

## Child survivor of domestic violence recovers through advocacy help

BY DAWN BRAZELL

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There are some things you can't unsee, like watching your mother being stabbed 37 times and dying in your arms.

Danielle Richardson, now a mother herself with six children, was 16 when she heard her stepfather storm into the house mad at 2 a.m. and begin attacking her mother. She and her younger brothers ran out to help, but it was too late.

A neighbor came over and administered CPR while she tried to patch the worst of her mother's wounds with sheets and towels. She watched her die twice and be brought back. "I was holding her in my arms. We talked. I promised her I would look after my brothers. I sang songs to her. As children, we were taught our Bible verses. I repeated Psalm 23 over and over. She didn't die alone."

Looking back, Richardson, who's now 42, is amazed at her composure.

"When you get put in a situation and it's a do-or-die, you get incredible strength to do whatever it takes to get it done."

Richardson was one of the featured speakers at MUSC's third annual "Do No Harm" Domestic Violence Awareness rally on Oct. 26 at MUSC's Horseshoe. Other speakers included South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson, Charleston City Police Chief Greg Mullen, Doug Warner of Liza's Life Line and Kathy Gill-Hopple, RN,

### MUSC 'Do No HARM' RALLY



Photo by Sarah Pack

College of Graduate Studies student Andrea Anderson reads a note pinned on a shirt representing a domestic violence victim to commemorate the lives lost in South Carolina to domestic violence. Several speakers participated in MUSC's "Do No Harm" Domestic Violence Awareness rally.

MUSC Health SANE (sexual assault nursing examiner) program director.

Gill-Hopple said it's important to host the event because often people are unaware of the resources that exist to support victims. "Health care providers are afraid to talk about it because of discomfort with how to respond or not knowing what to say or do. Every opportunity that we have to talk about it will help break down those walls."

The MUSC Forensic Nurse Examiner Program provides education throughout

the community and state, promotes awareness and provides leadership among other health care providers, law enforcement, first responders and the judicial professions regarding domestic violence and sexual assault.

Progress is being made. MUSC's domestic violence steering committee has spearheaded two initiatives: rewriting the adult abuse and neglect policy (C7A) to require mandatory screening of all patients and provide a framework for response; and bringing on social workers

to address victims' violence issues. "We are still working on systemwide education and coordinated responses."

Survivors such as Richardson are essential to breaking the silence, she said. "Danielle puts the humanity into the issue. She has lived a remarkable story and helps us all to understand it can happen to anyone, and we should all be willing to step out of our comfort zone to help."

As a child survivor of domestic violence, Richardson knows how critical it is to break the silence. The bottom line of what she endured: "You never recover from that. You just find ways to cope with it."

Though she lost her mother June 18, 1991, the abuse started way before then. It was something no one talked about in the family. It's one reason Richardson started Goodbye Abuse Ministry and works with MUSC's National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center to encourage others to seek help sooner. Richardson said it takes too long for many victims to get help. That's true for her. She only sought out help when one of her daughters, who was 8 at the time, lost her father, who was killed in a home invasion.

She couldn't stand the thought of her daughter, Zykerra, going through what she had. Richardson got them involved with MUSC's Crime Victims Center where they joined a support group. Richardson also sought out private

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2016 Caring Spirit Award  
Meet Suzette  
Psychologist offers solutions



## EXCELLENCE ROUND UP



Silvestri

□ **Gerard A. Silvestri, M.D.**, professor and George C. and Margaret M. Hillenbrand endowed chair in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care in the Department of Medicine, was **named president of the American College of Chest Physicians** as of Nov. 1.

Silvestri is an international expert in lung cancer and interventional pulmonology. He is also vice-chair of medicine for faculty development at MUSC. He has served as past president of the American Association of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology. He is a writer and editor of the American College of Chest Physicians lung cancer guidelines and has authored numerous scientific

articles, book chapters and editorials.

□ **MUSC** received the **first place award for the 2016 Vizient Excellence Award** at the Sept. 29 Vizient Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

**MUSC** won the **Innovation Excellence Award** for adopting and developing digital technologies that enhance health care delivery models. The SNAApp software solution system for advanced practice providers was specifically recognized. The system was developed by **Barton L. Sachs, M.D.**, associate executive medical director at MUSC.

□ **MUSC** won the coveted **Brandon Hall Group bronze award for excellence in the Best Launch of a Corporate Learning University category**.

"MUSC Creates a New Way to Explore Learning Opportunities" was the title for the award submission in collaboration with NetDimensions, MUSC's new learning management platform. **Albany Cromer**, Learning Technologies manager for MUSC Health stated, "Our objective was not simply to replace our learning management system, but rather to foster rich learning experiences. Our new system, MyQuest, supports lifelong learning, which exemplifies the spirit of the Medical University of South Carolina."

"Winning a Brandon Hall Group Excellence Award means an organization is an elite innovator within human capital management. The award signifies that the organization's work represents a leading practice in that HCM function," said Rachel Cooke, COO of Brandon Hall Group and head of the awards program.

The award entries were evaluated by a panel of veteran, independent senior industry experts, Brandon Hall Group analysts and executives based upon the following criteria: fit the need, design of the program, functionality, innovation and overall measureable benefits. Excellence Award winners will be honored at Brandon Hall Group's HCM Excellence Conference, which will be held in January.

