



Community Memorial Health System

You
always
fear
the
worst

**"You cannot get
better care, or
better results,
anywhere in the
nation than right
here at the
Neonatal Intensive
Care Unit."**

CARING

REAL LIFE, REAL HEALTH
IN VENTURA COUNTY

FALL 2006



**Gary Wilde,
President/CEO**

wilde thoughts

Reconnecting With Our Community

I love the summer months and the holidays because they offer us time to reconnect with family and friends. This past summer was bitter-sweet for the Wilde family – I lost my mother, and Cheryl and I had our first grandson, Robbie. We were fortunate to have excellent physicians, nurses, and other health professionals support our family during a loss and during a birth. We could not be more grateful!

In July, I attended the 10-year anniversary of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Community Memorial Hospital. Proud parents with their NICU-graduate children came to Olivas Adobe to help us celebrate. It was a great family event with about 300 in attendance. Along with face-painting and a petting zoo, there were pony rides, “calf” roping and even panning for gold. It was such a delight for me to see these children and their families enjoy this special afternoon – bound

by their experience within our acclaimed NICU unit. But, most remarkable to watch were the interactions between the parents and the NICU staff – nurses, respiratory therapists and our Medical Director, Dr. John van Houten. The bond between all was most evident.

Little did I know that our own grandson would be born prematurely just five weeks later, and he would need to receive care in a NICU. I have since come to appreciate even more our nurses, physicians, therapists and everyone who provides such loving care during the most stressing of times. What noble and caring people who do for us what we cannot do for ourselves!

In this issue, Dale and Leslie Gietzen share with us their own NICU experience, as they welcome their twin daughters into their family. We thank them for their wonderful story.

Our Maternal Child Health program is the busiest in Ventura County with over 3000 births last year. Not only

are we recognized as the premier birth center in the region, but we were recently honored when UCLA’s prestigious David Geffen School of Medicine chose us as the site for a residency program for their third year gynecological surgery residents. This speaks volumes to the high quality of care we offer at Maternal Child Health.

In this issue you will also meet Marsha Bianco, a veteran E.R. nurse, whose compelling story of heroics and hope will certainly cause you to pause and evaluate what is most valuable in your life – I know it did for me. I am humbled by the road she treads. She works and lives to be prepared to save lives, and now she is receiving care in turn for a healthy return to the life she loves – caring for others. Marsha, you are an inspiration to all of us.

Enjoy this issue of Caring, and please let us know how we may better serve you. ♥

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Dedicated to the Hospital and the Community

Dr. Martin Pops came to Ojai to retire, but today he's working the phones.

"Are you coming to the Nightingale Ball?" he asks. The voice on the other end is no doubt unable to resist a personal invitation to attend the hospital's annual fundraiser, and Dr. Pops can add another checkmark to today's to-do list.

It was on a trip back to Los Angeles from Santa Barbara in 1994 that Dr. Pops, then Professor of Medicine and Dean of Students at UCLA's School of Medicine, and his wife Barbara, decided to retire to the Ojai Valley.

Shortly after settling into retirement here, he was asked to serve on the Ojai Valley Community Hospital's advisory board, back when the hospital was privately held. The board subsequently formed a non-profit foundation to take over operation of the hospital, and Dr. Pops served as one of the chairs. Last year Ojai merged with Community Memorial Hospital and Dr. Pops now serves as a member of the Board of Trustees with Community Memorial Health System.

"When I first came to Ojai, I thought I would do nothing but go bass fishing on Lake Casitas!"

While there hasn't been much time for fishing, Dr. Pops has found tremendous satisfaction volunteering his time. In addition

to his work with the hospitals, he is the Ojai Rotary's president-elect, has served on the Ojai Tennis Tournament board and continues to stay involved with UCLA as Emeritus Professor of Medicine. His wife, Barbara, is president of the Ojai Community Hospital Foundation.

"It's in Barbara's blood and my blood to give back to the community."

Being involved in hospital governance was a big departure for Dr. Pops. "There's sort of an ivory tower when it comes to being a doctor in an academic setting – and that was my whole career," he says. "I didn't know anything about Medicare, Medi-Cal, hospital debt and insurance – none of that was apparent to me until I came here."

In addition to striving to keep his community healthy, Dr. Pops keeps himself fit by swimming a mile and a quarter everyday, and has been for 30 years. "Swimmers age more slowly!" His one-year-old Australian Sheppard, Mattie, also gives him another workout with a one-hour daily walk.

"I take my responsibility seriously and feel I can do it with a light heart and a good sense of humor!"

Sounds like the fish in Lake Casitas can rest easy for awhile! ♡

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nightingale Ball

Benefiting Ojai Valley Community Hospital
Saturday, November 4, 2006
Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, Info: 805-640-2317

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Wait a minute... two!

Dale and Leslie Gietzen could not have been happier this past December. Already parents of two healthy boys under age three, the Camarillo couple now had a third child on the way. But shortly before Christmas, Leslie recalls, “We started a roller coaster ride of emotions.”

“I started to bleed a little bit,” Leslie continues. “I was afraid I was going to lose the baby.”

Dale rushed his wife to Community Memorial Hospital. “Luckily the ultrasound looked good,” Leslie shares, adding, “Then the technician said, ‘Wait a minute . . . there’s two!’ We went from thinking I might be having a miscarriage to knowing we were going to have twins.”

Dale interjects, “In just a few seconds we went from a real low to a real high.”

The roller coaster ride of emotions, however, was just beginning. More dips, curves, lows and life-and-death worries lay ahead.

On a Sunday night in early May, two-and-a-half months before the twins were due, Leslie’s water broke. “We were shocked and confused. It was too early in the pregnancy,” says Dale, who at 1 a.m. rushed his wife of nearly six years to CMH. “It hit me square between the eyes: something’s terribly wrong. I was worried sick.”

