

watching the wheels

Rocky Mountain (Two Miles) High

BY WAYNE WOOD

wo miles high.
That's the elevation of the highest point on the Trail Ridge Road, the section of U.S. Highway 34 that runs through Rocky Mountain National Park in Northern Colorado.

This means that you are driving along a smooth and wide two-lane blacktop road between two very pleasant mountain towns, Estes Park to the east and Grand Lake to the west, and in between find yourself at an elevation that tops out at 12,183 feet above sea level. That's almost as high as Mount Fuji in Japan, and higher than many mountains that people have to like, actually *climb*. It's almost twice as high as the highest point in Tennessee, Clingman's Dome in the Smokies.

And to get there, all Sharon and I had to do was get in our rental car and drive. I find that amazing.

Here's something else that's neat: the road begins in a evergreenintensive Western forest, and gradually with the gain in elevation, the trees get smaller until they resemble ornamental shrubs, and then, suddenly, the road is still climbing, but there are no trees.

You're above the timberline in a tundra landscape that is suffused with an eerie beauty. There's even a short hiking trail across the tundra near the Continental Divide. Here's something to know about hiking above 12,000 feet: there is a lot less air up there. Seriously, I'm no athlete (as I can still hear the voice of my junior high gym teacher informing me), but in air that thin, I was out of breath in about 20 steps.

Luckily, before we had walked very far, we saw a marmot sitting on a rock, which served the twin purposes of giving me an excuse to stop and catch my breath as well as giving me an excuse to use "marmot" in a sentence. Nice marmot.

And that wasn't the only example of wildlife. As we drove into

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HOUSE ORGAN

www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/houseorgan

October 2009

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE HOWELL



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Community Giving BY JESSICA PASLEY FOUR STORIES

The Vanderbilt Community Giving Campaign for 2009 "Where Will You Fit In" is in full swing. The kick-off for the annual giving effort was held on Sept. 24 in Langford Auditorium and attended by more than 300 coordinators.

The campaign features four federations dedicated to improving local communities – United Way of Metropolitan Nashville, Community Health Charities of Tennessee, Community Shares and the Nashville Alliance for Public Education.

The campaign runs until Nov. 5. This year's goal is \$925,000. For the past three years, the campaign has surpassed its goal, reaching the \$1 million mark.

Over the next few weeks, coordinators will ask the nearly 20,000 employees at Vanderbilt to make a contribution to this campaign. Donations may be made through payroll deduction, credit card or cash/check. Online giving is encouraged at www.vanderbilt.edu/communitygiving.

Below are stories about how the federations, which represent hundreds of charitable and public service organizations, help communities throughout the state, but benefit employees and patients here at Vanderbilt.

Rebuilding lives at Magdalene House

Magdalene House, supported by United Way of Metropolitan Nashville

When the Rev. Becca Stevens came to Vanderbilt in 1995 to serve as the chaplain for St. Augustine's Chapel, she was interested in starting an outreach program.

Little did she know her desire to assist women in recovery from a life of prostitution and drug abuse would turn into a non-profit organization that is a national model.

That organization, Magdalene House, is a free, two-year residential program that provides women a safe place to recover.

"I didn't know it was going to be such a big deal when I started it," Stevens said. "I was going to open one house as part of my outreach. I wanted to help women in a really dignified way and respect them and all they had gone through.

"It has proven to be life changing for us and the women we have helped."

Since starting Magdalene House in 1997, Stevens has opened five more houses in the Nashville area. Many cities throughout the country have modeled programs after it.

"It is a real ministry and a beautiful way of treating these communities so that they heal," she said.

About 125 women have come through the door of Magdalene to follow a structured schedule that consists of individualized therapy, a 12-step program, group meetings, spirituality classes and financial planning courses.

The program is funded by donations and private grants as well as money from the United Way of Metropolitan Nashville, one of the federations featured in the Vanderbilt Community Giving Campaign. Responsible for hundreds of initiatives that address some of Nashville's most critical needs, the United Way serves as an umbrella to unite groups and communities to affect change and improve lives.

Stevens likes the way United Way works for her organization. "The reason we are committed to United Way is because the



The Rev. Becca Stevens and Gwen Cockrell

This is a real ministry
and a beautiful way of treating
this community of women
so that they can heal.



