Greetings from the Duke University Department of Pediatrics. During the period since our last newsletter, we have continued to experience significant success in our clinical programs, educational activities, and research initiatives. This success is a direct reflection of our dedicated and collegial faculty who work hard to support all aspects of our mission. In addition, we continue to recruit bright and motivated residents and subspecialty fellows who add impressive diversity and talent to our community.

This past winter we further strengthened our research infrastructure by establishing an interdisciplinary Center for Pediatric Lung Disease. The focus of this new center will include identification of novel biologic targets for the development of therapies to prevent, control, and cure respiratory disease in children.

A number of our faculty have received new independent investigator awards from the National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies, an especially impressive accomplishment given the challenging funding environment. Other members of the faculty have been recognized for their outstanding contributions to medicine with honorary awards and election to national academic societies. I am especially pleased to share the news that our Office of Pediatric Education received the Teaching Program Award from the Academic Pediatrics Association.

Later this spring, we will hold our annual Department of Pediatrics Research Retreat, featuring a keynote presentation by Henry Petroski, PhD, a professor of civil engineering and history at Duke and a prolific author. This event represents an important opportunity for faculty, trainees, and staff to gather to appreciate the breadth of research across the department and for research projects to benefit from a variety of perspectives.

With the goal of keeping you connected with friends and colleagues, I invite you to join us at the Duke Pediatrics Alumni Reception that is scheduled for the evening of April 28, 2012, at the Boston Marriott Copley Place during the Pediatric Academic Societies meeting in Boston. (See “Upcoming Events” in this newsletter for more details).

I hope you enjoy reading about the continued progress of Duke Pediatrics, and I look forward to sharing more news with you throughout the year.
Kurtzberg Receives 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award
Joanne Kurtzberg, MD, Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Blood and Marrow Transplantation, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplant Consortium (PBMTC). She is the fourth recipient of this award and was recognized for a career that exemplifies the mission of the PBMTC, namely “to support research and education to improve the availability, safety, and efficacy of hematopoietic cell transplantation and other cellular therapeutics for children and adolescents.” Dr. Kurtzberg is Chief Scientific Officer of the Robertson Clinical and Translational Cell Therapy Program, Co-Director of the Stem Cell Laboratory, and Director of the Carolinas Cord Blood Bank. She is an internationally renowned expert in umbilical cord blood transplantation. In collaboration with her colleagues in the Division of Blood and Marrow Transplantation, she has pioneered the use of unrelated umbilical cord blood transplants for children with resistant cancers and rare metabolic diseases. She has also been an active advocate of public umbilical cord blood banking and played a critical role in the passage of a bill establishing a national umbilical cord blood program, providing federal funding to collect and store cord blood for life-saving blood cell transplants, and reauthorizing the existing national registry for marrow donors.

Dr. Kurtzberg was honored for her extraordinary achievements during the 2012 Tandem BMT Meetings of the American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation and the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research in San Diego on February 2.

Katsanis Receives 2012 E. Mead Johnson Award for Research in Pediatrics
Nico Katsanis, PhD, Jean and George Brumley, Jr. Professor of Cell Biology and Pediatrics and Director of the Duke Center for Human Disease Modeling will receive the E. Mead Johnson Award for Research in Pediatrics at the 2012 Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Annual Meeting in Boston this April.

This award honors clinical and laboratory research achievements in pediatrics and is considered the most prestigious award in pediatric research. Katsanis is receiving the award for his research focusing on Bardet-Biedl syndrome (BBS), a rare genetic disorder with symptoms that affect the kidneys and a variety of other organs.

In order to explain why BBS results in severe symptoms in some patients and only mild symptoms in others, his lab is developing animal models to understand how an individual’s genome can influence the clinical presentation of this and other genetic diseases.

“Nico is an extraordinarily creative scientist who has provided important insights into the variable relationship between genetic mutations and clinical phenotypes,” says Nancy Andrews, MD, PhD, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Duke University School of Medicine. “I’m very pleased that the E. Mead Johnson Award selection committee has chosen to recognize his outstanding work.”

Katsanis earned his PhD at the University of London in 1997 and completed his postdoctoral work at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He joined the Duke faculty in 2009.

Pediatrics Faculty Elected to the APS/SPR
Oren Becher, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Hematology-Oncology and Assistant Professor of Pathology; Michael (Micky) Cohen-Wolkowicz, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases; Sallie Permar, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Assistant Professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology; and James Wynn, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Neonatology, were recently elected to the Society for Pediatric Research (SPR). These individuals will be inducted at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Annual Meeting, April 28 – May 1 in Boston.

