Gifts of Life
A liver transplant recipient and her donor share a bright future thanks to their UCSF procedure

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UCSF Medical Center

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UCSF BENIOFF CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL NEWS INSIDE
TO OUR NEIGHBORS

Late last year, UCSF’s automated pharmacy, which was featured in the fall/winter 2011 issue of Advances, won a Best of What’s New award from Popular Science. Chosen from among thousands of new innovations, the winners showcase products or technologies that yesterday seemed impossible, but are changing lives for the better today.

This recognition acknowledges a responsibility we take very seriously at UCSF Medical Center: to provide the highest-quality care that is personalized, patient-focused and safe. The automated pharmacy has delivered more than 1 million medication doses without error. In this issue of Advances and Bridges, we share other breakthroughs that also once seemed out of reach—but are now saving and improving the lives of the patients we serve.

Three stories particularly highlight this mission. Amy Baghdadi and Olivia Lemen are grateful for the extraordinary care they received through our acclaimed transplant program—one with survival rates that consistently exceed the national average. Stayce Sullivan was inspired to pursue a career in nursing by the renowned UCSF neurosurgeon who saved her life, and Ryland Burke was diagnosed by our sports medicine experts with a heart condition that in years past may not have been detected until it was too late.

These are but a few examples of how UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital are dedicated to providing the best, most innovative care available. Our motivation and our inspiration are derived from all of our patients who every day put their confidence, and often their lives, in our hands.

Mark R. Laret
Chief Executive Officer
UCSF Medical Center
UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital

TAKE OUR READERSHIP SURVEY

UCSF Medical Center wants to better serve your needs by providing you with the health information that interests you most. We invite you to help us improve the effectiveness of Advances and Bridges by answering the questions on the brief survey included in this issue. Please complete the survey and return it to us by July 1, 2012.

NEED LUNG CANCER SCREENING?

If you currently smoke or quit smoking within the past 15 years and are 50 to 74 years old, you may be at increased risk for lung cancer and may benefit from the UCSF Lung Cancer Screening Program. Offered at a discounted, self-pay price, the program includes a CT scan and a same-day visit with a pulmonologist (a doctor who is an expert in breathing problems and lung diseases). Our specialists use the latest CT scan technology shown to detect lung cancer at relatively early stages and reduce lung cancer deaths by as much as 20 percent. This technology uses low-dose protocols to greatly reduce radiation exposure. To schedule a screening, call (415) 514-8787. To learn more, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/lungscreening.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS AT UCSF

Rollout of electronic health records (EHRs) continues at UCSF, transforming how health care providers, staff and patients exchange information. The system increases emphasis on patient safety and medical error prevention by creating electronic patient charts that are accessible across the medical center. Housing all patient information in one electronic database eliminates the duplication of tests, sends alerts to warn of allergies to medications and creates an easily accessible tool for sharing information.

Electronic health records help UCSF primary care patients stay in contact with their doctor by allowing them to send nonurgent messages; request appointments and medication refills; and view test results through the patient portal, UCSF MyChart (https://ucsfmychart.ucsfmedicalcenter.org). “EHR enhances my ability to care for patients,” says Dr. David Buchholz of UCSF Primary Care at Laurel Village. “It is truly an integrated community record with input from me, my staff and specialists, and the patients themselves.” To learn more about primary care at UCSF Medical Center, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/primarycare.
THE GIFTS OF LIFE
UCSF is one of the leading centers for organ transplants in the nation—just ask Amy Baghdadi and Olivia Lemen.

If one medical miracle can lead to another, if one stroke of good fortune can trigger countless others, if one good deed can inspire many more, then liver transplant recipient Amy Baghdadi and her donor, Olivia Lemen, are living examples.

The two Bay Area women credit the success of their February 2011 procedure to the skill of their UCSF surgeons—Dr. John Roberts and Dr. Nancy Ascher—and to the wonders of modern medicine and the liver itself. For example, either of a healthy liver’s two lobes can be transplanted and grow into a full, healthy liver. In living donor transplantation, both donor and recipient livers grow to full size after the transplant.

For her part, Baghdadi marvels at her current state of good health and her well-functioning liver. It was an incredible chain of events that made it so: when she first learned that her rare form of liver cancer responds well to transplant; when she found a living donor before her own liver failed, a match who was the daughter of her mother’s close friend; when doctors confirmed at the outset of the transplantation that the procedure could go forward because her cancer hadn’t metastasized.

“The stars lined up for me,” says Baghdadi. “It was very much a race against time, and everything fell into place so beautifully.”

Like Baghdadi, Lemen is fully aware that she’s been through a “life-altering experience” and appreciates her quick return to health. “It was the right thing to do and I’d do it again in a heartbeat,” she has told reporters. “How often do you truly get the opportunity to save a life? Most of us never get to do that and to have so many positive things come out of it.”

Both women, who call themselves “liver sisters,” count the close bond that’s formed between them and their families as one of the most positive aspects of their experience. Equally important is the way it has sharpened their commitment to contribute to the greater good.

