

# HEALTH SCIENCES matters



FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES MAGAZINE OF NEWS, VIEWS & DISCOVERIES

2011



## → MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE

Health Sciences Dream Team is enriching lives through international charity program.

### FACULTY NEWS

Celebrated counsellor made significant impact on students over 38 years.

### PHILANTHROPY

Nursing professor cares for hidden homeless community.

### SENIORS AND DIABETES

CCAA helps seniors live independent, healthy lives.



## GREETINGS FROM THE DEAN



**Now, more than ever, Health Sciences Matters, and as a faculty, we are all working to make a difference in the health of our community, our country and the world.**

I had the honour of volunteering at the hockey competition during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver and this experience allowed me to reflect on the great privileges we enjoy in Canada and at The University of Western Ontario. This point is not lost on our Faculty.

Through teaching, research and service, our professors, staff members, students, alumni and friends combine to make the Faculty of Health Sciences an amazing place to work, study, learn and grow.

Our academic programs are growing to include outreach activities and international learning opportunities for students, which we believe is essential to our academic mission of providing Canada's best university experience. It helps foster a culture of service that extends beyond the walls of the academy and provides perspective that will help shape our world.

Research conducted in the Faculty continues to make positive contributions to the health and well-being of people around the world. This would not be possible without our team of brilliant researchers and speaks to the importance of maintaining our strong tradition of discovery.

The culture of service that has continued to develop in our Faculty over the past several years is something that makes me particularly proud. Whether through financial donations to causes like the United Way or the Run for a Cure, membership in community organizations such as Middlesex-London in Motion, or outreach programs in Rwanda, Peru or Chile, members of our Faculty go above and beyond to share their passion for health and wellness.

It has been, and continues to be, a pleasure and privilege to serve as the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. I look forward to sharing the great news from our Faculty with you and hope you enjoy this edition of our *Health Sciences Matters* magazine.

Yours in Health Sciences,

**W. James Weese, Dean**  
Faculty of Health Sciences

## ABOUT THE FACULTY

Comprised of six Schools – Communication Sciences and Disorders, Health Studies, Kinesiology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy – and one interdisciplinary graduate program – Health & Rehabilitation Sciences – the Faculty of Health Sciences strives to be a leader in the generation and dissemination of knowledge in the areas of health and health care, rehabilitation, physical activity and sport.

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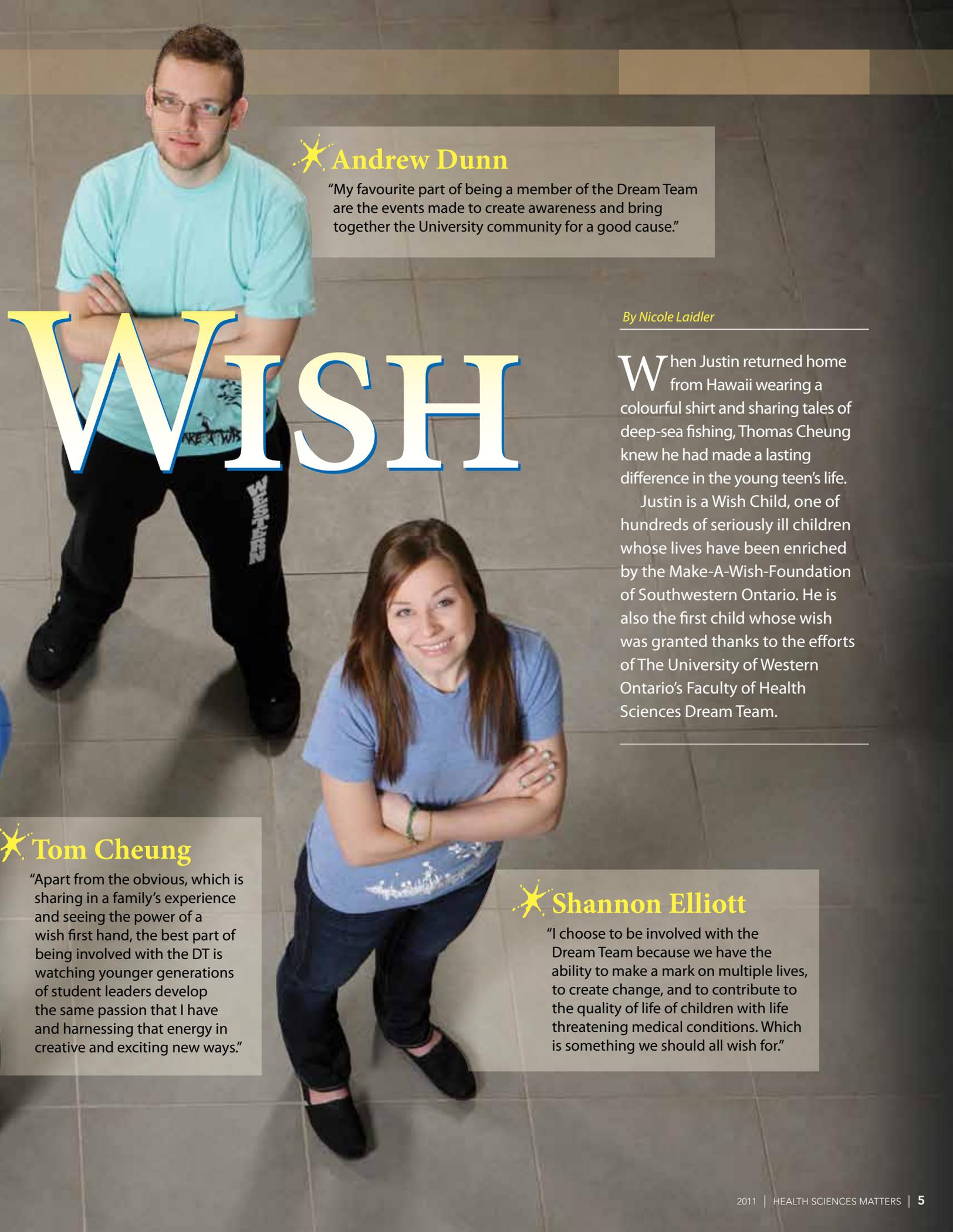
★ Erica Barbazza

“The Dream Team is a practical way to apply our education towards improving the quality of life of a child – while having fun at the same time.”

# MAKE-A- ...it just might come true

★ Jordan VanderEnde

“There are so many clubs available at Western, but the Dream Team is something that has an immediate impact on a family, and that’s something special. If we have the time and resources available to help others then we should jump at the opportunity, and that’s a belief held by everyone involved with the Make-A-Wish organization.”



**★ Andrew Dunn**

“My favourite part of being a member of the Dream Team are the events made to create awareness and bring together the University community for a good cause.”

*By Nicole Laidler*

When Justin returned home from Hawaii wearing a colourful shirt and sharing tales of deep-sea fishing, Thomas Cheung knew he had made a lasting difference in the young teen’s life.

