

Chez nous

MCH EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

March 11, 2010

News

MCH Surgical Fellow heads to Kenya

By Lisa Dutton

In March, when many head south for spring break, Dr. Robert Baird will also board an airplane, but he won't be heading to a fancy beachfront resort; he'll be heading to Kijabe, Kenya for a month. He won't get much R & R either, but he will get a lot of O.R.... time that is.

Dr. Baird is the MCH's Pediatric Surgical Chief Fellow. Part of his two-year fellowship curriculum includes the option of completing a four-week stint in the BethanyKids Pediatric Surgery Unit of Kijabe Hospital under the supervision of Canadian surgeon and missionary Dr. Dan Poenaru. This opportunity is unique to the MCH. It was the vision of Dr. Sherif Emil, Director of the Division of Pediatric General Surgery, who wanted to make the MCH program unique among the 40 training programs in North America, by incorporating 3rd world training into its fellowship.

Far from viewing this training as a burden, Dr. Baird says he is looking forward to the opportunity which will take him outside his comfort zone. "I expect to learn a lot. It will be one heck of a culture shock. I'll see a different way of doing surgery under extremely difficult conditions," he says.



The type of surgeries will be in some ways similar, in other ways very dissimilar, to the work Dr. Baird is doing at the MCH. He'll be assisting Dr. Poenaru during surgeries to correct congenital abnormalities such as anorectal malformations, congenital diaphragmatic hernia and esophageal atresia. There will also be surgery on children with solid cancerous tumours. However, he will be working in an environment of severely restricted resources, one where children often present with very advanced stages of their disease. He will also perform many procedures, such as urologic and neurosurgical operations,

not traditionally performed by a pediatric surgical trainee in North America.

"I expect the big difference to be the resources at our disposal such as supplies and equipment. While the diseases we treat will be the same, the approach to care will be very different," he says.

Another major difference between the two countries is that Canada has a universal health care system while Kenya does not. Dr. Baird points out that in Canada, if a parent notices a small change in their child's health, they will likely seek a medical opinion. Thus diseases and health problems are diagnosed early when they are highly treatable. In Kenya, however, Dr. Baird says patients are likely to seek medical advice much later when the diseases have had a chance to advance. And many have great difficulty getting any medical care.

It actually isn't easy for a pediatric surgical fellow to leave for a month. His absence will not only have an impact on the hospital but it will also have a major impact on his family. His wife Naomi, also a physician, and their two young children, Sean and Caitlyn, will head out to Vancouver for the month where she has family.

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As for the hospital, the General Surgery team will have to step up during Dr. Baird's absence. Given that he works about 80 hours per week and participates in about 50 surgeries per month, he will be missed. However, because all the attending staff in the general surgery division felt so strongly about the importance and potential benefit

of this rotation, they were willing to put in the extra work to support the junior fellow during his absence.

The Montreal Children's Hospital has had a relationship with Dr. Poenaru and the Kijabe hospital for the last 15 years. MCH general surgeons Drs. Jean-Martin Laberge and Sherif Emil have both been to

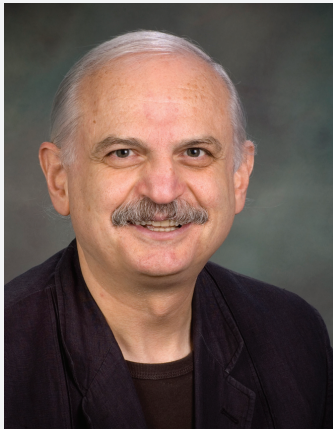
Kenya to assist Dr. Poenaru, and provide pediatric surgical services. Dr. Poenaru completed his residency at McGill, and his fellowship at Ste-Justine. He originally worked at the Kingston General Hospital in Ontario and taught at Queens University, but during the past few years, he moved his family and his practice to Kenya.

McGill discovery offers hope in diabetes

Another step on the road to a cure for diabetes may give hope to the world's 171 million diabetes sufferers, thanks to collaboration between teams from McGill University and the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF).

Diabetes is a chronic condition that occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin because of the destruction or dysfunction of small clusters of cells, known as islets of Langerhans.

However, the rest of the pancreas, which produces digestive enzymes (the exocrine system), remains intact and functioning. It is known that during embryonic development, and in all likelihood throughout life, exocrine cells can transform to become islet cells and begin secreting insulin. Finding a way to activate this transformation holds great promise in terms of improved treatments for diabetes, but the genes involved are not thoroughly understood.



