



**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER**

Government & Community Affairs



GCA Connections

Spring 2007

CUMC -- Building Bridges for a Better Community

Lions Roar as Columbia Wins Medical Center Challenge for the Third Year in a Row

Columbia University Medical Center was victorious again this year in the Medical Center Challenge, defeating NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) for the third year in a row. The challenge was run as part of the 9th Annual Coogan's Salsa, Blues, and Shamrocks 5K road race. Held on March 4th, more than 4,000 runners of all ages, including world class competitors and local leaders, celebrated the strong community ties and rich cultural diversity of northern Manhattan by taking to the streets of Washington Heights. The race starts and finishes across from the Medical Center at the Armory National Track and Field Hall of Fame, heading up and back on Fort Washington Avenue with a loop through historic and beautiful Fort Tryon Park. A collage of musical groups including gospel, bagpipes, merengue, jazz, and salsa bands serenaded the runners along the route. This year, for the first time, members of the Columbia University Cheerleading Squad and Dance Team were on hand to cheer the runners on, as was Roar-ee the Lion, Columbia's mascot. Roar-ee was a big hit with all runners, both young and old. After the race, runners and spectators adjourned to Coogan's for good food and good fun.

More than seventy students, faculty and staff ran for the CUMC team and brought the trophy home again for Columbia. Christopher Kellner, a P&S student, was the top male finisher for the CUMC team, while Deirdre Kelleher, also a P&S student, led the way on behalf of the CUMC women for the second year in a row. Congratulations also to John Mann from the Psychiatric Institute, who finished first among men in his age group, and to Kathleen Crowley from Environmental Health and Safety, who came in eighth among women in her age group.

The challenge was cosponsored by CUMC, NYPH, the Seasons of Wellness Initiative, and the Columbia University Athletic Department.

CUMC Goes to the Theater

The CUMC Office of Government and Community Affairs sponsored two very entertaining, yet meaningful, performances that both delighted and educated audiences. In February, CUMC along with NYPH joined the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Alianza Dominicana, and Senator Eric Schneiderman in sponsoring a special presentation of Sarah Jones' "A Right To Care" at Columbia University's Miller Theatre. Over 300 people, including many CUMC faculty, staff, and students attended the performance by the Tony Award winning actress. Just as she had in her critically acclaimed one woman show, *Bridge and Tunnel*, Ms. Jones brilliantly used several different characters to focus attention on the issue of health disparities and the health care access crisis in our country. Proceeds from this special presentation went to benefit the Dominican Women's Development Center's Health Promotion Program.



Local community youth watch Momma's Boyz at Alumni Auditorium

The next month CUMC and NYPH joined together again to host a special presentation of Repertorio Español's *Momma's Boyz*. Alumni Auditorium was filled to capacity with over 700 students from Adam Clayton Powell Middle School, Amistad High School, Children's Arts and Sciences Workshops, Inc., St. Elizabeth High School, Mott Hall School, New Heights Neighborhood Center, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, and the Washington Heights Inwood Coalition.

This production which won the 2005 Metlife "Nuestras Voces" competition tells the story of three friends in the inner city who make a questionable choice to get quick money. The outcome is tragic, but a mysterious and magical force intervenes giving them a second chance to visit their decision. The play is often used as an educational tool to highlight the devastating impact of drugs and violence on inner city youths. *Momma's Boyz* was noted as one of the "best, most uplifting, relevant and compelling dramas" by reviewers and a must see for educators, parents, and teens.

\$100 Million for Stem Cell Research in State Budget

Patient advocates, biomedical research institutions, and others cheered as New York State included \$100 million for stem cell research in this year's state budget. The budget also put in place a mechanism to fund at least an additional \$500 million over the next ten years.

The Empire State Stem Cell Fund will support basic, applied, translational and other research and development activities that will advance scientific discoveries in fields related to stem cell biology. In addition to advancing the science of this new and exciting field of research, the new program will allow New York based institutions to compete with other states like California, Connecticut, and New Jersey which are all devoting significant public resources towards stem cell research.

