From Care Extender to Nurse Practitioner, Nina Pung

These Care Extenders have gone above and beyond their duties as volunteers.

**UCLA Santa Monica:**
- Candice Hill  
  **Oncology**
- Gerardo Pombo  
  **Post Partum**

**Care Extenders of the Rotation**
- Yervant Hadjian  
  **Med Surg 4MNP**
- Danielle Fogel  
  **NICU**
- Karina Nepomuceno  
  **Geriatrics**
- Karishma Lakhani  
  **NICU**

**UCLA Health:**
- Greta Davis  
  **NICU**
- Abraham Wu  
  **Labor and Delivery**
- Angeli Mata  
  **Surgical Center**

(Continued on pg. 10)
From Care Extender to N.P.
Nina Pung

What do you do graduate from and what was your major?

I did my undergrad at UCLA and received my B.S. in MIMG (microbiology, immunology, and molecular genetics). I was pre-med at the time. After that, I went to Georgetown in DC for nursing where I received my BSN. Then, I went back to UCLA to receive my masters as a nurse practitioner.

How do you feel that Care Extenders has helped you achieve your professional goals?

Before Care Extenders, I didn’t know that much about nursing. It was in the L&D department where I fell in love with nursing and OB. So, I decided to change my career path from pre-med to nursing. Without Care Extenders, I don’t know when or if I would ever be exposed to nursing. The program really opened my eyes to what nurses do, the impact they have on people’s lives, and the possibilities the career has to offer.

If you could give any professional advice to a current Care Extender, what would it be?

It is important to have an open mind and be open

(continued)
to the possibility of a potential change in what you want to do in your career. I was set for going to medical school and being a physician but with the experiences I had along the way, it made me realize that there were other things out there that I ended up enjoying even more. Also, get into extracurricular activities with an open mind knowing that you will expose yourself to new possibilities.

What is the most rewarding thing about your job?

It is such a rewarding profession! For starters, I have a strong influence on people’s lives. I am able to give them advice, reassure them, educate them, take the time to listen to them, and practice cultural diversity.

What motivated you to pursue a career in healthcare?

My dad was a physician and he suggested that I also go into that field. I knew I loved practicing medicine. Along the way, the Care Extender Internship program introduced me to many careers in the medical field, one of them being, a nurse practitioner. I was able to use my experience as a bedside nurse to help make me better as an advanced practice nurse. As a nurse practitioner today, I am able to make more decisions to positively affect the health of my patients.

What do you do as a nurse practitioner?

I visit every patient’s room and I go through their lab scores. Because I work in OB, I conduct an ultrasound on the patient to see how far along they have come and to find any complications. The gestational age determines which appropriate test must be ordered. Then, I evaluate the ultrasound reports, X-rays, or blood tests. I educate the patient on what they should expect. I also monitor medications to see how well patients are reacting to them.

(Picture) Nina Pung and Dr. Tabsh

“I met him as a Care Extender 13 years ago, standing in the back of the OR watching my very first c-section that he was performing. I later worked with him as a labor and delivery RN. Then, I worked as a nurse practitioner in his perinatal clinic. My journey came full circle and it all began as a Care Extender at UCLA.”
From Care Extender to Care Extender Staff: Jonathan Tung.

Interview with Jonathan Tung

“\textit{I wanted to give back and inspire new volunteers with what I’ve been learning working in this hospital.}”

Why did you join Care Extenders?

My roommate Nguyen Le, then a regular volunteer but now the Gonda DC, encouraged me to join the program after hearing me talk about my previous hospital volunteering experiences because he thinks Care Extenders could offer the same, if not better, experiences.

How long have you been in the Care Extender Program?

This is my 6\textsuperscript{th} rotation.

What departments have you volunteered in?

I’ve volunteered in 8N, 8ICU, PICU, ER, and 7ICU.
Why did you become part of staff?

I was also encouraged by my roommate to apply for staff. I applied for staff one year after I joined Care Extenders. I wanted to give back and inspire new volunteers with what I’ve learned working in this hospital, and share my appreciation for the privilege of being able to volunteer at UCLA Health hospital. The ability and competency of a department coordinator (DC) also contributes significantly to how enjoyable and valuable that experience is. I wished to take what I perceived as missteps when I was a regular volunteer and improve upon them to further augment a fellow Care Extender’s volunteering experience.

What school do you go to? What year are you?

I go to UCLA, and I’m a 3rd year.

What is your major?

Physiological Science, loud and proud.

What do you do in your department?

I haven’t had the chance to volunteer in 7E yet since becoming 7E’s DC, so I just schedule shifts and pop in from time to time to check in with my volunteers, hearing their experiences and living through their stories.

