



# Focus

SEPTEMBER 2001

## In a Crisis, Downstate Pulls Together



All eyes are glued to the hall monitor as the tragic events unfold.

The attack on the World Trade Center and the loss of so many innocent lives was a tragedy felt around the world. But it also brought out the best in New Yorkers and united the Downstate community.

All through that first terrible week, President John LaRosa encouraged us to keep our spirits up—and we succeeded. Appealing for tolerance toward all members of our community, he reminded us that one of Downstate's great strengths is the unity of purpose among its people, who have come here to work and study from around the world.

"At this critical time, it is important that we recognize the richness of our

cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity," he said.

That first day, as events began unfolding and the scope of the horror was not fully apparent, our physicians and nurses began preparing to receive victims they believed would be brought to Downstate and Kings County Hospital. Hospital staffs were told to expect 200 or more, but far fewer than hoped had survived the fiery blasts and collapse of the twin towers.

At the same time, students and staff by the hundreds were signing up for volunteer service and to offer blood donations. In fact, so many donors showed up at the hospital Blood Bank

that it was able to collect more than it normally does in a year. Some students were frustrated to learn that donations have been temporarily halted, at the request of the New York Blood Center. It seems that the demand for blood throughout the city currently has been met. But everyone who signed up will be called to set up an appointment in the next several weeks, as there is again expected to be a huge demand for blood.

Not knowing if their loved ones were in danger or safe, many campus members were fearful and sought the solace of prayer. Our chaplains stayed on well into the night to be with them. Suite I in the hospital was set up to help anyone needing counseling. Social workers and the director of the Employee Assistance Program continue to be on hand to provide support services, and members of our psychiatry faculty are making themselves available to any department that would like to discuss the tragedy.

From the start, members of the University Police did an exemplary job of securing the health center complex. They operated with such quiet professionalism that patients and staff felt completely protected.



Our emergency medical personnel wait for injured survivors to arrive.

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## In Crisis, Downstate Pulls Together (continued from page 1)

Many campus members have pledged their continued support to any student, worker, or patient needing help. We are also helping the community to cope. While some members of our psychiatry faculty are reaching out to local firefighters and police, others skilled in child and adolescent psychiatry are offering counseling services in Kings County Hospital's J Building. They also have been working closely with school districts and the Board of Education, and with educators at PS 235 and other schools to help them talk to students about the tragedy.

Much remains to be done in the weeks ahead. At the time of this writing, students began a campaign to raise money for the American Red Cross, the New York Times 9/11 Neediest Fund, and organizations in our local community that are helping victims and their families. If anyone would like to make a donation, please make your check payable to HSCB Foundation Account 3664. It can be mailed to Box 1219, delivered to the Bursar's Office, or handed directly to a student volunteer.



Like David Blanco, who is shown here resting after donating blood, dozens of students and staff signed up to give at the Blood Bank.

## Close ups

**A NOTE TO OUR READERS:** "Close ups" is a continuing series of profiles of SUNY Downstate members who have made special contributions to our campus. If you know a faculty member, co-worker, or student who deserves recognition, please contact the editor by phone (ext. 1793) or by e-mail ([dyoudelman@downstate.edu](mailto:dyoudelman@downstate.edu)).

At Family Health Services (FHS), where he has practiced internal medicine for the past five years, Steven Liverpool is known as the doctor with the mostest—the most patients, that is. On average, 250 people visit this popular physician every month. Yet despite this heavy patient load, Dr. Liverpool never rushes. The visit isn't over until each of his patient's concerns has been fully discussed and answered.

"There are no time limits to good patient care," he says. "That is why I choose to work here and not for an HMO."

He also enjoys his role as teacher to medical, physician assistant, and nursing students. The atmosphere at FHS is conducive to learning," he explains, "and my students keep me alert and on my toes."

Born in Trinidad, Steven Liverpool came to the United States with his family at the age of 14 and attended Tilden High. After graduating from Columbia, he earned his medical degree from SUNY Buffalo and did his residency at Kings County Hospital Center, where he was chosen chief resident. He joined the Downstate faculty 11 years ago.

Being a resident of the community Downstate serves and a fellow immigrant is part of Dr. Liverpool's appeal, especially to newcomers who have difficulty navigating this country's complicated health care system.

"I see patients suffering from hypertension, complications of diabetes, and other serious conditions that have gone undiagnosed or untreated for years," he says.

Because Dr. Liverpool has his patients' trust, he has been asked to help recruit volunteers for important clinical studies, such as the Urology Department's current study to test whether vitamin E and selenium are effective agents in preventing prostate cancer.

Karen Benker, M.D., medical director of FHS, points out that each week the mailbox is filled with thank-you letters from grateful patients and their families.

"Dr. Liverpool's kindness, patience, and very high level of clinical expertise make him an inspiring example," she says, "not only for students but also for those of us who practice alongside him."



Dr. Steven Liverpool greets a patient at Family Health Services.

*Focus*

is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement for the faculty, staff, and students of SUNY Downstate.

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## Welcoming our new students



New first-year medical students, including Adam Jacobowitz (shown in insert with his proud father, Israel Jacobowitz, M.D., chief of cardiothoracic surgery) solemnly recite the Hippocratic Oath.

Returning to his alma mater to deliver the keynote address at this year's White Coat Ceremony, Dr. Robert J. Goulet, Jr., '79, encouraged entering medical students to put their faith in their patients. "When I think of my own patients, I am renewed," he said.

