

PEOPLE AS PARTNERS

Bertagnolli Energizes Crowd in First Town Hall

BY DANA TALESNIK

The anticipation was palpable. NIH'ers had gathered in Masur Auditorium, eager to get better acquainted with NIH Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli at her first Town Hall on Dec. 19. Bertagnolli—the 17th NIH director and the second woman and first surgeon to serve in the lead role—had taken the helm in November and was enthused to share her vision for the agency.

As she walked on stage to resounding applause, Bertagnolli said she was overcome with the enormity of the moment and task at hand.



NIH Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli addresses a packed auditorium.

PHOTO: CHIA-CHI CHARLIE CHANG

“My entire career, I have admired and looked up to NIH and thought of it as the pinnacle of everything I wanted to do, everything in our field that really makes the world better for people and people’s health,” she said. “To be here today as the director, I have to tell you quite frankly, is amazing and

overwhelming. I am energized by this honor and am determined to represent you all well.”

In remarks that emphasized collaboration, excellence, harnessing technology and promoting trust in science, she spoke openly and affably about her experiences and goals to a packed auditorium and more than 6,000 NIH'ers who tuned in live via videocast.

After formal remarks, she sat down for a fireside chat with NIH Principal Deputy Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak, during which she addressed the most popular concerns submitted by staff in an online poll.

Bertagnolli shared how her upbringing on a sheep and cattle ranch in rural Wyoming shaped her perspective. The closest hospital was 100 miles away. To attend school, she and her siblings moved to a town 97 miles away

SEE TOWN HALL, PAGE 6



Speakers at the groundbreaking are (from l) Tony Clifford, Jennie Lucca, Diane Baker and Dr. Lawrence Tabak.

SEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING

Children’s Inn Breaks Ground on Young Adult Quarters

BY ERIC BOCK

The Children’s Inn at NIH marked the start of construction for the Young Adult Quarters at Bldg. 15B during a groundbreaking event on Dec. 1.

Scheduled to open in a year-and-a-half, the quarters will provide accommodations designed to meet the needs of young adults

SEE NEW QUARTERS, PAGE 8

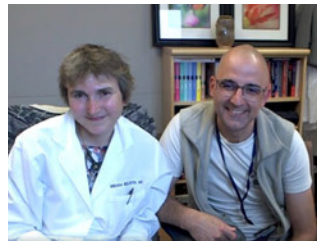
DIGITAL TIMESAVER DEvised

Necessity Breeds Tool for Neurologists

BY CARLA GARNETT

This story is part of an ongoing NIH Record series on NIH makers and inventors.

There’s got to be a better way. That’s what drove Dr. Bibi Bielekova and Dr. Peter Kosa to conjure up a computer program that neurologists can use to visualize, digitize and record patient exam data quickly and readily.



Dr. Bibi Bielekova (l) and Dr. Peter Kosa of NIAID

“We have developed an application that allows digital documentation of neurological

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NIH'ers earn HHS service award. See p. 3.

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Weed To Deliver Lecture on Health Care Optimization, Jan. 30

Dr. Matthew A. Weed will deliver a remote lecture, "Optimizing Outcomes for Patients with Chronic Illnesses and Disabilities," from noon to 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, Jan. 30 via videocast, <https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=54025> (HHS-only).



Dr. Matthew Weed

A health and technology consultant for NIH and numerous organizations, Weed will provide an overview of his lived experience in accessing health care and health information as someone who has been blind and diabetic from infancy.

Weed's lecture will be divided into three themes:

- how to improve awareness among health professionals, scientists and policymakers about the lived experiences of patients with chronic health needs
- how to improve understanding among various NIH constituencies on what must be done to accommodate patients and their caregivers in the clinical and research environments
- how to raise awareness more generally about barriers to optimal care

The lecture is co-hosted by the Clinical Center, the National Eye Institute and the Office of Intramural Research.

Closed captioning and audio descriptions will be provided. Individuals who need other reasonable accommodation should contact the WALs Office, WALSoffice@od.nih.gov, (301) 594-6747.

Home Test to Treat Extends Nationwide

The Home Test to Treat program has extended free at-home testing, telehealth and treatment for both Covid-19 and influenza to eligible people. It is the first public health program that includes home testing technology at such a scale for both Covid-19 and flu.

The program is offered by Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) initiative at NIH, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health and Human Services' Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response. The program launched as a pilot in select locations in 2023.

For more information, visit https://www.test2treat.org/s/?language=en_US.

NIH Hosts BIRCVH Meeting

The annual meeting of the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCVH) program, sponsored by the Office of Research on Women's Health, was held on campus last month.

Keynote speaker Dr. Karen M. Freund, Sheldon M. Wolff professor and chair of the department of medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine and physician-in-chief at Tufts Medical Center, delivered the Ruth L. Kirschstein memorial lecture. In her talk, Freund emphasized that teamwork is more important than ever and advised junior BIRCVH investigators to "work with your current peers in all settings, because those current peers will become the future leaders ... to promote the gains we make."

Dr. Lindsey Criswell, director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, delivered the Legacy of Leadership

lecture. She emphasized the importance of mentors, collaboration and work-life balance, and outlined NIH resources for junior BIRCVH investigators.



Principal investigators from 19 institutions join ORWH staff, director Dr. Janine Clayton and deputy director Dr. Vivian Ota Wang at the BIRCVH annual meeting.

Blood Donations Needed

January is National Blood Donation Month. The NIH Blood Bank is reporting shortages of A negative, B negative and O negative blood. NIH also urgently needs African Americans to donate blood for patients with sickle cell disease who are participating in clinical trials at the Clinical Center.

Visit www.cc.nih.gov/blooddonor to make an appointment or call the Blood Bank in Bldg. 10 at (301) 496-1048 or the Platelet Center at Fishers Lane at (301) 496-4321.