“I hadn’t had any contractions yet,” explains

Leslie, who was only 30 weeks into her pregnancy - a dangerous 10 weeks shy of the full 40-week gestational age. “They wanted to hold the contractions off and delay delivery as long as possible. Every day you can wait is important for the babies’ health. We were hoping to keep the girls in there for a month . . . but the girls had other plans.”

Twenty-four hours later, on May 9, Leslie’s contractions came on quickly and intensely. She immediately underwent an emergency cesarean section. Ella Rose was delivered first by Dr. Terry Cole at 2:03 a.m. weighing three pounds, one ounce. Anna Marie - “We call her our ‘Bonus Baby’ because we were planning on three kids,” shares Leslie - was one minute behind, coming into the world at two pounds, eight ounces. Both critically ill preemies went directly into CMH’s highly regarded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

“At that point it was so risky because they we’re so young,” Dale says. “There were so many unknowns. It was extremely emotional. I was not only worried about the babies, I was worried about my wife.”

Indeed, Leslie wasn’t well enough to see her premature twin daughters until 20 hours later at 10 p.m. “I was in a wheelchair in the NICU,” she recalls. “It was traumatic to see them so small with so many tubes and wires on them.”

On a positive note, neither Ella nor Anna

ever required a ventilator, for which Leslie credits CMH’s expert doctors. “Right when I got to the hospital they gave me steroid shots 12 hours apart to help develop the babies’ lungs. It worked because both girls were on room air right from the get-go, which was reassuring.”

However, as with many preemies so young, both twins had heart conditions. “When they talk about a heart problem, that really scares you,” Dale says, his voice filled with emotion three months later.

Specifically, Ella experienced patent ductus arteriosus, a condition in which a small blood vessel near the heart doesn’t close. If medication fails to correct it, surgery is required. “That was extremely stressful,” Dale says of waiting to see if an operation would be required. Fortunately, the medication worked.

Anna, meanwhile, was born with a tiny “hole” in the wall between the two lower chambers of her heart. “They think it will close by itself, maybe within a year,” explains a hopeful Leslie, noting the condition is being carefully monitored by a pediatric cardiologist. On top of this, Anna also experienced an infection that required antibiotics.

Dale, understandably, didn’t leave the hospital for the first five days and nights. (Leslie’s sister Erica, who serendipitously was visiting from Utah, cared for three-and-a-half-year-old Cole and two-year-old Tanner.) “I found a really cozy chair to sleep in,” Dale says.

Truth is, sleep was hard to come by because he was so worried.

“Like I said, it was an emotional roller coaster,” Dale continues. “They’d have a good day and the next day something is wrong. The next day things look better; then it’s something else. It was up and down so fast for the first couple of weeks. After I went home, I’d still visit twice every

day but that doesn't stop the worrying. Nighttime was the hardest. First thing in the morning I'd rush to the hospital to see how they were doing."

Often, Dale would nervously phone the NICU to get the latest report before going to the hospital. "You always fear the worst," he confides.

Both parents praise NICU Medical Director Dr. John van Houten, Dr. Bengt-Ola Bengtsson and the rest of the dedicated and attentive staff that provided expert around-the-clock care.

"They were great at telling us what was happening every step of the way and at the same time trying to reassure us," says Leslie.

"As stressful as it was, it was reassuring to know we have such a great NICU right here in our community," adds Dale, who grew up in Ventura and Oxnard, and has two sets of grandparents with local roots.

Even as the twins' condition greatly improved, the roller coaster ride of emotions was far from over. "Seeing babies leave the NICU and go home was a mixed emotion," explains Dale. "It's hard because your babies aren't ready, but you feel good too. It made us realize our day would come."

Yet when that homecoming day arrived after two months in the hospital – July 3 for Ella, who now weighed five pounds, eleven ounces, and July 7 for Anna, who was up to five pounds, five ounces – it brought another emotional dip.

"Bringing them home was actually very hard," Dale recalls, adding sadly: "The day before we brought Ella home, a twin born the day after our girls, died. That hits you hard. You realize how fragile the girls really are."

Adds Leslie: "It was scary, but the doctors and nurses reassured us they wouldn't send the babies home if they weren't ready – and if we weren't ready to care for them."

Leslie quickly surprised herself. Actually, the "Bonus Baby" did. "Anna had never nursed in the hospital," Leslie shares, "but her first feeding at home she started nursing. We truly feel blessed." ♡



Dr. Daryoush Jadali

High-Risk Pregnancies Require High Talent and High Tech Solutions

Ella and Anna Gietzen were born 10 weeks prematurely on May 9, but their chances for a successful entry into the world began nearly two months earlier after Leslie Gietzen first learned she was carrying twins.

On March 14, Leslie saw Dr. Daryoush Jadali, a perinatologist who runs Community Memorial Hospital's specialized High-Risk Pregnancy Unit.

Perinatology is the field of obstetrics devoted to managing high-risk pregnancies. These increased risks can be related to the mother's health, such as if she has high blood pressure, diabetes or another medical condition that would be affected by pregnancy or could affect the pregnancy. Other factors include in vitro fertilization, a woman with a history of premature delivery or pregnancy loss, or if she is age 35 or older.

Also, as with the case with Leslie, expecting two or more babies constitutes an increased risk for complications. Fortunately for her and the twins, more than 15 years ago CMH embarked on a mission to become the foremost perinatal center in Ventura County. To do so meant building a state-of-the-art Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; adding an in-house obstetrician on call 24 hours a day as well as around-the-clock OB/GYN anesthesia coverage; and a full-time perinatologist.