Barbara Clinton, director of the Center for Health Services

way that organization works, they hold people accountable," she said. "It is one of the few places that require a group, once you receiving funding, to report back to them. People can trust that if they are giving to a group that is part of United Way that it is watching how we spend our money, monitoring our statistics and looking at outcomes."

The impact Magdalene has had on the community is immeasurable.

"This is a real ministry and a beautiful way of treating this community of women so that they can heal. And it's not just a ministry for those participating in the program. We have an amazing impact on the community. Because our statistics are so good and there is so much hope, I think it inspires everyone."

Gwen Cockrell can attest to that. She is a recent graduate of the program. "I lived on the streets for 10 years," said Cockrell. "The program has done so much for me and I see things so differently now.

"For so long I didn't think anybody cared or that there was any help for me. I thought the world would say, 'This was a choice you made.' But there are people who care. It takes a community to bring women off of the streets. We made some bad choices, but we need people who care and love us to bring us back and give us hope."

They found that half of the developers were not true to their word.

We turned the information over to the state. Now the developers are subject to penalties.

Cockrell, a single mother of four, has been drug free for nearly four years. She works with Stevens at St. Augustine's Chapel, facilitates groups at Magdalene House and works at Thistle Farms, the non-profit business that creates natural bath and body products and is operated by the women of Magdalene. All sales benefit the program.

Because the program is so extensive, Cockrell, like many of the women enrolled have been able to receive therapy and receive education and job skills.

"I have found that Magdalene is my foundation and I find it necessary to give back every day," said Cockrell. "I am grateful for all the people who believe in this program and chose to support us.

"I am grateful for the vision Becca had. It changed my life."

Magdalene residents are not just local women. Participants have come from Georgia, Michigan, Virginia, Wisconsin, Florida and Honduras.

"Magdalene is a positive witness to this community," said Stevens. "A compassionate, loving community can be a powerful source of change."

Working for a cleaner environment

Service Training for Environmental Progress, supported by Community Shares of Tennessee

The Center for Health Services at Vanderbilt has helped nearly 110 communities throughout Tennessee by educating citizens about environmental health.

STEP—Service Training for Environmental Progress—was created in 1980 as a way to provide community service in concert with student learning on a wide range of issues including environmental justice, community mobilization, pollution prevention, environmental testing and documentation of environmental problems.

"Basically the program links students with communities in Tennessee dealing with environmental problems," said Barbara Clinton, director of the Center for Health Services. "STEP has provided community-based learning opportunities to students and outreach workers, who work with community organizations throughout the summer months."

The past few years, the group has worked with the Bells Bend Community Association and the Sierra Club. The goal of the Bells Bend project is to maintain a portion of Nashville as a rural and agricultural area. The Sierra Club project tracked developer records to determine if promises to maintain wetlands were kept. Because the state did not have the staff to follow up on this issue, STEP workers took on the project.

"The students assessed the track records of these developers as well as visited the sites," said Clinton. "They found that half of the developers were not true to their word. We turned the information over to the state. Now the developers are subject to penalties.

"The work STEP does goes hand-in-hand with what Community Shares is committed to."

Community Shares of Tennessee is an organization that funds groups trying to get to the root cause of issues like hunger, health care, domestic violence and environmental issues.

"Most of our students (who work with STEP) are planning to be environmental engineers or lawyers or corporate executives, so their experience working with a community that is coping with the effects of environmental policy makes them more wise and compassionate individuals," Clinton said.

Community Shares serves as the funding source for the stipend students receive during their summer work with STEP.

Community Shares supports groups at the local, regional and state level, which allows donors the option of keeping their funds in their own communities or using it to support change on a broader scale.

"It was through the STEP initiative that we were able to introduce Community Shares to Vanderbilt as another giving option for employees," said Clinton. "STEP makes a difference and it's why I stay involved."

Living with lupus, helping others

Lupus Foundation, one of the Community Health Charities

Wringing out a wash cloth is considered a simple task for most people. But in 1983, at age 9, Tiffany Davis could no longer do it.

