



We had many fun activities to mark September as *Childhood Cancer Awareness Month*, but here's one that saves lives. Blood donors were invited to participate in a drive that solely benefited Pediatrics patients in mid-September. Employees with the Blood Bank reported that 85 people attempted to give blood at the drive held at The Park on R2. Fifty-eight people actually were able to donate whole blood. This means that as many as 174 cancer patients will be touched by this generosity. Donations support patients undergoing chemotherapies, other infusions, surgeries, radiotherapy, and other treatments during their journey from diagnosis to wellness. Each unit of whole blood can be used for platelets, plasma, and red cells. MD Anderson administers about 800 doses of platelets a day—it takes about four or five donations to provide for one patient. The institution uses between 200-300 units of red cells a day. Plasma can be frozen for a year. [More Childhood Cancer Awareness stories throughout newsletter.](#)

September Town Hall Meeting Discusses Hurricane & What's Happening in Pediatrics

The proposed Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Program has now been approved at the highest levels of MD Anderson and The University of Texas System, announced **Richard Gorlick, MD** (left in photo), head of the Division of Pediatrics, at a Town Hall held Sept. 7. It will serve the unique needs of active patients and long-term survivors between the ages of 15-29. The AYA program will involve faculty and employees in the Divisions of Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and Cancer Medicine, among others, and will initially focus on psychosocial and supportive care, onco-fertility/fertility preservation, genetic predisposition, and survivorship. **Continued on page 3**



Gorlick with Lisa Hafemeister

Salvador a Finalist for Briscoe Physician Assistant Award for Excellence



Laura Salvador, PA-C, was a finalist for MD Anderson's 2017 Geneva and James Briscoe Physician Assistant Award for Excellence, which recognizes these professionals for delivering high-caliber patient care, demonstrating a commitment to research and education, and serving as an inspiration to others. Division

of Pediatrics colleagues hosted an Oct. 10 reception in her honor.

"Recently I was talking to the mother of a patient who came to us a year ago from another Houston hospital after they'd told her to take her daughter home to die. Today that little girl is without evidence of disease and, although she'll likely recur, her mother was in tears when telling me how grateful she's been to have this extra year with her child," recalled Salvador. "That's one example of why I'm proud to be part of this profession and this organization. We are making a huge difference in patients' lives and it's a great honor."

Continued on page 2

Salvador----

Sixteen of MD Anderson's 330 physician assistants were nominated. Two other finalists were named, along with the recipient who works in the Division of Cancer Medicine. Of note, this is also the profession's 50th anniversary. Among other things, these clinicians practice medicine alongside medical doctors, see patients on their own, order simple and diagnostic tests, interpret test results, write prescriptions, and discharge patients. They can work in a hospital or private practice with a family practitioner, specialist, or stand-alone urgent care centers.

Salvador's nominations came from supervisors, faculty, peers, and patient families. "Laura was one of the first people I hired in this role. I was a little hesitant at first because she was fairly new as a physician assistant and I had never really worked with one. I thought she would last a year and then move on to do something else. But the minute she started, she had a drive for excellence and an understanding of the care our patients needed. She works well with them throughout their entire journey—whether

through successful treatment or end of life care. In fact, one of our patients' families said she 'exemplifies the role of a care provider,'" said [Sarah Bottomley, MSN, RN, CPNP](#), manager of advance practice providers. The mom of an osteosarcoma patient wrote in her nomination that she appreciated Salvador for giving honest input about whether to receive a final dose of chemotherapy after doing research and consulting with their oncologist. "My daughter had her last chemo on May 18, 2015, but Laura continues to be a critical partner in her care because we still have questions that arise. We know she will help us quickly and do her best to ease any fears that we have," wrote the parent. [Douglas Harrison, MD](#), associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, added that in the past Salvador was assigned to several faculty who either retired or moved to other institutions and left behind large practices. "I want to acknowledge that it has been you more than anyone who kept those patients here and on track with their treatments. You did it with poise and it has been a pleasure working with you."



