



Department of Psychiatry

Virginia Commonwealth University

Volume 4, Issue 2

Summer-2011

Our Vision: To Conquer Mental Illness.
Our Mission: To improve the mental health of our citizens through education, research, advocacy and innovative clinical care.

Special points of interest:

- Chair Letter
- Benefit Luncheon
- Focus on Sam Chen
- Hounds for Healing
- Accolades for many
- Photos of Graduation

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More Announcements

From the Chairman



Dear Colleague:

In the last few months we have made very important progress developing endowed support for educational programs. These endowments will provide funding for education in perpetuity.

I am very grateful to Dr. John Urbach for establishing the Rindler Urbach Psychiatry Residents Education Fund. This endowment is in honor of Dr. Urbach's late aunt and uncle who were refugees from World War II Europe. The proceeds from this fund will provide books and supplies for our psychiatry trainees.

In addition to this good news, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Dr. Mimi Pizzani established the Joel J. Silverman, M.D. Teaching Excellence Award endowment to annually support the efforts of an outstanding junior faculty teacher. This fund will recognize a faculty member who has achieved excellence in teaching. Dr. Pizzani worked very hard to raise support and I am honored that she named this fund in my honor.

Mrs. Ruth McDonough, longtime friend of Psychiatry and wife of Dr. William McDonough, who was a graduate of our department and a member of our Clinical Faculty for many, many years, has established the Ruth and William McDonough Professorship in Graduate Psychiatric Education. The proceeds from this fund will support a professor specializing in graduate psychiatric education.

These three funds will synergize to strengthen our department's educational work. Each fund is accepting additional donations. Please let our Director of Development, Rupa Murthy, know if you wish to contribute or if you have thoughts about developing ongoing support in additional educational or research areas.

Speaking of research, I am pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Michael Mason, as Assoc. Professor of Psychiatry. Dr. Mason is a child psychologist and funded researcher. He is a productive, mid-career scholar who is bringing funded research to VCU. In addition to doing his own research, Dr. Mason will mentor scholarship in child psychiatry.

Dr. Kenneth Kendler will be receiving the Delay Prize for Excellence in Psychiatric Research from the World Psychiatric Association this September in Buenos Aires. He is the second North American to receive this prestigious award. We are very proud of his work and the international recognition of Ken, the Virginia Institute of Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics and our department.

Congratulations to Dr. Alex Trutia for organizing our Fifth Summer Institute for Psychiatry. Annually, we host medical students from VCU and from around the country for a week long experience learning about Psychiatry. This year we taught nine students, three from VCU. The students received both didactic and clinical experiences and enjoyed meeting our faculty and residents in a relaxed social setting. One wrote to Dr. Trutia afterwards: "Thank you for letting me participate in your program and giving me the opportunity to meet so many inspiring people and gain insight into the work they do. I really appreciate all of the work you did putting this program together."

Congratulations to Dr. Ananda Pandurangi who was just elected to the Board of MCVP.

Our next Faculty Dinner Meeting will be September 1 (5:30 – 8:00 p.m.) at the Mekong Restaurant, 6004 West Broad Street. I hope to see everyone there. Enjoy your summer.

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Former First Lady Jeannie Baliles Hosts Luncheon to Benefit VTCC



The Virginia Treatment Center for Children Luncheon, hosted by **Former First Lady of Virginia, Jeannie Baliles**, was held June 7th at the Bull & Bear Club.

Guests heard from parents like Bill Murray, Senior Policy Analyst for Dominion and Kathy Wirtala, community volunteer from Fredericksburg, about their experiences at VTCC. Dr. Bela Sood and Dr. Joel Silverman told guests that VTCC was "charged"

by the Virginia General Assembly to serve the children who have mental illnesses throughout our state.

VTCC currently occupies a building that is over 60 years old. Jeannie and her guests were given the challenge of building a new VTCC where innovative clinical care, training and research can provide Virginia's children a safe place to heal.

Present at the luncheon were legislators, community activists and many others who have expressed a desire to "help VTCC".

Welcome new Post-Doc

Dr. Marie LePage will be joining the department as a postdoctoral fellow in Clinical Health Psychology on September 1. Dr.