Justin is a Wish Child, one of hundreds of seriously ill children whose lives have been enriched by the Make-A-Wish-Foundation of Southwestern Ontario. He is also the first child whose wish was granted thanks to the efforts of The University of Western Ontario’s Faculty of Health Sciences Dream Team.

**★ Tom Cheung**

“Apart from the obvious, which is sharing in a family’s experience and seeing the power of a wish first hand, the best part of being involved with the DT is watching younger generations of student leaders develop the same passion that I have and harnessing that energy in creative and exciting new ways.”

**★ Shannon Elliott**

“I choose to be involved with the Dream Team because we have the ability to make a mark on multiple lives, to create change, and to contribute to the quality of life of children with life threatening medical conditions. Which is something we should all wish for.”

# WISH



*“But the power of a wish is that it gets bigger and bigger through all the people from the community who get involved.”*



“It was a great moment to see Justin’s family and to know that you were part of making [their trip] happen,” says 25-year-old Cheung, who founded the Dream Team in 2007.

Cheung was in his fourth year of a Health Sciences degree and taking a class in palliative care when he first contacted Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southwestern Ontario executive director, Lori Quick, in 2006.

He had a course project, and wanted to approach it from a slightly different angle.

Most people associate palliative care with the elderly, Cheung explains. As someone who grew up with nine siblings and spent his high school years working as a special needs swim instructor, he wanted to investigate palliative care for children.

Cheung’s timing couldn’t have been better. Make-A-Wish Foundation directors from across Canada were in London for their annual meeting, and Cheung was invited to join them.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation was formed in Phoenix, Arizona in 1980. The international charity grants the wishes of children, aged three to 17, with life-threatening medical conditions. “We can’t change the medical reality, but what we can do is give children and their families some strength, hope and joy,” Quick explains.

Many children wish for a special trip, others dream of meeting a favourite celebrity, while some request gifts like a computer, backyard play equipment or home entertainment centre.

“The wish itself is wonderful,” Quick notes. “But the power of a wish is that it gets bigger and bigger through all the people from the community who get involved.”

After speaking with the Canadian Make-A-Wish Foundation directors, Cheung knew he wanted to help. He decided that the foundation should be adopted as the Faculty of Health Sciences’ official charity.

“Their philosophy fit so well with the Health Sciences idea of health, which is

not merely the absence of disease, but physical, emotional and spiritual health,” says Cheung. He also saw Make-A-Wish as an organization that could unite students from the faculty’s Health Sciences, Nursing and Kinesiology programs behind a common cause.

Cheung’s idea was embraced by the Dean’s Office, and the Dream Team was granted a permanent seat on the Faculty of Health Sciences Students’ Council.

“It’s very easy for us to support these kinds of student initiatives, because they make such a difference in our community,” says Jim Weese, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. “[Cheung] made this a priority for our faculty, and now it’s one of the hallmarks of what we do.”

Although Cheung has now gone on to medical school at Western’s Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, the Faculty of Health Sciences Dream Team is still going strong. In fact, the group has raised enough money to grant a wish each year.

“Last year we sent a little boy to see The Backstreet Boys,” says current Dream Team director, Erica Barbazza. “This year we will send a little girl to Disney World.”

“Knowing that we are raising money to grant the wish of a child is very important. It resonates with everyone,” the 21-year-old says. “Seeing the wish take shape is a neat feeling. It touches on a something other than all the medical things that are going on in [the child’s] life. As a health sciences student, that is something I really appreciate.”

Fundraising through special events like coffee houses and athletic tournaments is only a small part of what the Dream Team does. “The money they raise is wonderful, but it’s almost secondary in our view,” says Quick. “It’s really about the awareness they spread. It’s incredible.”

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Southwestern Ontario has granted 500 wishes since the chapter was founded 25 years ago. Of those, Quick says almost

## Dream Team wins video competition

400 were granted in the past five years. "There are currently 100 families in various stages of the wish process," she adds.

Although he is no longer a Dream Team member, Cheung's relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation continues. He is currently working with Make-A-Wish Foundation International Chairman, Dr. Keith Goh, on a study to objectively investigate the power of a wish.

"What actually happens to these kids when they are ill and you can give them an experience that is so profoundly enjoyable?" he asks. "We want to see if there are outcomes that we can measure."

Regardless of the eventual findings, Cheung is convinced that each wish granted makes a difference.

"Many of these children spend a lot of their time in hospitals and going through tests. They really do lose a part of their childhood because of their illness. Being able to give part of that back is incredible. It's one of those things that in some ways you have to see for yourself."

Cheung, who hopes to go into family medicine with a specialization in emergency medicine, says his work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation has also had a profound impact on his own life.

"It's made me a better person, and I'm 100 per cent positive that it will make me a better physician," he says. "It will change the way I interact with my own children. It already changes the way I interact with people on a daily basis."

"I've never worked for Make-A-Wish," he adds. "It's been a labour of love. It'll be a lifelong venture for me, for sure."

For more information about the Dream Team, visit: [www.uwodreamteam.com](http://www.uwodreamteam.com)



*By Leila Almawy*

After entering a video in the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) IVY+10 Video Competition, the Health Sciences Dream Team's production was selected as one of two winners from a group of 30 submissions.

The video, produced by Shannon Elliot, Dream Team communications coordinator, showcased the Team's vision for making the world a better place through volunteering and earned her and Dream Team director Erica Barbazza a trip to the 21st International Association for Volunteer Effort World Volunteer Conference in Singapore.

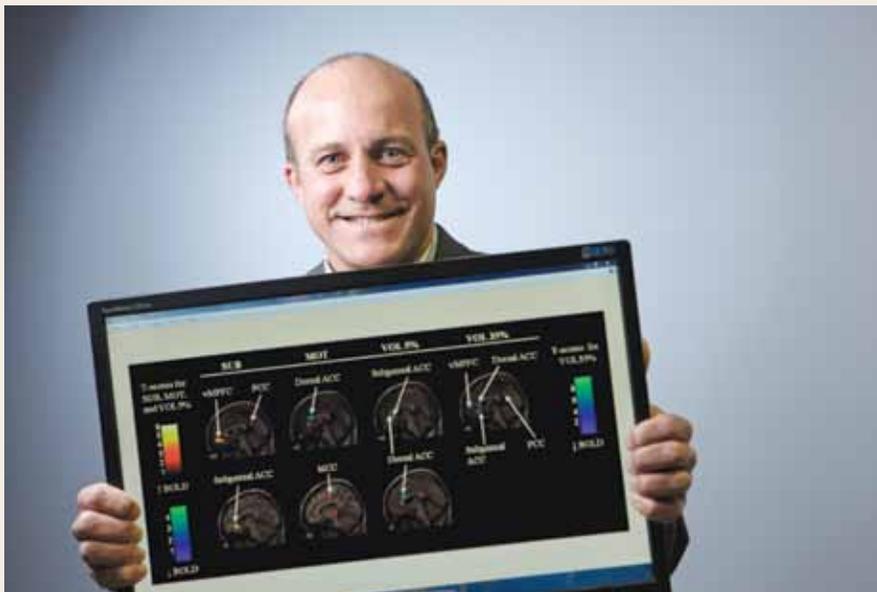
The Dream Team video is a one-minute inspiring segment made up of some of the Dream Team members who share their wishes by writing them down on paper and reading them aloud. The papers were folded into airplanes and thrown into the air to symbolize "the sky is the limit" with the Dream Team and the Make-a-Wish Foundation partnership, Elliot says.

