

Vet school patient advocate serves small creatures in great way

New faces and helpful hands at the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center are working to make every pet owner's visit to the small-animal hospital more enjoyable.

Since July, volunteers in the Volunteer Advocate program have been acting as liaisons between hospital clients and service technicians. By greeting clients and welcoming new visitors, the volunteers strive to make every pet owner feel important.

"They converse with clients in the receiving area to see if they have concerns about their waiting time, have any general questions, would like a cup of coffee or directions to the nearest mall, anything that will help make their visit as pleasant and comfortable as possible," said Ann Hostetler, the small-animal hospital's coordinator of administrative services.

The program was initiated by Carol Ash, a retired eminent scholar from the UF College of Nursing. After expressing an interest in volunteering at the medical center, Ash was able to get the Volunteer Advocate program off the ground with the help of former Dean Joe DiPietro and small-animal hospital chief of staff Colin Burrows.

"I said I didn't know anything about setting up a volunteer program, but I'm willing to give it a shot," Ash said.

A handful of volunteers already have joined, working in two- to four-hour shifts performing tasks like directing clients to the check-in counter or offering to hold a pet while a client signs in.

"The clients may have dog food or medication in hand, holding on to their pet and trying to write a check, all at the same time," Hostetler said.

In most cases, clients are happy just to feel they have not been forgotten and someone is paying attention to their situation, she added.

"People are just so grateful for the help," Ash said. "Particularly if they have never been here before; they're confused and bewildered. When they say 'thank you so much,' it makes you feel like it's all worthwhile."



Sarah Kiewel
Patient advocate volunteer Carol Ash greets an animal patient and his owner in University of Florida's small-animal hospital.

Burrows said he could already see the benefits of the program.

"The volunteers have made themselves invaluable in just a short while," he said. "They are valued members of our client service team. We just wish we had more of them."

By Sarah Carey

UF Voices

UF, Gainesville a winning combo

The University of Florida matches its education, research and global service missions with the goals and needs of the communities it serves. It supports programs and initiatives that advance the interests of the communities through donations of in-kind services, volunteerism and community events.

The city of Gainesville and Alachua County are UF's key community partners. In these partnerships, UF students are some of the most enthusiastic volunteers. Last year, UF students logged more than 150,000 hours of community service, contributing to a number of worthy causes and groups, including the Boys and Girls Clubs.

UF also has served more than 1,000 area residents through the "Helping Our Neighbors" project, which provides food baskets to those in need at Thanksgiving and Christmas. And UF faculty and staff have given more than \$1 million to about 80 nonprofit agencies through the Community Campaign.

In the area of economic development, UF continues to help the city advance. UF's Eastside Campus on Waldo Road is a \$4.2 million facility that houses nearly 200 employees with high-tech, computing and accounting expertise.

As director of community relations, I have an awesome responsibility. Every time I venture into the community, I hear from every corner or avenue, every church I visit and every meeting I attend that UF is appreciated.

But I do not hold sole ownership of this UF ambassadorship. Community relations is an important role for every Gator. It goes with being connected to one of the largest public universities in the nation.

I urge you to help by getting involved in our community outside UF or by contacting me to offer suggestions about how UF as a community can help its partners. Together, we are a winning combination.

Florida Bridgewater-Alford
Director, Community Relations

Editor's note: Florida Bridgewater-Alford may be reached by phone at 846-3903 or by e-mail at bridgef@ufl.edu.



Bridgewater-Alford

Top Stories

Class gives students confidence to speak in public

Some people make public speaking look easy. They approach the podium with confidence and keep their audiences interested and entertained. For others, just the thought of giving a speech causes sweaty palms, shaky knees and a racing heartbeat.

University of Florida student Lauren McKinney used to be one of the nervous people. Whenever she had to give a class presentation, no matter how short, her nerves would make a speech nearly impossible.

"I would get major butterflies and my face would flush," she said.

The second-year business student knew she needed help in developing public speaking skills. On a friend's recommendation, she signed up for the Speech in Anxiety Lab, a one-credit class offered by the William and Grace Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication designed to help students overcome their fears of speaking in public.

Kim McCall came up with the idea for the SPA (Speaking in Public Anxiety) program after she realized that many students would sign up for her public speaking course and then disappear when it came time for their first speech. Her colleagues at the center noticed the problem, too.

"We didn't have any way to help them," she said. "So we came up with a special class."