Annual Graduate Student Research Symposium Scheduled

The 20th annual NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium will be held in-person on Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Natcher Conference Center. The symposium is the premier event for NIH graduate students to showcase their research to the NIH community. Find details at <https://www.training.nih.gov/me/graduate-student-research-symposium/>.



At the recent clinical faculty community-building gathering are (seated, from l) Emily Limerick (SCC), Suma Singh, Parker Ruhl, Janice Lee; (standing, from l) Eric Wassermann, Mike Solomon (SCC), Jenna Bergerson (SCC), Mamatha Mandava, Tom Burklow, Ashkan Malayari (SCC), Gina Montealegre (SCC), Andy Lipton, John Butman and Jonathan Bolanos (SCC).

Staff Clinicians Have a Ball This Holiday Season

Clinical faculty members gathered for bowling and community-building at Bowlero Bethesda after work on Dec. 13. Deputy Director for Intramural Clinical Research Dr. Janice Lee celebrated with the many staff clinicians in attendance.

The Staff Clinician Council (SCC) sponsored the event and is excited to continue to build cohesiveness among NIH's diverse clinical faculty. The council supports cutting-edge care and ongoing professional development for more than 300 staff clinicians.

NIH'ers Earn HHS 'Call to Service Award'

The Supporters of 8CRE recently received the 2023 HHS Mary Brodie-Henderson Call to Service Award, which is among the highest honors bestowed by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. It specifically recognizes employees who, through their volunteer service, make a direct and consequential impact towards advancing the department's mission.

Eight Changes for Racial Equity (8CRE, pronounced "acre") was proposed in 2020 to NIH leadership, by a self-assembled group of NIH staff motivated to ensure the workplace culture was free of racism, discrimination and harassment, and committed to compassion, respect and understanding for all.

Since then, the group has initiated and sponsored several activities and events to enhance the workplace community, including *Juneteenth 19 Days of Wellness* and collaborative webinars with NIH's Office of Equity,



HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm (r) present the service award to supporters of 8CRE. Accepting on behalf of the group is Dr. Sadhana Jackson (c) of NINDS and NCI.

Diversity and Inclusion. In addition to serving as panelists on EDI webinars, the group collaborated with staff at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to organize a monthly live webinar series, *Authentic Conversations*. There were nine webinars total.

According to the award nomination, 8CRE supporters were recognized for "their dedication, teamwork and leadership...that has been catalytic to develop initiatives to end structural racism, promote racial and ethnic equity, and to provide [science, technology, engineering, math] STEM career development to historically underserved groups inside and outside NIH."


Activities undertaken as a result of the Eight Changes go beyond simply initiating this important conversation and include the release of an NIH Director's statement against structural racism in biomedical research issued in March 2021, a virtual Town Hall on Achieving Racial Equity held in April 2021, establishment of the NIH anti-racism steering committee, as well as numerous policy and training enhancements to strengthen NIH's stance on this important matter.

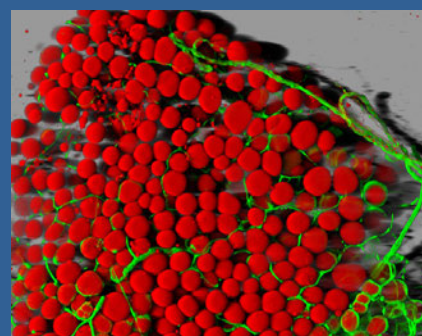
The group's work was influential beyond NIH, continued the nomination.



Shown with Becerra (standing, fourth from r) are NIH'ers (standing, from l) Dr. Bettie Graham of NHGRI, the CC's Jennifer Simmons, Dr. Leah Hubbard of NCI, Dr. Mia Rochelle Lowden of NINR, Jackson; Dr. Rob Rivers of NIDDK, Dr. Troy Muhammad of NCI, Dr. Ericka Boone of OD/OER, Dr. Eddie Billingslea of NIGMS and (seated) Dr. Cheryl Jacobs of NIH's Office of Science Policy.

"[They] established a partnership with another grassroots movement at the CDC Friends of the 7 Acts of Change...Together, they developed programming to mentor the next generation of scientists and thought leaders in [diversity, equity, inclusion and access] DEIA by inviting STEM and DEIA experts from R1 research institutions, the federal government and private sector.

Additionally, this forum is used to change the narrative on what types of science careers are accessible to historically underrepresented groups. For example, at the May 19, 2022, forum, Black leaders in space exploration shared their journey into their careers and how they are using their platform to dispel misinformation that limits access." 



ON THE COVER: A mouse's fat cells (red) are shown surrounded by a network of blood vessels (green). Fat cells store and release energy, protect organs and nerve tissues, insulate us from the cold and help us absorb important vitamins.

IMAGE: DANIEL MALIDE, NHLBI

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National Institutes of Health
Turning Discovery Into Health



Bielekova demonstrates the app she and Kosa designed.

Maker

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

exams at bedside using an iPad [or other tablet device] and simple, intuitive layouts,” Kosa explained. “Development of the NeurEx platform was prompted by [two things]: our need to simplify a very cumbersome and user-unfriendly documentation of the neuro exam that had been available at the time and the need to collect raw, granular data from the exam in an electronic form that can be later used to various downstream analyses.”

Bielekova, chief of the neuroimmunological diseases section in the Laboratory of Clinical Immunology and Microbiology at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and staff scientist Kosa study neurological disease, with emphasis on multiple sclerosis (MS), a chronic, progressive disease of the central nervous system.

In their research, performing a thorough neurological exam is essential to determine the level of disability patients experience and the rate the disorder progresses over time. The data generated from the doctor’s clinical visit informs every subsequent decision about treatment and other aspects of patient care and research progress.

