



The Vellore Advocate

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

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“Not to be Ministered Unto, But to Minister”

Spring 2003

Dr. Sara Bhattacharji To Visit The U.S.A.

Dr. Sara Bhattacharji, Director of the Ida Scudder Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCEC) at Vellore Christian Medical College (CMC), will be visiting the United States in June. Coming as the guest of the Vellore Board USA, Dr. Bhattacharji will meet with CMC supporters across the country.

Dr. Bhattacharji has been a member of the CMC faculty since the early 1980's. She served for many years with Vellore's Community Health and Development (CHAD) program, developing primary health networks among poor villagers in rural areas.

As director of LCEC for the past three years, she has applied her knowledge of primary care to the problems of the urban poor in Vellore town. She is also supervising a major expansion of the LCEC building to better accommodate outpatients by adding facilities and beds. The completed facility will include

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Dr. Sara Bhattacharji with a patient.

Willeen Smith Joins Vellore Board Staff

Willeen Smith is the new Gifts and Grants Manager at the Vellore Board. A social worker by profession, she brings extensive experience in administering grants and developing and implementing programs.

For over seventeen years, she coordinated a grant program of the Episcopal Church USA, in which she worked with applicants from all parts of the world, including the Churches of North and South India and the Mar Thoma Church. Her work has sent her to many parts of the world and in 1993, she visited India. Willeen was volunteer coordinator of Servas International's NGOs at the United Nations for several years. As director of a private non-profit agency in Ohio, she generated government and private funding to support services for older people. Willeen is delighted to join the Vellore family.



Thanks, Dr. Susy Kurian

The Vellore Board staff thanks Dr. Susy Kurian for her years of faithful service as Deputy Director at CMC Vellore. She has been responsible for providing the information necessary for the Board to apply for, monitor and report on ASHA grants. Susy made the work go smoothly and produced effective results. Beside the ASHA work she continued her regular duties in the pathology department and many other administrative responsibilities. She and her husband George have been gracious hosts to many visitors from the USA.

Dr. Kurian finished her term as Deputy Director in March and turned over her responsibilities to Dr. Priya Abraham from the Virology Department.

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Recently, I visited Stanford University, my alma mater. A motto etched on an old statue of Leland Stanford, Jr., reads: "For science and the advancement of humanity." Stanford and CMC were both founded at the turn of the last century, a time of great optimism. In both cases the founders had high ideals and great aspirations that have inspired generations of academic leaders. A distinction between the two institutions is that Leland Stanford began with faith in science and Ida Scudder began with faith in God.

Ida Scudder also understood that modern scientific method is a providential gift from the hand of God. She took her own degrees from one of the best institutions available in the U.S., Cornell Medical College. Dr. Scudder insisted on excellence in clinical practice and research. It was, in fact, her understanding of the importance of excellence in research and teaching that led her to the conclusion in the 1940's that CMC Vellore should become a coeducational institution. Only through this change could the resources be acquired to cover the cost of a first-rate faculty, laboratories and clinics.

Down through the years, Vellore has distinguished itself as a research institution. CMC Vellore has limited resources, but what it has, it uses wisely. CMC faculty focus on research that will directly benefit humanity through finding new ways to promote health and heal illness in developing countries.

In cooperation with CMC alumni, the Vellore CMC Board has created the Excellence in Academics-Research Endowment. Income from this endowment will stimulate new research projects at CMC, thus helping to insure that CMC will continue for another century to find new ways to use science for the



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The First Winter Symposium at CMC An Unqualified Success

On January 30, 2003, the First Winter Symposium was held at Vellore, presented by CMC staff and alumni from the USA and the UK. Well over 1,000 people registered for the event. The two-day symposium, titled "Cell Biology and Molecular Medicine", featured speakers from internationally renowned medical institutions such as Cambridge, Harvard, Univ. of California at San Diego, Univ. of California at Irvine, The National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore, as well as CMC. The first day focused on hematology and cancer with presenters Dr. Vaskar Saha and Dr. Ron Laskey from the UK, Dr. Anindya Dutta from the USA, and CMC staff Dr. Mammen Chandy and Dr. Alok Srivastava. The high point of the day was a lecture from the UK's Dr. Tim Hunt, the 2001 Nobel Laureate for Cancer Research, who spoke about the cell cycle and its control.

On the second day a variety of topics were covered, from CMC staffer Dr. B. Ramakrishna's lecture on the role of ion transporters in the management of diarrhea, to USA alumnus Dr. K. George Chandy's presentation about potassium channels in cell membranes. US alumni Dr. Shiv Pillai gave an overview of the immune system, followed by Dr. Ajit Varki lecturing on Siglecs, lectins that act as signaling molecules in the immune system. With the enormous success of this first symposium, CMC is already planning others. In December 2003, the topic will be Neurosciences and Psychiatry and in 2005 Infectious Diseases. (For more details, visit our website at www.vellorecmc.org)



Dr. Tim Hunt meeting with students at the symposium.

Mental Health Center Expansion Begun

The much anticipated expansion of the Mental Health Center has been underway these past few months and is scheduled for completion this spring. Under the leadership of Dr. Jacob John, the MHC director, the construction of the new wing has stayed on schedule. The project will provide more space for seeing patients and will greatly enhance the waiting areas for the hundreds of patients who arrive every day.

Blood Bank Recipient of ASHA Grant

American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) awarded a grant to the Vellore Board USA for \$360,000 to be used by Vellore CMC to improve its blood management system as well as increase its pool of blood donors, thereby continuing to set standards for medical care in India. The timing is propitious as the government of India has been introducing stricter controls for blood banks. CMC's blood bank has been recognized by the Indian Government as a Regional Blood Transfusion Center.

