Counseling clinic will train students, help under-served

A new in-service training opportunity will enable graduate students to receive hands-on instruction from licensed, professional instructors and provide counseling services to people in the community who otherwise could not afford them.

The UAB Community Counseling Clinic is a practicum and internship site in the School of Education building and a service of the Counselor Education Program (CEP). It began receiving clients this month.

“Until now, all of our students have been placed in different community agencies for their practica,” says Solange Ribeiro, Ph.D., clinic director and licensed therapist. “With that, some agencies by nature have a niche population they serve. We want our students to have an opportunity for a more rounded experience in which they are exposed to a variety of different clients.”

The clinic will serve pediatric, adult and geriatric clients from 1 to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday in its location in School of Education Room 157. The cost for an individual session is $5. Call 996-2414 for referrals and appointments. A variety of counseling modalities will be available, including cognitive and emotional behavior therapy, parenting and group therapy and counseling for anxiety, depression and relationship issues, among others. Providing affordable and diversity-competent counseling services will fill a void in mental health services in the region and contribute to UAB’s status as a leader in health services to the community, Ribeiro says.

“By offering quality in-house training to these beginning professional students, the CEP will have the opportunity to develop innovative approaches to counselor education and to clinical practice bringing UAB to the forefront as a leader in counseling,” says the CEP vice dean, Glenda Isenhour (not pictured) of the new UAB Community Counseling Clinic — a practicum and internship site in the School of Education that enables graduate students to receive hands-on instruction and training from licensed, professional instructors. For more on the clinic, visit www.uab.edu/counselingclinic.

UABRF provides support for university start-up companies

The learning curve for entrepreneurs is steep, especially if you’ve never fancied yourself a business magnate.

Barry Andrews, Ph.D., Uday Vaidya, Ph.D., and Selvum Pillay — all School of Engineering faculty members and researchers — became the first UAB group to win the contest since its inception in 2004, and they received $100,000 to help start their company Innovative Composite Solutions (ICS).

Innovative Composite Solutions (ICS). Behind the scenes, a great deal of work was done to get the group to the finish line. “Our mode of thinking had to be adjusted from pure academic research and development to pursuing commercial business opportunities,” Vaidya says. “The UAB Research Foundation (UABRF) helped us in several ways.”

The UABRF helped ICS protect its intellectual property rights and negotiate, manage and monitor its research, option and licensing agreements. UABRF also helped the three colleagues form a business plan to design, develop and manufacture high-end thermoplastic composite components for the military, aerospace, mass transit and other high-demand industries. The groups worked and learned together, and ICS received precious start-up capital from Launchpad.

The UABRF has long history of helping researchers, UAB

The UABRF has an extensive portfolio of inventions, from which both U.S. and foreign patents have been granted, and from which numerous patent applications are pending. It has generated more than 40 start-up companies based on UAB technologies and completed more than 400 option and licensing agreements, generating approximately $46 million in revenues for the university. More than $38 million has been distributed back to UAB, its inventors and its various academic departments by the UABRF, and more than $29 million in research agreements have been negotiated through the UABRF. UAB-based companies are knocking on the door of success in the competition again this year. Nine of the 20 top start-up companies in this year’s competition have UAB ties. The UABRF has helped more than half of those groups lay the groundwork for their companies and prepare to present their ideas to the Alabama Launchpad reviewers and judges, says Deborah Bidanset, Ph.D., assistant director of technology transfer.
Outcasts United coach to deliver public lecture
Luma Mufleh, the inspirational coach and founder of the Fugees Soccer Team, comprising young refugees from war-torn nations, will speak at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25 in the HUC Alumni Auditorium. Mufleh’s experiences are told in the national bestseller Outcasts United, which is the 2010-11 campus Discussion Book. Mufleh will discuss the importance of community and teamwork in bringing about positive social change and the role of athletics in empowering historically oppressed groups and bringing together people from diverse backgrounds.