A team led by Constantin Polychronakos, of McGill's Endocrine Genetics Laboratory at The Montreal Children's Hospital site of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC), used state-of-the-art technologies such as capture microarrays and highly parallel sequencing to examine a previously unstudied gene called RFX6. The team discovered mutations in this

gene and found that these mutations are the cause of a rare syndrome of neonatal diabetes involving the complete absence of islets of Langerhans.

The work is set to be published in the journal **Nature**. Collaborator Michael German, of UCSF, showed the same outcome in animals – that mice, whose RFX6 genes had been artificially disrupted, develop exactly the same syndrome as found in human neonatal diabetes cases.

Although this syndrome is an extremely rare cause of diabetes, knowledge of the gene involved may benefit all people suffering from diabetes.

"This discovery brings us closer to one day finding a cure for diabetes. Now that we know the RFX6 gene is crucial in the process of insulin production, the door is open to finding a cure through gene therapy or therapeutics that will create new islets out of cells from the rest of the pancreas," said Polychronakos. The study was funded by the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Now available online

The Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre at The Montreal Children's Hospital announces the online publication of its **2008-2009 Annual Report on Child Health Research**. Please visit the link at <http://www.thechildren.com/en/research/>. We welcome your feedback on this report as well as on the research section of the MCH website.

To read the French version of the annual report, visit <http://www.thechildren.com/fr/recherche/?sLg=1>

Alison Burch, ext. 24300

MUHC Users' Committee election results

Elections were recently held across the MUHC to elect members of the Users' Committee. The successful candidates who will represent the MCH are **Beverly Fields** and **Lisa Rosati-White**, both of whom are also members of the Montreal Children's Hospital Family Advisory Forum (FAF).

A primer on pagers...

Pagers are one of the preferred ways to communicate in the hospital. They allow us to reach each other quickly to ensure we can act without delay when needed.

Like any equipment, pagers are not perfect, although the reliability rate of this technology is higher than 99.99% in a normal environment.

In spite of all this, particularly for users whose dependence on a pager is critical, certain precautions, which are the responsibility of the users, are essential in order to avoid missing a call. The information here will help you identify the actions needed if you don't receive a call (or several calls) on your paging device.

- 1) Verify if the battery charging indicator shows a reduction in power. If yes, replace the battery immediately and run several tests to assure that it's functioning properly.
- 2) Even if the low battery indicator does not appear if you do not receive calls, change the battery. In certain cases, the battery indicator will only show when the battery is too low or in an area where coverage is limited, in which case, certain calls may not be received on the device.

Under normal circumstances, a battery in a pager can last for more than one month.

By contrast, for users with critical requirements, for those who receive a very high volume of calls, or in

situations where a pager is shared by several people and it's difficult to determine when the battery was last changed, it is preferable to change the battery every two weeks.

- 3) If the battery is new and the problem with reception of calls continues, your pager may be defective, in which case you can exchange it for another one at Rm. C-145.
- 4) Information on coverage outside MUHC buildings is available on the intranet. Please note that in the majority of Métro stations, you cannot receive calls. Coverage inside MUHC buildings is 99.999%. Aside from certain areas where walls have been constructed to prevent the transmission of waves, a signal should be received without a problem.

If you notice that a certain area of the MUHC is not covered and that calls are not appearing on your pager, it's important to report such events on the incident/accident report (AH-223), indicating the type of problem, the area where it occurred to ensure that the appropriate follow-up is done with services that might be directly involved (call centre, logistics, IS, care teams).

Resource persons to contact in case of problems:

- ▶ Managers in charge of your area
- ▶ Christiane Lalonde, Information Services support
- ▶ Nathalie Trastour, Risk Management advisor (ext. 22485)

Calling all budding artists!

The MCH Auxiliary is holding its annual Christmas card contest. This year we would like to extend participation in the contest to children of hospital employees. We are looking for original drawings of bright, colourful winter or holiday scenes. The winning entries are printed on our cards and winners receive a plaque as well as a cash prize. This would appeal to children in grades 4 to 11. Contest rules and entry forms are available from Lucette Bennett, Auxiliary Administrator (lucette.bennett@muhc.mcgill.ca, or ext. 22384). **Deadline for entries: April 30, 2010**

Become a *Chez nous* news reporter!

