



The **EVERGREEN** Newsletter

**Editor: Pamela Lewis**

[www.uthro.org](http://www.uthro.org)

November 2011

From UTHRO President Henny van Dijk

**UTHealth President to Speak at Fall Luncheon**

The Holiday Luncheon this year will feature a very special guest, UTHealth President *ad Interim* and Dean of the Medical School, Dr Giuseppe Colasurdo.

I had extended an invitation to him to talk to our members and present a “State of the Union” kind of talk, so those of us who are no longer immediately in the trenches would hear from the highest authority in which direction he believes the Health Science Center is evolving.

He has accepted that invitation and I am thrilled to be able to present to our members the opportunity to meet and greet Dr Colasurdo, hear his presentation and ask questions. I sure hope to see many of you that morning not only for the usual excellent catering by Ben’s Chuckwagon, but to meet the President. Last year we hosted about 45 people and I sure would love to see that record broken

This is an opportunity that doesn’t occur too often and if any of you have questions for Dr Colasurdo but aren’t able to attend, please e-mail me or write me so I can ask them for you and report in the newsletter.

One of my stated goals as President is to create a more enduring relationship with the organization we were all a part of for many, many years and which still reverberates. No matter if you were a part HSC General, one of the schools or centers, many of our retirees still feel a very close bond with that area, especially those who have put 20 years or more in .....

So mark your calendars, Thursday November 17 from 11:30 – 1:00 our traditional Holiday Luncheon with special guest Dr Colasurdo.

As a great additional benefit you can renew your ties with old friends and co-workers, and munch on yummy food from Ben’s Chuckwagon.

Make your reservations ASAP to Katherine Cortaigne or Susan Papalexandris (see contact info on page 4)

Reservation date has been extended to November 10, to allow for folks to take advantage of Dr. Colasurdo’s attendance.

***I count on our members to be there.***

***Holiday Luncheon at a Glance***

***Speaker:*** Dr. Colasurdo, UTHealth President

***Menu***

- Turkey, Dressing, Gravy Ham
- Mashed Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Green Beans
- Cranberry Sauce
- Bread
- Pecan & Apple Pie
- Iced Tea

***Price:*** \$14 per person

***When:*** Nov. 17, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

***Where:*** OCB (Operations Center Building) in the Rio Grande Room on the second floor. Free parking.

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*In Retirement***Honduras Medical Mission Trip Takes Health to Mountain Village***By Ken Jones, D.D.S*

In 2001, The First Presbyterian Church, at Main and Bissonnet streets, sent its first group of six people led by Robert Moore, M.D., and Chuck Sidell, Ph.D., both from Baylor and Texas Children's Hospital, and Dorothy Otto, R.N., Ed.D., of UT Health School of Nursing, on a Medical Mission Trip to Copan, Honduras. Since then, this eight-day trip every January has grown in both size and scope of treatments. Now there are 19 participants (nurses, pediatricians, ob-gyn doctors, pulmonary specialists, neurologists, surgeons, infectious disease specialists, and four dentists).

The group flies from Houston to San Pedro Sula in Honduras. Then the church provides us with transportation—sometimes a school bus and recently vans for the four-to-six hour drive to our destination. Copan Ruinas, Honduras, is approximately half way between the Pacific and the Caribbean. This city has some of the most spectacular Mayan ruins in the world. Fortunately for us that means we have adequate hotels and restaurants.

Our ultimate destination each day is the village of Otuta, up in a beautiful lush jungle which takes one hour by four-wheel drive vehicles to get to. We go in January because the children are out of school for the months of December and January so they can help pick coffee. So we can use the school building (two rooms) and the public clinic (two rooms) as our treatment rooms. Until three years ago, there was no electricity in Otuta, so we had to improvise by bringing pressure cookers to sterilize our instruments.