"You cannot get better care, or better results, anywhere in the nation than right here at Community Memorial Hospital," says Dr. Jadali, who five years ago played an instrumental role in the healthy delivery of the county-famous Bova quintuplets.

Twenty-two weeks into Leslie's pregnancy, Dr. Jadali began "seeing" the Gietzen twins every two weeks via state-of-the-art ultrasound examinations.

"We monitored how her babies were growing," notes Dr. Jadali, explaining it was important to make sure neither twin was greatly outgrowing the other. "If this happens and one twin is getting more nutrition than the other, we can take some of the [amniotic] fluid out of one twin to balance it out and help the pregnancy to go further."

Extending pre-term labor, usually by means of modern medications, is paramount.

"We try to push to at least 26-27 weeks," Dr. Jadali points out. "At 28-29 weeks you're usually in pretty good shape for an excellent outcome, but we really try to go to 30-31 weeks. The extra time means a better chance for healthier babies."

High-tech ultrasound exams allow doctors to check for such problems as cleft palate or spina bifida. With twins, these images tell



The Gietzen Family

Continued on page 14



Moms See Their Twin Pregnancies as Double Blessings.

The days when a mother would give birth to a baby and then – Surprise! – push out an unexpected twin moments later are long past.

“You just don’t have those surprises anymore,” laughs Dr. Terry Cole, an obstetrician/gynecologist at Community Memorial Hospital.

Indeed, with today’s sophisticated ultrasound equipment and emphasis on prenatal care, a twin pregnancy is almost always diagnosed before five months.

Something else is not a surprise when it comes to twins: “When a woman is diagnosed with twins she’s always through the roof with excitement,” Says Dr. Cole, who estimates he delivers twelve to fifteen sets of twins a year. “It’s a wonderful thing to see.”

“The physician shares in the joys of twins, but he then has to tell a woman there are a couple of risk factors,” Dr. Cole continues. These risks include pre-term (premature) birth and an increased chance for a cesarean section delivery. Despite this, the first two trimesters are actually not markedly different from a single

“When a woman is diagnosed with twins she’s always through the roof with excitement.”

pregnancy, except that a mother carrying twins is now eating for three people, not two.

“All things considered with twins, besides needing to eat more, the first six-and-a-half to

seven months of the pregnancy is usually like any other,” Dr. Cole notes.

One major difference, however, is that while a mother with a single pregnancy will typically have one or two ultrasounds, a mom carrying twins might have half a dozen or more such exams. For example, serial ultrasounds can detect if the babies are growing discordantly, a dangerous situation where one baby usurps the blood and food supply.

Carrying two healthy growing babies also means the mother is literally carrying an extra burden. “Gravity is the enemy, not a friend,” says Dr. Cole. “At 26 - 28 weeks, the mother will need to spend more time off her feet. You don’t want the cervix dilating early.”

While a full-term pregnancy is 40 weeks, the target with twins is typically shorter. “Most times a mother with twins will not make it to the full-term due date,” Dr. Cole points out. “We consider it victorious if we can get to four weeks from due date. If we can make it to 36 weeks, we’re pretty excited.”

If a mother goes into pre-term labor short of that goal, she may require hospitalization, where bed rest combined with medication can often effectively stop it.

“Every day we can keep the babies in the uterus is another day of fetal maturity,” Dr. Cole explains, adding that each extra day in the womb decreases the chances of a baby requiring a stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

However, in preparation for this very possible reality, when a woman is admitted to Community Memorial Hospital with pre-term

labor (be it a single or multiple pregnancy), a physician from CMH’s highly acclaimed NICU will spend significant time consulting with her and the father. When possible, the parents will be given a tour of the NICU so they will know what to expect should their baby – or babies – need its expert care.

If the diagnosis of twins is a through-the-roof experience, their birth sends emotions over the moon.

“It’s really exciting; an amazing scene,” Dr. Terry Cole says of delivering twins. “There’s a lot going on and a lot of great teamwork involved.

“And a lot of joy!” ♡



Dr. Terry Cole



Kudos for Katie's Team

Katie Weldon and her team of volunteers work tirelessly to make CMH the best it can be.

With nearly 5,000 volunteer hours to her credit, Kathryn "Katie" Weldon was elected President of the Community Memorial Hospital Auxiliary in 2005. Her long history of service at CMH began in 1993 when she volunteered on the floors. Katie has held offices as PPD Chair, Desk Chair, First Vice President and Treasurer, before embarking on a two-year term as Auxiliary President.

Originally Katie is from North Carolina and Kentucky, but she moved to China Lake, California in 1946. After college, she worked there as a chemist for the navy while raising three children. In 1967, when the family moved to Ventura, Katie began volunteering at her children's schools. She ran a successful math lab at Ventura High School for 10 years, and after receiving her teaching credential taught math

and science at Fillmore Junior High School for 10 years. Her children and six grandchildren still live in the area.

At the hospital, Katie's team of volunteers currently has 185 active members who have worked nearly 27,000 tireless hours in 2006. The auxiliary provides service assistance in 14 departments including maternity, PACU, same-day surgery and pharmacy. Her husband Rod is a volunteer in pharmacy. They hold an annual fundraising jewelry and book sale. One service group even makes birth certificates for three dollars per birth. Katie explains, "If you have twins, it's also three dollars, and if you have quint, it's still five certificates for three dollars."

Interested teens, ages 14-18 can also become involved in the junior volunteer service group. In support of our local youth, the

Continued on page 8



Kathryne "Katie" Weldon



Jr. Volunteer Scholarships

Six Ventura high school graduates who were hospital volunteers have been awarded thousands of dollars from a scholarship fund established by the late Maria Cavallo, a longtime member of the Community Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

This year's graduates all

volunteered a minimum of 100 hours for CMH by serving as Junior Volunteers for at least one year. "All have high grade-point averages and had to include letters of recommendations in their applications for a scholarship from the Maria Cavallo Scholarship Fund," said CMH

Auxiliary President Katie Weldon. "They all are so talented and deserving."

