



The Vellore Advocate

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

WEB SITE: www.vellorecmc.org

Volume XXVIII Number 2

“Not to be Ministered Unto, But to Minister”

Fall 2004

Former Dean of College of Nursing Planning Visit to Vellore Board USA



The Vellore CMC Board is pleased this September to honor one of our living legends, Ms. Aleyamma Kuruvilla, former Dean of the College of Nursing. Ms. Kuruvilla is a towering figure in the history of CMC. She came to CMC

as a nursing student in 1944 and after receiving her degree, joined the faculty and remained until her retirement in the 1980 s.

Among Ms. Kuruvilla s many accomplishments perhaps the most significant was her implementation in the 1960 s of a system of dual appointments for CON faculty, where faculty members are responsible both for a part of the educational curriculum and also for maintaining nursing care in a section of the hospital. Numerous benefits flow from this arrangement. Standards of care in the wards and clinics are maintained at a high level, and training of nursing students is kept practical and person-oriented. Experience in the hospital feeds back to the classroom, allowing for a close integration of book learning and practical experience.

Ms. Kuruvilla, who lives in the Indian state of Kerala, is expecting to celebrate her career with us the evening of Friday, September 24 at Taste of India, in Bergenfield, New Jersey. Special guest, Dr. George M. Chandy, Director of CMC, will share his perspective on Ms. Kuruvilla s career and the future of the College of Nursing, which she did so much to shape. This event signals the beginning of the Board campaign, “A Vision for the Future: Building for A New Century.” The Board intends to raise \$1 million to assist with the construction of a new campus at CMC. The crown jewel of the new campus will be an entirely new facility for the College of Nursing. (see story on page 3, and more information on the web site.)

Support Continues from American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Program

Computer laboratories are up and running. Equipment for the blood bank is regularly delivered and installed. During the fiscal year 2003-2004, the Board realized \$225,000 from ASHA grants. Another \$250,000 is expected by the end of the third quarter and \$150,000 by the end of 2004, when both grants end.

CMC contracted with R&J Associates, Delhi for professional services on design and bid process for the ASHA funded pneumatic system that will deliver laboratory samples and pharmacy prescriptions, installation to be completed by late 2005.

Negotiations for a new grant of \$271,500 to equip basic sciences facilities will be finalized by the end of September 2004.

Response to an application submitted for \$325,000 to set up a brachytherapy high dose rate treatment unit is anticipated in the spring of 2005.

In Memory

Naomi Carman died on April 27, in Indiana, one week short of her 98th birthday. Naomi and her husband, Dr. John Carman, who died in 1978, served in India for 41 years, sponsored by the American Baptist Mission Society. Twenty-three of those years were served at Vellore, Dr. Carman as Professor of Surgery and later as Director, while Naomi served in many capacities. She established the Dodd Memorial Library at the Hospital, and started the Department of Medical Records. She became the Treasurer and Head of the Accounts Department, establishing programs still in use today. She led bible studies and initiated many programs for the students at the college and hospital.



From 1969 to 1972, she served as Executive Director of the Vellore Board USA. Semi-retired, she continued as a member of the Vellore Board, an Honorary Director, a Corporate member and Treasurer. She continued accepting speaking engagements around the country on behalf of Vellore for many years.

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

We have been privileged to have as our guest this summer the Rev. Valson Thampu of New Delhi. Currently serving as vice chair of the Vellore CMC Council, Rev. Thampu seeks to foster the “culture of caring” in both India and the United States. He observes that true caring requires a spiritual base. It is easy to care for our family members and friends, but it is hard and unnatural for us to care for the stranger. Only through spiritual discipline and practice, in a supportive community of others of like mind, can we prepare ourselves for the task of caring for a suffering world.



Rev. Thampu sees the United States as a country with a strong Christian tradition of hospitality and welcome for the stranger. But the tradition is threatened in an era of terrorism and suspicion. It is important now, more than ever, to study and discern how our commitment to caring should be expressed in our institutional and professional relationships. Do we turn inward, giving the cold shoulder to people from distant and strange places? Or do we respond to the atmosphere of threat with a new and more disciplined commitment to caring on a global scale?

Our recent experience with American visa officers and government security agencies suggests we are in danger of losing our national tradition of hospitality and generosity. Can people of faith, standing up for the principles of caring in India and the United States join hands to restore our humanity? I pray that God will give us strength.

Sincerely,

Lou Knowles

(Copies of Rev. Thampu's sermon, “The Spirituality of Hospitality,” delivered at Riverdale Presbyterian Church on July 18, 2004 are available on request from the Vellore Board office.)

Palliative Care Staff Care for Malliga

Malliga, a 40 year old mother of three, was diagnosed with cancer of the uterus. She underwent major surgery at Vellore. Difficult social circumstances prevented her from coming back for full treatment, and six months later, the cancer recurred. Although given radiotherapy and a second operation, the cancer had become incurable. She was referred to the palliative care service for treatment of pain and support of her family.

Although 90% of costs for her four month stay in the hospital and treatment were covered by the gynecology, radiology and oncology departments at CMC, costs for travel, food and loss of daily wages were too much for the family to handle.

The palliative social worker visits all patients within a radius of 40 kms. from Vellore. Home visits tell the social worker how desperate circumstances are. He found that Malliga's family lived in a dilapidated



Patient's mother-in-law, husband, Malliga and son welcoming the cow

mud hut, which had been mortgaged. As debts mounted, they sold their main source of livelihood, their one cow.