Back in 2018, Bielekova spent half a year transcribing 770 historical, paper patient records into digital format, so she could compare physician analysis to computer analysis. It had taken the two scientists about 18 months to fine-tune the first generation of their NeurEx™ app.

System (CRIS) form for documenting neuro exams with a web page that allows direct upload of a PDF file generated by the NeurEx™ app into CRIS as an officially documented neuro exam.

“[My patient visit] is automatically streamed to the NIAID server,” Bielekova explained, “so by the time I walk from the clinic to the office, the exam is already documented...then we just negotiate [the medical record] field on the app’s touchscreen and *voila!* it’s uploaded into the patient’s medical record.”

Before they created NeurEx™, Bielekova

and other physicians on similar clinical rounds used analog—pen and paper—to manually update patient records. Doctors spent hours on the task—writing in descriptions of each patient’s individual muscle

damage or deficit—and they didn’t have the cool anatomical images and diagrams the app incorporates. One single exam could generate 12 to 14 pages of notes, which were not portable the way NeurEx™ files are.

Other app design elements thrill users too.

For example, Kosa said, “NeurEx has embedded algorithms that automatically

“That tells you how painful the process was before, that she was willing to do this,” Kosa joked.

By 2019, the Clinical Center’s medical records department had replaced its old Clinical Research Information

calculate various clinical scales of disability using the raw documented neuro exam data, including the FDA-approved gold standard of disability outcome in MS—Expanded Disability Status Scale. This feature dramatically reduces the amount of inter- and intra-rater noise and helps facilitate multicentric studies. We have already tested this feature during a multicentric project of Spinal Fluid Consortium for MS, funded by the National MS Society, where all centers used the NeurEx™ app to document patients’ neuro exams.

Articles about NeurEx™ development and performance were published in 2018 in *Annals of Clinical and Translational Neurology* (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30349859/>). The app also has been

★★★

“I just wanted to build something that empowers neurologists to better monitor patients’ disease and give them more and better information.”

—DR. BIBI BIELEKOVA

★★★

presented at various international meetings and requested by several groups from inside and outside the United States. NIAID’s Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Office filed an application with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 2021.

Bielekova and Kosa continue to tweak their invention, periodically adding details and adjusting features.

“I just wanted to build something that empowers neurologists to better monitor patients’ disease and give them more and better information to help them make decisions about treatment options,” Bielekova concluded.



VOLUNTEERS

CADASIL Study Recruits Volunteers

Become a healthy volunteer in NIH research on CADASIL, an inherited small vessel disease. Compensation will be provided. Call the Clinical Center Office of Patient Recruitment, (866) 444-1134. Ask for study 000413-H. Online: go.nih.gov/fiqGkAF.



Shayne Frebert (l) and Kristy Derr of NCATS in front of the White House with the 3-D tissue bioprinter

‘AMERICAN POSSIBILITIES’ Several ICs Put on Show at White House Demo Day

Innovative research from across NIH was on full display at the American Possibilities: 2023 White House Demo Day, an event hosted late last year by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

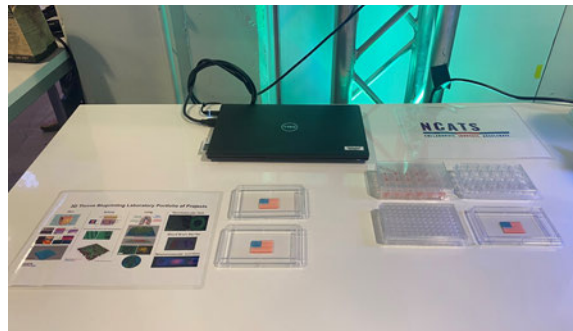
The event showcased innovations from 40 exhibitors supported by federal investment. Topics included energy, national security, artificial intelligence, climate and health.

NCATS scientists Kristy Derr and Shayne Frebert donned their white lab coats to demonstrate their 3-D tissue bioprinting capabilities by printing a red, white and blue lattice resembling an American flag. The booth drew large crowds and long lines up until the event ended.

“It is such an honor to be invited to an event like this,” said Derr. “It was very rewarding to see how many people were interested and excited about our work. It made me feel so proud to be a part of such an innovative and impressive group.”

Through the process of 3-D tissue bioprinting, researchers like Derr and Frebert are creating models that mimic the structure and functionality of tissues in our bodies for drug screening and disease research. The goal is to better predict which treatments tested in the lab will be successful in clinical trials in people.

“Everyone was amazed with how this technology



At left, Dr. Arati Prabhakar (c), director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Bertagnolli chat with another Demo Day attendee. At center, NCATS “red, white & blue” tech printouts. At right in front of the Cancer Moonshot booth are (from l) Dr. Marvin Langston of Stanford University; Bertagnolli; Dr. Laurie McLouth of the University of Kentucky; Dr. Leeya Pinder of the University of Cincinnati; and Dr. Sanya A. Springfield, director of the NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities.



Above, Mike Arango demonstrates NEI tech as NIH Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli observes. At right, NEI’s Arango and Kerry Goetz, with their NEI exhibit behind them. Below, Bertagnolli tries out tools at the cancer nanomedicine station.



is currently being used,” said Frebert. “The video presentation we had at our booth, which included the ‘American Flag’ printing process, really helped us gather attendees so that we could talk more about the great work we’ve been doing.”

Research collaborations with scientists from NIH, academic institutions and industry have been key to testing and validating the technology as a solution for both studying and finding treatments for diseases affecting our skin, lungs, eyes and other organs. Learn more at ncats.nih.gov/research/research-activities/bioprinting.

NEI representatives showed off a commercially available optical coherence tomography (OCT) retinal imaging device. Booth visitors had images of their retinas taken.

