

# VCHRI TRAINEE NEWS

Welcome to **VCHRI Trainee News**, a newsletter brought to you by the Research Education Program of VCHRI. The newsletter is designed to help VCHRI trainees stay connected to each other and to the programs and services of the VCH Research Institute. The newsletter will cover a variety of topics such as celebrating trainee achievements, upcoming funding competitions, and trainee educational opportunities. We welcome information from trainees and supervisors including announcements for the 'kudos' section such as published papers, defended theses, talks given or prizes won at meetings. Please submit items to Kerri Abramson for review at [kerri.abramson@vch.ca](mailto:kerri.abramson@vch.ca).

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## Trainee Kudos

### January 2009 Winner: Ajaib (Jab) and Nirmal (Munni) Sidhoo Charities Fund Trainee Travel Grant



Congratulations to Reza Baradar Jalili, the January 2009 winner of the Ajaib (Jab) and Nirmal (Munni) Sidhoo Charities Fund Trainee Travel Grant, which began in the fall of 2008. Reza is a PhD trainee in Dr. Aziz Ghahary's lab, and the travel grant supported his presentation at the International Congress of Diabetes and its Complications held in Yazd, Iran this past May.

The Ajaib (Jab) and Nirmal (Munni) Sidhoo Charities Fund is managed through VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation. Its purpose is to support VCHRI research trainees working at VGH and UBC Hospital in the areas of Diabetes or Urology. This travel grant competition provides financial support for a trainee to present at an international conference. There are three deadline dates for receiving requests: January 15, May 15 and September 15. For more information go to [http://www.vchri.ca/s/Internal\\_Grants.asp](http://www.vchri.ca/s/Internal_Grants.asp)

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## Awards and Scholarships

**Jayasree Basivireddy**, (Dr. Peter Rieckmann, Brain Research Centre and MS Clinic at UBC Hospital), is the recipient of a post-doctoral fellowship that is renewable up to three years from MS Society of Canada.

**Scott Garrison**, (Dr. Karim Miran-Khan, Centre for Hip Health & Mobility), is the recipient of a doctoral research award from CIHR in the area of research of aging.

**Sean Meehan**, (Dr. Lara Boyd, Brain Research Centre) received a post-doctoral fellowship from Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

**Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships** which are worth \$50,000 a year for up to three years to support their graduate studies have been awarded to:

- **Alicia McMurphy** is a PhD candidate studying with Dr. Megan Levings in the Immunity & Infection Research Centre at VGH. The topic of her thesis is Ex vivo generation of antigen-specific human T regulatory cells with in vivo suppressive capacity.
- **David McVea** is a MD/PhD candidate in Psychiatry. He is studying with Dr. Tim Murphy in the Brain Research Centre at UBC Hospital. He is testing the role of muscle spindles in plasticity of neural circuits.

The following trainees have won **Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarships – Doctoral Awards**:

- **Pamela Arstikaitis**, (Dr. Timothy Murphy, Brain Research Centre)
- **Simon Chen**, (Dr. Kurt Hass, Brain Research Centre)
- **Mazyar Ghaffari**, (Dr. Michael Cox, The Prostate Centre at VGH)
- **Megan Himmel**, (Dr. Megan Levings and Dr. Theodore Steiner, Immunity & Infection Research Centre)
- **Yu Hui**, (Dr. David Ansley, VGH Department of Anaesthesiology, and co-supervisor, Dr. David Chen)
- **Adele Wang**, (Dr. Megan Levings, Immunity & Infection Research Centre)
- **Dennis Wong**, (Dr. Yossef Av-Gay, Immunity & Infection Research Centre)

**Emily McWalter**, a PhD candidate with Dr. David Wilson, was selected as a recipient of the 2009 Graduate Teaching Assistant Teaching Award. This prestigious award is given annually in recognition of the valuable role that Teaching Assistants play in UBC undergraduate programs. The award includes both a certificate and a \$1,000 prize.

**Robyn Newell**, a PhD candidate with Dr. Peter Cripton, was awarded a travel grant by the International Society of Biomechanics to travel and collaborate with a group in Switzerland. The grant allows Robyn to do a 30 day collaboration with researchers at the ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research at the University of Bern in Switzerland. The purpose of the trip to Bern is to learn and develop a new research method for describing three-dimensional spinal kinematics using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and fluoroscopy. The proposed work will be part of her thesis project entitled “Kinematics and muscle activation of the cervical spine during vehicle rollover accidents”.

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### **The VCHRI Immunity and Infection Research Centre Sun Run Team (aka The Immunosupremacists)**



The Immunosupremacists doubled in size this year to a group of 20 VCHRI trainees and technicians who trained diligently since January in preparation for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary race on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Proving yet again that they can do so much more than manipulate your T-cells and macrophages, the team's hard work was rewarded with an outstanding 4<sup>th</sup> place finish out of 82 teams registered in the Health/Medical Corporate Team Division. Special thanks to Dr. McMaster and Karen Donaldson for their continued support of the IIRC runners.

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### **Recent VCHRI Trainee Graduates**

**Jason Chak** attended convocation on May 26<sup>th</sup> to accept his masters degree in engineering. His degree was related to the field of spinal cord injury and supervised by Dr. Peter Cripton. Jason is going on to a career in the new field of mechatronics in the mechanical engineering industry and working towards his professional engineer designation.

