up singing in the church choir and once sang the national anthem solo at a Los Angeles Rams game in the Coliseum. Yet, as Bill points out with deep admiration, "You'll never hear her complain. I never have. Not once."

Because scar tissue from the second course of radiation treatments had closed her throat almost completely, Dr. Stephen Covington, a gastroenterologist at CMH, performed a series of 12 esophageal dilation surgeries. Simply put, he stretched the diameter of her esophagus approximately 3 millimeters every couple of weeks.

"I can eat again," Louise says happily. "I eat like a baby: tiny, tiny bites."

Louise is getting her strength and energy back. She is anxious to return soon to her volunteer duties as a "Pink Lady" at CMH, which she has done since joining the Auxiliary six months after it was formed in 1963.

Asked for advice she would offer anyone who has received a cancer diagnosis, Louise Hart replies: "I think I would just say to remain positive and tell yourself, 'I can do this!'" "That's her viewpoint in life," Bill Hart shares. "She has epitomized that attitude through all of this. Her attitude is, 'Here we go, let's march on!'"

She's one tough lady."

Indeed, this "Pink Lady," she is fierce. ▼

“Remain positive and tell yourself, I can do this!”

courage

"Until we lose it," adds Louise, who carried a pen and pad and wrote notes from late July until her voice began to softly return early in 2006.

Adding to the tribulations, because she had reduced saliva and difficulty swallowing, Louise had to undergo surgery to have a gastric feeding tube inserted into her stomach through her abdomen. Dr. Hart fed his wife via the G-tube about every two waking hours to supply the necessary nourishment to carry on her battle. The "G-tube" remained for nearly six months before being removed on Christmas Eve.

Meanwhile, after completing the full course of radiation under Dr. Fogel's guidance, Louise underwent chemotherapy under the expert care of Dr. Lynn Kong, an oncologist at CMH. The weekly chemotherapy regiment consisted of two half-day sessions and five 3-hour sessions. Through it all, Louise remained a portrait of heart, courage and optimism.

"Of course you wonder what the future

per esophagus, about eight inches below the previous occurrence. This new tumor was not a metastasis (spreading of the first) but an uncommon second "primary" squamous cell carcinoma.

"My reaction was, 'Well, it happened again, let's march on again,'" Louise shares. "This time I knew what to expect."

"Dr. Fogel and Dr. Kong worked hand-in-hand throughout," notes Dr. Hart. "They have a great collaboration and cooperation in caring for a patient."

Louise again had surgery to put in a gastric feeding tube; again underwent chemotherapy (10 sessions); and again endured wearing the tight mesh mask bolted to the table for thirty-five confining sessions of radiation, albeit this time improved technology shortened each treatment to 15 minutes.

And, once again, Louise refused to complain or ask "Why me?"

CARING Spiritual

On January 28, 2008, over 60 clergy members from neighboring faith communities throughout Ventura and Ojai gathered for the first Visiting Clergy Orientation held by the Community Memorial Health System. Reverend Curtis Hotchkiss, Manager of Spiritual Care Services was joined by the Health System's President & CEO, Gary Wilde, and Vice Presidents from Operations, Marketing, Human Resources and Nursing to present a community-wide collaboration that addresses the spiritual needs of patients. The program, which began last year, establishes a Spiritual Care Services department that provides a holistic approach to patient care and interfaces with the surrounding faith community.

"We want to recognize that spiritual care is important to the healing process," says Reverend Hotchkiss, who is the first chaplain at CMHS. "It's not just about religion," he continues. "It's about what brings meaning to a person's faith, beliefs and practices."

Currently, clergy from a variety of faith communities routinely visit patients from their individual congregations at CMH and OVCH. With over 700 visits to the hospitals by clergy each month, administrators recognized the need for expanded services that provide direct communication by a chaplain with patients and family members in need of counseling, emotional and bereavement support. Chaplains are clinical pastors trained to work with patients in the hospital. They have always been available at faith-based institutions and are becoming more prevalent in all healthcare settings. As the external trend of greater cultural and religious diversity increases among patients and staff, the need for emotional and spiritual care will be met by a well-trained and caring team that connects with the community and provides a faith element within the hospital.

