



The Vellore Advocate

NEWSLETTER OF THE VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE BOARD (U.S.A.), INC.

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“Not to be Ministered Unto, But to Minister”

Fall 2008

CMC Honored by Memphis Healthcare

The Methodist Healthcare Foundation, the development arm of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare of Memphis, Tennessee, has given a 2008 Living Award to CMC Vellore. Each year, the Methodist Living Awards recognize individuals or organizations who have distinguished themselves through faith-based initiatives that have had a profound impact on healthcare locally, nationally, and globally.

Speaking at the August gala awards dinner of the Memphis-based organization, Vice President Dr. Gary Gunderson said, “As an institution CMC has maintained the mission of its founder, Dr. Ida S. Scudder, to challenge its students and staff to heal and serve the needs of the whole person. CMC serves as a witness to the spirit and teachings of Christ by providing care to the highly diverse population drawn from hundreds of Indian cultures and all major religions.

“What inspires me most is CMC’s capacity to ‘get small’ and to partner with community level assets and networks. Last December, visiting the Mental Health Department in Vellore, I had the opportunity to see an extraordinary example of a great institution coming alongside a small network of volunteers working with a residential home for twenty-five mentally ill men drawn from the streets. (See story on page 2.) It is difficult to overstate the nobility of the volunteers or the brilliance of CMC faculty in finding a way to work alongside them. Brilliance without partnership hangs in the air, out of reach of those in need. Nobility without partnership lacks the tools of clinical excellence to accomplish the goals

of compassion. I am inspired by CMC’s capacity to align both.”

CMC and Vellore Board Establish Research Endowments

In meetings and discussions extending from last winter to this September, CMC and the Vellore CMC Board have reached an agreement to build endowment funds for research chairs throughout CMC. “This will be a joint effort, involving fund raising activities in India as well as the United States,” explains Board chair, Anish Mathai.

Research has become a hot topic in Vellore in recent years, as CMC has re-emerged as an institutional home for scientific investigations benefiting the people of India. This re-emergence is the legacy of former generations of cutting-edge doctors/scientists such as Drs. Paul Brand (orthopedic/hand surgery), Jacob John (virology) and V. I. Mathan (gastroenterology).

The fund raising campaign has been launched with founding commitments from both CMC and the Vellore Board. CMC has created three permanently funded all-institution research chairs in the names of Ida S. Scudder, Hilda Lazarus and Jacob Chandy. The Board, for its part, has committed to using existing endowments to support at least one departmental chair and to seed campaigns to create several more. Together, they have set a goal of creating a total of ten chairs by the end of 2009 with long-range plans for many more.

Endowed chairs will allow selected CMC faculty to see fewer patients in order to free up time to pursue research interests. Chairs will be awarded on a competitive basis by a CMC faculty committee and appointments will run for periods of three



Dr. Jacob John in Memphis accepting Living Award for CMC

Continued on page 2

New Members of the Board of Directors

Convening on September 19, the Vellore CMC Board Corporation elected four new members to three-year terms on the Board of Directors:

Dr. Sudi Devanesen, M.D. (CMC Batch of 62) will join the Board as the only Canadian member. Dr. Devanesen has practised for many years as a family physician in the Toronto area. He advocates for holistic health practices and is active in many community activities.

Dr. S. Balasubramaniam, M.D. (CMC Batch of 58-59) has been a surgeon in Southern California, practicing in South-Central Los Angeles. Expert in trauma medicine, he has worked with several health agencies in Indian cities to develop unified and modernized emergency medical response systems. He is a former president of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) and was recently honored for his volunteer work in India by the American Medical Association.

Dr. Madelon Finkel, M.D. Professor of Public Health and Director of International Education at Cornell/Weill Medical College in New York City (Dr. Ida S. Scudder's alma mater), has become a strong partner of CMC and especially of RUHSA. She has organized a cervical cancer screening project at RUHSA and arranges for Cornell/Weill medical students to do elective study at CMC.

Dr. Honorine Ward, M.D. (CMC Batch of 69), professor in the Department of Geographic Medicine and Infectious Diseases at Tufts University School of Medicine, has been instrumental in building a strong research partnership with CMC. Among many other positive achievements, the partnership has led this year to major grants for distance education and gastrointestinal research at CMC.

CMC Helps India's Street People

The Department of Psychiatry has been supporting the work of the Home for Psychosocial Rehabilitation of the Homeless Mentally Ill, run by Udhavum Ullangal, an NGO in Tirupattur, about an hour and a half drive from Vellore, for over a year. The department has provided psychiatric services for the 25 (sometimes more) patients of the home, who have found shelter there after mental illness and its consequences had forced them on to the streets. While at the home, they are involved in making handicrafts

that are marketed and the profits deposited in their individual bank accounts.