LePage received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Kent State University and is completing her internship in clinical psychology at the Medical University of South Carolina. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Mary Washington. Dr. LePage has a strong background in eating disorders in underweight, average weight and overweight populations.



Hounds for Healing Dog Walk



Co-Chairs Drs. Barker and Barker, along with Honorary Chairman Tam Silvestri, *Richmond Times Dispatch*

The First Annual Hounds for Healing Dog Walk was held at Monroe Park on April 23rd. The event was held to raise funds for the Center for Human-Animal Interaction in our department. Two hundred fifty registered pets and owners walked one kilometer to raise over \$20,000 and awareness

There were 500 participants, along with sponsors, who offered face painting, dog bowl decorating, a silent auction, a mock search and rescue demonstration and the Richmond PD K-9 Unit exhibited drug detection.



Recently the Wall Street Journal featured an article on Dr. Barker's work with therapy dogs which can be seen on the CHAI website, www://http.chai.vcu.edu.

Welcome to our new Trainees: Drs. Arun Andrews, Mohammad Ashfaque, Joshua Chandy, Shivan Desai, Tanya Dutta, Zeeshan Faruqui, Sameer Hassamal, Sherin Moideen, Kshitij Pandit, Kimberly Reese, Jennifer Smith and Geranameo Bullock. Drs. Josef Bledowski, Catherine Fericola and Zabe Sayeed are our new Fellows in C&L Psychiatry; Benita Blevet, M.S. and Leila Islam, M.S. are continuing Clinical Health Psychology Practicum students and in Child Psychiatry, Drs. Tamara Helfer and Jennifer Fischer.

Dr. Sandra Barker and Dr. Janet Knisely are co-investigators with Dr. Vicky Shivy (VCU Psychology Department and PI) and Dr. Randolph Barker (VCU School of Business) in a project funded with a \$20,000 Community Engagement Grant. The focus of the project is to evaluate Fetch-A-Cure's *Pixie's Pen Pals Program*, an animal-assisted therapy program in which inmates learn to train shelter dogs to make them more adoptable in the community. We will be studying the program's effect on the inmates and the institution.

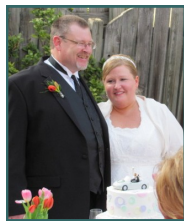


The Community Engagement Grants are intended to help VCU develop strong university-community partnerships to address critical needs in our community. The photograph used with this story is used with permission from the Lee County Sheriff, Ft. Myers, Florida.

NAMI Honor

In a letter from NAMI Executive Director Michael Fitzpatrick, **Dr. Ananda Pandurangi** has been selected to receive a 2011 NAMI Exemplary Psychiatrist Award. He was nominated by NAMI Central Virginia and the award is given to psychiatrists who are "noteworthy for going the extra mile and who have made substantial contributions to NAMI activities. Award winners are recognized for their advocacy for access to care and research funding, community education programs and other NAMI priorities. Winners have provided comprehensive treatment or have taken the time to educate those who care for people with mental illness.

Congratulations



- Congratulations to Dr. Silverman's Assistant, **Lisa Lee Hill Smith (Wead)** on the occasion of her marriage to Scott Wead on April 4, 2011.

- Congratulations to **Dr. Cheryl Al-Mateen** who received the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment (PACME) on April 13, 2011. The awards honor individuals who have made significant contributions toward enhancing VCU's commitment to Diversity.

- Congratulations to **West 8 Psychiatry** which is listed "Best Practice Location for CoPay Collection by a Front Desk". Collection rate was 93.2%!

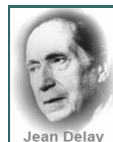
- Congratulations to **Dr. David Freeman**, Resident of the Month for February, to **Dr. Erik Peterson** Resident of the Month for March and to **Dr. Pradip**

Koirala, Resident of the Month for April. Dr. Silverman was named "Honorary" ROM on April 1. Resident of the Month for May was **Dr. Madhavi Kandel** and **Dr. Atit Bhattachan** was selected Resident of the Month for June.