What is your future career plans?

The plan as of right now is medical school. I plan to take a gap year between college and med school to hopefully volunteer/travel abroad.

What is the most memorable experience you have had volunteering?

There was an experience in the PICU with a 2-year-old baby whose parents had gone home temporarily to freshen up. The baby really didn’t want to be left alone, and she’d fuss and cry if no one was next to her. That day in the PICU was on the busier side, so the nurses did not have the time to continually sit by her. I had a bit of down time, so I fed the baby, picked up the baby, and carried her around the unit. Eventually she fell asleep in my arms. The baby was one of the sweetest babies I’ve met while on the floor; all she wanted was a bit of attention. Even though it was for just 2 hours, I was glad to have been able to interact with her. By the end of that rotation in the PICU, I was reaffirmed that I love working with kids. These kids are in the hospital by of no volition of their own (often because of congenital conditions), yet they are often the most understanding and most resilient patients, even more than adults. It really made me realize just how much I take my own good health for granted. To be healthy and be able to give back, that’s also an experience in and of itself.

“It really made me realize just how much I take my own good health for granted. To be healthy and be able to give back, that’s also an experience in and of itself.”
Omega 3 Fatty Acids and Their Contribution to Good Health

How many people in the United States are affected by heart attacks each year?

About 735,000 in the United States have had a heart attack. The Center of Disease Control (CDC) has reported that one in every four deaths is due to heart disease.

What functions do Omega 3’s have in the body?

Omega 3 fatty acids are responsible for maintaining certain functions of the body. These functions include: blood clotting, digestion, muscle activity, growth, and cell division.

What foods are rich in Omega 3’s?

It is important to note that the only way our body can obtain Omega 3’s is through the diet. Some foods that are rich in content include: tuna, salmon, anchovies, trout, leafy vegetables, walnuts, and vegetable oils.

The Relationship Between Omega 3 Intake and Health

Inflammation in the body is detrimental to one’s health because it damages blood vessels, causes stiffness in the joints from rheumatoid arthritis, and is a component of asthma. Fortunately, it has been found that Omega 3 fatty acids reduce inflammation.

Therefore, eating foods with high Omega 3 fatty acid content is beneficial for overall health.
content can help prevent heart disease, ameliorate joint pain, and improve lung function.

However, the strongest evidence gathered about Omega 3 fatty acids is their positive affect on the heart. Omega 3's keep the heart beating at a steady rhythm.

**What exactly are Omega 3's?**

There are three types of Omega 3’s: eicosapentaenoic (EPA), docasahexaenoic (DHA), and alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). EPA and DHA are usually found in fish. Whereas, ALA is found in westernized diets that contain walnuts, leafy greens, animal fat from grass fed animals, and flax seeds.

**GISSI Prevention Trial: Comparing the Effects of Omega 3 Supplements in the Human Body**

In the GISSI Prevention Trial, two groups of individuals were studied to test the beneficial effects of fish oil on heart health. A group of heart attack survivors were separated into two groups. One group took a 1-gram omega 3 supplement every day for 3 years while another group took a placebo. By the end of the study, those who took the omega 3 supplement had reduced their chances of a repeat heart attack, stroke, and sudden cardiac death by 50%.

**Jelis Prevention Trial: The Effects of EPA Supplements On the Human Body**

Participants were split into two groups: one group took EPA and statin while another group solely took statin. Statin reduces lipid levels in the blood by altering enzyme activity in the liver, which is the source of lipid production. After the study, it was found that those who took statin and EPA were less likely to have a procedure that opens blocked arteries due to cholesterol buildup.

**Omega 3 Fatty Acids and Their Connection to Cancer Prevention**

According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, research has shown that Omega 3 fatty acid intake plays a part in cancer prevention specifically breast, prostate, and colon cancer.

Studies have shown that those who consume foods rich in omega 3’s are less likely to develop breast or prostate cancer. However, research is still being conducted to thoroughly research its effects.

More research has been done revealing the effects of Omega 3’s against colon cancer. Most of the Eskimo diet consists of high amounts of fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids; hence, these people have a low chance of developing colon cancer. Other studies have shown that fish oil supplements slowed the development of cancer.
Thumb-Sucking and Nail-Biting
Children Are Less Likely to Develop Allergies

Oral Bacteria and The Immune System

According to a study that has spanned three decades, there is surprising evidence that suggests children who frequently suck on their thumbs and bite their nails are less prone to developing allergies into adulthood. Allowing children these two so-called “bad habits”, in turn, expose them to greater populations of oral bacteria. This decreases a child’s allergic sensitivity as he or she enters adulthood. “Cat, grass, house dust mite, and dog [allergies] — those were reduced, some significantly, some borderline”, says Malcolm Sears, a researcher at McMaster University School of Medicine.