The Maria Cavallo Scholarship recipients are:

Kyle Duff, a Foothill Technology High School graduate planning to attend Stanford University.

He volunteered at CMH for the past four years and was awarded \$2,000.

Kelly Mizraji, a Ventura High School graduate planning to attend UC Berkeley; \$1,500.

Emily Brooks, an El Camino High School graduate planning to attend Ventura College; \$1,500.

Areim Omar, a Ventura High School graduate planning to attend UCLA; \$1,000.

Christine Riley, a Foothill Technology High School graduate planning to attend Westmont College; \$1,000.

Ashley Hughes, a graduate of Ventura High School planning to attend California Baptist University; \$1,000.

For more information about CMH's Junior Volunteers Program and the scholarship fund, please contact Junior Volunteers Chair Judy Miller at 647-3023. ▽

Katie's Team

Continued from page 7

auxiliary gave \$6,000 in college scholarships to area high school seniors last year. The scholarship fund was set up by a dedicated volunteer named Maria Cavallo.

In addition, volunteers for the auxiliary run the book cart which provides donated books and magazines to patients at CMH. Other volunteers run errands, prepare medical supplies, provide computer services and work in the gift shop which provides the main source of auxiliary funds. A sewing service group makes pillows for heart patients and stockings for holiday babies. Under the direction of a nurse, "Cuddlers" in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provide human contact for premature infants during off hours when parents may not be available.

"There are lots of benefits," says Katie, "It's *the* best hospital to

work for." Besides lots of appreciation, CMH auxiliary workers receive a snack at every shift and a meal with every ten hours worked in a month. They are honored at an awards luncheon in February, a volunteer luncheon in April and receive a discount at the Fast Track Gym.

But the major task of the auxiliary is to assist patients and visitors at Community Memorial Hospital and to raise much-needed funds. Last year the auxiliary presented the hospital with a check for \$170,000.

For more information on how to become part of the auxiliary team at CMH call Katie Weldon at (805) 652-5043 or stop by the hospital. Applications are available at the front desk. Orientations take place once per month, and volunteers are able to work in more than one service. The auxiliary provides full training and according to Katie, "It's a friendly place to work!" ▽

Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation

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Meet Foundation Member Barbara Rose



Barbara came to Ventura in 1999 after 23 years in Santa Barbara, where she first found that nonprofit work was in her blood. She worked for the Santa Barbara Foundation and Direct Relief International, an organization that provides humani-

tarian medical relief around the world. Having seen the troubles plaguing third world nations, she knows what it means to have first-rate medical care readily available, "I realize how privileged we are."

In addition to non-profit work, Barbara also has a background in the hospital-ity industry. Most notably, she

worked at Rancho de los Cabaleros in Wickenburg, Arizona for 10 years. While at the famed guest ranch resort, she met many leaders of corporate America, put them in jeans, gave them a horse and showed them how to relax. It is in this same spirit of caring that paved the way for her volunteer work.

A couple of years ago, a neighbor with whom Barbara walks in her Ventura Keys neighborhood, saw in Barbara the perfect fit for the hospital. It was on one of these walks that Sandy Masiel, past President of the Foundation Board, encouraged Barbara to volunteer with the Foundation. Before she knew it, she was helping plan events, getting elected to the Board and chairing the Gold Dust Gala. "I feel like I am on a vertical learning curve!"

When Barbara is not

working with the Foundation, she volunteers at her church, helps raise funds for the Mancos Library in Colorado, serves on the board of a family foundation and enjoys retirement with her husband Ron, a retired banker and Ventura native. Ron shares Barbara's passion for volunteer work and serves on the Ojai Valley School Board and has been a commissioner of the Ventura Housing Authority for more than 30 years.

Following her successful chairing of the 2006 Gold Dust Gala which raised money to provide breast cancer treatment to those who lack access to healthcare, Barbara is now turning her focus to her new duties as Vice President. "I look forward to working with Kay Woodburn in moving the Foundation forward to the next level." ♡

B Barbara Rose was recently elected to the post of Vice President of the Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation's Board, which for her serves as a terrific way to give back to Ventura, a city she adores.

"I love the sense of community here! It's real; what else can I say?"

We're Always Looking for Volunteers!

Auxiliary volunteers provide that special touch of comfort, compassion and assistance to patients and their families. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call the Auxiliary:

**Community Memorial Hospital
(805) 652-5043**



Some Big Drives Were Hit to Benefit a Very Worthy “Little” Cause



Community Memorial Hospital held its Ninth Annual Golf Tournament at Sterling Hills Golf Club in Camarillo this past July to benefit the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The event raised money that helped purchase the ABL 800 Blood Gas Analyzer/Monitor from Radiometer. Because of the generous support of the participants and sponsors of events such as this, the CMH NICU has become a distinguished leader, capable of successfully caring for high-risk infants with state-of-the-art equipment.

Teamwork, caring and technology all work together to make Community Memorial Hospital's Level III NICU the foremost NICU in Ventura County. ▽



Memorials & Tributes

Did you know that the Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation has a Memorial and Tribute program?

What better way to honor someone you love, or to remember someone you miss, than by supporting your hospital.

Our Memorial and Tribute program offers friends of the hospital a thoughtful, meaningful way to remember a loved one or to celebrate a special occasion, while contributing to a worthwhile cause. Gifts to the program are a unique way to express your sympathy or appreciation in a personalized way, while your donation to Community Memorial Hospital will give special meaning to the recipient of your gift.

