

The new Connection

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Valley Baptist Announces New Partnership

Valley Baptist is pleased to announce we have signed a letter of intent for a joint venture with Vanguard Health Systems, an agreement that is expected to be finalized before the end of the summer.

“This partnership will continue the Valley Baptist mission and delivery of high quality care, continue to provide our employees with a great place to work, improve access to capital, and strengthen our collaboration with physicians,” stated James E. Eastham, President and CEO of Valley Baptist Health System.

Nashville-based Vanguard Health Systems owns and operates 26 acute care and specialty hospital and complementary facilities and services in five states, including Baptist Health System in San Antonio.

“The partnership between Valley Baptist Health System and Vanguard will ensure the preservation of the strong heritage and long standing mission of Valley Baptist,” said Charlie Martin,

Chairman and CEO of Vanguard. “We look forward to bringing the resources and national scale needed to sustain and build upon the great clinical care provided by Valley Baptist Health System.”

About Vanguard Health Systems

Vanguard owns and operates 26 acute care and specialty hospitals and complementary facilities and services in Chicago, Illinois; Phoenix, Arizona; San Antonio, Texas; Detroit, Michigan and Massachusetts. Vanguard’s strategy is to develop locally branded, comprehensive healthcare delivery networks in urban markets. Vanguard will pursue acquisitions where there are opportunities to partner with leading delivery systems in new urban markets or to increase its presence in existing markets. Upon acquiring a facility or network of facilities, Vanguard implements strategic and operational improvement initiatives including expanding services, strengthening relationships with physicians and managed care organizations, recruiting new physicians and upgrading information systems and other capital.

An Amazing Display of Generosity

Valley Baptist Employees Donate \$7,700 to help needy families

Once again showing their generosity and compassion, Valley Baptist employees helped 26 needy families – many in dire situations, including those with terminally-ill patients – through the Adopt-a-Family Project coordinated by the Valley Baptist Foundation in December.

Employees donated a total of \$7,700 for presents, gift cards, and turkey or ham dinners to make Christmas brighter for 19 hospice and 7 home health families. These families were chosen by our social workers based on their critical needs.

Central Transport employees helped a family that recently lost their young daughter to cancer. Their generous gifts – totaling almost \$500 -- left the father of the family speechless and on the verge of tears. The father said because of the loss of the daughter, the family wasn’t planning to celebrate Christmas this year. But -- after seeing the money and a fully-cooked ham dinner donated by Central Transport employees – he said that “God must have wanted us to have Christmas.”

VBMC-Brownsville Administrative employees helped an elderly man in his 90’s and his wife, in her 80’s, who said they had NEVER before received a single Christmas present, not even from their own children. The woman said she was orphaned as a young girl in the mountains of Mexico. She said neither she nor her husband ever

received toys when they were children, so they were delighted to find a dancing, stuffed Santa doll in their package from our employees. The woman wanted to express her gratitude to those who have brought them the best Christmas of their lives and that “may God bless you, keep you and bring health and prosperity to you and each of your families.”

Laurie Pitts of Odyssey HealthCare Sandi Jo Funk Hospice related the reaction of a third hospice family who received gifts from Valley Baptist Marketing employees. “The woman and her grandson were very surprised by the thoughtfulness of each and every one that adopted them. The grandson kept asking, ‘Are you sure?’ When he handed his grandmother the money from their gift, she said ‘This is the best day!’ ”

Valley Baptist Information Services employees once again displayed great generosity, donating a total of \$1,500 to a family of an HIV patient with three children. The patient was so thin at the time that she looked like a “Holocaust survivor,” Ms. Pitts recalls. The family lives in a 2-bedroom trailer, with all three children sleeping on the floor. Despite their poverty, Ms. Pitts said she had never met “a happier family.” When receiving the gifts from the IS employees, the children thought it was so much food that it would last for a whole week.

Valley Baptist Surpasses 100th Gynecological Robotic Surgery

Dr. Susan Hunter, Obstetrician-Gynecologist, has performed her 100th gynecology surgery using the da Vinci® robotic surgical system at Valley Baptist-Harlingen, resulting in a 38-year-old patient being able to recover faster and get back to work sooner after having a hysterectomy to relieve pain, abnormal bleeding and discomfort.

