

HOUSE CALLS



PROVIDING THE MOST ADVANCED
TREATMENT FOR STROKE PATIENTS



Dignity Health
Mercy & Memorial Hospitals

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We hope you enjoy this issue of *HouseCALLS*. Comments about the publication can be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department:

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DEAR FRIENDS:

NEW MILESTONES IN PATIENT CARE

Dignity Health Bakersfield is pleased to announce that we are reaching new milestones as we expand to meet the growing needs of our community. A particularly exciting announcement is the quantum leap forward in our services with the coming addition of a 120-bed patient care tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest.

This new tower will allow us to add many new auxiliary services for our community, including additional surgery suites, intensive care beds, the capacity for added cardiac and neuro services and other critical medical needs. Our goal is to move this project forward as quickly as possible.

May is National Stroke Awareness month and we are very proud of our Bi-plane Interventional Suite at Memorial Hospital's Sarvanand Heart and Stroke Center. This system allows for life-saving procedures requiring exacting precision that haven't been available for stroke and cardiac patients here in Bakersfield until now. We recently recruited a board certified neuro interventionist to perform these procedures.

We also plan to add a pediatric interventionist cardiologist to perform cardiac catheterization procedures that were previously not possible for young patients as part of our further enhancement of services offered at the Lauren Small Children's Medical Center at Bakersfield Memorial Hospital.

Our community's response to InQuicker, our online, in-home emergency room registration service has been very encouraging. Our patients can now use InQuicker to schedule a same-day appointment at any of our three emergency departments from the comfort of their home. We encourage anyone who needs non-life threatening emergency care to use our InQuicker service by visiting choosemercyhospital.org.

It's great to share news about new buildings and technological breakthroughs for Bakersfield. But the most important thing remains making sure we always treat you as a person, not just a patient. Our commitment to humankindness is one thing that forward progress will never change.

SINCERELY,

JON VAN BOENING
PRESIDENT AND CEO, MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
SVP OPERATIONS, DIGNITY HEALTH
CENTRAL VALLEY SERVICE AREA

BRUCE PETERS
PRESIDENT AND CEO
MERCY HOSPITAL DOWNTOWN
MERCY HOSPITAL SOUTHWEST

NEW PATIENT TOWER COMING TO MERCY HOSPITAL SOUTHWEST



The landscape at Mercy Hospital Southwest will soon change with the news that Dignity Health Bakersfield has received the green light to construct a four-story, 120-bed patient tower at Mercy Hospital Southwest.

The expansion will provide additional space for existing services such as the emergency department and women's health services and will also allow Mercy Southwest to add new services like cardiology and neurology, among others.

"Bakersfield has grown by leaps and bounds since our southwest campus

opened in 1992 and we need a bigger hospital," said Bruce Peters, president of Mercy Hospitals. "Mercy Southwest is the only hospital located west of Highway 99 and is located in an area where most of Bakersfield's growth has been focused. This expansion will allow us to accommodate many more patients and is an important addition to the community."

Drawings for the expansion are already under development and, once complete and approved by Dignity Health, will be submitted to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) for approval. The

review process can take up to 18 months, so it is anticipated that construction on the tower will begin in 2018 and will take approximately one year to complete.

Mercy Southwest currently has 78 beds and will grow to an estimated 198 beds after the expansion. The project is expected to cost around \$150 million and may create up to 600 new jobs.

According to Peters, the expansion will be funded by revenue from operations, capital funds and funds raised by the Friends of Mercy Foundation, which will be launching a campaign for the tower. ■

Dr. Kiron Thomas, who is the first fellowship trained neuro endo vascular specialist in the Bakersfield area, demonstrates how to use the Bi-plane Interventional Suite to treat cerebral trauma, such as stroke.



THE ONLY FELLOWSHIP TRAINED NEURO ENDO VASCULAR SPECIALIST IN BAKERSFIELD

DR. THOMAS TREATS PATIENTS EXCLUSIVELY AT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL'S SARVANAND HEART AND STROKE CENTER

It might begin with a small slur when talking. An arm that seems to have lost some of its strength. Or a leg that starts dragging slightly. And while it's tempting to think of each as a minor and temporary inconvenience, for many it's the first signs of a stroke that soon may follow.

This May, educating the community about strokes, their symptoms, treatment and prevention, will be the priority for Dignity Health Mercy and Memorial Hospitals during Stroke Awareness Month.