The patients also help keep the town clean, a notable activity for those who lived amidst the squalor of the streets earlier. Once their psychiatric condition has stabilized, efforts are made to contact family members to see if the residents could return to their homes, though this has not often borne success. Recently, however, one resident who had been missing from his home for over four years was reunited with his family, following efforts made by the staff of the rehabilitation home. His family had given him up for dead and had performed the last rites and had kept his picture garlanded. They were overjoyed to know he was alive and mentally well and are in the process of taking him back.

Dr. Jacob John is now trying to raise funds to establish a similar institution in Vellore to ease the burden on the Tirupattur facility and bring help to the mentally ill in and around Vellore town.

Research at CMC

(continued from page 1)

to five years. In the long run, CMC's tradition of excellence in medical education and practice can only be maintained if research is an essential activity of the faculty.



In June, Dr. Conelius Walter cut the ribbon for the new Centre for Stem Cell Research with Dr. Suranjan Bhattacharji and Ms. Sangeetha Harindaran, a junior research fellow at the Centre, looking on.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Partners with CMC

The Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) Employee Giving Program is launching a new initiative to provide hepatitis B vaccinations to children in Assam, a remote impoverished area of India. Young children who become infected with the virus are more likely to develop chronic infections. The World Health

Organization recommends that all children under the age of 18 receive the vaccination.

Working with the Christian Medical College, Vellore and the Vellore Board, BMS has earmarked employee donations to provide hepatitis B vaccines to children who would not otherwise have access to this important prevention intervention. CMC trained medical personnel, in partnership with the Baptist Christian Hospital in Tezpur, will purchase the vaccine locally and administer it free of charge. This method will reduce the cost of immunizing the children to about \$2 per child. Dr. George M. Chandy, at CMC, was a major mover in initiating the program.

The Vellore Board will administer the contributions from the US side. The BMS organization is providing a dollar for dollar match to employee donations.

U.S. Institutions Support CMC Distance Education Effort

An anonymous U.S. foundation has announced a grant of \$168,000 to support a distance education initiative at CMC Vellore. In cooperation with faculty members of Tufts University School of Medicine, Dr. Anand Zachariah, Vice Principal of CMC, is planning to use the funds to expand electronic resources for medical education in mission hospitals and at CMC.

Dr. Zachariah explains: "This is really a pilot program to test the value of expanding communication and data resources both here at CMC and in a small group of mission hospitals. Depending on our success, this effort can be extended in the future to a large number of institutions."

The project will also benefit clinical practice in outlying hospitals through facilitating instant communication with CMC specialists. Preliminary experiments with hand-held communication devices have shown the value of on-line consultations in resolving problems in treatment of complex conditions.

Tufts University School of Medicine, a long time partner of CMC in research endeavors, will share its innovative software, the Tufts University

Sciences Knowledge base, TUSK, which provides knowledge and course management and e-learning tools. The anonymous grant will pay for hardware and additional staff at CMC and in outlying hospitals.



In a recent interview, Dr. Zachariah noted that mission hospitals can play a valuable role in providing advanced training to young people who have acquired the basic medical degree but who are shut out of post-graduate training. "India graduates 25,000 people with the basic MBBS degree every year," commented Dr. Zachariah. "At

present, only 5,000 of those can find places in post-grad training courses, and we lose another 5,000 who further their education outside India. Mission hospitals can offer advanced training through a strong connection with CMC as a central source of expertise and data."

CMC leaders hope that enriched educational opportunities in mission hospitals will be an incentive for young doctors to stay in those facilities rather than moving to urban areas or foreign countries.

The grant-funded project will also benefit medical students at CMC through creating a large electronic data base of medical information, much of it generated locally. For example, the well-known anatomical drawings of Dr. Harshe, a retired CMC faculty member, will be digitized to increase their usefulness to students, faculty and researchers at CMC and elsewhere.

VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE BOARD (USA), INC.

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The mission of the Vellore Christian Medical College Board (USA), Inc., in response to the healing ministry of Christ and inspired by the legacy of Dr. Ida S. Scudder, is to provide a focus for excellence and integrity through the support of the wide range of programs of the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, India.

Memorial and Honorarium - July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

We thank our friends who gave gifts in memory or in honor of family and friends in recognition of their lives and works. The contributions for support of CMC Vellore are living memorials enabling student education and quality health care to those in need.

In Memoriam

July 1, 2007- June 30, 2008

Tom & Lucy Ansalone
Philip Ansalone
Tommy Ansalone
Philip Ansalone
Lena Boggiano
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Alice Gulker
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Linda Pierce Knutson
Susan & John Mathew
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Herbert & Zola Gass
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Lena Boggiano
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Dr. & Mrs. George D. Troyer
Dana O. Troyer
Saramma Zachariah
Susan Zachariah

In Honor Of

July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

Philip Ansalone
Oladiwura Okesola
Dorothy Hilmer Armanino
Dr. & Mrs. Louis P. Armanino
Suranjan Bhattacharji
Jon Closson
Lena Boggiano
Oladiwura Okesola
Margaret Brand
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Mary Jacobs
Arjun & Renu Mohandas
Charles Jameson
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