Nominations sought for Faculty Senate, FPPC elections
The Faculty Senate is seeking nominations for the 2011 election of senators and alternate senators from all academic units and representatives to the Faculty Policies and Procedures Committee from Joint Health Sciences, Optometry and the College of Arts and Sciences. Also, nominations are requested for the chair of the Faculty Policies and Procedures Committee from Joint Health Sciences, which is the 2010-11 campus Discussion Book.

Scale Back Alabama starts this week
The weight-loss program beginning the week of Jan. 24 challenges people to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks. UAB will provide weigh-in and weigh-out locations for its participants. Teams of four will weigh-in Jan. 24-28 and weigh-out April 11-15. Faculty, staff and students who are not part of a team will be assigned a team on location. More information is available on the UAB Wellness website at www.uab.edu/wellness.

Learn to establish, maintain a healthy financial lifestyle
Looking for a more secure financial future but not really sure how to get there? The lunchtime class “Establishing and Maintaining a Healthy Financial Lifestyle” will address the skills you need that will support your life goals.

Conference Center Board Room
Speaker Rick Coleman will focus on the foundations of establishing a solid platform of personal financial knowledge to build upon for the rest of your life:
• What should you do with your 2011 payroll tax break?
• Why will rapid refund loans be harder to get this year?
• What are the Big Three financial setbacks you should be prepared for?

It’s never too late to increase your financial knowledge or improve your financial lifestyle.

The UAB Resource Center Employee Assistance Program offers this free class to all UAB and UAB Health System employees. Space is limited. Call 934-2281 to register.

The UAB Resource Center Employee Assistance Program provides counseling, supervisor consultation, and a variety of educational programs designed to support your quest for health in all areas of life.

For more information about these programs or other Resource Center services, visit The Resource Center online at www.uab.edu/erap.

Commentator Juan Williams to speak here
American journalist and political commentator Juan Williams will deliver a free public lecture during Community Week, UAB’s annual celebration of campus diversity, at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 27 in the HUC Alumni Auditorium.
The UABRF's Top 20 companies will be entering Phase III of the competition in February, and eight finalists will be announced March 5. The top three winning companies will be announced in April.

Bidanset says this year's group of UAB startup compa- nies had many of the same qualities as previous groups. Some were very aware of what they had and what they wanted. Others didn't know where to start.

"We always see a mix of people," Bidanset says. "Some don't know to ask for the help, and we start nursing them through and show them the way they need to go. Some say they want to start a company, and that's as far as they've gotten. Some come in with really great technology and know they want to start a company. They work with us from the very beginning. They look to us for guidance on how to bring UAB technology into their company."

Having an impact

Alabama Launchpad is a not-for-profit organization created to support and promote high-growth entrepre- neurship and innovation in Alabama. It is a partnership among the state's research universities and the business community, and the Alabama Launchpad Business Plan Competition attracts many participants each year.

Every new business needs start-up capital, and the top three in the competition receive hefty monetary prizes ranging from $100,000 for first place to $25,000 for third.

ICS was the first UAB start-up company to win first place, but others have finished in the top three in previous years.

"We're very glad to see UAB do so well," says Glenn Kinzer, director of Alabama Launchpad. "We're very pleased by the hard work a number of folks at UAB have put into Launchpad. The UABRF has been encourag- ing companies to enter Launchpad, and other parts of the campus also are very involved. Douglas Ayers, Ph.D., associate professor of marketing and director of the MBA programs at UAB, is on the Launchpad Board of Directors. They have helped them think about issues start- up companies face from the business-model perspective."

Indeed, translating the science of a therapeutic compound or any new product or research tool is essential to success in the competition.

"Your business plan is not the same as that for an NIH award," says David Warwood, Ph.D., chief executive offi- cer of the UABRF. "You've got to reach a different audi- ence. All of the science has to be completely compelling and defensible, and then it has to be flavored with 'and here's why this makes business sense if you want to make an investment in it.' It's going to meet a market need that so far has not been met, and there's a real opportunity to make more from this than you will have to put into it."

With Innovative Composite Solutions, for example, we sort of nurtured and mentored them through the process to the point where they understood what the judges would want to know."

This included helping the group conduct mock presenta- tions of their business plan and providing critiques.