**Johnny Chen** defended his PhD thesis titled, "Oxidized Low Density Lipoprotein-mediated Macrophage Survival: A role for Calcium and Regulation of Cellular Energy. He was co-supervised by Drs. Vincent Duronio and Urs Steinbrecher. Johnny has gone on to work in the private sector.

**Maggie (Chong U.) Cheang** completed her PhD with Dr. Torsten Nielsen in fall 2008. She won a Terry Fox Foundation Research Fellowship (biomedical) (National Cancer Institute of Canada). Maggie is pursuing a post-doctoral fellowship in the field of breast cancer research with Dr. Charles M. Perou at the University of Northern Carolina – Chapel Hill.

**Kim Emsley-Leik** completed her masters of science degree in February under the supervision of Dr. Paul Rennie of the Prostate Centre at VGH. Her thesis title is, "The effect of cyclin associated kinase on androgen receptor function and prostate cancer progression". While she explores teaching and other training/employment opportunities, Kim works as a manager for her family's transportation company.

**Farshad Forouzandeh** defended his PhD thesis, "Development and application of non-rejectable skin substitute to improve wound healing". His research project was supervised by Dr. Aziz Ghahary. Farshad is heading to Texas Medical Center in Houston for training to become a medical specialist.

**Jocelyn Harris** is the first of two UBC students to receive a PhD in Rehabilitation Science. With Physical Therapy professor, Janice Eng, she devised the Graded Repetitive Arm Supplementary Program (GRASP), a set of exercises for the arm and hand that patients could do without therapists. In June Jocelyn begins a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute.

**Luke Harris** is joining the faculty at the University of Northern British Columbia in July. His position will be in Health Sciences Program, College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences. Luke recently completed his post-doctoral fellowship with Dr. Darlene Reid in the Muscle Biophysics Laboratory.

**Dustin Hines** successfully defended his PhD thesis, "The roles of microglia in response to pathological stimuli in the brain" supervised by Dr. Brian MacVicar. This fall he continues on to Tufts University (Boston campus) to take up a post-doctoral position with Dr. Phil Haydon, chair of neurobiology. Dustin's post-doctoral research will be funded by the National Institute of Health.

**Rochelle Hines** completed her PhD on the regulation of GABA inhibitory receptors under the supervision of Dr. Yu Tian Wang in the Brain Research Centre. She has received a CIHR postdoctoral award to pursue research with Dr. Steven Moss at Tufts University (Boston campus).

**Giuseppe Iaria**, a postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Jason Barton in the Eye Care Centre, has accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Calgary. He begins teaching in September.

**Wency Ip** defended her thesis on May 12<sup>th</sup> for her masters of science degree in Experimental Medicine. She conducted her research in metastatic melanoma at the Laboratory of Predictive Medicine and Therapeutics, Skin Care Centre, under Dr. Youwen Zhou. Wency will be working as a researcher in developing an anti-cancer drug candidate for a biotech company.

**Maggie (Ying) Jia** is working in sales for a pharmaceutical company in China. She completed her masters degree in neuroscience with Dr. Max Cynader at the Brain Research Centre.

**Martin Koebel** completed his post-doctoral fellowship with Drs. David Huntsman and Blake Gilks in the Genetic Pathology Evaluation Centre. He has been hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Calgary, commencing in June.

**Kristen Kokotilo** completed her masters degree in Rehabilitation Science with Dr. Janice Eng. She has been accepted into medical school program at UBC and starts in September.

**Austen Milnerwood** completed his post-doctoral fellowship with Dr. Lynn Raymond at the Brain Research Centre. As a research associate, he continues in the same lab investigating Huntington's Disease.

**Amelia Payne** graduated in May with a masters of science degree from the School of Rehabilitation Science. She conducted her research at the Muscle Biophysics Lab under the supervision of Dr. Donna MacIntyre.

**Amira Tawashy** attended convocation on May 20<sup>th</sup> to receive her masters of science degree which was supervised by Dr. Janice Eng. The title of her thesis is, "Cardiovascular fitness in individuals with cervical spinal cord injury". As for furthering her career, Amira is exploring her options in research and rehabilitation.

**Ivan Waissbluth** completed his PhD in the Experimental Medicine Graduate Program, supervised by Dr. Vincent Duronio. Currently he has an internship position with UBC' University-Industry Liaison Office.

**Yang Wang** is a medical doctor who will complete his post-doctoral fellowship in early August. He has been working at the Skin Care Centre in the Laboratory of Predictive Medicine and Therapeutics under Dr. Youwen Zhou. He returns to China to finish his residency training in Dermatology.

**Jill Williamson** completed her PhD in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine where she worked with Dr. Corrine Ong. Jill is actively seeking work in the fields of infectious disease and public health.

**Ren Yuan** completed a PhD degree in Experimental Medicine with supervisors, Drs. Peter Pare and Harvey Coxson. Working in the field of radiology, the thesis title is, "Longitudinal study of lung structure and airflow limitation of smokers using computed tomography an spirometry". In July Ren begins work as a post-doctoral fellow at iCAPTURE Research Centre, St. Paul's Hospital, with Dr. James Hogg.

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## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (CHHM) Trainee Poster Afternoon**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CHHM Trainee Poster Afternoon was held on Friday, March 06, 2009. The goals of this event were twofold: 1) academic - to have trainees prepare and present a poster and give and receive feedback, and 2) social - to foster an environment of discussion and collaboration for trainees, associates, and fellows. The event began with a keynote address from Dr. Heather McKay and a round of introduction by participants over lunch.

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