Memorials

Memorial donations honor the memory of a loved one or friend who has passed away. A Memorial card is sent to the next of kin and acknowledges your gift. The amount of the gift is never disclosed.

Tributes

Tribute gifts honor a special occasion such as a birthday, an anniversary, or a special achievement. Or, send a tribute as an expression of appreciation or even “get well” wishes. The individual being honored is sent a Tribute card that acknowledges your gift. Again, the amount of the gift is never disclosed.

Memorials and Tributes will also be recognized in the Caring magazine.

We hope you will think of the hospital the next time a special occasion arises. Thank you for your continuing support of Community Memorial Hospital. ▽

Community Memorial Healthcare Foundation plays a major role in CMH's sincere ongoing “Commitment to Caring.” By supporting the Foundation, you are not only making an investment in the health of Ventura County residents today, but are also helping ensure a healthy future.

For further information on giving opportunities please call the Foundation office at (805) 667-2881.

Centers for Family Health Deliver

In the past twelve years, the Centers for Family Health have responded to the needs of these communities by growing to support a team of 37 physicians and 15 mid-level providers, such as nurse practitioners and physician's assistants.

Nine locations throughout Ventura County provide a private medical office approach to healthcare with confirmed appointments, centralized scheduling and billing, bilingual services and individualized and urgent care, as opposed to a first-come, first-served basis employed by traditional clinics. The computer system that the Centers for Family Health share with Community Memorial Hospital (CMH) offers expectant mothers a seamless transition from perinatal care to hospital delivery.

Through the Centers for Family Health, expectant mothers are able to gain access to the most distinguished obstetric center in Ventura County, Maternal Child Health (MCH) at CMH. Currently, obstetric referrals from the Centers account for about one-third of the infants delivered at Community Memorial Hospital. Overall, studies indicate that high risk populations have good outcomes when they receive early intervention, patient education, diabetes and blood pressure screening. With

Community Memorial Health System developed the Centers for Family Health to provide primary and obstetric care to underserved, and in some cases, less economically privileged communities without ready access to health services.

over 200,000 patient visits per year, the Centers provide care to PPO, HMO and Medi-Cal patients, with three locations in Oxnard, two in Ventura, and single locations serving Camarillo, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Oak View. The Centers recruit health professionals that are familiar with the individual health needs, as well as the broad economic and cultural demographic of our outlying communities. Each center is staffed with one to three physicians. Six OB specialists and one mid-wife also rotate through the nine locations. A variety of medical services that focus on women's healthcare are available for expectant moms who are simultaneously registered at the hospital upon intake at a Center for Family Health. In addition, new mothers have access to a comprehensive perinatal education program at MCH that provides on-site instruction. A staff educator provides information to patients on proper diet with explanation of the physician's instructions.

The nurses really contribute to the success of the expectant mother's experience. "Our nurses have a commitment to high quality nursing care," says Dr. Richard Reisman, Medical Director of the Centers for Family Health. The physicians depend on their nurses to recognize, identify and notify them of changes with the patient. The focus on superior nursing service comes from the top administrators, directors, and nurses.

The Centers for Family Health create much needed accessibility for healthcare to communities within the area. Over the years, they have broadened their scope of care to include , pediatrics, internal medicine, cardiology, obstetrics and dermatology. By recognizing the needs of our expectant mothers, these community centers provide a gateway to the safest birth experience in Ventura County at the prestigious Maternal Child Health Center at CMH. ♥



MARSHA BIANCO'S HEROIC SAGA

After Saving a Jet Passenger's Life, E.R. Nurse is Now a Role Model as Cancer Patient.

As a veteran Emergency Room nurse, Community Memorial Hospital's Marsha Bianco knows that lives depend on her remaining calm and focused no matter how demanding and chaotic the situation.

Still, even her unflappable coolness faced a stiff test this past Memorial Day weekend when she found herself in a life-saving situation 35,000 feet in the air. Instead of panicking aboard Southwest flight 1265 bound from Kansas City to Los Angeles, Marsha rose to the occasion.

After visiting her ill mother, Marsha was flying back to California on Saturday, May 27. Fifteen minutes into the three-hour flight, an urgent announcement came over the intercom: "Is there a doctor on board or other medical personnel?"

"The plane was full," Marsha recalls. "I knew a doctor had to be on the plane and

going to L.A. What were the chances there wasn't one?"

She pauses. Those long odds struck.

"No doctor," she continues. "Nobody came forward. Well, I couldn't just sit there. I had to do something."

Marsha, as she has done for 15 years as a registered nurse, answered the call for help.

"Are you a doctor?" a flight attendant asked.

"I'm an E.R. nurse," Marsha answered.

"We've got a passenger who's unresponsive," the flight attendant hurriedly explained while leading Marsha to the back of the plane where a man in his 60s was indeed in serious distress.

"He did not look good," Marsha recalls. "He was pale, and sweating profusely. While he wasn't completely unresponsive, he was very slow talking to me."

Slipping into the aisle seat beside him, Marsha had difficulty finding a pulse. Her initial thought was perhaps he was a diabetic with low blood sugar. Questioning his wife in the window seat, Marsha quickly learned he was not diabetic but that he had a history of cardiac trouble, including two bypasses and a pair of heart attacks.

"He had a whole list of medications -10 or 15 cardiac meds he was taking," Marsha points out. "I told the stewardess we needed to lay him down."

Next, Marsha administered oxygen and asked

the flight attendant to get her a stethoscope and blood pressure monitor, both of which are kept on board. Noting that normal blood pressure for the patient would have been in the neighborhood of 120-over-80, Marsha reports the passenger's BP was 58. Fifty-eight over what? The diastolic pressure (bottom number) was so weak she couldn't even get a reading.

