Residency Fair Held on Campus

A Residency Fair/Hospital Day was held December 1 at VCOM. This special event showcased the residency programs we sponsor with the Appalachian Osteopathic Postgraduate Institution Consortium (A-OPTIC). The American Osteopathic Association established the Osteopathic Postdoctoral Training Institution (OPTI) in 1995 as a system to structure and accredit osteopathic graduate medical education.

This event was also an opportunity for our Council of Teaching Hospitals to introduce students to the CORE teaching hospitals in our surrounding area. Seventeen of our affiliated sites were in attendance and the military affiliates were represented by Ret. Colonel Vaden Blackwood, D.O. The Southwest Virginia Graduate Medical Education Consortium (GMEC) also participated. The GMEC mission parallels VCOM’s.

Several of our hospitals are in the process of developing residency programs and third year students came back to VCOM from their hospital sites in Southwest Virginia and Western North Carolina. Fourth year students also attended. All classes had the opportunity to meet with program directors, residents and administrators at our affiliated residency and hospital sites. A large residency fair highlighting osteopathic residency programs in various specialties throughout the country will be held on March 29, 2007 in Blacksburg.
Members of the Class of 2009 Choose Hospital Sites

Hospital site choices and assignments for the Class of 2009 third year rotations took place in January. The students had the opportunity to meet with hospitals at Hospital Day and visit the hospital sites in December before making their choices for their third year hospitals. All students were placed in their first choice of region. The students are then allowed to rank hospitals and the majority of students receive their first or second site choice. The system was conducted via an electronic match that was initiated with this match season. The third year rotations for the class of 2009 will begin in September.

Residency Fair

Continued from page 1

Above: (left to right): Joshua Knowles, Scott Fell, Jonathan McNeal, and John Hughes at Hospital Day.
Right: Darrell Lovins, D.O., with students at the A-OPTI booth.
Bottom Right: Carilion Family Medicine booth.

Message from the Dean

Continued from page 1

and Southwest Virginia for their practices after a three to four year residency, addressing the increasing shortage of physicians in Virginia and in our country.

During the first four years of operation, the VCOM faculty on campus and in our regional sites have worked very hard to create a College to be proud of. The next four years will be dedicated to taking our College from Good to Great. I sincerely hope you enjoy our second newsletter and that you will visit our campus to see the many accomplishments of our students and faculty.
VCOM Students Have An Opportunity For Early Clinical Experiences

The second year class began their weekly early clinical experiences in January. This provides synthesis of classroom education with practical clinical applications.

Clinical skills including suturing, casting, sterile technique and cardiopulmonary labs are taught under the direction of Linda Frasca, M.D. VCOM clinical faculty assists with the training. Ava Stanczak, D.O. directs the Appalachian Medical Missions. Dr. Stanczak takes the students to various rural sites throughout Southwest Virginia responding to areas of need in health care and health education.

The students have experiences in Radiology rounds at our local hospitals under the direction of Hing Har Lo, M.D. This gives them an opportunity to see various modalities of radiology and have a better sense of the patient’s expectations before entering their hospital based rotations in the third year. Students attend and participate in free clinic experiences with Dr. Cathy Callahan and our Sports Medicine Fellows, Sarah McGinley, D.O. and Mark Rogers, D.O. Jeannine Strobl Ph.D., works with PharmD’s at Montgomery Regional Hospital, Carilion Roanoke and the Salem VA to provide a clinical experience in the hospital which relates to the Pharmacology material students are learning each block in the classroom. Drs. Chris Pile and Tina Smusz who are fellowship-trained Palliative Care physicians provide an in-home experience in Palliative Care. Students meet at VCOM after their experience to train further and share the knowledge of working with patients to provide end-of-life care with dignity and compassion. Geriatrics experiences occur in our associated learning centers directed by Rick Williams, M.D.

Karol Gordon, D.O., John Paulus D.O., and Dave Harden D.O. Finally, the students have the opportunity to work in the hospital with our Internal Medicine Hospitalists Art Roberson M.D. and Evelyn Parish D.O. at Montgomery Regional Hospital.
The Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine would like to offer our sincere gratitude to Ethicon for their generous grant of suture material for the Clinical Skills Lab. The suture material will be used to teach the students to suture in their second year, thus preparing them for their clinical rotations in their third year.

This is the second consecutive year Ethicon has awarded VCOM a grant for suture material. A special thank you to Chris Cline, the Ethicon representative, who helped to coordinate the grant.

Ethicon Provides Grant

The first VCOM class Health Profession Scholarship Program (HPSP) students have matched for their residencies. The Department of Defense match is held in November of each year, which is much earlier than civilian matches. Most of the students got their first choice residency in highly competitive fields and highly competitive training programs at fine Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF). We are very proud that the first class rose so well to the challenge.

In addition to the required active duty training month required of military scholarship students, VCOM students are allowed a total of three rotations in their third year at our affiliated military sites. Our affiliated sites include Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in Portsmouth, VA; First Medical Group Hospital at Langley Air Force Base, VA and Womack Army Medical Center at Ft. Bragg in Fayetteville, NC. Our hope is that they will be well prepared for life in the military when they go on their fourth year rotations to be seen for residency opportunities. Retired Colonel Vaden Blackwood, D.O. is our Director of Student Medical Education for the military MTF, working with the HPSP students. He is the advisor for our Association of Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons undergraduate chapter at VCOM. We are sure our students who placed in residencies at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, Eglin Air Force in Florida and Naval Medical Center San Diego will be selling their winter coats to incoming students.

Military Residency Match Class of 2007

Pictured in the photo from left: Linda Frasca, M.D., suture lab instructor; Mr. Chris Cline, Ethicon representative; and Ms. Eryn Perry, Director of Research Administration and Development.

Colonel Vaden Blackwood, D.O.

The VCOM Student Military Organization officers.
King Speaks at Burruss Hall

Yolanda King, a daughter of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the keynote speaker at Burruss Hall on the Virginia Tech campus on January 15th. Several VCOM students attended this event and were very impressed with the dynamic presentation given by Ms. King.

Left to right: Lynda Tang, Raul Mirza, Cassandra Paul Scott, Yolanda King, Nnemdi Baird, and Courtney Stinson

Bhaba Misra Named Student D.O. of the Year

The Student D.O. of the Year (SDOY) is a prestigious award sponsored by the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSPG) which is a council representing Student Government Associations at the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). The primary focus of this award is to acknowledge students’ commitment to their school, their community, and the osteopathic profession. All osteopathic medical students (OMS I-OMS IV) are eligible for nomination. Each school selects their SDOY who goes on to compete at the national level for a $500 scholarship.

Congratulations to Bhaba Misra!

SOMA Awards Student Mentoring Grants

By Raul Mizra, SOMA

Earlier in the year the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) VCOM chapter awarded the Student Mentoring Grants. The grants consisted of twenty-five and fifty dollar awards for the purpose of providing funding for travel expenses incurred as a result of professional osteopathic or VCOM clinical mentorship training.

Recipients of the award included: Karen Tinaglia, Lili Lustig, James Harris, Neem Bhatt, Allison Greenstein, Chris Gilbertson, Nic Branscomb, Scott Leggoe, Angelica Perry, Katie Timmins, Jonathan Baugh, Tracy Carter, Cary Brewton, Brandon Green and Mary Caroniti.
VCOM’s Fourth White Coat Ceremony

By William King, Vice President of Student Affairs

On December 9, 2006, VCOM held its fourth White Coat Ceremony in Burruss Hall on the campus of Virginia Tech. The Class of 2010 students were cloaked by faculty members (and in some select cases by physician family members) and were supported by student mentors from the Class of 2009.

The White Coat Ceremony is a “rite to passage” for beginning medical students that encourages a contract for professionalism and empathy in the practice of medicine. This ceremony is held at over 100 medical schools nationwide and emphasizes the importance of both scientific excellence and compassionate care for patients.

VCOM’s first White Coat Ceremony was held for the Class of 2007 in December 2003 and the tradition of celebration, recognition, and emphasis on the empathetic and compassionate care of patients has been a consistent theme each year.