According to Joseph St. Geme, MD, James B. Duke Professor of Pediatrics and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, “Election to the SPR represents a true distinction, and Oren, Micky, Sallie, and Jim are highly deserving of this recognition.”

The Society for Pediatric Research honors young pediatricians who have demonstrated creativity and productivity in research addressing child and adolescent health and disease.

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

NEW INITIATIVES

New Federal Awards
These major federal independent investigator awards were recently received by faculty in the Department of Pediatrics.

Courtney Thornburg, MD, Principal Investigator. NIH. Title: “Pediatric Hydroxyurea Phase III Baby Hug Clinical Trial.” Project period: 01/2012-12/2016.

Erica Davis, PhD, Principal Investigator. NIH0. Title: “Modifiers of Retinal Phenotypes in Ciliopathies.” Project period: 09/2011-08/2016.


Yong-hui Jiang, MD, PhD, Principal Investigator. NIH. Title: “Analysis of Shank 3 Complete and Temporal and Spatial Specific Knockout Mice.” Project Period: 07/2012-06/2017.
Staples to Attend APA Educational Scholars Program

Betty Staples, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Primary Care Pediatrics and Director of the Pediatric Residency Program, was recently accepted as one of 18 scholars in the Academic Pediatric Association Educational Scholars Program. In this program, Staples will be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of educational interventions designed to ensure a continuum of innovation, quality, and leadership that is consistent with best practices in the field. She will focus in particular on approaches to restructuring inpatient experiences in the context of current duty hour guidelines by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. “Being accepted by the Educational Scholars Program is a great honor and a wonderful opportunity for me to expand my educational expertise as requirements for residency training continue to evolve,” says Staples.

Office of Pediatric Education Receives APA Teaching Program Award

The Office of Pediatric Education recently received the 2012 Academic Pediatric Association Teaching Program Award. The purpose of this award is to foster interest in the teaching of general pediatrics by giving national recognition to an outstanding general pediatric program. “The Office of Pediatric Education is being recognized for demonstrated excellence in educational teaching methods, innovations and adaptability, and the outstanding quality of the individuals trained in our education programs,” says Joseph St. Geme, MD, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics. “The APA Teaching Program Award represents a true distinction and reflects the leadership of Kammy McGann, MD, as Vice Chair of Education, and Shari Whicker, MEd, as Education Administrator, and the contributions of educators across the Department of Pediatrics.”

The award will be presented during the Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 29 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston.

18th Annual Radiothon Exceeds the Magic $1M Mark

At the conclusion of the 18th annual Radiothon for Duke Children’s Hospital & Health Center on February 15, Joseph St. Geme, MD, Chair of the Duke Department of Pediatrics and Chief Medical Officer of Duke Children’s Hospital, and Bill Jordan and Lynda Loveland of WRAL FM 101.5, announced a two-day record-breaking fundraising total of $1,256,037. MIX 101.5 listeners, Duke Children’s sponsors, patient families, and hundreds of volunteers came together to make magic happen again for Duke Children’s.

The Radiothon for Duke Children’s broadcasts live from the lobby of the Duke Children’s Health Center and raises more money per capita than any other Children’s Miracle Network radiothon in the United States or Canada.

Over the past 18 years, the Radiothon has raised over $15 million dollars to advance patient care and research at Duke Children’s Hospital & Health Center.

To view photos of the event or to learn how you can be involved in the Radiothon and other events for Duke Children’s, visit dukechildrens.org.

Kirby Announces Retirement

Margaret Kirby, PhD, retired from her position as Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Neonatology and Professor of Cell Biology and Biology on December 1, 2011. She had been a faculty member in the Department of Pediatrics since 2001 and was internationally recognized for her studies of cardiac development. She was also the Senior Science Director of the Jean and George Brumley, Jr. Neonatal-Perinatal Research Institute (NPRI).

Dr. Kirby proposed and tested the hypothesis that neural crest cell function is essential for normal structural and functional development of the heart and great arteries. This neural crest cell model in chick embryos is now regarded as the gold standard in analyzing the phenotype of transgenic and mutant mice with defective heart development.

