As noted earlier this year, our new Virginia Treatment Center for Children is under construction with an anticipated opening in Fall 2017. On May 20th we were excited to learn that the design of the new VTCC has received an Award of Merit in the 2016 Behavioral Healthcare Design Showcase. It was the only project to receive a citation this year. There will be a recognition and presentation of the award ceremony at the National Conference on Addiction Disorders in Denver in August. Some of the comments of the jury were: “Exterior renderings are beautiful; color palette is warm and bright; immersive research, ability to expand and soothing aesthetics”. This will be an amazing building for our patients!

This year’s graduation was well attended and held at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Awards bestowed included: Dr. Joel Moran won the Annual Joel J. Silverman, M.D., Excellence in Teaching Award, Dr. Craig Yagel won the Clinical Faculty Award, Mr. Jamie Deans won the Residents’ Service Award, Dr. Keyhill Sheorn won the Residents’ Teaching Award, Dr. Jennine Moritz won the Bela Sood Teaching Award, Ms. Jennifer Jernigan won the Bela Sood Service Award and Mr. Larry Robinson won the Bela Sood Service Award. Secretary of Health, Dr. William Hazel provided greetings to our graduates.

Our graduates this year who will be staying in the area include: Dr. Peter Breslin (Inpatient Psychiatrist at McGuire V.A.M.C.), Dr. Inna Garber (Psychosomatic Medicine Fellowship, VCU), Dr. Troy Hoff (Psychosomatic Medicine Fellowship, VCU), Dr. David Lekberg (Staff Psychiatrist, McGuire V.A.M.C.), and Dr. Zia Uddin, who will accept a position as a psychiatrist in a private practice in Richmond. Dr. Mark Bahoura will be moving to Cleveland to complete a fellowship in Psychosomatic Medicine at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Claudia Cuervo’s plans are on hold with her new baby. Dr. Norrience Gibson will begin a geriatric psychiatry fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dr. Sarah Thygil will begin a child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the University of Maryland Medical Center. From our Psychosomatic Medicine Fellowship, Dr. Shivan Desai will join the consult service at McGuire V.A.M.C., and both Drs. Sherin Moldeen and Bushra Shah will join VCU as an Assistant Professors in Psychiatry. From our Child and Adolescent Fellowship, Dr. Sheraz Riaz plans to work as a community psychiatrist in Washington, D.C.

Four of our PGY-3’s are departing for Child Fellowships: Drs. Shrina Desai and Daina Ngugi will transfer to VCU’s Virginia Treatment Center for Children and Dr. Asra Ahmed will begin a fellowship at Northwestern University, while Dr. Awtar Rathore will begin a fellowship at UCLA-Kern in Bakersfield, CA. We wish all of our graduates successful careers!

We are indeed grateful for the recent notice of a generous future contribution of $125,000 by long time friend and advisor to the Center for Human-Animal Interaction, Mr. Richard T. Robertson, left in his estate plan. Dr. and Mrs. James Meador-Woodruff have also made a major bequest to our department. Jim is a former VCU medical student.

We are sad to say goodbye to Psychologist Karen Stewart who will be relocating to Alabama in July. We wish her and her family the best in this new venture.

Recently, retired professor Dr. Roy Pickens was awarded the 2016 Peter B. Dews Lifetime Achievement Award for Research in Behavioral Pharmacology by the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics in San Diego at their annual meeting. We congratulate Roy for the well deserved recognition.

Have a great summer!
Graduation 2016—Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

Drs. Troy Hoff and Andrea Cruz
Dr. Shivan Desai and family
Dr. William Hazel speaking

Dr. Jennine Moritz, Teaching Award Winner
Drs. Peter Breslin, Inna Garber, Zia Uddin, Sarah Thayil, David Lekberg, Chris Kogut, Troy Hoff, Claudia Cuervo

Drs. David Lekberg, Inna Garber and Peter Breslin, out-going Chiefs
Dr. Sheraz Riaz

Dr. Mary Ellen Olbrisch and Miss Zoe Nelson
Dr. Sarah Thayil
Rising Chiefs: Drs. Kara Beatty, Dana Soper, Drew Matz