Mr. John Rocovich, Chairman of the Board for VCOM, opened the ceremony and Dr. Eugene Zachary, VCOM Board Member and past Dean at the University of North Texas Health Science Center – Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, provided inspirational words to the students and their families.

Dr. Zachary spoke of the responsibilities of physicians and provided advice and guidance on the practice of compassionate medical care. He encouraged students to embark on their careers with a blend of real world advice and his own style of inspiration.

Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, Dean and Vice President, explained the purpose of the White Coat Ceremony and provided the ceremonious roll call of names as students were donned with their first white coats. Dean Rawlins emphasized the key VCOM student values of Compassion, Duty, Integrity, Patient Centered Care, Knowledge, and Altruism and tied these values to the purpose and history of the White Coat Ceremony.

The Arnold Gold Foundation, founders of the first White Coat Ceremony, provided “Humanism in Medicine” pins, which were presented to each student by VCOM’s President Jim Wolfe.

Dr. Joe Heaton, President of the Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association (VOMA), provided stethoscopes to the newly cloaked first year osteopathic medical students on behalf of the membership of VOMA. The ceremony concluded with the students and all Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine present reading “The Osteopathic Oath”.

With about one thousand students and guests in attendance, the White Coat Ceremony provided an opportunity for students and their families to celebrate the accomplishments of students and their transition as Student Doctors.
VCOM Hosts the Annual SNMA Conference
By Nnemdi A. Baird and Diane Sutphin

This year’s Student National Medical Association (SNMA) Annual Regional Conference (Dec. 1-2, 2006) offered both medical and pre-medical students the chance to build professional relationships with their fellow future physicians. Conference workshops addressed both the expanding view of the medical profession as a whole and domestic health issues. In addition to educational workshops that will better pre-medical and medical students alike, our workshops also focused on the diversity in medicine with respect to culture, gender, medical training, practice settings, research and practice, geography, etc.

Our exhibit hall featured residency programs, medical schools, and professional associations from around the country. Moreover, there were several keynote addresses made by Dr. Benjamin Dixon, Dr. Edgar B. Jackson, and Dr. Javette C. Orgain. We thank those who participated in this year’s successful conference. A special thanks goes to students, Nnemdi Baird and Errol Fields for helping make the conference such a success and to Dr. Linda Frasca for her leadership.

For more information or news about the VCOM chapter of the SNMA, go to http://www.vcomstudent.com/snma/ to visit their web site.
Friday Night Friends

Many of the VCOM students provide social, medical, and educational services to our community.

For the past three years, medical students have volunteered at a program known as “Friday Night Friends” at a local church in Blacksburg.

Founded by two students in the VCOM Class of 2007, “Friday Night Friends” in Blacksburg allows parents or caregivers, a break from caring for their loved one with special needs. For a few hours on Friday nights VCOM students and faculty serve as their caregivers. This provides parents who can be experiencing a stressful and tumultuous lifestyle a respite.

While the participants are with the VCOM group, they are kept entertained and happy. “Friday Night Friends” also provides a safe place where volunteers understand their many challenges.

Recently, Dr. Ava Stanczak, who serves as the group’s faculty advisor, was approached for VCOM to serve in an advisory capacity to assist another group in establishing a similar program in Roanoke. That program is currently developing and will serve children in the Roanoke/Salem region, using the VCOM model as a guide.

Anyone interested in contributing toward or working with “Friday Night Friends” should contact Adam Greenblatt, Class of 2010, at agreenblatt@vcom.vt.edu.

SAA Sponsors Relationship Seminar Series

By Kristin Wylie, President of SAA

The Student Associate Advocates (SAA) hosted its first relationship seminar on January 5th at 7 pm. Dr. Robert Miller spoke to students and their significant others on the topic of “Stress Management through Mindfulness”. He defined mindfulness as a person being intentionally aware of his thoughts in the present moment.

Dr. Miller stressed how “being in the moment” is important for relationships and having a successful career. He tied it into medicine by explaining that mindfulness is especially important for physicians in listening to the patients and having them feel like they are the number one thing on the physicians mind. As medical students and family of medical students, mindfulness is very important because the lack of time couples have to spend together is a real problem. If two people are mindful and in the moment, they spend more quality time together as a couple, thus enhancing their relationship.

Dr. Miller preformed exercises with the audience on how to block out all the past and future thoughts and focus on the present moment. These seminars are not only for people having trouble with their relationship but for people who wish to strengthen their relationship and develop tools to help them spend better quality time together.

The SAA would like to thank Dr. Miller for speaking at the seminar and plans to have the next relationship seminar in March. The SAA would like to thank the pediatric club for enabling the couples with children to attend by providing child care during the seminar.
VCOM Student: 3rd Generation Female to Join the Army

Student Doctor Leslie (Jaime) Brown, Class of 2010, was commissioned into the United States Army as a Lieutenant on September 30, 2006. The ceremony took place on the VCOM campus. Fellow VCOM Students and Army Lieutenants Maricel Zayas (OMSI) and Leigh-Anne Lindenmuth (OMSII) were present for the ceremony.

Student Doctor Brown is from a long family line of military officers. Notably, she is a third generation female to join the US Army. Her grandmother, Regina Dooley-Bremseth was a Sergeant and served as a nurse; her mother, Patricia Leslie Brown was a Major with the Military Police. Jaime’s father, Colonel George P. Brown (Aviation) and other relatives also served in the military. Jaime will be the second physician in the family to join the military. Her uncle served as a Navy physician.

Captain Terrie Pitman, US Army Health Recruiter, touted that this was the first third generation female that she has recruited. “This is so unique.” She went on to add, “VCOM is such a good fit with the military since we look at the whole person in our selection process. Lieutenant Brown’s character, experience as a team leader in athletics, and academics make her a strong fit.”

“It is not just one thing that makes a good Army Officer and that is why VCOM students are such a good fit,” stated Pitman. “I really like this school. I really do!”

Jaime’s mother administered the Military Oath to commission the new Lieutenant. Her father and fellow VCOM students were nearby.

When asked how he felt about his daughter’s commissioning, Colonel Brown said, “I think it is obvious (grinning). It is nice that she will be able to carry on the tradition. The Army is getting a good physician, a good individual and good basketball player. Being a third generation in the military is not usual particularly during wartime.”

VCOM has sixty nine recipients of the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). That represents 11% of the student body.
Class of 2007 Students Published!

By Jan Willcox, D.O.

It is difficult for a practicing physician to become published, so imagine the difficulty for a student to become published from experiences during their medical school career. Several VCOM students were able to accomplish just this during their training at VCOM. Some of those published include:

- **Jason Romesburg** was published with faculty mentors Chris Reilly, Ph.D., Selen Olgun, M.D., Ph.D., Robert Gogal, Ph.D., D.V.M., Arben Santo, M.D., in the May, 2006 issue of “European Journal of Immunology”. The article was “Interferon regulatory factor-1 gene deletion decreases glomerulonephritis in MRL/lpr mice.”

- **Jon Kim** was co-author of Section II, Case Studies, Case 7 “Vertebral Refracture After Percutaneous Vertebroplasty” with faculty mentor, John Mathis, M.D. in the book Percutaneous Vertebroplasty and Kyphoplasty, Springer 2nd Edition (2006) Mathis, Deramond, & Belkoff. Student doctor Kim was also published in the Journal of American Chiropractic Association, December 2004 issue with Dr. Mathis. The article was “Rapid Pain Relief for Vertebral Compression Fractures.”

- **Sam Deel** had two cases published in his third year of medical school. His manuscript was accepted to the Southern Medical Journal. This article was “Urinorthorax: A Rapidly Accumulating Transudative Pleural Effusion in a 64-year-old Man.” He also had “Aplastic anemia in the ED: A case report” published on the Student Union page of “MD Consult” Web site.

- **Mary Carolyn Vinson** was published in The DO in the January 2006 issue. Her article was “Pioneer Daze: Tackling Life at a New Medical School.”