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therapy for herself.

"She was the reason I started the quest on getting healed. I needed to find a way I could heal, so I could help her heal."

Healing is a long slow process. Richardson said not only did she and her three younger brothers witness their mother's death, they were in the middle of the fight, trying to break it up to save her life. The emotional scars take a long time to heal.

"My stepfather was an alcoholic and he abused drugs. He was real controlling and a jealous person. There was always something going on — an argument in the house and fights. By us witnessing all those things that happened during that era, there was no support. There was no domestic violence awareness. It was a private family matter that we kept to ourselves. It was a bit embarrassing to say, 'My mom got killed by my dad.' We didn't really have an outlet to express ourselves or say what we felt about it."

She found many people didn't want to hear about it or were unsure what to say. As she was trying to process what happened to her mother, her stepfather was arrested and died two weeks later in jail of a heart attack. She and her siblings were orphans, attending their mother's funeral. It was too much to take in.

To this day, it grieves her when she sees news reports about children who are in domestic violence situations, she said. "I want to be a voice. It's not a private family matter anymore when we're ranking in the top 10 in the United States of men killing women by domestic disputes and these children are being orphaned."

Though recent rankings in the study "When Men Murder Women" show the state is improving in its national ranking, dropping from the first position to the fifth, Richardson wants to see the state out of the top 10. The personal toll is too high. While she was lucky she got help and adopted good coping methods, not all of her brothers fared so well. One, who still suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, is in a mental health prison.

Richardson said she is fortunate that she's a people person. "I just love to help people. That's just me. I love to

write — poems and books and songs. I go to counseling now. That's been a great tool for me because I actually get to be around people who have shared the same experience. We all can bond like a family and lean on each other."

Richardson, who belongs to Ebenezer AME church, said it's important to find support. "My church home embraces me with warm hugs and encouraging words. My faith is important. It helps a lot. It makes you want to work harder to get through. You're looking at the bigger picture on the other side. When you've been through the worst thing that can be done to a child — if you can get through this, you can get through anything. With God's grace, you can get through anything."

Her work as a victim's advocate, motivational speaker and author also helps. Her book, "God Heard My Cries: The Deliverance" describes the emotional highs and lows that survivors go through and is a testimony of how she dealt with her mother's death.

Suffering from depression and PTSD can make it hard to reach out for help. She also had to get rid of negative messages she received as a child that she was unworthy and rediscover who she was before the trauma. Finding forgiveness for her step father was the hardest step.

"My mom was a kind, generous and beautiful woman. How can you do this to someone who was so kind and would give the shirt off her back?" she said, explaining it's why she wrote her book in 2012 to capture what she was like. "I want to keep her alive as a person and use the life lessons she taught me before she died that I can use now with my children."

When she sees one of her brothers still suffering the traumatic effects from their childhood, it makes her mad and angry and she has to go back and forgive again, she said.

"What saved me is having my kids," she said of her five girls who range in age from 13 to 20. She has one son, age 7. "I had someone I could take care of and do stuff with. Now that I have my girls, we do lots of stuff together. It's like a big sister hen party when we all get together.

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## THE CATALYST

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# Celebrating Pastoral Care Week, Caring Spirit Award given to nurse

## Staff Report

Pastoral Care Services celebrated the 31st annual Pastoral Care Week (Oct. 16–Oct. 22). This year's theme, Spiritual Resilience, acknowledged the role of chaplains in supporting the spiritual resilience or growth of those with which they share their ministry.

Spiritual Resilience represents one's ability to navigate through or recover from life's most challenging moments. Spiritual Resilience finds its roots in one's sense of spirituality and related practices, religion or beliefs, values and outlook. It also represents the individual's ability to gain, maintain or revise a sense of purpose and meaning, relationships, connections to the sacred, nature and an understanding of themselves and the world around them. These traumatic life events and losses invite the professional who can nurture spiritual resiliency. Pastoral Care Week provides the opportunity to have a conversation that addresses suffering

related to loss and trauma and seek opportunities for strengthening spiritual resilience in ourselves and community.

The world of medicine, nursing and patient care is backdropped by the spiritual needs of patients and families. The chaplaincy staff affirms MUSC faculty and staff, who ensure that the spiritual and pastoral care needs of patients and families are given the highest priority.

The Caring Spirit Award is presented each year during National Pastoral Care Week. The purpose of the award is to honor one faculty or staff member for their commitment and support. Many were nominated for this award by the Pastoral Care staff, and it was difficult to select just one. This year, the chaplain staff presented its 10th annual Caring Spirit Award to Brandy Pockrus, RN, who works in the MICU.

Pockrus was selected by the chaplains for her story of struggling with compassion burnout and moral distress. She found herself in a "bad place," not



Photos provided

MICU nurse Brandy Pockrus, fourth from left, is the 10th-year recipient of MUSC Pastoral Care Services' Caring Spirit Award. She is joined by MUSC chaplains George Rossi, from left, Stacy Sergent, Mel Williams, Dr. Terry Wilson, Lynn Brown-Conklin and Frank Harris.

liking her work or anything about it. She kept working and went back to school. At school, Pockrus read about moral distress and compassion fatigue and burnout. As she read the symptoms, she began to understand why she went from loving nursing to hating the work. She

was able to heal and renewed her love for nursing. Pockrus has since taught about moral distress and its toll on nurses. She joined the ethics committee and is a part of the Ethics Consultation Service. This is another way for her to help others who are struggling.

