Volunteer Spotlight:
Luo Luo Zheng by Max Jan

As a managerial intern at H+U in 2006, Luo Luo Zheng BS '08 observed, “the tremendous need for eye care was clear. When I was staffed at the front desk, patients asked me whether they could see an eye doctor. A patient whom I often ran into at PFC clearly had an opaque cornea, which I later learned had not been checked for over 10 years. Diabetes topped the chronic conditions we tried to educate patients about.”

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Cardinal Free Clinics Select New Student Managers for 2011-2012

Stanford, CA - Arbor Free Clinic and Pacific Free Clinic, two student-run free clinics affiliated with Stanford University School of Medicine, announced their new student managers for 2011-2012. The eight new managers, four for each clinic, were selected through a competitive application and interview process which had applications from current Stanford University School of Medicine students and current volunteers that are involved with the clinic. The new managers for Arbor Free Clinic are:

Amrapali Maitra, a first year medical student, has a proven track record in leading student-run programs and managing volunteers.

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Letter from the managers

At the beginning of the school year, CFC welcomed a new class of student volunteers. Their enthusiasm has been uplifting, and their volunteerism has proven essential to the existence of both clinics as CFC continues to train the next generation of health care providers. Last September, all new medical students were introduced to basic procedures including vital signs, phlebotomy and PPD placement. They now check the blood pressures of each patient they treat, work in PFC’s on-site phlebotomy lab and provide free tuberculosis skin tests to those in need at Arbor.

In addition, many medical students have elected to expand their skill set by joining the “Flu Crew,” a volunteer group led by Dr. Walt Newman which provides flu and Tdap vaccines to Stanford students, faculty and staff, CFC patients, and rural communities. As the Flu Crew expands its scope to include a “Vax and Vax” program during mid-term elections and vaccinations during dinner hours in Stanford’s undergraduate dining halls, students have had plenty of opportunities to hone their skills and serve their community.

As managers of CFC, we are delighted to see that the new volunteers continue to make the well being of our patients a top priority in their medical training. Many of them volunteered at the clinics and comfortably interviewed patients even before their formal education in Stanford’s Practice of Medicine course. Along with perfecting the art of history taking, medical student volunteers also have the unique opportunity to learn and perform advanced clinical skills through the ten specialty clinics operating at both sites, including Women’s Health, Ophthalmology and Mental Health clinics. Additionally, as our clinics are equipped with ultrasound and EKG machines, our volunteers have been able to hone these essential skills in a clinical setting.

All together, we have created a nurturing environment at CFC that fosters cooperation and mentorship among volunteers. Whether new faces or seasoned veterans, physicians, medical students and undergraduates alike are important to our success. We look forward to working with all the Cardinal Free Clinic volunteers, staff and supporters in the coming school year.

All our best,

*Duy Dao and Tope Lanre-Amos*
PFC Patient Spotlights

by Haiy Le

When Chanh Tu lost his job and health insurance in 2001, he turned to the Vietnamese community in San Jose seeking an alternative for health care. Around that time, Pacific Free Clinic (PFC) had just begun to establish itself in an effort to relieve the swelling numbers of uninsured persons in San Jose. Mr. Tu first found the clinic in 2004, still uninsured and jobless. Now six years later, thanks to assistance from PFC’s Social Referrals program, Mr. Tu is not only insured with a retirement plan but also has a steady income from a part-time job. “I speak on behalf of the Vietnamese community of San Jose when I say that we’re very grateful to have Pacific Free Clinic with us,” he says.

He speaks highly of the clinic’s generous services. “When I used to receive a blood test, it would cost $200, but this is free at the clinic.”

On his last visit to PFC, Mr. Tu happily boasts about his improving health, “The new doctors are very impressed with my numbers.”

For the past 13 years that Jose Ortega has been receiving a paycheck in America, he has always managed to set aside an amount to send to his family in Mexico. “I came to the United States when I was forty-six to find work and help provide for my family,” he says.

Mr. Ortega left his home country in 1997, leaving behind his wife and two sons. Today, he works in an electronics factory in San Jose, CA, managing his paycheck to provide for his family. Although his company offers a health insurance plan, Mr. Ortega cannot afford it. He explains, “I am the only one working in my family, so it is not feasible for me to buy (the plan).”

While taking classes at an Adult Independent School, Mr. Ortega discovered Pacific Free Clinic and its screening services. Ever since, Mr. Ortega has regularly taken full advantage of resources at PFC. “The students put a lot of attention into what is going on,” he says with a smile.

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Luo has always been passionate about eye care. Growing up with three blind family members, Luo’s childhood dream was to cure blindness. Over the past five years at Stanford, she turned her heartfelt interest in the science of vision into a pioneering role in artificial cornea research at the interface of biomaterials and neuroscience. “I’m excited to search for a treatment, not just an answer,” says Luo.

Luo met the challenge of bringing eye care to PFC’s patients with passion and determination. Luo’s arrival at PFC intersected with Dr. Lee Shashinian Jr. and Dr. Edward Saub, who both became the first ophthalmologists to volunteer at PFC and donated thousands of dollars worth of equipment to PFC. Says Luo, “Without these physicians there would be no ophthalmology clinic.” Current co-chair of PFC’s ophthalmology clinic Paul Lindau says, “Luo recruited all the physicians and precins, and she created a manual that outlined all of the procedures and protocols that we currently use in the clinic. She also has physician-level knowledge about all of the pathology we see.”

