Student-Run Clinic Stays True to Meharry’s Mission

Sydney Ford, SOM I

Passion for giving back to the community is one of the great characteristics that describes the student body at Meharry Medical College. Before long, students and faculty alike will have an opportunity to further their commitment to serving the underserved by volunteering at the 12 South Community Clinic, Meharry’s first student-run free clinic. The 12 South Community Clinic, operated under the supervision of faculty physicians, will serve primarily as a means to bridge the gap in lacking access to healthcare in Nashville. The clinic will provide a venue for hands-on experience so medical students may improve their clinical skills and learn important lessons about practice administration. Significant efforts have been made across Nashville to address health and health care disparities; however, there are still high rates of uninsured and under-insured individuals and families who cannot afford quality care. “The Meharry tradition is for us to go out and serve the underserved—to set up primary care clinics in needy communities,” says one of the founding committee members, fourth year medical student, Rebecca Pfaff. This sentiment is shared among all those who have been working diligently for over a year to ensure that the clinic’s doors are open to the community as soon as possible.

In support of the missions of Meharry Medical College and United Neighborhood Health Services, the partnering organization that will provide clinical space, the clinic will strive to improve the health and quality of life of the underserved by providing free-of-charge primary care visits, and all possible assistance for laboratory studies, prescriptions, transportation, specialty referrals, and imaging. Volunteer students and physicians from each Meharry School will be needed in order to ensure that the clinic reaches its maximum potential. Work has begun on integration of dental services, and plans include working closely with Dental and Public Health students in the future to create a comprehensive clinical and training collaboration.

Third year medical student, Antwon Chavis says with spirit, “I hope that it becomes self-sufficient. This means that the students, the doctors, the school, and the community embrace the clinic, support it, and make it their own. This is Meharry’s clinic, run by its students and faculty, to worship God through serving mankind.” The excellence of a student-run clinic will be one more opportunity to demonstrate that Meharry is not merely an institution where physicians and scientists are trained, but it is a place where students change lives, and serve communities in need.

More information concerning 12 South Community Clinic’s opening date and how you can get involved is coming soon.
Miss Meharry’s Student-led Alumni Phone-A-Thon

Erika King, SOD II

The role of Miss Meharry is to act as the official ambassador of the student body while uniting them with cords of community service and good will. When Erika King, a second year dental student, was elected to serve as Miss Meharry, she made it her focus to strengthen the relationship between Meharrrians at all levels—past, present, and future. One of the ways that King sought to facilitate these goals was by organizing and conducting the Alumni Phone-A-Thon. The Phone-A-Thon was an entirely student-led effort, with an aim of increasing the alumni financial participation percentage and support of the institution while generating funds for student scholarships. Preparation for this project involved collaboration of King, The Meharry Alumni Association, and Institutional Advancement’s Office of Development. Students from the three (3) schools volunteered from various geographical locations to participate. A one-day training session was conducted for the selected students participating in the Phone-A-Thon, followed by three (3) days of phone calls from 5pm-7pm on February 7th-9th. Over the three-day period, student callers reached out to 1,145 alumni—540 alumni on February 7th; 470 alumni on February 8th; and 135 alumni on February 9th. Thirty-four alumni made commitments and gifts totaling $14,925. Encouraging alumni to give back to Meharry Medical College not only helps the students, it helps the institution when looking to receive funds from corporate donors. When the College is seeking financial support beyond its alumni, one of the first questions asked is, “How many of your alumni support their alma mater?” There is always room for improvement of this number, which was 12.8% prior to the Phone-A-Thon project. As these funds are collected, they are deposited in the General Scholarship Fund, which is available for all qualifying students through the Financial Aid department.