The video was named the winner based on its originality, creativity, story and technique. It was posted on YouTube to allow the public to watch and vote for its favourite, and then, along with 19 other videos, it was sent to judges to make the final decision.

The three-day conference was held Jan. 21–23. The Dream Team representatives presented their video at the conference, as well as took part in training modules, hands-on service projects, creative workshops and plenary sessions.

Watch the Dream Team video at [www.uwo.ca/fhs/news/stories/2010/11\\_22\\_dreamteam.html](http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/news/stories/2010/11_22_dreamteam.html).



**GOING WITH THE FLOW** by Douglas Keddy

As a postdoctoral trainee, kinesiology professor Kevin Shoemaker made the conscious decision to improve our understanding of the autonomic nervous system, which operates subconsciously, helps determine overall health and controls such vital bodily functions as heart rate, blood pressure, perspiration and digestion.

"We're interested in how the autonomic nervous system communicates with the cardiovascular system to regulate blood pressure and the distribution of blood flow," he says.

Recently named Canada Research Chair in Integrative Physiology and Exercise, Shoemaker is keenly interested in how physical fitness and hypertension affect such physiological processes. This knowledge can play a particularly significant role in improving the health and well-being of at-risk and aging populations.

He and his team examine regions of the brain that influence the cardiovascular system, and how nerve signals from muscles and other sites in the body affect the brain's integrity. They also aim to establish how age and vascular disease interfere with normal brain structure and function.

In the process, Shoemaker stresses the importance of exercise as a stimulus for protecting vascular and nervous system tissues. "Due to its role in stroke, heart attacks and exercise limitations, vascular disease remains the greatest economic and physical burden in our society," he says.

By examining small blood vessel stiffness in humans, he also hopes to find early warning signs of vascular disease and opportunities for early responses to treatment.

Shoemaker pioneered the use of ultrasound to measure blood flow in muscle during exercise, which benefits a wide range of people, from high-end athletes monitoring muscle performance to patients under bed rest protocols. Similar advances in technology have provided novel manners of studying the body and integrating measurements related to physiological, cardiac and neural signals – all in real-time.

"Imaging technologies have led us to the point we are at now, and new developments will allow us to begin to look at the small vessels in the brain," he says.

The applied aspects of Shoemaker's research carry him around the world, including to Finland, where he is part of a \$4-million, CIHR-funded study led by Rob Petrella that looks for early markers of vascular disease in people at risk for diabetes.

“Not limiting his... studies to this planet, Shoemaker... works with various space agencies... to understand the effects of microgravity and physical deconditioning in space.”

In further studies related to cardiovascular disease and the autonomic nervous system, Shoemaker examines Croatian free divers to see if these athletes may in fact face a higher risk of cardiovascular disease as they age.

Not limiting his wide-ranging studies to this planet, Shoemaker also works with various space agencies around the world to understand the effects of microgravity and physical deconditioning in space. "Astronauts must exercise between two and three hours daily to minimize the effects of space on cardiovascular status," he says, "and we use bed rest on Earth as an analogue to understand the effects of microgravity on the autonomic nervous system and blood vessels."

It turns out Shoemaker's interests in the cardiovascular system and in neurophysiology as a student presciently parallel the manner in which he pursued his field of research: "I just followed my heart and my mind," he says.



## FOR ONE STUDENT, PHILANTHROPY MADE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE *by Karmen Dowling*

Dayna Jablecki is amazed that people she never met gave her the keys to the door of discovery.

"I always have had big dreams and will continue to have them, but the realization that complete strangers also believed in my dream and my abilities to make them happen has made all the difference to me," says Dayna, who plans to attend the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders after completing her undergraduate degree. "Through these donors' actions I am encouraged to help other dreamers reach their goals.

"My exchange opportunity changed my life," says Dayna who spent a year at the University of Leeds in the U.K. "The world needs a proactive response to improve world understanding and promote harmony. The International Exchange Program provides an answer by offering an opportunity to become a global citizen who is globally literate. From my exchange experience, I gained a new perspective on global issues and world affairs that I will keep forever."

Dayna believes the international exchange program is a terrific way for students to combine their academic interests with their studies. However, exchange and school are both expensive and sometimes a donation will mean the difference of whether or not a student can participate in an exchange program.

"It is through the altruistic actions of sponsors and donors, that exchange students, who dream of making a difference in the world, can utilize the gifts of their education and exchange experience to their fullest potential," she says. "I can't thank the Vander Laans enough for the generous scholarship. It allowed me to experience an unforgettably fantastic journey."

The Sun Light Foundation International Exchange Award was established by a gift from Hank and Anne Vander Laan in 2003. The \$2,000 award is given annually to students registered at Western who are participating in an approved exchange program at an international university. Selection is based on academic achievement and the candidate's fitness as an ambassador of Western.

When I left for exchange my goal as a Canadian was to be transformed and also be empowered by the world. Now that I have returned to Canada, my goal is to utilize that empowerment to transform the world."



Dayna stands outside the University of Leeds in the U.K., holding a thank you sign for the donors of her award, Hank and Anne Vander Laan.



REACHING  
OUT

## Nursing professor Abe Oudshoorn tackles homelessness in London

by Paul Mayne, Western News

Homelessness is a complex experience, with causes almost as plentiful as the number of people who experience it. And Abe Oudshoorn should know.

As a London InterCommunity Health Centre nurse, he treated the needs of (and created friendships with) the homeless community. Now an academic – year four co-ordinator (Collaborative Program and Lecturer) in the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing – Oudshoorn’s passion for wanting to make a difference with London’s homeless community hasn’t waned.





The creation of the London Homelessness Outreach Network (LHON), a grassroots organization developed out of the passion to act on homelessness in the city, began as Oudshoorn was disseminating research from his doctoral dissertation on homelessness and health.

“We are a diverse group of individuals with diverse talents, but with a common desire to take action on issues around homelessness in London,” he says. “Recognizing the complexity of the issues, we seek to work at multiple levels, including policy, public perceptions, and personal relationships.”

In his travels, Oudshoorn kept running into people interested in getting involved in some way on these issues. A small group of 10-12 people got together last spring to discuss what could be done, and wondered about what issues people face in experiencing homelessness in London.

The group grew to 20 by the summer months, and to more than 35 by fall. Everyone from doctors, nurses and occupational therapists to academics, students and social activists made up the ever-growing LHON.

“Seeing this growth, we realized that we didn’t have to find the one right thing to do, but could rather become a network to support many different actions,” Oudshoorn says. “In this way, we are conceptualizing ourselves as a community of practice, a diverse group of individuals gathered around a common concern.”

For Oudshoorn, it was a personal struggle when he left the London InterCommunity Health Centre to switch to full-time academic – which is the reason behind LHON.

