



# BMT Newsletter

## North Carolina Cancer Hospital: Our New Home

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The waiting is finally over and the much anticipated opening of the North Carolina Cancer Hospital (NCCH) has finally arrived! As of August 17th, our adult BMT clinic began seeing patients on the 2nd floor of the new building while our pediatric BMT patients began to enjoy their amazing new space on the 1st floor within the Pediatric Oncology clinic. And August 27th marks the day our in-patient unit moves from 5 Anderson to the fourth floor of the new hospital!

As a result of hard work, forethought and tireless dedication, our patients will be able to finally enjoy a new home that is comforting, expansive and just plain beautiful! What was once a vision is now reality, and everyone in our BMT family will reap the benefits. As with anything, change can be trying, but we're confident that any 'speed bumps' we may hit will be minor and well worth the ultimate final outcome! *Let's all celebrate!!*

### New Hospital—What's Where?

- [Manning Drive Level](#) (Radiation Oncology)
- [Level B](#) (Radiology)
- [Ground Level](#) (Main Lobby, Admitting, Patient and Family Resource Center, Conference Center, Food Service, Retail Pharmacy, Gift Shop, Starbucks in Oct)
- [First Floor](#) (Mammography and **Pediatric Oncology/BMT Clinic**)
- [Second Floor](#) (Outpatient Multidisciplinary and Surgical Oncology Clinics including the **BMT Clinic**)
- [Third Floor](#) (Infusion Center)
- [Fourth Floor](#) (50 Inpatient Beds including **16 Adult and Pediatric BMT Beds**)

### Things to Do During an Admission to the New BMTU

- Watch movies that you've never gotten to see before or revisit the ones you love!
- Learn a craft, such as jewelry or model making ~ try drawing!
- Enroll in an on-line class
- Do some form of exercise every day—have fun with your Wii™!
- Create a journal, either written or an on-line blog friends & family can follow
- Meet your neighbor while strolling the halls of the new BMTU!
- Try scapbooking with your photos that need organizing
- Stay connected with group activities offered in the new BMTU!

### A T-Shirt to Wear with Pride!

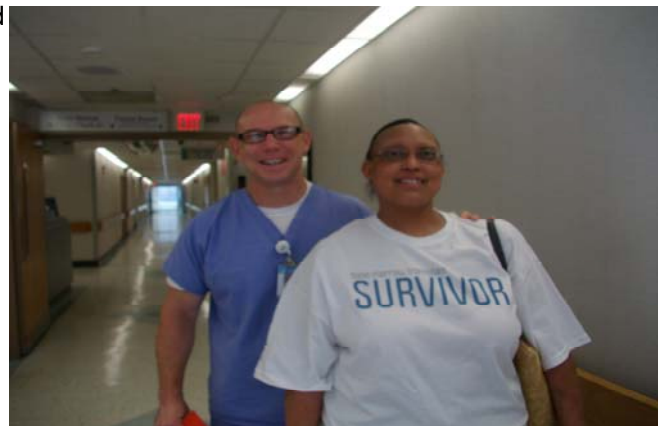
By Gayl Talbert, M.Ed, CPON

As Vera Degrand was approaching discharge day she shared with her nurse, Joe Kleinman, that it would be so nice if patients had a t-shirt commemorating their BMT journey. Making it to this important day was something of which Vera was very proud! Joe shared this with me and the wheels started turning. I thought that it was a great idea but knew that I didn't have funds budgeted for it. At UNC Hospitals we are extremely fortunate to have a wonderful Volunteer Association led by Linda Bowles. This group is dedicated to providing the best for our

patients and their caregivers.

I decided to write a "Request for Special Gift" proposal and was thrilled that the Volunteer Association granted it! As I talked with nursing about where to go from here, one of the RNs, Ashley Lane, mentioned that her brother was a graphic designer in Phila-

delphia. She contacted him and he provided two designs that we used for the final product. Patients now receive a Survivor T-shirt upon discharge. Former patients are given them when they return to the clinic for follow up appointments. Needless to say, these have been a big hit! Kudos to Vera, Joe, Ashley and the Volunteer Association for making this happen!