"This is not always an area that's familiar to folks who are primarily driven by research." Warwood says. "This ven- ture into business is a different world." Vaidya agrees with Warwood. He says the mock presenta- tions they conducted with the UABRF group provided an excellent critique.

"This helped us greatly in tailoring our presentation to Alabama Launchpad." Vaidya says: "The UABRF was also key in formalizing the exclusive license of our company's thin-walled carbon-composite products, and they continue to provide strong support in terms of intellectual property, patenting issues and opportunities between UAB research and development and opportunities for ICS."

Researchers are encouraged to work closely with the UAB Research Foundation to secure disclosures, protect intellectual property and file patent applications before disclosing the information publicly.

"If you think you have an invention, disclose it to us promptly — before you submit a manuscript for publica- tion and before you address a meeting, conference, semi- nar or symposium," Bidanset says. "We can help in these areas and with business development advice."

The UABRF is online at www.uab.edu/uabrf. Contact information for the UABRF is online at www.uab. edu/uabrf.
A five-year extension of a groundbreaking longitudinal study of youth health will create the most thorough dataset ever generated on family and peer relations.

Healthy Passages II is a five-year, $9 million, multi-site grant award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It will be used to assess factors that influence disparities in health, educational and social outcomes across diverse racial and ethnic populations and better understand the primary influences associated with obesity, early sexual initiation, substance use, violence and delinquency.

“Healthy Passages is using a broad lens to figure out the things that individually influence behavior and interact to influence behavior,” says Susan Davies, Ph.D., associate professor of public health and principal investigator on the project. "Adolescent risk-taking is rarely the result of a single factor — a dysfunctional family, deviant peer group, under-performing school or a dangerous neighborhood. Similarly, risk cannot be prevented by a single protective factor — involved parents, good education, religious affiliation or a high IQ. Rather, it’s the combination and interaction of those things and others.”

“Outside influences make earlier intervention a bigger need than ever before,” Davies says. “They are exposed to things now at an age when they are not developmentally ready to comprehend and understand how to make good decisions. We can change that. We can provide them with these skills that will help them throughout their lives.”

Data has been collected from 5,200 fifth-grade youth and their caregivers in Birmingham, Houston and Los Angeles since 2005; this grant extension will enable the team to follow the cohort until they are two years past high school. The objective is to provide an empirical basis for policies and interventions to promote the health and development of adolescents and adults.

The study will assess a broad array of health behaviors, including physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, alcohol and drug use; intentional injury and violence; sexual behaviors and health-seeking behaviors.

Outcomes examined will include mental health, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, disability, illness and cardiovascular disease risk. Educational and social outcomes measured will include academic achievement, school dropout rates and social adjustment. Ethnologic factors will include genetics, temperament, parenting style, peer relations, emotional connectedness, poverty, availability of health care, media influences and neighborhood environment.

Researchers from health behavior, biostatistics, psychology and sociology are involved in the project, which was led by Frank Franklin, Ph.D., before his retirement from the School of Public Health.

**Intervention programs**

Davies says the key to the study was gaining access to fifth-grade children — a time when they have yet to experience significant peer pressure but have begun forming perceptions. Researchers were able to ask them questions and gain insight into what drives their beliefs and the attitudes that ultimately shape their behaviors.

“You’re far enough ahead of the game when you get to them in the fifth grade that we can intervene on those beliefs and attitudes before they ever get exposed to those risk opportunities,” Davies says. “Middle-school years is the time that kids are caught from behind or under-prepared for the kinds of risks to which they are going to be exposed, and at that point it’s too late to talk about these things with them — certainly in Alabama.”

Davies says that doesn’t mean talking to fifth graders about condoms.

“The great thing is you don’t have to,” she says. “You can talk about positive future aspirations — identifying their strengths and figuring ways to apply them in ways that make their weaknesses irrelevant. You will be able to find ways to connect them to positive school, social and community groups and organizations. You often will find that youth naturally want to engage in risks much less. This approach is much more effective than telling kids ‘don’t do this, and don’t do that.’”

**Sound policy is key**

Of the 5,200 students and caregivers taking part, almost 1,600 are from the Birmingham metro area, and Davies says the follow-up rate at all three sites is high.