(l-r) Whitney Throckmorton, PA, Whitney Davis, PA, Angela Yarbrough, NP, Beatriz Roza, NP, Donna Bell, NP, Laura Salvador, Jeffrey Miller, NP, Heather Meador, NP, Lisa Triche, NP, Sarah Bottomley, NP

PAs Professional Development Models Recognized

Salvador and colleague [Whitney Throckmorton, MPAS, PA](#), were also celebrated for delivering the best Professional Development Models (PDM) as physician assistants at MD Anderson. PDMs are voluntary plans of action in which participants agree to take on projects that challenge them professionally. These tasks must go beyond their job description and their next-year evaluation goals. The Office of Physician Assistant Programs has a committee which evaluates documentation of goal achievement in multiple categories. Recipients are given a \$5,000 award. Salvador was recognized for clinical research. She was first author for an abstract titled, "*Relapse or Disease Progression in 45 Desmoplastic Small Round Tumor Patients Following Cyto-reductive and Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Perfusion of Cisplatin (HIPEC)*." Her abstract was presented at the *Connective Tissue Oncology Society (CTOS)* in November 2016. Throckmorton was recognized in education. She was a preceptor to a physician assistant student and a fellow in 2016. Additionally, she gave a lecture to Baylor College of Medicine physician assistant students about pediatric solid tumors in June, to the nursing staff at Cancer Care Course on neuroblastoma in October 2016, and presented to physician assistant students at The University of Texas Medical Branch regarding cancer pharmacology in November 2016. Congrats to both!



Town Hall----

Co-directors for the AYA Program will be **Mike Roth, MD**, associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, and **Andy Livingston, MD**, assistant professor in Sarcoma Medical Oncology. **Najat Daw, MD**, professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, will serve as medical director under the governance of a multidisciplinary AYA Steering Committee. The program will provide services at locations throughout the institution as a virtual center, with plans for actual dedicated space at MD Anderson. Clinical and support staff will be added as the program grows.

Also discussed at the Town Hall were findings from the BIG Survey held earlier this year in which 82 percent of our workforce participated. Among favorable results, the majority of our people enjoy the quality of their relationship with their supervisor and 41 percent participate in a formal or informal mentoring relationship at MD Anderson. Responses were unfavorable in areas of transparency, leadership and employee recognition; many employees say they don't understand how decisions are made; and some believe division leaders do not understand major work challenges they face. **Lisa Hafemeister, MHA, FACHE**, division administrator, said the feedback confirms the areas, "We know we can improve in, and in fact, plans are in progress to address concerns raised by the survey, particularly to improve transparency through more two-way communication opportunities." They include:

- ❖ Creation of Pediatrics Employee Recognition & Awards Program underway
- ❖ More frequent town hall meetings
- ❖ Recurring Pediatrics Roundtable Breakfast w/division head & division administrator. Employees can sign up to attend
- ❖ Distributed via email: an electronic news submissions portal and anonymous "Suggestion Box" to provide a vehicle for individuals throughout the division from any location, to submit suggestions, questions, or comments

Hurricane Harvey was a big part of the conversation at the Town Hall. Gorlick and Hafemeister thanked faculty and employees who kept operations going for our inpatients. Fellows were also recognized for staying beyond the hours required for their training.

The next Town Hall is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 30, at the AT&T Auditorium, B2-4750, from noon to 1 p.m.



Cortes Wades Through Hurricane Harvey Floodwaters for Critically Ill Children

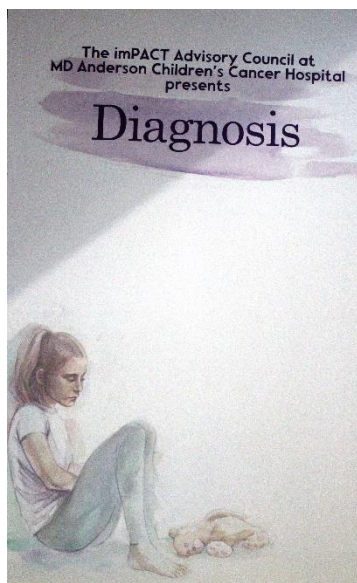


Kachi Emukah, RN, clinical nurse (left), with Jose Cortes, MD

Jose Cortes, MD, associate professor in Pediatrics-Patient Care, waded through water to get to work during Hurricane Harvey. That kind of dedication contributes to patient success stories at the Children's Cancer Hospital. On the day that the storm began its assault on Houston, Aug. 25, Cortes originally planned to stay at the hospital, but since the storm was only producing scattered rain at 5 p.m., he decided it would be okay to go to his Meyerland-area home for dinner. Then, the weather changed and, in about two hours, the neighborhood was flooded. But Cortes was the only pediatric critical care physician in close proximity and he was on the Ride-Out Team. So what did he do? "The only way I could return to the hospital was to walk through the flooding waters,"

the doctor recalled. That's right, in waist-deep water for over eight miles. What was normally a 15-minute drive to the hospital took 2 ½ hours on foot. After a shower and change of clothes, it was back to work as usual until he could return home—five days later. Cortes was in good company with a team of clinical staff and fellow physicians—**Drs. Cesar Nunez** and **Jessica Foglesong**.