We are now 'hiring' MCH staff interested in writing stories for *Chez nous*. You can write about your colleagues, patients, departments, events and other happenings at the MCH. The articles should range in length from 250 to 500 words. Each freelance reporter would pledge to write one article every two months throughout the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Your articles would appear under your by-line in *Chez Nous* and potentially on the MCH website and in MCH newsletters.

If you're interested in becoming the next Christiane Amanpour, Anderson Cooper or Oprah please call Lisa Dutton, Manager of Public Relations and Communications at ext. 23991.

Her motivation: improving our patients' well-being

By Marie-Pier Lepage



Mara Ruccolo with Father Paul Geraghty of Spiritual Services



Mara Ruccolo with the MCH Social Services team, including Rosanna D'Orazio, Mathew Park, Elizabeth Carone and Kim Larocque.

When Mara Ruccolo first began her clothing drive, she never imagined it would grow to what it is today. Over the last four years, she has worked diligently to encourage companies to donate their products to the MCH Foundation. Her routine begins every spring. For months, she sorts and wraps the goods collected, which she then delivers to Social Services, just in time for the holiday period. Since her first year, Adorable Kids and Adorable Lingerie have provided fine pajamas, while Adorable Junior Too and Danawares Corp. have given quality snowsuits

and educational toys for our young patients. In 2009, Les importations de textiles Cora joined the project, providing additional pajamas as well as baptismal gowns and accessories, which are greatly appreciated by MCH Spiritual Services. "These gifts are priceless. They contribute to raising the morale of patients and, if only for a brief moment, allow parents to forget about the daily challenges that they face," says Rosanna D'Orazio, Professional Coordinator in Social Services.

Nursing Dinosaur Contest

Just send us your question and you could win a prize!

The Nursing Research Committee is on a nursing dinosaur hunt. We want to hear about nursing dinosaur practices--either clinical or administrative--from any of our six sites at the MUHC.

Please send your question to Joann Creager (fax # 48286 or joann.creager@muhc.mcgill.ca) before March 31.

For more information, go to 'Nursing Department' on the intranet, click on Research, MUHC then the Dinosaur Contest link.

Reminder

Your child could be in the spotlight!

If you'd like to share your photographic talents and maybe see your little one's smiling face on our web site (www.thechildren.com) or in the album on our official MCH Facebook page (facebook.com/MCH.HME), let us know.

You can send your high-resolution photo with your child's name and age, along with your name, your department and extension number to info@thechildren.com. We'll get in touch with you if we plan to publish your photo.



L'Hôpital de Montréal pour enfants
The Montreal Children's Hospital
Centre universitaire de santé McGill
McGill University Health Centre

MEDIA PORTAL



Teddy Bear Clinic helps familiarize patients with hospital setting

The Child Life specialist working in Ambulatory Services (2B clinics) provides children and adolescents with opportunities for play, self-expression, peer interaction, learning, and gaining a sense of control, and promotes a supportive waiting environment that contributes to a positive hospital experience.

With these objectives in mind, the Child Life Department, in association with the McGill Osler Society, hosted a Teddy Bear Clinic on Thursday February 11, to familiarize patients with the hospital environment, staff and basic medical practices which helps alleviate any existing fears related to clinic visits. Each participant received a stuffed animal (Caramel, the MCH mascot), and then accompanied Caramel into six educational booths making up the Teddy Bear Clinic: the Welcome Booth, Bacteria and Viruses, Clinic Visit, X-Rays, Fighting Infection, and Preventing Infection, which included a hand-washing activity. The child played the role of the accompanying parent or the treating physician. The event was informative and enjoyable for all!



Dr. Frank Guttman launches new book

Dr. Frank Guttman, one time chief of General Surgery at the MCH, launched his new book at Ogilvy's Tudor Hall on February 12 as part of the 20th anniversary of the McGill Institute of Learning in Retirement. The book, titled *The Devil from Saint-Hyacinthe: Senator Téléphore-Damien Bouchard* chronicles the life of Bouchard whose lengthy political career took him from mayor of Saint-Hyacinthe to being one of the most influential cabinet ministers in the Quebec Liberal government in the 1940s. The book is scheduled to be translated to French later this year.

The 2008-2009 McGill University Health Centre Annual Report is now online!