The SPA labs meet three times a week for five weeks, rather than once a week



Kristen Bartlett Grace

University of Florida student Lauren McKinney says she no longer fears speaking in public, thanks to the Speaking in Public Anxiety Lab. Kim McCall (background) helped establish the program at UF.

for the full semester. No more than eight students are allowed in any one lab, which gives students a chance to directly address their fears in a relaxed environment. After learning the causes of communication anxiety and exploring various treatment methods, students determine what will work best for them.

"You need an audience to practice in front of and you can't get that experience from a book," said McCall, who has been teaching the lab for seven years. "There's not one thing that helps everybody."

McCall said the lab works because it teaches the key to overcoming a fear of public speaking: controlling feelings of anxiety. By using humor and relaxation techniques to ease tension, students learn how to remain calm. They play charades to practice gestures, participate in positive imagery and

breathing exercises, and even wear eccentric hats to distract from their stress.

"When you're doing the exercises, you can feel really ridiculous," McKinney said. "But even if we were nervous, we learned not to show it."

Students also can relax once they realize their speeches don't have to be perfect.

"They have to understand that communication is an imperfect system," McCall said. "When we change their perspective, they realize public speaking can actually be fun."

McKinney admits that she had always written down every word she wanted to say before a speech, but after completing the lab, she learned that all that memorization can cause more stress. Now, she just writes a few words on a note card to use as reminders and has conquered her fear.

"It was all about gaining confidence," she said. "That's helpful for everyone, no matter what your major is."

By Panagiotia Papakos

Registration under way ▼

Next fall, the five-week Speaking in Public Anxiety program will be offered during seventh period (1:55 p.m.) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The class is one credit and is taken on an S/U basis.

Contact Kim McCall at kmccall@cwoc.ufl.edu or 352-316-5124 to register.

Happenings

Listings in this section are a sampling of events at the University of Florida compiled from entries listed in the full calendar that appears on the Web at calendar.ufl.edu. To submit an event online, send an e-mail to calndar@nersp.osg.ufl.edu with the following information in this order: event date; event name, brief description and sponsor; time; location; costs; and contact information to include name, phone number and e-mail. Events, dates, times and programs are subject to change.

- April 10**
3 p.m., Harbert S. Gregory Sales Engineering Lecture by Richard M. Munday, Emerson Alumni Hall
- April 11**
7:30 a.m., Community Campus Council Breakfast, Reitz Student Union, Arredondo Room
- April 12**
11 a.m., George A. Smathers Libraries fifth annual Read-A-Thon, Plaza of the Americas
- April 15**
3 p.m., Carillon recital, Century Tower
- April 16**
4:05 p.m., "Expression of Zinc Transporters During the Differentiation of Erythroblasts from

- Phenylhydrazine-Treated Mice," Moon-Suhn Ryu, CSE E121 Building
- University Auditorium**
- April 10**
7:30 p.m., Brenda Smith, voice recital
- April 11**
7:30 p.m., Symphonic Band concert
- April 12**
7:30 p.m., Choir concert
- April 13**
7:30 p.m., Percussion Ensemble concert
- April 14**
7:30 p.m., Steel Band concert



- April 15**
7:30 p.m., Preben Hoegh Jr., piano recital
- Florida Museum of Natural History**
- April 12**
5 p.m., Museum Nights, "Starry Nights: The Birth of Stars and Planets"
- Galleries**
Master of Fine Arts Student Exhibition, April 17-27, University and Focus galleries; reception 7 p.m., April 20, University Gallery
- Harn Museum of Art**
- April 10**
6 p.m., "To the Divine Through Beauty," Roy C. Craven Jr. Memorial Lecture by Vidya Dehejia

- April 12**
6 p.m., Harn Eminent Scholar Lecture by Salem Mekuria
- 7 p.m., "Is That Art?," presentation by Museum University Student Educators
- April 15 (Holocaust Remembrance Day)**
2 p.m., "Creativity as Survival," gallery talk
3 p.m., "Anne Frank's Own True Heir," lecture by Anastasia Ulanowics
- Phillips Center**
- April 11**
8 p.m., Mia Farrow
- April 12-14**
Electroacoustic Music Festival