Last April, then Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and Senator David Paterson unveiled their plan to support stem cell research at an event on the CUMC campus hosted by the P&S chapter of the American Medical Students Association. Over the past year, advocates, led by the New Yorkers for the Advancement of Medical Research (NYAMR), of which Columbia is a member, worked to ensure state funding and to help refine the proposal. The final budget language incorporated many of the NYAMR ideas, including a recommendation that the Fund adopt a merit based/peer review system for making award decisions.

As the state fiscal year came to a close on March 31st, Governor Spitzer and the two leaders of the New York Legislature, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) and Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno (R-Rensselaer), worked furiously to complete work on the FY 07/08 budget before the April 1st deadline. For the past two years, State leaders have completed on-time budgets, after twenty years of failing to do so, and neither Governor Spitzer, in his first year in office, nor the Legislature wanted to be late this year. Although the prospects did look bleak at times, in the end the Governor, Speaker Silver, and Senator Bruno were able to deliver an on time budget.

In addition to stem cell funding, the final \$120.9 billion budget contained a number of items of interest to Columbia and the academic medical community. Perhaps most noteworthy, the budget restored roughly \$400 million of the \$1.3 billion in hospital and nursing home spending cuts that had been proposed. It also maintained New York's commitment to support higher education and included \$4.6 million specifically for palliative care education and training.

Used Computers Find a New Home

Norman J. Kleiman, Ph.D., Director of the Eye Radiation & Environmental Research Laboratory in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health recently arranged to donate forty reclaimed computers through the National Christina Foundation.



Dr. Kleiman (center, in lab jacket), helps load computers with Chris Pettinato (left) and Steven Berman, from Columbia's Office of Environmental Health and Safety, which helped facilitate this donation.

The foundation provides computer technology and solutions to give people with disabilities, students at risk, and economically disadvantaged persons the opportunity, through training, to lead more independent and productive lives. It works with organizations around the world to ensure that used computer technology resources that no longer meet the needs of an organization or individual are given a second productive life. Representatives from the National Christina Foundation came to the campus in January to pick up the used machines.

Many older university computers are simply discarded for their scrap value while they still have a useful life simply because individuals don't know there are other options. "In our current environmentally and socially conscious society, it is important to give back to the community and to those less able to afford current computing machinery," says Dr. Kleiman, who is deeply committed to the recycling and reuse of equipment and has been collecting and storing these machines for some time. "In the near future, we hope to expand this program to ensure that most working university computers are rescued prior to disposal and made available for reuse." For more information or to donate equipment, please contact Dr. Kleiman at 5-6748 or njk3@columbia.edu.

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Stem Cell Bill Passes Senate, Still Faces Veto Threat

With strong bipartisan support, the United States Senate passed legislation that would lift current restrictions on using federal funds for research involving human embryonic stem cells. The vote on S. 5, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, was 63 in favor, 34 opposed. The House of Representatives passed its version of the bill, H.R. 3, in January, also by a strong bipartisan margin, 253-174. President George W. Bush has stated that he would veto either bill in its current form.

Three Senators missed the vote, but all had voted in favor of the bill when the Senate considered it during the last Congress. Last year's vote was 63-37 so support for stem cell research is growing. Still even with sixty-six Senators on record as supporting the bill, that is one vote short of the two-thirds needed to override a Presidential veto.

Faculty Share Their Expertise in Washington, Albany, and at City Hall

In recent months, CUMC faculty from all four schools have been called upon to provide guidance to federal, state, and local health policy makers. On March 16th, CUMC and the New York State Psychiatric Institute (PI) hosted a Congressional field hearing on mental health parity. Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) was joined by two colleagues who, because of personal experiences, have developed a special interest in mental health and substance abuse issues, Congressmen Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN). Dean Lee Goldman, PI Director Jeffrey Lieberman, and PI Division on Substance Abuse Director Herbert Kleber were the lead witnesses at the hearing.



(l to r) Dr. Lieberman, Congressman Ramstad, Congressman Rangel, Dean Goldman, and Congressman Kennedy gather before the hearing.