Join us at www.muhc.ca to review our many successes and financial reports from the past year. Also take a web tour of our new and improved website and you could win one of three outstanding prizes:

- ▶ Two tickets to see the Montreal Canadiens (canadiens.nhl.com)
- ▶ Gift certificate for two to Strom Spa on Nun's Island (stromspa.com)
- ▶ Gift certificate for two to Holder's Restaurant in Old Montreal (restaurantholder.com)

Dancing with the stars raises money for MCH

Dr. Mirko Gilardino, MCH plastic surgeon, Assistant Professor of Surgery and the newly-appointed director of the MCH Craniofacial and Cleft Surgery Team, was one of eight dancers at the 4th annual *Dancing with the Stars* Gala held by the Just for Kids Foundation in February. Dr. Gilardino took dancing lessons for a number of weeks to prepare for the event. He and a professional partner danced the tango. Hola-la!

Dancing with the Stars is co-chaired by Wendy Shevell, Ali Greenberg and Samantha Manis, and raised \$300,000 for MCH Ambulatory Care Services.



Take the ROP Challenge! Win a trip for two to Jamaica!!

What is the ROP Challenge?

The ROP Challenge begins with a monthly series of quizzes and puzzles and ends with finalists participating in the ultimate challenge: ROP Jeopardy! The ROP Challenge is a fun way for you to get to know the 31 mandatory Required Organizational Practices (ROPs) developed by Accreditation Canada. The MUHC must have all 31 ROPs in place to enhance patient safety and minimize risk to patients. During the MUHC's accreditation visit which will take place from September 27 – October 1, 2010, surveyors will speak with volunteers, employees and physicians to determine how well we are putting the ROPs into practice on a daily basis.

From January to May, 2010, you will be invited to participate in a variety of ROP Challenges (distributed with the pay cheques, downloadable from the intranet, via Volunteer Services, or within your department). A total of three prize-winners each month will be randomly drawn from all eligible quizzes and puzzles received. In order to be deemed eligible, all answers must be correct. Of the three monthly prize-winners, one will be randomly selected each month to participate in the final ROP Challenge: ROP Jeopardy, which will take place June 10, 2010. During ROP Jeopardy the five finalists will compete for the grand prize, a trip for two to Jamaica.

You'll find the ROP Brochure helpful when completing the ROP Challenges. To download a copy of the ROP Brochure, or the complete rules and regulations, please click on the ROP Challenge icon on the MUHC portal or call the Quality and Risk Management Department at 35663 or 22292 to obtain a copy.



MCH Staff @ work



Photo: Daniel Héon

Lisa Hartley
General Pediatrics
5 years at the MCH

Five years ago, I was the first employee in the Division of General Pediatrics hired as an Administrative Support staff. I am a two-year breast cancer survivor. I enjoy spending time with family and friends and regularly take part in sporting activities for women of my age group – e.g. cosom hockey, softball and basketball.

Annie Capua
Ambulatory Services, Surgical Division
22 years at the MCH

There's never enough time in a day! Whenever possible, you can find me spending time with friends, grooming Arabian horses or DJ'ing as a hobby. At work, I like meeting members of the MUHC family... most of all, seeing the dedication, devotion and caring shown by employees on a daily basis.

Events

Can you 'Pedal for kids'?

The 'Pedal for Kids' event is scheduled for June 14 to 18 this year. In order to plan how many bikes will be required for hospital staff, and to make sure nobody is disappointed by not getting a place, we need to know how many of you would like to reserve a seat. Deadline to reserve your place is March 19.

A minimum of \$350 in pledges is required to reserve each seat. Here's a suggestion: if you're not able to raise the required pledge amount by yourself, get together with colleagues in your department and then choose the athlete who will pedal for you! It's as easy as 'ABC'!

Send your name, the name of your department and your telephone number to Terry Séguin, ext. 24307 (e-mail: terry.seguin@muhc.mcgill.ca) or Antoinette Angelini, ext. 22280 (e-mail: antoinette.angelini@muhc.mcgill.ca).



CONTINUING EDUCATION

Visit *Chez nous* online for a complete list of this month's Continuing Education events: www.thechildren.com/en/news

Pilates for employees - Spring session

A new session of Pilates at the MCH begins the week of March 22. Do something good for yourself and enroll today!