VCOM “Cashes In” At Vegas
AOA National Convention and SOMA Conference

In October, 2006, 30 students attended the AOA Convention held in Las Vegas. This was a record number of students attending! This gave the students not only an opportunity to interact and network with D.O.s from throughout the United States, but to attend invaluable workshops and lectures. Several students participated in the research poster sessions.

Students were appreciative of the fabulous VCOM Dinner provided by the President and Dean, which was held at the Las Vegas Hilton, and organized by Megan Price, Director of Admissions.

Congratulations to VCOM’s SOMA members who attended the National SOMA Conference held in conjunction with the AOA Convention, and returned with national leadership positions. M.C. (Mary Carolyn) Vinson’s position as National Membership Coordinator was shifted to being a member of the Board of Trustees, joining VCOM’s John Casey and Lynda Tang. John Casey, currently Newsletter Editor, will assume his duties as National Vice-President and Speaker of the House and Lynda Tang will become Region 1 Trustee in April following the spring convention.

Left to right: Lynda Tang; Dr. Strosnider, President of the AOA, and Melissa Bunnell.

In front of the Bellagio fountains are (left to right): Sean Martin Allison Greenstein Joey Castro Lynda Tang Owen Sperr Magdalena Szutowska
Health Focus of Southwest Virginia Scholarship

The Lewis Gale Foundation provides scholarships for students in all levels of medical training. Recipients must have already been accepted into a medical program. Preference is given to residents of Virginia.

Health Focus of Southwest Virginia Scholarship and the Lettie Pate Whitehead Recipients 2006-2007

By Daniel Hewitt, Director of Financial Aid

Rhamey Bushman ’09
John Casey ’08
Joseph Castro ’10
Margaret Cooper ’09

James Danner ’07
Jordan Hill ’07
Bradley McCrady ’07
Kimberly Palmer ’09
Justin Parker ’08
Neha Patel ’09

Astrid Radermacher ’07
Gwendolyn Riddick ’10
Joshua Rodocker ’08
Kevin Sabotchick ’09
Melissa Weimer ’07
Rebecca West ’08

Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation Scholarship

This scholarship was a special award for Megan Morris from the Health Focus of Southwest Virginia. The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation works with partner organizations to offer awards to women in nine southeastern states.

Congratulations VCOM Students!

Douglas Wiley ’07
Megan Morris ’09
The Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) kicked off the New Year with its Annual Gala. Unlike years past, the Gala traditionally held in December aside the White Coat Ceremony was enjoyed by VCOM’s students, faculty and staff on January 6, 2007. The event took place at the Virginia Inn and Skelton Conference Center.

Two hundred and fifty five attendees, a record number this year, enjoyed an elegant evening of jazz music, fine dining and dance. Another first for the annual event was SOMA orchestrating a community sponsored raffle consisting of more than 30 individual merchandised items and gift certificates.

Items were donated for the sponsorship of a proposed Mobile Medical Unit (MMU). Besides the proceeds from the raffle and $2,000 that SOMA provided, the AOA-funded Student Initiative Grant has also been transferred into an account exclusive for funding for the acquisition of a Mobile Medical Unit. It is with hope that VCOM faculty and students will utilize the MMU to bring healthcare to the underserved rural communities of Southwest Virginia.

Montgomery County, home of VCOM, has a population of greater than 16% that is uninsured and therefore has limited access to healthcare. Thirteen percent of the county’s population has stated they could not seek appropriate care due to cost. Several surrounding counties such as Giles, Wythe, Pulaski, and Floyd are in even more need. A priority has been established to meet the medical needs of these populations and our students representing all organizations on campus have made it their personal mission to do so. The Mobile Medical Unit will consist of a trailer equipped to function as a thoroughly stocked portable doctor’s office.
SOMA Stays Active

SOMA (the Student Osteopathic Medical Association) remains active throughout the year with conferences, volunteer unity projects, and the famed National D.O. Day on the Hill.

Give Kids the World

In December of 2006, Christine Taylor, Owen Speer, Elizabeth Lee, Eric Taylor, Siraj Abdullah, and Oluyinka Akinbinu traveled to Kissimmee, Florida from the 26th through the 31st to volunteer with 100 other SOMA osteopathic students and physicians at the Give Kids the World (GKTW) organization. Give Kids the World is a village for children with life-threatening illnesses as well as their families. GKTW provided accommodations at its whimsical resort, donated attractions tickets, meals and more for a week-long, cost-free fantasy vacation. With the help of many generous individuals, corporations and partnering wish-granting organizations, Give Kids the World has welcomed more than 75,000 families from all 50 states and over 50 countries.

International Health Program

This year National SOMA has utilized the SOMA International Health Program to focus on providing support for the education of young women and children of disadvantaged populations. National SOMA and its affiliated chapters have dedicated a movement to providing textbooks and writing materials for students in third world countries. Here, back at VCOM, our own Lili Lustig, 2009 and Hillary Van Duyne Shemes, 2010 have both taken the initiative to head this program. Lili has actively pursued donations from multiple organizations for writing utensils and school supplies and has maintained communication with National SOMA in this collaborative effort.

D.O. Day on Capital Hill

On April 26th, 2007, the National D.O. Day on Capitol Hill event provided a preeminent opportunity for D.O.s and students to go to Washington, DC and lobby members of Congress and their staff face-to-face. Prior to the event participants will receive briefing materials on the key issues to be discussed. Once in Washington, osteopathic advocates will participate in a morning legislative briefing, attend scheduled meetings with members of Congress and their staff, and report the results at a debriefing session. Participation in this event is important for members of the osteopathic community. This is a tremendous event for students and professionals as this is a prime opportunity to educate members of Congress and their staff on osteopathic medicine and our positions on important health policy issues.

Upcoming SOMA Conference

D.O. Day on Capitol Hill will be followed by the Semi-Annual Student Osteopathic Medical Association Conference. This conference will begin Friday, April 27th and continue through Monday, April 30th. In addition to the formal meeting agenda, guest lecturers, exhibitions, and National Board Elections, VCOM SOMA anticipates hosting a social event Friday evening, April 27th. This event will be open to all SOMA students, staff and professionals representative from our national osteopathic schools.
During the Virginia Rural Health Association’s Annual Conference held at Natural Bridge, Virginia, on November 15th through the 17th, VCOM Students and Faculty had the opportunity to present research projects at the poster session and to speak about their research at the Board luncheon on Friday. The poster session, held in the Monroe Room of the Natural Bridge Inn and Conference Center, was attended by the VRHA membership. Several Board members acted as judges. Research posters were evaluated on scientific and clinical merit, organization, presentation and importance to rural health.

There were three groups of students from VCOM; two of the presenting groups were comprised of second year students while the third poster was presented by a fourth year student, Melissa Weimer.

Of the three groups, one group of OMS-II students presented on anatomical dissection anomalies with relevance to predominant diseases affecting those in southwest Virginia (Jonathan Baugh, Nick Branscomb, Tracy Carter, Wayne Davis, Nathan Evans, Advisor: James Palmieri, Ph.D.). The other group of OMS-II students relayed information on the importance of doing anatomical dissection in medical school and how it helps to prepare better primary care physicians (Brent Carter, Tracy Carter, Christina Lang, Ben Smith, Lindsay Wilson, Advisors: Francine Anderson, P.T., Ph.D. and Arben Santo, M.D., Ph.D.).

Melissa Weimer, OMS-IV spoke on a research study she organized and conducted through the NRV Free Clinics, a study funded through the Medical Society of Virginia. The study examined diabetic patients and implemented a diabetes self management course (DSME) with each of the patients to see if their hemoglobin A1C levels would improve over time. Although limited in size, her study did show that DSME programs could be successful in free clinic settings.

One of the VRHA Board members Tony Lawson, Executive Director, Southwest Virginia Graduate Medical Education Consortium (GMEC) and a judge for the session stated that the importance of these presentations is not fully appreciated. VCOM, as a medical school is in a unique position where the medical students can gain insight into diseases afflicting those living in rural Virginia. He stated that this information demands attention by our legislators.