On March 20th, Jeanne Stellman, Professor of Clinical Health Policy Management at the Mailman School of Public Health, testified at a Senate Hearing on World Trade Center Health



Dr. Stellman and Mayor Bloomberg chat before the hearing.

effects. Dr. Stellman also appeared at a press conference with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), who is a member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions which held the hearing. Also in Washington, Professor Burton Edelstein from the College of Dental Medicine (CDM) was a lead witness at a House of Representatives hearing on reauthorization of the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Dr. Edelstein testified about the need to include oral health as part of SCHIP. Most recently, Irwin Redlener, Associate Dean for Public Health Preparedness at the Mailman School, testified before a Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing on Security on America's College Campuses.

In Albany, New York State policy makers also had the opportunity to hear from CUMC experts. Kristine Gebbie, an Associate Professor from the School of Nursing, was chosen as a member of then Governor-Elect Eliot Spitzer's transition team. As a member of the Health Subcommittee, she helped shape policy and advised on key personnel decisions in the health care arena.

In February, Dr. Hiroshi Mitsumoto, Professor of Neurology, was the guest speaker at a New York State Department of Health seminar on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease). Dr. Mitsumoto talked about clinical treatments and his hope to create a New York State ALS registry to assist researchers conducting epidemiological studies of the disease. Later that month, CDM Dean Ira Lamster was the guest speaker at a seminar hosted by the State Legislature on geriatric oral health care. Dean Lamster pointed out the importance of treating oral disease among seniors, whose numbers will greatly increase over the next twenty five years. On the same day, Associate Dean for Government and Community Affairs, Ross A. Frommer (not a faculty member), was a witness at a joint legislative hearing on the budget. He testified in support of state funding for stem cell research and made recommendations, echoing suggestions made earlier by Dean Goldman when he met with State leaders, on ways to shape such a plan.



Dr. Edelstein testifies before the House Energy and Commerce Committee

Rounding out CUMC's Albany appearances, were Drs. Lieberman and David Shaffer, also from the PI, who in March were among those who testified at a Joint State Senate/Assembly Mental Health Committee Hearing on autism. Their testimony focused on the neurodevelopmental aspects of the disorder.

Lastly, on the local level, Dr. Courtney Chin, from CDM, was a witness at a New York City Council Hearing on the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's School Based Health Program. Dr. Chin spoke on the importance of maintaining good oral health care as part of the program.



GCA Connections is published by the Office of Government and Community Affairs at Columbia University Medical Center

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Help us celebrate 20 years!!!!!!

Join the 20/20 Club

For the past 20 years, The Medical Center Neighborhood Fund has been supporting local community based organizations. This support is made possible by the generous donations and contributions received from faculty and staff of CUMC, NYPH, and NYPSI.

Help us continue this tradition of giving. Make your pledge of \$20 or more today. 100% of all funds raised directly benefit local organizations.

To make a pledge, please see inserted brochure.

Community Calendar

MOSA Concert - Rachmaninoff Rarity

Date: Sunday, May 13th, 2007

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church, 178 Bennett Avenue (at 189th Street), one block west of Broadway.

Contact: For more information, please contact MOSA Staff at (212) 923-5757.

Founded in December of 2005, Khorikos, an a cappella choir of 20 volunteer and professional singers, celebrated its inaugural concert in August 2006 at the Shrine Church of St. Anthony in Soho.

Conductor Jesse Mark Peckham will lead the ensemble in an all-Russian program. Highlighting the terno is a complete performance of Rachmaninoff's Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, composed in 1910 and neglected for 70 years after the composer fled Russia in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.



Make Music New York

Date: Thursday, June 21st, 2007

Time: 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 8p.m.

Location: J. Hood Wright Park, 174th Street and Fort Washington Avenue.

Contact: For more information, please contact Jean Bonnes at Foot Park at (212) 673-1658 or jeanbonnes@yahoo.com

Join in the biggest concert ever with musicians on streets or in parks in cities across the globe. Musicians will perform in public spaces on June 21, the longest day of the year. J. Hood Wright Park will host concerts of musicians in groups and solo musicians.