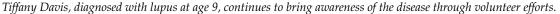
Alarmed, her mother took her to the pediatrician. They were told not to worry, that more than likely Davis had sprained a muscle and things would be better soon.

"But it got progressively worse," Davis said. "I was having muscle aches and joint pain. My mother took me to Vanderbilt. They did a blood test that showed I had lupus. I was hospitalized and missed quite a bit of school that year. My sister, who was 11, was also diagnosed."

The girls felt isolated.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body. It is a disease of flares and remissions that can range from mild to life-threatening. Estimates are that 1.5 million people in the U.S. have the disease. Although lupus strikes primarily women of childbearing age, it can also affect men, children and teens.

You already think you are different and feel set apart from everyone else and having a major disease diagnosed at a young age, it made it even harder.







Susan Hickman hugs her daughter, Shelby, at Harris Hillman School.

But in the 1980s there was not much available for children suffering from lupus.

"I do remember being told as a child that I would never be able to play, walk or go outside and that I wouldn't have a normal childhood or life," said Davis, now 35. "Back then I thought I was the only person like me, besides my sister. You already think you are different and feel set apart from everyone else and having a major disease diagnosed at a young age, it made it even harder."

Although there were no services available to the girls then, Davis made it a point to become involved in her local branch of the Lupus Foundation as an adult. Today she serves as a volunteer for the group raising awareness and serving as a group facilitator since 2000.

The Lupus Foundation is one of 37 groups supported by Community Health Charities, which is a federation of health-related organizations.

When Davis turned 23, she discovered she would need a kidney transplant because of the damage caused by lupus. Her first transplant was done in 1999, one day before her 25th birthday. And again five years later, she received a second kidney transplant. It has proven to be the answer to her lupus flare-ups.

"It's been more than 10 years since I had any issues with lupus," said Davis, a social worker at the VA Medical Center in Nashville. "I have been fine since my first transplant. Now I deal mostly with post transplant issues, not lupus."

Davis also said lupus is more common than most people think.

"I know someone knows someone with lupus," Davis said.

"They just don't know it. I challenge you to ask a person living with lupus how they manage day-to-day and how they are affected by this disease.

"Research leads to new medications and eventually it will lead to a cure," said Davis. "But it just takes people expressing an interest and giving. Every bit helps. It all adds up."

Reaching for fullest capabilities

Harris-Hillman Special Education School, supported by the Nashville Alliance for Public Education

The Nashville Alliance for Public Education was started in 2002 and since then has raised nearly \$20 million for the public school system of Metro Nashville.

Although some of the larger projects impact the entire school system, sometimes it's the specific gifts to individual schools that hit home.

Recently Harris-Hillman Special Education School received a check from the Alliance that made the principal's eyes pop.

"When I opened the envelope, I was amazed at how much it was," said Robbie Hampton. "It was large enough to go a long way in helping us with our kids. Equipment is very expensive, and the district is not always able to provide the money.

"For our students, specialized equipment is a great need," Hampton said. "The help we receive from the Alliance to meet our equipment needs is wonderful."

Harris-Hillman serves 150 students from the age of 3-21 years old. The majority of the students are considered med-

ically fragile with multiple disabilities in the severe to profound range.

For more than 23 years, the school has served as a Project Pencil partner with Vanderbilt as well as been a longtime neighbor. It is the longstanding relationship of volunteerism that has filled the gaps where funding stops.

Hampton credits the Alliance for addressing unmet needs of schools and impacting the lives of 75,000 students attending Metro schools.

The Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to securing private resources to improve Metro Nashville public schools. It is also committed to building broader and deeper community participation in public education.

"When we are talking about children in our school system, we are talking about our future," said Hampton. "The money going to the Alliance will impact the community for years and years to come. Basically the long-term well-being of the community as a whole is impacted by helping the schools."

Susan Hickman, whose daughter Shelby attends Harris-Hillman, is grateful for the donations made to the Alliance to assist schools.

"If Harris-Hillman did not exist, she wouldn't get the services that have helped her so much," Hickman said. "I know that attending Harris-Hillman has helped her develop to her fullest capabilities. We work together as a team—home and school."