Sign up for one or both of the following classes:

Mondays starting **March 22, 2010**, or **Wednesdays** starting **March 24, 2010**

5:00-5:55 p.m.

D-292

11 weeks

- ▶ Men and women are welcome
- ▶ \$110 for 1x per week (11 classes total); \$200 for 2x per week (22 classes total)
- ▶ Registration: Contact Karen @ 514 489-7717 before March 19 or email karenkunigis@hotmail.com

Annual MCH Blood Drive

Mark your calendar for this year's MCH Blood Drive will take place on March 30. You can stop by any time between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. to give blood and help the MCH at the same time. The blood drive is a joint effort between the MCH and radio station Rock Détente 107.3. See you there!

Date: Tuesday March 30

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Location: 1000 de la Gauchetière W.

Auxiliary Sales

- ▶ **Tuesday, March 16:** Videos
- ▶ **Wednesday, March 24:** Knits
- ▶ **Wednesday, March 31:** Miscellaneous

All sales take place on 2B

Awards and Nominations

Dr. Sam Daniel honoured

McGill Bravo Awards celebrate research excellence

The fourth annual Bravo Gala was held on Tuesday, February 9, at the Science Centre in the Old Port, where more than 400 people gathered to celebrate high-level research at McGill University. In all, 21 professors were recognized for their achievements.

Bravo, now four years old, is McGill's way of saying "félicitation" to those who have won major national or international prizes in the past year. Honorees at this year's event included Killam Prize and Research Fellowship winners, new inductees into the Royal Society of Canada and

a pair of researchers who captured Stacie Fellowships. **Dr. Sam Daniel**, Director, Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at the MCH and Director, Pediatric Otolaryngology, McGill University, was honoured for his 'Canada's Top 40 under 40' award.

Nursing Awards of Excellence

Nominations for the 2010 Nursing Awards of Excellence will be received from February 23 to April 1, 2010. The Awards of Excellence are site-based and include the categories of individual nurse, leadership, partner in practice, and professional development (group and individual).

Nominations for the Valerie Shannon MUHC Award for Innovative Leadership will also be received. This Award will be given to a nurse or group of nurses demonstrating innovative leadership in nursing practice.

New this year, there will be two Partner-in-Practice Awards – one for PABs and one for Admin Tech/Admin Officers. These awards are jointly sponsored by the Department of Nursing and the Council of Non-Clinical Personnel.

The Awards of Excellence are an opportunity to recognize excellence among employees of the Department of Nursing. Nomination packages will be distributed at each site.

Contact persons are:

MNH: Martha Stewart (88-09006);

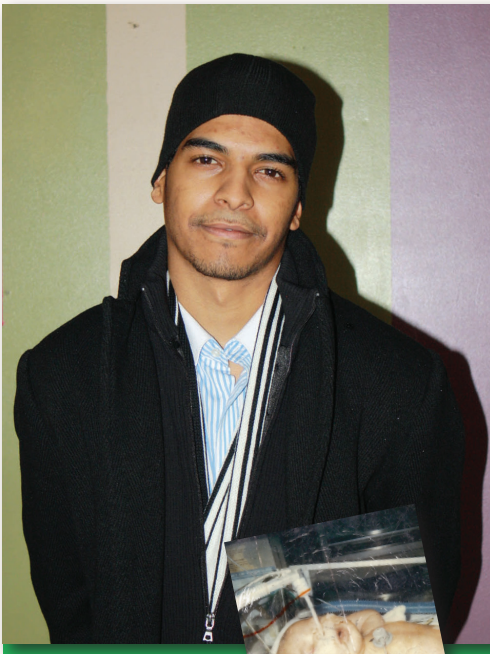
MCH: Donna Murray (23321);

RVH&MCI: Francine Belisle (34557) and Valerie Cass (43650);

MGH: Oliver Cachero (44801) and Zenith Jiwan (43033);

Lachine: Bruno Poudrier (77214);

Valerie Shannon Award: Catherine Oliver (44186).



A letter from Joey Maignan, who was saved by MCH specialists 21 years ago

My name is Joey Maignan. I was born on December 20, 1987, at 3:32 p.m at St.Mary's Hospital. When, later that day, my mom came to see me in the nursery she was told by the nurse that the doctor needed to speak to her. He had to tell her that I was born with a birth defect called diaphragmatic hernia. My health was considered very critical and I was dangling between life and death. An urgent operation was needed for me to survive, however, St. Mary's did not have the proper medical equipment or staff to work on this kind of medical condition.

