Dear Volunteers,
(and to all our current, past & future UCSF Volunteers);

A “Heart’y THANK YOU to all of our Summer Students who volunteered for our 2017 season! Watching all of you change and grow during your service here this past summer has been a real treat for your Volunteer & Guest Services team members, as well as our leadership/staff/faculty. We appreciate you, and invite ALL of you who served here this past summer to return some day, and encourage your friends and family to also join us and leave their Legacy here! (Additionally, all those of you reading this newsletter who have never volunteered, or those who have already volunteered with us, please come back and join us again!)

As we focus on growing our volunteer program at UCSF, and are growing the number of hours our volunteers serve at our three main campuses – Mt. Zion, Parnassus & Mission Bay, and as we look to grow NEW programs at all of our sites, we would love for YOU to consider volunteering at UCSF.

“You KNOW you’ve thought about it!”

If you have ever thought about volunteering, or know someone who would like to, please encourage them to also “Find their Heart in San Francisco!” and encourage them to check out our new Volunteer Services Website & Database, ucsfhealth.samaritan.com, which launched in November of 2016. The Samaritan Website & Database provides a simple, streamlined onboarding opportunity for all of our volunteers to learn about what it takes to become a volunteer at UCSF, review the programs we offer at each site, and onboard from the luxury of your own home/laptop/phone when it’s convenient for you.

Your UCSF Volunteer Services Team looks forward to welcoming you to our amazing team!

My Very Best,
wendy

https://www.facebook.com/ucsfvolunteer/
https://ucsfhealth.samaritan.com
Manager’s Message
Amy Sanders

Dear Volunteers,

This was a wonderful summer at UCSF! We hosted two very engaged groups in our Summer Student Program. It was truly a delight to welcome these high school students to UCSF. Their energy and excitement was a joy and their contributions were so meaningful to our patients, guests and staff. To those of you who mentored and trained the students, we want to thank you. Your kindness and patience is so appreciated. We are so very fortunate to have so many gracious volunteers of all ages willing to share your time with the people we serve. I feel truly humbled by your service. Please know that your contributions to UCSF matter. Many people wonder what they can do to make positive changes in their communities. You are truly making a difference in our corner of the world with your service.

Thank you!

amy sanders

Parnassus summer volunteers Michael Lee & Emily Tam
Perhaps there is no other institution in the world as paradoxical as a hospital. Within the enclosure of the hospital walls, life begins and ends simultaneously. The pendulum of Lady Fortune can swing in either direction, creating miracles and tragedies. There are patients who may be on the verge of surrendering to an illness, for its toll has been too great to conquer. On the other hand, there are those who continue to cling onto glimmers of hope for recovery and survival.

My mom is a nurse, so I often catch snippets of the realities in hospitals. The fragments of stories she has told me are captivating. Now, having had the chance to volunteer inside one has elevated my perspective on the paradox. Every day, I visited with patients and visitors from all walks of life. Each of the conversations I had, no matter how short, gave me insight into the human condition. The most rewarding part of volunteering at UCSF was the chance to connect with strangers on a deeper emotional level, as we both reveled in joy and wept with sadness together.

The most striking conversation I had was with an older lady, whose husband was battling a stubborn illness. In the visitor’s lounge, usually full of somber-faced families and friends, her calm smile and twinkling eyes were striking. As I handed her a steaming hot cup of coffee from our “Brew Crew” cart, she gave me a gentle smile and thanked me. I could have made that encounter yet another fleeting one, but there was a strange gravitational pull that made me want to stay and get to know her a little better. Perhaps she noticed me lingering, because she asked for my name and what I did as a volunteer. I hesitated a bit before answering her second question. Surrounded by doctors and nurses working around the clock and performing tasks that take years to master, I felt insecure about my own contributions. As if she could read my thoughts, she told me how much she appreciated volunteers like myself, and how small things like a cup of coffee and or a newspaper could really brighten someone’s day. Then she said something that still echoes through my mind: “You can’t control a lot of things, but you can control kindness and how you choose to use it.”

No patient chooses to fall victim to their illness, and even a force as mighty as a parent’s love for their child or the bond between spouses cannot control the fate of their cherished ones. Even through dire circumstances, the patient’s family member was courageous and grounded. She told me that even bleak circumstances for her and her husband would not drive her to surrender. It instead strengthened her resolve to find beauty in even the most mundane encounters, such as an inside joke with her husband, or a short chat with another visitor. It was amazing to me that she could fully accept her husband’s unfortunate prognosis and still remain hopeful. After all, the latter is what she could control -- she truly encompassed bravery.