All three of the student groups were awarded cash prizes ranging from $250 to $500 during the luncheon hosted by the VRHA on Friday afternoon.
Peds Club Responsible for Adopt-A-Town Program

VCOM’s Peds Club, advised by Dr. Ava Stanczak, along with the help of most of the other clubs here, is responsible for the Adopt-A-Town program. The towns of Grundy, Jonesville and Stuart have been adopted where families with the greatest needs are identified by working with the respective Headstart Program.

The Holiday Meals Campaign was the most recent activity benefiting these towns. Headstart directors in each of the three towns identified 25 of the neediest families to receive a food basket. Ladies at Warm Hearth nursing home made hats and scarves for the children. Lauren Morea initiated a fundraiser called “Kroger Cares,” through which people purchase Kroger gift cards from the Peds Club and Kroger donates 5% of the proceeds to the Adopt-A-Town program. With these proceeds, along with much discounted turkeys from Christiansburg Walmart, and support from Dr. Stanczak and her husband, 75 (25 to each town) healthy and hearty baskets were delivered and distributed in Grundy, Jonesville and Stuart. The only thank you the Peds Club, and others who helped needed was to see how happy and grateful the families were.

In the spring, a toiletry drive and community health fair is being planned for each of the towns.
COSGP Meets in Florida
Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents
By Ashleigh Dunn, SGA president

SGA representatives, Ashleigh Dunn and Jerita Dubash, represented VCOM at the quarterly Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP).

The Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents is composed of the student government presidents of each of the 23 colleges of osteopathic medicine. These student leaders represent the nearly 8,000 currently enrolled students of osteopathic medicine in the United States. Each and every osteopathic medical student therefore is a member of COSGP, as represented by their student leaders who travel to four annual conferences to collaborate on the issues and concerns of this profession via improved communication and technology, which will further unify all students on a national forum.

At the 2007 COSGP meeting at Bradenton and Lakewood Ranch, Florida, COSGP members covered a variety of topics between January 12th and 14th. Friday at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine – Bradenton, members discussed subjects such as Student D.O. of the Year awards, T.O.U.C.H recognition, new resolutions suggested by various schools, and the annual National Osteopathic Student Caucus at the AOA House of Delegates in Chicago. Presentations on public speaking and task delegation were also given. Each SGA president presented a school report for their respective institutions.

Saturday morning was open for school discussion and after lunch all participants helped stuff over 6500 envelopes and flyers to raise funds for the non-profit, non-sectarian project ShelterBox, which provides portable temporary housing and supplies all over the world and even places such as the Gulf Coast here in the US. Sunday resolutions were passed to divide the responsibilities and titles of the Research and Education position into two separate sets of responsibilities. After the conference adjourned, remaining participants could continue to help with extra work with ShelterBox.

The next COSGP meeting will be held in conjunction with DO Day on the Hill in Washington DC, April 26 – April 29, 2007.
The TOUCH program began as an initiative to encourage osteopathic medical students to integrate their education and knowledge into the communities where they live. Each osteopathic medical student is eligible to collect and document their hours of community service throughout the year.

When a student reaches 50 hours of service, he/she receives a TOUCH pin, which recognizes the student’s commitment to service. The names of every student who reached and exceeded these 50 hours was recognized at the 2006 AOA House of Delegates in the TOUCH presentation. The 2006 VCOM recipients are listed below.

VCOM was the recipient of the 2005 TOUCH award presented by the national COSGP to the school “For exceptional commitment to the service of your fellow man, for acting in the best interest of your community’s health, for honoring the osteopathic philosophy that the practice of medicine is a privilege and a responsibility.”
**VCOM Welcomes Surgical Chair**

Harry Simmons, D.O. has recently joined VCOM as Chair of Surgery.

Dr. Harry Simmons comes to us from Peru, Indiana and has years of experience in medical student education as well as in surgery residency training. Dr. Simmons began in December with visits to faculty at the core hospital sites. He will be continuing this process as well as curricular development and delivery for our first and second year students. Dr. Simmons has a surgical practice privileges at Montgomery Regional Hospital. Join us in welcoming Dr. Simmons and his family to the area. His hobby of Civil War reenactment made our recruitment much easier; however, he may require a new uniform.

**Bolin to Speak at Conference in Canada**

Dr. Delmas Bolin, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sports and Family Medicine at the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine and Team Physician at Virginia Tech, has been invited to speak at the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine International Meeting. The meeting is to be held in Calgary in July, 2007. Dr. Bolin will be updating orthopedic sports medicine physicians from around the world on the most recent innovations in non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications for sports injuries. Dr. Bolin practices in Salem with Primary Care Associates.

**Karol Lee Gordon, D.O. Joins VCOM**

In October, Dr. Karol Gordon joined VCOM’s clinical faculty. She was born and raised in Bluefield, West Virginia and went on to receive her B.S. degree, concentrating in biology, psychology and physical education, from Bluefield College, in Bluefield, Virginia. Before attending medical school, she obtained her National Emergency Medical Technician certification.

Dr. Gordon attended the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, West Virginia for her medical education. After graduating in 2002, she went on to do her residency in Family Medicine in Roanoke, Virginia. She achieved Board Certification in Family Medicine in 2005. Due to her interest in geriatrics, and her desire to improve the care in the nursing home setting, she completed a Fellowship in Geriatrics in 2006.

Currently, Dr. Gordon’s practice is concentrated on her patients at Heritage Hall, a skilled nursing and rehab facility in Blacksburg, where she is the medical director. She is available on site Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for both patients and family members.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Dr. Gordon teaches family medicine, physical diagnosis, geriatrics, and osteopathic manipulation skills at VCOM. Her goal is to make geriatrics fun for the students, in hopes of increasing the number of good physicians in the geriatric field.
Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Osteopathic Medicine But Were Afraid To Ask

“Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Osteopathic Medicine but Were Afraid to Ask” was recently presented to VCOM’s faculty and staff by Dr. Shawn R. Kerger, D.O. This lunchtime lecture and interactive video conference provided an overview of osteopathic medicine – its history, philosophy, and principles. Dr. Kerger is the chair of the Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Department and an Associate Professor in the Sports Medicine Department at VCOM.

Pharmacologic Management of Persistent Pain in Adults: Practical Application of Basic Principles

Sponsored by a grant from the American Alliance for Cancer Pain Initiatives and presented by VCOM, the Virginia Cancer Pain Initiative, Montgomery Regional Hospital, and the Virginia Association for Hospices, “Pharmacologic Management of Persistent Pain in Adults: Practical Application of Basic Principles” was presented on Friday, October 27, 2006. This interactive video conference, originating from VCOM and broadcast live to multiple sites, was open to all health care professionals. The conference provided attendees the opportunity to learn about advancements in assessing pain, avoiding prescription drug misuse/abuse considerations when developing a plan of care for the person in persistent pain, and the value of a team approach for the management of persistent pain. Additional seminars on Pain Management will be conducted in the spring.

For more information, please contact Deborah Bourne, VCOM’s Director of Continuing Medical Education, at 540-231-5844.

Head for the Hills: A Retreat for Residents and Faculty in Primary Care

Residents and faculty from primary care residency programs in VA, TN, KY, NC and WV and physicians from several states attended the recent conference “Head for the Hills: A Retreat for Residents and Faculty in Primary Care.” The retreat was cosponsored by VCOM and held at the Breaks Interstate Park in Breaks, Virginia. VCOM faculty presenting at this conference were Dr. Martha Wunsch and Dr. Michael Sampson.

VCOM AOA CME Certification Continues

Deborah Bourne, VCOM’s Director of Continuing Medical Education, attended the American Osteopathic Association’s 13th National Conference of AOA-Accredited Category 1 CME Sponsors held at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. VCOM remains a sponsor for AOA approved continuing medical education, and is seeking approval for allopathic CME as well.
Dr. Robert Miller, Ed.D., Credentialed Health Service Provider in Psychology

Congratulations to Dr. Robert Miller for being recognized by the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology. Since 1974, the National Register has reviewed the education and training of psychologists to identify those who met its national standards as health service providers. More than 12,000 psychologists nationwide are currently recognized, and listings can be verified through the National Register’s Online Searchable Database at www.nationalregister.org.