Looking back on her time with PFC, Luo has learned to keep thinking big. She reflected, “Even without a medical education yet, through PFC and Arbor, I am able to help provide eye care to the underserved. I might not be at the operating table, but our efforts in keeping the free clinics running, the extra time we spend to understand a patient’s unique background, and the paperwork required to send in subsidy applications are just as important to a patient’s well-being. Entering college, I thought my childhood dream [of curing blindness] was wishful thinking. But now I’m finding myself a step closer to achieving it.”

In the sweltering PFC control room this summer, volunteers often debated the origin of checklists in the clinic. Luo notes that the ophthalmology clinic had checklists back in 2006. In innumerable ways, Luo has led by example.
The Cardinal Free Clinics involved with community outreach programs that reach young students in the Bay Area by Caroline Jordan

Arbor Free Clinic and Pacific Free Clinic (PFC) have expanded their community outreach programs to include two exciting new youth programs in the last year. Arbor partnered with Camp Kwizera, a non-profit leadership development and social justice day camp for Bay Area middle school students, to develop a premedical education program for campers. Likewise, PFC student leaders developed a new “Immersion in Community Medicine” program, which prepares 24 underserved high school students for careers in the medicine each year.

Camp Kwizera teaches campers about global issues and provides them with hands-on service learning projects. During summer 2010, one of Arbor’s student managers, Tope Lanre-Amos, taught 20 Kwizera campers healthcare policy and basic clinical skills during four three-hour sessions.

During one session, Lanre-Amos taught campers how to conduct and record a patient interview. After learning to take a patient history, campers tested their new clinical skills with Lanre-Amos as an example patient. By applying the skills Lanre-Amos had taught them, the campers quickly discovered that what appeared on the surface to be a request for an eyeglasses prescription refill also had an underlying case of undiagnosed depression. In an exit survey, patients reviewed the Arbor program very favorably, and many expressed an increased desire to enter health professions. Arbor hopes to continue the collaboration with Camp Kwizera next summer.

This year PFC likewise started an outreach program for underserved local youth called “Immersion in Community Medicine” (ICM), in which high school students attend PFC every Saturday for four weeks to learn about medicine. PFC managers Duy Dao and Morgan Ferret implemented the pilot program during summer 2010, and first-year medical students Hong-An Nguyen and David Purger took over as program coordinators in fall 2010.

The program operates quarterly, and includes learning sessions such as shadowing patient visits, an informational interview with attending physicians, journal club discussions, and a capstone project presentation.

During the fall 2010 ICM session, six students from five San Jose high schools, including Overfelt High School where PFC is located, participated in a policy paper discussion led by Nguyen and Purger and a clinical research paper discussion led by first-year medical student Alison Chiang. The student participants enthusiastically reviewed the roundtable discussion with PFC’s co-medical directors, Dr. Peter Kao and Dr. Marina Martin.

For their capstone project, the high school students either conducted research on heart disease in Santa Clara County or surveyed their knowledge of hepatitis B, a disease commonly found among PFC’s patients, among their school peers. They presented their findings to more than forty Stanford undergraduate, graduate, and medical students on the final day.

In an exit survey, ICM participants unanimously reported that the program broadened their perspective of and increased their motivation to enter the health professions. These two programs have allowed Arbor and PFC to increase their presence in the San Jose and Menlo Park communities and to broaden the scope of their educational missions.
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Kaylin Pennington is an alumna of Stanford University who is currently applying to medical school. As an undergraduate, Kaylin has been actively involved in the clinic and has led initiatives that have already drastically improved operations and patient care at Arbor Free Clinic.

Cindy Ung is a first year medical student who brings an interest in helping Arbor with technological improvements, which is critical for the next year as Arbor Free Clinic transitions to an Electronic Medical Record. Cindy also brings health program management experience from various leadership roles in the Children's Hospital in Boston.

Lara Vogel is a first year medical student, who brings a strong background in business and non-profit management to help run the clinic. She is an alumna that graduated from Stanford University in 2004, who then went on to obtain her MBA from Oxford University.

The new managers for Pacific Free Clinic are:

Gillian Bach is an undergraduate neurobiology major at Stanford University. While an undergraduate, She was the chair of preclinical volunteer recruitment and training at Pacific Free Clinic; she is thrilled to deepen her relationship with the clinic by turning her skill and enthusiasm to management of community outreach.

Hong-An Nguyen is a first year medical student who has been involved with PFC since 2007 and served in various capacities of clinic flow design, volunteer recruitment and training, and most recently, a mentoring program for San Jose high school students.

Betty Pham, an alumna of Stanford University, has been an active participant at Pacific Free Clinic as a steering committee member and preclinical student since before its reopening.

David Purger is a first year medical student with a passion for poor mentoring and education in the community volunteer setting. He brings his substantial experience as an emergency medical technician.

To donate to Arbor, visit arbor.stanford.edu and click on the “Donate to Arbor” link. To donate to PFC, visit pacific.stanford.edu and click on the “Donations” link.