“It was very difficult because I had all these relationships with the people I’ve been working with and with the agencies. I was feeling fairly disconnected and that wasn’t okay with me,” he says. “For myself, as an academic, it meets that triangle of service, research and education. A lot of what we’re doing will have research built into it, and I’m hoping for an education component to be built into it.”

Oudshoorn adds homelessness in London is hidden to most, as it is relegated to a limited area, with few people sleeping on the streets like they might in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver.

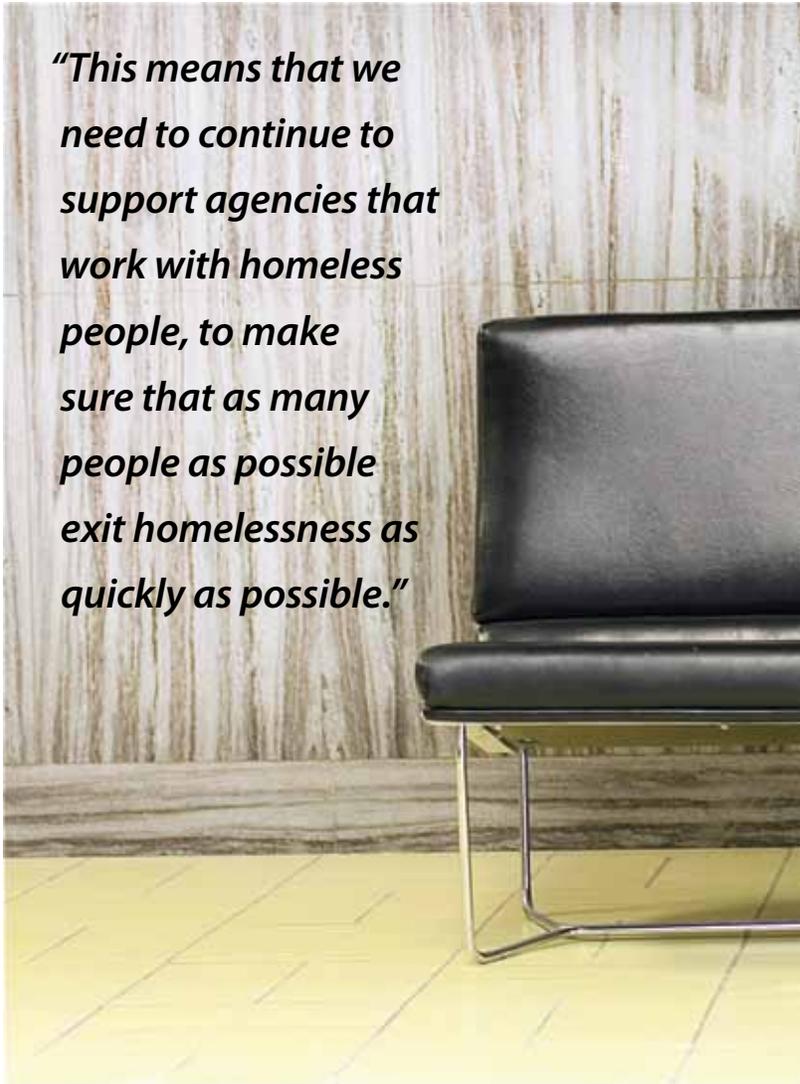
However, it is no small concern, with London having more than 600 shelter beds, the London InterCommunity Health Centre’s Health Outreach for People Who are Homeless having more than

1,000 clients, and countless numbers of people living in precarious housing situations such as couch-surfing or group homes.

The first step, Oudshoorn says, is to change the public perception around the idea that homeless is simply another word for lazy. Although mental illness and addictions are relevant factors, less than 60 per cent of homeless persons experience a mental illness, and less than 40 per cent experience an addiction.

And for 90 per cent of people who experience it, homelessness is not a chronic state, but a temporary transition.

“This means that we need to continue to support agencies that work with homeless people, to make sure that as many people as possible exit homelessness as quickly as possible,” Oudshoorn says. “Perception is the lynch pin in that three level structure (policy, perception, personal involvement). If you don’t change that perception, the policies and the politics won’t change and no one is going to want to get personally involved.”



***“This means that we need to continue to support agencies that work with homeless people, to make sure that as many people as possible exit homelessness as quickly as possible.”***

LHON looks to create a healthy policy structure to address homelessness in London.

Oudshoorn has been amazed at how quickly LHON has progressed in just under a year and is excited to see change in the community.

"I believe that if we can grow public will to eliminate homelessness in our city by assisting everyone out of it, as opposed to driving it away through criminalizing poverty, political will is bound to follow," says Oudshoorn. "This is essential, as homelessness is something we actually choose to have in our city based on our health and social policies."



With the development of LHON, Abe Oudshoorn (below) hopes to help change the public perception of homelessness.



## Canada's homeless veterans

by Paul Mayne, *Western News*

Canadian Forces veterans, who at one time served and protected their country, are now facing one of the toughest battles of their lives – homelessness.

A national study by assistant nursing professor Susan Ray and nursing professor Cheryl Forchuk, the first of its kind on Canada's homeless veterans, found a number of surprises that will hopefully make Veterans Affairs Canada and others aware of the problem.

Prior research on the subject, which has primarily originated in the United States, presents the scenario of homeless veterans having seen overseas deployment, witnessing trauma, having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and not being able to adjust when they get home. But research with Canadian homeless veterans shows a whole different picture.

"For a lot of them it was from drinking, which started in the military, escalated over time and 10 years later you would see the alcoholism, and through that they would lose their job, their relationships, their housing," Ray says.

Surprisingly, none of the veterans had been deployed overseas; so their current plight wasn't caused by deployment trauma or PTSD. With the exception of a couple who had experience in peacekeeping missions, the bulk of the veterans in the study all served on bases in Canada.

The good news story in this, Forchuk says, is that Veterans Affairs Canada is dealing really well with high-risk veterans and what they are doing is working. But she adds there is this other group and the risk for them is higher than initially thought.

"We want the Canadian picture to be clear," Forchuk says. "We don't want people implementing things based on results from other countries. We support what they're (Veterans Affairs Canada) doing with vets with PTSD, but what we would like to see is an alternative clinical pathway where people are routinely assessed for alcoholism so things can be nipped in the bud."

**TIRELESS ADVOCATE HELPED 38,000 STUDENTS** by Heather Travis, Western News

Tova Zarnowiecki may not have made startling research discoveries or received an outstanding teaching award, but she made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of students at The University of Western Ontario.

Zarnowiecki was the Academic Counsellor & Career Development Officer for the School of Kinesiology and retired in June 2010 after 38 years at the University.

Few people have committed their entire life to the same organization, but each day Zarnowiecki arrived at her office, the challenges and rewards kept it from feeling like work.

Zarnowiecki's influence was seen on her office wall, which was covered with cards of thanks from former students.

On days when in need of a boost, those notes offered a sense of accomplishment.