**BMT Survivor De Bora Parker in her new Survivor T-shirt along with Drew Culwell, RN, BMT Clinic Nurse!**

## *Please Welcome Stefanie Sarantopoulos, MD, Ph.D. New BMT Attending Physician*



Please join us in welcoming Dr. Stefanie Sarantopoulos to UNC! Dr. Sarantopoulos received her M.D. and Ph. D degrees from Boston University School of Medicine in 1998. She completed her postgraduate training in Internal Medicine at Boston Medical Center, followed by a fellowship in Hematology and Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. She was an Instructor at Harvard Medical School and an Attending Physician in the Bone Marrow Transplant group at Dana-Farber before she joined UNC in June 2009. At UNC, in addition to seeing patients as a Bone Marrow Transplant physician, she runs a research lab as a member of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. The Marrow Foundation(r) and the National Marrow Donor Program(r) (NMDP) have named Dr. Sarantopoulos the newest

Scholar in the Amy Strelzer Manasevit (ASM) Research Program for the Study of Post-Transplant Complications. This young physician-scientist was selected based on her research proposal that sets out to develop targeted treatments for marrow transplant patients whose bodies attack their new donor cells (when they develop 'graft versus host disease').

Dr. Sarantopoulos says her goal in both BMT clinic and in the lab is to "improve transplantation therapy by focusing on treating its side-effects, so that our patients are not only cured of their leukemia or lymphoma, but they can also live better and longer." She will be treating adult patients.

Dr. Sarantopoulos moved to Chapel Hill with her husband, Dr. Cyrus Vaziri, a research scientist now in the Department of Pathology and at the UNC Lineberger Cancer Center. They live with their two children in Chapel Hill. "We chose Chapel Hill and UNC as our home and work environment in large part because of the people we've met here and the colleagues we knew who'd come here before us from all over the country and world to live and work. The collaborative energy of UNC is palpable and unique. Researchers and doctors are very willing to 'put their heads together' here to try to bring what they're finding in the laboratory to Clinical Trials for patients. And as a place to raise children, Chapel Hill is tops! Our first night in Chapel Hill, endless unpacking of boxes was softened tremendously by our neighbors. They came over to cook us all a wonderful meal and tell us about our neighborhood. We've never experienced that kind of community kindness before -- we already love it here." We're glad you're here, too, Stefanie! The warmest of welcomes to UNC!

## BMT Educational DVD Series is Filmed

Filming is just about complete on our BMT educational series entitled "*You are the Key.*" This project idea was submitted in October of 2008 to the University Cancer Research Fund (UCRF) for consideration. And to the BMT Program's delight, it received approval early this year for the development of a teaching tool for all potential adult BMT patients. This five part series includes information about a potential BMT candidate's first visit to UNC, the pre-transplant work-up, the BMT admission and post-transplant follow-up care. It concludes with interviews from patients who have 'been there' speaking to those about to go.

After a multidisciplinary team met monthly to storyboard the video, Cirque Productions of Chapel Hill, began filming the series in August with former autologous patient Kendall Johnson and his wife Annette playing the key roles of the patient and caregiver. "My experience at UNC was the best, and I am honored to be a part of this in any way," said Ken. His wife Annette agrees ~ "This will be so helpful for the patients." Other staff members were also filmed representing their respective roles under the guidance of filmmaker Leon Godwin and UNC's Sam Sharf, RN, BSN, CHTC who is managing the project. Editing is next along with a composite voice-over to narrate each chapter.

This DVD should be complete by February 2010, and each new adult patient referred to the program will receive a copy. Be sure to stay tuned for future project updates as production continues!



