For the Love of a Child, USD Family Goes to France

Nichole Lailson is a typical 14-year-old who likes Britney Spears, Ashanti and ceramics, and cherishes a keepsake picture of her and Snoopy taken at Knott’s Berry Farm.

Nicknamed “colibri,” or hummingbird, by her father, the once energetic teen-ager who enjoyed camping and riding bicycles now spends most of her days in bed at the family’s Murrieta home.

Nichole was diagnosed in 1998 with a rare form of bone cancer called Ewing’s sarcoma. After exhausting traditional treatments — surgery, chemotherapy and radiation — her pediatric oncologist referred her to hospice, designed to provide comfort to patients at the end stage of an illness.

But her father, Alex Lailson, a 14-year building maintenance employee, refuses to give up hope and is seeking alternative medical care in France, an option his medical insurance doesn’t cover.

“I’m optimistic,” says Lailson, a locksmith. “I have no other choice right now. I have to believe in this.”

The university recently raised more than $7,000 for Lailson by selling ice cream, raffle prizes and baked goods (see “In the Spotlight”).

“My heart went out to the family, and I had to be here,” says Sister Juanita Meyer of the provost’s office, who attended the event. “We are a community, and whatever happens to one of us happens to all of us. Even though I don’t know Alex personally, this is my small way of helping someone in need.”

Using the contributions, father and daughter traveled in November to Paris to see Dr. Jean Claude Lapraz, who after practicing traditional medicine has spent 25 years researching the use of mineral oils and plants in healing.

“We all want to thank the community of USD for giving us the opportunity to make this possible,” Lailson said in a letter to USD following the fund-raiser. “There are no words I can use to thank you enough for your support, and I can assure you now that regardless of God’s decision with my little angel, I feel cared for because I know that whatever awaits me in the future I just have...”

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The Women’s Center — Strong and Invincible

“You go, girl!” It’s a rallying cry for the USD Women’s Center and a thumbs-up to graduate assistant Amber Picou, who transformed the program from fading to flourishing.

Picou, who is earning a master’s degree in leadership, re-opened the center in 2001, after a period of inactivity forced it into hibernation.

“We’ve come a long way,” says Picou, ignoring the similarity to the Virginia Slims ad. “We’re offering a wide variety of programming and are getting a great response from the campus.”

The center, in UC 116, is one part chill-out zone — visitors kick back on the couch, read magazines and hover over the bottomless candy dish — and one part madhouse, as students, faculty and staff check out books from a resource library, sign up for exercise classes and support groups, and deposit pink aluminum tops from Yoplait yogurt or pink pull tabs from Hansen’s soda cans to support breast cancer research.

Open to men and women, the center offers self-defense workshops, leadership discussions and exercise and dance classes. With skeins of yarn in hand, amateur and ace needle workers also hook up for the center’s popular weekly Crochet Circle, where they sometimes weave baby hats for nurseries at nearby hospitals.

Other well-attended events sponsored by the center included November’s Luna Fest and October’s Body Image Awareness Week, which drew 400 participants to the culminating discussion by actor Traci Gold of television’s “Growing Pains,” who talked about her struggle with an eating disorder. This month, the center will support World AIDS Day by featuring the San Diego AIDS quilt on Dec. 3 in the UC Forum.

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For the Love of a Child

(Continued from page 1)

to turn around and feel the warmth of the community of the university.”

Nichole’s family finds joy in little upturns — like the day she avoided a blood transfusion when her blood count improved. But she has her bad days as well. A recent dose of radiation, to abate tumors in her pelvis and right femur, left her only able to hobble four or five painful steps.

“She is angry that she is sick and has not been able to work this out,” Lailson says. “She has talked about dying. She has been saying she wants to be cremated.”

Lailson, who recently took a leave of absence to care for his daughter, says prayer and faith in God have helped Nichole and the family with the ordeal. “We pray to God that it’s not God’s wish,” he says. “We still have more time. She has been fighting this cancer for years. We cannot give up on her.”

Donations are still welcome. For information, contact Josie Vella at ext. 4784.

Editor’s note: Since this story was written, Nichole’s family reports that she changed her diet and simplified her life. Now she’s stronger, is gaining weight and feels better. The family asks the USD community for its continued thoughts, prayers and support.

— Story by Cecilia Chan

SEA Snippets

The following issues were discussed at the November meeting of the Staff Employees Association:

• The group elected a new board for a two-year term that will end in 2005. Josie Vella, of the Center for Christian Spirituality, is president. Penny Navarro, of continuing education, is vice president. Co-secretaries are Perla Bleisch, from law school administration, and Cynthia Dana, from the Legal Research Center. Treasurer is Joan Wolf of budget and treasury.

Where are you going on your Christmas vacation? Whether you shovel down the slopes in Colorado or shirk the cold weather and visit the sunny shores of the Bahamas, let us know by sending us a vacation photo. But don’t be camera shy because the only rule is that you, the employee, have to be in the shot. Send your photos to Krystn Shrieve in the publications office, Maher Hall, Room 274.