Because most states issue only general licenses to psychologists from the various psychological disciplines, the National Register credential is an important tool for consumers to identify appropriate providers of psychological services. “By identifying psychologists with education and training in direct, preventive, assessment, and therapeutic services, we provide the public, the profession and the healthcare industry with a unique resource to locate qualified providers,” explains Judy E. Hall, Ph.D., Executive Officer of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology and former head of licensing for the state of New York.

VCOM is honored to have Dr. Miller as a faculty member.

Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins Selected as “Local Legend”

By Diane J. Sutphin

VCOM’s own Dean Rawlins received the honor of being selected by the National Institutes of Health Research in partnership with the American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) as a “Local Legend.” On behalf of the partners, the AMWA annually calls upon Congress to nominate outstanding women physicians from their state or district who have demonstrated commitment, originality, innovation or creativity in her field of medicine.

Dean Rawlins was nominated by U.S. Congressman Rick Boucher and was the only D.O. in the nation to receive this award! Congratulations to Dr. Rawlins and to VCOM! To learn more about AMWA, visit the web site: www.nlm.nih.gov/locallegends/about.html.

Dean Rawlins is presented AOA Mentor Hall of Fame Award

By Diane J. Sutphin

Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins was inducted into the AOA Mentor Hall of Fame at the AOA National Convention in Las Vegas on October 15th, 2006. The Mentor Hall of Fame is dedicated to recognizing excellence in mentoring by those who serve or have served as trusted advisors to members of the osteopathic profession in the tradition established by A.T. Still, M.D., D.O.

This award is sponsored by the Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative (PMHI) founded in 1997 and created by Pfizer Inc, the world’s leading pharmaceutical company, as a natural extension of Pfizer’s commitment to patients and physicians; especially, to the understanding and the enhancing of the patient-physician relationship.
John M. Kauffman, Jr, D.O., Joins VCOM as Associate Dean for Postgraduate Affairs

In October, John M. Kauffman, Jr., D.O., joined VCOM as the Associate Dean for Postgraduate Affairs. Prior to coming to VCOM, Dr. Kauffman spent the previous six years at University Hospital Richmond Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was Director of Medical Education. While there Dr. Kauffman developed residencies in internal and family medicine as well as programs in pediatrics, dermatology, radiology and cardiology. Dr. Kauffman’s primary responsibility at VCOM is to develop residency programs in Southwest Virginia and the surrounding areas in keeping with the schools mission to train physicians for Southwest Virginia and the greater Appalachian region. In his spare time Dr. Kauffman enjoys going on medical mission trips to India and Jamaica. He is especially looking forward to his first mission trip with VCOM to Honduras and El Salvador. Dr. Kauffman, his wife Sharon and their four daughters are enjoying the natural beauty of Southwest Virginia.

Dr. Marty Wunsch, M.D., To Present Studies at Conferences and Named Co-Editor of Journal

The devastation of deaths due to overdose with prescription medications in rural American is in the national news, with an increase of 940% in deaths in rural Appalachia. VCOM is in the forefront of the study of this problem with the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA R03 DA 019047-01A1) research award “Opioid Mortality in Southwestern Virginia”, a project awarded to VCOM in 2005 with Dr. Marty Wunsch as Principle Investigator and Peg Wimmer, MS as the Research Associate. To date, 500+ of the over 775 deaths in the rural Western Virginia have been captured in a detailed database, uncovering important details about these tragic deaths in our region.

Dr. Wunsch has been invited to present her findings at the National Rural Health Association May 2007 conference in Anchorage, Alaska. Additionally, the work will be presented at the American Society of Addiction Medicine Conference (April 2007, Orlando, Florida) where Dr. Wunsch has been named the “2007 Young Investigator of the Year” for her studies in this area. Another project studying this issue, “Prescription Drug Abuse among Prisoners in Rural Southwestern Virginia”, has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Addiction Medicine of which Dr. Wunsch has been asked to serve as co-editor. Congratulations to Dr. Wunsch!
The Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA) held its annual conference at Natural Bridge, VA November 15-17, 2006. Highlights of the conference included:

- a presentation from Hilda Heady, former National Rural Health Association President, on her views of Rural Values & Advocacy
- Virginia State Police 1st Sergeant John Ruffin’s discussion of methamphetamines and their impact on rural Virginia
- student research presentations – five VCOM students walked away with prize money!
- the Annual VRHA Awards Banquet – VCOM’s own Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins received the Charles Crowder, Jr. Rural Health Leadership Award!

The VRHA is a diverse group of individuals from communities spread across Virginia - individuals who care about improving the health of Virginia's rural residents. VRHA members provide care, plan for the delivery of care, and are consumers of health care services. They are individuals and families who desire and need high quality health services close to home.

The VRHA office is located on the 3rd floor of VCOM. The 2007 VRHA conference will be held on November 7-9 in Staunton, VA. Learn more about VRHA and the Annual
Dean Rawlins Receives Charles D. Crowder, Jr. Award at VRHA Conference

Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins was recognized for her dedication and love of rural health at the recent Virginia Rural Health Association’s Annual Conference. Dean Rawlins received the Charles D. Crowder, Jr. Rural Health Leadership Award during the Awards Dinner on November 16, 2006 at the Natural Bridge Inn & Convention Center.

The Charles D. Crowder Jr. Award is given annually to recognize outstanding individual commitment and service in the advancement of rural health in the Commonwealth. The award was developed to recognize Dr. Charles Crowder, a long-time supporter of the Virginia Rural Health Association, whose love for rural health showed in his close relationships with his patients and his desire for the Association to focus on facilitating and nurturing research on rural health – what models worked – what did not. He wanted research on how to promote wellness in rural areas, not just treat illness.

Dean Rawlins embodied Dr. Crowder’s philosophy. During the presentation, her love of rural health, the relationships she has built throughout Virginia with healthcare providers and future physicians, her constant focus on facilitating and nurturing research on rural health issues, coupled with her incredible work ethic were recognized. When accepting the award, Dean Rawlins talked about the students at Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine and how her personal mission to help provide more physicians for rural communities through the establishment of the school was being met. She stated that “we are trying to produce compassionate, caring doctors who want to work in rural areas” – exactly what Dr. Crowder envisioned for rural Virginia. Congratulations Dean Rawlins!

The Virginia Rural Health Association is a professional membership organization, comprised of individuals that care about improving the health of Virginia’s rural residents. VRHA is an affiliate of the National Rural Health Association and is the leading voice for rural health in Virginia. To learn more about VRHA please check out their website at www.vrha.org.

Rzigalinski NanoNeuroLab Represents VCOM

The Rzigalinski NanoNeuroLab represented VCOM with three presentations at the annual meeting of the International Society for Free Radical Biology and Medicine meeting this past November, in Denver, Colorado.

“Cerium Oxide Nanoparticles Extend Lifespan and Protect Drosophila Melanogaster from Paraquat-Induced Oxidative Stress” was presented by graduate student Courtenay Cohen assisted by undergraduate Matthew Kurnick.

“Antioxidant Properties of Cerium Oxide Nanoparticles” was presented by graduate student Neeraj Singh.

“The Anti-Inflammatory Effects of Cerium Oxide Nanoparticles in Paraquat Treated Microglia” was presented by graduate student Chengya Liang assisted by undergraduate Julie Karfakis.

The Rzigalinski group also assisted the Itsy-Bitsy Robots First Lego-League Team in their regional Lego science fair competition. The team placed first in the regional competition, and first in the Research Division in the state finals.
Nobel Laureate Sir Harold Kroto was the Keynote speaker at the Third Annual Via Research Conference and Geriatrics Update Symposium on October 5 & 6, 2006. Kroto set the tone for the research Day event with his visionary speech “Architecture in NanoSpace”.

Professor Kroto was awarded the 1996 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his discovery of Buckminster-fullerenes “buckyballs” – molecules consisting of 60 carbon atoms in the shape of a soccer ball. These nanoparticles have multiple applications in industries and in medicine. Kroto started his academic career at the University of Sussex (Brighton) in 1967, where he became a professor in 1985 and in 1991 he was made a Royal Society Research Professor. In 2001, Kroto won the Royal Society’s prestigious Michael Faraday Award. The award is given annually to a scientist who has done the most to further public communication of science, engineering or technology in the United Kingdom.