**Filmmaker Leon Godwin of Cirque Productions sets up a shot with Dr. Shea and post-transplant patient Ken Johnson in the new BMT Clinic.**

## *Sweat it Out!* By Ashley Lane, RN, BSN

The benefits of exercise abound in the news and literature today as more and more individuals strive to obtain a healthy weight and lifestyle. While some prefer non-impact activities such as yoga or swimming, others engage in running or team sports to accomplish their goal. Exercise can be a negative word for some: bringing to mind memories of strained muscles, sweat, or days of taking pain relievers to mask the aches and pains. However, as you will see, sweating it out with exercise will complement your Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) stay at NCCH in such a way as to improve your endurance, decrease fatigue, and lead to an enhanced quality of life.

In a literature review of 15 studies, Wiskemann and Huber (2008) discovered the benefits of BMT patients undergoing a regular exercise program during their inpatient stay and after discharge. The exercise programs varied from three to five days a week using a treadmill, bicycle, and/or strength training and lasted either only the hospital stay, weeks after discharge, or continued for 12 months. Throughout the studies, a common theme arose – patients who engaged in daily treadmill or cycling exercise improved on a number of important factors. Improvements in physical performance, quality of life, and fatigue status were statistically significant when compared to patients not exercising. Described below are the results of their review and the concluding important message for you, as BMT patients, to hear.

Whether performed inpatient, outpatient, or at home after discharge, exercise with treadmills or bicycles caused a significant increase in endurance and strength performance. Patients in the control group who did not exercise regularly saw a significant decrease in their strength during their hospital stay. That is to say, those who did not exercise daily in some form of strength training or endurance exercise became weaker as their hospitalization continued. This carries an important message we have all heard before: ***“If you do not use it, you lose it!”*** While fatigue from the BMT process is understood to hinder your desire to exercise, please know that any exercise is better than none at all.

Secondly, as stated above, fatigue can affect your desires and actual ability to perform exercise activities while in the hospital. In the studies reviewed, patients who regularly exercised during the BMT hospitalization reported a significant decrease in their fatigue, compared to those who did not exercise. This decrease in fatigue not only lasted through their hospital stay, but was maintained through a 12 week outpatient survey as well as at a one-year follow-up! This important result means that, while it may be hard to find energy to exercise while with us in the hospital, finding time to move and strengthen your body will provide you with more energy now and in the long term – energy that will foster more opportunities for success in your daily activities.

Finally, for those patients who engaged in exercise during their BMT stay, a significant improvement in quality of life was found compared to those not exercising. This improvement related to their belief of individual physical functioning as well as their role in family/social atmospheres. In other words, the improvement related to how they felt physically as a functioning human being in the relationships with others in their life. Additionally, as stated above, this improvement carried on from day of discharge and even until Day +100 for allogeneic transplant recipients. As with the findings from fatigue, quality of life not only improved while in the hospital, but maintained a high level after discharge and for months afterward. This result is important because your personal belief of what it means to have a “quality” life plays a vital role in everything you do each day. With an improved quality of life, each facet of your daily life improves as well!

The importance of these findings shows that as you exercise and improve your strength, endurance, and energy levels, you consequently experience an enhanced mood and feeling of well-being. Those of us who have not experienced a transplant will never completely understand what you deal with each day; however, know that the benefits of exercise far outweigh not engaging in any activity.

The Nursing, Medical, and most importantly, Recreational Therapy staff are all here to educate and help you learn how to exercise safely and help you become stronger, have less fatigue, and create healthy habits to complement your BMT stay. Feel free to ask any of us how we can get you on the path to sweating it out today!

Huber, G. and Wiskemann, J. Physical exercise as adjuvant therapy for patients undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. *Bone Marrow Transplantation* (2008) **41**, 321-329; doi:10.1038/sj.bmt.1705917; published online 19 November 2007



***“Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass....it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.”***  
- Vivian Greene

### **What’s New In the BMTU**

- Congrats to Amy & Jay Coghill (RN & MD) on the arrival of little Daniel Joshua who joins brother Jamie!
- Katie (Mueller) Pyle is expecting! Much happiness!!
- Welcome back, Monica Mitchell! Monica is a new RN on the unit. She comes to us from Alamance Co. Hospital and previously worked at UNC as the receptionist for the BMT clinic!
- Welcome to Keama Eason who is a new RN on the unit after having worked for several years as an NA on the BMTU!
- Alicia Childs is a new RN on the unit after having worked as an extern and then a NA—Welcome!
- Alicia Childs is also expecting! Congratulations!
- Laura Snyder is a new RN on the unit—Welcome!
- RNs Angela Spruill and Barbara Eron recently enrolled in UNC School of Nursing’s Master’s in Nursing program!