“We have a good representative sample that mirrors the general population of U.S. adolescents and families from public and private schools and across the socioeconomic spectrum,” she says. The sample in Birmingham includes Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic adolescents and parents.

“We hope to collect and analyze all of these data during the next five years and disseminate them broadly — to researchers, practitioners and policy makers — so that interventions can be developed to educate families, schools and communities to reduce risk behaviors and increase protective factors,” she says.

“School administrators will tell you they can predict in third grade which students are going to drop out of school before they reach the 12th grade,” Davies says. “Similarly, you can predict which kids are going to initiate sex at an earlier age and which kids are going to be at increased risk for violence, substance abuse or delinquency.”

Intervening at an earlier age has two other advantages, Davies contends. “It’s less expensive and more effective in the long run if children are engaged earlier,” she says. “The earlier we identify with those at risk and engage with protective activities, the better off we are and our communities. It’s a tremendous investment to do early prevention in kids. Certainly our data are going to be able to argue very strongly of the need for that.”

“Early-intervention programs help preadolescents understand themselves and others to build better relationships, make healthy decisions and prepare for a positive future,” Davies says. “These are just as important as math, science and literature but rarely given the priority they deserve.”

**Three proteins linked to Alzheimer’s disease**

Three proteins linked to Alzheimer’s disease have dramatic effects in most patients,” says John Trojanowski, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor in the Departments of Neurology and Neurobiology and lead author of the study. “Rather than thinking about individual cells dying, we are thinking about abnormalities in the way groups of neurons fire together as a cause of cognitive impairment in AD.

“Currently, we only have a few drugs to treat Alzheimer’s disease, and those do not have dramatic effects in most patients,” said Roberson. “It is exciting to me that our results might point to a new direction for developing drugs to treat this dreaded disease.”

The three proteins are amyloid beta (Ab), tau, and Fyn. Ab collects into aggregates in the brains of AD patients. Fyn is an enzyme that regulates other proteins by adding small phosphate chemical groups to them. Fyn cooperates with Ab to increase cognitive deficits in mice. The protein tau makes up part of the “skeleton” of the cell and aggregates into tangles in the brains of AD patients.

The research team used mice that were engineered genetically to produce large amounts of Ab or Ab plus Fyn in the brain. These mouse models replicate many symptoms of AD. They then used genetics to determine whether or not reducing tau levels might have beneficial effects in the mice. The results of the study were published in the Jan. 12 issue of the Journal of Neuroscience. Previous studies have shown that AD mice have abnormal, seizure-like discharges during which many neurons fire at the same time. The findings indicate that tau reduction blocks this network dysfunction.

“We show, by putting an electrode into individual cells in the network, that neurons affected by Ab have an imbalance between the excitatory and inhibitory input onto the cells — they are still getting excitatory input, but the inhibitory input is greatly reduced,” said Roberson.

“This may be why the neurons are all firing together abnormally. Tau reduction blocks this excitation-inhibition imbalance, which probably is how it corrects the network dysfunction.”
Treating depression may help prevent weight gain in women

Belinda Neemham, Ph.D., had been to Washington D.C. before for family vacations, and she did all of the normal things tourists do — visit museums, memorials and landmarks.

She didn’t get to go inside the walls of Congress to see how it operated, however, until this past December. Neemham, assistant professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of Sociology and Social Work, was invited by the Society for Women’s Health Research to brief Congress on the topics of women, depression and obesity.

Neemham’s study findings, published in the June 2010 issue of the American Journal of Public Health, confirmed the relationship between depression and abdominal obesity, which has been linked to increased risk for cancer and cardiovascular disease. She was one of four researchers asked to brief congressional aides and their staffs on this issue.

In Neemham’s sample of young adults during a 15-year period, those who initially reported high levels of depression gained weight at a faster rate than others in the study; however, those who already were overweight did not experience changes in depression.

The finding is important, Neemham says, because it means treating depression can help prevent obesity and the risk of obesity-related diseases.

“It’s another reason to take depression seriously and also to think about the physical consequences of mental health problems,” Neemham says.