I would be lying if I said I did not meet some difficult patients; at first, I couldn’t help taking things personally. But after thinking about the concept of control, I realized that I had the power of kindness. I could choose to be offended if my actions were not visibly appreciated, or I could smile and know that I was not volunteering for external rewards. It was through my own choice to volunteer, and the opportunity to do so was a valuable reward in and of itself.

I wouldn’t say “strangers” is the right word to use for unfamiliar faces I saw in the lobby areas, hallways, and patient rooms. After all, how can any fellow human being on the planet be a stranger, when we all share the same emotions of happiness and sadness, and everything in between? Even though the time I had with patients and families at UCSF may have been short, my experience allowed me to have the most profound exploration of humanity I have embarked on yet. My outlook on life has been transformed. Before, on sleepless nights, I would lay awake worrying about what my future might or might not hold. Now, I am a little less anxious about what I cannot control, and more excited for what I can control: becoming a nurse one day, returning to the hospital, and continuing to bring kindness to the warriors bravely fighting their own battles.
I have always been told that smiling at someone or making them smile counts as charity; that no good deed, no matter how small, is ever wasted. I never realized how true this was until now. I applied to the Summer Student Volunteer Program hoping to gain experience and not waste my last summer of high school but was rewarded with much more. Although I only volunteered for a short time, it made a big impact on me that will last much longer. I smile at people more now and realize that even on my worst days I have something much more valuable than anything materialistic – people who care about me and the blessing of being in good health.

On my last day of volunteering, as another volunteer and I were rounding on units offering coffee and tea to patients’ visitors, I met a family member who was especially grateful. She was tearing up while telling us about how nice it was that we were going around visiting and talking with patients, especially since a lot of patients don’t have many visitors and may feel isolated. Her husband, who was the patient, was undergoing some medical treatments and even asked us how he could help out. I hope that one day I can be as selfless as he was, to face a struggle so immense and still offer to help other people. The patient opened up to us about his life and told us a story I will never forget. He said that there was a man in a jungle being chased by a tiger. The man, hoping to lose the tiger, jumped off a cliff. As he was falling down, he saw another tiger waiting for him at the bottom so he reached out and grabbed a cherry blossom branch. As the man was holding onto the branch, it started to break, but he wasn’t worried, because the cherry blossom branch was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. The patient told us we were his “cherry blossom branch” because we brightened up his unfortunate stay at the hospital. I have heard this story many times before but this was the first time it made me cry. I didn’t realize the impact we were making until this moment. I used to dismiss community service as simply another activity to add to college applications, but I now believe it is one of the most influential things I can do. I know I have not done anything amazing or incredible, but I have made people smile, whether it was while offering beverages with the “Brew Crew,” decorating patients’ rooms with paper cranes, or delivering amenities to patients.

Volunteering at UCSF has sparked my dream to work in the medical field because I like to connect with patients. I find science challenging and have often doubted whether I would be capable of having a career in science, but seeing so many medical professionals in action this summer inspired me and now I believe that I, too, can achieve my aspirations through hard work. I have a lot of friends who are gifted academically, especially in science and math. I now see that I am as passionate as my friends are talented; I strive for sincerity in my interactions with patients and everyone I meet.

Through volunteering, I found that making people happy made me feel happy in return. I discovered my passion to help people and received deep satisfaction in return. Volunteering made me step outside of my comfort zone and I am grateful. I am better at interacting with people now, which has also opened other doors of opportunity. I used to avoid making eye contact with others, but now I smile at them and wonder about their stories. I met an abundance of incredible people, including fellow volunteers, UCSF staff, patients, and visitors. They helped me realize that my life would be much more meaningful if I allowed more people to enter in. I’ve never considered myself to be a “people person,” and I still don’t, but I won’t let that stop me from helping other people or having conversations with others again.

Being a part of the High School Summer Student program has definitely changed how I view the world. The many smiling patients and visitors in the hospital made me realize how foolish and ungrateful I had been. I cherish every moment now, realizing that any breath I take could be my last. I often feel as if I’m wasting my youth away, going through the same cycle every day. However, volunteering at UCSF refreshed my perspective and provided me with a sense of meaning I didn’t know I was lacking before. It helped reduce my anxiety and any regrets I may have had and revealed to me that I am just a speck in the universe. It feels good to have done something that greatly benefitted others, and the experience benefitted me even more. I hope that I can be a “cherry blossom branch” to many more lives in the future.
When I returned to the intimidating double doors of the hospital that healed me as a newborn child, the TV series *Game of Thrones* was not in the forefront of my mind. I was beyond nervous to assume the role of a volunteer; in my head, I kept going over all the training steps to make sure I could help people feel better and not screw anything up. When I was a newborn, I spent the first four weeks of my life at UCSF after having a fever of 106 as well as a urinary tract infection, and consequently, I developed significant fear of doctors and hospitals after I had been painfully poked and prodded. As I became older, my apprehension turned into admiration and I found myself longing to have a career in medicine one day. When I was ten, I was sure I wanted to become a surgeon. I became more aware of what a career in surgery would look like, but it would not be until that fateful Monday when I walked through the doors and into Benioff Children’s Hospital that I would truly understand the importance of being a volunteer.