“I’m looking for ways to give back, to celebrate the gift I’ve received,” says Baghdadi, who along with Lemen has fundraised and been trained as an ambassador for the California Transplant Donor Network. “I want to help people have a second chance like I have.”

Liver transplant donor
Olivia Lemen (top) and recipient Amy Baghdadi have become good friends since the February 2011 procedure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit www.ucsfhealth.org/livertransplant to find out more about organ transplantation at UCSF Medical Center, one of the largest transplant centers in California. To view UCSF’s exemplary outcomes for liver and other organ transplants, visit www.srtr.org.

www.ucsfhealth.org / SPRING-SUMMER 2012 3
CHECKING ON YOUR BABY’S HEALTH BEFORE BIRTH
UCSF’s Prenatal Diagnostic Center serves expectant parents in the Bay Area and beyond

Moms-to-be and their partners can get important information about their developing baby’s health and possible risks of problems, thanks to the comprehensive screening, diagnostic testing and counseling at UCSF’s Prenatal Diagnostic Center (PDC).

“If you come to us, you have the reassurance of being seen by experts in the field—not just the doctors, but all of the sonographers and genetic counselors too,” says Dr. Mari-Paule Thiet, director of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at UCSF Medical Center. “We are committed to providing the information and support that patients need to make the choices that are right for them,” adds Sherri Peña, a certified genetic counselor and PDC practice manager.

The PDC offers the most advanced technology and procedures and also is involved in leading-edge research. The services are offered in San Francisco, Pleasanton, Monterey and Santa Rosa. Look for a new PDC clinic opening soon in Marin County.

For more information, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/prenataldiagnosis. To make an appointment, call (415) 476-4080.

HELP US REVOLUTIONIZE BREAST CANCER CARE

Patients at UC medical centers and clinics are invited to join a landmark statewide initiative in the battle against breast cancer. Called the Athena Breast Health Network, the groundbreaking project will initially involve 150,000 women throughout California who will be screened for breast cancer and followed for decades through UCSF Medical Center, the host campus, and UC’s four other medical centers. The project is supported by a $5.3 million UC grant and an estimated $4 million to $5 million annual matching gift from the Safeway Foundation.

“Our goal is to improve survival and reduce suffering from breast cancer, to accelerate research and compress the time to implement innovations in clinical practice,” says Dr. Laura Esserman, Athena’s founding director and director of the UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center.

Want to become involved in Athena? If you are a female UC patient, you’ll be offered the chance to enroll by completing a health questionnaire next time you schedule a mammogram. Based on the information you supply, you’ll get a personalized risk report, learn how to lower your risk for breast cancer and develop a plan with your doctor. If you’re identified as being at elevated risk, you’ll be referred to appropriate resources, such as risk-reduction programs or genetic counseling. If you’re diagnosed with breast cancer, you’ll be offered the very latest options in medical care and access to promising new approaches through clinical trials.

For more information, please visit http://athenacarenetwork.org, email athenainfo@ucsf.edu or call (415) 476-0276.
SPECIALIZED DERMATOLOGIC CARE FOR AT-RISK PATIENTS

Transplant recipients are among those receiving leading-edge treatment at UCSF’s High Risk Skin Cancer Clinic

One of the known risk factors for developing skin cancer is having a weakened immune system. This is especially true of organ transplant recipients since they must take immunosuppressant medications to avoid organ rejection. Similarly, patients with long-term HIV, lymphoma and certain genetic predispositions have compromised immune systems, leaving them vulnerable to nonmelanoma skin cancer, among other health conditions.

UCSF established its High Risk Skin Cancer Clinic to provide leading-edge care to patients who face such medical predicaments. Working with a multidisciplinary team of specialists, the clinic’s experts offer patient education, early intervention, state-of-the-art surgical care and customized treatment plans.

“Our goal is to prevent pre-cancer from developing into cancer,” says Dr. Sarah Arron, director of the High Risk Skin Cancer Program. “Organ transplant recipients have a 65 to 100 times greater risk of developing squamous cell carcinoma than the average person. We work very closely with these patients because the vast majority of skin cancers can be treated surgically if caught early enough.”

In addition to transplant patients and others with weakened immune systems, the clinic also sees patients who have had advanced nonmelanoma skin cancer and are at high risk for recurrence.

For more information, visit www.ucsfhealth.org/highriskskincancer, or call the High Risk Skin Cancer Clinic at (415) 353-7878.
Brain surgery patients at UCSF Medical Center have a special opportunity to be cared for by an extraordinarily empathetic nurse. That’s because Stayce Sullivan, who has been a clinical nurse with UCSF for the past four years, is also a longtime brain cancer patient.

For years, she has been under the care of Dr. Mitchel S. Berger, chairman of UCSF’s Department of Neurological Surgery and one of the nation’s top neurosurgeons. The inspiring story of how Sullivan came to care for patients of the neurosurgeon who saved her life speaks to the power of their remarkable, 22-year relationship.