## Open Enrollment is here! \*Extended through Nov 15<sup>th</sup>\*

### 2016 Insurance Open Enrollment period

Both University and Medical Center employees are encouraged to check their current benefit elections to ensure no changes are needed.

#### Open Enrollment synopsis:

- Open Enrollment is from Oct. 1 – 31. **\*\*EXTENDED THROUGH NOV 15<sup>TH</sup>\*\***
- There are no changes to employee premiums
- All plan changes are effective January 1, 2017.
- Enroll in or drop health insurance for yourself and/or eligible dependents
- Enroll in or drop the state vision plan for yourself and/or eligible dependents
- Switch from Savings Plan to MUSC Health Plan
- Increase Optional and/or Spouse Life Insurance with medical evidence only
- Enroll/re-enroll in Medical Spending & Dep Care Accounts (required every year). Enroll/re-enroll at [www.myfbmc.com](http://www.myfbmc.com)
- Decrease/cancel optional or spouse life insurance
- Changes to insurance can be made online via My Benefits at <https://mybenefits.sc.gov>. Your BIN# is on your insurance card.
- No action required if you wish to keep your benefits 'as-is'

*\*documentation is required to add dependents to coverage*

More information can be found on the University HR Benefits webpage ([www.musc.edu/hr/university/benefits](http://www.musc.edu/hr/university/benefits)) under News and Links

Benefits Advantage booklets can be retrieved from your HR office. This booklet outlines some details of the 2017 plan year. Insurance Benefit Guides will not be printed for 2017. Additional plan information can be found on the PEBA website.

## MUSC Recycles Day set for Nov. 16

### Staff Report

On Nov. 16, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., MUSC Sustainability and Recycling will host its annual "MUSC Recycles Day" on the portico. The event will feature food trucks, recycling themed games, local recycling organizations and art made from recycled materials. Representatives from Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester County recycling programs will be present to answer questions about recycling at home, and MUSC Recycling will have prizes for those who take the pledge to recycle more. The event celebrates MUSC's role in reducing waste and bringing awareness to recycling, and to recycling correctly.

"Due to MUSC's size, the impact of what we throw away, reuse and recycle can have a major impact on our community and beyond," said Carolyn Tomlinson, MUSC Recycling coordinator. "Responsibly managing our waste not only saves money, but is essential to building sustainable and healthy communities. This involves learning how to responsibly and efficiently handle our resources from cradle to grave. MUSC works toward this goal with a variety of programs to



Sodexo previously participated in Recycle Day events.

reduce waste, reuse materials and of course, recycle. Continually improving and expanding these programs here at MUSC is something we can all take part in within our varied roles here at MUSC."

Included as an insert in the Nov. 4 issue of The Catalyst is a recycling guide that provides information on what is recyclable at MUSC and how to recycle different materials. Please use this guide and share it with coworkers to help MUSC continue to make great strides in waste management and sustainability.

This event is part of Keep America Beautiful's America Recycles Day, a nationwide event promoting recycling.



# Summer internship program leads undergrads to research track

By MIKIE HAYES

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Like delighted parents, mentors nodded proudly as students in the MUSC Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) nailed their scientific presentations. It was in many ways hard for them to believe these were the same students who, only 10 weeks earlier, had come to them not particularly familiar with granulocytes or ligands. Aug. 5 marked the end of the program, and as Paula Traktman, Ph.D., dean of the College of Graduate Studies, hopes, the beginning of robust careers in biomedical research for many of them.

Through this innovative 10-week CGS internship program, highly motivated rising college juniors and seniors from around the United States and Puerto Rico spend their summers working in MUSC laboratories, learning how to conduct research experiments and modeling themselves after the dedicated scientists from whom they learn so much. Through the experience, students gain greater levels of confidence as they perform research in the biomedical sciences, and they also gain a clearer picture of what the future might hold in store for them careerwise.

Admittance into the SURP program is very competitive, according to Stephanie Brown-Guion, who runs the program and has four summers under her belt. For the 2016 program, the college received more than 400 applications from well-qualified and talented students, many of whom had GPAs greater than 3.5. Sixty-

four students were selected and accepted into the program.

They look for students who have the drive, passion and desire to pursue a career in research. Brown-Guion feels SURP gives students an advantage in terms of experiencing firsthand what a future in biomedical research might be like.

"SURP provides an opportunity for students with science seeking majors from undergraduate schools interested in performing research in the biomedical sciences to come to MUSC and work one-on-one with our extraordinary graduate faculty who mentor them in their laboratories. This allows them to get a really good picture of what it's like to conduct research. We will always need good researchers. Research is the foundation for medicine, and without it, we wouldn't have the medications or treatments that exist today. It's an important art that should be continued. It's also important for students to understand they have other career options where they can make a difference in the lives of patients."

