

health matters

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El Centro
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Level 4 Trauma Center Allows for Greater Care During the 'Golden Hour' of Serious Trauma Cases



El Centro Regional Medical Center hosts the region's only working elevated Emergency Heliport.

Accreditation as a level 4 Trauma Center allows the El Centro Regional Medical Center's new Emergency Department to provide greater degree of concentration on the "golden hour" with the more serious trauma cases.

Amanda Magana, R.N., base hospital, trauma nurse coordinator, said statistics show mortality is greatly reduced if proper

emergency care is received within an hour of the injury to stabilize patients for transfer to a larger facility for the specialized treatment they require

Dr. Robert Obler has been named the Trauma Center Medical Director, and in that capacity is in charge of a specially trained trauma team called into action the minute a trauma case arrives in emergency.

Dr. Obler has been on the hospital's emergency room medical staff since 1995, one of 14 doctors associated with the Imperial Valley Emergency Physicians, Inc., which is under contract with the hospital to staff the emergency Department with fully accredited emergency physicians. A total of three physicians are on duty at all times in the department.

Dr. Obler, a native of Los Angeles, received his medical degree from the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine, and while working on his medical degree he also earned a master's degree in public health from the San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health. He did his internship and residency at the San Joaquin General Hospital, Stockton, under a three year program in which he received training in internal medicine, family practice, pediatrics, general surgery and obstetrics.

He has been an active volunteer for such programs as the Flying Samaritans, taking free medical services to Tijuana and other Mexican communities; a field worker outreach program, taking medical services to migrant workers in San Diego County farm fields and providing medical care at the St. Vincent De Paul free clinic. He also was associated with the Kauai Veterans Hospital in Waimea, Hawaii for two years in the mid-'90s.

The Trauma 4 accreditation is conferred by the state Department of Health Services on recommendation of the Imperial County Health Department. An on-site survey showed the hospital's emergency facilities to be fully compliant with state Level 4 trauma center requirements.

Dr. Obler said the facility had to meet a long list of requirements to qualify for the designation in such areas as providing an available and fully equipped and staffed intensive care unit, an available blood

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Building on a Legacy of Caring Campaign Holding at \$1.7 Million

The Building on a Legacy of Caring Campaign to equip and furnish the various modernization and expansion projects currently underway at El Centro Regional Medical Center has three and one half months and \$300,000 to go to send the mercury of its progress thermometer bursting over the top.

Campaign chairman Phil Heald is confident that is precisely what will happen. The goal is \$2 million. The mercury on the campaign thermometer, posted on the hospital campus, reflects proceeds that include both outright gifts and pledges. Today the thermometer stands at the \$1.7 million mark.

The 32-members of the steering committee of community leaders are determined to wind up their activities by early summer. Heald, in addition to serving as general chairman, also has taken responsibility for

the major gifts committee; John Kennerson heads a special gifts committee, Bill DuBois, general gifts, and Dr. Jorge Robles is working with the medical community.

Heald reiterated, "every contribution is important and as general chairman of the campaign I express my appreciation and that of the hospital to those contributors who are making this drive a success."

Proceeds from the campaign have been used not only to help equip the new acute care addition, now open and running, but also will aid completion of the new lobby and entrance scheduled to open in early summer.

Jim Dikes, project manager, said construction on the lobby and entrance is on schedule and should be completed by mid- or late-May. The roof is on and wall framing is in progress.

Pillars to support a canopy covering the drive-up entrance off Imperial Avenue are in place and Dikes said the singular canopy will be ready for installation in about a month.

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Kathleen J. Farmer, assistant administrator and chief financial officer at ECRMC.

Kathleen J. Farmer, assistant administrator and chief financial officer at El Centro Regional Medical Center, received one of five scholarships awarded nationally for attendance at three-day Women in Leadership Summit in San Francisco in February.

Farmer joined more than 600 leaders from public and privately owned companies, as well as selected non-profit organizations, on Feb 9-11, 2004. The sessions featured seven nationally and internationally known keynote speakers as well as 25 critical skill-building learning labs.

Farmer said she is particularly interested in the area of managing the multi-generational workforce that she regards as "appropriate training for motivating and inspiring the

Kathleen Farmer Awarded Scholarship for 'Women in Leadership' Summit

younger people in my organization to become the leaders I know they can be."

Linkage, Inc., a global organizational development company serving both public and private sectors in specializing in leadership development, sponsors the Women in Leadership Summit. The annual summit boasts more than 3,800 alumni.

Keynote speakers included Doris Kearns Goodwin, world renowned journalist and author. Another keynoter was David Gergen, an adviser to four presidents, political commentator, editor, teacher and best-selling author.