Reverend Hotchkiss, who joined CMHS in August of last year, was ordained in 1990 and holds a master's degree in theology. His career of caring includes serving his community as minister of the New Life Ministries Church in Oxnard. Previously he was a staff chaplain at St. John's Hospital. He also developed local outreach ministries that serve

the homeless and underprivileged children. In addition, he has maintained a volunteer ministry at the Ventura County Rescue Mission for over 20 years. During his residency at Arcadia Methodist Hospital, he completed a year-long Clinical Pastoral Education where he developed a passion for working with patients in the hospital setting.

Reverend Hotchkiss currently manages assessments and counsels over 70 patients and family members weekly with critical interventions of around 15 patients per week. Many of these patients are in ICU, CCU or have become disconnected with their faith base. Honoring the diversity and health situation of the individual patient with respect and dignity is his main goal. "Whether they're from the East Coast, have fought in the war or have 10 grandchildren. I enjoy meeting with the patients and listening to their stories," explains Reverend Hotchkiss. "This Health System cares about its patients and our community. We want the community to know how much we appreciate their support."

As the department grows, Reverend Hotchkiss hopes to develop a diverse volunteer clergy team that will help him reach the Health System's goals to further solidify the relationship between CMHS, its patients, families and surrounding faith communities. ▼



*Community
Memorial Health
System Welcomes
Reverend Curtis
Hotchkiss*



New Center for Family Health Facility Offers Expanded Healthcare Services in Ventura

The Telephone Road Center for Family Health has relocated to 120 North Ashwood Avenue in Ventura. The new Center began accepting patients on Monday, March 17.

With the addition of new physicians and a larger facility, the Center for Family Health on Ashwood will offer improved services through expanded family practice and obstetrics/gynecology services, internal medicine, veterans primary care and podiatry as well as pediatric consultative services in pulmonary and infectious disease. Other services available include free pregnancy testing and an industrial health program.

Office hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For information please call 805/643-1871. ▼



COMMUNITY MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

Community Memorial Hospital **appreciates** the many **generous** gifts from our friends. Contributions to the Foundation benefit our community in many ways. We **gratefully** acknowledge the following **contributions** received between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007.

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Mary McCormick
Gael Topping
George Berg

We apologize for any omissions or misspellings.

11TH ANNUAL NICU GOLF TOURNAMENT

July 25, 2008

Sterling Hills Country Club

Join us for the 11th Annual Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation NICU Golf Tournament. Proceeds benefit Community Memorial Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Funds raised are used to offset the cost of the latest in equipment technology with the sole purpose of saving the lives of premature infants.

Sponsorships Available



For sponsorship information and registration visit

www.nicugolf.com

or call 805/667-2881

Get your entry in early! Last 6 years sold out! Field limited to 144.



COMMUNITY MEMORIAL
HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

Cancer Resource Center



Opens

A cancer diagnosis can oftentimes be devastating to individuals and their loved ones. Fear, anxiety – even understanding cancer terminology and procedures – can be overwhelming.

CMH has long been committed to assisting our cancer patients from diagnosis and treatment through recovery. CMH is extremely proud to announce the opening of the Cancer Resource Center, which will enhance the level of services we provide.

“Opening the resource center has been a goal for some time,” noted Cancer Program Manager Kathleen Horton. “Everyone is thrilled that we are here. Now people have a place to go locally to get the information they need.”

The free-standing resource center is conveniently located directly across the main entrance of CMH next to the physicians’ parking lot in a newly renovated home. Decorated in warm earth-tone colors, the center features comfortable furniture, fully functioning kitchen, a library of resources and a computer station.