Cynthia Wright, Ph.D., associate dean for admissions and career development for the College of Graduate Studies, is the program director for one of the grants that supports the SURP program and sees it as an important pipeline for the future.

"The SURP program is a superior tool for career development and recruitment," she said. "Our goal is to bring students from all over the United



Dr. Laura Kasman, left, Department of Microbiology and Immunology associate professor, and Dr. Cynthia Wright, right, College of Graduate Studies associate dean for admissions and career development, join SURP student Alondra DeSantiago from Clemson University. Both Kasman and Wright served as co-mentors for DeSantiago, who spent her summer months conducting research and exploring her research interests with mentors and faculty at MUSC.

*Photos provided*

States to MUSC and ensure they have a positive experience. It not only helps to increase the number of students who are interested in biomedical research, but it gets promising students actively involved in cancer research, structural biology and a whole range of things."

Once the cadre of students is accepted into the program, they are able to choose from nearly two dozen areas of research, based on their interests. The program directors then carefully screen and match students with mentors, who in turn assign their students research projects and work with them to provide the type of valuable hands-on research experience that will prepare them for postgraduate work and possibly even careers in biomedical research.

A number of MUSC researchers have very specialized grants that allow for the involvement of students. This offered a chance for more than 40 of the participants to be integrally involved in projects related to research in the neurosciences, cardiovascular disease, addiction studies, oral health sciences and biofabrication and bioinformatics.

Others have the opportunity to try their hands at research involving pharmacology, immunology and cancer, among many others. Olanike Awotunde was one such

student. Having recently completed her second summer in SURP, Awotunde, a junior at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, is now an old pro. She had wonderful experiences both times, she said, but her second go-round was particularly positive, as she really knew what she was doing and her confidence soared.

Awotunde feels she was destined to pursue a science track. A first-generation American, her parents, both from Nigeria, moved to the United States to pursue careers in the medical field: her father, a pharmacist, owns an independent pharmacy, and her mother, a nurse, now manages the family business. From a very young age, Awotunde was exposed to the importance of science.

"I've been interested in science and taking care of people for as long as I can remember. I was that kid who played doctor with her doll," she said with a laugh. "I've always had a passion for STEM," referring to a combined field that includes science, technology, engineering and math.

"I loved watching my dad in action at the pharmacy and getting to know his patients. He helped them so much. My mom would tell me stories about her work



*Photo provided*

MUSC SURP students took some time to socialize at a Charleston harbor cruise along with College of Graduate Studies faculty and staff.

*See SURP on page 11*

## MEET SUZETTE



Suzette Gaines

**Department; How long at MUSC**  
*Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU);  
 40 years*

**How you are changing what's possible at MUSC**

*I am immersed in every shift and I work with an awesome team that provides the best for the patient and their families*

**Family**

*Daughter, Adina Garner (MUSC Labor & Delivery); son, Tron; son-in-law, Greg Garner; daughter-in-law, Rebecca Gaines; grandkids, Hunter, Ellie, North and Saylor*

**Hometown**


*Mobile, Alabama*

**A unique talent you have**

*Tole painting. There are several rooms in my home that I have painted the borders on the walls.*

**Most notable moment in 40 years**


*Graduating from nursing school while working full-time as a medical technician in the microbiology lab. I went back to school to be a nurse at age 40 and started my nursing career in 1992 in the Burn Unit.*



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE SPONSORED

# BLOOD DRIVE


*Honoring Dr. Rupak Mukherjee's son, Dylan*



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# ECHO program explores how environment affects kids' health

## Staff Report

Our environment may be causing serious problems with lifelong implications for children, but a new national project that includes MUSC may help change that.

Roger Newman, M.D., works as a researcher and obstetrician at MUSC Health. "There's an obesity epidemic, there's an epidemic of asthma, there's an epidemic of disorders like autism and attention deficit disorder," Newman said. "These aren't just inherited. Something's happening to our children in our environment."

John Vena, Ph.D., founding chairman of the MUSC Department of Public Health Sciences, is a co-principal investigator. He said only the first two years of funding have been awarded so far, but it has the potential to be the largest clinical translational study ever, in financial terms, for MUSC. MUSC's portion for the first two years combined has the potential to be about \$9.6 million.

Vena said the study, part of an effort by the National Institutes of Health to document those factors, will track kids' health over a seven-year period. It's called the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes Program, or ECHO. MUSC will serve as a coordinating center for part of the project known as the Exposure Contributors to Child Health Originating from National Fetal Growth Study.

The Exposure Contributors to Child Health Originating from National Fetal Growth Study team includes scientists from public health, obstetrics and pediatrics who will follow the children enrolled in the National Fetal Growth Study at 10 clinical centers throughout the U.S., including MUSC and Columbia University.

NIH Director Francis Collins, Ph.D., said the researchers will try to ensure every baby has the chance to thrive. "ECHO will help us better understand the factors that contribute to optimal health in children."