Also on the keynote roster were Barbara Corcoran, founder of The Corcoran Group, a premier New York real estate brokerage; Charlotte Beers, Under Secretary of State for public diplomacy and public affairs; Dr. Beatrice Berry, an award winning teacher, entertainer, lecturer and comedienne and Erin Gruwell, a two-time California

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Our Family Serving Yours

LETTER *from the* President



Debra Driskill is the President of ECRMC's Board of Trustees.

This is an exciting and productive time for El Centro Regional Medical Center. Our new 55,000 sq. ft., two-story medical tower with 48 medical surgical beds dedicated in 2003 is full. Our expanded ER department treats over 3,000 patients a month and our new state-of-the-art Operating

Department, Intensive Care Unit, and Medical/Surgical Unit stands ready to meet the community's needs. In May of this year we will complete the second phase of the construction and open our new lobby, admissions area, and gift shop.

In January 2004, the hospital earned the Trauma Level IV designation. This enables ECRMC to provide a coordinated quick response to trauma injuries coming through our ER department.

ECRMC continues to touch tens of thousands of lives annually through wellness exams, diagnosis, research and medical treatments, community events, educational programs, and other in-patient and outreach services. We remain focused, as always, on you, our community family, and our mission: "To continue building a legacy of compassionate, accessible and reliable healthcare."

Best wishes for a healthy, happy month.
Sincerely, Debra Driskill
ECRMC Board of Trustees, President

Farmer Receives National Scholarship

Farmer, from page 1

teacher of the year, Spirit of Anne Frank Award, KBNC Crystal Apple Award, National Conference of Community and Justice Award and is currently a Teacher in Residence at California State University, Long Beach.

"There were so many really excellent programs and speakers at this conference it is difficult to pinpoint the most informative one, however, the highlight of the conference was the inspirational presentation by Erin Gruwell. Ms. Gruwell's first teaching job after graduation from UC Irvine was teaching freshmen English at Wilson High School in Long Beach, California, where at the age of 23 she was faced with 150 impoverished youth who had very little scholastic motivation due to their low self esteem and family/environmental issues. The teens initial reaction to her reading list for the year was "Why do we have to read books by dead white guys in tights?" She used the power of education to encourage these 150 teenagers to write their own diary, Freedom Writers' Diary-How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them. The story is now being made into a movie that will start filming summer of 2004. The Tolerance Education Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization, was established by Ms. Gruwell with the proceeds from the book sales for the purpose of paying for college expenses for the 150 teens who helped author and edit the diary. Currently, all 150 teens are attending college and are college seniors. Many are the first high school graduates in their families, so graduating from college

is really an awesome accomplishment for them. Gruwell continues to mentor and coach "her kids" as they make their way through college and career plans. Gruwell also established the "Ambassadors of Tolerance Tour" which took the Freedom Writers to visit Auschwitz concentration camp, Anne Frank's attic in Amsterdam and war-torn Sarajevo. When asked "what next?" for the Freedom Writers, Gruwell says "the next big decision for the Freedom Writers is deciding how to handle the \$15 million dollars they will be paid for their movie rights." If any group has the opportunity for a featured speaker, Mrs. Farmer highly recommends contacting Gruwell. Farmer guarantees there will not be a dry eye in the place.

Farmer, who has worked in the health care field for 29 years, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of Montana, Missoula, and a Master of Business administration degree-Health Services from the University of Dallas in Irvine, Tex., and Health Services Management Certification, Graduate School of Management of the Braniff Graduate School.

She joined the Medical Center staff in 1986 as accounting supervisor and controller, and became the assistant administrator and chief financial officer in 1991. She has twice served as the interim chief executive officer, most recently from October 2002 until June 2003, during which time she was responsible for oversight of the new building construction that resulted in upgrading the hospital's license from 107 to 165 beds.

Building on a Legacy of Caring

Legacy, from page 1

"That's when people will really start to notice this project," he said. The steel canopy, featuring an irregular roof-line, will be perforated to reduce but not eliminate sunlight and will be misted for cooling on hot days.

The new, 600-square-foot lobby, with an 18-foot ceiling to enhance the aura of spaciousness, will house a new registration area, a large and comfortable visitor lounge, a new chapel a new Auxiliary gift shop, and an information desk traditionally staffed by the all-volunteer Auxiliary. Other significant remodeling and upgrading projects have been completed or are in the planning stages for the older sections of the hospital. The present north and south wings have been remodeled to provide patient rooms and nursing stations equipped to match those in the 48-bed medical-surgical area in the new building. The hospital has been running at near capacity in recent months, utilizing

all available beds. The present south wing also is destined to become a new pediatrics section, increasing the bed capacity of the unit from 12 to 20 as well as providing more comfortable facilities for parents who wish to stay with their hospitalized children. An expansion of the Women's Center will add more labor, delivery, recovery, postpartum (LDRP) rooms, also is in the offing. Heald said, in emphasizing the importance of successfully completing the Building on a Legacy of Caring Campaign, that all of these projects require equipment and furnishings. All gifts will be recognized on a campaign Honor Roll and the names of all donors of \$1000 or more will be inscribed on a donor wall to be displayed prominently near the new lobby upon completion.