“It’s the complete opposite of a clinical environment. The center has a very homey atmosphere,” Horton added.

Moreover, the center is staffed by a dedicated group of caring and trained individuals who can assist patients and offer resources and guidance on a variety of services and information specific to their needs.

The center has also partnered with The Wellness Community based in Westlake Village. The group has an office in the center to provide access and information to patients on the west end of the county.

“We’ve partnered with as many people as possible to give as much support as we can to our cancer patients,” Horton said, adding that the center has put

together a comprehensive cancer information packet with literature from the American Cancer Society, Cancer Care and other agencies.

A number of local physicians have also been instrumental in expanding the CMH cancer program.

“We’re thrilled with the opening of the Cancer Resource Center. It’s an all-inclusive facility that offers a wide range of assistance for our patients,” Dr. Lynn Kong, CMH Cancer Committee Chair, noted.

“Having information and services easily

available for our patients is critical to the treatment and recovery process,” Dr. Thomas Fogel, Cancer Liaison Physician, explained. “Moreover, partnering with The Wellness Community is truly an added asset to the Cancer Resource Center.”

Although the center is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, a number of support groups currently hold their meetings at the center at different times throughout the day.

“We hold support groups in conjunction with The Wellness Community and the American Cancer Society, and we are working with The Wellness Community to begin providing additional groups, including support groups for Spanish-speaking individuals, children and caregivers,” Horton explained.

In 2006, CMH formally launched its accredited cancer program. This summer, the program will be surveyed by the American College of Surgeons.

“A certification by the college is significant because it means that our program is meeting or exceeding the highest requirements,” she noted.

Once the program is certified, it will be surveyed every three years. “The survey looks at research, quality control, support groups, our outreach efforts – a variety of things. This ensures that we continually meet the most stringent requirements for all cancers and all ages.”

For more information about the Cancer Resource Center, please call 805/652-5459. ▼

It’s an all-inclusive facility that offers a wide range of assistance for our patients.



Attacking Cancer with a Powerful Dose of Teamwork

An Interview with Dr. Thomas Fogel and Dr. Lynn Kong

"It takes ten hands," legendary basketball coach John Wooden used to emphasize to his players, "to put the ball in the basket." To successfully treat cancer requires similar teamwork involving many physicians' hands.

"A team approach really is required," says Dr. Lynn Kong, a medical oncologist at Community Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Tom Fogel, a radiation oncologist at CMH, wholeheartedly agrees, pointing out: "It's an uncommon situation today where you have a single physician taking care of a single patient. Treating the disease requires a multidisciplinary approach where multiple specialists, and sub-specialists, share their knowledge and work together. This collaboration and teamwork is invaluable."

"This exchange of ideas," Dr. Kong adds, "allows us to provide the most advanced care available."

This advanced care may include surgery, radiation or chemotherapy; any combination; or even all three.

"Sometimes it is best for a patient to have surgery first, sometimes surgery last, sometimes no surgery at all," explains Dr. Kong. "Sometimes a patient is better served with chemotherapy or with radiation. Sometimes it's best to have concurrent chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Each individual case is different."

Deciding how each patient is best served requires a continuous dose of collaboration, both among specialists on staff at CMH and also experts throughout the larger medical community.

"Our weekly Tumor Board (Cancer Conference) is very helpful at getting viewpoints from surgery, radiation and oncology," notes Dr. Kong. "These meetings give us an opportunity to learn about advances in all these fields that might be helpful in a particular case."

When a case is so rare that physicians at CMH have little combined experience dealing with it, the exchange of knowledge goes a long distance.

"We also make liberal use of consulting with 'super specialists,'" adds Dr. Fogel. "We can pick up the phone and get in

touch with anyone, anywhere. When we have something relatively rare we will reach out to someone who has seen it a couple times, and with someone else who has seen it a few times, and all this knowledge then funnels down to help our patient."