Neemham’s findings were true for men and women. However, more than twice as many women experience depression as men, according to numerous sources. Because of that, the Society for Women’s Health Research believes women are at a greater risk for obesity, too.

“One on an individual level it doesn’t really matter. Women and men who experience the same levels of depression will experience the same increases in obesity over time. But because depression is twice as likely to effect women, it becomes more of a women’s health issue,” Neemham says.

Adolescent well-being

Most of Neemham’s previous research has focused on adolescent depression and the consequences for young adult health and well-being.

Neemham now is trying to replicate her most recent study in a sample of adolescents and young adults. She hopes to look at the same relationship of depression and obesity and its affects on the the transition to adulthood. “It’s not clear if this same pattern will hold up for people in different age groups,” she says.

One of the reasons Neemham became interested in studying adolescents and

Therapies ease men’s incontinence after prostate surgery

Behavioral therapies such as pelvic-floor-muscle training and bladder-control strategies can reduce incontinence episodes by more than 50 percent in men following prostate-cancer surgery, according to new research from the UAB Center for Aging and the Birmingham/Atlanta Veterans Affairs Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center. The findings, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) on Jan. 12 indicate that these therapies can improve bladder control and enhance quality of life.

Incontinence is common in men following prostate-cancer surgery, and while it improves in most men in the months following surgery, up to 65 percent of men may still have some leakage after one year. The UAB researchers followed 208 men ages 51-84 with persistent incontinence. Most subjects were five years post-surgery, with a range of one to 17 years after surgery.

One group of men received eight weeks of behavioral therapy administered during 4 visits. This group saw a 55 percent decrease in incontinence episodes, down from an average 28 episodes a week to 13. A second group, who received the behavioral therapy and additional treatment via biofeedback and electrical stimulation of the pelvic muscles, had a 51 percent decrease.

“Our finding indicate that no matter how long it’s been since surgery, behavioral interventions can help men reduce the number of incontinent episodes they experience,” said Patricia Goode, M.D., professor in the Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care and lead author of the study. “There is no guarantee that they’ll be completely dry, but behavioral therapy will help reduce incontinence and improve quality of life.”

Behavioral therapy, first described in the late 1940s, consists of pelvic-floor-muscle training — learning which muscles to squeeze and strengthen to close the urethra — and bladder-control strategies, which include actively using the muscles to prevent leakage, fluid-management skills and maintaining a bladder diary.

“Behavioral therapy works, but unfortunately many men are not aware that it is an option or don’t know where to find the therapy,” said Kathryn Burgio, Ph.D., professor of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care and a study co-author.

“Making this sort of therapy more easily accessible will be even more important as the Baby Boom generation ages and the number of men developing prostate cancer increases.”

Goode says some physical therapists offer behavioral therapy, and two organizations maintain a database of prac- tioners, the National Association for Continence and the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society. UAB has a Continence Clinic that offers behavioral therapy.

The study also found that biofeedback and pelvic floor electrical stimulation, which have been used to treat incontinence since the 1980s, also were effective when combined with behavioral tech- niques, but did not lead to better results than the behavioral therapy alone.

“Biofeedback works for some men,” said Burgio, “but our study would suggest that it is not an essential treatment com- ponent for all men undergoing behavioral ther- apy following prostate surgery. Goode and Burgio say there are surgical options for the treatment of male incontinence, but they are invasive expensive and not without risk. Behavioral therapy could be a good first treatment for men following prostate-cancer surgery.

“Making the message is that there are non- invasive options that can mitigate incontinence and improve quality of life,” said Goode. “Men, their families and health-care providers need to be more aware of the value and benefits of behavioral therapy.”
The area surrounding the South African town of Piet Retief’s is immense and hardy. It is a timber-growing region, with trees and lumber lining both sides of the roads heading out of town as far as the eye can see. Occasionally a little road or trail will appear among the tall trees. It’s the orphans of the small villages along them that stir the heart of several UAB employees. They have been to this land for the past two years to bring the most valuable love and hope.

Respiratory Therapist Phillip Hood and nurses Melissa Garner and Beth Craig will leave again Jan. 28 for a 10-day journey into this part of the world where medical care is a luxury.