Dr. Hunter is the first doctor in Cameron County to perform 100 gynecological surgeries using a robot. The less-invasive surgery benefits Valley women because the robot requires only small incisions – instead of the larger incisions required by traditional gynecological procedures. In



fact, many patients go home the next day after a robotic surgery -- instead of three days of hospitalization for traditional surgery for a hysterectomy. This means these women can return sooner to their families and jobs.

The 100th patient, 38-year-old Julie Teat, is previously from Brownsville --- and used to work at Valley Baptist as a respiratory therapist -- but now lives with her husband and three children in Corpus Christi. She said it was worth it to drive more than 120 miles south to have a hysterectomy with Dr. Hunter using the robot at Valley Baptist.

“Dr. Hunter told me I should be back to work in three weeks,” Mrs. Teat said. “The compassion that Dr. Hunter has is renowned – and the care I received from the Valley Baptist nurses and other staff members has always been very open and very supportive.”

During the procedure, the surgeon operates while seated comfortably at a console viewing a 3D image of the surgical field. Doctors insert surgical instruments and a camera through small incisions. The physician can precisely guide the instruments using high-definition, 3-D vision monitors which greatly magnify the area of the surgery. The robot also has an ‘endo-wrist’ which gives the doctor more flexibility in small places and enables more precise suturing. The system seamlessly translates the surgeon's hand, wrist and finger movements into precise, real-time movements of surgical instruments inside the patient.

“The robot allows us to do more delicate and precise procedures than can be done by any other method, such as open surgery or laparoscopic surgery,” Dr. Hunter said. “In many cases, this means there is less pain for the patient, less bleeding, and a faster recovery time ... it is a great thing for the people of the Valley to have the robot here and to have physicians with the ability to utilize this cutting-edge technology.”

Dr. Hunter was the first physician in Cameron County to perform several gynecological procedures using the robot, including the first hysterectomies (for cancerous and non-cancerous uteri); the first removal of an ovarian cyst (in which a non-cancerous cyst was removed to save the ovary in a young girl); the first procedure to remove benign tumors (called fibroids) which were causing pain and bleeding in a patient's uterus; the first robotic tubal reconstruction procedure which enabled a Valley woman to be able to successfully conceive and give birth to a child; and the first “prolapse” surgery (vaginal / pelvic reconstruction for a “fallen” vagina).

Gail Downey, Surgery Director for Valley Baptist, said that reaching 100 gynecological surgeries with the robot is a great milestone for Valley Baptist and for the care of women in the Valley.

The robot can also be used for other types of surgery, including prostate cancer surgery in men and general surgeries. For more information, please visit: <http://www.valleybaptist.net/daVinci/index.htm>.

Who's On The Cover

Clockwise from the top (A) VBMC-Harlingen nurses dress in traditional nursing uniforms for “Final Farewell” memorial services for VBMC-H nurses who have passed away and who had previously made a request for such a service at their funeral. From the left are Bill Adams, VBMC-Harlingen CEO; Carolyn Schwarz, RN, House Supervisor, who made the capes the nurses are wearing; Paula Cruz, RN, MSN, of Nursing Education; Rita Villarreal, RN-BC, BSN, Education Specialist; Martina Briseño-Lucio RN, BSN, Education Specialist; Guadalupe Garza, LVN, of 5ST; Henrietta J. Peynado, RN, MSN, OCN, FNP-BC, Education Specialist; and Ann McDonald-Upton, Chief Nursing Officer for VBMC-H. **(B)** VBMC-Brownsville Care Management employees include in the front row Veronica O. Flores, RHIT, CCS, Clinical Documentation/ Core Measures Specialist; Dee Longoria, RHIA, MPPM, Director of Care Management; Anselma Esguerra, RN, BSN, CCM; Perla Soto, LBSW; Lauren Heiy, RN; and Meg Bloch, LCSW. Standing, from the left, are Benilda Abanilla, RN; Raul Mancillas, LBSW; Norma Arismendi, MSSW, IPR, CART; Efrain Sedillo II, RN, MSN, CCM; Betty Fernandez, RN; Gloria Hamby-Gonzalez, RN; Laura Solis, Case Management IM Specialist; Linda Roberts, RN, of ED; and Gilberto Cantu, LBSW. Not pictured are David Hernandez, Ray Garcia, Jorge Magallanes, and Esmeralda Gomez. **(C)** 3 Tower Staff Nursing Staff at VBMC-Brownsville