OCT is a revolutionary imaging technology, developed with federal funding dating back to the 1990s. The technology has been universally adopted by ophthalmologists and optometrists over the past 10 years and has changed how they diagnose and monitor patients with eye disease. Based on recent studies, OCT has potential to diagnose and monitor many systemic diseases, including Alzheimer’s disease, cardiac disease, psychiatric disease, diabetes and more.

“President Biden joined us at the end and interviewed several of the exhibitors,” said



Kerry Goetz, associate director, NEI Office of Data Science and Health Informatics. “If I had to explain the event in a sentence it was ‘an adult science fair judged by the President.’ Our exhibit highlighted the potential to use retina imaging and OCT to predict everything from cardiovascular health to overall wellness. We used a Maestro2, a device that can capture high-quality images in less than a minute with the push of a button. Guests were invited to try it out at the event and learn about our plan to add these types of images to the *All of Us* Research Program to ensure diversity in future uses.”

In addition to NCATS and NEI, technology supported by the National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders and NIH’s BRAIN Initiative was presented.—**Angela Steadman**

Town Hall

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

during the week; they rejoined their father on the ranch on weekends and in summer.

“Growing up in a place completely off the electrical grid and far away from the grocery store, we learned to be independent and resourceful,” she recounted.

Inspired to become a doctor like her Uncle Pete, she’d planned to work in internal medicine. “But to my surprise,” she said, “the first time I walked into an operating room, I knew I had to be a surgeon.”

After decades as a surgical oncologist and researcher in Boston, she is invigorated to start this new chapter at NIH—having first arrived as National Cancer Institute director and now serving as NIH director.

When presented with the staff survey’s top question, Bertagnolli responded from personal experience. Will NIH continue to



support telework and local remote options? Bertagnolli said she herself teleworks regularly. She travels to her NIH office three or four days each week from Boston.

“Those one or two telecommuting days are really critical for me for family reasons,” she said, noting she and her husband Alex have an autistic son who lives with them in Boston. While she encourages staff to be physically present, if and when possible, she emphasized ongoing support of work-life balance and flexibility.

Bertagnolli added other personal tidbits during the fireside chat. “I love to get in big old boots, tromping out in the middle of a swampy river, and catch fish,” she confided. In addition, she said she especially enjoys such winter sports as ice skating and skiing.

She also spoke of her battle with early-stage breast cancer in 2022, shortly after arriving at NCI. She was fortunate to have



In Masur Auditorium, NIH leaders applaud Bertagnolli from the front row. Shown are (from foreground) NIDCD Director Dr. Debara Tucci, NICHD Director Dr. Diana Bianchi, NIMH Director Dr. Josh Gordon, NEI Director Dr. Michael Chiang and NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow.

benefited from NIH research, which guided her treatment.

“We have to make sure those benefits get to everyone,” she said, stating a core tenet of her vision for NIH. She underscored that the knowledge and discoveries generated in NIH labs and clinics must involve and reach all communities, everywhere.

“My life experiences, both personal and professional, as someone who grew up in a rural area, as a woman in science and surgery, as a cancer survivor, as the parent of a child with autism—now a young adult with autism—these have all given me a very powerful sense of the transformative potential of our research and also the critical importance of equity, of access to all people, to research.”

A critical way to make progress in this area, Bertagnolli noted, is harnessing information technology, machine learning and data science.

“Take your brilliance and work together,” she said. “Communicate it together. Bring the people you serve into this process...May we use this now as a moment to help educate and engage the public in everything we do.”

Channel all of the data and new knowledge into ways that transform life, she challenged. “As this rush of information comes in, we must be more effective, more proactive in connecting what we learn, understanding the interplay between the genes we inherit and the environmental and societal factors that surround us, beginning even before birth, and



NIH Principal Deputy Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak sits down with Bertagnolli for a fireside chat.

PHOTOS: CHIA-CHI CHARLIE CHANG



Bertagnolli shared personal experiences, including that she loves to fly-fish. In this photo from last summer, she was headed up a wilderness trail to fish in a lake at 11,000 feet elevation.

connecting that knowledge to everyday life, clinical practice and community health.”

Another goal under Bertagnolli’s leadership—and one she expounded on in response to another staff poll question—is improving

the public’s confidence in science.

“Trust is everything,” she said. Engage research participants. Consider community wants and needs. Communicate as effectively as possible, she urged.

“We will engender trust in science when people who stand to benefit from our research become our research partners, when we design studies that engage people and respect their needs, and when they see the results make their lives better,” she said.

Bertagnolli also advocated for more collaboration across institutes and centers. “There are fundamental questions in health that really span all organ systems,” she said. Learn from other disciplines. Take advantage of

commonalities across research areas.

Some staff—by way of the third top poll question—admitted feeling overworked and undercompensated. Bertagnolli said, “The best solution for that, to me, was always camaraderie with my fellow combatants in the world of trying to overcome disease. Find your team.” And when problems arise, “Don’t sit in silence...Support each other and ask for help,” she urged.

Tabak asked whether the new director had advice she would tell her younger self or perhaps researchers just starting out. Bertagnolli recalled her early days, coming from a rural state, entering a field that then included few women. She had just wanted to fit in. But, she said, “I was an odd duck. I stuck out like a sore thumb.”