It was an unusual Monday; I had just dropped off my sister at the airport at six in the morning, so I was wide awake and ready to go at seven, but was not needed at the hospital until nine so my mom and I decided to do some grocery shopping at Bi-Rite Market to pass the time. I decided to get an iced coffee, and was ready to go on my way. After I got to the hospital, I spent the morning delivering newspapers and magazines to various patients, and when I returned to the Volunteer Services Office, I was told we had a printed e-mail greeting to deliver to a patient in the Children’s Hospital. I took the e-mail letter and rode the elevator up to the unit and badged in, not knowing what to expect when I entered to the patient’s room. I walked in with the e-mail and handed it to the patient. As soon as he saw the message, he exclaimed with joy, then looked at me and said, “Daenerys might end up on the Iron throne.” I looked at him and, before I could stop myself, exclaimed, “I know, she’s such a boss.” Before I knew it, we were in a full-blown conversation down to the minute details about *Game of Thrones*, including our favorite lines and what we predicted would happen to each of the characters in the next season. Inadvertently, the conversation shifted to his illness and how long he had been staying in the hospital, surrounded by medical jargon. The moment that stood out to me was when he asked me to tell him about some of my life’s adventures in detail. I quickly obliged him, recounting memories of ocean waves, sunshine, and other times that I felt free. As I talked, the room grew warmer, and he started to smile. I continued to tell him about numerous adventures I’d had, from cross-country skiing to jumping off cliffs into crystal clear ice water, all as he continued to smile. Once I realized I had spent nearly a half hour in his room, I regretfully told him I had to leave and had to stop talking about my adventures. He asked me to come back the next time I was volunteering, and thanked me for talking to him about life outside of the hospital. As I walked out of the room, he asked me to promise him to help him find his own adventure after he left the hospital. This brought me nearly to tears. Ever since that day, I kept thinking about the brief interaction we had. I desire to help patients like him live a more colorful life, and I also want to cure people as a surgeon in the future.

As I reflect on that experience, it astounds me to think that such a small interaction would have such a large impact on my trajectory and dedication to healing. Conversing with that young boy showed me that there is more to medicine and surgery than learning how to use a scalpel and knowing where to make an incision. As volunteers, we have the unique opportunity to be able to talk with patients casually. I could tell I was making a difference in the boy’s life and his stay in the hospital. Far too often do we focus on healing as the mechanical process of administering drugs in order to fix the problem, but may forget along the way that we are dealing with human lives. They may be scared and tentative to have conversations involving subjects other than medicine. The conversation we had about the *Game of Thrones* will stick with me through my aspiring medical career because it taught me that something as simple as the *Game of Thrones* can result in a powerful interaction. As hopefully a future surgeon, I need to treat patients with empathy and compassion and not only address the physical side of their illness, because healing is more than just having surgery. I will always remember that patient, and I never thought that I would learn such a powerful message about caring and healing from someone so young. It was an experience that taught me how to be a better person and a better volunteer, and hopefully one day, a doctor.
Perhaps it was my desire to contribute something larger to society. Maybe it was the promise of prestige or resume-building opportunities. I don’t quite know. But what I do know is that my summer volunteering at UCSF Health was filled with sentiments of self-efficacy and fulfillment. At first, it felt odd. How could doing something with no direct benefit to myself bring about such feelings of contentment? After all, I would be a senior in the fall, and would have already completed all the mandatory service learning requirements. I could have simply lounged around at home instead of volunteering. But by the final week of volunteering, I underwent a significant change. I discovered why so many people, both young and old, from all different backgrounds and ethnicities, wanted to volunteer. I believe that we are creatures of inherent benevolence and benefit from interactions. We enjoy imparting emotion and good tidings, as well as being on the receiving end of such benefits. Only through our service and kindness, not through our wealth and financial status, can we truly be fulfilled. Indeed, as the famed Aristotle once said, “What is the essence of life?” and to this he readily answered, “To serve others and to do good.”

I will proceed to highlight just a few of the greatly formative experiences I had during my time volunteering at UCSF Health. Please note that identifiers are intentionally omitted in order to maintain patient privacy.