Vena said the MUSC team is in very good company. The first year's overall funding for the ECHO Program



Dr. John Vena, fourth from left, Dr. Roger Newman, fifth from left, and members of the ECHO study design team meet for a Oct. 28 planning session. The group, Dr. Jihad Obeid, from left, Dr. Erik Svendsen, Dr. Jimmy Roberts, Dr. Kelly Hunt, Dr. Chris Metts, Danira Medunjanin and Dr. Michael Bloom, is part of a national study that will shed light on environmental factors affecting the health of children. For information, email, [echo-nfgs@muscedu](mailto:echo-nfgs@muscedu).

is \$157 million, which is spread out among 35 institutions nationally.

Over the course of the seven-year project, researchers with the MUSC and Columbia University-led part of ECHO will re-contact the 2,400 families involved in the National Fetal Growth Study and try to enroll the children in ECHO. The kids will become part of a panel of 50,000 children from diverse racial, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The ECHO Program will analyze existing data and follow the children over time to address the early environmental origins of ECHO's primary health outcome areas, which are: upper and lower airway disease; obesity; pre-, peri- and post-natal outcomes; and neurodevelopment.

Each group will work with the others to combine data that are collected in a standardized way.

MUSC is involved in the ECHO Program because of the role it played in the multi-site fetal growth study, which established a standard for fetal growth that considered racial and ethnic differences. The data collected through the fetal growth study, including multiple ultrasounds on each baby, blood tests from the mothers and detailed pregnancy-related information, are being re-analyzed in the ECHO program.

Newman, who was the principal investigator at MUSC for the fetal growth study, said it's an exciting

opportunity. "We talked many times about how great it would be if we had the chance to follow up on the children as they got older, because there's no group of children in the country where anyone knows more about what happened to their moms and them during pregnancy."

Vena said the goal of ECHO is to gain a better understanding of environmental influences at each life stage.

"The main outcomes we're looking at are obesity, endocrine disruption, insulin resistance, that type of thing. Also in neurodevelopment, conditions such as attention deficit disorder, autism — all of that will be assessed."

The overall ECHO program is meant to provide significant information about which environmental factors might be affecting the health and wellness of the country's children so health care providers can offer better, more customized treatments and interventions for pediatric patients and contribute to better health and wellness for all children, Vena said.

"To have this many capable, brilliant researchers coming together in the interest of significantly determining what environmental risks are placing our children at most risk is a wonderful testament to the power of collective data and our determination to work together for the good of our nation's children."

# CHP open house event offers glimpse into medical professions

BY OLIVIA FRANZESE

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The demand for health care professionals in the United States is higher than ever before, due in large part to an aging population, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information. At MUSC, the College of Health Professions (CHP), the largest and most diverse college in terms of types of programs offered, is working to help satisfy this increased demand.

The college held an open house Sept. 30 to celebrate its 50th anniversary and showcase various programs to inspire prospective students to pursue careers in areas of the medical field where demand is particularly high. The event was very well attended and well received.

“With the College of Health Professions being home to more than a dozen academic programs, the 50th anniversary open house provided students from all over the university with an interprofessional opportunity to learn about a variety of health care programs,” said Cindy Dodds, Ph.D., professor and coordinator of the open house.

The event gave the college an opportunity to highlight programs that are in particularly high demand, such as cardiovascular perfusion and physical therapy, which are advancing rapidly due to improvements in technology and scientific advancements. And, as the U.S. population continues to age, the need for these specialties grows even more.

Hannah Tecson, a first-year student in the Master of Science in Cardiovascular Perfusion program in CHP, is working

toward her degree in a very important but often overlooked field of medicine.

Perfusionists are responsible for operating a heart-lung machine during open-heart surgeries. The machine essentially bypasses the heart and acts as an artificial blood pump during surgery, so the doctor is able to work on a still heart. Perfusionists must monitor a patient’s status closely in order to maintain his or her physiological state during the operation.

At the open house, Tecson demonstrated the use of a heart-lung machine in one of MUSC’s simulation labs.

“The market for perfusionists is really great right now,” said Tecson. “It’s a very young profession. It’s only been here for about 50 years or less, so everyone who was a perfusionist at the beginning is starting to retire now.” According to Tecson, the employment rate for perfusionists coming out of school is close to 100 percent, an encouraging statistic for those entering the field.

For Tecson, receiving the opportunity to practice in an up-to-date simulation lab that mimics a standard operating room is invaluable. “I think it’s great because you are practicing in that environment, so once you are physically put in the OR you have a good feeling of where things are,” Tecson said. “The fact that we use an actual heart-lung machine that was once used for surgeries helps a lot, because we’re practicing on the machine that we will be using on patients someday.”

MUSC has the second largest perfusion program in the world —



Photos by J. Ryme Danielson

David Fitzgerald, left, a cardiovascular perfusion faculty member, and Amelia Lewis, a perfusion student, examine the new heart-lung model used for cardiopulmonary bypass surgery.

just slightly smaller than a perfusion program in Arizona — making it the ideal institution for students on the East Coast who are interested in perfusion.

Joe Sistino, Ph.D., professor and director of the Division of Cardiovascular Perfusion in CHP, is passionate about the success rates perfusionists experience during surgeries at MUSC.

Sistino explained the low success rates associated with early open-heart surgeries. “In the 1950s, the first 16 out of 17 patients died.” Now, the overall national success rate for open-heart surgery is about 98.7 percent, according to the Society of Thoracic Surgeons.