Does that mean parents should encourage their babies to suck on their thumbs and bite their nails?

According to an associate professor of respiratory epidemiology at the University of Otago in New Zealand, by the name of Dr. Robert Hancox, researchers are not recommending that parents encourage their children to suck on their thumbs and bite their nails. The American Dental Association advises that habitual thumb sucking can cause misaligned teeth in

continued…
young children. The study simply provides consolation, to the parents of children who can’t break these habits, that all of the oral bacteria children are exposing themselves to may not be so bad after all.

**Study of 1,000 children in New Zealand**

In this study, researchers followed the lives of 1,000 individuals from birth to adulthood. Researchers gathered data from each child when they were 5, 7, 9, and 11 years old. They also had an allergy test at 13 and 32 years of age.

After three decades of research, it was found that 38% of children who habitually sucked their thumbs and/or bit their nails developed at least one allergy; whereas, 49% of the children who had not developed these habits had at least one allergy (scientificamerican.com).

In this observational study, different factors like breastfeeding frequency, parental allergies, owning pets, and parental smoking were taken into account. However, the link between oral habits as children and allergy development into adulthood was still very strong.

**Three Decades of Research Correlates with the Hygiene Hypothesis**

The hygiene hypothesis states that children that are exposed to more bacteria are less likely to develop allergies as they get older. Westernized culture tends to be “too clean” and “too hygienic”. Unfortunately, this denies individuals the necessary exposure to diverse bacteria to create its microbiome. Diverse micro biomes tend to correlate with individuals who don't suffer from allergies, asthma, etc.

This exact concept also correlates with a 2013 study published in the Journal of Pediatrics. Research proved that mothers who sucked on their babies' pacifiers decreased their babies' chances of developing allergies later on in life.

**Allergies Today**

Data gathered from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have showed a higher prevalence of allergies in the U.S. population throughout the years. Food allergies jumped from 3.7% from 1997 to 5.4% today. Skin allergies have jumped from 7.4% from 1997 to 11.6% today. (cnn.com)

With percentages like these consistently growing since 1997, this research is very important to preventing the prevalence of allergies in future generations.

“...children who frequently suck on their thumbs and bite their nails are less prone to developing allergies into adulthood. “
Care Extender Committees

There are many leadership opportunities offered in the Care Extender program. You can find more information on our website:
https://www.uclahealth.org/careextender/Pages/care-extender-committees.aspx

Department Coordinator Assistant (DCA) Position
DCAs must perform “sweeps” at Ronald Reagan or Santa Monica Hospital to gain feedback from staff and Care Extenders. DCA's must also make sure Care Extenders are attending shifts and are in proper uniform.

Recruitment Committee
These leaders must spread the word about the Care Extender Program by emailing professors, visiting the school’s career center, making class announcements, etc.

Greeters Committee
These leaders must train incoming Care Extenders to get them more acquainted with the hospital. The tours consist of taking Care Extenders to the most visited places in the hospital.

Admissions Committee
These leaders must facilitate the interview and Live Scan Process by checking in applicants, taking photos, giving health requirement presentations, and answering applicants' questions.

Care Extenders of the Rotation
For Summer 2016

Ronald Reagan UCLA:
- Saiyada Haroon
  ER-A
- Dwinta Kusuma
  8E
- Kevin Nguyen
  7ICU
- Mehdi Nojoumi
  CCL

We appreciate all of your hard work and dedication. You have been an integral part of this department thanks to your exceptional good work, volunteering efforts, and patient interaction. Your energy, dedication, and selflessness truly exemplify the Care Extender spirit. Keep up the good work!

* Did you know?

Care Extenders that have been nominated as “Care Extender of the Rotation” at least two times may be eligible for a letter of recommendation.

Although all completing CEs will receive a reference letter, only our most outstanding volunteers will be considered for a letter of recommendation. For more questions, please email ASherer@mednet.ucla.edu.
Important Dates

August

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08.08.16    Recruitment Committee Applications Open Up
08.10.16    Extension Request Form Due
08.14.16    Recruitment Committee Application Deadline and Preferences Sign-ups Open
08.27.16    Admissions Committee Applications Open Up
08.28.16    Preferences Sign-ups Closes
09.03.16    Admissions Committee Applications Deadline
09.25.16    Orientation Day #1
09.26.16    Orientation Day #2
09.28.16    Orientation Day #3
09.29.16    Orientation Day #4
10.02.16    Fall Department Assignments and Meeting Information Posted
10.17.16    DCA Applications Open Up
10.29.16    DCA Applications Deadline
10.30.16    Last Day of the Rotation