“This is just something we’ve very passionate about,” Hood says. A few years ago, Hood and his wife Wendy, a former UAB nurse, decided they wanted to use their medical skills to help children somewhere in the world. They had no idea where they wanted to go, but they knew they wanted to do something.

“It’s just something we felt strongly about,” Hood says. “You’ve heard people say they have a calling. Our calling was to reach out to orphaned children.”

As fate would have it, Len Weston, minister of Wellspring Ministries in Birmingham, visited the Hood’s Daystar Christian Center church in Gadsden and spoke of the need of the children in the area. The local church provides the care it can in the form of medical supplies and food to 400 of an estimated 2,000 orphans near it. After hearing Weston speak, the Hoods knew South Africa was where they wanted to go. They made their first trip in 2008. In 2009, they added Garner, other caregivers and construction workers who helped to build a water supply in one village — a much needed resource for the area. Craig is joining this year’s team for the first time.

In the area, children and adolescents care for most of the infants and toddlers. Hood has seen children as young as 8 serve as the primary caregiver for infants. The AIDS epidemic in the area is one reason; the need for adults to serve as the primary caregiver for infants.

COUNSELING CLINIC

CONTINUED from page 1

leader in counselor education,” Ribeiro says. “This will provide a forum for collaboration between the CEP, the School of Education and other campus units and enable the clinic to contribute to the UAB mission as a leader in research.”

The clinical faculty includes Ribeiro, Larry Tyson, Ph.D., program coordinator; Michael Brooks, Ph.D., associate professor of counselor education; Glenda Isemhour, Ph.D., assistant professor of counselor education and Jacqueline Swank, Ph.D., assistant professor of counselor education. The faculty are licensed, professional counselors in Alabama, and one is a certified play therapy supervisor.

Students will staff the clinic under direct supervision of the five counselors. Prospective clients will be screened prior to their visit to the clinic, and those whose needs appear to be beyond the level of student competence will be referred to a faculty professional. The clinic facilities possess equipment that enables live observation of all sessions, and faculty will provide live supervision as needed.

“All of our students will have the same level of supervision,” Ribeiro says. “We can interact during a session if needed, and we can debrief and engage the students immediately afterward. It really should benefit us, the students and the clients because we can see how and what they are doing, and we’ll have a better idea of the skills that need to be further developed.”

On-the-job training

The CEP, in its 42nd year, prepares graduate students to become school, community, mental health and/or rehabilitation counselors. Students are required to participate in two levels of clinical experience — practicum and internship — after completing coursework and passing a comprehensive examination.

The practicum experience is 100 hours of field experience, 40 of which must be spent providing counseling services directly to clients. At least half of those 40 hours must be providing individual counseling; 10 may be in assessment activities, and 10 hours may be in group-leadership work. During practicum, students receive one hour of individual supervision and 90 minutes of group supervision per week from program faculty.

The internship comprises 600 hours of field experience, 240 of which must be direct contact with clients. Students are expected to develop all areas of concentration-specific practice needed by a counseling professional employed in that setting. During this phase of training, one hour of individual supervision is provided by the site supervisor, while group supervision continues to be provided by program faculty.

“It’s an in-depth, hands-on, intense program,” Ribeiro says. The CEP recently received an eight-year accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs and holds its Council on Rehabilitation Education accreditation until 2015.

Exploring partnerships

The Counselor Education Community Clinic will partner with the UAB Wellness Center to fill voids each entity cannot meet, but it will not encroach UAB students. The clinic will provide services for students after they graduate and spouses and family members of UAB students who are not eligible for Counseling & Wellness Center services.

“We aren’t competing, we are partnering,” says Susan Hart, director of the Counseling & Wellness Center. “I graduated from the Department of Education, and I know the importance of training. I think the counselor education program understands our role and they don’t want to interfere with the mandate and mission we have. But they have opportunities to help people on campus and in the community who we can’t help. I see that as a wonderful blending of what we have to offer.”

Consultation with professionals from area agencies, including the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, The Crisis Center, Lovelady and others, revealed that clients served by these agencies would benefit from low-cost counseling services. Area children and their families who seek mental health services also would benefit.