The teamwork doesn't stop after one phone call to another hospital or one meeting at CMH.

"We touch base with one another all along the way," says Dr. Kong, with Dr. Fogel seamlessly adding: "The collaboration is a dynamic process."

"Deciding how each patient is best served requires a continuous dose of collaboration, both among specialists on staff at CMH and also experts throughout the larger medical community."

"There's no cookbook, no recipe. Each case is unique," Dr. Fogel continues. "We're constantly interacting, constantly taking a step back to look and evaluate and adjust. We look at the same problems from different angles, put our heads together, discuss with our partners and surgical colleagues. Two heads are better than one – and eight heads better than two."

The goal of this extensive team approach is

not just to improve the success rate of treatment, but also diminish complications and side effects while maximizing quality of life issues.

How is a “cancer team” assembled? Very often a patient’s primary physician makes a recommendation of a specialist – surgeon or oncologist – to see. This specialist may in turn recommend adding other specialists. Slowly, the “team” grows as needed.

There is one more important person on a “cancer team”: The patient.

“I tell my patients we can’t do this without you,” Dr. Fogel says. “I tell each patient you’re in charge of three things: Mood and attitude, nutrition, and exercise.”

Patients play an active role, Drs. Fogel and Kong agree, in the ultimate course of treatment that will be followed. While physicians can explain the prescribed standard of care, and the risks and benefits of different options, each patient is an individual.

“Some will not want to be very aggressive while others will be more comfortable with a higher degree of risk,” Dr. Kong explains. “So each treatment is tailored to each individual patient.”

“More screening means finding cancer at an earlier stage, and earlier detection improves the percentages for a successful outcome.”

Yet another valuable “member” of a cancer team is technology.

“Medical technology has just exploded,” explains Dr. Fogel. “We’re very computer driven (in radiation oncology), and as speed and memory have increased, our abilities to set up patients in an exact manner and generate a three-dimensional model of a person with a remarkable degree of accuracy is incredible.”

Dr. Fogel compares these advances in imaging to the difference between black-and-white photography in the ’50s and digital photography today.

Dr. Kong agrees, noting: “Technology is improving all the time. Medications are another

example. We have targeted therapies – drugs that target the tumor. This helps to minimize side-effects. In the last 10-15 years, anti-nausea medications have improved and we have less-toxic chemotherapy. As a result, people are doing much better with chemotherapy – they tolerate it better and finish treatment, and that translates into better success.”

The combined result of these advances in state-of-the-art equipment, medications, and surgical techniques, Dr. Fogel explains, “is a treatment that in the past was very, very difficult on a patient, we can now make it less hard and more successful.”

“Statistically, you look at the data and most people (with cancer) are doing much better with treatments and living longer,” Kong interjects. “I think one more important aspect is that we are also seeing more awareness about the importance of screening. More screening means finding cancer at an earlier stage, and earlier detection improves the percentages for a successful outcome.”

And a team of dedicated specialists working hand-in-hand together further improves those percentages. ▼

INTERDISCIPLINARY CANCER CONFERENCE

Every Wednesday at noon, twenty or more radiologists, medical and radiation oncologists, surgeons, pathologists and other physicians at Community Memorial Hospital leave their offices, treatment areas and operating rooms to meet in CMH’s eighth floor conference room. No, they are not taking a break from their shared commitment to fighting cancer: they are sharing their expertise and knowledge to battle the disease as effectively as possible.

“I can’t overemphasize how important and valuable this is,” Dr. Irwin Grossman, a radiologist at Grossman Imaging Centers (partner of Community Memorial Health System), said after a recent Interdisciplinary Cancer Conference, also commonly referred to as the “Tumor Board.”

Dr. James Woodburn III, a general surgeon, agrees: “I won’t schedule surgery or patient visits in the office on Wednesdays at noon. And I’m not alone. This Tumor Board is that vital; it helps us give our patients the best care for the best outcome.”