Donations may be made to the ECRMC Development Office at 1415 Ross Ave., El Centro, CA 92243, payable to ECRMC, Building on a Legacy of Caring.

NEWS Highlights

Dr. Dlugos Joins Our Family

A new doctor with a strong background in emergency medicine has been added to the Emergency Department medical staff at El Centro Regional Hospital. The addition of Dr. Scott Edward Dlugos raises to 14 the number of physicians comprising the Imperial Valley Emergency Physicians, the agency under contract to provide the medical staff for the ECRMC Emergency Department.

Dr. Dlugos earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Harvard University, Cambridge, in 1886, graduating cum laude with an emphasis in biology. He earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, in 1990.

Dr. Dlugos is licensed to practice in California, Michigan, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada, and is a Diplomate, National Board of Medical Examiners. He holds accreditation in advanced cardiac life support advanced trauma support and advanced pediatric life support.

Driskill Elected President

Debra Driskill, a member of the El Centro Regional Medical Center Board of trustees for the last two years, has been elected to head the board as president for the 2004-2005 year.

Elected to service with Driskill were Jennifer McGrew-Thomason, a board member since May 2001, as vice-president, and Dr. Mohammad S. Berenji, an El Centro physician associated with the nephrology practice of Dr. Horacio Rodilles, as treasurer. Dr. Berenji has been on the board since August 2003.

Preciado thanked board members for the opportunity to serve as president and called it "a great working and learning experience."

Driskill, the new president, is office manager for the University California Desert Research and Extension Center, and more recently was appointed to the California Healthcare Association Governance Forum, a group formed to put local hospital trustees in a position of leadership in California Health Association affairs.

Patient Safety Awareness Hightened

Coincident with the opening of its new building last summer, the hospital administration instituted a security system to better protect the safety of both patients and visitors in this era of terrorist consciousness.

Frank Biaggiarelli, director of engineering and safety, has reported a total of 77,000 recorded visitors and outpatients came into the hospital during the last quarter of 2003.

"My guess is the figure was more like 100,000," he said, "because we know some visitors and patients aren't recorded."

Even at the minimum figure, Biaggiarelli said, those figures equate to more than 20,000 visitors a month and nearly 300,000 in a year.

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Level 4 Trauma Center Critical for the 'Golden Hour' of Serious Trauma Cases

Trauma Center, from page 1



Dr. Robert Obler has been named as ECRMC's Trauma Center Medical Director.

bank, and availability of anesthesiologists, radiologists and general surgeons. He said adding an on call orthopedic surgeon would qualify the unit to be upgraded to Level 3 Trauma Center.

The trauma team consists of the emergency physician as team leader, two registered emergency nurses, two emergency aides, an on-call surgeon, a pharmacist, and a charge nurse to record proceedings. All cases are subsequently reviewed to ensure quality standards are maintained. Waiting outside the trauma room to enter as needed are the

blood bank tech, a radiology tech, the house supervisor, social worker and chaplain.

Virgie Galindo, chief nursing officer, said the Trauma 4 designation is important because it "puts us on the trauma center network," meaning a closer relationship with other trauma centers, particularly those to which patients might be transferred. But it also, she said, would authorize the Emergency Department to treat more patients without the necessity of transfer. She said the team approach to treatment provides a better-organized, quicker response and better monitoring of trauma patients. Galindo headed the team that applied for the accreditation and prepared for it.

With the opening of the new 20-bed ER facility in June, the patient load has been setting new records with each passing month. Before the new building opened, the ECRMC emergency room was seeing about 2,500 patients a month, a load comparable to larger coastal hospitals. It currently is running at nearly 4,000 a month.

Dr. Obler and Magana also are medical director and coordinator, respectively, for the base hospital that operates out of the El Centro Regional Medical Center Emergency Department. The base hospital covers virtually all of Imperial County and offers advisory assistance by radio to ambulance crews on the scenes of emergency preparing victims for transfer to the nearest hospital.

DISCLAIMER This El Centro Regional Medical Center ("ECRMC") newsletter is for the sole purpose of providing readers with reference information as a means of introducing them to ECRMC and to the services provided by its physicians, health care providers, and affiliated clinics. The Information provided is not intended to replace obtaining medical evaluations and health care advice from qualified health care providers. Reference to specific products, processes, businesses, facilities, or services does not constitute or imply recommendation or endorsement by ECRMC.