Each year about 15,000 donations from relatives of patients, CMC staff and students are processed by a manual system. Through integrated hardware, software and peripheral devices an automated management and tracking system will speed up processing. The turnaround from time of collection to time of use is expected to be reduced from five hours to one. Bar-coding will increase accuracy of traceability of donor samples and blood units. Also a fluorescent stain based system and a Vitros ECI analyzer will more effectively screen for HIV 1 and 2, hepatitis B and C viruses, syphilis, malaria and filarial.

Staff will use a mobile unit equipped with educational aids and blood collection equipment to visit college campuses and voluntary organizations to encourage a wider range of people to donate blood and to make it easy to do so.

Vellore Board Corporate Meeting

On October 18, 2002, Corporate members, guests, and staff gathered to conduct business, receive the reports of the committees, and elect board and corporate members. Corporate member Pat Gass chaired the discussions by guest speakers, Dr. George Chandy, director of CMC Vellore and Mr. Rajat Gupta, Managing Director of McKinsey and Company. Among the guests attending the meeting were India's Permanent Ambassador to the U.N., Vijay K. Nambiar and Pramatesh Rath, Consul General.

DONATE THROUGH THE VELLORE BOARD WEB SITE

Donate to the Vellore Board through our website using your credit card. Log on to our "Contribute" page (www.vellorecmc.org/Contributions.htm) where you'll find a link for the Network for Good. They provide us, free of charge, with a safe, secure web page for donations. You can be assured that 100% of your donation is promptly forwarded to us.

Senior Training Fellowship Experience Offers Hope of Affordable Cancer Treatment at CMC

The Vellore Board's Senior Training Fellowship grant awarded to Dr. Nylla Shanthly, a physician in the Department of Nuclear Medicine, could lead to a substantial saving in the cost of treating cancer patients at CMC.

Dr. Shanthly specializes in research to identify and treat major organ and breast tumors. Learning about exciting new work being done by Dr.



Dr. Nylla Shanthly

Mathew L. Thankur, a pioneer in radiochemistry at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, she contacted him and was invited to visit as an observer in his research laboratory.

During her three-month experience, Dr. Shanthly worked closely with Dr. Thakur and his team, learning peptide chemistry and labeling a new peptide which could be used in diagnosing and treating breast, ovarian, colon and prostate cancers. Dr. Shanthly returned to CMC to work toward the approval of this new treatment. Trial studies and approval from several medical governing committees will be needed before the new procedure can be implemented. If approved, the new treatment could mean not only a major change in the way patients with these tumors are treated, but a significant reduction in the cost of such treatment. Dr. Shanthly estimates that the cost of treating patients could drop from Rs. 40,000 (\$845) to about Rs. 4,000 (\$85). This would have an enormous impact on CMC's ability to not only treat more patients, but to extend such treatment to the poor. (Read Dr. Shanthly's report on our website at www.vellorecmc.org.)

Letter from the President

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physical, psychological and spiritual advancement of humanity. Your gifts help make possible this intellectual legacy for the future of India and all developing countries.

In faith,

Lou Knowles

GIVING WITNESS TO VELLORE'S FUTURE MINISTRY

Jeanette Fieldhouse, born in 1902, was an elementary school teacher in Chicago for over 50 years. A mentor and excellent motivator of young people, she was admired for her dedication to her students.

Jeanette's interest in foreign missions was the result of many visits to Reformed mission stations throughout the world. She was very impressed after spending time at CMC and observing Dr. Ruth Myer's ministry in the microbiology department.



Upon her death, Miss Fieldhouse bequeathed funds to the Thorn Creek Reformed Church of South Holland, Ill., which in turn funded an endowment in the names of Ruth Myers and Jeanette Fieldhouse that will assist the microbiology and virology departments.

Dorothy Clarke Wilson died on March 26, 2003, in Maine. She was an author and biographer of Ida S. Scudder and other prominent figures in the history of Vellore CMC. More information on Mrs. Wilson is available on our website.

Dr. Sara Bhattacharji To Visit The U.S.A.

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the Ida B. Scudder Ward for women and the Charles H. Fish and Lillian Scudder Fish Ward for men.

During her visit to the U.S., Dr. Bhattacharji will report on the many initiatives and programs underway at CMC. She will be speaking in New York, Texas and California as well as other locations. As her arrival date draws closer, check our website: www.vellorecmc.org or call 1-800-875-6370 for details.

Alice Johnson died peacefully at 95 on November 4, 2002. The wife of The Rev. R. Park Johnson, Alice served with him through the Presbyterian Church (USA) in most areas of the Middle East. After his retirement, Park spent years as Planned Giving Associate for the Vellore Board.

Seeing the need to show people the ministry of CMC, Alice and Park organized many trips to Vellore and the surrounding area. On his death, the R.



Park Johnson Education Endowment Fund was created. Alice Johnson also made a bequest and upon her death additional funds were donated for an endowment scholarship fund for nursing students at CMC. This scholarship fund will enable the development of new programs to enhance the quality of nursing care.

Gertrude Nyce died on February 20, 2002, leaving a bequest of an insurance policy to the Vellore Board. She was a Presbyterian missionary with many years of service in India, and in the USA. She also served as Interim Executive Director at the Vellore Board when Rev. Herbert Muenstermann was on sabbatical. Ms. Nyce was a corporate member and had served as Foundation and Grants Associate for the Vellore Board.

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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.