Traveling Down Memory Lane, The Path Home

Christopher D. Watson, SOM I

Ask any Meharry alumni to recount his or her favorite Meharrrian memory and an array of descriptive stories will be recounted. These stories include the vivid accounts of gross anatomy lab, self imposed lock-ins in West Basic, sleepless night in the graduate research lab, or multiple attempts at creating a dental mold. But the most reoccurring memory is almost always associated with the supportive and embracing environment that makes up a Meharry class. Alumni fondly share these memories with each other and current students. Meharry has the reputation of being a melting pot where individuals from different backgrounds come together, are nurtured and then given the tools to go out into the community to provide care and education to the under-served. Although alumni are living in the fifty United States and across the world making a difference, they will always find their way back home. Meharrrians of past, present and future now have a place on campus to call home: Meharry’s New Alumni Hall. The Meharry family will have the opportunity to celebrate the opening of this beautiful 6,000 square foot building starting in May 2012. The New Alumni Hall will serve as a time machine preserving alumni’s memories and the school’s rich legacy, while simultaneously being symbolic of students’ hopes, dreams, and aspirations. The New Alumni Hall is a place for alumni, current students and friends of Meharry to enjoy a variety of events, such as new student orientation activities, alumni gatherings, student organization meetings, community day programs, and the annual Friends and Family Day. The New Alumni Hall will be the place where memories are made.
Making Strides in Dental Education

Christina G. Quarterman, SOD II

Thanks to a generous $750,000.00 grant from Delta Dental of Tennessee, the new Dental Simulation Lab will be an expansion of the current DentSim lab. The newest lab will be located on the 4th floor of the dental school and will consist of the five current simulators as well as up to 50 new A-dec Simulators. These new simulators will feature a fully-equipped virtual operatory with realistic patient models that will allow pre-clinical students to accelerate learning, elevate clinical competency, and promote healthy posture.

The purpose of the DentSim lab is to allow students to gain confidence in clinical procedures before working with patients, as well as give students the opportunity to gain experience earlier in their training. In the past, students did not begin seeing patients until their junior year. The goal of Dr. Janet H. Southerland, DDS, Dean of the School of Dentistry, is to have students begin their clinical experience after the completion of their freshman year. The idea is that the more clinical exposure and experience they have, the better prepared they will be to enter the workforce.

The simulator consists of a patient and a computer monitor and allows the student to choose which tooth and which procedure they would like to work on. It is equipped with many small LED sensors and cameras that allow the computer to accurately detect the position and movement of the student’s hand-piece. The student is able to evaluate their performance, such as whether he or she has eliminated the simulated cavity and prepared the tooth to the ideal shape and depth. The program is so detailed that it is able to provide the depth at any location with the click of a button.

The best part of the simulator is that it gives students the opportunity to self-evaluate and correct mistakes as they occur. This new lab will provide a medium for standardized, objective evaluation. The DentSim lab is currently used to prepare students for clinic, but it may also be used for testing purposes and awarding students credit for clinical procedures required for graduation.

This new DentSim lab is just one of the many ways the School of Dentistry is making improvements to the dental school and the curriculum.

Blast From the Past

Team G.O.A.T Champions of 2000-2001 Intramural Basketball (R-L) Jelani (MVP), Nick, C.P., Danny, Bryant, Richard, Errol, Big Swole, Dana
“Remember me.” These two words represent a charge given by Jesus as he prepared to face his fate at the hands of his own people. It is a reminder of what we should do as we face life and all it has to offer, both good and bad. When I think of Dr. Pamela C. Williams and all that she represented for Meharry Medical College in the Office of Student & Academic Affairs, this mantra has a similar meaning for those lives she has touched.

I first met Dr. Williams in the summer of 1997 as I began Mini-Academic Program for Success (MAPS) in preparation for my matriculation in the School of Medicine. As I was embarking on this great challenge away from home, I relished the notion that I would have support to handle the rigors of medical school. When I shared with her the striking resemblance she had with my first cousin back in Louisiana, her response was a resounding, “Welcome to Meharry, cousin.” I breathed a sigh of relief as I quickly appraised her encompassing qualities as a mother, friend, counselor and mentor. Dr. Williams was a glimmer of hope in an emerging world of the unknown.