Technological advancements made the heart-lung machine possible, and as a result, open-heart surgeries have become consistently more successful.

But a heart-lung machine is only as capable as the medical professional who operates it. Sistino hopes that CHP’s new Master of Science in Cardiovascular Perfusion programs, both entry-level and post-professional, will encourage more students to choose MUSC and shape valuable and competent perfusionists for the future of the profession.

CHP offers 14 undergraduate and graduate degrees, encompassing various disciplines, and educates and prepares

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# FRATERNITY RECOGNIZES E.E. JUST SYMPOSIUM



Photo by J. Ryne Danielson

Members of Omega Psi Phi, a predominantly African-American fraternity founded at Howard University in 1911, presented a check for \$2000 to MUSC's E.E. Just Symposium Wednesday, Oct. 26 in the Drug Discovery Building. The money will be used to fund the annual minority student recruitment symposium, hosted by the College of Graduate Studies, which celebrates the life of Ernest Everett Just, a renowned African-American biologist and one of the founders of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

## ABUSE *Continued from Page Two*

I'm making sure to raise my son to treat women as a gentleman would and to not have anger issues."

Statistics show nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the nation. That's one in three women and one in four men who have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime. That means just about everyone knows someone or a friend of someone who is affected by this, she said. She encourages the public to reach out and break the silence and support fundraising efforts that provide resources to victims. For victims, she encourages them to break their isolation.

"You always need to be able to confide in somebody. Somebody needs to know what's going on, whether it's a pastor or a best friend or neighbor. You need to be able to be educated about it. There are a lot of education and prevention tools."

Richardson said recovery is critical to end the abuse.

"There's not a right or wrong way to recover, but some people get stuck. How do you build yourself back to be the happy person you were before the abuse or tragedy happened? Witnessing that stuff as a child, that's not normal. My mom's funeral was the first one I had ever been to. Growing up and not knowing how to cope with that as child and then becoming an adult, you want to help others."



# Psychologist offers solutions for parents, children who use drugs

By J. RYNE DANIELSON

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Parents are the key to keeping kids off drugs. That's according to MUSC clinical psychologist Phillippe Cunningham, Ph.D. Many studies indicate that open communication and appropriate discipline, as well as positive parent-child relationships that balance warmth and structure, greatly reduce the risk of drug abuse among children and adolescents. But what happens when parents have issues to work through themselves? Cunningham's latest work with juvenile drug offenders suggests that parents are still the key, though they may need some help to see it.

"Many drug courts and treatment programs have difficulty getting parents and caregivers involved," Cunningham said. "These families have had a long row to hoe. They've suffered 10,000 defeats and they're demoralized. But, if we can get them through the door and involved in their kids' treatment, we have an opportunity to teach them skills and competencies that they can then use to help their child and themselves."

When it comes to getting parents through the door, Cunningham thinks carrots work better than sticks. A new \$3.6 million R01 research grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, part of the National Institutes of Health, will allow him to put that theory to the test.

In return for engaging in verifiable activities – taking part in parenting classes, meeting with teachers and attending school functions, creating a monitoring plan or parent-child contract, even planning a "date night" to bond with their child – parents who take part in the program will have the opportunity to earn rewards worth between \$1 and \$100. A parent who fully participates in these activities for the 16 weeks would earn, on average, a little more than \$700.

"Parents are centrally located, emotionally, psychologically and physically, to manage many of the factors that influence whether or not a kid uses drugs," Cunningham said. "Setting limits, getting to know a child's peers, enriching his or her life beyond drug use – those are things really only parents or caregivers can do."

But most parents have issues to deal with themselves, especially in many of the low-income communities Cunningham works with. Some work multiple jobs and have difficulty juggling their commitments. Others mismanage issues through poor discipline.

"Many poor, disenfranchised families are nickel-and-dimed; they're working all sorts of jobs to make ends meet, and they don't have the opportunity to



Photo provided

**Psychologist Dr. Phillippe Cunningham on his way to the White House in 2006 to participate in First Lady Laura Bush's "Helping America's Youth" conference. Cunningham served on a panel for the Office of National Drug Control Policy's youth anti-drug media campaign.**

watch their kids or be connected with others in their communities. They have to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table," Cunningham said. "And some parents just don't know what to do. They've never experienced good parenting themselves, so they naturally turn to coercive or inconsistent discipline practices."

Cunningham believes that most parents wake up every day wondering what they can do to help their kids be successful, but they just don't have the tools or support to pull it off. "We live in a time where we have so much information, but so few relationships," he said. "Without tight community relationships, kids can fall through the cracks."

He hopes his project can change that.

"If you want to help a kid, you need to help a parent," he explained. "And by helping a parent, you help a whole community."

The communities Cunningham wants to help look very much like the one he grew up in. "I'm the son of an African-American father and a French woman," he explained. "My father met my mother when he was in the Air Force stationed in France. They came back to the United States at the height of the tumultuous Civil Rights movement, and my father ended up leaving, so my mom raised five kids alone in a poor, black community in our nation's capital. I went to a 'separate-but-equal' school; I had so many opportunities to go the wrong way."