You can access the Chair Letter online at: http://psych.vcu.edu
Christopher Kogut, M.D., M.S.W., is the William and Ruth McDonough Professor in Graduate Psychiatry Education at VCU and Director of the Psychiatry Residency Program. Along with capable staff members Delores Yeatts and Suzanne Lowery, Chris orchestrates resident recruitment annually. He is also a Consultation & Liaison psychiatrist at VCU Health and he serves the department on-call monthly. He has been listed in Richmond Magazine’s “Top Docs” in 2011 as “Top Docs Hero Award” winner and “Top Docs” in 2015; he has served on the Board of the Psychiatric Society of Virginia for several years; he served as President of the Richmond Psychiatric Society in 2012 and in 2013 he was awarded the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enhancement. Chris was invited by the VCU School of Medicine to present the Annual Convocation Speech this year and was honored to be selected. His inspirational speech can be viewed on our website at: http://psych.vcu.edu. Here is the story of how Chris became the doctor he is today......

Chris Kogut grew up in Fairfax County, Virginia, and followed his two older siblings to William and Mary, where he was a philosophy major. He didn’t really know what he wanted to do for a living, but knew he wanted to be in a helping profession.

He moved to Richmond in 1994 to attend the School of Social Work at VCU, focusing on clinical social work. During his second year of the program, he had an internship at Chesterfield Mental Health Center working as a case manager for adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses, and he knew that he had found a calling.

After graduation, he took a job running the kitchen unit at the psychosocial rehabilitation program, Chester House. There he got to work with people with mental illnesses on their social and vocational skills, really getting to know his clients as people and focusing on their strengths. Over time, and through collaborating with some of the VCU faculty who worked at Chesterfield Mental Health, he decided to make a change and pursue psychiatry.

Alas, his philosophy major did not provide him with the pre-medical science curriculum he needed, so he returned to school part-time in the evening to complete his prerequisites, studied for the MCAT, and applied for school while working as a social worker. He started medical school at VCU in 2000, then stayed on for residency and fellowship in psychosomatic medicine with a special focus on working with patients with HIV.

Since completing residency, Chris has volunteered two evenings a month providing clinical care to outpatients at the Fan Free Clinic, a clinic that has long provided care to marginalized and underserved populations in the Richmond area. Ask him about it if you want to find out how you might get involved there!

Outside of his professional life, Chris is an avid fan of the performing arts. He and his husband Tom (an English Professor at Randolph-Macon College) attend dozens of performances a year of symphony, opera, ballet and theater both locally and as a part of their travel.

Among their more adventurous production experiences was a trip to Montpellier, France for a rare chance to see the groundbreaking Phillip Glass opera, “Einstein on the Beach.” Chris also started studying ballet himself a few years ago, and tries to go to class at least a couple of times a week at the Richmond Ballet. He was able to be an extra in this year’s production of “Romeo and Juliet”.

Dr. Kogut and his residency team are excited to welcome our new PGY-1’s on June 27th. Please introduce yourself and welcome them as you pass them around campus. They are: Shaheen Ali, M.D. (VCU School of Medicine), Marian Coleman, D.O. (W.VA. School of Osteopathic Medicine), Greg Correia, M.D., (University of Miami SOM), James Fields, D.O., (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine), Ashley Harvin, M.D., (VCU School of Medicine), Melora Jacque, D.O., (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine), Kayia Jones, M.D., (UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine), Amar Mukhtar, D.O., (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine), Lauren Parr, M.D., (University of Minnesota Medical College), Roxanne Shoolevar, M.D., (Sidney Kimmell Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University) and Kathryn Williams, M. D, (VCU School of Medicine).
On June 10, 2016, Drs. Treven Pickett, Meghan Geiss, and Christopher Murphy gave a 3 1/2 hour talk entitled “Military Culture and Deployment-Related Mental Health Affecting Veterans and their Families” at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. David Rothman, a VCU psychology doctoral student, assisted with all aspects of the presentation and was also there to support the event. The presentation was made possible by invitation from Give an Hour and ultimately, offered three hours of free continuing education for Social Workers (NASW accredited) and Psychologists (APA accredited). The event was catered by the Barry Robinson Center in the morning and the Wounded Warrior Program through Mission BBQ for lunch. There were approximately 80 attendees at the event and many remained at the venue for 1-2 hours afterwards to network. Some attendees registered with Give an Hour as community-based providers willing to volunteer their professional time to support the mental health needs of Veterans and their families who present for care in the community.