Who's On The Back Cover

Clockwise from the top (A) Jose Diaz, RN, of the Ambulatory Infusion Unit, is one of several Valley Baptist employees who serve as Patriot Guard Riders in honor of fallen Valley soldiers during funerals for local veterans. More information on the program is on the intranet home page. **(B)** VBMC-Brownsville Wound Care and Foot Care Institute employees recently took a “Cage Fitness” mixed martial arts class taught by Dr. Jose Ayala, DPM, CWS, Director of the Foot Care Institute. Staff members include Nancy Diaz, Janie Alanis, Marisa Aguilar, Sandra Gonzalez, Gabby Castro, Heather Thiel, Dora Lopez, Irma Chavez, Dr. Sandra Blanco, DPM; and Dr. Jose Ayala, Instructor. **(C)** Several Valley Baptist employees participated in a “Walk for Life” to raise awareness about organ donation, including Carol Alejandro-Ruiz, RN, of Women's Services; Perla Conde, Certified Pharmacy Technician; Sofia Fonseca, RN; Chaplain Joe Perez, Vice President of Pastoral Services; Tina Briones, RN, Ed.D., Vice President; Jovita Aruizu of Environmental Services; Lois Marchand, RN, Bsc., BN, CEN, CA/CP, SANE, Henrietta J. Peynado, MSN, RN, OCN, and Mario Bocanegra, Communications Technician. **(D)** Dr. Robert Lozano, left; and Dr. Jeffrey Reese, right, who serves on the Organ Donation Committee for Valley Baptist, thank the Brito family of Brownsville for giving the “gift of life” to more than 80 patients through tissue donation by their late wife and mother, Guadalupe Brito. The Brito family was honored during a “Tree of Life” ceremony at VBMC-Brownsville Nov. 3. Brito family members present for the dedication were, from the left, Pilar Anzaldúa (daughter of Guadalupe Brito), Juan Sr., and Juan Jr. Brito.

Valley Baptist Volunteers of the Year



Betty Rand has been elected by her fellow volunteer Auxiliary members as “Volunteer of the Year” for Valley Baptist-Harlingen.

Betty has been volunteering since April 2003, and is most often found in the South Tower Gift Shop, greeting customers with courtesy, her smile, and helpful attitude. She often comes in several days a week to help out – even on days when she’s not scheduled – and takes on extra duties when needed.

“If they ask me to do something, I’ll say ‘sure, I’ll do it,’ ” Betty says. “I enjoy the work – that’s why I do it. I feel like I get along pretty good with everyone.”

Betty says she was very “surprised” when elected Volunteer of the Year from the 300 adult members of the VBMC-H Auxiliary. “I was shocked ... I had no idea I would be chosen ... I just sat there,” Betty recalls.

This was the first year the Auxiliary held a “Volunteer of the Year” election. Volunteers received a ballot, asking them who should be elected and why.

In addition to working in the gift shop, Betty also helps with the Auxiliary’s popular, record-setting \$5 jewelry sales. During October, the volunteers’ two-day sale at VBMC-Harlingen generated \$87,300 – all in \$5 items, including shawls and tote bags in addition to the jewelry items such as watches, ear rings, and necklaces. The \$87,300 – which netted a \$17,460 profit to the Auxiliary – set the NATIONAL record for any 2-day jewelry sales through the Masquerade jewelry company. And this does not include an additional \$51,485 -- with a \$10,297 profit -- generated in Brownsville by the VBMC-Brownsville Auxiliary’s jewelry sale in October.

“The \$5 Jewelry Sale generates money we use for our nursing scholarship fund; for decorations, such as in the East Tower Lobby; and for sponsorships, such as the Black Tie Gala,” Betty said.