- Congratulations to **Dr. Ken Kendler** who will be awarded the Prix Jean Delay (Jean Delay Prize) from the World Psychiatric Association in Buenos Aires in the Fall. The

Jean Delay Prize is the most prestigious award of the WPA and is a very highly regarded prize in the field of Psychiatry. It is awarded every three years and is named for the first President of the Association. The prize consists of a diploma, medal, a cash award and the recipient delivers a plenary lecture at the World Congress of Psychiatry. "At the end of last century the Jean Delay Prize was established to honor distinguished colleagues that scholarly bridged the biologi-



cal, psychological and social sciences underpinning our clinical profession and who veritably emblemized our highest ethical aspirations." Jean Delay is one of the most important psychiatrists of the 20th Century; he introduced chlorpromazine in the treatment of psychotic disorders and described for the first time the antidepressant effect of isoniazid.

- Congratulations to **Dr. Christopher Kogut**, named *Our Hero* by *Richmond Magazine* along with the following who were named Top Docs for 2011: **Drs. James Levenson, James Asa Shield, Jr., Joel Silverman, Cheryl Al-Mateen, Neil Sonenklar, Bela Sood & Martin Buxton.**

- Congratulations to **Dr. Ananda Amstadter** who was awarded the 2010 Chaim and Bela Danieli Young Professional Award from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.



Growing Up in China with Dr. Sam Chen



Xiangning (Sam) Chen, Ph.D.

On Dr. Xiangning (Sam) Chen's recent trip home to Shenzhen and Hangzhou, China, he spent 12 days on a research collaboration with Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI), a non-profit organization involved in genomics and high throughput DNA sequencing. The project is a transcriptome sequencing study for schizophrenia. The trip was to finalize a plan for data analysis and get some first hand experience on the protocols and procedures of a large scale genomic analysis.

He also visited his mother and siblings, all of whom live in China, as well as a grad school classmate who is a professor at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, who recently went back to China to lead a research institute.



Religious Deities

All five of Dr. Chen's brothers and one sister live in China. Two brothers are medical doctors. His parents visited him in the States twice before his father died six years ago.

Dr. Chen says that in the last few years, several institutions in China have produced research comparable to major universities in the U.S. and BGI is one of them. "Although the number of world-level institutions is still relatively small, it has been

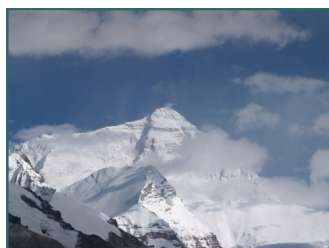
changing rapidly. The economy does have very significant impact on the quality of research in China."

Dr. Chen's research here at the Virginia Institute of Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics focuses on schizophrenia and smoking addiction. During the last several years, in collaboration with Dr. Ken Kendler and others, "we have discovered several potential candidate genes for both schizophrenia and smoking addiction, including the most recent study of the CMYA5 gene".

When he goes back home to China, where food is among his fondest memories and the thing he misses most, other than family and friends, he notes one of the most obvious changes is in the quality and variety of food available now. "In the last several years, the economy in China has brought many changes in people's lives."

A few years ago, Dr. Chen and his wife Wynn timer took their three children to China to experience the culture and the country. They went to a restaurant for Chinese food and the children screeched after the first bite. "It's HOT" they yelled. American Chinese food is not much like real Chinese food! Dr. Chen says when he and his wife want "real" Chinese food, they go to Washington, D.C. Dr. Chen's wife is from Taiwan and she is an accountant.

Dr. Chen's life began in meager circumstances. Growing up in China in the 1960's was "chaotic". Mao Tse Tung had risen to power in 1949 but Russia had revoked aid to China in early 1960. As the Cultural



Mount Everest

Revolution swept across the country, the schools were closed, no one was working and fear ruled the cities. When Sam was seven years old his family was "relocated" to a small village in the country. Two hundred people lived in this four hundred year old town and everyone was related; they had all descended from three brothers.



Potala Palace, a mountain monastery

Dr. Chen's father was an officer in the Communist Party who was "purged/sanctioned" and sent to a self-improvement camp during the Cultural Revolution.

Schools were practically non-existent during Dr. Chen's early years. Very little structure and some days they would have school, some days they would not. Sam Chen had no formal education in his early years. What he did learn about was raising pigs, chickens, vegetables and farming.