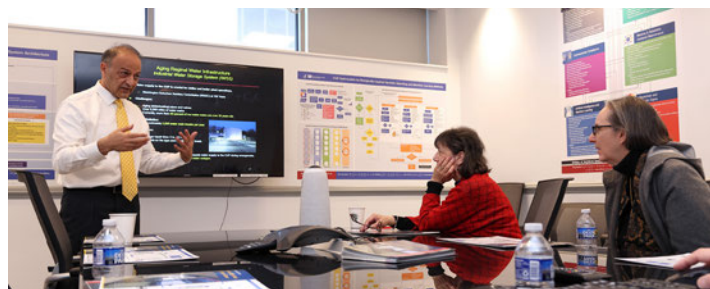
Now, though, she observed, “it is perfectly OK to be an odd duck. If you’re on a mission like the rest of us, we need to celebrate and appreciate that...Demand to be accepted for who you are. That’s what gets all of us the best from you.” **B**

NIH, NCI Directors Take Campus Tour

NIH Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli and NCI Director Dr. Kimryn Rathmell took a tour of campus on Dec. 20. Coordinated by Dan Wheeland, director of the Office of Research Facilities in the Office of Research Services, the tour included several buildings and presentations. First stop was the Children’s Inn at NIH with CEO Jennie Lucca. Next came a visit to the Clinical Research Center with Dr. James Gilman, CEO. Then it was on to the Porter Neuroscience Research Center (PNRC), where they were met by Dr. Jeff Diamond, NINDS scientific director. Final stop was NIH’s Central Utility Plant (CUP) with Dr. Farhad Memarzadeh, director, Division of Technical Resources, and Joe Nieves, chief, Utilities Generation Branch.



At left, NINDS Scientific Director Dr. Jeff Diamond (l) and Dr. Angela Ballesteros (r), a new Stadtman investigator in NIDCD, host NCI Director Dr. Kimryn Rathmell (second from l) and NIH Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli in Ballesteros’s laboratory in the PNRC. Ballesteros is showing images of the mouse cochlea, the model that her laboratory uses to study the biophysical mechanisms underlying the first steps in hearing. At right, CC CEO Dr. James Gilman (l) points out features of the Clinical Research Center on the model.



At left, Dr. Farhad Memarzadeh discusses NIH’s CUP. At right, in the foreground, Donald Edwards (l), chief of the CC Facilities Management Branch, explains the challenges associated with the legacy mechanical and electrical equipment in the basement of Bldg. 10 to Rathmell (l), Bertagnolli (c) and Dan Wheeland (r). Behind them, Dr. Alfred Johnson, NIH deputy director for management and NCI’s Anne Lubenow focus on preventing Johnson from bumping his head on the low-hanging infrastructure.

PHOTOS: CHIA-CHI CHARLIE CHANG

New Quarters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

undergoing clinical studies at the Clinical Center and their caregivers. The building is part of a historic group of houses known as the “Officers Quarters.”

“We are so excited that inn families will make this house a home,” said inn CEO Jennie Lucca. “Patients and their families have had a pivotal role in the research that’s conducted at NIH. They help clinicians discover treatments that are shared around the world.”

The event was held on the building’s lawn, near the intersection of West and Center Drives. The quarters are across the street from the inn, close to the CC. Representatives from the Inn, NIH and architectural, engineering and design firms celebrated what Lucca called “an important milestone in our journey.”

Lucca knew the inn had to do more for young adults when she became CEO in 2015. Then, young adults stayed nearby at the off-campus Woodmont House, a transitional home for patients participating in pediatric research.

“Patients want to be here on campus

close to the Clinical Center and their medical team,” she said.

The National Register of Historic Places recognized the Officers Quarters as a historic district in 2000, said Tony Clifford, chief engineer emeritus in the Office of Research Facilities (ORF). The eight buildings are the only small-scale residences on



campus. Originally constructed in the early 1940’s, these homes were originally reserved as living space for Public Health Service officers and HHS and NIH senior staff. The renovated structures will feature historical



The late Dr. Alan Rabson of NCI and his wife, Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, former NIH deputy director, had lived in Bldg. 15B for more than 60 years.

exhibits that tell the stories of the scientists who once lived there.

The quarters are “where the past converges with the promise of a vibrant future,” Clifford said.

Long-time NCI Deputy Director Dr. Alan Rabson and his wife, Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, former NIH deputy director and NIGMS director, had lived in Bldg. 15B for more than 60 years, said NIH Principal Deputy Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak, at the groundbreaking.

“Alan and Ruth were not the only famous scientists to make this place their home,” Tabak said. NIH directors, Nobel laureates, surgeon generals, among others lived here. “Still, they were recognized as the ultimate NIH power couple.”

Diane Baker, inn trustee and wife of former NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, regularly met Rabson for lunch when he lived on campus.

When Bldg. 15B became available, Baker suggested that it might be an alternative to the Woodmont House and Lucca then appealed to Clifford.

In 2017, NIH leadership granted the inn unlimited use of the building. The inn hired an architectural firm to draft design plans for the renovation. ORF and the Office of Research Services will fund the renovation, and the inn will complete the interior design with finishes to support young adults.

Before construction could begin, Clifford said ORF and ORS worked with the Maryland Historical Trust to ensure renovations maintain the quarter’s original aesthetic and character.

Right now, the building is known as the Young Adult Quarters. Unofficially, inn employees are calling it the “Rabson House,” in honor of the home’s previous occupant.

“The spirit infused in all these bricks and mortar will be greatly enriched and enhanced with the renovation and construction of a young adult residence,” concluded Tabak. **R**



The inn marked construction of the Young Adult Quarters at a groundbreaking event in December.



FAES Scholar House Named for Leder

The Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES), in collaboration with NIH, hosted an event to honor former NIH colleague and well-loved mentor Dr. Phil Leder with a day of remembrances and dedication of one of the new scholar houses as part of the FAES Academic Community project. This unique project was created to support the NIH scholars' community and is located just across the street from NIH.

The Phil Leder house is an off-campus space that will provide an inspiring and turn-key environment for current and future generations of researchers, offering a robust support network for early-career scientists while they are at NIH.