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month



MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital's Patient Advisory Council for Teens, known as **imPACT**, kicked off a new season this week by unveiling "Diagnosis," the first in a series of comic books designed to share their experiences as patients with peers who are newly diagnosed.

imPACT members **Madisson**, **Mario**, and **Mauricio** (in plaid), among others, contributed ideas and content, and artist Christopher Hill (left) published the book with support from area Chevrolet dealerships. The teen council is open to patients ages 13-18 who would like to participate in improving the hospital experience. Craig DeSerf, general manager for Chevrolet LMA, is on the right in group photo.



imPACT has had an input in upgrading technology in the teen recreational room, approving themes for the Children's Cancer Hospital's annual prom, and helping staff make new dining selections to the hospital menu.

A Big Turnout for Annual Teddy Bear Clinic



Patients had a great time on Sept. 21 helping brand new teddy bears get through some of the same procedures and tests they go through as part of their care—blood work, IVs, CAT scans, shots, bandages, and wearing face masks. The Teddy Bear Clinic—with furry friends donated by Bennet's Bears—was hosted by Child Life Program so the kids can play doctor using the cute animals as their patients and maybe take some of the fear out of these encounters! Beary Bear enjoyed giving lots of hugs.

This patient had a good time helping her furry friend prepare for a CT scan.

Camp AOK Featured on NBC's TODAY Show

Our teen patients and their siblings gained lifetime memories from the summer camps managed by **Child Life Program** employees to provide fun opportunities in spite of the disease that brings them all together. The activities included canoeing, horseback riding, archery, paddle ball games, swimming, nutrition and cooking lessons, and arts and crafts. Much of that was recorded by a crew from NBC's Today Show, when Jenna Bush Hager interviewed several patients about their camp experiences. The [story](#) aired on Aug. 17.





Harrison

Two Faculty Start FY'18 with Promotions

Two division faculty were promoted, effective Sept. 1.

Douglas Harrison, MD, earned the rank of associate professor. He first joined the division in 2014. **Demetrios Petropoulos, MD**, earned the rank of professor. He joined the division in 2002.



Petropoulos

Pediatrics Welcomed Three Faculty in the Last Quarter!

Sajad Khazal, M.B.Ch.B., July 26, as an assistant professor. He is a stem cell transplantation specialist and will be contributing to institutional medical education initiative such as developing and advising modules for medical students, residents, and fellows, as well as assisting them with career planning.

Jonathan Gill, MD, Aug. 1, as an associate professor. He is a subspecialist in non-neural solid tumors and serves as Dir., Clinical and Translational Research Prog. He brings experience as a principal investigator for Children's Oncology Group trials and he volunteers as a camp physician.

Karen Moody, MD, MS, Sept. 27, as associate professor. She is an integrative medicine and supportive care specialist, and serves as Dir., Pediatric Palliative and Supportive Care. Moody is developing a wide-ranging integrative supportive program to enhance pain and symptom management, communication effectiveness, and end-of-life care. She will also work with Winston Huh, MD, fellowship program director, to create supportive care/palliative curriculum.

Research Faculty Have Published Manuscripts as *First or Last Authors* in Journals in the Past Quarter



Joya Chandra, PhD

- Schadler KS, Kleiner ES, Chandra J. "Diet and exercise interventions for pediatric cancer patients during therapy: Tipping the scales for better outcomes." *Pediatr Res*. 2017 Oct 25
- Zaky W, Manton C, Miller C, Khatua S, Gopalakrishnan V, Chandra J. "The ubiquitin-proteasome pathway in adult and pediatric brain tumors: biological insights and therapeutic opportunities." *Cancer Metastasis Rev*. 2017 Oct 25



Nancy Gordon, MD

- Janice M. Santiago-O'Farrill, Eugenie S. Kleinerman, Mario G. Hollomon, Andrew Livingston, Wei-Lien Wang, Jen-Wei Tsai, and Nancy B. Gordon. "Phosphorylated heat shock protein 27 as a potential biomarker to predict the role of chemotherapy-induced autophagy in osteosarcoma response to therapy." *Oncotarget*. <https://doi.org/10.18632/oncotarget.20308>



Eugenie Kleinerman, MD

- Moonat HR, Huang G, Dhupkar P, Schadler K, Gordon N, Kleinerman ES. "Combination of Interleukin-11Ra Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cells and Programmed Death-1 Blockade as an Approach to Targeting Osteosarcoma Cells in vitro." *Cancer Translational Medicine*; 2017: Vol 3, Issue 4, Pgs 139-45
- Kiany S, Huang G, Kleinerman ES. Effect of Entinostat on NK Cell-Mediated Cytotoxicity Against Osteosarcoma Cells and Osteosarcoma Lung Metastasis. *Oncoimmunology*. 2017 Jul 11;6(8):e1333214