During the last few days of the program, a patient had requested some books to read, so I proceeded to make my way up on the elevator with a collection of books. A piece of literature seemed to be such a simple thing -- nothing more that ink on paper. To the patient, however, it was something much more. When I entered the room, her eyes lit up and she became quite energized, exclaiming “I’m so bored, I need something to read.” She stated that she enjoyed reading science fiction books involving time travel, so I gave her a few books on that topic. She thanked me multiple times, and then I left to go back to the Volunteer Services office. It was not until the next week that I realized the significance of those few books. They were her refuge, an escape from reality. The books served as a medium through which she could transcend from her current ill condition and the monotonous nature of her long-term hospital stay. To me, the books were just that -- books, nothing more than pieces of literature. But to her, they represented something much more significant. I was quite elated at the thought of being appreciated so much for a seemingly simple task, but I also gained a new respect for my role as a volunteer. Happiness is the strongest, most important emotion. After all, we spend our whole lives in pursuit of it; as a volunteer, I had the chance to deliver happiness to patients in the hospital.

Another notable experience took place on my very first day as a volunteer. An older patient had requested an Android phone charger, so I proceeded to deliver it to her. The process seemed to be relatively simple in my head -- I would give her the charger, get her signature on a check-out form, then exit quietly. However, the actual circumstance was not representative of my initial premonition. After signing the form, she began to engage with me in conversation, asking me courteous questions such as “Do you enjoy volunteering?” and “Do you have any siblings?” She then shared about her own life as well. On a superficial level, she had requested a phone charger. But more than that, she wanted to have company, someone to talk with. Maybe she had relatives or kids, maybe not. Regardless, she was fed up with the monotonous and sometimes dreary nature of hospital life, from her point of view. She wanted someone, anyone to talk with, in order to escape reality. She even commented to me “I thought volunteers were supposed to stay awhile. Talk to me.” We conversed for around fifteen minutes, at the conclusion of which she stated “Thank You.”

From these examples, we can discern some interesting parallels. Both individuals did not seem to be content and instead appeared to be exhausted from the drudgery of being patients. They wanted something new and something that would provide an escape for them. I couldn’t help but wonder if many other patients felt this way as well. This saddens me, but it is the harsh reality of being a patient in a hospital. My self-growth over the short period of six weeks was extremely proliferative. The most applicable lesson I learned was that service to others provides its own reward. These six weeks were the most self-transcending and proliferative time period of my life thus far, and if I have the chance in the future, I definitely want to do it all over again.
The works of Shakespeare have always resonated with me -- his use of extended metaphors, realistic characters, and dramatic soliloquies was different from the traditional writing of his time. In “Romeo and Juliet,” his most famous tale of star-crossed lovers, Juliet finds herself in a predicament after spending the night with Romeo. Hearing the call of a bird, Juliet claims that it comes from a nightingale and tries to convince Romeo to stay. Despite Juliet’s assurance of its nightly consistency, Romeo asserts instead that the call is coming from a lark that sings once daybreak arrives. He points to the parting clouds and peeping rays of sunlight while gathering his things to leave.

Although Juliet takes comfort in the nightingale’s constancy and in her momentary happiness, she must accept the arrival of the lark and embrace the change in her life. In a play that seems to oversimplify all the emotions concerned with love and tragedy, I was surprised to find myself drawing parallels to my own life. Growing up, I took comfort in knowing that I had a long-lasting passion for the arts. I loved to draw and had an eagerness for a future career in interior design -- I had found my nightingale. But as much as my nightingale had a soul -- a passion for design and the arts -- it lacked wings, or the motivation to make a meaningful career out of my interest. Fast forward to high school, I broadened my horizons by taking more science classes and becoming more involved in my community. My newfound interest in the medical field became my lark, and my volunteer experience at UCSF became inextricably linked to the path in finding my lark’s wings, or the motivation, to pursue a career one day as an orthopedic surgeon.

My lark found its wings during my second week of volunteering at UCSF. That Thursday morning was as sunny as a morning in San Francisco could possibly be. Living in Walnut Creek made the morning transit a bit long, but I grew to enjoy my time reading on the train and listening to “La La Land” on my phone. Every time I walked into the Parnassus Volunteer Services Office, I was greeted with the warm smiles of Jennifer, Keith, and Kira, all of whom were such exemplary models of volunteer excellence. That day was no exception, and I was happy to see that all of them truly cared about the welfare and enjoyment of the volunteers.

After making our morning “Brew Crew” rounds, my fellow volunteers and I started making paper crane keychains to give to patients. We wanted to continue the Japanese tradition of folding a thousand cranes, which is believed to grant a long life and successful recovery for those who are ill. We sat in the brightly lit volunteer workroom and began to carefully fold each paper crane. After an hour, we added dozens of cranes to a large box already filled with over a thousand cranes made by other volunteers. I loved how each crane was different; the nuances in the patterns and folds seemed to give each of them a unique personality. After folding the cranes, we strung a few of them together using embroidery thread and attached each strand to a keychain. We clipped the keychains onto the Patient Amenity Cart and took the elevator up to the hospital units to begin handing the keychains to patients.