Shelby began at Harris-Hillman when she was 3. She is now

11. Developmentally, she is probably between 9 and 12 months old, but has made much progress, her mother said.

But because of the challenges associated with caring for a medically fragile child, many of the parents at Harris-Hillman are not able to participate in parent groups that serve as a fundraising source.

"People really don't understand how hard it is to fund a school like Harris-Hillman because of the expenses," Hickman said. "And having fundraisers is not easy when most parents are having to tend to their children or cannot transport them back and forth to school to be involved in a PTA.

"Getting people back to school is really hard because some things are out of our control. It's not that we don't want to participate. But many of the children are not on set schedules, the parents don't have the flexibility to come and go because of the health needs of our children.

"When people donate to our school, it is so appreciated," she said. "All the schools benefit from the work of the Alliance. It really does take community support."

Basically the long-term well-being of the community as a whole is impacted by helping the schools.



Robbie Hampton is the principal at Harris Hillman School.



Toni Malu<mark>gin, L.P.N., en</mark>ters for a prize at Employee <mark>Celebration Picn</mark>ic on Library Lawn.

Jessica Lic<mark>up, care partner, Josh</mark> Payne, R.N., and

THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS

Employee Celebration Month, the September Vanderbilt tradition, featured dozens of events. Here's a look back at a few scenes from the month.



Latina Woods, pharmacy tech, enjoys Night Owl Howl



Blair Fl<mark>emmi</mark>ng and Tiffany Love at Empl<mark>oyee Cel</mark>ebration Picnic on Library Lawn.



Nick Luibrand and Elise Adcock Hinojosa dancing at Employee Celebration Picnic on Library Lawn.



Vanderbilt's Patricia Edmondson, right, gets a hug from co-worker Rabija Sasic at Night Owl Howl



Brandy Jones, care partner, enjoy Night Owl Howl

Marcus McHaney and Carla Esaw, both in patient transport, dance





Deborah Rhoden dances at Employee Celebration Picnic on Library Lawn.







Li Wang, MS, and Joseph Barzizza try their luck at Employee Celebration Picnic on Library Lawn.



Mehrnoosh Bir, housekeeping services, enjoys Night Owl Howl.



A rehearsal for "Hey Florence," the musical about nursing, with Vanderbilt nurses Brooke West, Susan Hernandez, Donna Collins and Ellen Musick



Phillip Stewart, environmental tech, at the Night Owl Howl





Li Wang, MS, enjoys Employee Celebration Picnic on Library Lawn.



Refka Bacevac, left, and Jearldine Tucker, with environmental services, dance the night away at Night Owl Howl



From Left, Schronda Grimes, patient services rep, and her mother, Alycia Buford, administrative assistant, practice art appreciation at the Night Owl Howl



Drexel Martin se<mark>rves Ci</mark>ndy Dorminy a hot dog at Employee Celebration Picnic









he packed flight taking travelers from Nashville to San Diego started off quite ordinarily that day in late July.

Ron Childress, an unassuming and dedicated nurse supervisor at the Vanderbilt Clinic in Brentwood, relishes his summer vacations to a new destination each year. After eight months of planning, Ron and his family boarded Southwest Flight 914 for their trip to sunny San Diego. About an hour after take-off Ron was seriously considering popping in a movie on his laptop when he heard the overhead announcement: Is there a passenger with medical experience that could please come to the front of the plane?

"On such a packed flight, I was sure there was someone else who could help, so I didn't respond at first," said Childress. A second request came soon after, and he headed directly to the front of the plane. He soon saw a woman in her mid 40s laying face up on the floor, surrounded by flight attendants. That's when his heart started pounding, and he knew that this woman was in need of some medical help.

Childress moved to her side and tried to talk to her, but she didn't respond. "I checked her pulse and was concerned

because it was 26, so I started CPR," he said. After the series of chest compressions and breaths, the woman's pulse increased to about 40—better, but not good enough.

He remained bent down beside the woman continuing CPR. Soon he was equipped with headphones connecting him by the cockpit radio to a physician with Southwest Airlines—the two

As the flight attendants prepared the passengers for landing, Ron was offered a belted seat with the flight attendants. Instead, he stayed unbuckled, knelt next to the ill and frightened woman. "I wasn't going to leave her," he said.

quickly worked together to get IV saline into the woman.