“The service is at a very low cost for the client,” Ribeiro says of the $5 fee. “That is not intended to financially support the clinic; it’s for reasons of accountability. We want the clients to put something into it so they will value it.”

The majority of funding for the clinic comes from the College of Arts and Sciences and professional training courses and workshops hosted by the Counseling Education Program during the year. Fees collected will be used for clinic and internship expenses.

Visit www.uab.edu/counselingclinic for more information.

Melissa Garner, clinical research nurse in pulmonary, allergy and critical care, will leave again Jan. 28 for a 10-day journey into a part of the world where medical care is a luxury.

coming from all directions to see what they called the American doctors or American nurses. It spread by word of mouth very quickly that medical treatment was available.”

Hood said one particular patient caught their attention this past year — an 18-month-old who was in dire need of medical care.

“He was lethargic and running a fever,” Hood recalled. “We were very fortunate because we had enough money to send him to a hospital for the antibiotics he needed. We don’t know if he would have survived had he not gotten treatment.”

The most common problems caregivers see on their visits are headaches — many brought on by high blood pressure — and respiratory issues. Doctors’ offices have donated inhalers and Tylenol in the past. Hood’s team members write out directions on how to use the products, and interpretors explain to the villagers how to use the medicine.

They also put together numerous first-aid kits for area caregivers that they leave behind after they leave, and they train them how to use the supplies.

“We train the caregivers on how to clean out wounds, use ace bandages properly and apply antibiotic ointment,” Hood says. “We also show them how to teach villagers to wash their hands, brush their teeth and other basic hygiene maintenance. We do this type of training for the caregivers who live with the orphans.”

Hood’s team is seeking supplies and donations for their upcoming trip. Items needed include antibiotic cream, antifungal cream, toothbrushes, small tubes of toothpaste and small toys for the children. If you would like to contribute, contact the Hood at philando@uab.edu or send tax-deductible donations to Daystar Christian Center, 3400 West Meighan Blvd., Gadsden, AL 35904, memo African missions.
Margaret Feller is thankful for many things, but the one thing at the top of her list these days is the stimulus funds awarded by the federal government. It’s the reason she has a job as a research assistant in the UAB Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care. “Hopefully people will see the money is going to good use,” she says. “I know I appreciate it.”

Feller had her stamp on the division in a little more than a year, showing drive, determination and a willingness to adapt and step in when needed — even when it meant presenting research findings at the Gerontological Society of America meeting in New Orleans. As a result, she has been named January’s Employee of the Month.

All Ahmed, M.D., professor of gerontology, geriatrics and palliative care, hired Feller and says she immediately stood out as one of the most proactive, dependable and compassionate research assistants or colleagues he has ever had. “She is hardworking, detail-oriented and sincere,” Ahmed says. “Regardless of how many concurrent projects we are working on, she is always able to provide a timely, thoughtful response to all the details of each one of them.”

No project showed Feller’s skill more than preparing research for presenta- tion for numerous national meetings — including a project she presented at the Gerontological Society of America meeting. All told, Ahmed’s team submitted more than 30 abstracts this past year and presented more than 20. Feller took over the administration of those abstracts and completed the process in a smooth fashion. “If submitting this many abstracts from a single team in one year is not a world record, it must be pretty close to it,” Ahmed says. “And she was in charge of all of them.”

“She played a key role in coordinating geriatric heart failure research for these meetings,” says Mustafa Ahmed, M.D., resident in graduate medical education. “Even arranging for one presentation requires a huge amount of effort. I was one of those presenting research there, and I am thankful to Margaret for her invaluable help.”

Feller went a step further for one faculty member who couldn’t make the trip to present findings — she prepared the abstracts, develop abstracts based on my projects and even help finalize our poster presenta- tion quickly. “Margaret was able to step in and present the findings in an admirable fashion,” Bearden says. “She also recently helped me to prepare for a national meeting, and I would not have felt as confident or ready to present our findings if she had not assisted me.”