— Roger Manion
Director of Facilities Management

Construction crews have torn down Harmon Hall and are making tremendous progress on other projects around campus. Here’s what to expect in December and January:

• Degheri Alumni Center: Grading and footings will start in December. Crews expect to erect steel framing in mid-December. The target date of opening the center is November 2003.

• Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology: Crews are back filling the north side of the building to create a slope where the sidewalk will be installed. The roof will be completed, lab furniture will be installed on the third floor and the east and south sides of the building will be painted.

• West Marian Way Parking Structure: Wall pours will be done on the west and north sides of the building. The bottom slab will be poured in mid-December. In January crews hope to begin working on the first deck of the four-level structure.

— Roger Manion
Director of Facilities Management

Where are you going on your Christmas vacation? Whether you shop-shoop down the slopes in Colorado or shirk the cold weather and visit the sunny shores of the Bahamas, let us know by sending us a vacation photo. But don’t be camera shy because the only rule is that you, the employee, have to be in the shot. Send your photos to Krystn Shrieve in the publications office, Maher Hall, Room 274.

• The SEA voted to donate $1,000 to USD locksmith Alex Lailson; $250 to the Manchester Family Child Development Center; and $200 to Latino Identity.

• The SEA’s annual Christmas party is set for 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., Dec. 11, in Salomom Lecture Hall, Maher Hall. Submarine sandwiches will be served and participants may bring a gently used wrapped gift for a “white elephant” gift exchange. Every year the SEA collects donations at its Christmas party for a local charity. This year, party-goers are encouraged to bring blankets, towels, toys and non-perishable foods for 150 families at Holy Family Catholic Church in Linda Vista. Cash donations for Alex Lailson also will be accepted.

• The December Staff Employee of the Month is Elba Sims of custodial services, who, according to her nomination, “makes no compromises with her work or with her compassion for others.”
Festive Feasts
Celebrate Christmas and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe by sharing traditional holiday meals prepared by the chefs in dining services. A traditional posada dinner, followed by the Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe, will be served from 4 to 6:30 p.m., Dec. 8, in the Hahn University Center main dining room. The annual Christmas dinner will be served from 4:45 to 7:30 p.m., Dec. 12, also in the main dining room. Both events are open to on- and off-campus patrons. For menus, log on to http://dining.sandiego.edu.

Women’s Center
(Continued from page 1)
The center also promotes community outreach by encouraging involvement with Habitat for Humanity, walk-a-thons for breast cancer, Dress for Success, which helps women re-enter the work force, and Rachel’s Women’s Center, a shelter for homeless women in San Diego County.

“We offer so many ways to connect,” says sophomore Erica Lovano, Associated Students’ director of programming for the Women’s Center. “We see so much need out there and do what we can, but we need more help.”

Picou and Lovano shoehorn Women’s Center duties between academic responsibilities, and hope for a full-time director.

“We’re always looking for volunteers to help out,” Picou says, “But I have to warn people that if they come to me with an idea, I’ll look to them to help make it work.”

For information about the Women’s Center, call ext. 2396 or log on to http://womenscenter.sandiego.edu.

Nothin’ But the Facts!
The annual facts booklet, an easy guide to anything from USD history and important telephone numbers to sports statistics and a campus map, is hot off the presses. Get your copies before they run out.

Copies can be sent via campus mail to departments that need fewer than 10. Departments needing more than that can arrange to pick them up in the publications office, Maher Hall, Room #274. Send your requests to Judy Williamson at ext. 4684, or e-mail her at wmson@sandiego.edu.
Employee Service Awards 2002

15 Years
Armando Medina-Castaneda, University Center Operations
Chris La'O, Public Safety
Bob Tran, Main Dining Room
Susan L. Pillsbury-Barton, Human Resources
Larry Gardepie, Business Process Redesign
Kevin Cole, Law School Administration
Ruey Shivers, Graduate Records
Cheance Adair, Mail Center
Janet Madden, Law School Administration
Adriana Moran, Copley Library
Nancy Carter, Legal Research Center
Barbara Hughes, Public Safety
Cynthia Villis, Provost
Patrick Boyce, Campus Card Services
Terri Miller, Building Maintenance
Stanley Manson Yiu, Print Shop
Tedi Kostka, School of Education
Ana Schafer, Bookstore
Patricia Lee, University Relations Operation
María Docarmo Luís, Housekeeping Services
Arieta Maria Balelo, Housekeeping Services
John Frazier, Media Center
Ann Pantano, English
Leo Baker, Academic Computing Services
Maria Naranjo, Main Dining Room
Pureza Garces, Main Dining Room
Darlene Piensa, School of Business Administration