"The physician asked me if I knew how to insert IVs, and I told him I've done that hundreds of times," Childress said. "Then I saw the IVs in the plane's medical kit were 16 and 18 gauge, much larger than I regularly use, and the woman's vein in her hand was tiny."

He kept praying to himself, "Please Lord, help me get through this. Give me the strength I need and help this woman recover."

He inserted the IV on the first try. The woman improved and eventually gained consciousness, but was still not stable.

"We were about two and half hours from landing in San Diego at that point," said Childress. "I wasn't sure she was going to live and certainly knew we couldn't wait until San Diego."

He told the flight attendants that the plane needed to land at the closest airport so the patient could get additional help. A few minutes later, an overhead announcement informed the plane full of passengers that the plane was going to make an emergency landing in New Mexico.

Childress stayed with the woman, making sure the fluids continued to do their job, and he also comforted her by keeping her engaged in conversation until the plane could be re-routed. He learned the woman had been dealing with heart issues and her family physician had encouraged her to get a stress test.

As the flight attendants prepared the passengers for landing, he was offered a belted seat with the flight attendants. Instead, he stayed unbuckled, knelt next to the ill and frightened woman.

"I wasn't going to leave her," Childress said.

As soon as the plane landed, the ground ambulance took the woman off the plane. Thankfully, she did survive and eventually had open-heart surgery.

Childress was shaken and exhausted when the plane headed to San Diego. The flight crew showed their appreciation with continuous soda service and even buying Childress and his family dinner in San Diego. Southwest provided him with free roundtrip tickets as well, but, that's not why he answered the call.

"It was scary, and it's not something I ever wanted to do, but I kept thinking about my own family," he said. "If one of my family members was lying outside the cockpit of a plane, I would hope somebody would get up and help them, too."

House Organ Photo Contest wants pet photos, more

Enter through Oct. 15 on House Organ Web site

This is the 28th year that *House Organ* has called on VUMC staff, students, volunteers and faculty to submit photographs to the *House Organ* Photography Contest, the winners of which will be featured, one per month, in the 2010 *House Organ* Calendar, to be included in the combined December/ January issue.

Only digital images will be accepted for the contest. These may be shot with a digital camera or scanned from prints, but all entries

must be submitted by e-mail.

We are also asking for pictures of your pets. The pet pictures will be featured in the February 2009 issue in a "Pets of the Medical Center" feature.

The House Organ Calendar has changed formats several times in its 28 year life. The most common format has been a calendar grid on one page with a

photograph on the facing page. That's still being worked out, but may change this year, due to budget cuts.

Any jackass can enter.

Details:

Calendar Photography Contest: Open to all subject matter. Twelve winners will be selected on the basis of interest, technical proficiency and suitability, and printed in the *House Organ* Calendar.

Pet Photography Division: Photographs of pets of Medical Center staff, faculty and students are welcomed. Photographic skill matters less than pictures that show the personality of the pets. It's OK for people to be in the pictures, too. At the discretion of the judges, pet pictures may be considered for the calendar.

Those who want to include some information about their pets, such as age, or the fact that she was picked up as a stray, or that he howls when a fire truck goes by, are encouraged to do so. At the very least, tell us the pet's name and the names of others in the pictures.



Good shot of the Grand Canyon? Send it in!

General rules (please read and follow carefully to avoid the disqualification of your entry):

Who may enter: The contest is open to Medical Center staff and faculty, volunteers, nursing students and medical students. People who work in News and Public Affairs are not eligible for the calendar competition. The photo must have been taken by the person entering it.

What type of photography is suitable? Anything—studio

portraits, still lifes, landscapes, art photographs, aerial photography, pictures of children, pictures of adults and pictures of pets have all won in the past.

What formats are acceptable? The images must be saved as .jpg images, and must be at least 300 dpi. (That means no cell phone photos or other low-resolution images; they just won't work for print).

What information should be included with each entry? Your name, department or school, an address and a phone number should be written on or attached to each entry. Again, with the pet photographs, include the name of the pet and the names of any people in the photograph with the pet.