Dr. Kiron Thomas, MD, is the only fellowship trained neuro-endovascular specialist in the Bakersfield area. Having a doctor whose sole focus is on this area of expertise ensures that patients with ischemic stroke or brain hemorrhage will receive the best treatment possible to not

only save their lives, but to also improve their quality of life.

"Treating a stroke patient is completely different than treating any other type of patient," said Dr. Thomas. "The neurovascular anatomy and blood vessels in the brain are different than in the arm, leg or anywhere else in the body and the margin of error is so small that even a small mistake can cause a world of problems."

The brain is full of small, delicate vessels that are interconnected, so it is imperative to have the right equipment and training for treatment. In addition to the most specialized doctors, Memorial Hospital's Sarvanand Heart and Stroke Center also brings the latest advancements for stroke treatment to Bakersfield, like

the Bi-plane Interventional Suite. With this leading 3D technology, neurologists can place tiny wires into the brain with exacting precision to treat stroke-causing clots and blockages, as well as aneurysms.

"The bi-plane procedure gives doctors the ability to look at two angles simultaneously, which results in a safer and more efficient procedure for patients," said Dr. Thomas. "This cutting-edge technology reduces procedure time and radiation doses, allowing Dignity Health to treat patients with cerebral aneurysms or other vascular disorders who were previously unable or unsafe to be treated with single-plan technology."

The complexity of treating neurovascular disorders is one of the reasons that Dr. Thomas first entered the

field of interventional neuroradiology. His mentor was the first neuro-interventional fellow in the world and this is a relatively new specialty in the field of medicine. "I chose this field because of the complex disorders and treatment options and the technological advances that we've seen in the last two decades," said Dr. Thomas. "The ability to offer comprehensive care from diagnosis, medical and interventional treatment options to meticulous follow up care that is key."

With the help of advanced technology, such as the bi-plane procedure, Mercy and Memorial Hospitals treat approximately 240 stroke patients every year. The commitment at Mercy and Memorial Hospitals to give the local community the best treatment has earned

Memorial Hospital the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award.

With an aging population, improvements in stroke education and treatment are becoming ever more important. According to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, on average, someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds; dies of a stroke every four minutes; and 795,000 people experiences a new or recurrent stroke each year.

According to Angela Walker, stroke coordinator at Mercy Hospital, the acronym "FAST" is an effective and easy to remember way to be alerted to the signs of a potential stroke. Simply put,

the letters link to:

FACE: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

ARMS: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

TIME: If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Even though May is officially Stroke Awareness Month, Dr. Thomas says that becoming educated on the risks, signs and response to stroke is important every day because you never know when you or someone around you may experience a stroke. ■

IS IT A STROKE?

Act F.A.S.T.



FACE
Ask the person to smile. Does one side of their face droop?

ARM
Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH
Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

TIME
If you observe any of these signs, call 911 immediately!

Dignity Health Mercy & Memorial Hospitals are always ready when an emergency strikes. Our emergency department door-to-doctor times average 30 minutes or less.

Bakersfield's three Dignity Health hospitals are Nationally Certified Stroke Centers and are nationally recognized for excellence in both stroke and cardiac care.

Memorial Hospital's emergency department treats the deadliest form of heart attack as a ST Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) receiving center and also offers a telestroke program to rapidly evaluate and treat stroke patients.

"A Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) is often defined as a mini-stroke, but I like to say that TIA stands for 'Take Immediate Action,'" says

Michele Shain, stroke program coordinator at Memorial Hospital. "That's what I tell patients and the public. Call 911 immediately." She adds, "At Dignity Health, we take TIAs very seriously. When acted upon quickly, we can intervene and prevent some very catastrophic outcomes." ■

For more information about the Mercy and Memorial Hospitals' emergency services, visit ChooseMercyMemorial.org.



Wanda and Linda receive manicures from their caregiver to soothe their severely arthritic hands.

GIVING IS THE PURIST FORM OF KINDNESS AND IT CAN RESULT IN MIRACLES – BIG & SMALL

Donors to the Friends of Mercy Foundation and the Bakersfield Memorial Hospital Foundation may never know the names or see the faces of the people they have helped, but because of their generosity, lives throughout Bakersfield have been changed.

Wanda and Linda are two of those lives. Two elderly sisters, these women have experienced the kindness that is made possible through charitable gifts to the Friends of Mercy Foundation in support of Dignity Health's Homemaker Care Program.