The three children faced the impending death of their mother and possible loss of their home. The family's income was less than \$1 a day. Malliga's greatest worry was not her own illness, but how her children would survive. Her physical pain was controlled by medication, given through a donor's generosity and the volunteer nurse taught Malliga and her family ways to keep herself clean and comfortable.

The consensus of the team was that the family needed financial rehabilitation, so they helped the family purchase a cow. The cow and her newborn calf were welcomed by the family with a garland of flowers. The cow is an important and cherished member of this household—a ray of hope, a source of nourishment, a new life even as the mother's own life ebbs away.

The palliative care service in CMC began in November 2002, with a part-time weekly clinic run by the doctors in oncology. Rev. John Lunn, a mission chaplain from Global Ministries (United Church of Christ/Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) serves as a consultant for developing palliative care services. He is in Vellore for four years. CMC sanctioned funding for an interdisciplinary team, and palliative care became a separate unit in 2004. (For more information about Rev. Lunn's work, please visit our website.)

VELLORE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE BOARD (USA), INC.

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 243, New York, NY 10115 • Toll Free: 1-800-875-6370 • Tel: 212-870-2640 • Fax: 212-870-2173

Email: usaboard@vellorecmc.org ■ Web site: www.vellorecmc.org

Louis Knowles
President

Lena Boggiano
Editor

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



The College of Nursing is “Growing in Wisdom and in Stature and in Favor with God and Humanity,” but it is Bursting at the Seams!!

Christians have always been closely associated with the nursing profession in India, with Christ's command to care for the least of these transforming into institutional commitment to the profession in which caring is the pre-eminent virtue. From earliest days, the education of nurses has been a high priority at the Christian Medical College. Nurse training began in 1904 and improved and expanded steadily through the early years, culminating in 1946 with the official organization of a Bachelor degree nursing program. The College of Nursing (CON) was furnished with new classrooms and student residential space about 40 years ago. Located in the heart of the hospital campus, the CON building is a much loved quadrangle with a delightful garden filling its center courtyard. But the realities are that the student body in 40 years has grown from 200 to over 600. In addition to basic nurse training, CON now offers a variety of specialty courses and hope soon to initiate a nurse practitioner curriculum.

The needs for classroom, laboratory and library space simply cannot be met in the present structure. Student housing is overflowing with brilliant and motivated young people, but crowding must be considered an issue when students are expected to concentrate on a demanding curriculum as well as put in long hours of work in wards and clinics.

While it might be possible for the College of Nursing to “rest on its laurels” and continue its current training in the present facility, our institution is now being called to a higher and more demanding role in the new century. Vellore CON was recognized as a collaborating center for nursing and midwifery education by the World Health Organization. This makes it only one of two such Centers in India and one of 36 in the world. In this new capacity, CON will be expected to cooperate with WHO in gathering official health statistics, research projects, and regional training for nursing faculty from other institutions. These tasks, to which God is calling our nursing faculty, simply cannot be accomplished in the context of buildings now almost a half century old.

Added to this new responsibility as a WHO partner, CON is recognized today as a global resource. CON graduates are found in hospitals and as faculty at nursing colleges around the world. As a global resource, CON deserves the support of the worldwide family of friends, alumnae and supporters. Nurses are desperately needed in India and around the world due to the spread of diseases such as AIDS and drug-resistant TB that require extended periods of care and close therapeutic supervision. While the nations continue to invest billions in the instruments of death, we can do no less than to support this institution which produces rank upon rank of the “soldiers of life,” the nurses who are dedicated to the care of the living and the dying.

Senior Training Fellowship (STF) Project Helps Mr. D. Devakumar

Mr. D. Devakumar of Vellore's Department of Nuclear Medicine participated in the Evaluation of Effective Scatter Source Estimation (ESSE) and Triple Energy Window (TEW) scatter compensation methods for Myocardial Perfusion SPECT.

A myocardial perfusion SPECT (Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography) study, also called a cardiac stress-rest test, helps the doctor to evaluate the heart's blood supply.

Research on Nuclear Medicine Imaging Physics in India is not well developed. Learning the modern technology associated with this study was one of the practical benefits of the Fellowship. Results from this research will be useful in changing or modifying protocols, making improvements and increasing the confidence in the diagnosis of Coronary Artery Disease.

Nuclear Medicine Imaging Physics Lab with Monte Carlo simulation facility is not available anywhere in India, although there are many Nuclear Medicine Centers in India. The experience gained at Johns Hopkins University through STF will help to start a new Lab in the Nuclear Medicine Department of CMC. (For more information, visit the web site.)



*Mr. Devakumar, center with Johns
Hopkins staff members*

Minnesota Students Study at Vellore

In the fall of 2004, a total of nine students will participate in the St. Olaf Biology in South India Program. The program arranged by the college and Vellore's Rural Unit for Social Affairs (RUHSA) consists of a 5-day orientation, in which students are given an overview of RUHSA programs. The second phase is an opportunity for students to spend 5 weeks engaged in an independent project.

The program includes lectures, and library work related to the research project. Some of the projects being considered deal with assessing the prevalence of cardiovascular symptoms; children's nutrition; and health care for disabled infants or school aged children.