Many thanks to Betty and all of our volunteers for the tremendous service they provide for our patients, staff and the community every day. For more information on volunteer opportunities available with the VBMC Auxiliary, please contact Katie McCarty, Volunteer Services Director, at 389-1193 or at katie.mccarty@valleybaptist.net.



Longtime VBMC-Brownsville volunteer Carmen Cavazos has been named “Volunteer of the Year” for Valley Baptist-Brownsville.

Ms. Cavazos has donated 17,184 volunteer hours since 1997, working in VBMC-B’s recently-remodeled gift shop. Ms. Cavazos says she enjoys selling items in the gift shop – knowing that the proceeds will enable the volunteer Auxiliary to make donations for scholarships for nurses and special projects – such as the re-opening of a historical chapel at VBMC-B, as well as renovations to the pediatrics area.

While she is now mainly a salesperson in the gift shop, in the

past, Ms. Cavazos was involved in all aspects of the gift shop’s operations, including ordering, buying and pricing merchandise. “We used to do all the pricing by hand,” she says. “But with the new system, we just pass the item under the machine to get the price ... it’s much improved.”

During the past 14 years, Ms. Cavazos has served in many positions in the Auxiliary, including two terms as president, as well as vice president, treasurer, secretary and parliamentarian. She says that the volunteers work as a team, and that she has had a lot of help with her accomplishments.

“Everybody has been very helpful ... and we are very united,” Ms. Cavazos said. “It’s been great to work here. I’m very grateful to the Lord, that He gave me the opportunity to help here.”

Ms. Cavazos added that the volunteer work was a “life saver” to her after she retired in 1996 after 33 years of accounting work at the Rancho Viejo Country Club.

“Volunteering at the hospital has helped me, because I have worked all my life, and was used to doing something, not just being at home, watching TV all the time,” Ms. Cavazos said. “Volunteering allows me to meet other people and groups, and it’s a way for me to contribute to the community. It brings me self-satisfaction.”

Ms. Cavazos has six grown children, two of whom are deceased, including her youngest daughter, Carmen, who passed away from cancer. Ms. Cavazos – who has also been a longtime volunteer with the Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society – will walk in memory of her daughter during this year’s Relay April 1-2 at the Brownsville Sports Park.

Dr. Crous Specializes in Treating High-Speed Trauma Victims, Saving Lives at Valley Baptist



As a trauma surgeon with specialized training in treating victims of high-speed vehicle crashes, Dr. Robert Crous treats patients with some of the most dramatic injuries from across the Valley.

Dr. Crous completed a Fellowship in Orthopaedic Trauma at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He is the Director of Orthopaedic Trauma at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Harlingen and also serves on the trauma team at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville.

Dr. Crous is the only full-time Fellowship trained Orthopaedic Trauma surgeon south of San Antonio. Although the opportunity for an academic life presented itself, he chose to return to the Valley as he felt he could make a difference in this area.

Dr. Crous has worked on publishing two research papers, one on pelvic fracture fixation in pregnancy and the second on alternative methods of ankle fixation in trauma cases. Dr. Crous had the honor of presenting the second paper as a podium presentation at the Orthopedic Trauma Association meeting in 2010.

Severe trauma often occurs as the result of high velocity car crashes. "While most orthopaedists treat low energy injuries very well, high velocity crashes can require a much more specialized approach, and close cooperation with all branches of the trauma service," Dr. Crous said.

"I only do trauma – I don't do joint replacements or general orthopedics – so I'm available when many of the most critical cases come into Valley Baptist," Dr. Crous added. "When it comes to severe trauma cases, or any other difficult or unusual surgery for that matter, patients are better off when they are treated by someone who is focused exclusively on these types of cases, and who does a larger volume. I also do not have the pressures of private practice, so I can devote the requisite time to some of the more difficult procedures."

His additional training paid off when he treated a teenage girl who had been hit by a car and sustained a fractured pelvis. Traditional surgery would have required a large incision for an injury that likely would have led to difficulties in childbirth. Dr. Crous instead made a tiny cut and was able to fix the pelvis using a minimally invasive technique. As a result, the young woman will likely be able to have children naturally.