The church has a resident orphanage in Tequcigalpa, Honduras for street boys who have been abandoned and are living on the street eating garbage and sniffing glue to get high. These 15- to 18-year-old boys (usually six or eight each year) are our interpreters. Most of them go to college in the states and then return to Honduras to work. The orphanage/mission is called the Micah Project. It was founded by Michel Miller from Houston and includes several other Americans who live with the boys and teach them.

The church buys a large amount of drugs each year to stock the portable pharmacy which our group sets up when we get there. We leave any remaining drugs with the local doctors and nurses. Respiratory problems and chronic lung disease are the biggest problems since the Indians cook on open fires in the middle of their houses with no flues or vents to the outside.

Other medical problems are GI problems, diarrhea, parasites from contaminated drinking water, etc. Warren Bellows, M.D., our surgeon, even removes the occasional bullet. Susan Porkorny, M.D., brings a microscope to perform Pap smears on the women. Karla Wild M.D., retired Pediatric UT Faculty has the kids lined up treating ears, ears, etc. Our group brings lots of vitamins, etc., for the residents of Otota. The Chorti Indians suck on sugar cane so their decay rate is very high.

We dentists include Ken Jones, Susan Seybold, David Tang, Bob Tate, and Tom Wild—all UT Health Science faculty or retired faculty. We bring all our extraction instruments and, of course, local anesthetics to extract teeth.

All the men of Otuta carry machetes, little boys carry training machetes, and some of the men bring their guns to their appointments. However, they do place their weapons in the corner before they get up on the table for us to extract the teeth. What is really different about this kind of practice, is when you look down while treating patients and find a chicken or pig standing by your feet.

***In Memoriam***

We have been notified that **Maria Olga Davila** who retired from the Medical School in 1997 and lived in Laguna Vista, Texas, died on March 29, 2011.

***For Questions about Retirement Benefits,  
your contact person is:  
Terry Calloway at 713-500-3822;  
Terry.Calloway@uth.tmc.edu.***

## Speakers “wow” the audience at UTHRO Health Symposium



**Vaunette Fay**, Ph.D., RNC, FNP, GNP, head of the Division of Gerontology at the UTHSC-Houston School of Nursing and Associate Director for Education at the UTHSC-H Center on Aging, pointed out that normal aging usually starts in our twenties and she talked about the effects of aging on practically all our body systems and how to adjust to that.

**Elda Ramirez**, PhD, RN, FNP-C, FAANP, took us on a trip through our homes to make us aware of the many possible “trip-ups” we make for ourselves, such as throw rugs,

wires or sharp-edged low tables.

She also addressed depression and suicide in the elderly who are prone to those issues when they cannot take care of themselves or are too dependent on others for their daily routines. Her delivery was extremely vivid and effective and she hopes to be invited again some time in the future. No doubt about that one.

School of Dentistry staff member **Jean Garza** addressed the many dangers bad dental health can cause to our general health and

gave some very good advice as well as case history insights when clients are either disabled or too confused to be able to take care of themselves.

It is still a challenge to get the membership to value these very important talks by attending. But I am still sure that an October Symposium on health issues concerning the elderly will be successful, so I’ll continue to pursue that goal.

*Henny van Dijk*

## UTPD Toy Drive Needs **YOU!**

In this season of giving Thanks and thinking of those who are less fortunate, the UT Police Department is accepting *new, unwrapped* toys and gifts, especially for infants and teens, for its **Annual LBJ/HCP Children’s Gift Drive**.

The toy drive benefits pediatric and adolescent patients in these two UTHealth institutions and starts Nov.17 coinciding with our Holiday Luncheon. Our members probably do know the pleasures of gift giving to the grandchildren and their response. So please bring an unwrapped, new toy to the luncheon. There will be a box in the area to deposit your gifts. Make a child happy The gifts will be delivered to LBJ Hospital and to the UT Harris County Psychiatric Center.

For more details, contact:  
Lt. S. Bozman, 713-563-3539, or Capt. V. Weatherspoon, 713-563-7785.



# UTHRO

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To update your address or phone number  
please contact us at 281-550-8071

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