It didn’t take long to recognize the Office of Student & Academic Affairs (OSAA) as a “safe zone” for all matters, academic or personal. The sincerity and availability she afforded instilled a confidence in me to utilize their services. Furthermore, this concept seemed infectious amongst all personnel in the office. It was like an instant family connection.

Through seemingly countless visits, it became apparent the wealth of knowledge and guidance she possessed. Dr. Williams was always there in times of need and never once passed judgment. Her belief in us as students helped us to recognize and strive toward our potential.

Although I have known her since 1997, it wasn’t until her last few months on this earth that I really appreciated her strength and selflessness. She never hesitated when sharing her time and financial resources, but the greater lessons came in sharing her life. An innate ability to disarm those who posed as obstacles to the progress of her students was an amazing sight to witness. She continued to fight fearlessly until the very end. Witnessing these acts of courage was truly humbling.

When I think of her legacy, the most important lessons parallel the source from whom we should all aspire to emulate. Dr. Williams gave a voice and humanized those in need of advocacy and intervention. Not one to care about scrutiny, she would often extend her reach and epitomized what it meant to “see it through”. The challenge to keep the dreams alive will always permeate the walls of the OSAA. Ironically, as her motivation was to fight for others, these two powerful words, “Remember Me,” would not be something she would have chosen. However, if there was ever a person who deserved this reference on this earth, there was none other than Dr. Pamela C. Williams. She will indeed be remembered…
Remember Me: The Legacy of Dean Williams
February Fanaticism: Meharry Intramural Basketball 2012

Malcolm Bevel, MSPH

Meharry is an institution of higher learning that has produced some of the world’s best and brightest physicians and researchers since 1876. However, there is another side of Meharry, rarely known outside its walls. Meharry intramural basketball is where young men and women battle for pride, a large trophy, and bragging rights for the rest of the academic year. The 2012 season has been arguably the most suspenseful at Meharry, filled with plenty of drama and fun that would have Dick Vitale screaming, “ARE YOU SERIOUS???” New teams and fans graced the courts of the Ross Fitness Center, namely, Severe Buzzosity and their personal cheerleading squad. Opponents would be lying if they said the noise factor from the dedicated cheerleaders did not distract them at the free-throw line this year. Other teams making their first Meharry appearance included The Replacements and Captain of Bread, with many fans supporting them throughout the season. It’s safe to say, however, that the All Girls Squads—plus two gentlemen—have been a fan favorite since their inaugural season. The team, led by captain and MVP Brittany Burns, played with heart and made each game as interesting as ever.

The “Game of the Year” vote would have to go to the semifinal game between The Chosen Ones and Third Time’s the Charm. Both teams fought hard, and in an overtime thriller, Third Time’s the Charm prevailed to advance to the team’s first championship game. Awaiting them on the other side were the two-time defending champions, known simply as The Realest. Seeking their third championship trophy in four years, The Realest knew it would take a team effort to achieve their ultimate goal. Despite a slow first half, and the African drums in the stands rumbling against them, The Realest defeated Third Time’s a Charm, earning an unprecedented third championship!

This season has been another exciting chapter in the history of Meharry intramural sports. It had the complete package: great teams, loud fans, and a halftime show by four sophomore students. Intramural basketball proved to be the perfect outlet for students, faculty, and staff after studying for board exams or a long day at work. Kudos to the athletes and fans for making February as memorable as March Madness!

Haiti Alternative Spring Break

Courtney Jacocks, SOD III

“To whom much is given, much is required.” It is with this quote in mind, along with Meharry’s motto of “Worship of God through Service to Mankind,” that the initiative to create an international outreach program for dental students was devised. The thought of providing students the experience to travel to a foreign country and assist poverty stricken areas through dentistry seemed incredible. The dental students deeply desired to participate in a program of this nature. Students encouraged one of their leaders, Miss School of Dentistry, to collaborate with Dr. Suzette Stines and the Dental School administration to transform the student’s dream into reality.

The Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry Global Initiative- Haiti Externship is a new and innovative program aims to increase the cultural awareness and sensitivity of dental students while allowing them to use their dental knowledge and skills to help those less fortunate. This summer 9 students, Dr. Suzette Stines, and Dean Janet Southerland will partake in an elaborate mission to Port au Prince, Haiti. Student participants will work in conjunction with the University of Haiti School of Dentistry students in providing dental care to local residence and in participating in other community service activities. Diligent work will be expected and executed majority of the externship yet students will have an opportunity to enjoy the culture and rich history of Haiti. This externship is the first step of an exciting ongoing collaboration with the dental school in Port au Prince.

While in Haiti, it is this externship’s mission to positively reflect Meharry by providing quality dental care to many Haitians who otherwise would not receive these services. In addition, it is hoped that dental Meharrians will embrace a new culture, increase their knowledge and ability to practice dentistry to anyone through any circumstance, and acquire a greater appreciation for the impact that their services render. This journey may be long, daily living may be difficult, and many procedures may be challenging but the experience of the Haiti Externship will be one that is monumental for everyone involved.
Meharry's Black Tie and Awards Season

The Pulse Staff

Cadaver Ball Awards:

Dr. Arthur Jackson for Service Award
Dr. James Tyus for Dental Award
Dr. Cecil Cone for Medical Award

Carabelli Ball Awards:

Brice Gilliam for Ewell Neil Dental Society Award
Dionne Tompkins for Student National Dental Association Award

Pre-Alumni Ball Awards:

Dr. Emmanuel Atta-Asafo-Adjel for Basic Sciences Dental Award
Dr. Cecil Cone for Basic Sciences Medical Award
Dr. James Tyus Clinical Sciences Dental Award
Dr. Susanne Tropez-Sims for Clinical Sciences Medical Award
Dr. Varnisha Brown for Masters of Public Health Award
Dr. Sanika Chirwa for PhD Award
John Muise for Staff Member of the Year
Project R.E.C.E.S.S. Promotes Healthy Living

Lamercie Saint Hilaire, SOM III

Project R.E.C.E.S.S. is an annual event that takes place at Bordeaux Enhanced Option Elementary School, a local public school in Nashville. R.E.C.E.S.S. stands for Restoring Exercise, Cutting calories, Emphasizing hygiene, and Stopping Substance abuse. This project is a collaboration of student-run organizations including Saburo Hara Pediatrics Society, Family Medicine Interest Group, Student National Medical Association, and American Medical Student Association. On March 21, medical and dental students from Meharry Medical College volunteered their time to give back to the local community by incorporating vital information on health into a day of fun activities. DeOnna Johnson is a third year medical student, as well as the Co-Community Service chair for the Saburo Hara Pediatrics Society. According to Ms. Johnson, “Project R.E.C.E.S.S. is my favorite event because every year nearly 400 students learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle that includes good food choices, regular exercise, and abstaining from substance abuse. The goal is to establish habits that will follow these children for the rest of their lives.”

This event took recess to another level. Every corner of the gym was utilized. The students were able to rotate from one station to the next, participating in activities that were fun and educational. The Healthy Weight: Body Mass Index (BMI) station used the Center for Disease Control guidelines for children to determine each child’s BMI. They were then assigned a green, yellow, or red light. Green meant they were at a healthy weight, yellow meant overweight, and a red light meant they were obese. They were also given an informational hand-out to take home to their parents. At the Boot Camp station, the students learned the importance of exercise, and they were taught an exercise routine they could easily do at home. They did jumping jacks, sit-ups, push-ups, and jogged in place. To finish up, they competed in a friendly game of tug-of-war. The “Tar Wars” station used models and interactive activities to discuss the long term health effects of smoking tobacco. In addition, volunteers dressed up as various fruits and vegetables and educated the children on diet and nutrition. There was also a bounce house and a DJ for added entertainment. At the conclusion of the event, the children left with smiles, information on health, healthy snacks, jump ropes, and other goodies.