Wanda and Linda have lived together their entire lives. They are very protective of each other and even though they needed help desperately, they didn't want to ask for help because they were afraid of being separated. The Homemaker Care Program is designed to provide just the type of care Wanda and Linda needed.

After enrolling in the program, Wanda

and Linda no longer fear being separated. They are safer, happier and healthier. The sisters now have a caregiver they trust and who prepares their favorite pot roast dinner and even gives them soothing manicures for their severely arthritic hands.

Similarly, lives of patients at Memorial Hospital have been touched by the kindness of generous donors to the

The sisters now have a caregiver they trust and who prepares their favorite pot roast dinner and even gives them soothing manicures for their severely arthritic hands.

infant is rarely anticipated and can be a very stressful event for a family. Some families cannot plan for the financial burdens associated with daily trips to the hospital, especially from outlying areas, and arranging for childcare for other children at home.

The families who face the greatest challenges are those who are already living in poverty. For these families, bus passes and gasoline cards are resources which allow parents to be at the hospital with their child. Having the parent of a Neonatal ICU infant available at the bedside promotes the bonding and education which is vital for an infant's survival. Critically ill children in the Pediatric ICU need the support and comfort of their parents as well.

Every day at Dignity Health hospitals, young patients and their parents, sisters and life-long companions and families of all forms are together thanks to the kindness shown by foundation donors. ■

Mendiburu Magic Fund, which provides bus passes and gasoline gift cards to parents of patients at the Lauren Small Children's Medical Center.

Having a critically ill child or premature





BELOW THE BELT: WOMEN'S HEALTH SEMINARS ADDING LEARNING TO LONGEVITY



Depending on your gender, the statistics can seem downright unfair. Just over 100 years ago, the average American woman had a life expectancy of 48.3 years while her male counterpart could only look forward to an average of 46.3 years, a close two-year difference. Fast-forward to present day and women are now outlasting men on an average of 5.1 years, with a life expectancy of 80.4* years.

What it all means is that while women today have the potential to enjoy longer, more fulfilling lives than any other time in history, they also have a wider range of health issues that require specialized attention at each stage.

This summer, Dignity Health is sponsoring a series of Women's Health Seminars related to various obstetrics and

gynecology topics. Each free seminar will provide useful knowledge and answer questions in the quest to improve quality of life for women in Bakersfield.

Dr. Sonia Ghai, OB-GYN, presented the first seminar, held on May 7, "Girl Talk: Everything you've ever wanted to know about STDs but were too afraid to ask." Despite the fact that STDs are largely preventable, they remain a significant public health problem in the United States and can lead to consequences such as cervical cancer and infertility.

At this seminar, Dr.

Ghai made it simple for people to understand what STDs are, the signs and symptoms, as well as treatment and prevention. With approximately 19 million new STD infections each year, and almost half of them among young people ages 15 to 24, she also encourages parents to educate their children.

"Although it can be an uncomfortable subject for parents, they need to talk about the dangers of unprotected sex," said Dr. Ghai. "Both parents and kids need to get the information they need to make smart decisions."

On June 25, Dr. Jacqueline Williams-Olango,

OB-GYN, will hold the "Breaking the Cycle" seminar to discuss abnormal uterine bleeding, a health issue that can occur for women at any age with

the general warning sign of menstruation that lasts more than seven days.

According to Dr. Williams-Olango, "Sometimes when transitioning from puberty to adulthood and to menopause, menstruation can last longer. But abnormal bleeding can also happen anywhere in the spectrum of a woman's menstrual years and after, so it's important to know when it's something that's normal or could be a sign of problems, such as cancer."

To Dr. Williams-Olango, the important thing is to not

accept bleeding that's out of the ordinary or pain that doesn't go away or can't be alleviated with over the counter medication. "For instance, fibroid tumors can increase menstruation profusely which is another sign that a woman should see a doctor right away," she said. "Plus, as women get older, it could be an indication of something that's pre-cancerous or non-cancerous which can be removed and return the cycle back to normal."

In the following months, additional seminars are planned at San Dimas Medical Group and other locations to help women meet the challenges of maintaining their health with informative presentations. Dr. Gregory Klis, who has specialized in obstetrics and gynecology since 1996 along with urogynecology, will discuss Urinary Incontinence (UI).