Dr. Woodburn emphasized “our” patients for good reason: no matter who the primary physician is, when a patient’s case is presented at the Tumor Board, he or she suddenly has the entire group

working together for its new shared patient.

“These are not usual cases,” explains Dr. Grossman. “We are looking at unusual cases that really benefit from having a wide range of experience and viewpoints. Instead of being treated by one physician, a patient is in effect being treated by many. Not only do we have so many different specialists on the Tumor Board, we have multiple radiologists, multiple oncologists, multiple surgeons, radiologists and pathologists. So you really get a wide range of knowledge and experience, even within a discipline, and that is really beneficial.”

The Interdisciplinary Cancer Conference has been in existence in different forms at CMH since the mid-1970s, but in 2006 gained a new emphasis and formal focus. Today, typically, four or five new cancer cases (and follow-up cases in progress) are presented during the ninety-minute meeting.

“We’ve done as many as eight cases in one meeting,” says Kathleen Horton, CMH’s Cancer Program Manager. “If a case needs to be seen, we do it.” Furthermore, members routinely confer with each other between weekly Tumor Board meetings as warranted. All physicians on staff at CMH can attend and have a case discussed.

The physicians look at pathology biopsy slides, mammograms, ultrasounds, MRIs. Then the pros and cons of different therapies are discussed in a spirited open forum. Individual patients are never identified, and confidentiality is always maintained.

“It helps us give our patients the best care for the best outcome.”

“This is a tool to further enhance patient care,” explains Dr. Woodburn. “For example, as a surgeon I can’t keep up with all the advances in oncology or radiation – and other fields can’t know all the latest surgical techniques. But working together in an interdisciplinary effort, we all learn from each other – and most important, together we give the cancer patient the best of all these medical advancements.”

“This gives a patient not only a second opinion, but in fact a third, fourth and fifth opinion on what should be done,” says Dr. Grossman. “This is appreciated by the patients. The docs appreciate it, too. Really, everyone benefits.” ▼

Fit Kids in Ojai



Overcoming Childhood Obesity

grant applications and funded four different programs.

The launch has been impressive. Currently, four Fit Kids programs are working with pre-school children to teens. On the teenage level, the Rotary donated money to the Teen Center in Oak View which is managed by the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation. The money has helped fund after-school programs focusing on athletics and fitness, as well as healthy eating.

"Many thanks to the Foundation and the Rotary," Ashley Lowe from the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation said. "Because of the grant, the Oak View Teen Center has been able to make a direct impact on the childhood obesity epidemic in Ventura County by providing health education programming to Oak View youth."

Believing that healthy eating can be taught from a very early age, part of the Foundation grant was used to fund the addition of a program at the Ojai chapter of Smart Start.

"It consists of nutritional information and workshops for parents, in addition to a fitness program for preschoolers. This is where we may have the most impact, teaching healthy eating, conditioning and fitness to 4, 5 and 6 year-olds," Dr. Pops noted.

"The money was a significant gift to our program, and thanks to the donation it's alive and well," Smart Start founder Dana Huffman

proudly remarked, adding that the money was used to hire a physical education teacher who visits each of their centers.

"Combining nutritional information with physical activity is a wonderful interactive way to help prevent some serious healthcare issues down the road. The support from the Rotary and the Foundation has made a difference in the lives of the children and the families in our programs," she added.

At Topa Topa Elementary School, the children are flocking to an after-school athletics program that was initiated when the grant money helped fund an additional part-time physical education teacher at the school.

And food is the focus at Meiners Oaks Elementary School where the Rotary partnered with Food For Thought, an Ojai non-profit group that lobbies for healthy school lunches.

"Our garden has never looked better," gushed Principal Marty Babayco.

"Each class has their own plot and some of the money was spent on fencing and tools. With the help from volunteers from Food For Thought, the kids have learned how to grow, pick, clean and eat the food from their garden."