Rufus Rencher, Administrative Information Services
Maria Goncalves, Custodial Services
Catherine Crutchfield, Arts and Sciences Administration
Niran Shenoda, Legal Research Center
Julie R. Wright, Copley Library
Leilei N. Thein, Environmental Health and Safety
Josie Vella, Center for Christian Spirituality
Paciano Tovar, Marketplace
Amy Guaitieri, University Ministry
Marilynn Ann Green, Continuing Education
Debbie Finocchio, Chemistry
Vivian Holland, Arts and Sciences Administration
Mario Casillas, Telecommunications
Richard Clark, Banquets and Catering
Cathleen Mumper, School of Nursing
Dennis Schmidt, Administrative Information Services
Ruth Levoir, Legal Research Center
Cary Dorris, Bookstore
Elaine Elliott, Community Service-Learning
Cipriano Glez Marquez, Custodial Services
Juan Felix, Aromas
Coffee House
Rebecca Gilbert, Human Resources
Jacqueline Kennedy, Manchester Child Development Center
Thomas Dalton, School of Business Administration
Julio Hernandez, Dining Services Administration
Valencia Hamman, Undergraduate Admissions
Felix Leyva, Telecommunications

10 Years
Bill Anderson, Law School Administration
Diane Dobson, Bursar
Cheryl Getz, School of Education
Employee Service Awards 2002

John Cunningham is driven. Not only did he coach USD men’s basketball for 18 years and baseball for 35 years, but now Cunningham, who this year celebrates his 40th anniversary at the university, drives the bus that gets Torero athletes to and from their games. He is one of more than 70 people who in November were given awards for milestone anniversaries of 10 years of service or more to the university.

“There were times when people accused me of not having ambition because I wasn’t going after other jobs,” Cunningham recalls. “But if you like what you’re doing and where you’re doing it, why go anywhere else?”

The following is a list of service award winners provided by the human resources department.

40 Years
John Cunningham, Athletics Administration

30 Years
Guadalupe Cardenas, Main Dining Room
Jack Pope, Academic Computing Services
Tom Cosgrove, Student Affairs Administration

25 Years
Penny Navarro, Continuing Education
Therese Thiessen, Campus Card Services
Susan Sullivan, Paralegal Program
Virginia Shue, Law School Administration

20 Years
Ludmila Berengolts, Legal Research Center
Socorro Ellis, Housekeeping Services
Sheryl Lorey-McAtee, University Relations Operation
Diana Githens, Law School Administration
Rudy Spano, Dining Services Administration
Marge Costanzo, Bursar

(Service Awards continued on reverse side.)
Christmas at the Casa
Put on your Santa hats, brush up on the lyrics to your favorite holiday hymns and come on down to the casa. It's time for President Alice B. Hayes' annual Christmas party, 2-4 p.m., Dec. 18, at the Casa de Alcalá.

Employees and their families are welcome, light refreshments will be served, and Christmas carolers are needed to spread the holiday cheer. To participate, call Don McGraw at ext. 4553 or e-mail mcgraw@sandiego.edu. Please R.S.V.P. for the party to Yolanda Castro by Dec. 13 at ext. 4520, or e-mail castro@sandiego.edu.

Doughnut Day Brings in Dough
Jacqueline Corey Kennedy, director of the Manchester Family Child Development Center, reports the center raised more than $500 through the recent Krispy Kreme Doughnut Day. The money will be used to purchase new playground equipment. The next Krispy Kreme fund-raiser will be in February. For information, call ext. 6819.

University Ministry Events
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass: 7 p.m., Dec. 8, in the Hahn University Center Forum.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Procession: Meet at noon, Dec. 12, for the mariachi procession from the University Center to Founders Chapel for Mass. Todos están invitados! Everyone is welcome!
- Mid-Year Graduation Mass: 3 p.m., Dec. 19, in Founders Chapel.
- 20- and 30-Something Retreat: Staff, faculty, administrators, graduate students and alumni in their 20s and 30s are invited to enjoy a weekend exploring issues that affect young adults. The retreat will be Jan. 10-12 at Camp Sierra del Mar in Ramona, Calif. For information, call Lisa Directo at ext. 7770, or University Ministry at ext. 4735.
- Silent Retreat: Father J.J. O'Leary will facilitate this retreat from Jan. 22-24. It offers participants a chance to explore and deepen their relationships with God. For information, call Mary Kruer at ext. 5903, or University Ministry at ext. 4735.
- Tenth Annual All-Faith Service: Noon, Jan. 31, in The Immaculata.

classifieds
FOR SALE: Porsche seats. Two black leather with red leather insets, fully electric Recaro seats, excellent condition. $700. Two tan leather seats from a 1974 911, manual. Fair condition. $200. Call Diane Callahan at ext. 4659, or e-mail her at dianec@sandiego.edu.

MILESTONES
John P. Lynch, father of USD Trustee John T. Lynch and father-in-law of Mark Reidy, director of USD's Real Estate Institute, passed away on Oct. 20.
Michael Treptow, former employee in banquets and catering, passed away on Nov. 22.

Ask H.R.
On Furlough 'Til February
Maybe we need to recover from holiday parties, or maybe we just need a jump start on keeping our New Year's resolutions, but H.R., the human resources guru, and the rest of the gang at the Alcalá View are taking January off. But we'll be back in February. Send submissions for the February edition to Krystn Shrieve by Jan. 10. Send her an e-mail at kshrieve@sandiego.edu or call her at ext. 4934.