Not only is UI a problem for millions of women, they also experience incontinence twice as often as men. Factors such as pregnancy, childbirth, menopause and the structure of the female urinary tract are part of the reasons why this bothersome, and sometimes debilitating, issue can affect women. Dr. Klis will bring to light the types of UI and how each can be treatable at every age.

Later in the summer, Dr. Ghai will host another seminar, "Truth or Conception," covering the timely topic of preparing for childbirth. From trying to conceive to labor and delivery, Dr. Ghai will devote the session to discussing the myths and facts that can be confusing for parents throughout pregnancy.

Soon after, Dr. Charles Allen, OB-GYN, will discuss the advancements offered by minimally invasive hysterectomy. As one in three women in America have a hysterectomy by age 60,* the topic is an important one. With the latest surgical technologies at Dignity Health, like the da Vinci® Surgical System, a minimally invasive hysterectomy offers the benefit of faster healing incisions so small they require only a stitch or two to close, minimal discomfort, fewer complications and less time in the hospital.

Dr. Jason Helliwell, OB-GYN will also be presenting during this series. Visit ChooseMercyMemorial.org for more information about the topic.

With women living longer, more productive lives – outnumbering men 2.6 to 1 by age 85 – Dignity Health is proud to sponsor these important events.

More information about the Women's

Health Seminar series can be found at ChooseMercyMemorial.org or by calling 661-324-7070. ■

*National Center for Health Statistics
*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Breaking the Cycle – Understanding heavy periods, symptoms, conditions and treatment options. Presented by Dr. Jacqueline Williams Olango, OB-GYN
June 25, 2014 at 6:30pm

Keep Calm and Tinkle – Time to take control of your overactive bladder. Presented by Dr. Gregory Klis, OB-GYN
Coming July 2014

Truth or Conception – From coloring your hair to flying on planes, what are the facts and misconceptions when you're trying to conceive. Presented by Dr. Sonia Ghai, OB-GYN
Coming August 2014

Renaissance Woman – Innovative surgery options for women with da Vinci® Robotic Surgery System. Presented by Dr. Charles Allen
Coming September 2014



DIGNITY HEALTH HUMANKINDNESS AWARDS

At Dignity Health, we believe that humanity has the power to heal people. Throughout our hospitals, you'll find champions for humankindness helping patients achieve happier and healthier lives. This spring, we acknowledge those among us who, through their actions big and small, remind us that humankindness is powerful medicine with the 2014 Dignity Health Humankindness Award. Selected by peer nominations, winners were recognized by Dignity Health president/CEO Lloyd Dean during a Bakersfield Open Forum in May. Thank you to the nominees and every doctor, nurse, staff member and volunteer who has created the conditions for kindness to flourish and multiply every day in our hospitals. ■

HELLO HUMANKINDNESS NOMINEES

MERCY HOPITALS OF BAKERSFIELD

Abraham Rodriguez
Alice Ivey-Valenti
Angela Nichols
Ashley Frausto
Avninder Kaur
Caitlin Wright
Carmelita Tuazon
Celina Valenzuela
Cheryl Harris
Concesa Murray
Cynthia Thompson

Darick Blackshere
Deborah Hull
Donna Bianco
Durish Dorotheo
Elizabeth Thornsby
Emma Silva
Esmeralda Veloz
Freddy Hernandez
Joe Moreno
Kathleen Lochrie
Kimberly Walker

Lorriane Olguin
Margaret Johnson
Maria Hernandez
Matthew Barrett
Maurene Estrada
Melanie Moore
Nancy DeLaTorre
Nicholle Jennings
Nora Rubio
Patricia Salazar
Paula Sallee-Robinson

Perlita Asencion
Randy Hunter
Rebecca Hernandez
Roselita Delacruz
Ryan Bell
Sally Juarez
Shana Gonsman
Simon Quiroz
Tanya Dambrosio
Wendy Diaz

VOLUNTEERS:
Alice Brown
Betty Dake
Darlene Powers
Pat Bianchi

BAKERSFIELD MEMORIAL HOPITAL

Catherine Olague
Cheriann Hershey
Cristina Gonzalez
Deborah Condren
Deborah Newfield
Dede Pere
Gayle Stevens

Glicería Rodriguez
Glynnetta Walker
Greg Lopez
Jacky Solis
Jenny Strode
Joanne Holzinger
Lori Drury

Lynn Knapp
Martha Chapman
Phyllis Adams
Ruben Hernandez
Sharlott Phipps
Tess Gingras

VOLUNTEERS:
Phyllis Adams
Ruth Kranovich

**SYSTEM OFFICE -
CVSA SUPPORT**
Gerald Brock

Visit ChooseMercyMemorial.org

Share your humankindness story at hellohumankindness.org
[#humankindness](https://twitter.com/humankindness)





Students from Team Dignity Health met with and interviewed three local WWII veterans as part of their Dream Builders community project.