Above the science of growing food and instilling healthy eating habits, Babayco said Meiners Oaks students are learning that food is also a commodity. The children recently grew mint

F Childhood obesity is a national epidemic that is creating long term, devastating health consequences for our children. Recognizing the need to take immediate action on the local level, Community Memorial Health System granted \$20,000 to the Rotary Club of Ojai to help launch their program, Fit Kids.

With the CMHS grant, and additional proceeds raised at last November's Youth Fest, the Rotary Club was able to reach out to non-profit organizations in the community who work with children.

"We announced that we were interested in funding different projects that were geared to childhood obesity and helping children," Dr. Martin Pops, current President of the Rotary Club of Ojai and a member of the CMHS Board of Trustees, explained. The Rotary's Community Service Committee then reviewed

and sold it for the first time at the local farmers market. Proceeds from the sale of Meiners Oaks Mint went back to the school.

"The grant made it possible for us to have a very robust, healthy garden. The kids are eating the things they grow, they're learning about healthy eating, and how food contributes to the overall economy," the proud principal added.

"We helped them create a vegetable garden and that feeds into the salad bar at the school," Dr. Pops explained. "We are really helping the children get educated about eating fruits and vegetables and getting them away from junk food."

Nationally, the rate of overweight children ages 6 to 11 has more than doubled in the last 24 years. Among adolescents ages 12 to 19, the rate has more than tripled. Obesity leads to a variety of health issues including heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

Moreover, if the daunting statistics remain the same and health officials are correct, this generation could be the first in history not to outlive their parents.

Yet, while the government funded nearly \$1 billion last year to help combat the pandemic, they admittedly have no way of measuring whether the funding is working.

Dr. Pops, a retired UCLA faculty internist and gastroenterologist, felt he could make a personal difference. "I thought it would be great to get involved with childhood obesity and diabetes – something very near to my heart."

"There are a number of initiatives occurring locally and nationally. It's a huge topic. But how can we be affective? How can we measure our outcome? This is an area we will be looking into," he noted.

Success may come from a long-term commitment. "One criteria we had during the funding process was a guarantee from the groups that they would keep the programs running for three years," Dr. Pops noted. "However, once these programs really get going our hope is they won't have to rely on one hundred percent funding from the Rotary and CMHS."

But, by all measures the programs are extremely popular. So much so, the Rotary is looking at ways to expand their efforts and find additional funding.

"The club is very enthusiastic and many Rotarians are very dedicated to this project. But it's just a start. The idea is that you really have to get this out in front of the population," he added.

One way in which the community can partner with the Rotary Club of Ojai is to plan on attending the 2008 Youth Fest. This year's event will be held November 2nd at Libby Park. The festival includes a wide variety of activities focusing on health and fitness. Last year, the event raised \$10,000 for the Fit Kids program. ▽

Record Breaking Donations From Auxiliary

On February 8th the unprecedented amount of \$165,000 was presented to CMH by the hospital's Auxiliary at the 43rd annual business meeting and awards luncheon. The luncheon was held in Ventura at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel ballroom which was decorated by activities committee co-chairs Mary Harrison and Ann Warnagieris and their team of volunteers. The Auxiliary has contributed over \$2 million since its inception in 1962, and has grown to a combined membership of 395 adult and Junior Volunteers. These dedicated members have contributed 38,568 hours of service in 2007 alone. With 160 members in attendance at the patriotic-themed luncheon, individual awards were given out to many outstanding volunteers including Judy Miller and Judy Macgregor who served 15,000 hours each. Genevieve Basso, Madalynne Tilly and Helen Webb were recognized for a remarkable 40 years of service each, and Mary Lunny and LaVonne Askay were recognized for 30 years of service each. Volunteers range from teenagers to a vibrant 90 plus years.