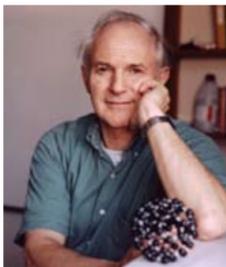
Mia Farrow

- April 12**
7:30 p.m., Hungarian State Folk Ensemble
- April 14**
7:30 p.m., Shen Wei Dance Arts
- April 21**
7:30 p.m., "La Traviata"
- O'Connell Center**
- April 16**
8 p.m., Sheryl Crow and Laurie David
- Academic Calendar**
- April 13**
Deadline, Spring add/drop by college petition; Spring withdrawal with a "W" assigned

Seen & Heard

Nobel laureate's talk part of Research Day events

Nobel Laureate Sir Harold Kroto, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Florida State University and fellow of the Royal Society, will address faculty, staff,



Sir Harold Kroto

students and guests during the College of Dentistry's fifth annual Research Day on Friday. Kroto's presentation, "Science, Society and Sustainability," will begin at noon in Room 101 of the UF Genetics Institute.

Kroto received the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1996 for the discovery of C60 Buckminsterfullerene, a new form of carbon. He is a thought-provoking speaker with insights on sustainability and the role of science, engineering and technology in addressing the "mindless, mass-production-driven plundering of the planet's resources" as the most serious issue the world has confronted.

Kroto's is the keynote address in the college's Research Day activities, which include an opening presentation by Christopher Batich, UF professor of materials science and engineering, oral presentations by student researchers, poster sessions and a closing award ceremony.

For more information and a schedule of events, visit the Web at www.dental.ufl.edu.

Real estate program receives \$1 million

The graduate real estate program at the Warrington College of Business Administration at the University of Florida seeks to enhance its national prominence with help from a Gainesville-based alumnus.

Nathan S. Collier, founder and owner of the Collier Cos., which includes Paradigm Properties Management Team Inc., pledged \$1 million to help endow the Nathan S. Collier Master of Science in Real Estate Program (MSRE) at the college.

The gift will benefit the one-year specialized master's degree program at UF by providing a stable source of funding to support faculty, off-campus field trips and project tours, grants for the development of case studies and promotional support to focus attention on program quality and

student accomplishments. The gift also will establish the Nathan S. Collier MSRE Scholarship.

Actress, humanitarian Mia Farrow to speak

"With Knowledge Comes Responsibility: Saving Darfur" is the title of a free talk by actress-humanitarian Mia Farrow at 8 p.m. Wednesday at the University of Florida's Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

Farrow may be best known for her movie roles in such films as "Rosemary's Baby" and "The Great Gatsby" and for her stage parts in such Broadway productions as "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and "The Importance of Being Earnest." For the last six years, however, she has been a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF. As ambassador, she has traveled to Nigeria, Angola and most recently, Darfur, Sudan. Farrow's talk will highlight her goals as ambassador as well as the importance of helping the people of Darfur.

Farrow's talk is open to the public, with doors opening at 7:15 p.m. Seating is first-come, first-served.

For more information, visit the Web at www.sg.ufl.edu/accent.

UF rates high in IT storage solutions

The University of Florida is one of five finalists in the category of Innovation and Promise in the Storage World Best Practices in Storage Awards Program. The award identifies and acknowledges excellence among users of IT storage solutions and approaches. Finalists in each category will be honored in a ceremony April 18 at the Storage Networking World conference in San Diego.

Computerworld is recognized worldwide as the premier source for news, information and opinion on critical technology and management issues affecting senior technology professionals. Computerworld is a business unit of International Data Group (IDG), a leading technology media, research and events company that publishes more than 300 magazines and newspapers, including GamePro, InfoWorld, Network World and PC World.

Psychology department seeks preschoolers for study

The psychology department at the University of Florida needs 3- and 4-year-olds to take part in a longitudinal study of children's social development and language development. The study is part of cross-cultural research comparing the role of language in children's social development.

Testing is done at the psychology department and involves a small compensation. Parents who would like more information about this study and their children's participation should call 392-0601, ext. 217, or e-mail farrar@ufl.edu.

UAA wins regional award

The University Athletic Association has been named the 2007 Athletic Trainers' Department of the Year by the Southeast district of the National Athletic Trainers' Association.

UAA was given the award in March in recognition of its support of University of Florida athletic teams, said Crandall Woodson, honors and awards chair for the Southeast Athletic Trainers' Association.

This is the first year the association has chosen to recognize a department. Previous winners of the award have been individual trainers.

Don't forget...

Friday is the deadline to submit officer nominations for the Academic & Professional Assembly. Go to apassembly.ufl.edu/voting to name candidates.