Meanwhile, I was kept under oxygen until they contacted The Montreal Children's Hospital for an emergency medical intervention. An ambulance and medical staff were quickly sent over to transfer me while others at the MCH were preparing the operating room for me.

Just a few hours later, I was having the operation. The doctor closed the opening on my diaphragm so I would be able to breathe; he also had to remove part of the intestines that were near my lungs to give them space to develop. The procedure lasted over two hours. Once they made sure I was stable, they kindly told my mother how I was doing.

The next 72 hours were critical. I was kept in an open incubator in the intensive care unit with round-the-clock staff on duty. I stayed at The Children's for over two weeks. Considering the severity of my birth defect, a miracle had happened.

I am a miracle child and it's thanks to the MCH for having the professional expertise and equipment needed to save my life. The staff was so compassionate. Their presence and human contact contributed to my recovery and helped my family along the process.

Today I'm 21 years old and living a normal life. I am the owner of an electronics company named EYE Electronics (www.eyefutureS.com). As a way to give back, I donate part of the profit I make on every sale to the MCH so I can help save a child's life just like they saved mine.

I thank the Montreal Children's Hospital from the bottom of my heart. They are my saviours.

Dental assistant takes special pride in cleft palate work

By Maureen McCarthy

Beverley White-Morais tells an anecdote about life on the job. Not long ago, a dentist she worked with said, "I'm so happy to be working with an old assistant." Beverley laughs and says, "I would have preferred the word "experienced" instead!

'Experienced' is certainly a fitting description. Beverley holds a fairly unique position in the department of Dentistry at the MCH, working as a dental assistant as well as creating plaster models for children with cleft palates. Before starting at the MCH, Beverley graduated from McGill University as a dental assistant. The course program was only six months—nowadays it's two years—so much of what Beverley learned was on the job.

She didn't originally plan to work in a hospital. Her first year on the job was in private practice but she had plenty of opportunity to do lab work, a passion that stays with her to this day. "I wasn't that happy working in the private sector. And it so happens that I knew Dr. Stephane Schwartz. Her dedication and interest are probably what motivated me to start this career."

Beverley spends a good deal of her time assisting the dentists who see patients in clinic. But over the course of a conversation, you can tell that her real passion is working in the cleft palate clinic. "I love it," she says. "These kids grow up with us."

Beverley became interested in helping children with cleft palate many years ago. "What causes cleft palate is not really known," she says, but the problem is that there's a big hole. Her special role involves making plaster models that are used to help analyze and re-align teeth displaced by surgical repairs to these children's palates.

Creating the plaster models of a child's mouth starts with an alginate impression and then eventually requires building an orthodontic plaster model. "You're taught how to mix alginate in school, but you really learn this technique on the job." Beverley has perfected her skill to the point that she can create a model in about 10 minutes.

A typical day—or week—for Beverley runs from 9 to 5 at the chair side with different dentists. The cleft palate clinic is held once a month. She works with orthodontists Dr. Madelaine Shildkraut and Dr. Jon Kapala, as well as



Beverley White-Morais greets her granddaughter Symphony as she makes her first visit to the MCH dental clinic.

oral and maxillofacial surgeons Dr. Richard Emery and Dr. Deborah Iera to see post-op patients.

In addition, she goes into the OR once every six weeks to replace the assistant working there, and fills in for her vacations too. "I've gained a vast experience here," she says of her career at the MCH. "I've had the opportunity to work with oral surgeons in OR, periodontists and orthodontists. You'd never get that kind of variety in private practice." And thanks to the support of the clinic staff, headed by director Dr. Duy-Dat Vu, these special interest clinics continue to teach and encourage new dentists.

When she's not busy working in clinic, Beverley loves to travel. Her last junket was a Mediterranean cruise. She's been to Norway and California, and to New Orleans for Mardi Gras both before and after Hurricane Katrina. "It's devastating what happened there," she says, "and there's still very little progress in some quarters."

Last year, she became a grandmother after working and raising her own kids throughout her 35-year career. Retirement is on the horizon but Beverley hopes to continue to work in some capacity. "I'm about the only one who really likes making the plaster models," she laughs, "so maybe there will still be room for me in the department!"