### **CAREGIVER TIP:**

Do you need help organizing those who want to help *you*?  
Check out these websites:

For an on-line calendar tool for helpers, go to:  
[www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com)

For suggestions on how to organize a care giving team, go to: [www.sharethecare.org](http://www.sharethecare.org)

# Caleb's Story

When you're 12 years old, you're supposed to be outside playing and worrying only about the simplest things in life. But for Caleb Rowe, his days have instead been filled with unfamiliar terms and discussions of chemotherapy regimens since May of 2008. "When they told me I had Hodgkins Disease, I was confused. It started when I had night sweats and a fever... then a lump came out." Although Caleb didn't know what Hodgkins Disease or chemotherapy really were, he quickly learned. "I had to have a bunch of chemos and they weren't easy, but I got through 'em." Speaking with the voice of a veteran, Caleb says he was again confused when the discussion turned to transplant. "I didn't really understand what it all meant, how it worked. But when they (the Pediatric BMT Team) explained it to me, it wasn't really scary any-

more because it made sense."

Now having received an autologous stem cell transplant, Caleb anxiously awaits for the day when he can return to school—for real. Although keeping up with his studies as a 7th grader has kept him busy, he still misses the social aspects of school. When you're favorite subject is lunch "because you get to *talk*," being schooled from afar is just not the same.

Caleb loves to fish with his Dad in their boat and is an avid Carolina fan, be it basketball or football. And he loves wrestling, especially watching champ John Cena who he hopes to meet one day soon for his Make-a-Wish celebration.

To anyone about to embark down this road, Caleb offers the following advice: 'Keep fighting, you'll make it. Don't give up 'cause there will be something good at the end.' There's no doubt to us who the true champ is, Caleb ~ you're the *best!*



**Top:** Caleb and his Carolina basketball signed by Roy Williams  
**Bottom:** Caleb's Day of Transplant

## Wii™ Gaming System Keeps Patients Happy & Occupied

A couple of years ago it would have been impossible to imagine that Bone Marrow Transplant patients could spend time in the hospital playing tennis, bowling, and even boxing! Today it's actually happening in our patients' rooms as they enjoy the Wiis that have been made possible by grants from the UNC

Volunteer Association. In addition to the sports activities our patients also enjoy the Wii™ Fit which offers a variety of fun and challenging exercises. We originally purchased three and then later six Wiis. Recently a third grant was approved so that we will be able to purchase ten additional game systems. Kelly Kivette, BMT's Recreational Therapist, ensures that every patient stays as active as possible. She has enjoyed the addition of the Wiis to her collection of exercise interventions. Kelly says "Patients are more motivated to participate in a consistent exercise routine if it's something that they enjoy. We're very excited that the Volunteer Association has agreed to provide funding so that every patient

room in the new North Carolina Cancer Hospital will have a Wii™."

Nurses working on the Bone Marrow Transplant have also seen the benefits associated with the use of Wiis.



Barbara Eron, RN comments "Our patients hear about the Wiis before coming into our unit. It's one more enticement to keep them up and active during the transplant process. Our patients use the Wiis for exercise and diversion. They are a wonderful addition!"



**Recreational Therapist Kelly & patient Hannah play with the Wii™!**

*Would you like your story told in a future newsletter?*

*Do you have an idea for an article? If so, please contact Sam at [ssharf@unch.unc.edu](mailto:ssharf@unch.unc.edu) or 919-966-7516*