With every second counting, Marsha knew she had to improve his blood pressure. "I needed to start an IV," she explains, noting that the limited on-board medical supplies included one single bag of saline.

Starting an IV was easier said than done: "I'm doing all this in a very tiny aisle."

And under extreme pressure. "The engines are roaring really loud and I'm thinking, 'Please let me find a vein – I might only have one chance.'"

That is all the skilled E.R. vet needed. "Luckily I hit it on the first try."

The IV helped, slightly, as the patient's systolic (top number) pressure rose into the 70s. Marsha now had a message for the pilots: "I said, 'We need to land as soon as we can – I'm afraid he's going to go into cardiac arrest at any moment.'"

The pilots changed course for Denver, about 30 minutes away, and Marsha continued her emergency duty. "By the time we landed, he had gotten a little better," she remembers. "He was a little more coherent and had better color."

Once on the ground, paramedics rushed on board. Marsha gave them the report as coolly and expertly as if she were in a well-equipped E.R., instead of the cramped aisle of an airplane. The man's blood pressure was up to 100 but still no diastolic pressure.

Asked if she ever felt a hint of panic, Marsha replies matter-of-factly, "Oh, no. I was calm the

whole time. To me it was an everyday thing. That's what I'm trained to do. I deal with that type of situation, and worse, all the time."

Dede Utley, Community Memorial Hospital's Emergency Room Director, is not in the least surprised with how Marsha not only expertly handled the medical emergency, but was able to keep the crew and passengers relatively calm.

"She is a top-notch RN," Utley emphasizes. "She is an excellent clinician who has consistently exceeded the expectations in her role. On top of that her personality is so bright and cheerful."

When the crisis was over, something special happened that Marsha says she has never before experienced: "People clapped for me and were thanking me for being on the plane. They were calling me the hero. In the E.R. they just expect it."

While refueling in Denver, Marsha got up to use the bathroom and received further hero treatment. "There was a long line and someone said, 'Let the nurse through. She deserves to go to the front of the line,'" Marsha says, smiling at the memory.

It is wonderful to see her smile, and remarkable, because Marsha has had too many recent reasons to let the tears fall.

The heartbreak began late last December when her stepfather – "He was really my dad; married to my mother for 35 years" – had a fatal heart attack.

Five months later, Marsha's mother went into the hospital with fluid in her lungs and heart, and then suffered a stroke. Marsha promptly went to Kansas City – where she was born and raised before moving to Oxnard in 2001 – to care for her. She also moved her mother out of the house she had lived in for 50 years, got her happily settled

into a retirement facility, and sold the family home. It was a couple years worth of stress compressed into a few weeks.

Marsha flew back to California, dramatically saving a life en route, and then in an instant had her own life turned upside down – even before her mother passed away on July 5. While working in the E.R. on June 3, Marsha, with no warning symptoms, suffered a grand mal seizure and passed out.

A state-of-the-art CAT scan revealed a brain tumor. The biopsy brought worse news: cancerous glioblastoma. "It's a very, very aggressive tumor," Marsha explains evenly, adding this somber prognosis. "There is usually about a three-month life expectancy."

Four days after her seizure, Marsha underwent surgery to remove the tumor. She then

"Oh, no. I was calm the whole time. To me it was an everyday thing. That's what I'm trained to do. I deal with that type of situation, and worse, all the time."

endured seven weeks of daily chemotherapy and radiation treatments concurrently. Her last radiation treatment was August 24, but she will continue chemotherapy – five treatments monthly – for the next two years.

The next two years. That actually makes her smile because it is so much better than a three-month prognosis. "Because of my age, being under 65," explains Marsha, 52, "and the fact the tumor was small and they got all of it, the doctors are hoping for a longer term of survival. But it's an aggressive form that doesn't stay in remission – it will come back."

To further improve her chances for longer-term survival, Marsha is looking into becoming a clinical trial candidate at UCLA Medical Center.

Asked how she has remained so positive through her recent ordeals, Marsha answers: "Good friends and family. Everyone in the E.R. has been like family to me. They have been there for me every step of the way. I haven't had to ask for a thing – they have just done it. They are wonderful."

Her older brother, Rick, meanwhile, has remodeled the entire basement of his Kansas City home into an apartment for Marsha. She says she will spend a lot of time there, but will keep her Oxnard home – because she wants to keep



Marsha Bianco is surrounded by her friends at Community Memorial Hospital.

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UCLA Selects Maternal Child Health for Prestigious Residency Program

Dr. Monica Lee

UCLA has recently selected Community Memorial Hospital to implement a program that invites their third year residents to study in the area of gynecological surgery. The program once again showcases Maternal Child Health (MCH) as the premier maternal care department in Ventura County. CMH Medical Director, Dr. Richard Reisman, and local OB/GYN, Dr. John Keats, who both completed their residency training at UCLA, first contacted Dr. Gautam Chaudhuri, professor and Chairman of the OB/GYN Department at UCLA's, David Geffen School of Medicine, with

the suggestion that residents visit CMH to study on a rotation basis. They had an ongoing relationship that opened the door for the arrival of the prestigious university program.

The program, now in existence and co-directed by Drs. Keats and Reisman, will host seven residents each year. CMH will host one resident at a time with each resident completing a seven-week rotation. The first resident, Dr. Monica Lee, completed her rotation in August. CMH is very focused on women's healthcare. The dedicated staff has a very busy surgical schedule that includes women's oncology surgery. The residents will gain experience in gynecological surgery, and will be making rounds enhancing the level of care provided to patients in the MCH. Patients are aware that the residents are in training under

the direct supervision of the attending physician. The only expense to the hospital is the cost of an apartment to house the visiting student.