"I once thought we had to do great and wonderful things to say we had meaning in our life," says Zarnowiecki. "But it's the small things in life, and you don't realize how you make a difference in people's lives. The impact and footprint is made in small increments."

She watched many graduates take up successful careers, including Deborah Bright (BA '90, MA '92), President and CEO of Special Olympics Canada, who continued to seek advice from Zarnowiecki after she graduated.

"She has changed my life so significantly," says Bright. "She inspired me to always reach out and help others ... You don't meet many people like Tova in life and I was fortunate enough to have met her."

One student who sat in her office picking out courses moved to the other side of the desk as a faculty administrator.

Faculty of Health Sciences Associate Dean Kevin Wamsley knew Zarnowiecki as an undergraduate student in the early 1980s.

"She was my counsellor, so she helped me to choose courses and we talked about career paths," says Wamsley.

"Tova was probably the foremost advocate for the undergraduate students in the Kinesiology program. She always had the students at heart."

She was well-known across campus and many counsellors turned to her for advice and institutional history, he adds.

Through the years she helped close to 38,000 students make decisions about courses and careers. Having no children of her own, she considers the many members of the School of Kinesiology part of her "extended family."

"My whole approach was developed with the student in mind," she says. "My passion is students."

Looking back over the years, she is emotional about closing the door on such an integral part of her life.

"It was a very supportive environment for me to learn and grow," she says. "I never thought of it as work."

"I do love working with the students and I need to channel that beyond the university gates," she says. "I am going to live each day as if it is a weekend."

Zarnowiecki has left big shoes to fill, says Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Jim Weese.

"We are deeply indebted to Tova and thank her for her incredible contributions and selfless commitment. She served and influenced thousands of students over her 38-year career that have benefited from her wise counsel and caring personality. We all miss her."



## MARILYN FORD-GILBOE NAMED ECHO CHAIR IN RURAL WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH



Nursing professor Marilyn Ford-Gilboe was named the new Echo Chair in Rural Women's Health Research, effective September 21, 2010.

Through the generous support of the Ontario Women's Health Council, now Echo: Improving Women's Health in Ontario, and Arthur and Sonia Labatt, the Chair was established in 2002 with the aim of providing leadership in research on rural women's health, promoting equity and improved health for the women of Ontario by working in collaborative partnership with the health system, the community, research and policy stakeholders.

Professor Ford-Gilboe brings a strong track record of research in the areas of women's health and community health interventions to the role. She will lead a broad research agenda that brings together campus and community researchers, students and

leaders to identify gaps, map out research strategies, build research teams and stimulate research activity.

A Faculty Scholar, Ford-Gilboe earned a bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Windsor, a master's degree in Nursing from Toronto and a PhD from Wayne State (Michigan). She is an associate scientist at both Lawson Health Research Institute and the Children's Health Research Institute and an adjunct professor with the School of Graduate Studies at the University of New Brunswick.



## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: DOUG HAYES, PROFESSOR, COACH AND FRIEND *by Heather Travis, Western News*

Long-time Western Mustangs men's and women's basketball coach and football coach Doug Hayes died September 25, 2010 at the age of 68.

Hayes was hired in 1969 as a lecturer in the Department of Physical Education at Western and was professor emeritus in the School of Kinesiology.

He played an instrumental role in recruiting Kinesiology professor Bert Carron to the faculty. They were childhood friends, both growing up in Edmonton and later studying at the University of Alberta together.

"I've known him since 1960," says Carron.

"He never left a friend behind... I'm one of those (friends)."

Hayes coached football and men's and women's basketball during his time at Western and was named Ontario University Athletics Association Coach of the Year in 1976.

"A measure of the kind of coach he was, he has had all his life former athletes coming to visit him and (wife) Laurretta at his house. They truly loved the guy," Carron says.

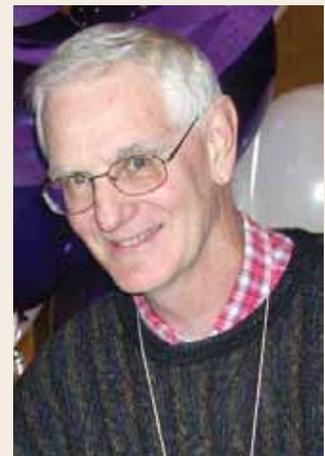
As an administrator at Western, Hayes was men's athletic co-ordinator (1988-1997) and acting chairman, Intercollegiate Athletics (1995-96).

"He was an outstanding communicator and incredibly effective motivator in terms of dealing

with his athletes and in relating to his colleagues involved with coaching," says Former Mustang football head coach Darwin Semotiuk.

Semotiuk, who coached football with Hayes and is a professor in the School of Kinesiology, describes him as soft-spoken and quiet, but also someone with a great sense of humour.

Overall, he was a great teacher and "incredibly highly respected by his colleagues and his athletes and fellow coaches," Semotiuk says. "He was a great friend."



“A measure of the kind of coach he was, he has had all his life former athletes coming to visit him... They truly loved the guy.”





Researchers Anthony Isaac, Debbie Rudman and Chantelle Richmond.

# GIVING INDIGENOUS YOUTH A 'PHOTOVOICE'

## **Innovative Research Project Explores the Barriers to – and Facilitators of – Education**

*by Katherine Low*

Researchers in The University of Western Ontario's Faculties of Health Sciences and Social Sciences have come up with an inventive way to study the barriers Indigenous youth face when it comes to education. The technique is called 'Photovoice' and its use to explore the topic is the brainchild of Occupational Science master's student Anthony Isaac, who is a member of the Anishinabe community, Occupational Therapy Assistant Professor Debbie Rudman and Geography and First Nations Studies Assistant Professor Chantelle Richmond.

Although the trio didn't invent the technique, they are using it with a modern twist to help them understand the unique complexities First Nations youth face when transitioning to post-secondary education.

Richmond and Rudman are the primary investigators on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded research project entitled 'Educational Vision Quests: Photovoice and Community-based Participatory Research with First Nations Youth.' It's a community-based participatory research project with N'Amerind Friendship Centre, Indigenous Services at The University of Western Ontario and the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre.



Photovoice is a research methodology that allows participants to be actively involved in a study, rather than being passive subjects. Richmond and Rudman say this technique was chosen because it aligns with Indigenous traditions of story-telling.

“We aimed to make the community central to the work – to place community issues, concerns and ideas at the centre of the research throughout the process,” says Richmond. “It is a study that is advancing the way Indigenous health research is done in Canada.”

And it’s giving a rare insight into the way First Nations youth view education.

The First Nations youth involved in the study were given cameras to take photographs meant to show their own attitudes toward education, including their dreams and their challenges. Then, in addition to individual interviews, the youth also participated in a group discussion.

“It enables these youth to tell their own stories. It’s not us interpreting what these photos mean; it’s them taking photos of something that means something to them in their lives,” says Richmond. “As the culture of Indigenous health research shifts more and more toward community-based approaches, the importance of building trusting relationships and rapport with the communities you work with becomes imperative... This means that research projects must work in mutually beneficial ways, and that the research must have tangible benefits for study communities.”