Each year the Jim Burke Education Foundation selects some of the top local high school seniors to participate in Dream Builders, a year-long, community service project that allows students to work as a team and focus on building life and leadership skills while instilling a sense of civic responsibility. As one of the program's four corporate sponsors, Dignity Health not only lends its name to one of the Dream Builders teams, but also actively participates by providing advisors to help instruct students through the year-long program.

Katie Salcido, the director of community events at Jim Burke Ford and the assistant director of Dream Builders explains just how exceptional these students are: "the best of the best," she calls them. The Dream Builders program accepts 220 applications, interviews 105 applicants, but ultimately selects only 32 students. These students must have a GPA above 3.7 and most already participate in extra-curricular activities, AP honors classes, serve in the Associated

of fulfilling that obligation," said Sandy Doucette, marketing manager at Dignity Health. "Before our eyes they become young adults with an understanding of the value of giving back and the skills to make a real difference in this community."

Team Dignity Health took those lessons to heart when they decided to work with local veterans. For Ali Champness, a Garces High School senior and Team Dignity Health member, the decision was easy. "We all feel passionate about veterans," she said, while acknowledging that there is a disconnect between generations. What better way to bridge that gap, to build stronger ties in the community, than by telling and listening to stories? How better to learn where one has come from than by learning from and showing gratitude to the veterans who defined a generation?

With the help of the national nonprofit Honor Flight Network, Team Dignity Health met with and interviewed three local WWII veterans. Laura Wiener, a local business owner and Team

"these projects have legs," they can move on their own. As such, the project is meant to be a legacy, something that continues even after students graduate. Team Dignity Health's legacy is a memory book created for the veterans they interviewed. Using the interviews as a foundation, Team Dignity Health compiled stories and photos of the lives of the three WWII pilots, "almost like a scrap book," as Champness put it, and presented the book to each veteran at a breakfast hosted by the American Legion.

So that other students could continue the effort to preserve the memories of these men and women, Team Dignity Health also built a toolkit. The toolkit includes interview etiquette and other tips, as well as instructions for submitting to the Library of Congress. At the recent Dream Builders awards presentation, Team Dignity Health was awarded Best of Class again this year for their community service project.

Although the program is a competition, according to Wiener,

DREAM BUILDERS EMPOWERS LOCAL YOUTH

TEAM DIGNITY HEALTH HELPS LOCAL VETERANS PRESERVE MEMORIES



Team Dignity Health compiled stories and photos and presented each veteran with a personalized memory book.



To help others capture and preserve memories, Team Dignity Health also built a toolkit complete with instructions for submitting to the Library of Congress.

Student Body (ASB) or are captains of their sports teams.

Dream Builders isn't just another accolade for these students or another program to put down on their college application. "We give them the skills necessary to become a successful adult and to contribute to their society," says Salcido. The program advises students in etiquette for public presentations, from how to shake hands to where to properly display a nametag. But more importantly, says Salcido, Dream Builders teaches students to "be grateful and authentic, to be appreciative of where they come from." Dream Builders is about teaching pride in their city and humility in themselves.

"These kids commit to meeting a need, then work through the process

Dignity Health advisor, says she was touched by the respect and attention the students showed the veterans during the interviews. Wiener's own father was a WWII pilot and she found herself fighting back tears during the interviews.

What shocked Champness the most was that the veterans didn't think of themselves as heroes. "They believe the true heroes are the ones that didn't come back," she said. "It was the most gratitude I've ever seen in my life," she added, describing the veterans' response to the interviews. "I've never felt so accomplished about doing anything for someone else."

Part of Dream Builders' success is its ability to encourage students to think outside of themselves and create sustainable projects. As Wiener puts it,

"they're all winners." Champness agrees with her advisor. "Even though we're on separate teams and competing against each other, it's more like family," she says. The real reward, Champness added, was working with the veterans.

