MedGames 2014
By Jacob Van Orman, MS2

On September 20, 2014, regional medical schools from across Southern California descended on the USC campus to compete in a daylong athletic competition including team sports such as basketball, football, soccer, dodgeball, volleyball, track and field and dance. MedGames had been an annual event for several years among the Los Angeles regional schools, but this was the first time in MedGames history that invitations were extended to 6 medical colleges across the whole of Southern California. Of special importance was the debut of the UC Riverside School of Medicine, fresh into its second year and ready to run with the likes of USC and UCLA.

Eddie Ly, an MS2, helped coordinate the event: “One of my friends from undergrad at UCLA, who’s a med student at Keck School of Medicine, emailed me and asked if UCR was interested in participating. After talking with our students they seemed interested and I agreed to get us involved. I started coordinating from that point on.”

For a population as academically competitive as medical students, it came as no surprise that the competition on the courts and fields was equally as fierce. The day began with a round robin series of volleyball and dodgeball games that, in spite of a valiant effort by our faithful Highlanders, proved to be a rout on all fronts. Though having come close in several matches, UCR had yet to notch a single victory in the opening sports. As soccer, football and basketball competitions began heating up in the afternoon, UCR students, with fewer participants than the other schools, saw their endurance tested.

Eddie Ly had this to say: “We have a really small class size so it’s hard for us to gather a lot of people to participate. A lot of the other schools, they projected about 70 to 80 students to attend, which is reasonable because their class sizes hold 150 to 200 people. We only have 100 total between both classes and had around 50 people show up. That 50% and even though we had fewer people than everyone else, we had a high percentage of our class. Because we had fewer people we got tired sooner and struggled to win, though I was very proud of our efforts.”
In the end, the basketball team secured a win over UC San Diego and the soccer crew earned a tie match with UC Sand Diego. By mid-afternoon, a short walk from the soccer field to the gymnasium would find students sprawled out on concrete benches nursing sore limbs, their bright colored jerseys soaked through with sweat. It would have been easy to write off UCR at that point but, as is true in life, it’s not how you start but how you finish.

Enter the UCR Dance Crew.

Becca Bishop, an MS2, says of the UCR dance team, “I had been asking Eddie about the dance competition and he said I could help lead the team. Raj Mehta was also a dance captain. He did a ton of work, he’s very creative. He came up with our music and storyline. He put together the virus theme. I did a little bit of choreography. Sarah Gomez did the Latin piece we opened with. Leila Magistrado worked with an outside undergrad choreographer on one of the dance routines. Then I did two pieces and we had Raj do a piece. We practiced two times a week for an hour each for about a month before the games. All of our dancers were amazing, they worked so hard!”

All dancers gathered in the south wing of the gymnasium where each school took turns under the spot light. Many initial routines were well-coordinated and high-spirited though, naturally, the best was saved for last when UC Riverside took the stage. Lisa Dao, an MS1, played the doctor in the skit part of the routine. “It was a lot of fun. I played the doctor in the skit, so I came to the practices during the last week. They were practicing really hard for I think at least a month before that. I was a little nervous before performing at the games but it ended up being a great experience,” said Dao.

The total routine incorporated Latin, Bollywood and Hip Hop styles guided by a central theme. It was the most complete and well-executed piece of the competition, which won over the affections of each school. In a close decision, UC Riverside was voted the Dance Champion of MedGames 2014. “I was overjoyed and relieved,” says Becca Bishop. “It felt great! It was the first win of the day! It felt amazing,” adds Lisa Dao. Upon hearing the decision, the Highlanders danced and cheered, filled with spirit and school pride.

It was certainly a hard fought day. The Highlanders found themselves tested early but showed virtues that speak volumes about the quality of students here at the UC Riverside School of Medicine: resilience, mutual support, strength of character, and incredible dance moves. Eddie Ly states it best: “Everyone was exhausted but I got a lot of positive feedback and a lot of enthusiasm. I think this is something that we’ll be involved with for many years to come.”
Staff Spotlight – Cathy Crotts
By The Scope staff

From Orientation Week to Step 1, she’s a constant fixture of the first and second year. She was there at the beginning, clipboard in hand, guiding the traffic of fresh-faced first year students through the wall-to-wall madness of orientation week. She always keeps us on track, always provides a listening ear and a positive perspective. But who is the person behind the clipboard? For this edition we wanted to find out more about Cathy Crotts.

Where did you grow up?
I grew up in Lancaster, California

What was your childhood like?
I grew up with 3 brothers; 1 older and 2 younger, which made me into a tomboy and was always in trouble.

Tell me about your family?
I’ve been married for over 21 years with 2 children; Justin 19 years old and Ashley 15 years old. I have 2 dogs and a cat.

Where did you go to school?
I attended Quartz Hill High School and went to college at the University of Phoenix.

What did you want to be when you grew up?
I’ve always enjoyed the medical field and wanted to be an RN.

What sort of jobs did you work in the past?
I was a stay at home mom for a few years. I also worked as Admin Assistant to a Professor in Chemistry and Development Coordinator for a Children & Family Services.

Three words to describe yourself?
Independent, caring and loyal
Favorite Book?
Don’t have a favorite, but I enjoy adult romance.

Favorite restaurant/meal?
Definitely Best Thai; cashew chicken with veggies.

Favorite Cliché?
When you have lemons, make lemonade.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
Usually spend time with my family or reading.

Best advice you’ve ever received?
Take life one day at a time.

Pet peeve?
I can’t stand people who talk on the phone while driving.