Now on the surgical faculty of the University of Indiana, Dr. Goulet based the title of his talk, "Medicine: The Good Earth," on Pearl S. Buck's classic novel about a Chinese peasant and his love of the land. "Just as his land provided solace during difficult times, the doctor-patient relationship will sustain you in the face of external challenges and internal lapses of spirit," he assured the audience.

Following Dr. Goulet's address, members of the Class of 2005, in their new white coats, recited the Hippocratic oath. Traditionally, the white coat is a rite of passage for third-year medical students, and

the oath is not administered until graduation. "Today's celebration and departure from tradition is our way of welcoming you into the profession," said Dr. Eugene Feigelson, dean of medicine.

The brainchild of Dr. Arnold P. Gold, a pediatrician and neurologist at Columbia, the White Coat Ceremony was first begun in 1994 and has since been adopted by 130 medical schools here and abroad, including one in China. It symbolized the belief that humanism in medicine should be the goal of all physician, starting the first day they enter medical school.

Of the 188 medical students admitted this year, just less than half are women, and five are graduates of Downstate's Early Medical Education Program, which prepares disadvantaged students for careers in medicine. The vast majority of new students hail from New York State and the city's five

boroughs. Among the top feeder schools are NYU, Brooklyn and Queens Colleges, SUNY at Stony Brook and at Binghamton, Columbia, Brandeis, and Johns Hopkins Universities.

The School of Graduate Studies has admitted 19 new students. Fifteen are Ph.D. candidates and 4 are here to earn their M.D./Ph.D. degrees.

Sixty-four new students enrolled in the College of Health Related Professions, many attracted by the physician assistant program, diagnostic medical imaging, and the master's program in occupational therapy. Eighty-five new undergrads joined the College of Nursing, and an additional 62 students enrolling in the school's graduate and certificate programs. Nurse anesthesia and the master's program in family nurse practitioner were among the most popular offerings.



Student  
Activity  
Fair





# ALONG CLARKSON AVENUE

## WALK BROOKLYN

In July, Healthy Downstate held its first Walkathon in Prospect Park. Employees and their families had their choice of a 2- or 3.5-mile walk, and at the finish line everyone received a medal, gift bag, and continental breakfast. Honorary Chair Dr. Gerald Deas kicked off the walk by explaining the benefits of walking for cardiovascular and respiratory health. Co-chairs Peggy Smith and Rose Jackman held a lottery and gave out prizes donated by local businesses. It was a healthy, fun-filled day.

## Congratulations

**Dennis Castillo, M.D.**, has been appointed director of podiatry at University Hospital of Brooklyn.

**Rose Jackman, MPH**, senior administrator of physiology and pharmacology and co-director of the Healthy Downstate program, earned a certificate in adult weight management from the American Dietetic Association.

**Ira Kass, Ph.D.**, professor of anesthesiology, physiology, and pharmacology has been invited to attend the 2001 Chinese Society of Anesthesiology meeting in Kunmin, P.R. China. In addition, he was awarded close to \$18,000 by the College of Medicine's Research Investment Initiative Program for his pilot project, "An in-vitro examination of the cellular electrophysiological properties of cortical neurons in the penumbra and core territories after middle cerebral artery occlusion."

**Marlene Schwanzel-Fukuda, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of anatomy and cell biology, was invited to speak at a satellite symposium of the XIV International Congress of Comparative Endocrinology held in Penang, Malaysia, in June. Her topic was "Vasculogenesis in association with the development of the GNRH systems in early human embryos and in a fetus with Kallmann Syndrome."

**Han Sohn, M.D.**, Class of 2001, who is now doing his residency at Long Island College Hospital, was awarded First Prize in the Resident Research Competition sponsored by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation.

**Ira Soller**, director of the Scientific and Medical Instrumentation Center, presented an address titled "Medical Equipment Should Only Be Designed by Those Over 50: Bring Back the Canary," at the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation.

## DOWNSTATE'S FINEST MAKE THE GRADE

On August 24th, Downstate Medical Center's University Police Department had four police recruits complete a grueling 16 week training course for police officers at the New York State Police Academy, Albany, New York.

The course consisted of over 520 hours of classroom instruction in the areas of police skills, law, physical wellness, interpersonal communication and university life. In addition, there were field training exercises and demonstration tests. The four graduates were: Carol Fusina, Aaron Gaskin, Samuel Ramos Jr. and Kaison Speller. Officer Speller was presented with an award for the best overall performance in physical training.

## UHB

news & events

## UHB HAPPENINGS

### Prostate cancer prevention trial

Downstate is participating in an important study to test whether selenium and vitamin E offer protection against prostate cancer. Launched by the National Cancer Institute, the Selenium and Vitamine E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT), will test whether these antioxidants can neutralize toxins that may lead to cancer.

"SELECT is the first study designed to look directly at the effects of vitamin E and selenium, both separately and together, in preventing prostate cancer," said Dr. Richard J. Macchia, chairman of the Department of Urology. "Previous research suggested that these nutrients might be effective, but we won't know for sure, until SELECT is completed."

During this year alone, prostate cancer will be diagnosed in about 198,100 Americans and more than 31,500 men are expected to die of the disease. In New York, 12,700 will get prostate cancer and 2,000 men will die of it. Risk factors for the disease include being over age 55, being African-American, or having a father or brother with prostate cancer.

Healthy men age 55 and older are needed to volunteer for the study. Both Downstate's University Hospital of Brooklyn and Kings County Hospital Center, which are part of a network of research sites known as the Southwest Oncology Group, will be involved in conducting the study.