Over the ten year period of the Cultural Revolution, people were admitted to colleges and universities because they had political affiliation and influence. Dr. Chen was in the first class of people admitted for academic merit at the age of 17. There were people in his classes who were just beginning college at the age of 40, so he was nicknamed "the child".

He studied agronomy in college, but did not like it. So he enrolled in graduate school after graduation and received his Master's Degree in plant genetics. From then on, he has been engaged in the study of genetics, from plant genetics to

bacterial genetics and eventual human genetics.

Sam Chen is a fun kind of guy. He laughingly tells the story of his life growing up in pre-Mao China and during the reign of the Chairman.

Dr. Chen has lived the life many of us have read about in Time, Life, Look and Newsweek magazines. He was there and he saw it all up close and personal. As a child, he lived the life Walter Cronkite brought into our homes every evening on the nightly news.

Dr. Chen is a happy scientist. He loves what he does and believes someday genetic discoveries will change the world. He loves talking about his family. His mother is alive and well and has visited him here after the death of Sam's father.



Dr. Chen at Sera Monastery

Right here at our Virginia Institute of Behavioral and Psychiatric Genetics, we have a brilliant scientific researcher who has discovered that the CMYA5 gene may be involved in the etiology of schizophrenia. This discovery provides an opportunity to understand how mutation in a gene can lead to a devastating mental disorder like schizophrenia.

Safely ensconced in his third floor corner office in Biotech I, overlooking I-95 and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Dr. Chen contemplates the upcoming "Spit" Study involving freshmen and addictions which he, along with Drs. Danielle Dick and Michael Neale will undertake when the Fall Semester begins.



Congratulations and Appreciation



• Congratulations to **Dr. Jack Hettema** who was recognized by Thomson Reuters Essential Science Indicators for having the most-cited publication in the field of psychiatry/psychology in their Fast Moving Fronts.

• Congratulations to **Dr. Douglas Gibson**, Co-PI on the recent news of a new four year \$2,000,000 grant from the Department of Defense entitled Warriors Achieving Resilience (WAR). The study is being run here in Virginia. **Dr. Gibson and Dr. James Wade** are also Co-PI's with Dr. Bajaj on a \$1,000,000 grant studying mild hepatic encephalopathy.

• Congratulations to **Dr. Penny Ziegler** who was awarded a Distinguished Life Fellow by the APA.



• Congratulations to **Dr. Danielle Dick**, who was awarded the Research Society on Alcoholism Young Investigator Award.

• Congratulations to **Dr. Cathy Crone**, (INOVA) who is now Treasurer of the Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine and is on the Scientific Program Committee of the APA.

- Joint Appointment congrats: **Dr. Joan Plotkin and Dr. Sandra Mullen.**
- Congratulations to **Carolyn Jewell, MSN, Judith Tomlinson, RN and Michael Weaver, M.D.** of our Addictions Division on the recent publication of their article "Identification and Management of Prescription Opioid Abuse in Hospitalized Patients, published in the *Journal of Addictions Nursing*.



Resident **Dr. Madhavi Kandel** was surprised recently with a Baby Shower in her honor. Baby is expected in August 2011

- Congratulations to **Dr. Douglas Gibson** on his promotion to Major Gibson. Dr. Gibson serves in the Army Reserve and is currently on a one month assignment in Tajikistan.



• A farewell party was held for retiring Administrator, **John Blatecky**, at the Alumni House on June 20, 2011. John served the department for 20 years with integrity and excellent

fiscal management skills. He and wife, Donna, plan to make North Carolina their retirement home soon. We wish them the best. We are already missing the "Big Guy"! But.... We also welcome our new Administrator, **Mrs. Suzanne Williams**, who



comes to us with a wealth of experience in financial management, human resources and marketing. Please feel free to drop by and meet Suzanne.

• Congratulations to **Elizabeth Wise**, (daughter of Dr. Tom and Karen Wise (INOVA) VCU M-3 who was elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society.

• Congratulations to **Dr. Ken Kendler** who was recently named the 2011 ISPG Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement Award winner by the International Society of Psychiatric Genetics.