Champness believes Dream Builders has helped her step outside of herself and the routine of a high school senior and to realize just how much more there is to life outside of school. That's the goal of the program, says Salcido - that and "getting these kids invested in their community so that once they're done with their education, they'll come back." Empowering local youths to improve the community, now and tomorrow, is the kind of cause that Dignity Health is proud to support. ■



COMMUNITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

CCAT EXPANDS TO BAKERSFIELD & OFFERS FREE CLASSES TO LOCAL YOUTH



There's a new program in Bakersfield that has widespread roots in the Central Valley community. The Community Center for the Arts and Technology (CCAT), is a free program for children ages four to 15 that meets every Monday at Madison Place, an affordable housing complex located in the Casa Loma area of Bakersfield. The classes, which include lessons in piano, guitar, Hula, folkloric dancing and media technology, are made possible thanks to volunteer instructors who want to make a difference in their community.

CCAT opened in Bakersfield last June, but the program has been around since Armando Valdez founded it in Fresno in 1998. After Valdez graduated from Cal State Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in telecommunication, he returned to Fresno where he started an after-school program. "When I was growing up, my parents couldn't afford to send us to an after-school program," explains Valdez, "and that's the whole reason behind this project. I wanted to give those kids their own voice." He called the program MANITAS, which means little hands in Spanish.

The purpose of MANITAS is to empower students by training them in the latest technologies, but the more important impact of MANITAS, says Valdez, is "how close the kids and parents have become after getting involved with the program. Their grades have improved a letter or two and their relationships with their moms or dads have become stronger. For me that's what satisfies."

Now, MANITAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that offered free classes to more than 1,200 children in Fresno in 2013. The success of the program caught the attention of Liberty High School Spanish teacher, Felisa Patino, who took her students and some of their parents to visit CCAT in Fresno after a college tour. "The parents were so impressed and wanted to know how we could start a program like MANITAS in Bakersfield, so I asked Armando and we began the

process," said Patino.

Patino reached out to her friend Genie Navarro, the manager at Madison Place, which is one of two Mercy Housing buildings located in Bakersfield. "[Patino] contacted me to see if I could get her in touch with someone who could find a place in the southeast Bakersfield area," explained Navarro. Instead of referring Patino elsewhere, Navarro offered Madison Place.

CCAT grew quickly, with 150 kids taking classes in the first six months. There are already 242 kids who would

the beginning are Luis Valadez, who teaches guitar, and Sarah Ross, who teaches piano.

Another volunteer instructor is Rosario Ortiz, the public relations coordinator at Mercy and Memorial Hospitals. Patino contacted Ortiz, who has taught Hula in her spare time, and asked if she would be willing to teach to children at CCAT. Ortiz, who grew up in Mexico City where she first began taking Hula at age 11, says she learned Hula through a free program similar to CCAT. "My family had little money to take classes but Hula came to the rescue," says Ortiz, "it became my friend."

Ortiz agreed to volunteer at CCAT in a private capacity, but she soon realized that CCAT provided the opportunity to share her passion in a professional capacity as well. "I thought, what if I brought the heart disease prevention campaign," a campaign run by Ortiz through her position at Dignity Health, "to the families of the children?" In addition to teaching the children Hula, Ortiz began giving parents brochures and information about preventing heart disease. "Little by little," says Ortiz, "I'm trying to spread the word about heart disease prevention and combine it with my passion. CCAT provided me the opportunity to do it."

Thanks to community members like Patino, Navarro and Dignity Health's Rosario Ortiz, CCAT has already reached



"I'm trying to spread the word about heart disease prevention and combine it with my passion. The CCAT provided me the opportunity to do it."

— ROSARIO ORTIZ, PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR, MERCY & MEMORIAL HOSPITALS

like to take classes next year but space is limited because the program only has 10 computers and iPads to share amongst the students, says Patino. MANITAS and CCAT survive on small and local donations and the willingness of its instructors, which is why Valdez continues to drive between Fresno and Bakersfield to give piano lessons to the students every Monday. "The instructors are the core of the program because without them we couldn't do anything," says Valdez. Two of those instructors, who have been with CCAT in Bakersfield since

out to more than one hundred Bakersfield youths. And if the Fresno MANITAS is a model for Bakersfield's CCAT, then it's likely they will reach out - with the community's help - to hundreds more. Valdez also hopes that CCAT will find a larger building that will allow more students to participate in the program. There is only room for CCAT to grow and Valdez already plans to open another CCAT in Merced.

If you are interested in learning more about CCAT, visit ccatfresno.org.

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Hello humankindness

ChooseMercyMemorial.org



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