When is the deadline? Midnight on Thursday, Oct. 15. No entries received afterward will be considered.

How do I enter? Go to the House Organ Web site at http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/houseorgan/ and click on the button to enter, or send photos by e-mail to house.organ.photo@vanderbilt.edu, saved as .jpg images, and at least 300 dpi.



watching the wheels continued

Estes Park, we saw an elk standing beside the road. Just standing there, as though he were some sort of ambassador of welcome from the Chamber of Commerce or something. We also saw a herd of elk on a nearby golf course, which, in my mind, would instantly make televised golf WAY more interesting. We even heard coyotes howling at night (but of course some of us can hear that in Nashville).

I looked up some publicity material on Rocky Mountain National Park, and came across this, which ran under the headline "Did You Know?": "Daily during the summer, Rocky's custodial crew cleans 102 toilets in comfort stations at trailheads and along roads. They also clean around 100 toilets in campground comfort stations, 30 visitor center toilets, and 35 toilets for park staff. That's 267 toilets cleaned every day of the summer!"

This is why I would never make it in the highly competitive world of National Park Tourist Information. If I were trying to tell people interesting facts about a park, I would focus on the awe-inspiring and spirit-enhancing sights. It would never occur to me to focus on the toilet cleaning aspect of things, although there were certainly many toilets in the park, and they did appear to be well-maintained.

Speaking of well-maintained, we stayed at a historic hotel in Estes Park, the Stanley, which is a 100-year-old wood-frame building that has so much character that it inspired the setting for Stephen King's "The Shining."

Given that the book, movie, and mini-series involve a man who is hired as a winter caretaker in a haunted secluded mountain hotel, and who goes insane and attempts to kill his family, you might think that the Stanley Hotel would be eager to play down this connection.

Boy, would you be wrong. It turns out the Stanley is actually quite proud of its association with ghosts, insanity and murder.

• There is a video channel at the Stanley Hotel that plays "The Shining" all the time.

- There are REDRUM-brand chocolate bars for sale in the coffee shop. (This is, of course, MURDER spelled backward and figures in the plot of "The Shining.")
- There are tours sponsored by the hotel that play up the alleged presence of ghosts in the hotel, and also highlight the role of the hotel in "The Shining."
- Our room even had a form on the table at check-in that asked guests to fill it out detailing any experiences of the paranormal experienced at the Stanley.

I regret to report that we were not awakened by any ghosts, spooks or spirits while staying there, although we were awakened by revelers leaving a wedding reception who saw fit to stand under our window for what seemed about three hours frequently shouting, and I quote, "WHOOOOOO."

It was enough to make me contemplate REDRUM.

Seasonal flu shots under way; H1N1 shots on way

BY WAYNE WOOD

■ Flu shots from the Occupational Health Clinic for seasonal flu will be available for staff, faculty and medical students in the tent on the plaza in front of the Eskind Library through Friday, Oct. 2, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., said Stacey Kendrick, coordinator of health promotion.

Everyone coming to get a shot should have his or her ID badge.

This shot is for the seasonal flu. While a vaccine for the H1N1 swine flu is not available yet, shots for that strain will also be provided when it's possible to do so, officials say.

"It is vital for those of us who work at a health care institution to do everything we can do to protect our patients, and getting flu shots is part of that," said Melanie Swift, M.D., medical director of the Occupational Health Clinic.

In addition to the flu tent, other locations in upcoming weeks include:

- One Hundred Oaks conference room 26103, Thursday, Oct. 8, from 8 to 11:30 a.m.
- Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital: second floor entryway, Monday, Oct.
 Thursday, Oct. 8, and Friday, Oct. 9, from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Vanderbilt School of Nursing, Godchaux Hall Living Room, Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

There are numerous other vaccine locations scheduled in all areas of Vanderbilt, including Williamson County medical practices, West End locations, and Child Care Centers. For a complete listing, go to www.occupationalhealth.vanderbilt.edu or, for daily updates, follow Occupational Health on Twitter at http://twitter.com/vandyocchealth.

At that same site visitors will find the Occupational Health Flu Tool, which asks five simple questions regarding possible flu symptoms, then gives step-by-step guidance about being at work and seeking medical care.