Walking with the Amenity Cart was a joy in and of itself. Nurses, doctors, and other medical staff would pass by our cart with smiles on their faces, and some even asked us about the story of the cranes. My most memorable experience was with a patient who, upon seeing the cranes, lit up with a huge smile and told me how much his one-year-old son would love them. He shared more about his life and his experience in the hospital, and told us he really appreciated all the hospitality he received from the staff. After handing him a second keychain to give to his son, I left the room feeling incredibly gratified. I felt that it helped to brighten his day and gave him a memento of the profound kindness that was shown to him. I had fulfilled my main duty as a volunteer. As someone who has volunteered at many different institutions in the past, I can happily say that UCSF has been the most diligent in carrying out the tenets of its Mission Statement. I had previously never seen an eager and enthusiastic group of volunteers such as ours who wanted to better the experience of the patients and visitors. Some of the paper cranes we made now hang in the Volunteer Services Office; they represent the collaborative efforts of all the volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to serving patients. Witnessing such an exemplary atmosphere of teamwork has stirred an enthusiasm in my other extracurricular activities and has also shaped me into a better leader.

In the same way that the wings of the paper cranes lifted the spirits of the patient I met, I hope to lift the spirits and lives of all those I encounter in the future. While I hope to become an orthopedic surgeon, I ultimately would like to work in third-world countries to help the underprivileged; this experience was vital in helping me realize that I have the motivation to do that. Similarly in the way that the lark signaled daybreak and a new start for Juliet, my experience at UCSF opened new doors and perspectives for what I want to do in the medical field one day.
The Giving Tree - UCSF
Ciara Gaffney, 17
Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory
Parnassus Gift Shop

“I saw firsthand how UCSF’s mission and values spread compassion and gratitude, from the ICU to the Cafeteria, and I saw how everyone made a difference. Excited to finally make a Gift Shop delivery to a patient, I eagerly approached the elevator to begin my adventure around UCSF; before finding the patient’s room, I stumbled across a mural of a tree. The tree was painted on square tiles, and the tiles included messages of gratitude from patients to their physicians. Just like the mural of the tree, we are still growing and evolving each and every day, with the help of the truly amazing staff here at UCSF. I’m grateful I was able to be part of the volunteer program in a hospital ranked fifth in the country, and next time someone asks me how UCSF is different than other hospitals, I will tell them that UCSF looks at patients beyond their illnesses and creates a supporting relationship with patients to help ease their pain and search for cures.”

Changes
Bridget Laffey, 16
Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory
Mission Bay Patient Visitor & Amenity Program

“I met a wonderful patient during my second week volunteering. When I offered her a complimentary newspaper, she gladly took it and we started having a conversation. She asked me where I went to school and what I liked about being a volunteer. I told her where I went and explained to her that all I wanted to do was try to put smiles on people’s faces and gain an experience in the medical field. We then had a great conversation about her grandkids and how they were always getting into trouble. I was able to joke around with her and talk about my experience working at a daycare. She was so genuine and grateful for all of the amenities from Volunteer Services. She thanked me for putting a smile on her face and allowing her to forget the fact that she was in the hospital. I hoped to make every patient and visitor feel this way! This woman made me realize how little things in life can have a big effect on other people. She has inspired me to become a nurse one day, so I can impact other people’s lives in a big way.”

New Perspective
Jasmine Ho, 17
Abraham Lincoln High School
Parnassus Patient Visitor & Amenity Program

“My volunteer experience showed me the importance of community - a community where patients are the top priority. Volunteers are a vital and unifying force of this hospital. Serving at the hospital allowed me to recognize some intangible benefits such as meeting new people, expanding my social network, stepping out of my comfort zone, practicing my communication skills, and gaining relevant experiences in the medical field. I felt compelled to volunteer at UCSF because of its Mission Statement and Vision they seek to fulfill captivated me. UCSF strives to offer the best health care services, while having a friendly environment to work in, to teach in, and to learn in.”
**A Life-Changing Experience**

Avani Reddy, 17  
Basis Independent Silicon Valley  
Mission Bay Patient Visitor & Amenity Program

“M”y cousin’s passing was one of the biggest hurdles I had to overcome. She was my age, a mere 17 year old girl who had the whole world at her disposal. It took a while, but in the end, she opened my eyes to a new perspective. I want to be able save lives; I wanted to have been able to save my cousin. Now my grief wasn’t speaking to me anymore; it was my conscience giving me a full sense of clarity, vision, perspective, and a new outlook. My goal is to become a doctor, to learn what I need to know to help loved ones, and aid those in need. Volunteering at UCSF was, without a doubt, the pinnacle of my summer. The ambience and overall hospitality at UCSF was truly a comfort that helped quell any uneasiness. Every day, everyone including nurses, patients, and the Security department made me feel like a member of the organization and gave me a sense of belonging. I can confidently say that after those blissful six weeks, I’m determined to become a doctor one day and will definitely pursue a career in medicine. Thank you, UCSF!”