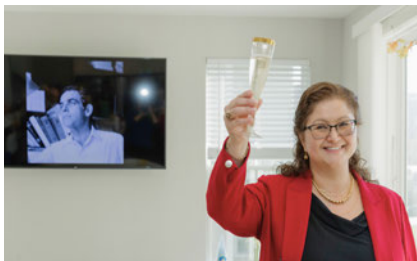
Leder had a long history of advancing education at NIH and served as chair of the FAES department of chemistry, FAES vice president (1970-1971) and FAES president (1971-1973). Also, he taught an important FAES-sponsored course on DNA replication, transcription and translation. Leder left NIH in 1980 for Harvard Medical School, where he was founding chair of the genetics department, a position he held until his retirement in 2008.

Leder, who died in 2020 at age 85, was among the world's most accomplished molecular geneticists. His work with future Nobelist Marshall Nirenberg—namely, the famed Nirenberg and Leder experiments starting at NIH in 1964 that definitively



Above, Leder family members (from l) Mary, Micki, Benjamin and Ethan Leder stand outside the Philip Leder House (top, l). Below, Christina Farias, FAES executive director and CEO, toasts Leder during a tour of the scholar house named in his honor.

elucidated the triplet nature of the genetic code and culminated in its full deciphering—helped set the stage for the revolution in molecular genetic research that Leder himself would continue to lead for the next three decades.



The recent celebration started with a symposium in Masur Auditorium, introduced and moderated by NCI Senior Investigator Dr. Michael Gottesman and FAES Executive Director and CEO Christina Farias. Scientific talks by nine "Leder alumni" from his tenure at NIH and Harvard

followed. They shared captivating stories of their time in his lab and how his mentorship helped shape careers leading to the alumni's own significant contributions to science.

The talks were given by Dr. Cynthia Morton, Dr. Stuart Orkin and Dr. Jonathan Seidman, all of Harvard Medical School; Dr. Philip Hieter of the University of British Columbia; Dr. Jeff Ravetch of Rockefeller University; Dr. Ilan (Lanny) Kirsch of Adaptive Biotechnologies; and NIH's Dr. Kathleen Kelly of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Lothar

Hennighausen of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and Dr. Richard Woychik of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

The symposium was recorded and is archived at <https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=52742>.

Later, attendees met for tours inside the house dedicated to Leder. Read more: <https://faes.org/content/faes-community-at-nih>. [R](#)

Jorgenson Appointed Associate Director for Science Policy

Dr. Lyric Jorgenson was appointed as NIH associate director for science policy and director of the NIH Office of Science Policy (OSP). She had been serving in the role in an acting capacity since April 2021. She began her official tenure in December.



Dr. Lyric Jorgenson

During Jorgenson's tenure as acting director, she led key NIH policy initiatives to transform clinical research to meet health challenges, promote and protect the security of the biomedical research enterprise and maximize responsible

data sharing to translate research into products that improve the health of all Americans.

Between 2017-2021, Jorgenson served as OSP deputy director. Prior to that she served as deputy executive director of the White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force in the Office of the Vice President in the Obama administration, where she developed a cancer roadmap for the nation and advised the Vice President on strategies and investments to accelerate progress in cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment. She also led the development of many White House-initiated policy processes, including developing new NIH policies to bolster scientific integrity, public access to research publications and biosecurity and biosafety practices.

Jorgenson first joined NIH as an AAAS science and technology fellow and throughout her tenure has played a leading role in development of high-impact science and policy initiatives such as the NIH Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies Initiative and establishment of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Denison University and a doctorate degree from the Graduate Program for Neuroscience at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, followed by a post-doctoral fellowship with the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota.



Speakers, donors and the Leder family at the symposium

PHOTOS: BETH CALDWELL/BETH CALDWELL PHOTOGRAPHY



Camille Hoover and Keith Lamirande

NIH's Receive Presidential Rank Award

Four NIH's received the 2023 Presidential Rank Award, the highest honor the federal government can bestow upon a career civilian employee.

This year, Camille Hoover, executive officer at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Keith Lamirande, executive officer at the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences; Colleen McGowan, director of NIH's Office of Research Services; and Jerry Sheehan, former deputy director for policy and external affairs at the National Library of Medicine, were among the 232 recipients from 31 federal agencies.

Winners of the award are strong leaders, professionals and scientists who achieve results and consistently demonstrate strength, integrity, industry and a relentless commitment to excellence in public service. Presidential Rank Awards recognize extraordinary long-term achievements.

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 established the Presidential Rank Awards Program to recognize a select group of career members of the Senior Executive Service for exceptional performance over an extended period of time.

A complete list of the awards can be found at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/presidential-rank-awards/2023/2023-presidential-rank-awards-winners/>.



Colleen McGowan and Jerry Sheehan

NIH's Win Departmental Data Excellence Awards

Four NIH teams won HHS Data Excellence Awards at the ceremony held Dec. 5 at department headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Jaime M. Guidry Auvil, director of the NCI Office of Data Sharing; Imaging Biomarkers; NIH's Computer-Aided Diagnosis Lab; the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program Team; and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Advanced Analytics Team were honored with the award. They were among several individuals and groups across HHS in four categories whose creative, resourceful and collaborative efforts have led to innovative solutions to the department's data challenges.



Dr. Jaime Guidry Auvil

The awards program is a collaboration of HHS's Office of the Chief Data Officer, Data Governance Board's Data Culture Work Group, evaluation officer and statistical official.

CSR's Fosu Retires

BY LAMONT WILLIAMS

Dr. Gabriel Fosu retired in December after more than 17 years at the Center for Scientific Review (CSR). For the past four years, he served as CSR's associate director for diversity and workforce development and chief diversity officer. In this dual role, Fosu successfully coordinated internal and external efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA). For his work, he was featured in 2021 by the NIH Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as part of the its Black



Dr. Gabriel Fosu

History Month series, NIH Champions of the Black Community, Game Changers.

