

# NEWSFLASH ::

ARTHRITIS & AUTOIMMUNITY RESEARCH CENTRE FOUNDATION



WINTER 2006

## WELCOME CHAN HON GOH HONOURARY PATRON OF THE AARC FOUNDATION ::

The Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre Foundation is thrilled to start off the year by announcing that Chan Hon Goh, National Ballet of Canada Principal Dancer, has joined as its first Honourary Patron.

Ms. Goh is an accomplished and gifted Canadian dance artist who has successfully developed her talents into multiple artistic channels. Ms. Goh is one of the leading stars with the National Ballet of Canada and the Suzanne Farrell Ballet, and frequently appears as a guest artist with dance companies around the world. Ms Goh is also a published author co-writing her autobiography, "Beyond the Dance: A Ballerina's Life."

Ms. Goh is not new to the Foundation. She was Honourary Chair of "Celebration of Body and Movement," an event which took place in 2001 in support of the AARC Foundation.

The issues surrounding arthritis and musculoskeletal health remain at the forefront for Chan, which is why she has agreed to join us in our efforts to spread the message to Canadians about the importance of supporting arthritis, autoimmune and related musculoskeletal research.



PHOTO BRUCE ZINGER

The AARC Foundation looks forward to working with Chan in its efforts to continue raising awareness about the importance of this research and being proactive about maintaining good musculoskeletal health.

Welcome Chan!

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## CARING WITH A DIFFERENCE ::

Since March 2004 nurses in Toronto Western Hospital's (TWH) orthopaedic surgery and rheumatology inpatient floor have participated in a pilot program called the 80/20 Program. They've been spending 80% of their time working with patients and the other 20% on professional development. The nurses are using a nursing theory called "Human Becoming" to enhance patient-centred practice on the unit.

Many rheumatology patients are seasoned inpatients at TWH and through their own observation, have noticed a new atmosphere.

Here's what is being said about 80/20:

"When I was first diagnosed with lupus in my early 20s, I began 13 years of literally living in a hospital. Since then, I've endured many more hospitalizations. During my most recent stay, there was a noticeable difference. My views were respected, my care was always delivered in a timely fashion and I sensed a special empathy. This was very reassuring to me and my husband."

- Honey Agar, AARC Foundation board member and UHN patient.

"We are testing an innovative model of employment which provides time for nurses to engage in continuous learning and projects that advance quality of care while at the same time advancing patient-centred care. This enables us to improve the quality of worklife for nurses and the quality of care for patients and their families."

- Dr. Mary Ferguson-Paré, UHN Vice President Professional Affairs and Chief Nurse Executive.

"The gratification I received from the 80/20 Program is precisely the reason that I chose nursing as my profession. Now, I am more in touch with my patients' feelings, I feel more valued by the patient and am constantly experiencing what it is like to be privy to someone's experiences and make a difference in someone's life."

- Nancy Halas, Clinical Nurse Coordinator and currently pursuing her Masters in Nursing.



Nurses in Toronto Western Hospital's orthopaedic surgery and rheumatology inpatient floor met with renowned nursing theorist, Dr. Rosemarie Rizzo Parse as part of their education (centre row, third from left).

"This program is great for retention, recruitment and development. The 20% protected time for personal development allows nurses to explore and learn about other areas of the hospital, take part on hospital committees, and pursue higher learning."

- Dr. Debra Bournes, Director of Nursing - New Knowledge and Innovation.



## UHN RESEARCH EXPANDS ::

The Toronto Medical Discovery Tower is part of the MaRS Innovation Convergence Centre on College Street, which is designed to connect and foster collaboration between science, technology, industry and capital – all under one roof. Dr. Stuart Berger, a senior scientist associated with the Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre, moved into the building in November.

“What makes this new lab space outstanding is that it was actually designed to be a lab – the engineering is unique,” says Dr. Berger. “The open concept encourages interaction amongst scientists and is an efficient use of space. Part of my research includes studying how cells communicate and influence each other. We are confident that our work will benefit enormously from our own communication and interactions with our colleagues.”



## BACK TO BASICS ::

Carole Galligan first became interested in the autoimmune response while studying to be a vet at the University of Guelph. In fact, she was so fascinated by what causes it, Carole switched careers and is now a Postdoctoral Fellow working in Dr. Eleanor Fish’s lab.

“All autoimmune illnesses have the same underlying principle of the body attacking itself – whether rheumatoid arthritis (RA), diabetes, multiple sclerosis or Crohn’s disease. When working at the National Cancer Institute in Maryland, we discovered a novel receptor in RA and that is what really peaked my interest.” Now back in Toronto, Carole is working on two projects in Dr. Fish’s lab, one involves RA, the other multiple sclerosis. She is looking at how the diseases develop, with the ultimate goal of figuring out how to block them in the first place.

“I’m thrilled to be associated with University Health Network because it is one of the largest teaching hospitals in Canada, and researchers have access to large quantities of patient data. I also collaborate with researchers and clinicians across UHN, Sick Kids and Mt. Sinai Hospital.”



*Carole Galligan*

When she finishes her training Carole will be in a position to set up her own lab – hopefully with the Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre.

## UPCOMING EVENTS ::

### **Governors Circle Lecture Wednesday April 26, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. featuring Monique Gignac, PhD**

Coping with a Chronic Illness: Addressing the day-to-day challenges facing those suffering with arthritis and other chronic diseases.

Toronto Western Hospital  
West Wing Auditorium, 2nd Floor  
Everyone is welcome. Please RSVP 416-340-4975

*Dr. Gignac is a senior scientist with the Arthritis Community Research & Evaluation Unit at Toronto Western Hospital and member of the Arthritis & Autoimmunity Research Centre*



*Dr. Monique Gignac*



### **Yoga classes in support of arthritis research**

Moksha Yoga Downtown will be donating the proceeds from their Karma Classes held on Friday evenings at 8 p.m. during February and March. Classes are free with a donation to the AARC Foundation. For more info contact Erin at 416.340.4800 x 6020 or [www.mokshayogadowntown.com](http://www.mokshayogadowntown.com)

### **Inspiring Collaboration**

In January, an international group of investigators gathered at Toronto Western Hospital to determine the reproducibility of outcome measures in ankylosing spondylitis – arthritis of the spine (AS) – and psoriatic arthritis (PsA). This is the first study to rigorously assess the reliability of clinical measures used to determine activity and severity of AS and PsA.

Twenty-two rheumatologists from 12 countries participated, as well as twenty examiners and 19 patients. Each physician examined 9 – 10 patients, half of whom had AS and the other PsA. Patients completed questionnaires addressing their disease activity, pain, fatigue, and their opinion regarding each of the clinical measures.

Data were analysed immediately and the results showed that most of the measures are reproducible and that the measures used in AS are appropriate for PsA with spinal involvement. Moreover, a new instrument was developed and tested during the study: the INSPIRE lateral bending instrument to measure the spine.

The INSPIRE (INternational SPondyloarthritis Inter-observer Reliability Exercise) study was developed by Drs. Dafna Gladman and Robert Inman with the support from the SpondyloArthritis Research Consortium Canada (SPARCC), was funded primarily by The Arthritis Society through a grant to SPARCC, the Krembil Foundation and grants from Amgen/Wyeth Canada, Abbott Canada, Wyeth Global, Pfizer Canada, and Schering Canada.

There's always an answer. *We'll find it.*

**NEWSFLASH** is published once a year by the AARC Foundation. We welcome your comments and/or contributions. Please contact us if you would like extra copies of this issue, or know of someone who would appreciate receiving it.

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Charitable Registration #11929 0773 RR0001



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