One thing you would change about the world today?
Poverty

What’s your job title at UCR School of Medicine?
I am the Director of Pre-Clinical Education

How did you become affiliated with the school?
I applied for a position as a admin II for Student Affairs.

What’s the best part about working here?
I love seeing the growth of the medical students becoming a physician.

What lessons have you learned while working at UCR School of Medicine?
Just to be patient and learning to deal with different types of personalities.

What do you see in UCR School of Medicine’s future?
An increase in class size and greater diversity in our student body.
Volunteering in Hospice Care
By Isaiah Roggow, MS2

I noticed a distinct scent when I entered the long-term nursing facility: faintly musty, like old clothes been worn too long, ill-masked by the scent of disinfectant. I signed in, introduced myself to the charge nurse, and proceeded to meet my new hospice patient, Yvette. My role as a member of the hospice team is to provide companionship and a human presence during a person's final weeks or months of life. I rapped on her door and let myself in; I knew she had suffered from a stroke a number of years ago that had immobilized her entire right side of her body and that she would thus be unable to answer her door. She was a frail woman, 100 pounds with paper-white skin and a mop of grey-white hair. I introduced myself and quickly found she had significant hearing loss.

We did not speak much that day; Yvette did not seem entirely aware of my presence and her eyes would often lose their focus. However, every now and then she would lock on to me, smile a lopsided and adorable grin, and say “Hi!” as if she were meeting me for the first time. Then she would look away for five or ten minutes and we would sit there, in what was for me, an awkward silence. However, Yvette was not my first quiet hospice patient and I knew that just being there for her was of value.

After two hours and about 10 words, I took my leave of Yvette, promising her I would see her next week. I came away from that day very disturbed. Was this to be my fate someday, locked in a double prison, one of flesh encased within one of walls? If so, I wanted nothing to do with it. Meeting Yvette that day and being in the nursing home for a few hours made me confront both my own mortality, which is something I have wrestled with and thought I had a good handle on, and morbidity. While dying is an inevitability we cannot escape, I’m not frightened by it. It’s the window of time in which we are no longer strong and vibrant. Where you’re confined to a small room to wait for the end to come.

I have continued to visit Yvette every week for the past several months. My experience at the nursing facility has been a sombering one; every week I see people slumped in wheelchairs, eyes fixed on a spot of floor before them. Faces slack, they do not respond to a cheerfully issued “Good morning!” as I walk by. It has taken its toll on me; I am ashamed to say that I greet them less and less now.

Why do I keep coming back? I’m not being paid and the demands on my time as a medical student are many. Why do this? The hospice patients I work with are always so grateful for having someone there. They are so often forgotten and ignored; having someone there whose only job is to be present and listen for a few hours means so much to them. They have lost so much: their mobility, their independence, their hearing, their sense of identity and self, their friends, many of which have died or no longer come around because of their own declining states.
Writing publicly about the elderly and the care of them is a delicate subject. Most of us have aging and ailing parents whom we must care for (or are currently caring for). This is a conversation that we as a nation are reluctant to have. Our American culture disdains growing old; we fear it. Modern medicine is extending lives in ways unimaginable 100 year ago. But we are victims of our own success: more and more of us are becoming more frail and dependent upon others as we age. This is reflected in how we take care of our parents and grandparents. We shut them away in motel-like enclaves where we pay someone to feed, clothe, and wash them. This is problematic and we can do something about it, but it will require a cultural shift in how we treat our elders.

I have been a part of Yvette’s care team for several months now, and she has taken a turn for the better. She is animated and talks all the time about her family, mostly her sons, who visit her frequently. I like to tell myself that I played a small role in her re-engagement with life.

Why do I keep coming back? It is the little things that turn out to be the big things. I am surprised by how they express their appreciation: just the other week, as I was leaving for the day, Yvette said “Good bye, and I love you.”
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Highlighting Excellence in Student Achievement

Doug Grover, Brian Hernandez and Christina Guest

First year P.I.P. project poster presented at the American College of Physicians annual symposium of Internal Medicine, October 2014

Poster Title: "Increasing Mammogram Utilization–A Direct Patient Contact"

Chiarra Maruggi

Summer research done at the Boston Children’s Hospital presented at the American College of Physicians annual symposium of Internal Medicine, October 2014 and to be presented at American Pediatrics Society Symposium in the spring of 2015.

Poster Title: “Drinking to Obesity: Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by pediatric patients presenting to weight management programs”

Bryan Yeh

Summer research done at Loma Linda University presented at the American College of Physicians annual symposium of Internal Medicine, October 2014. Won 2nd place for best research.

Poster Title: “Assessing Neurovascular Pathology using Perfusion and Laser Doppler flow”

Hurnan Vonsachang

Second authorship on paper published in the Journal of Academic Emergency Medicine done affiliated with research done while working at Stanford University.

Article Title: “Variations in Pediatric Trauma Transfer Patterns in Northern California Pediatric Trauma Centers (2001-2009)"

Students at the 2014 ACP Symposium

…If you’ve recently presented research, been part of a publication, selected for special accolades or done something otherwise fabulous The Scope would like to hear about it. Please e-mail a description of your achievements to ucrscope@gmail.com
What do you call two x-rays that claim neither faith nor disbelief in God?

Answer: Di-agnostic!

Who's the slowest quarterback in the NFL?

Answer: Tom Brady-cardia

The anatomy professor cold calls on an MS1 and asks “what does the trapezius do?”

The MS1 shrugs.

“Excellent,” the professor says.