Several of Fosu's specific contributions in DEIA are having an impact not only at CSR, but also across NIH.

At CSR, he served as a reporting avenue for bias in peer review, unfair reviews or uncivil conduct on panels; efforts are under way to implement a similar reporting structure at other NIH institutes and centers. The work of the UNITE-E implementation committee on bias in peer review, of which Fosu was a co-chair, has led to the requirement that all NIH peer reviewers undergo training regarding review integrity and bias awareness.

Fosu also served as co-lead of the working group that oversaw the development of the recently

published NIH-wide strategic plan for DEIA. He received an NIH Director's Award in December 2023 for his work with the group.

"I am so grateful to Gabriel for all that he has done for CSR and for his representation of CSR across NIH," said CSR Director Dr. Noni Byrnes. "His deep commitment to our peer review mission, his belief in the value of diversity and the importance of treating everyone with dignity, along with his warm demeanor and ability to really listen have been so important in fostering an inclusive work environment at CSR."

Fosu holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Brown University. Prior to joining CSR, he served as program officer, principal investigator, research director, assistant professor and associate professor across several institutions and programs, including Catholic University of America, Howard University, University of Ghana, UCLA Danfa Project and University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

In addition, he served as a chief technical advisor for the Population and Housing Census Program at the United Nations.

Having served in several additional posts within CSR—scientific review officer and integrated review group (review branch) chief—Fosu remained at the center for the full course of his NIH career, mentoring many others along the way.

"I have always regarded mentoring as a very important endeavor and I am delighted to witness the advancement of the careers of my former mentees," he said.

Reflecting on his latest positions at CSR, Fosu said, "I am sincerely and deeply grateful for the opportunity given to me to contribute to advancing DEIA at NIH. Serving in those roles has been the high point of my career and an honor."

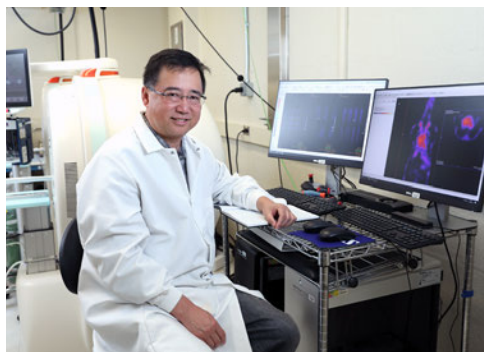
NIBIB Analytical Chemist Ma Remembered

Dr. Ying Ma, staff scientist in the Molecular Tracer and Imaging Core Facility at the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), passed away on Nov. 20. His career at NIH spanned three decades on the Bethesda campus.

Ma was born in January 1964 in Shanxi Province, China. He earned his Ph.D. in medicinal chemistry from the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Beijing Medical University, in 1992.

Beginning in 1993, Ma was a visiting scholar at NIH, where he conducted postdoctoral research in analytical chemistry at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and National Eye Institute (NEI). In this period, he developed separation methods for biologically active molecules. His NHLBI mentors included Dr. Henry Fales, a renowned mass spectrometry expert, and Dr. Yoichiro Ito, an innovative countercurrent chromatography scientist.

In 1999, Ma joined the Clinical Center's positron emission tomography (PET) department and in



Dr. Ying Ma

2004, his group moved to NIBIB as one of its first intramural components.

An expert in mass spectrometry techniques, Ma was a valued collaborator on a broad range of research topics, including small molecule metabolites, nanobody adducts, antibody functionalization and nanomaterial characterizations. He obtained two patents on chiral separation and affinity countercurrent chromatography and contributed to more than 130 peer-reviewed scientific publications.

“Ying was a dedicated mentor who was always eager to share his knowledge,” said NIBIB Scientific Director Dr. Richard Leapman, at Ma’s memorial service. “His influence was felt not only at NIH, but also in the wider scientific community through his publications and presentations.”

Dr. Dale Kiesewetter, chief of NIBIB’s Molecular Tracer and Imaging Core Facility, also remembered Ma at the service, “Ying was a colleague, collaborator and a friend.”

Ma is survived by his wife, Lin Qi, his parents, brother and extended family.

FIC’s Eiss Is Mourned

BY SUSAN SCUTTI

Rob Eiss, 69, a long-time member of the Fogarty International Center team, passed away at his home in Silver Spring, Md., in late October.

“Rob loved to hike and swim and, in his younger years, had numerous travel adventures, including counting tigers in India, hiking through the African jungle to observe Silver Back gorillas, and two close calls—one with a running hippo and one with a hungry crocodile,” recalled his sister, Susan Eiss.



Rob Eiss

Eiss held a bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland and a master’s degree from Oxford University. He served Fogarty in a variety of capacities beginning in 1993 as a program officer in

the Division of International Relations, and later as director of the Office of International Science Policy and Analysis.

From 2000 to 2003, Eiss took on the role of associate director for planning and budget at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and from 2005 to 2007 he served as CEO of the Center for Management of Intellectual Property in Health Research, a non-profit based in Oxford, UK, that partnered with the Medical Research Council of South Africa. Eiss returned to Fogarty in 2007 as senior advisor to FIC’s director.

“Rob was a leader, a negotiator, an organizer, a representative, and a visionary, who understood Fogarty and recognized the vital potential for global health research partnerships,” said Fogarty Acting Director Dr. Peter Kilmarx.

One of Eiss’s most significant contributions was leading the creation of FIC’s strategic plan for 2000-2003, which reoriented the center’s programs and its focus toward addressing communicable and emerging chronic diseases in low- and middle-income countries. This plan provided the analytic framework for NIH investments in Africa that ultimately led to the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria, an alliance created to control and eventually eradicate malaria in Africa.