Each resident in the program must go through a credentialing process and then be granted specific privileges. The CMH staff members will expect these young knowledgeable professionals to ask questions, challenge thinking, and expose the medical staff to the newest information available. A journal club has been established to allow each resident the opportunity to share top medical articles with their peers. OB/GYN physicians are invited from CMH and the Ventura County Medical Center to discuss relevant topics.

MCH has approximately 3,000 deliveries per year. This high volume will provide the UCLA residents with the opportunity to observe the increased patient safety associated with the increased population. In addition, they will gain practical patient experience from some of the best trained obstetricians and gynecologists. Unlike other hospitals, medical staff members with privileges in the MCH must be board certified in the area of OB/GYN or Family Practice.

"Numerous studies have shown that high volume, high quality, larger obstetric centers typically have the best fetal outcomes as compared to hospitals that have small obstetrics centers," says Dr. Reisman. "Dr. Chaudhuri was specifically impressed by the volume of obstetrics and gynecology cases at the hospital and the quality of the medical staff. He felt this would be the best exposure for the UCLA residents."

The hospital has gained a prestigious program and a five-year agreement with UCLA. That's just one more reason why CMH is a recognized hospital of distinction with a clear strategy of becoming the area's hospital of choice for the women of Ventura County. ▼

High-Risk Pregnancies

Continued from page 5

doctors if the babies each have their own placenta and amniotic sac (the most common and best scenario); one shared placenta but two amniotic sacs (in the case of the Gietzen twins); or one placenta and one amniotic sac (the most rare and high-risk).

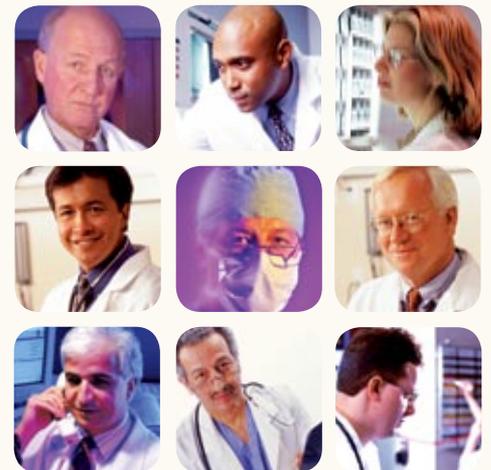
Because they shared a placenta, the Gietzen twins were at an increased risk of having one baby take more of the nutrients and grow bigger than the other. Fortunately, this only occurred to a slight degree: Ella's birth weight was three pounds, one ounce compared to Anna at two pounds, eight ounces.

"I know things turned out better, thanks to the exceptional [perinatal] care we got," praises Leslie Gietzen.

"It is very interesting and very satisfying," Dr. Jadali says of his specialty. "It is a growing field, absolutely. Our technology is constantly advancing, and our success rates today are extremely good. It is very rewarding to see happy outcomes." ▼

The program, showcases Maternal Child Health as the premier maternal care department in Ventura County.

SELECTING A PHYSICIAN IS A DIFFICULT DECISION



Community Memorial Health System is here to help. Physician referrals are available at no charge.

Physician Referral Service
(805) 652-5600

MARSHA BIANCO'S HEROIC SAGA

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her CMH medical team. "I think I have the best doctors in the world," she praises. "I couldn't have hand-picked better ones."

The caregiver has become the one getting cared for, yet Marsha continues to help others.

"She always has a smile on her face and a warm, genuine hug to give – even after she was diagnosed," marvels Utley. "She is an

awesome woman. Many times I felt like Marsha was the strong one getting us through these last couple of months. We should all be so lucky to have her attitude and outlook – she is a true inspiration."

It seems entirely fitting that after her final radiation treatment Marsha celebrated with a group of CMH friends by going to the movie "Little Miss Sunshine." Somehow, despite losing her stepfather, her mother, and being hit with the lightning bolt of a malignant brain tumor, all in the span of seven months, Marsha has focused on the sunshine in her life.

"I've helped other people through hard times, now it's my turn to be strong," she allows. "If these are the cards I'm dealt, I've got to make the best of them. I look at it like I have the advantage of knowing how much time I might have left. The time I have I want to appreciate. I want to appreciate my friends, enjoy my dogs and travel."

True to her word, she plans to rack up a lot of frequent flier miles. In September she traveled to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, followed by a trip to Kansas City to visit her niece whose baby will be due. She will spend Christmas and New Year's in New York, go to the Caribbean in February, and then enjoy springtime in Paris on a trip with her sister-in-law.

"I'm not going to put anything off any more," Marsha Bianco says. That's inspiring advice for all of us. ♡

Dear Marsha,

So often we buy into the hype that people are into their own things and they don't want to get involved. I'm so grateful that on May 27th, on Southwest flight 1265, that was not a decision you chose to make.

I thank God for your hands, I thank God for your skills, but most of all I thank you for your heart. You could have just sat there and said, "I don't want to get involved," but you did not. You are a phenomenal woman and no good deed goes unrewarded. Our paths may have accidentally crossed but you rose to the occasion in grand style.

I can never thank you enough for your willingness to assist my husband during his medical crisis on the plane. In a normal situation on the ground, in a hospital, anything can go wrong, but to be able to remain cool, calm and collected in the air, now that takes skill. Any medical facility should be grateful to have you. I will always remember you and keep you in my prayers.

Sending you God's continued blessings.