The research program at Sussex has covered several interdisciplinary areas. One area focused on the creation and spectroscopic characterization of new molecules, in particular, unstable species and reaction intermediates which contained labile multiple bonds. Since these pioneering studies the presently extremely active field of phosphaalkene and phosphaalkyne chemistry has developed. Laboratory synthetic and spectroscopic work on cyanopolyynes led to the surprising discovery, by Radio-astronomy, that very long carbon chain molecules were relatively abundant in interstellar space. During a project which explored the possible source of these carbon chains in space, laboratory experiments which simulated the chemical reactions in the shells of red giant carbon stars were carried out, which serendipitously uncovered the existence of C60 Buckminsterfullerene.

Professor Kroto gives a highly popular series of public lectures, visiting many schools to promote international educational outreach work. He joined Florida State University as Francis Eppes Professor in October of 2004 from the University of Sussex in England, where he taught for 37 years. He plays a key role in the development of the university’s initiatives in biotechnology.

The Third Annual Via Research Recognition Days featured

Via College Research Recognition Day featured Nanoparticle “BuckyBall”
research by VCOM and Virginia Tech faculty and students in three areas - Nanomedicine, Brain injury and Geriatrics.

The platform speakers on Biomedical Application of Nanoparticals included Virginia Tech Faculty: Roop Mahajan, Ph.D., Harry Dorn, Ph.D., and Ishwar Puri, Ph.D., and VCOM faculty: Beverly Rzigalinski, Ph.D., and Selen Olgun, M.D., Ph.D.

Luncheon Speakers for two days event were Ross D. Zafonte, D.O. Professor and Chair, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, University of Pittsburgh Medical School and Ron Klatz, M.D. D.O., President of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

The Geriatric Update for Continuing Medical Education lectures included: Thomas Cavalieri, D.O., FACOI, FACP, Interim Dean, Director and Professor, New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine, Virginia Tech Professor Karen Roberto, Ph.D., John Paulus, D.O. and many others.

Over 500 people attended the conference and several MDs and D.O.s received up to 8 hours in CME credits in category 1A. The participants had opportunity to attend the scientific posters and oral presentations offered by biomedical and clinical faculty and learned the recent advancements on topics such as cardiovascular disease, lupus, cancer, immunodeficiency, birth defects, arthritis, sports medicine, osteopathic manipulation, genomics, environmental toxicology, immunology, addiction medicine, women's health, among others.

The success of the two day event was made possible by the hard work of many VCOM faculty, student, some dedicated staff, administrators, presenters and participants.
Since opening the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2003, the School has distinguished itself with new innovative and novel approaches in medical education.

One of the innovations, International Outreach, initiated at VCOM in July, 2005, set a trajectory to distinguish VCOM among colleges of osteopathic medicine. By April, 2006, the first VCOM international clinic opened in Veron, Dominican Republic. Then in August, two additional clinics opened in Honduras and El Salvador, making VCOM the first US D.O. school to establish a network of international clinics for student rotations. Yet another international site in Guatemala, scheduled to open in 2007 will provide four clinics which are sufficient to accommodate virtually all VCOM students with interests in medical rotations in developing countries; and to a very limited extent, provide opportunities for students at other D.O. Schools. This international network of community-based clinics, strategic partners within the countries and Appalachian area provide the foundation for another international outreach landmark program at VCOM.

In August 2006, VCOM announced a new joint D.O. and M.S./Ph.D. research graduate degree. Eighteen students in the inaugural VCOM D.O. class were approved to enroll in the Graduate Degree Program in “Research and Education” at Virginia Tech.

Dean Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, D.O. said: “The graduate program is an exciting and positive development for VCOM because it embraces and advances the college mission to serve Appalachia and underserved international mission areas. Our students will have a specialized skill set in research and education that complements their D.O. degree and positions them for international leadership and research.”

VCOM developed a special track for selected students in their fourth year D.O. program to enroll through a collaborative arrangement with the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, the
College of Liberal Arts and Human Resources and their School of Education. Currently enrolled students will graduate with their D.O. degree in June, 2007, then continue for a fifth year to complete remaining graduate degree requirements for Virginia Tech. Students in subsequent classes will follow a similar schedule.

Among the 18 students admitted to the D.O. and M.S./Ph.D. degree in August 2006, 10 students completed three one-month rotations in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Honduras during the fall of 2006. Students in groups of two to three moved from one location to another between October 1 and December 20, before returning to the US just in time for the holidays. Four additional students in the class elected to complete the same international rotations this spring, 2007; and others have an individualized rotation.

Joe Cacioppo, D.O., Director of Medical Missions said:
“Graduate students will be advancing medical services at our international clinic in special ways by advancing new knowledge and contributing programs to the community from their research.”

Before departing for international rotations, students complete an intensive four week immersion Medical Spanish course and an overview of research, attending class from 8 AM until 5:00 PM. A pre-test in Spanish provides diagnostic information to structure group and individualized instruction appropriate to their individual proficiency. A post-test validates proficiency to function in Spanish speaking country clinics before they are approved to leave for the sites.

Maurio Iglesias, the Salvadoran Doctor employed by VCOM, stated to Martha Murphy, the Spanish course instructor upon completion of the first student rotation: “You are a good teacher because our (VCOM) students speak very good Spanish with the patients.”

A field experience requires students to identify researchable topics at each rotation site. A subsequent seminar is designed to sort out the most viable research topics and refine those most promising through critical reflection. In a research institute model, students are encouraged to formulate their topics individually and/or in teams around themes and research teams.

The research seminar is held in January, designated research month at VCOM, for those on the fall international rotation. Activities during January are conceptualized in an institute model and include seminars in research, reflections on international experiences, individualized advising, library skills, special topics to equip students to prepare their dissertation research proposals and development of an individualized graduate program plan of study approved by their graduate committees. In February, students move to selective medical rotations and concurrently maintain critical elements of their graduate program.

The parallel D.O. and graduate program activities are guided by a carefully developed program of study that includes completing their D.O. rotations with concurrent enrollment in graduate courses including on-line internet based instruction, live interactive video, on campus courses and seminars, field experiences, dissertation research and individualized study.

Dissertation research is aligned with fellowship goals, developing new knowledge in health education and leading to implementation of new or novel interventions in the international or Appalachian settings where students have rotations. In all cases, students have extended placement at their research sites to collect data and, then return to implement a program leading from their research that makes a positive impact on the community.

A fellowship supporting this inaugural class focuses on developing international leadership and research skills. Funding for tuition, partial travel support, and related start-up expenses position the graduate program for long-term success.

H. Dean Sutphin, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for International Outreach directs the joint graduate program for VCOM, advises students, coordinates institute activities and concurrently serves as professor of Education at Virginia Tech. Joe Cacioppo D.O., VCOM Director of Medical Missions supervises graduate students on medical rotation and advises in the graduate program. Kerry Redican, Ph.D., Chairs the Virginia Tech School of Education unit that supports the Graduate Program with VCOM and teaches and advises students.

Dixie Tooke-Rawlings, D.O., Dean of VCOM, has provided the vision, leadership, program direction and funding for this exciting new program.
VCOM Students Teach Inner-City Latino Children

by Martha Murphy

In December 2006, VCOM graduate students in the Spanish for the Medical Professional class, together with VCOM Peds Club volunteers were invited to present a 2-hour children’s activity for a monthly meeting of the Crossing-the-Border class at the Oak Grove Church of the Brethren in Roanoke. CtB is a Virginia Tech service-learning course where VT students are matched with Latino families in Roanoke to foster cross-cultural understanding of both US and Latino societies, designed and headed by Dr. Gresilda Tilley-Lubbs.

Chris Hughes, a VCOM medical grad student was particularly eager to attend as it gave him the opportunity to practice his newly acquired Spanish speaking skills and share his bilingual hand-outs with the parents. Chris and Peds Club volunteers Lauren Salmon, Heather Tyrell, Maria Dunn, and Rebecca Starr gave a hands-on look at the tools of the medical profession, what to expect when going to the doctors office, and even presented the importance of hand washing and good hygiene to stay healthy.