In addition to coordinating many of the division’s research projects, Feller directs new students and faculty into areas of research that support their interests. “A year ago, I was a novice in the area of epidemiological research and its prin- ciples, and I needed someone to help steer me in the right direction,” says Tony Winters, an undergraduate student and part of Ahmed’s research team. “Margaret has been the perfect teacher and guide. She has helped me develop skills to analyze data for my research proj- ects, develop abstracts based on my projects and even help finalize my poster presenta- tion for a national scientific meeting.”

“She has always been available and willing to help me learn and further my research goals anytime I need assistance,” Winters says.

Other researchers who collaborate with Ahmed outside of UAB also have had posi- tive experiences with Feller. They say she works hard and has acclimated to her posi- tion quickly. “I have found her to be outstanding in every way and extremely productive,” says Wilbert Aronow, M.D., clinical professor of medicine at New York Medical College. He met Feller and watched her in action at the American Heart Association meet- ing in Chicago this past fall. “I understand why Dr. Ahmed says he couldn’t have pre- sented 17 abstracts at the American Heart Association without her,” Aronow says.

The number of projects Feller juggling could lead anyone to have some sleepless nights. But Feller tries to head those off by staying organized — a trait she says she’s always had. She fields many e-mails from co-workers and students asking for help, and she does her best to keep fewer than 50 messages in her inbox at all times. “I don’t wait file an e-mail until I know the task is done,” she says. Her time spent as a Peace Corps volunteer in Suriname from 2005 to 2007 also taught her much about helping and working with others. “I lived in the Amazon with an African tribal community,” she says. “There were no modern conveniences — no electricity, running water or Internet. In order to be the most effective at your work, you have to be able to put yourself into their shoes, try to figure out their way of thinking so you know best how to handle the work the community wants you to do. The experience really taught me a lot about the different ways people view the world.”

If you know someone that should be Employee of the Month, send letters of nomination to Kelly/Mayer at kmayer@uab.edu.

Feller uses tribal lessons to manage multiple difficult tasks

OneRepublic to perform at UAB’s Alys Stephens Center

UAB’s Alys Stephens Center and the UAB Office of Student Involvement Blase Productions will present OneRe- public at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 20 at the center. Tickets are $37.50 and $16 for UAB students with valid ID. Tickets will go on sale Tuesday, Jan. 18. Call 975-2787 or visit www.AlysStephens.org.

OneRepublic shot to fame on MySpace in 2007 with their hit song “Apologize,” captivating thousands of fans with their clean, spare, orchestral rock sound before they even had a record. The band was started in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 2003 by writer, lead vocalist, guitarist and pianist Ryan Tedder, after he spent two years working intensely with per- former and producer Timbaland. That hit was not the song’s original ver- sion, but a remix headed by Timbaland, who signed them to his Mosley Music Group, the first rock group on the label. The original appears on “Dreaming Out Loud,” the band’s debut album, released in late 2007. According to PR Newswire, the re- mixed single of “Apologize,” featured on Timbaland’s “Shock Value,” became the biggest radio airplay hit in the history of the Top 40 radio in North America, until its record was broken by “Blinding Love” by Leona Lewis, ironically also co-written by Tedder. It peaked at No. 1 for eight consecutive weeks on the Billboard Pop 100 chart and reached the top three on the Bill- board Hot 100. The song was a massive hit internationally, reaching No. 1 in 16 countries.

OneRepublic is Tedder, Zach Filkins on guitar and backing vocals, Drew Brown on guitar, Brent Kutzle on bass and cello and Eddie Fisher on drums. One differ- ence from other bands is that the mem- bers of OneRepublic are “always rotating instruments. Sometimes we forget who plays what on a song,” Kutzle says.

In little more than a year, research assistant Margaret Feller has put her stamp on the UAB Division of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Palliative Care. She has shown drive, determination and a willingness to step in when needed. These qualities have earned her the honor of Employee of the Month for January.
Prepare to be mystified! This duo presents a high-tech stage show that combines drama, comedy, romance, and suspense that's chock-full of elaborate stage illusions that include dazzling special effects and magnificent set design!

*Valid while supplies last. Not good on previously purchased tickets. Offer expires 1/27/11.


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Friday, January 28
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