The Junior Volunteer Auxiliary, formed in 1966 and currently directed by advisors Edie Marshall, Judy Miller and Chuck Marshall devoted 6,419 volunteer hours by 69 members in 2007. Over the years many of these outstanding high school students have been recipients of annual scholarships named after dedicated volunteer Maria Cavallo.

The Ojai Valley Community Hospital Auxiliary has also had an exciting year with a complete remodel of their volunteer-run gift shop. The gift shop now accepts credit cards and sells flowers, along with a variety of new gift items. They presented the hospital with a check for \$20,000 this year. The OVCH Auxiliary was established in 1962 and has 19 members. Simone Ecker has been President of the group for the past ten years.

"These are remarkable volunteers," says Trudy Cook, President of the CMH Auxiliary. "We all begin to volunteer for different reasons, like giving back something to our community, or because we've had a positive experience at CMH, or we want to learn something to



Above: (L-R) Gary Wilde, CMHS President & CEO; Katie Weldon, CMH Auxiliary Treasurer; Gary Wolfe, Chairman, Board of Trustees.
Below: (L-R) Mary Jo Garrett, OVCH Administrator; Simone Ecker, OVCH Auxiliary President; Gary Wilde CMHS President & CEO

further our careers." Trudy encourages others to become involved, have fun and develop new friendships through volunteering. There are so many opportunities to serve. Volunteers help in Maternity, Same-Day Surgery, PACU, Pharmacy, Central Dispatch, Front Desk, and as Flyers. Newborns in the NICU benefit from the talents of committee chair Rene Beauchesne who soothes the crying babies in French. He claims the infants fall asleep within minutes.

During this election year, volunteers handle patient voting for those who are unable to get to the polls. Others make souvenir birth certificates, tray favors on holidays and caps with special yarn for chemotherapy patients. Recently, the Auxiliary was asked to assist with a new security program that has yielded a successful sign-in and badge distribution operation at the reception desks.

"A day at the hospital always gives me an opportunity to help a neighbor, friend or stranger have a positive experience at CMH," says Trudy. She is hopeful that the Auxiliary membership will grow in 2008 and promises future members that "you will have an opportunity to give back to your community, work with some terrific volunteers in a supportive environment, and have purpose in your life."

For information on how to become an Auxiliary member contact CMH at 805/652-5043 or OVCH at 805/646-1401 extension 224. ▽

MENDED HEARTS

HOPE for recovery.
for a rich full life.

In the early 1950's, Dr. Dwight E. Harken, a pioneer in cardiac surgery in the Boston area, was approached by four of his cardiac patients who informed the doctor of the beneficial effects of sharing their surgical experiences while in his waiting room. Dr. Harken, recognizing the therapeutic and comforting impact of this exchange, suggested an expansion of their

group. The great success of these meetings ultimately led to the creation of Mended Hearts, Inc.

In 1953, Chapter 1 of Mended Hearts was founded in Worcester, Massachusetts with the mission to "inspire hope in heart disease patients and their families." Mended Hearts is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the American Heart Association.

The Ventura County Chapter 101 of Mended Hearts was formed in 1979 with the help of Dr. William Hart and Dr.

Siegfried Storz, CMH staff cardiologists. The support and encouragement of local cardiologists, cardiac surgeons and CMH have all played a role in the continued success of Mended Hearts Chapter 101. Community Memorial Hospital provides meeting rooms, the mailing of the chapter newsletter and invaluable cooperation for the Mended

Hearts patient visiting program.

True to its mission, Mended Hearts has established an accredited visiting program that provides people who can answer questions and offer encouragement both in and out of the hospital that may alleviate a heart patient's fears. Accredited visitors are themselves survivors of heart surgery, and their presence as healthy heart survivors, is evidence that people do survive heart disease and live a full and healthy life.

Recently, Mended Hearts has undertaken an expansion by establishing Mended Little Hearts to offer support to parents whose child has a heart defect or heart problem.