Presented in a workshop-type format, the children enjoyed activities such as drawing life-sized bodies and labeling (in Spanish and English) the body parts and reading books about going to the doctor’s office. The children especially liked trying out all of the doctor’s tools: the stethoscope, otoscope, and blood pressure cuff. Some children showed off their enthusiasm by practicing on each other and playing doctor to the VCOM medical students.

As a result, these Latino children will be more comfortable at their next US doctor’s visit in Roanoke and our VCOM med students learned about perceived barriers to adequate healthcare in the Latino community and gained an invaluable opportunity to practice their Spanish speaking skills with native Spanish speakers.

Medical Missions Continue to Grow

By Joseph Cacioppo, D.O.
Chair of Medical Missions

Medical Missions has been extremely busy throughout the fall. On October 1, 2006 VCOM opened 2 more international medical clinics. Our clinic in the Dominican Republic has been operating since February 2006.

HONDURAS

Our new clinic in Tegucigalpa, Honduras is situated on the Baxter Institute Campus. There 40 patients per day are served from the under privileged area adjacent to the clinic.

However, VCOM’s work isn’t localized there. VCOM provides outreach to a once vacant clinic in Santa Anna, a village of several hundred located 45 minutes away from Tegucigalpa. The people of this community and surrounding villages have had to travel to Tegucigalpa for medical care for years. Beginning in November VCOM has been making weekly visits to Santa Anna, seeing 20 to 30 patients per visit.

EL SALVADOR

In San Salvador, El Salvador VCOM is taking it to the streets and making a tremendous impact. In October VCOM joined forces with My Father’s House, a children’s home in San Salvador, and Universidad Evangelica, a local medical school in San Salvador, and immediately went into action. VCOM offers care to the children of My Father’s House, the Peace Messengers (home for HIV children), and Love Links, a facility for severely malnourished babies.

In El Salvador the road is truly VCOM’s home. Faculty and students travel to the far northern state of Chalatenango.
offering care to a rural area which was void of health care. In the village of La Tremadol the people were so appreciative of the healthcare provided, that they have donated a small home for VCOM to use as a clinic. VCOM has provided a mobile clinic which will be operating by February 2007.

**FIRST AND SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OFFERED OPPORTUNITY**

VCOM has partnered with the International Christian Resources (ICR) to offer opportunities for our 1st and 2nd year students to experience international medical missions. ICR has adjusted their mission trip schedule to accommodate the MSI and MSII class breaks. In 2006, students have traveled to **Kenya, Honduras, and India**. On each trip the VCOM students with faculty by their side, care for many patients. It has been a tremendous experience for the students and an enormous benefit to the thousands who have had the opportunity to see that we sincerely D.O. care.

This program is growing tremendously. In February 2007, ICR and VCOM took two international trips back-to-back. 36 first year students traveled to Honduras and 22 second year students went to El Salvador. As always these are open to the faculty and staff. Dates of upcoming trips will be sent by e-mail and will be posted on ICR’s web site at www.internationalchristianresource.org.

Above: In El Salvador, Dr. Maurio Iglesias, provides care to patients with student doctors Camille Henson and Amy Keurjentes assisting.

Dr. Paula Scariati cares for an infant in India.

Student doctors Gerri Steele (left) and Travis Smith (right) provide Osteopathic Medical Manipulation (OMM) to patients in India.
VCOM Graduate Students Reflect on Recent International Rotations in Latin America

By Martha Murphy, MA Lecturer, VCOM and H. Dean Sutphin, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for International Outreach.

Ten VCOM students, enrolled in the inaugural joint D.O., and M.S./Ph.D. program, returned to VCOM in January 2007 after three concurrent months in Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic where they worked alongside doctors in these countries to provide service to orphanages, rural underserved areas and infant malnutrition centers.

All describe their experiences as life changing regardless of whether they practice medicine in the US or abroad.

Sarah Cates, fourth year student from Tennessee said, “It is impossible to describe what we learned first-hand from our daily experiences interacting with the people in the communities we served. Most of them had very limited experience with quality health care. This experience urged me to strive to be able to offer top of the line health care to all.”

JJ White, fourth year student from Montana, reflected that “We saw 30 to 70 patients a day, some traveling 3 – 4 hours to our free clinics, some walking, others by public transportation, almost never by their own transportation because they could never afford their own car in countries where the average income is $600 to $800 per year. Also, the state of the environment is very sad to me in these countries. For example, El Salvador has no environmental laws. I learned that poverty and environmental damage go hand-in-hand.”

VCOM students visited HIV orphanages weekly to provide medical care. As Kristen Geers noted, “Experiencing the major illnesses such as HIV and the emotion of the diagnosis and being personally involved changes you.”
Sofia Abraham commented, “I discovered there are a plethora of factors, solutions, and research possibilities. It is not so simple. It showed me the complexity and layers of their society. There is so much to be done.”

Not only have the sites and program provided locations for research but the experiences with the indigenous doctors provided insights into problems and medical needs. As, Bhaba Misra noted, “The preceptors were incredible!!!”

Similarly, JJ White stated, “The doctors at all of the sites were very sharp, very warm and welcoming, fun, bright and very good teachers. We had full autonomy. They trusted our judgment and our medical decisions. It was a real confidence booster.”

Eric Sutherland, speaking of the medical experiences said, “The opportunity to jump right in there and practice, to treat patients, to draw conclusions-the right conclusions…was a great feeling. I really felt like a doctor making a difference.”

VCOM provided the skills required to work in a different culture and language. As Bhaba Misra reflected, “Before I went, I thought the language barrier would be a huge problem. After I arrived and very early on I realized I could communicate effectively with my patients. It was not at all hard to listen to them and understand them.”

While working at the international sites, personal relationships and networking paved the way for research and continuing our programs. Amy Keurentjes stated, “The generosity of people who have so little was overwhelming. They were generous with their time, their money and their belongings.”

The personal experiences were an inspiration and in some cases spiritual as Sofia Abraham reflected, “I was spiritually rejuvenated by serving this population. I have made friendships I will keep for the rest of my life.”

Camille Henson reflected on her visits to Peace Messengers, a HIV orphanage in El Salvador. She shared that “the most amazing lesson she learned was that being healthy does not mean being devoid of sickness but being happy and enjoying every minute of your life regardless of your life situation.”

Speaking of her experience in the Dominican Republic, Macy Little-Latter described what she saw. “I saw the families that we treat living in huts with tin walls and sometimes barely a roof. I saw how children have to carry water for bathing and cooking from a central location in town. And I saw a great deal of violence there. It really put things in perspective for me and helps me appreciate what we have in the U.S.”

No doubt VCOM is laying a foundation, just in the first year of international clinic rotations for the Ph.D. students that will grow and develop with our clinical and research program.
On November the 17th Drs. Richard Wyeth, Ph.D., and his wife Maxine Lee, M.D., gave a 4-hour cardiac workshop for 95 6th and 7th graders at Roanoke Catholic School. Students participated in EKG demonstrations and measuring pulse oximetry during rest and exercise.

The students had the opportunity to dissect sheep hearts and studied human hearts with several cardiac pathologies. This was a great opportunity to discuss how healthy life styles can keep the heart healthy!

“The Santa Tree” Huge Success at Heritage Hall
By Karol Gordon, D.O.

This year VCOM participated in “The Santa Tree”, which was a partnership with a local nursing home. I am very pleased to report that our partnering was a huge success! The “Santa Tree” is a program in which residents from Heritage Hall are selected to have their ‘names’ and something they have asked for, or need, placed on the tree in the VCOM lobby. Everyone at the school was then invited to pick a “Santa” off the tree, which contained this information. Many students, faculty, and staff told me how much fun it was to go shopping for the residents,” especially the ones who had items difficult to find, like the pig slippers pictured. The items purchased for the residents at Heritage Hall were then gift wrapped and returned to the tree. There were several students who helped transport the many packages to the nursing home.