“This project aims to explore the perspectives of First Nations youth in relation to their educational aspirations, including pathway facilitators and barriers,” says Rudman. “Knowledge generated will be used to enact action strategies and facilitate positive social change.”

The study included First Nations youth aged 17-29 from the London area or who commute to the city and are transitioning between secondary and post-secondary education levels. A broad

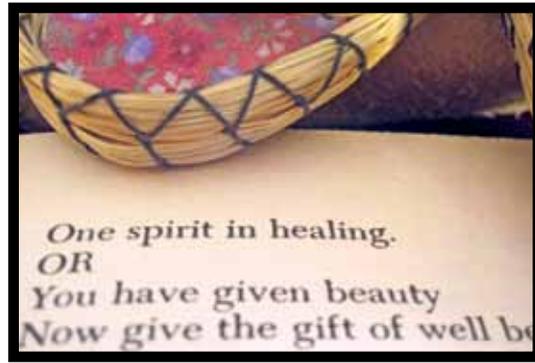
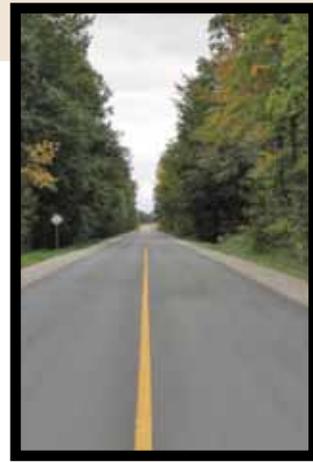
# “They want their

age group was selected because the patterns of educational involvement are different for Indigenous youth.

Isaac says the major themes emerging from the study include family, environment, identity, choosing educational pathways, continuously learning and embracing the educational journey.

He is currently analyzing data but knows that the comfort of home is a major factor in Indigenous youth’s transition to post-secondary school.

“Family, social support and a sense of belonging are very important to these decisions,” he says. “When youth go away to school they need to find a way to engage that is comforting to them.” Isaac says youth find support by calling back home frequently



and by using Indigenous services on campus. "Finding a sense of belonging, comfort and an encouraging environment is conducive to supporting the transition to higher education, especially in the absence of family," he says. "Being grounded in who they are (family roots, cultural roots, values and beliefs) is important to helping them understand their value of education, how they define success and where they want to be in the future – and how they will get there."

## **r voices heard."**

Isaac says there are similar themes across many of the images such as the idea of education being a journey – he has seen many photos featuring long roads, walking trails and stairs. But perhaps the most powerful image has been that of a burning book.

The study finished its fifth stage of completion, the youth focus group. The group's sixth and final step, the community celebration, took place in April. Then, community members, researchers and the youth involved in the project will meet to celebrate their work, discuss what they have learned and talk about future steps. Youth will also be presented with posters of their photography.

Isaac says youth-defined issues are integral to creating youth-defined asset-based solutions. This research has created an

advocacy group to support Indigenous youth in achieving their visions of success, he says.

"Youth who see other youth doing well in school, being motivated, creative, and involved can be inspiring for them," says Isaac. And because of that, he is hoping to get a book out to the community about his research. "One of the youth said it would be great if we could send this book out to other youth so they can be motivated and we can see them excel," he says.

Isaac is working on a website, [www.visionquests.ca](http://www.visionquests.ca), to keep the research available and accessible. "Having the youth Photovoices on the web, in research articles, and used is a great way to empower the youth and make them feel like their voices are important – which is something a few of them brought up as a concern," he says.

The site will keep the work alive after the study's completion in order to share the information with stakeholders, partners and community members. But most importantly, Isaac's aim is to engage more youth, whom he hopes will look to the project for inspiration and mentorship.

"They want their voices heard," he says, "and their voices need to be heard in order to support their aspirations and goals."



**SHAW TAPPED FOR MELLON APPOINTMENT**

Lynn Shaw, a University of Western Ontario School of Occupational Therapy associate professor, has been awarded the Mellon Retired and Visiting Scholars Mentorship Project Grant. As such, she has been invited to the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town as a Mellon-funded visiting mentor for two, two-month visits in 2011 and 2012.

Shaw will assist South African researchers in developing occupational science courses, research scholarship and an international research project.

A 1984 Western graduate, she has been a professor since 2005.

**OBRIGHT HONOURED WITH PLEVA AWARD**

A two-time winner of the Faculty of Health Sciences Teaching Award of Excellence (2006, 2009), Physical Therapy's Kathy Obright was presented with the Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching at Fall Convocation (October 28, 2010).

An associate professor and full-time teacher in the School of Physical Therapy, her research interests are in the area of orthopaedics, particularly carpal tunnel syndrome and whiplash associated disorders.

(Pictured below) The Faculty of Health Sciences Class of 2014 showed their school spirit on the field at TD Waterhouse Stadium as part of Orientation Week.



Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Jim Weese chats with Arthur and Sonia Labatt at Nursing's 90th anniversary Gala Dinner.

**NURSING CELEBRATES 90 YEARS**

The Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing celebrated 90 years of excellence in Nursing education on October 23, 2010 with a Gala Dinner.

As part of the celebration, a 90th anniversary bursary fund was established, designed to support a full-time student in financial need.

**NURSING GRADUATE NAMED HEAD OF LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE**

Alumna Bonnie Adamson (MScN '84, Nursing Administration) was named President and Chief Executive Officer of the London Health Sciences Centre on October 25, 2010.

Prior to her appointment at LHSC, she served as the President and CEO of North York General Hospital.

**WESTERN HOSTS NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR SPORT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE (NASSM)**

The 2011 NASSM Conference was held at Western from June 1-4, 2011. Associate professors of Kinesiology Karen Danylchuk and Alison Doherty were part of the organizing committee. NASSM is actively involved in supporting and assisting professionals working in the fields of sport, leisure and recreation.





Faculty of Health Sciences alumni, including Angie Mandich (right), Director of the School of Occupational Therapy, gathered on campus and showed their school spirit for 2010 Homecoming.

### JOINT INTERNATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE COMES TO WESTERN

From October 14-16, 2010, the School of Occupational Therapy hosted North America's first joint International Occupational Science Conference. Presenters from more than 10 countries were on hand, including keynote speakers Elizabeth Townsend (Dalhousie) and Geyla Frank (Southern California).

### HOMECOMING

As part of 2010 Homecoming, the Faculty of Health Sciences welcomed home nearly 100 alumni and friends along with current and former faculty and staff members.

The day was highlighted by the football team's 46-10 victory over Queen's in front of a packed TD Waterhouse Stadium.

### FALL PREVIEW DAY

There was record interest in Western's Health Sciences undergraduate programs at the annual Fall Preview Day. Designed to showcase the Faculty's outstanding reputation for providing Canada's Best Student Experience, Fall Preview Day drew nearly 1,000 prospective students to the FHS information sessions for Health Studies, Nursing and Kinesiology.

### ORIENTATION BUILDS SCHOOL SPIRIT

More than 700 first-year students enrolled in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the start of the 2010-11 academic year.