The Ventura County Mended Hearts Chapter 101 invites the public to attend their meetings held at Community Memorial Hospital on the first Tuesday of each month. The meetings take place on the 8th floor at 7:30 p.m. with a guest speaker that is guaranteed to provide helpful information and answers to any questions you might have. Visitors and interested individuals are always welcomed at our meetings, states Dick Hiser, President of the Ventura Chapter of the Mended Hearts.

It's great to be alive...and help others. ♡

COMMUNITY COMMUNITY

Every month, Community Memorial Health System offers a variety of support and informational meetings. Please verify meeting date and location with the contact person listed. Sometimes meetings may be cancelled or rescheduled.

Meetings & Support Groups at CMH

147 N. Brent St., Ventura

Amputee Support Group

6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m., 1st Wed.
Contact: Meg Larramendy
(805) 652-5341 or Kim Jensen (310) 497-7886
mlarramendy@cmhhospital.org

Bariatric Surgery Seminar

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Selected Mondays
Contact: Nancy Barber
(805) 676-9100, drbhelfer@aol.com

Bariatric Support Group

Lap Band: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., 1st Tues.
General: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., 4th Thurs.
Contact: Nancy Barber
(805) 676-9100, drbhelfer@aol.com

Better Breathers

American Lung Association
3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., 2nd Wed.
Contact: Juanita Trine
(805) 652-5346, jtrine@cmhhospital.org

Breast Cancer Support Group

1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m., Thursdays
Contact: Cancer Resource Center
(805) 652-5459, khorton@cmhhospital.org

Caregivers Support Group

3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m., 2nd Fri.
Contact: Marilyn Beebe
(805) 445-1181

Diabetes Education Program

Call for class dates.
Contact: Loquitha Rex, DNP
(805) 797-3676, loquitha@aol.com

Diabetes Update

Diabetes technology update for patients who take insulin.
Call for class dates & time.
Contact: Jacque Berg
(805) 636-3016, jacqueline.berg@medtronic.com

Diabetes & Weight Management Classes

Nutritional management classes.
5:15 p.m.-6:15 p.m., Alternating Tuesdays
Contact: Heather Gilliam, Registered Dietitian
(805) 652-5066

HICAP

Insurance Help for Seniors.
1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., 3rd Mon.
Contact: Katharine Raley
(805) 477-7310, press 4

Lymphedema Support Group

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m., 3rd Wed.
Contact: Melissa Stoen
(805) 644-9620
missyw@sbcglobal.net

Mended Hearts

American Heart Association
6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m., 1st Tues.
Contact: Dick Hiser, President
(805) 646-4636

Prevention Strategies for Heart Disease

Topics vary each month
6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Contact: Andrea Ricketts, NP
(805) 667-2818, aricketts@cmhhospital.org

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Man to Man Group / American Cancer Society
6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., 2nd Thurs.
Contact: Sandy Berg
(805) 983-7792 Ext. 21
Sandy.Berg@cancer.org

Restless Leg Syndrome

Support group & relevant seminar topics.
1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Sun., Oct. 19, 2008
Contact: Dave Hennerman
(805) 766-2035, ventura@rlsgroups.org

Stop Smoking Class

5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Wednesdays
Contact: Sandra Tovar
(805) 652-3376 or (805) 652-3231
Sandra.Tovar@ventura.org

Walking Fitness Program

9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m., every Thursday
Kimball Park, Ventura
Contact: Andrea Ricketts, NP
(805) 667-2818, aricketts@ventura.org

Weight Management Classes

Overcoming barriers to weight management.
5:15 p.m.-6:15 p.m., alternating Tuesdays
Contact: Heather Gilliam, Registered Dietitian
(805) 652-5066

Meetings & Support Groups at OVCH

1306 Maricopa Hwy., Ojai

Stop Smoking Class

Call for class dates.
5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
Contact Erika Mendez (805) 640-2203

Community Memorial Hospital of San Buenaventura
147 N. Brent St.
Ventura, CA 93003

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