Dr. Crous also serves as an Assistant Professor at the Regional Academic Health Center, operated by the UT Health Science Center-San Antonio. He previously served on a trauma team in South Bend, Indiana and is a member of the Orthopedic Trauma Association.

"I have a significant interest in academics and I believe that we here in Harlingen have the only Valley hospital with regular Ortho meetings with an academic component -- we usually do a formal lecture and case presentation."

Prior to attending medical school, he served as a lieutenant in the South African Army (Weermag), and was that army's youngest commissioned officer when he was just 17 years old.

His hobbies include weight training, running, kickboxing and the martial art of Jujitsu. He also enjoys studying European history and physics.

Dr. Crous' wife also works at Valley Baptist as a nurse in the Emergency Department. He has four grown children.



Dr. Asim Zamir speaks on the importance of pediatric renovations at Valley Baptist-Brownsville during a Black Tie Bash benefit for VBMC-B at the Brownsville Events Center Jan. 21. Dr. Zamir said he is very honored to serve in Brownsville and spoke of his personal desire to give back to the community through the charity event. Aramark Healthcare served as presenting sponsor for the Black Tie Bash, which was successful in raising funds for children's services at VBMC-B because of the generosity of many donors, sponsors, physicians, and employees.

EMPLOYEES BRING GIFTS TO 1,138 NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Valley Baptist employees brought holiday gifts and smiles to 1,138 nursing home residents in Harlingen, San Benito, Brownsville, Olmito, and Raymondville this past Christmas Eve as part of a “Seniors’ Santa” program.

This is the third year that our fantastic employees visited the nursing home residents – some of whom have no family in the area and who otherwise wouldn’t receive a single gift. Hundreds of employees at Valley Baptist-Brownsville and Valley Baptist-Harlingen generously contributed \$5 or more toward purchasing of the gifts for the nursing home residents. All together, our employees raised more than \$5,000!

Jaime Vega, IT Tech with Information Services, really helped spread the spirit of giving, collecting 130 donations from fellow employees and others interested in helping as Seniors’ Santas! “We thank all of the employees and contributors who participated,” Jaime said. “We look forward to next year’s contributions being just as generous for our seniors’ community.”

Greg Ruiz, Director of Respiratory Services on the VBMC-Brownsville campus, collected an additional 60 donations for this worthwhile project. “This is a cause with a purpose that touches

the hearts of everyone,” Greg said. “Contributions are not hard to get once you explain the message behind the project.”

Three days before Christmas, dozens of employee volunteers helped with gift wrapping for “Seniors’ Santa” program, and many more – including children of several employees -- helped with distributing presents at 14 different nursing homes on Christmas Eve, including six nursing homes in the Brownsville / Olmito area.

“The nursing home residents were so excited just to receive a visit from us – and very thankful for the gifts for our employees,” said Rebecca Stirzaker, Human Resources Director for Valley Baptist. “And our employees really had fun spreading Christmas cheer and making memories with their families and co-workers!”

The “Seniors’ Santa” project is spearheaded each year by the Valley Baptist Ambassadors of Service, with assistance from the Valley Baptist Auxiliary volunteers.

Valley Baptist Seniors’ Santa



VALLEY BAPTIST EMPLOYEES SET RECORD IN BLOOD DONATIONS

United Blood Services has presented Valley Baptist Health System with a check for \$29,606, due to Valley Baptist employee’s commitment to our community through the United Blood Services Donor Participation Rebate Program.

Valley Baptist collected a total of 561 units of blood, including Harlingen and Brownsville, in a one-year span.

“This is the first health system in the Rio Grande Valley that collects this astonishing number in a year,” said Frank Esparza BS, MT, (ASCP), Center Director for United Blood Services-McAllen. “The donations acquired by these acute health care providers not only will help save Valley lives, but it shows us that community partners like Valley Baptist Health System have taken our message and mission of saving lives and applied it to their standards.”