As part of their orientation activities, the Class of 2014 showed their school spirit on the field at TD Waterhouse Stadium (see picture).

### MARK TREMBLAY LECTURE

Canada's foremost expert on childhood obesity visited the Faculty on October 14. Mark Tremblay, author of the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, spoke to more than 500 students, researchers and service providers and presented strategies for tackling the issue of inactivity among today's children and the health problems associated with it.

Ruben Barakat-Carballo and Javier Sampedro Molinuevo from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, and Meg Cheeseman and Michelle Mottola from the Faculty of Health Sciences at Western signed a research agreement between the two schools.



### IOANNIDES LECTURE – ICOS

The International Centre for Olympic Studies hosted the 10th International Symposium for Olympic Research on October 28-29, 2010.

As part of the event, the University of Utah's Larry Gerlach gave the Earle F. Zeigler Lecture and spoke about the legacy of the 2002 Winter Olympics. Zeigler, who now lives in British Columbia, was the first Dean of Western's Faculty of Kinesiology (now Health Sciences) and was an academic leader in sport philosophy, history and administration.

### FHS SIGNS COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH SPANISH UNIVERSITY

After two years of collaborative research in the area of exercise during pregnancy, Western's Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Physical Activity & Sport Sciences at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid signed a formal agreement to advance the research links of both institutions through knowledge exchange, research proposals and visitation between the schools. The agreement extends until 2015.



# GET FIT FOR ACTIVE LIVING

**CCAA making a difference for older adults living with diabetes**

*By Nicole Laidler*

Better health may be only a hop, skip and jump away for Canadian seniors living with diabetes, thanks to a new program developed by the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA).

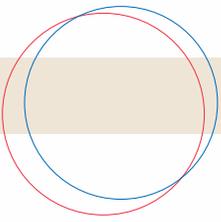
The Get Fit for Active Living – Diabetes Strategy (GFAL-D) exercise and education program is an eight-week course designed to help people aged 55 and older with pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes better manage their disease.

The project is funded through a grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada – Diabetes Strategy.

More than two million Canadians have diabetes, according to Public Health Agency of Canada estimates. Of these, one-third are undiagnosed and nine out of 10 have Type 2 diabetes – which occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or does not effectively use the insulin produced, causing sugar to build up in the blood.

Left untreated, or poorly managed, this can result in complications including blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage. Almost half of all people with the disease are seniors, and this number is expected to rise as Canada's population ages.

CCAA program director  
Clara Fitzgerald with  
members Ruth Martin  
and Peter Evans





“When someone is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, they usually go through a stage of denial or shock,” says CCAA program director, Clara Fitzgerald. “They realize that they are likely going to have to live with this condition for the rest of their life. Their diet is going to have to change. Their lifestyle is going to have to change. They might become dependent on certain medications or become insulin dependent.”

Established in 1989, CCAA is one of three research centres within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Unique in Canada, it promotes an active, healthy lifestyle for older adults by combining basic and applied research, educational resources, and community-based programs, which are made available across the country.

Get Fit for Active Living – Diabetes Strategy is just the latest health initiative developed with a certain population in mind. The centre currently offers 17

different exercise programs, including ones tailored for people with osteoporosis, stroke, and chronic obstructive lung disease.

“Our focus is not necessarily to do research that is disease specific,” notes Fitzgerald. “People over the age of 65 usually present with at least two chronic conditions, so it is really challenging to do disease-specific research.”

The goal is to help seniors maintain their independence and enjoy a good quality of life through a combination of regular exercise and healthy diet. These lifestyle choices are especially important for those who are pre-diabetic or who have Type 2 diabetes, Fitzgerald says.

“The key is to get people to buy into the importance of physical activity and to demonstrate how it can help them to lower and stabilize their blood glucose levels, and help with their weight loss and mobility goals.”

To get that message across, CCAA is launching GFAL-D programs right across Canada.

In 2010, the centre trained 48 GFAL-D facilitators nationally. More facilitator training is planned this year, and CCAA also offers a diabetes and physical activity

webinar series for diabetes educators, health care professionals and interested members of the public

Fitzgerald describes the program itself as “an eight-week intervention.” Participants sign up for two 60-minute exercise classes and an hour-long lecture each week. Qualified applicants must be physically inactive and have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes.

“We’re collecting data on about 250 people nationally who have gone through the GFAL-D program,” Fitzgerald explains. Each participant completes a background questionnaire and has their blood glucose levels, cardio-vascular fitness and weight measured prior to the program, after eight-weeks and for six-months following completion.

Barb Baker of London, Ontario signed up for GFAL-D because she knew “it was time to try and get moving. I’m overweight and I have diabetes. It’s not raging, but it’s time to get a better handle on it.”

Like many who have followed a sedentary lifestyle, Baker was intimidated by the prospect of joining an exercise class. But certified GFAL-D instructor Pat Greenlaw eased the group into

**“The key is to get people to buy into the importance of physical activity and to demonstrate how it can help them to lower and stabilize their blood glucose levels, and help with their weight loss and mobility goals.”**

**- Clara Fitzgerald**



the beginner-level program, which incorporates cardio-respiratory, strength training, balance and flexibility exercises.

"I start slowly, make it simple, and don't overwhelm them with too many steps," Greenlaw says. Music is another way to keep the class moving. "I figure out where the group fits in to a certain generation of music. If the Big Bands were part of their teenage years, I'll play that. Or 60's music. Right away, they're enjoying it."

Target heart rates and exertion levels are monitored during each class, and participants check their blood glucose levels before and after exercising. "Seeing their glucose levels in healthy ranges is very motivational for people," Greenlaw says.

Now in her seventh-week of GFAL-D, Baker's morning blood glucose levels are once again within a normal range, and her hips don't ache as badly when she walks. And although she has learned exercises that can be done at home, Baker has already decided to sign up for another seniors' fitness class at CCAA.

"The GFAL-D really brought home the fact that if I don't do something I could lose my independence," she says. "It's not just diet. You need to keep your joints

moving and you need your balance. You don't think that is what can take you out of your home."

Although research clearly demonstrates that physical activity can help delay the onset of chronic conditions like diabetes and improve quality of life, the cost of exercise programs is not covered by provincial health insurance, Fitzgerald notes.

That can be challenging, she says, especially for seniors living on a fixed income. "We see a lot of older people here that are more fit than the average

40-year-old. The key is that they have to work for those benefits. But once they do, the outcomes are amazing."

Faculty of Health Sciences alumni interested in learning more about GFAL-D – as a participant, to become a facilitator or to introduce this program in your city – are encouraged to contact Clara Fitzgerald at [cfitzge4@uwo.ca](mailto:cfitzge4@uwo.ca) or 1-866-661-1603 or visit the CCAA website at [www.uwo.ca/actage](http://www.uwo.ca/actage)



## About the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging

Founded: 1989

**Program Director:**  
Clara Fitzgerald  
[cfitzge4@uwo.ca](mailto:cfitzge4@uwo.ca)

**Research Director:**  
Don Paterson  
[dpaterso@uwo.ca](mailto:dpaterso@uwo.ca)

**Medical Director:**  
Dr. Rob Petrella  
[petrella@uwo.ca](mailto:petrella@uwo.ca)

The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) is Canada's leader in current research and program development for improved physical ability and healthy aging for older adults. It is a not-for-profit national research and education centre within the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The Centre's mission is to develop, encourage and promote an active, healthy lifestyle for Canadian adults that will enhance the dignity of the aging process.