Eiss also served as a member of the NIH global health research team and as an advisor to former NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins. Eiss organized annual NIH workshops for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and tightened the bonds between NIH and one of its most productive external collaborators. He also set agendas for meetings of the Heads of International Research Organizations and prepared NIH presentations and briefings.

“Rob’s ideas shaped Fogarty’s and NIH’s global footprint as we know it,” said Kilmarx.

As a representative at the National Science and Technology Council subcommittee on international science & technology coordination, Eiss ensured that global health was prominently featured in the biennial report on international cooperation. As a lead writer for the council, he authored reports on U.S. government science and technology relations with Russia as well as on European economic integration and science and technology cooperation. Eiss also advised the WHO Science Council; worked on an initiative to help strengthen the genomic research workforce in Africa; and acted as NIH lead on issues related to the EU General Data Protection Regulation.

Eiss was preceded in death by his parents, Herman and Alice Eiss, and is survived by his nephew Kevin Newcomb, niece Emily Newcomb, and brother-in-law Larry Newcomb in addition to his sister, Susan.

The family requests those who wish to send flowers instead make a donation in his name to the Children’s Inn at NIH, where his frequent volunteer work made him a familiar face. <https://childrensinn.org/ways-to-give/>.

NICHD Mourns Scientist Emerita Levin

Dr. Judith H. Levin, a long-time NIH researcher who joined the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) in 1962 and then the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) from 1973 until her retirement in 2014, passed away on Dec. 8.

A daughter of public school teachers, Levin was born in 1934 in Brooklyn, N.Y. She earned her B.A. in chemistry in 1955 from Barnard College, an M.A. in biochemistry from Harvard in 1957 and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Columbia University in 1962. She came to NHLBI for her postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Nobel Laureate Dr. Marshall Nirenberg, where she studied protein synthesis and the genetic code. In 1973, Levin joined NICHD’s Laboratory of Molecular Genetics and eventually headed her own laboratory, the section on viral gene regulation.



Dr. Judith Levin

Levin’s research focused on the molecular mechanisms involved in retrovirus replication. She sought to understand HIV replication strategies and host defense mechanisms to help develop effective treatments for people with HIV/AIDS.

Levin studied the effects of mutations in structural elements of the HIV-1 capsid protein on infectivity, viral core architecture and reverse transcription. She also had a longstanding interest and leadership role in research on the HIV-1 nucleocapsid protein (NC) and made numerous contributions regarding the critical importance of NC function for specific and efficient reverse transcription. Her scientific reviews on the nucleic acid chaperone activity of NC (i.e., the ability of NC to remodel nucleic acid structures to form the most thermodynamically stable conformations) continue to be cited widely in retrovirus literature.

After retirement, Levin was designated a “scientist emerita” and continued to interact with colleagues, join meetings remotely and stay connected with the field. In 2023, she was invited to co-edit a special issue of the journal *Viruses*, “Molecular Genetics of Retrovirus Replication” (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/viruses/special_issues/mol_genet_retrovirus).

Colleagues remember Levin as “committed to research, dedicated to her family and generous with her support in scientific and personal matters. She was a very caring person who always remembered the names of friends’ children and special dates.”

Levin is survived by her husband of 66 years, Jonathan Levin; sons, Joshua (Dora) and Daniel (Risa); four grandchildren; and brother Bernard Goldstein. [R](#)

GIVING SEASON EVERYDAY

Thoughtful Treasures Bring Joy to Young Patients, Families

BY DANA TALESNIK

It's fun and exciting at any age to receive a treat in the mail, especially for children—even more so for kids with serious illnesses. At the Children's Inn at NIH, where children, teens and young adults from all over the world reside with their families while undergoing medical treatment at the Clinical Center, pediatric patients and their siblings receive treats just about every day, thanks to the Thoughtful Treasures initiative.

Every inn resident is assigned a mailbox. Each morning, they race to their mailboxes to see what treasures await. The anticipation is part of the thrill. The treasure might be a homemade craft or stuffed animal or a small toy. Some youngsters take their treasures to their medical visits to play with while waiting for treatment. The goodies bring a bit of cheer and comfort to patients and their families during an uncertain and scary time.

On Dec. 18, Sia Lakshmi Sampson, age 13, delivered 50 gift bags to patients as part of an annual charitable giving tradition every December for her birthday celebration. Each gift bag was curated to include such holiday-themed items as a bracelet, pop-it fidget keychain, activity books and a signed card.

Sampson, who aspires to be a physician when she grows up, is the daughter of Dana Sampson, a former NIH'er who now works at the Health Resources and Services Administration. Sampson said she has sought to explain her daughter's reported exhilaration following selfless service to others by introducing the "helper's high." Research has shown that helper's high can lower stress levels, boost self-esteem and mood, and may even enhance the body's immune function. Sia said she has a deeper appreciation for how giving benefits both giver and recipient.

Sia said giving to those in need makes her feel good while bringing joy to others.

"I hope these gifts make the patients feel excited and cared for," she said. "I want them to feel happy even though they're going through difficult times. Any time I've ever helped someone feel better, my heart soars and I can't help but smile the rest of the day...Giving is something I love doing."

Anyone can donate to Thoughtful Treasures. To learn how and where to drop off a donation any time of year, see: <https://childrensinn.org/get-involved/thoughtful-treasures/>



Sia Lakshmi Sampson (l) with Meghan Arbegast Smith at the Children's Inn



Smith (l), senior volunteer engagement manager and lead contact for Thoughtful Treasures at the inn, in front of the kids' mailboxes with Sampson, who hand-delivered gift bags to the inn in December

PHOTOS COURTESY DANA SAMPSON/HRSA