

Volunteer View

A publication for the volunteers of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute and UPMC Cancer Centers

In the Spotlight: *Jim Ackerman*

"We have had many volunteers over the 14 years I have been at UPCI. Jim is the only one for whom the laboratory has looked forward to his return every summer. As this is his 4th year, summers wouldn't be the same without Jim." Frank Jenkins Ph.D.

How did you get involved with UPMC Cancer Centers and UPCI?

As a freshman in high school, I began to seriously consider pursuing a career in medicine. To better acquaint myself with doctors and researchers, I decided to look for a volunteer position in science or medicine. My initial summer as a volunteer was spent at Allegheny General Hospital. I wanted something more challenging for the following summer, so I met with Ms. Lisa Huntley, who offered me a volunteer position in a lab here at UPCI and I thought I would give it a shot. As they say, the rest is history.

School Tools Drive

Volunteer & Community Services will be collecting school tools for children in need at Bloomfield's Woolslair Elementary School. Preferred donations include pens, pencils, highlighters, crayons, markers, loose-leaf paper, notebooks, pocket folders, glue sticks, basic calculators, rulers, socks and toothbrushes. Donations are due by September 5.

Why do you volunteer?

I volunteer for two reasons. I have had family members and others close to me diagnosed with cancers. Since I have some scientific abilities, I feel good about doing research into finding ways to fight cancer. I also love the process of scientific research and I truly enjoy every moment that I am in the lab.

What do you do as a volunteer?

I perform various experiments on Human Herpesvirus-8, the causative agent of Kaposi's sarcoma. I am currently investigating the role of estrogen on the virus.

Free Monthly Skin Cancer Screenings

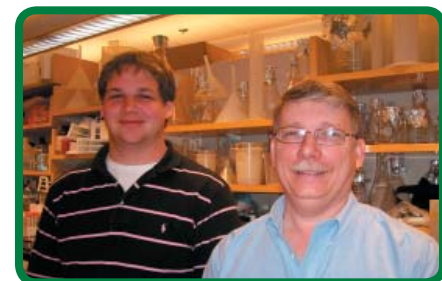
UPMC Cancer Centers offers free skin cancer screenings on the third Friday of every month from 12 to 2 p.m. on the 2nd floor of Hillman Cancer Center. Pre-registration is required. For an appointment, call the Cancer Information and Referral Service (CIRS) at 412-647-2811.

What is most challenging about your volunteer duties?

Patience! I find it very challenging to have to wait for the results of one experiment in order to continue on with a project. I get excited about my research and want to move quickly to the next procedure, but science doesn't always cooperate.

What is the most rewarding part of volunteering?

It is very rewarding to finish the summer and look back on what I



Volunteer Jim Ackerman with Supervisor Frank Jenkins

personally learned and contributed to the lab's research of cancer. When the lab achieves some progress or makes a discovery, it is satisfying to know that I had some part in the research.

Do you have any special memories from volunteering?

It has become a tradition in the lab that I will bring in Chinese food at the end of every summer for the Volunteer office and the

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Jim Ackerman, Continued

lab. We always have a great time and it is a fun way to end the summer of work.

Is there a staff member who has inspired you?

Dr. Jenkins has been both motivational and inspirational to me because of how passionate he is about what he does. He is truly interested in his students, their learning and their growth, not only in the lab, but also as people. He is very giving of his time, always available for questions and advice, and provides an “education you can’t get anywhere else.”

Have you made any good friends?

Yes. I have become good friends with all of the graduate students in the lab. Patrick, Heather, Jill and Lance have either graduated or are about to graduate from the lab and they will be missed. They have taken a lot of their time to get to know me and to offer advice and assistance in both academics and life.

What activities do you enjoy outside of volunteering?

Golf, lacrosse, scuba diving, reading, lifting weights and spending time with my family.

Do you have any hobbies?

My hobbies are science, cars, music and sports.

Do you have any advice for your fellow volunteers?

Confucius says it best, “Find something you love to do and you’ll never have to work a day in your life.”

Save the Date: August 16, 2008

You are invited to the 14th Annual Grant Channell Memorial Golf Outing on Saturday, August 16. Proceeds from the event benefit the



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Program of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI). To date, nearly \$132,000 has been donated in Grant Channell’s memory!

Grant died in 1994 at the young age of 27 from malignant melanoma. He will always be remembered by family and friends for his good nature, sincerity and of course, his love for the game of golf. In the words of his doctor, John M. Kirkwood, Director, Melanoma and Skin Cancer Program at UPCI, “Grant was an inspiration to all of us who had the honor to care for him. Grant’s courage, faith and

tenacious hope is what we all need to remember, whether we deal with melanoma personally or in our immediate family.

Each year, the Grant Channell Memorial rededicates us to the challenges of better treatment, detection, and prevention of melanoma—all of which will come from research sponsored by the proceeds of the event.”

This year’s event will be held at Black Hawk Golf Course in Beaver Falls. The day will begin with a 7:30 a.m. shotgun start and golf will be followed by a buffet lunch. Also, the donation check will be presented to a representative of the

“Grant was an inspiration to all of us who had the honor to care for him.”

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Program at UPCI, and the winning team, contest and raffle prizes will be announced.

For more information, visit www.geocities.com/channellmgo or call Lisa Huntley at 412.623.4636.



John M. Kirkwood, MD and Lisa Huntley, August 11, 2007