In addition to offering exercise programming for older adults, the CCAA is also active in research into:

- The ways in which older individuals differ from young people in their physiological responses to exercise
- The physiological limitations to exercise in older adults
- The physiological and biochemical causes of muscle fatigue
- Properties of muscle in the aged
- Cardiovascular function and muscle metabolism
- Adaptations with exercise training in older adults and physical activity guidelines





## STAYING CONNECTED

– that’s what it’s all about. As the Alumni & Development Officer for the Faculty of Health Sciences, my goal is to connect with alumni and encourage you to become engaged with your School and our events.

This year, Jim Weese, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and I are making the rounds

to meet alumni from all the Schools. Since October 2010, we’ve met alumni in London, Toronto, Ottawa, and Kitchener/Waterloo. Watch for us in Calgary and Hamilton in the coming months. We want to meet with you to hear about what you’ve done since graduating, get your feedback on your FHS experience and give you a chance to voice any concerns you may have.

If we can’t meet in person, join us on Facebook or check out our website.

Another great way to stay connected is to take part in Homecoming. I invite you to review the information on the back cover for details.

If you would like to be a class leader or organize a class event, I’m only a click or phone call away. If you feel ready to make a financial commitment, then review our funding priorities to determine if any resonate with you. Philanthropy is very empowering. It’s an opportunity to support and impact a cause you believe in. Remember, you’ll never donate a penny more than you’re willing to give. When you’re ready, I encourage you to contact me.

Yours in health,

**Catherine Dorais-Plesko**

cdoraisp@uwo.ca

## GOT A QUESTION?

Catherine Dorais-Plesko, CFRE  
Alumni & Development Officer

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Faculty of Health Sciences  
Arthur and Sonia Labatt  
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London, ON CANADA N6A 5B9  
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## FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### FHS Undergraduate and Graduate Student Scholarships

- Merit-based and bursaries – to help attract the very best students and provides access to higher education for those who have the ability but not the financial means to earn a degree from the Faculty of Health Sciences
- Distance Clinical Education Support Fund – supports students with financial need and enables them to gain practical experience
- Study Abroad Support Fund – enables students to expand their knowledge of international issues

### Research Chairs

- Are a critical tool in FHS’s ability to attract, support, and retain senior faculty teachers and researchers
- A chair holder is someone of great distinction, the best in their field, who brings leadership, knowledge and expertise to the University

### Research & Teaching Facility Upgrades

- Renovation of older buildings, such as Thames Hall and Elborn College
- Creation of new teaching labs, and upgrades to existing research centres

## ALUMNI NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PLEASE NOTE:** Gazetteer notices, like all portions of the print magazine, appear in an online version of *Health Sciences Matters* and the contents may turn up during a web search. Publicly available personal information may be collected for the purpose of updating alumni records as well as for the purpose of recognizing outstanding achievement or distinguished service by alumni in University publications. Western respects your privacy. At any time you have the right to request that your personal information cease to be used to recognize outstanding achievement or distinguished service in University publications. For more information or to make a request about the kinds of contact you would like to receive, please contact the Operations Administrator, Advancement Services, 519-661-4176 or 1-800-420-7519 Fax 519-661-4182 email [advser@uwo.ca](mailto:advser@uwo.ca)

**Joni Baechler**, BA '82 (Physical Education) was elected as a councillor of the City of London, Ontario on October 23, 2010.

**Bonnie Adamson**, MScN '84 has been named the London Health Sciences Centre's new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective October 25, 2010. She was previously President and CEO of North York General Hospital.

**John Millar**, BA '77 (Physical Education) was appointed Director of track-and field and cross-country at Wake Forest University.

**David Cruise Malloy**, BA '83, MA '86 (Physical Education), (PhD) is now the Associate Vice-President-Research and the Director of the Office of Research Service at the University of Regina. In addition he is an Adjunct Professor of Hunan University in China and the Foreign Director of the Shandong International Research Centre for Bioethics in China.

The Clarkson University Athletic Department has announced the appointment of **Brenda Crawford**, BA '02

(Kinesiology), as an Assistant Athletic Trainer. Her primary responsibility is to act as trainer for Clarkson's NCAA Division I women's hockey program.

**Shirley Green**, Diploma Nursing Education '56, and her husband were recognized by Athens District High School for their long record of philanthropy, including a donation of \$1 million to a summer training centre in British Columbia.

**Maureen Hagan**, BA '84, BScPT '87, has developed Newbody Workout for Women, a fitness program designed specifically for women. She is Vice-President of Goodlife Fitness Clubs and oversees the development of more than 1,900 fitness instructors for GoodLife Fitness Clubs.

**Mary Vergeer**, BScN '90, has been appointed to the position of Executive Director with the Central Lambton Family Health Team in Petrolia. She is its first executive director and will be selecting her team of nurses, social workers, dieticians and pharmacists to work with the family physicians in providing improved access to primary health care services in Central Lambton.

**Deborah Shaftoe**, BSc(CD) '91, has published her first novel, *Forged in the Jungles of Burma*. The book is available through [www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)

**Greg Layne**, BScN '02, NP '08, was appointed the first nurse practitioner for the new Central Lambton Family Health Team in Petrolia.

**Tova Zarnowiecki**, retired Academic Counsellor and Career Development Officer in the School of Kinesiology, was honoured by the Ontario Kinesiology Association (OKA) with their Honourary Membership Award at OKA's annual conference on October 15-17.

**Jeanne Warwick Conroy**, BScN '56 was awarded a Sudbury Community Builders Hall of Fame Award for her dedication to community service work in her hometown.

**WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?**  
Share your news with fellow grads and help us keep our records up to date. Contact us at 519-661-2111 ext. 82269 or email at [jbechar@uwo.ca](mailto:jbechar@uwo.ca)



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[www.facebook.com/fhswestern](http://www.facebook.com/fhswestern)

# GET READY TO COME HOME AND CELEBRATE! HOMECOMING 2011

Calling all Nursing, Kinesiology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, Communication Sciences and Disorders and Bachelor of Health Sciences Alumni!



**Saturday, October 1, 2011**

**9:00 a.m. Homecoming Parade**

**10:00 a.m. Tours of FHS Facilities**

**11:00 a.m. FHS Dean's Brunch**

Face Painting

Music

Trivia

**1:00 p.m. Football Game – Western vs. York  
Lab Tours**

For more information, contact:  
Catherine Dorais-Plesko – [cdoraisp@uwo.ca](mailto:cdoraisp@uwo.ca)  
[www.westernhomecoming.uwo.ca](http://www.westernhomecoming.uwo.ca)