**TUGging Emotions**

Emily Tam, 16  
Burlingame High School  
Parnassus Patient Visitor & Amenity Program

“What did I expect from my first day? Maybe it was a bustling elevator full of medical students in white coats, hopping from floor-to-floor, learning the inner workings of the hospital. Or a hallway filled with doctors and nurses responding to medical emergencies. Or maybe it was just an eager child waiting to visit a relative. What I didn’t expect was a robot (known as TUG) appearing through the double doors of the elevator. Equipped with motion sensors to navigate around obstacles in the hallways, TUG’s are a tangible representation of the technological revolution healthcare is experiencing. Although robots have the ability to accomplish all necessary physical tasks, they are unable to connect with patients emotionally and provide them comfort. I learned the importance of human compassion through my Patient Visitor & Amenities assignment. As I went from room-to-room, I noticed just how many patients were delighted to talk with us. As I continued volunteering at UCSF, I witnessed the power of presence, even if it was for a short while. The action of delivering amenities and other items to the patients may be a quick interaction, but the simple gesture left a lasting impact on patients and made them feel at home. While TUG may be making hospitals more efficient, staff and volunteer can are making hospitals more like home.”

**A Little Goes a Long Way**

Devon Switalski, 17  
Saint Mary’s College High School  
Mission Bay Patient Visitor & Amenity Program

“A”n important skill UCSF taught me was how to be comfortable introducing myself to others, even if I felt somewhat out of place. This skill has been really influential in a new and important venture for me: my senior project. Since I have dealt with self-esteem issues all my life, I have decided that I want to focus on body positivity and random acts of kindness, which inspire self-love. Over the next six months, I will go around the Bay Area and take Polaroid pictures of strangers to show them how everyone stands out in their own, unique, and beautiful way; whether it is their smile, their friendly aura, or their style. Inspiring positivity in my community is really important to me, and it would definitely not have been possible without the confidence I gained from my experience at UCSF, and a specific program I participated in this summer: Random Acts of Flowers. The day I participated in this program, I showed up excited, yet exhausted from a long night. My slot was supposed to be three hours long, but in the end, it only lasted half of that. When we ran out of flowers, I was devastated; I wanted to deliver more! This program led me to believe that a small, spontaneous act of acknowledgement can change someone’s mood completely, and that “someone” can be both the giver and the receiver.”
Thank You, Bengier Foundation!
By Wendy J. Reese
Director, Volunteer & Guest Services

The Bengier Foundation continues to make a tremendous impact on our UCSF Summer Student Volunteer Program. The foundation “helps bright, hard-working young people find their own success,” and in 2017, we were able to organize the following activities and programs for our 43 summer student volunteers -- all due to the kind generosity of the Bengier Foundation funding:

• Summer Student Volunteer Essay Contest. Students submitted essays and winners were awarded a monetary prize.

• Summer Student Recognition. Summer Student recognition included ‘on the spot’ acknowledgement of outstanding volunteer service and volunteers also received special thank you gifts at the end of the summer.

• Patient Amenity Support Program gave student volunteers the opportunity to visit with and provide patients with a variety of amenities such as magazines, Patient Activity books, crossword puzzles, board games, arts & crafts supplies, knitting needles, crochet hooks, and yarn, phone chargers, iPads and laptops, DVD movies, and much more. Patients were so grateful to be able to choose from the large selection of items!

• Funding for Two Summer Student Mentorship Positions. Queenie Chin and Kira Nakamoto (please see articles on pages 11 and 12, assisted with orientation, training, supervision, and leadership of 43 high school student volunteers at our Mission Bay and Parnassus campuses.

The generosity of the Bengier Foundation has touched countless lives. Doors have been opened for hundreds of high school students to explore healthcare, opportunities for college students to mentor, nurture, and supervise have been created, and thousands of patients and their families have received the very special support provided by the student volunteers and the Summer Student Program.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.
Summer Reflections
By Queenie Chin
Summer Student Program Assistant
Volunteer & Guest Services at Mission Bay

I was elated when I received a phone call from Kathleen, one of the Volunteer Services Coordinators, about the Summer Student Program Assistant position at Mission Bay. I myself had been a volunteer at Mission Bay in the Volunteer Services Office for a few months, delivering newspapers and visiting patients with the Amenities Cart on Tuesday mornings. When I was asked to consider the position, I admit, I felt nervous about the opportunity. I was just starting to become more adjusted to the hospital and was getting better at finding my way around and not getting lost all the time! Nevertheless, I decided to accept the summer position; I’m thankful for Kathleen and Lauren, both amazing and supportive coordinators who instilled in me the confidence that I could take on this role.