More recently, Dr. Kirby developed a modification of her neural crest cell theory based on the presence of a midline stripe that is an organizer for brain, face, and heart development. This model provides a unifying concept for commonly recognized clinical syndromes in which abnormal midface, neural, and heart development are present. In addition, her lab identified a special field of cells in the cardiogenic mesoderm that forms the arterial pole of the heart. These cells are at particular risk for abnormal development, resulting in many of the most common conotruncal malformations seen in children.

“I have had the pleasure of working closely with Peggy for the last decade at Duke,” said Ronald Goldberg, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Neonatology. “She has been a truly outstanding faculty member, a leader in the field of developmental biology, a tireless mentor for trainees, and a very active member of the Duke community. We will miss her many contributions to the Department of Pediatrics and to the NPRI.”

Duke Pediatrics Opens New Center for Pediatric Lung Disease

The Department of Pediatrics has established a new Center for Pediatric Lung Disease, led by Judith Voynow, MD, Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine. The mission of this new research center is to identify novel biologic targets for the development of therapies to prevent, control, and cure cystic fibrosis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), asthma, and pulmonary complications of air pollutants.

The Center for Pediatric Lung Disease will capitalize on a new NIH-funded multicenter project to study biomarkers of BPD severity, a recently initiated NIH-funded project to study host factors and mechanisms of pulmonary susceptibility to air pollutants, ongoing active involvement in the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-funded Therapeutic Development Network, and participation in the NIH Prematurity and Respiratory Outcomes Program Network. The Center will also take advantage of collaborations with the Duke Neonatal-Perinatal Research Institute, the Duke Asthma, Allergy, and Airway Center, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in Research Triangle Park, and the Environmental Protection Agency.
2012 Pediatric Research Retreat
The Department of Pediatrics Research Retreat will be held on the afternoon of Friday, May 4, and the morning of Saturday, May 5. This annual event offers the opportunity for students, postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows, research assistants, research associates, research scientists, and faculty members in the Department of Pediatrics to engage in collaborative discussions and showcase current research. The retreat will feature several oral presentations and more than 60 posters.

Henry Petroski, PhD, PE, DistMASCE, NAE, Aleksandar S. Vesic Professor of Civil Engineering, will present the keynote address focusing on the interrelationship between success and failure in design. Petroski has achieved eminence for significantly advancing the practice of civil engineering and education as a renowned educator, author, investigator, and lecturer and for his considerable published works that have increased the public’s understanding of the role of the engineer.

As in past, awards will be given for the best clinical/translational abstract and the best basic science abstract.

IN MEMORIUM
Thomas Eliot Frothingham, MD, who founded and served as Chief of the Division of General Pediatrics in the Department of Pediatrics from 1973 to 1988, died on December 27, 2011, at the age of 85.

Dr. Frothingham earned his medical degree at Harvard Medical School in 1951, completed his internship at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, and then served as a medical officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve until 1955. Upon returning from overseas, he held positions at Tulane University, New York University, and Harvard before joining the faculty at Duke in 1973 as a professor of pediatrics. He later received a secondary appointment in the Department of Community and Family Medicine. While serving as Director of the Duke Pediatric Clinics, he became involved in a pediatric community health program that allowed practitioners to travel to rural areas in North Carolina to assess and treat children. He also served as the coordinator of Area Health Education Centers for Duke University.

Dr. Frothingham became a professor emeritus in 1994. At that time, he helped found the Center for Child and Family Health, a treatment center for abused and neglected children in North Carolina. He authored or co-authored more than 40 publications pertaining to pediatrics and infectious diseases.

EDUCATION FUND
Deborah Kredich Pediatric Education Fund
The Deborah Kredich Pediatric Education Fund provides support for a variety of educational experiences for residents and subspecialty fellows at Duke, including participation in research projects, attendance at national meetings, involvement in community outreach programs, and hosting of a special Grand Rounds.

Please send your donation to the Deborah Kredich Pediatric Education fund to:
Deborah Kredich
Pediatric Education Fund
DUMC 2975
Durham, NC 27710

Duke Pediatrics Alumni Reception
Saturday, April 28, 2012
9:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Boston Marriott Copley Place
Vineyard Room
110 Huntington Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts

This reception is scheduled in conjunction with the Pediatric Academic Societies annual meeting, April 28 – May 1, 2012, at the Hynes Convention Center. We hope you’ll join us.

RSVP to Diane Crayton at 919-681-3260 or diane.crayton@duke.edu.