2010 PHYSICIANS OF THE YEAR

Dr. Luis Gaitan | VBMC-Brownsville



Dr. Luis Gaitan, Neurologist and Medical Director of the Stroke Program at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville, has been named the 2010 Physician of the Year for VBMC-Brownsville.

Each year, Valley Baptist's Physician of the Year nomination process seeks staff input on physicians who embody the ultimate in patient care, professionalism and courtesy to patients, their families and our employees. We ask for examples of situations in which the physician has demonstrated the characteristics that we have identified as "ideal."

As this year's Physician of the Year, Dr. Gaitan is described as a physician who is "totally committed" to the team at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Brownsville. Dr. Gaitan, who trained at Emory University in Atlanta, never hesitates to come in -- day or night -- when a patient presents for evaluation. In fact, it is reported that "he will run from an office full of patients" when the need arises.

Following are additional comments from Valley Baptist employees who nominated Dr. Gaitan as Physician of the Year. Dr. Gaitan is courteous and has a great bedside manner, taking the time to explain to the patient and family the diagnosis and treatment. Even when there is little hope of recovery, he has been seen sitting with the family members, holding their hands and giving comfort.

Dr. Gaitan is reported to be a great teacher, always willing to take the time to teach the nursing staff. He wants the best for his patients and is willing to take the time to help the staff learn how to provide the best stroke care in the Valley. As the only remaining practicing neurologist in Brownsville, the fact that all of his peers and clinical team members find him extremely responsive and polite is really amazing. Dr. Gaitan has a very stressful schedule trying to meet so many needs, yet he does so with such grace. In addition, he has been a very vocal advocate for intensifying Valley Baptist's stroke services over the past several years. His hard work has resulted in a stroke program that cannot be rivaled south of Austin. So many patients have returned to very fruitful lives due to our stroke program -- and all this would not have happened without Dr. Gaitan. His depth of knowledge, his willingness to share that knowledge and his selfless devotion -- not only to his patients but to the entire Stroke Program here at Valley Baptist-Brownsville -- has no limits.

Dr. Oladayo Sanusi | VBMC-Harlingen



Dr. Oladayo Sanusi, Nephrologist and Internal Medicine Physician, has been named the 2010 Physician of the Year for Valley Baptist Medical Center-Harlingen. Dr. Sanusi is known for his sunny disposition, excellent bedside manner, and caring attitude toward his patients as well as hospital employees.

Following are comments from Valley Baptist employees who nominated Dr. Sanusi as Physician of the Year. Employees stated that Dr. Sanusi always greets everyone with a smile and a handshake, whether he is seen in his office or in the hospital. He is the epitome of professionalism. Regardless of how busy he is or how stressful a situation, he doesn't get flustered. He always responds promptly and professionally to all his pages, regardless of the hour of day.

Dr. Sanusi is also the consummate humanitarian. He is humble and compassionate in the way that he interacts with patients, family members, and employees. He treats everyone with dignity and respect, including patients who are unable to pay him for his services. He routinely accepts patients when we are having difficulty finding an attending physician to accept responsibility for a patient. He even takes the time to call his patients during the weekends to make sure they are doing well. What a caring attitude!

Dr. Sanusi's caring attitude and compassion also extend to the hospital staff. When he sees our employees working hard in the ED dealing with an unexpected influx of patients, he orders meals to show them they are appreciated. This selfless act not only shows his commitment to his co-workers, but it also shows his compassion for his fellow man.

It is evident that many respect and admire Dr. Sanusi by the numerous nominations he received from multiple departments in the hospital.

In addition to being a caring physician, Dr. Sanusi is known as a prolific painter, poet, and author of several books and short stories. Many thanks to Dr. Sanusi for everything he does, and congratulations!



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WEARING RED WIGS FOR CHARITY

A team of Valley Baptist employees and others helped raise funds for a "Dining by Design" cancer benefit by donning red wigs and traditional nursing uniforms during the fun event at TSTC in Nov. Participants included, from the left, Judy Quisenberry of the Valley Baptist Foundation; Danielle Webb of Administration; Beverly Skloss of the LVN School; Alan Johnson, Valley Baptist Board Chair; and Katie McCarty and Lorraine Gonzales of Volunteer Services.