Part of my job as Summer Student Program Assistant involved training volunteers on their very first day and teaching them how to visit patients and deliver amenities to them such as newspapers. Through my own experience as a volunteer, I found that the most important part of walking into a patient’s room was to show up with a smile. My goal was to teach this important aspect to all of our volunteers. I wanted them to greet everyone with a smile, their name, and a “Good Morning” to let patients know “Our volunteers are here for you!” After I gave them a lengthy and sometimes tiring tour of the entire hospital, teaching them the basics of patient interaction and the perfect coffee recipe for the “Brew Crew,” I let them take the reins. As the weeks went by, I enjoyed seeing the summer volunteers in action; they were spectacular! I was surprised as to how fast they progressed and had become very comfortable speaking with patients. There were many times I had a huge grin plastered on my face all day because I heard about the great interactions volunteers were having with patients. This summer was nothing short of incredible!

Thanks to the Bengier Foundation for their generous support, and to Volunteer Services for having this program! It not only taught young people what it was like to be at UCSF, but they also learned about leadership, kindness, and what it meant to be a volunteer. As for the future, I look forward to continuing to volunteer at the Mission Bay campus every week while keeping up with my education so that one day I’ll be able to do more for our patients. To our amazing summer student volunteers, I wish you luck with the stress of filling out college applications and hoping for the best in all of your future endeavors!
Summer Reflections

By Kira Nakamoto
Summer Student Program Assistant
Volunteer & Guest Services at Parnassus

A typical day working in the Volunteer Services Office could be a bit unpredictable at times. The phone would ring constantly with patients requesting deliveries and other amenities. Volunteers would be busy getting the “Brew Crew” Coffee cart ready to go, making coffee for visitors and guests to enjoy. Newspapers also had to be delivered every morning bright and early. And on top of that, multiple projects in the office would usually be happening simultaneously.

But even on the most unpredictable of days, there were some things you could always count on. As soon as you walked into the Parnassus Volunteer Services Office, Jennifer would always greet you and be available to answer questions and work with volunteers. She also had a ton of good food recommendations, and we would have a great time chatting about different restaurants. Keith would not only go the extra mile to help you out, but he would also share about one of his funny stories with you. Amy would brighten up your worst day with her positive and uplifting attitude. I would be there writing on a million little sticky notes with the schedule plans for the day. And then there were the volunteers, with smiles on their faces, ready to work diligently to help patients and staff at UCSF Health.

On the surface, UCSF Health appears to be similar to many other hospitals. The day-to-day activities throughout resemble those of other hospitals in the area. However, what I think makes UCSF such a unique place is the people. It was amazing to meet staff members who were not only important people, but also incredibly kind and willing to teach others. It was truly a rewarding experience to work in an environment with such hard-working and empathetic staff members. Volunteers always commented to me that they were pleasantly surprised by how nice and funny everyone was in the Volunteer Services Office. One student even mentioned that she had volunteered at another hospital previously, and the mood was more intense and serious. This gave me a strong sense of pride knowing that UCSF is a successful and prestigious hospital, with staff members who truly care for their patients as fellow human beings.

I have always appreciated the importance of good student-mentor relationships. Being able to learn from someone more experienced and being able to pass on that knowledge to someone else is so important, but is often undervalued. I felt honored to be in my position as the Summer Student Program Assistant because it not only gave me the opportunity to train and guide new volunteers, but I also learned a lot from them in return. I enjoyed training the high school students and helping them feel more comfortable interacting with patients and navigating around the hospital. Volunteering at UCSF was my first experience being in a hospital environment, so I understood how scary it could be in the beginning. Toward the end of the program, I was pleased to see volunteers working together, teaching each other, and discussing their future plans. I found myself learning so much from the high school students. I was amazed at how professional and mature they were, especially for their age. I had to constantly remind myself that they were still in high school!

I couldn’t have been more proud of the high school volunteers this summer. In the beginning, many of them were nervous and shy. But it didn’t take long for them to feel more confident as they learned how to complete different tasks. I am so thankful to have been able to work with such a dynamic group of students who were always enthusiastic and eager to help patients - it made my job not feel like work at all! The summer students also helped fold beautiful paper cranes and flowers, and assemble ribbon roses for patients. They made so many paper cranes that we were able to decorate our office with them as well.