About Give an Hour
Give an Hour, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) providing free mental health services to military members, veterans and their families, was founded in September 2005 by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a psychologist in the Washington, D.C. area. Give an Hour has been instrumental in the development of the community-based approach to addressing the challenges that face our nation’s military community, having created a successful model for harnessing skill-based volunteers eager to offer their services. Thus far, the network of nearly 7,000 licensed mental health professionals has provided more than 192,000 hours of care and support to those in need. Give an Hour is now leading the “Campaign to Change Direction”, a collective impact effort to change the culture of mental health in America. Give an Hour and its partners are addressing common barriers to understanding mental health and raising awareness about the signs of emotional suffering. To learn more, visit www.giveanhour.org or connected.giveanhour.org. To learn more about the “Campaign to Change Direction”, visit www.changedirection.org.

Submitted by Treven Pickett, Psy.D.
Hunter Holmes McGuire V.A.M.C.
Dr. Susan Jones was introduced as a faculty profile in our Spring 2016 Chair Letter. She is a physician at VTCC and has been working with Dr. Melinda Penn, an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics, who specializes in endocrinology and created the new Transgender Clinic. When Dr. Jones arrived here she had contacted Dr. Penn and expressed her interest in treating this population. Now, once a month Dr. Jones evaluates and treats transgender children and teens at CHOR’s Center for Endocrinology on North Parham Road.

“Dr. Penn welcomed my involvement in her Transgender Clinic so I now see transgender and gender-questioning patients there the first Monday of every month. She refers patients to me but referrals also come from the community. I evaluate patients for the presence of psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety, as well as gender dysphoria. Some treatments may require a diagnosis of gender dysphoria by a qualified mental health professional, so I can provide that documentation. I can also prescribe medication and follow patients there to create a more convenient and familiar experience for these children and their families.”

Dr. Jones continues, “Our goal is to ultimately create a true multidisciplinary Transgender Clinic with a Social Worker and a Psychologist. Then we would be able to provide an array of services and support in one location. Currently, patients may access my clinic time there by contacting CHOR or VTCC.”

Staff Focus—Regina Piercy-Ross

I grew up in the Church Hill neighborhood of Richmond and with the exception of three years living with my Aunt in Stuarts Draft in high school, have lived my life in the Richmond area. I was married to William Piercy and we had five children (three together and two from his previous marriage). We had four boys and one girl. William was a career military mechanic and after retirement drove a big rig truck across country. I later met Sidney Ross after my niece introduced us in 1996. We were married in 2000. Sidney was a welder all of his working life until retirement.

My first job at VCU began 21 years ago through the Richmond Urban Partnership for Educational Success (RUPES) which was a 20 year grant-funded program designed to help children who were struggling in early high school before they reached the age where drop out occurs. We taught them lifelong learning skills such as keyboarding and basic computer, study skills, how to take tests successfully; we tried to find the children who had slipped through the cracks where reading was the issue and work with them to learn to read. We taught skills about how to handle money and a bank account and other things that would help them succeed throughout their lives even after school was completed. It was very rewarding work with each success story and it was very sad work when we failed to reach some of them. My job with the program was fiscal secretary. The program originated at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and moved to VCU when the director moved employment. My next job here was VISSTA which was a partnership between the VCU Department of Social Work and Social Services of Richmond. I was the Training Coordinator. We trained social workers and case workers and also provided training for Child Care workers.

I have been with the Department of Psychiatry as the Fiscal Tech for five years. My work day is filled with many different duties and tasks. I key time sheets and then check SAS to verify time in the system; I order all supplies for those of us in West Hospital and occasionally for others in our department through eVA, the state purchasing agency; I create and process invoices and am in charge of inventory control; I am a facility manager in the fact that I keep the refrigerators, microwaves and coffee areas neat, stocked and clean.