Sincerely,

Claudia Haskins



Drugs & Pregnancy



PHARMACIST CORNER

by Gary Metalak

The news media has made us well aware of the hazards of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use during pregnancy. The physical, intellectual, social and functional development of a child may be impaired by the maternal use of these substances. Unfortunately, many prescription and non-prescription drugs create similar

hazards. This was never more evident than the thalidomide catastrophe in the 1950's. About one-third of the women taking thalidomide during the first trimester gave birth to infants with birth defects. This tragedy made us painfully aware of the potential consequences of taking any medication during pregnancy.

It has now become the responsibility of each woman of childbearing age to consider carefully her use of drugs, both prescription and non-prescription. Pregnancy is a symptom-producing event and has the potential of causing women to increase their intake of drugs, with the potential being that the fetus will be nurtured in a sea of chemicals. The decision to administer a drug during pregnancy should be made only after a risk-benefit appraisal between a woman and her physician. Except for a prenatal vitamin with folic acid (folic acid can prevent certain defects), the safest advice is to avoid everything else. This, however, may not be possible.

At the hospital, we have a 1,200-page

reference book that discusses the safety of drugs in pregnancy. The book uses the FDA system which classifies drugs into five categories ranging from being safe during pregnancy to causing known abnormalities. We would be happy to share this information with any physician. Unfortunately, many classifications are based on effects in animals where effects on humans are unknown. Drug manufacturers provide some information, but for obvious ethical reasons, researchers simply cannot test a drug's ability to cause a human birth defect.

Since we don't know the cause of about 60% of birth defects that occur, totally avoiding drugs during pregnancy is no guarantee that a birth defect won't occur. But if avoiding both prescription and non-prescription drugs during pregnancy can reduce the chance of a defect, shouldn't it be done whenever possible? Check with your doctor. Let's give our newborns a defect-free start in life. ♡

Mobile Medicine



We've all seen hospital nurses poring over a patient's chart at the central nursing station and wading through pages of records to learn about medication allergies or a patient's latest lab results.

Those days for the busy nurses at Community Memorial Hospital are coming to an end. Last fall CMH became one of the first hospitals in Ventura County to bring in new mobile computer carts that give the nurses instant access to patient information right at the patient's bedside.

These handy mobile computer nursing carts are called Computers On Wheels (COWS).

Scores of nurses at CMH now use them, including nurses in specialized units like Intensive Care Unit, Critical Care Unit, and on all the medical-surgical floors. Soon, nurses in the maternity department also will have the mobile computer carts.

"CMH is embracing newly developed medical technology as part of its long-term effort to find new ways to improve efficiency and patient care," said Nick Pappas, Director of Information Systems for CMH.

The COWS, with their adjustable computer screens, keyboards, mouse, privacy screens, and drawers for medications, syringes and other supplies, have helped CMH's nurses do their jobs much more efficiently while they spend more time with the patients in their rooms instead of running to a nursing station to review paper charts or retrieve supplies.

"For the nurses the mobile computers are like a one-stop shop," said R.N. Rita Proffitt, CMH's Clinical Informatics Coordinator.

Proffitt, a nurse for 35 years, has been

training other nurses at CMH on the new computers, and she routinely checks on the systems and software. The computers work off a wireless network, and the secure system is internal to the hospital, although users can access the Internet on the computers as well.

"From a technology point of view, one of the great things about the computers is they are wireless and they don't need to be plugged in. And you have access to the entire system," Pappas added. "They are a self-contained unit with a battery pack and can be moved from room to room."

Nurses use the computers at patients' bedsides to enter data about the patient's condition, review a patient's medical history, get information about medications, look up lab or X-ray results, and find a patient's relatives in case of a medical emergency.

"The information is available right away and the patient can be taken care of in a more timely manner," Proffitt explained.

"It's not like a paper chart where you had to wander through the chart. And several people can be in the same patient's chart electronically at the same time on different computers," she said.

Physicians may also use the computers to look up information about their patients. ▾

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 at CMH, 147 N. Brent St., Ventura

• **Congestive Heart Failure Support Group**
5:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m., 4th Wed.
(805) 652-5010

• **Living with Cancer**
3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m., Wednesdays
Contact: Carrie Sundberg,
(805) 652-5010

• **Prostate Cancer Support Group**
6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m., 2nd Thurs.
Contact: May Lee Berry,
(805) 278-6100
Mayleeberry@cancer.org

• **Bariatric Surgery Seminar**
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
Selected Mondays.
Call for more information.
Contact: Pam Sanchez,
(866) 720-6296

• **Bariatric Support Group**
7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m., 3rd Thurs.
Contact: Sara Rayes or
Dr. Helmuth Billy,
(805) 648-2227, ext. 110

• **Mended Hearts**
6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m., 1st Tues.
Contact: Dick Hiser, President,
(805) 646-4636

• **Better Breathers**
3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m., 2nd Wed.
Contact: Juanita Trine,
(805) 652-5346

• **Perinatal Education, Maternity Orientation, Prepared Childbirth, Sibling Class**
Call for more information.
(805) 658-BABY (2229)
www.cmhhospital.org

• **Bittie Babies (Newborn-3 months) or Bigger Babies (3-7 months)**
Various weekly discussions and breastfeeding support.
No pre-registration required.
Contact: Stacy Hebert,
(805) 658-BABY (2229)

• **SuperSitter Courses**
Children 11 years and older.
Learn to be responsible babysitters and how to administer CPR to an infant or child.
(805) 658-BABY (2229)

• **Caregivers Support Group**
3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m., 2nd Fri. Contact:
Arlene Reynolds, (805) 445-1181

• **Lymphedema Support Group**
6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m., 3rd Wed.
Contact: Melissa Stoen,
(805) 644-9620

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

• **Hepatitis C Support Group**
6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m., 1st Tuesday
Contact: Janeen Lyche, RN, FNP
(805) 641-6536

Community Memorial Hospital of San Buenaventura
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