As a young man, Cunningham said it was the suffering he saw around him, both in the violence of the Civil Rights movement and in struggles closer to home, that kept him on the straight and narrow. His mother, who didn't speak English well, worked as a

waitress to get by and wasn't around as much as she would have liked to be.

"I was fascinated by my mother's experience," Cunningham said.

From early on, he knew he wanted to get involved with kids and families, helping to build stronger communities in which to one day raise his own children.

After high school, Cunningham went to Virginia Union University, a historically black college, on an athletic scholarship. He later tried out as a free agent for the Detroit Lions football team, but when he wasn't offered a contract, he decided to pursue psychology as a career.

"I went to Mankato State University in Minnesota for my master's in clinical psychology. That was where "Little House on the Prairie" was set," he laughed. "I went from the blackest environment in the world to the whitest. This was really my first experience with European-American culture. Outside of my mom and cutting grass at Chevy Chase Country Club in Washington, D.C., I seldom saw white folks."

Though the change was jarring at first, he soon grew to love his new environment. "These were good, salt-of-the-earth people," he said. "And many of them had never had experience with a black person before either."

That experience guided him even after he left

*See Juvenile on page 12*

OPEN *Continued from Page Seven*

students to become integral members of health care or health administration teams.

Physical therapy is another growing area. Dave Morrisette, Ph.D., professor and director of the Division of Physical Therapy in CHP, represented this ever-expanding field at the open house with his demonstration titled “Possibilities in PT.”

As students who assisted with his demonstration practiced various physical therapy techniques on each other, Morrisette explained the different areas physical therapy encompasses. “If you’re seeing a geriatric or pediatric patient, you’re seeing them for either a neurological, orthopedic or cardiopulmonary problem or wound healing – those are the four areas in which PT intervenes with someone.”

Many patients require a physical therapist for ailments commonly associated with aging, such as arthritis, hip pain, knee pain or osteoporosis. There are also neurological conditions

that require long-term physical therapy, including multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury and strokes.

Students in the CHP physical therapy program have the opportunity to practice on patients with long-term conditions, according to Morrisette. “We have a multiple sclerosis clinic, so Dr. Kraft brings in a number of patients who have MS, and they work with these patients,” said Morrisette. “They learn how to communicate and interact with people. It’s great for the students to learn the best way to educate people.”

Kathleen Schaeffer and Joy Carston, first-year students in the PT program, chose to study this area due to personal experiences with family members who required physical therapy. Currently, they are enrolled in neuroscience classes, but they find the hands-on aspect of the physical therapy program to be vital to their skill development. “It’s only our second semester, and we get to treat patients with one of our professors,” Carston said of CHP’s extensive physical therapy program.

Both faculty and guests had high praise for the success of the open house and

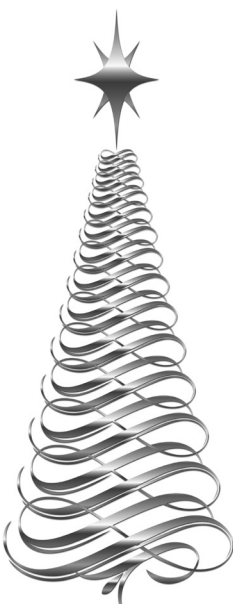


*photo by J. Ryne Danielson*  
**Erin Cleveland, a physical therapy student, demonstrates physical therapy techniques on fellow student Taylor Ross at the CHP open house Sept. 30.**

50th anniversary celebration, which provided students with a glimpse into several medical specialties. Inspiring and shaping a new generation of health professionals is essential to the growth of health care, said Dodds, and the College of Health Professions is achieving that goal one open house at a time.

**MUSC Holiday  
Tree Lighting**

**5 p.m., Nov. 7  
at the  
MUSC  
Horseshoe**





## SURP *Continued from Page Four*

in the hospital. I always knew I wanted to help patients. I didn't know exactly what that would look like, but this program has definitely helped to point me in the right direction."

This summer, she worked for a second time with her two mentors, Samar Hamad, Ph.D., an associate professor, and Titus Reaves, Ph.D., an assistant professor, both in the Department of Regenerative Medicine and Cell Biology, and was able to jump right back into the project she had undertaken the year before, making even greater strides. The research she conducted with Hamad and Reaves involved the transcription factor, scleraxis (SCX).

"I did research on the role of SCX, trying to look at its role in neutrophils, which are leukocytes in the blood. We did experiments two summers ago and got preliminary results that it is expressed by neutrophils. So this past summer, we tried to identify the relationship of the transcription factor in neutrophil function, and we got results that show SCX may regulate neutrophil function. It was very exciting."

This success showed her she was on the right path — a path she thinks might include an M.D.-Ph.D. program.

"My experience in the summer program at MUSC showed me the real-life application of the science that I've been studying so long. It gave me the ability to see — at work — all the things I had learned in classes. When we were looking at experiments, I was reminded of some of the chemical processes that were taking place, and the properties of the cells we were studying. It was beautiful to see this nitty gritty level of

detail that I'd been exposed to in the past. It really gave me reassurance that I'm interested in science. It made me confident that I'm in the right field."