Growing up, I wanted to be a Mathematics teacher and I completed my Associate Degree in Medical Assisting from JSRCC. I later took classes at VCU but Calculus challenged my trajectory.

My favorite things to do are travel and camping. When the children were small, we would go camping every weekend in the summer. We camped at all of the Virginia campsites so the kids had exposure to the great outdoors and people from other places. Some of the campgrounds we visited most often were the John Kerr Dam in Boydton, Lake Gaskins in Mecklenburg County, Ed Allen’s in New Kent, Virginia Beach, Stuarts Draft in Augusta County, Sherando Lake in Franklin County, Cave Mountain Lake in Rockbridge County and Douthat State Park in Bath County. I also love to read suspense novels and collect angels.

I am a member of New Hope Ministries and our work consists of a Clothes Closet with home furnishings, fundraising to help feed those who are without food and CARITAS. My favorite quotes are “Children are worrisome” and “they never grow up”. When I retire I will enjoy having my grandkids visit often.
The American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) has awarded the Department of Psychiatry’s North 3 the **Silver Beacon Award**. Charlene Moore, Nurse Manager, was notified in late April of this prestigious honor. As the only psychiatry unit in the United States to attain Beacon Status, this award speaks to the structures in place to provide excellent patient care. There are three levels which can be awarded, including Bronze, Silver and Gold. In 2013, North 3 was awarded the Bronze Beacon Award. Moving from Bronze to Silver speaks to the ongoing advances being made within the unit structures listed below. The designation is active for three years.

For our psychiatric patients and their families, this Beacon Award signifies exceptional care through improved outcomes and greater overall satisfaction. For nurses, being a Beacon Unit and having this award signals a positive and supportive work environment with greater collaboration between colleagues and leaders, higher morale and lower turnover. The elements below are all addressed in the application submitted to AACN.

* Leadership Structures and Systems
* Appropriate Staffing and Staff Engagement
* Effective Communication, Knowledge Management, Learning and Development
* Evidence-based Practice and Processes
* Outcome Measurement

VCU Health has the highest number of Beacon Units in the country. For more information, please visit the following site: [aacn.org](http://aacn.org)

While this is a nursing award, the North 3 application spoke to the collaborative teamwork within our organization and all team members are included in this worthy award.

Our Beacon Celebration will be August 5, 2016 at 8 a.m. in Room 67 on North 3. Please come and celebrate this amazing award given by nurses from AACN. A light breakfast will be served.

---

**Publications and Congratulations**

- For the past four years, the Department of Psychiatry has had a winner of one of the Leonard Tow Humanism and Excellence in Teaching Awards. This year’s winner was **PGY 2 Dr. Jubin Karimi**. The three previous winners were Drs. Sri Punyala, Inna Garber and Gerald DeMasters.

- Congratulations to **Dr. James Wade**, first author of “Does the Death of a Spouse Increase Subjective Well-Being: An Assessment in A Population of Adults with Neurological Illness” published in *Health Aging Research*.

- Another paper by **Dr. James Wade** was accepted this month by the journal *Liver Transplantation* entitled “Liver Transplantation Significantly Improves Global Functioning and Cerebral Processing”.

- **Drs. Sandra Barker**, Randolph Barker, Nancy McCain, and Christine Schubert published “A Randomized Crossover Study of the Effect of Visiting Therapy Dogs on College Student Stress Before Final Exams” in the current issue of *Anthrozoös*.

- **Dr. James S. Brown, Jr.** recently published “Cancer Immune Equilibrium and Schizophrenia Have Similar Interferon-γ. Tumor Necrosis Factor-α and Interleukin Expression: A Tumor Model of Schizophrenia” in *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. Dr. Brown is an Asst. Clinical Professor on our faculty.

- Congratulations to **Drs. Bela Sood and Cheryl Al-Mateen** who both had books published recently. We'll have additional information about these texts in the Fall Chair Letter.

- A special note of congratulations to **Drs. Inna Garber and Peter Breslin** upon the occasion of their engagement. Peter proposed to Inna at graduation this year. We wish them many years of happiness together.