Shinji Maegawa, PhD

- Shinji Maegawa, Yue Lu, Tomomitsu Tahara, Justin T. Lee, Jozef Madzo, Shoudan Liang, Jaroslav Jelinek, Ricki J. Colman, Jean-Pierre J. Issa. "Caloric restriction delays age-related methylation drift." *Nature Communications*. 2017; 8 (1)
DOI: [10.1038/s41467-017-00607-3](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-017-00607-3)

*The MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital Pediatric Memorial Service
will be held at the Freeman Dunn Chapel
Wednesday, November 15, 2017
at 3:00p.m.
Reception to immediately follow the service*

Pediatrics Welcomes Rosburg as New Child Life Manager



Not many people can say their first day on the job was delayed by a hurricane, but **Nicole Rosburg, MS, CCLS**, sure can. She was supposed to join us as the manager of our Child Life Program on Aug. 28, but had to wait a week because of

the weather emergency. Instead, Rosburg began on Sept. 5. She earned her bachelor's degree in foreign languages and literature from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, and her master of science degree in child development from the other UT—University of Tennessee at Knoxville. She is a member of the Association of Child Life Professionals and of the Texas Association of Child Life Professionals. She has performed grant-funded research and authored papers on pediatric renal patients in the American Journal of Kidney Disease, and has another paper coming out this fall, titled, *"Risks and Benefits of Tablet Use: Are Child Life Professionals Being Replaced by Technology?"*

Rosburg leads the Association of Child Life Professional's Public Policy Committee and pursues interests concerning student education, research, and staff self-care practices.

Rosburg is now focused on getting to know her staff and our patients, with goals including collecting productivity data that can be included in the Association of Child Life Professional's data base. This will allow her to work with division leaders to compare our teams against other teams of our size and to determine if our staffing is appropriate based on programmatic goals. Other goals include exploring the possibility of a child life fellowship at the Children's Cancer Hospital, assessing action plans for environmental enhancements to increase child friendliness, reexamining other non-pharmacological pain management options, and building stronger relationships with Volunteer Services and Spiritual Care to benefit patients and their families.

Child Life Specialist Named Heart of MD Anderson



Laura Wiedemann, MS, CCLS, child life specialist in Pediatrics-Patient Care, accepted the MD Anderson's Heart of MD Anderson Outstanding Employee Award for July 2017. She works with children receiving specialized radiation at our Proton Therapy Center. Her

job is to prepare them for the physical and emotional challenges and to help our caregivers determine if coping strategies will be enough to help the young patients get through it or if they will need sedation. She accomplishes most of her work

with the children through play. "It's a universal language and often, it allows me to connect with them regardless of language barriers," said Wiedemann. "I really admire children's resilience," she says. "If they're given the right tools, kids will attempt things most adults wouldn't. They walk in feeling extremely nervous, but they walk out feeling really proud of themselves." Division leaders held a reception in Wiedemann's honor on July 11 at the Proton Therapy Center at the South Campus. Her parents attended as she accepted a plaque, cash award, and commemorative pin.



Sage Kimzey (left), Alexis Bloomer, and Dr. Mike Roth

“Dinner with the Champs” & “Bob Tallman Charities Golf Tournament” Raise \$100,000 for School Program

We want to give a huge thanks to Bob Tallman’s Charities for sponsoring two events in October that raised \$100,000 for our school program. On Oct. 4, our medical oncologists and researchers dined with real-life, award-winning rodeo professionals and talked about the common interest of being experts in their fields. On Oct. 16, the charity hosted its annual Pasture Pool Classic Golf Tournament at Black Hawk Country Club in Richmond, TX. Medical and business leaders engaged in friendly competition. Some players also got to use an air-powered cannon shot at the 14th hole to give them an edge for a hole-in-one at the next stop! Pictured, Sage Kimzey, left, is a three-time World Champion Bull-Rider.

Back to School Fashion Show at Houston Galleria Mall Features Patients, TV Anchor, and Oncologist
[MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital](#) patients and their families had a good time being "model" participants in our Back to School Fashion Show on Saturday, Aug. 12, at the Houston Galleria. Leukemia specialist **Dr. Mike Roth** shared cancer facts with the audience and KHOU’s Mia Gradney was our emcee. The event featured clothes and accessories from stores at the mall and provided a great opportunity for shoppers to help our researchers identify new treatment options by texting **ENDCANCER** to 51555. You can click on this [link](#) to see the story.



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