Even though my time working at UCSF was rather short, it was an experience that I will never forget. I learned so much and appreciate everyone who helped me along the way. Special thanks to the Bengier Foundation for their support of our summer program, and to Amy, Jennifer, and Keith for being so wonderful to work alongside at the Parnassus campus! It was great to meet all of the summer students. They inspired me to work even harder and I wish them the very best in the future. They were a bright group of students and I know they will go far in life.
Samhita Banerjee, 17
Parnassus Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Kira Nakamoto, Volunteer & Guest Services

Samhita was always genuinely happy to volunteer at UCSF. She had a great attitude and a warm, friendly personality. She cared about giving back to the patients in the hospital and was more than willing to take on any tasks given to her. She was our only high school summer volunteer on Fridays and our office would get very busy at times. She always stepped up to help us and took the initiative to work on projects while we had meetings. I appreciate that I could always count on her to do a great job.

Katherine Elkort, 17
Mission Bay Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Lauren Franklin, Volunteer & Guest Services

Kate, at only 17 years old, was an astounding and independent leader, driven by experience to serve. She was a joy to have this summer, as she was very much aware of the needs of others. I was amazed by how she offered the gift of time so selflessly, and with so much integrity. She expressed her care and empathy for humankind through our “Brew Crew” program as she welcomed families and visitors with hot beverages each week. She went the extra mile with each encounter, offering a listening ear to lonely patients and talking with them about common interests. With a welcoming and cheerful personality, Kate connected with patients, families and staff on all levels.

In the office, Kate took the initiative to learn and take on new projects. She was well organized and had a great vision of her role as a volunteer. She embodied the expectations of a volunteer, and always wore a vibrant smile, accepted new responsibilities and expressed her values with actions.

Jessie Deng, 16
Parnassus Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Keith Ackerson, Volunteer & Guest Services

On Jessie’s first day as a volunteer, she was very attentive, polite, and proactive, but was also a bit on the shy side. As the weeks passed, though, Jessie quickly left behind her shyness and grew to become a strong team member who was able to help and train others in all the different aspects of the program. She did everything from visiting new admit patients, to helping with the “Brew Crew,” answering patient phone calls, and delivering amenity items to patients and visitors. I could always depend on Jessie to be able to assist with these tasks and help train other volunteers. Jessie was an excellent representation of a UCSF Volunteer!
Athena Go, 17
Parnassus Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Jennifer Satake, Volunteer & Guest Services

Athena was a great help to our department this summer. She always had a ‘can-do’ attitude and made everyone around her feel welcome with her bright and cheerful personality. I remember one day, Athena made a huge bouquet of tissue paper flowers for patients, who appreciated her special handmade touch! Athena always went out of her way to get to know all of the other volunteers during her shift. She was good at taking the initiative and extended a caring touch to each of the patients she visited. Thanks, Athena!

Cecily Ma, 16
Mission Bay Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Queenie Chin, Volunteer & Guest Services

I would like to recognize Cecily Ma for the H.E.A.R.T.S. Award. Cecily did such an incredible job dedicating her time and efforts to aid our patients to her full capacity. Usually, we would have volunteers partner up so they could divide up their tasks evenly and make their workloads lighter. But due to unforeseen circumstances, Cecily had to be on her own without a partner for the majority of the summer. She took on each task like a champ and helped to make our office run more smoothly. She traveled the confusing halls of the hospital by herself, completed every tedious task assigned to her, and also kindly offered patients and their families beverages from the “Brew Crew” cart. I am so incredibly proud to honor Cecily with this award and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Devon Switalski, 16
Mission Bay Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Kathleen Grusenski, Volunteer & Guest Services

Starting from her group interview and orientation, Devon was an outstanding volunteer. She was thoughtful, reflective, and compassionate. Devon was eager and willing to take on both the “Brew Crew” and Newspaper assignments with great zeal and a courageously positive attitude, even operating as a ‘one-woman show’ on Mondays during Session 1 at Mission Bay. She went above and beyond our expectations. With a generous spirit, she helped with the launch of a new program this summer at Mission Bay, Random Acts of Flowers, even serving an extra day in addition to her regular shift! She also picked up two extra shifts in Session 2, knowing that we could use her support!

Tracy Pan, 17
Parnassus Patient Visitor and Amenity Program
Nominated by Kira Nakamoto, Volunteer & Guest Services

Tracy had a great attitude about volunteering. I could give her any task and she would do it to the best of her abilities, regardless of what the task was. She especially liked to do craft projects in the office. She was always excited to do even the most tedious of tasks such as folding and then carefully stringing paper cranes onto keychains for patients. Patients really enjoyed the surprise of receiving a special paper crane keychain! Tracy was a model volunteer and I appreciate that she was willing to also help teach new volunteers about how to make deliveries, visit with patients, and go on “Brew Crew” rounds.
Thank You
Summer Volunteers