She doesn't have her future mapped out entirely, but she does know she would like to continue working in research, answering questions that fascinate her. "Ultimately my goal is to really understand the functions and processes behind diseases that are affecting a lot of people, study them in detail and figure out ways to approach treatments and possibly cures that will make people feel better. My mind is constantly worrying — why and how does the human body betray you and become diseased? I really want to figure out why and how to prevent these diseases from happening — so the body will defend itself. There are so many complexities."

She would like to further explore a particular area — one that will make a substantive impact in people's lives. She's considering immunology. "Then I could study the body's defense system and how to optimize its efficiency, so that if something does go wrong, the body will respond appropriately."

### PRESENTATION DAY

Awotunde and 61 other SURP students presented their research to fellow students and their mentors on Aug. 5. Brown-Guion sat in the audience, proud and amazed.

"The students I see at orientation on Day 1 of the program are not the same students who stand before their mentors and peers on the last day of SURP as they present their work and all they have done. It amazes me to see the growth; it is just awesome. When our students realize they have worked hard on their

projects, and they know their stuff, it's a mind-blowing experience. This program is extraordinary."

Both Wright and Brown-Guion always find themselves impressed with how committed the students are and agree that the program helps them realize characteristics they didn't even know they possessed.

Brown-Guion explained, "When they arrive, they are very nervous and anxious not knowing what to expect. The projects the mentors assign can seem overwhelming in the beginning. But I tell them, 'Just wait — you will begin to understand what is going on and you will be able to tell us about your work.' They develop such a passion for the project — it is almost like it becomes their child, and they want to see it grow and succeed. That's the kind of passion we see developed in the student participants in this program. By the end of SURP, they are seemingly like experts in their research area. When they go back to school, their whole mindset has changed in every way. Students have told me their approach to courses, their drive, even their personal lives are elevated and they

develop a new perspective, especially because of the wide variety of career choices available in the sciences."

To learn more about SURP, visit [http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/grad/summer\\_research\\_program/](http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/grad/summer_research_program/).

## MUSC Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 10

Join Interim Provost Dr. Lisa Saladin and the MUSC Veterans Day Committee at the annual Veterans Day Celebration event from 1 to 2 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 10 at the Drug Discovery Auditorium.

Guest speaker is Dr. Theresa S. Gonzales, Colonel, USA (Ret.). Gonzales is a professor in the Department of Oral Pathology at MUSC.

The event will feature a video celebration of MUSC veterans and presentation of lapel pins to all veterans.

# Fall self-defense class teaches women life-saving tactics

By OLIVIA FRANZESE

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You are walking back to your car alone at night, starting to regret the dimly lit parking spot you chose, when you feel that prickle of uneasiness begin to creep up the back of your neck, signaling danger nearby. Your body tenses, your eyes dilate, but instead of an instinctive fight-or-flight response kicking in, you just freeze.

This scenario is exactly what Tim Brooder, officer and assistant supervisor in the MUSC Department of Public Safety, wants to help women avoid.

Brooder is an instructor for the Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) program offered free of charge for female staff, faculty and students of MUSC, as well as their immediate families.

"The techniques we show are

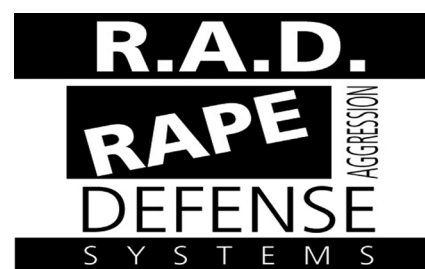
spontaneous, very sudden and very effective, if you ever do unfortunately find yourself in that situation," said Brooder.

RAD is an internationally accredited women's self-defense class that teaches women realistic self-defense tactics that can be used in the case of a potential attack. It is a nationwide network endorsed by the International Association of Campus and Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), and MUSC has been part of this network for over eight years.

According to current FBI statistics, 1 in 4 women are victims of a sexual assault at some point in their lives.

Brooder believes the best way to reduce this statistic is to be prepared. "Our world has gotten dangerous in the last several years," said Brooder.

There will be a RAD class offered



at MUSC in November. For more information on the program or to set up a training session, contact Brooder at brooder@musc.edu. The session will feature a variety of basic self-defense techniques, including how to break a strong grip and how to identify pressure points to hit on an attacker, as well as a presentation on how to remain alert and aware of your surroundings.

"To have a skill set that anybody can use regardless of size is a very empowering gift, and that's how we teach the class," said Brooder. "We are looking to empower the women who partake in the class, so they can feel free to walk by themselves at night and not have that fear in the back of their minds."

## JUVENILE *Continued from Page Nine*

Mankato for Virginia Tech, where he earned his Ph.D. in clinical child psychology, and would continue to guide him at MUSC.

"An area that's near and dear to my heart is building cultural competency," he explained. "How do we train people to work with others who are different from them? In the past, many of the approaches we've taken have actually caused harm. For example, if we know that the best predictor of kids engaging in anti-social behavior is who they hang with, what's the last thing you'd want to do? Group them together. And yet that's exactly what we do. We either lock them up or put them in special classes together. We have a responsibility to use evidence-based interventions and prove that what we're doing won't cause harm. When I look at what's happening to kids in this country, kids of color, kids from poor and disenfranchised communities, it just breaks my heart. I know we can do better."

He hopes his new project is a step in that direction.