I attended the Christmas Party at Heritage Hall, and it was a true blessing to see them opening their gifts. So many of the residents would not have gotten anything for the holidays, were it not for the generosity of those at VCOM. I hope this first year with the “Santa Tree” will be the start of an annual tradition. Kudos to all who helped or participated in some way!
Anatomy Stimulates Young Minds
By Francine Anderson, Anatomy Project Coordinator

The Anatomy Outreach Project at VCOM, a collaborative effort of educators and students within the public school systems of Southwest Virginia, VCOM faculty, students and staff, was designed to educate the community about the role of anatomical science in osteopathic medical education, to attract potential students, and to stimulate interest in science for local youth from rural areas.

The “hands-on” experience in the gross anatomy lab is a way to introduce youth from underserved areas to the true science of anatomy and careers in and related to medicine. Over 500 young people from high school to college undergraduates participated in this program.

Although the highlight of the experience was the activities in the gross anatomy lab, students were given a tour of the facility and educated on the medical school experience by VCOM students, many of whom were from the surrounding areas.

VCOM students demonstrated their dissections and answered questions related to anatomy and what it’s like to be a medical student. So often, young people in underserved and rural areas have not had the opportunity to explore science areas of interest and therefore lack the confidence to pursue careers related to anatomical sciences.

The VCOM students were honored to be a part of the Anatomy Project and reminded students that not long ago, they were high school students trying to decide what they wanted to do after graduating. “To hear it from the medical students was better received than hearing it from their parents,” said local high school teachers.

Students were fascinated to see what arthritis in a knee and a total knee replacement actually look like. They were “curious to see what the human body is composed of from the inside out”. Students were given the opportunity to touch tendons, nerves, and muscles. To see a true aneurysm allowed them to pose many health related questions. Those of them who had musculoskeletal injuries were intrigued to see the actual structural orientation of the knee and ankle from below the surface of the skin. One student (from Salem High School) wrote in a thank you card to VCOM, “Thank you for letting us come to your facility, you taught me so much.” Another said “This was awesome, I definitely want to be there one day, you could see me in a few years.”

The goal of the project was to use human anatomy to stimulate the minds of young people so they would be curious enough to learn more and not be afraid of the challenges in higher education. “We hope that we have the opportunity to teach some of these children who will come back and serve in their communities as physicians,” said Francine Anderson, Ph.D. Project Coordinator.

High school educators who participated in this project plan to make the VCOM anatomy lab visit part of their class activities in the future.

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Building Health Networks for Rural and Small Healthcare Providers Program

By Dr. Rebecca Davis, VCOM faculty and NCHN Director

The National Cooperative of Health Networks Association (NCHN) is a national organization, with a mission to support and strengthen health alliances through collaborative efforts, networking, leadership development, and educational opportunities. Rebecca J. Davis, Ph.D., a faculty member of VCOM, was selected as NCHN’s Executive Director and began the position in July 2006.

Dr. Davis also serves as Program Director for the “Building Health Networks for Rural and Small Healthcare Providers Program,” which is a partnership between NCHN and VCOM. In this role, she is responsible for the overall operation of NCHN and is managing the national cooperative of health networks, including the development, implementation, and management of business services and vendor relationships.

NCHN has over sixty members across the nation and meets semi-annual to provide networking and educational opportunities for its membership. One of NCHN’s new programs is the development of a mentorship program for new network directors in cooperation with the National Rural Health Association and the Office of Rural Health Policy. Diane Sutphin, Director of Community and Business Outreach, attended the fall conference in Nashville to represent VCOM and learn more about NCHN and its members. To learn more about NCHN programs please visit their web site at www.nchn.org. For information about the partnership e-mail Dr. Davis at rdavis@nchn.org.
**March 29, 2007**

**Annual Spring Residency Fair/Hospital Day**

The Annual Spring Residency Fair/Hospital Day will be held at Virginia Tech's Lane Stadium in the South End Zone facility. Ample complimentary parking is available. First, second, third and fourth year students will be in attendance at this event. VCOM's inaugural class is in its fourth year with graduation scheduled for June 2, 2007. For more information go to our web site at http://www.vcom.vt.edu/general/news/.

**March 27-31, 2007**

**American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOOG) Conference**, Palm Springs, CA.

**March 21-25, 2007**

**Undergraduate American Academy of Osteopathy (UAAO) Annual Convocation**, Colorado Springs, CO. Attendance by students requires an excused absence if classes are held on the dates of these meetings.

**April 21, 2007**

**VCOM Spring Open House**

Students interested in medical education at VCOM are invited to join us on the campus of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine campus for the Spring Open House on Saturday, April 21 from 1:00-5:30 p.m.

During this time frame, students will have the opportunity to meet our President, Dr. Jim Wolfe, review our medical curriculum and opportunities for clinical rotations, tour our new facility including a session in our first-rate anatomy lab featuring virtual cadavers and the best air quality in the country, participate in a panel discussion with our medical students, view an OMM demonstration and explore the unique aspects of osteopathic medicine. There will be an opportunity to speak with our Admissions and Student Services Staff regarding candidacy at our College.

If you are interested in attending, please make your reservations through the Office of Admissions by calling (540) 231-6138 or use e-mail admissions@vcom.vt.edu to reach us.

**April 26, 2007**

**The National D.O. Day on Capitol Hill.**

This event provides a preeminent opportunity for D.O.s and students to go to Washington, DC and lobby members of Congress and their staff face-to-face. Prior to the event participants will receive briefing materials on the key issues to be discussed. Once in Washington, osteopathic advocates will participate in a morning legislative briefing, attend scheduled meetings with Members of Congress and their staff, and report the results at a debriefing room. Participation in this event is important for members of the osteopathic community. This is a tremendous event for students and professionals as this is a prime opportunity to educate Members of Congress and their staff on osteopathic medicine and our positions on important health policy issues.

**May 15-18, 2007**

**NRHA Conference**

The National Rural Health Association (NHRA) Annual Conference will be held in Anchorage, Alaska. NRHA has chosen Alaska for the 2007 conference because it is to Alaska's advantage if rural healthcare leaders from across the United States have the opportunity to see where and under what conditions we are able to offer healthcare services to our very isolated rural residents, and see the quality of the facilities out of which these primary and acute care services are delivered locally.

Scholarships for the conference are available. For more information on the conference and scholarships, please go to http://www.nrharural.org/conferences/sub/AnnConf.html to visit the NRHA web site conference page.

**May 16-21, 2007**

**VOMA Conference**

The Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association's (VOMA) 101st Annual Spring CME conference will take place at The Inn at Virginia Tech http://www.theinnatvirginiatech.com and The Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine http://www.vcom.vt.edu in Blacksburg, Virginia. A conference rate of $109/night, single occupancy, has been negotiated with the Inn at Virginia Tech for the first 40 rooms. To reserve your rooms, please contact the Inn at (540) 231-8000 or toll-free at (877) 200-3360 and as for the Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association room block no later than Monday, April 16, 2007.
Supporting a College with a Mission to Serve the Underserved

Take the opportunity to be part of making a difference in the health care of rural Appalachia and developing countries.

Your support to VCOM may be directed to many initiatives including:
- providing scholarships to deserving students,
- enhancing Appalachian medical outreach,
- enhancing International medical outreach,
- continually updating and improving the campus,
- enhancing academic programs, and
- enhancing medical research.

Regardless of whether you are making an annual gift supporting the college's immediate needs, supporting a scholarship, supporting a specific program or providing a major gift for an endowment or capital project, there are a variety of ways to contribute to VCOM.

When making a gift to VCOM, you may designate a particular area to be the recipient. In addition, you may wish for your gift to be directed to where the greatest good may be accomplished at the current time.

To make a gift to VCOM, you may contact:
Patty Smith.
Assistant VP for Alumni and Development
Or
Diane J. Sutphin
Director of Development
Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine
2265 Kraft Drive
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
540.231.1174

Or you may go to our secure web site: www.vcom.vt.edu/general/, click on “Ways to Give” and then click on “Click and Pledge” which will provide a full menu of giving options.

Thank you for your continued support.

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