A Childhood Interrupted

The headaches started when Sullivan was 7 years old, growing up in Spokane, Wash. Her head often hurt so much that she couldn’t play with her schoolmates, and she was constantly in the nurse’s office. At the age of 9, she started to have vision disturbances. An ophthalmologist recommended that Sullivan have a CT scan, which revealed a large, slow-growing tumor in the right hemisphere of her brain.

“I was told I’d need surgery immediately but that I’d wake up a different person,” says Sullivan. “It was terrifying.”

Fortunately, Sullivan’s parents had learned about leading-edge neurological research being done in Seattle by Dr. Berger, who was then on the neurosurgery faculty at the University of Washington. Dr. Berger was a pioneer in the field of brain mapping—a sophisticated form of neuroimaging—and he agreed to take Sullivan as a patient. She underwent a surgery that lasted more than 12 hours, during which Dr. Berger determined that Sullivan would lose no cognitive functioning.
Dr. Berger performed a second surgery to treat a recurrence when the young girl turned 11. A course of radiation therapy followed. “I was so young I focused less on mortality and more on things like losing my hair and never being able to roller-skate without a helmet again,” she recalls. “Dr. Berger’s compassion and generosity were so special. He included me in every conversation, every step of the way, while all the other doctors I’d seen would only talk to my parents.”

Called to Nursing

More surgeries followed: At the age of 15, Sullivan had cyberknife surgery, and in 2001, she had another recurrence, which Dr. Berger treated at UCSF, where he had joined the neurological surgery faculty in 1997. “After that surgery, I decided I wanted to be a nurse,” says Sullivan. “I found I identified with patients, and the hospital felt like my home.”

She went on to attend nursing school at Hawaii Pacific University and upon graduating joined UCSF. She gave birth to a son in 2009, but another tumor was found during her pregnancy, and she needed another surgery three months postpartum.

“Being a nurse helps me keep everything in perspective,” says Sullivan. “It makes me happy to wake up each day and be alive. I talk with patients and their families about what to expect. I can be a resource for them, and they are a resource for me.”

While nursing allows Sullivan to help other patients, it also lets her support the work of the gifted neurosurgeon who has become a huge part of her life. “Dr. Berger is my hero,” she says. “I am here to help him. There are no words to describe the bond we have.”

TREATING PARKINSON’S DISEASE

One of the nation’s top hospitals in the field of neurosurgery, UCSF Medical Center offers leading-edge surgical techniques to help patients manage Parkinson’s disease and other movement disorders.

While patients with early-stage Parkinson’s disease can often maintain good quality of life by taking medications, those with a more advanced condition often benefit from surgery. The most established surgery is deep brain stimulation (DBS), in which a tiny electrode, connected to an implanted pulse generator, stimulates the area of the brain that coordinates movement.

Traditional DBS surgery requires that the patient be awakened in the middle of the procedure to verify that the electrode has been implanted correctly and that neurological functioning has not been affected. Now, UCSF experts, under the leadership of UCSF neurosurgeon Dr. Philip Starr, have pioneered a less invasive technique. Called the ClearPoint system, this DBS procedure is done with real-time magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)—no awakening of the patient required.

“This is an advantage for children, seniors or any patient who might feel anxious about being awakened in the middle of surgery,” says Dr. Jill Ostrem, medical director of the Surgical Movement Disorders Center. Best of all, it results in a faster and more accurate procedure.

For more information, call (415) 353-2071 or visit www.surgicalmovementdisorders.ucsf.edu.

CAREING FOR THE CAREGIVER

UCSF is launching a comprehensive program to assist caregivers of brain cancer patients. Through a fundraising campaign called the Gordon Murray Initiative—created by the family of a UCSF brain cancer patient in his memory—UCSF plans to offer a dedicated resource to help improve quality of life for those affected by this disease. Many of the program’s components, such as educational resources and support groups, have long been available through the UCSF Cancer Resource Center, but now they will be centralized for neuro-oncology patients, their families and caregivers. In addition, the program will offer assistance with navigation, coordination of care and the services of a dedicated social worker and neuropsychologist.
Information at your fingertips

- Main websites
  - www.ucsfhealth.org
  - www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org
- Primary Care
  - www.ucsfhealth.org/primarycare
- Outreach clinics
  - www.ucsfhealth.org/outreachclinics
- Health coverage
  - www.ucsfhealth.org/healthinsurance
- Maps and directions
  - www.ucsfhealth.org/pathway
- Past issues of Advances and Bridges
  - www.ucsfhealth.org/newsletters
  - www.ucsfbenioffchildrens.org/newsletters

Our hospitals

- UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital
  - 505 Parnassus Avenue
  - San Francisco, CA 94143
- UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion and the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
  - 1600 Divisadero Street
  - San Francisco, CA 94115

Find a doctor | (888) 689-8273 | www.ucsfhealth.org/findadoctor

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