David Dorbad is the first person to receive The Appleseed Foundation Annual Scholarship, which was established to ease the financial burden of an incoming MD1 student from Luzerne County.

Dave grew up in Exeter, PA, graduated from Wyoming Area High School and earned a BS in Biology from Misericordia University. As an undergraduate, David was very involved in leadership activities, volunteering at the Graham Academy, and shadowing physicians and other healthcare providers.

Regarding his path to TCMC, Dave says, “The path toward becoming a physician is worthwhile, yet stressful—emotionally and financially. When I first found out I had been offered The Appleseed Foundation Scholarship, I was elated. The Valley With a Heart continues to fuel my passion and admiration for this community. I am humbled to have been considered and I am truly thankful for the support.”

On behalf of the full Board of Directors of the Appleseed Foundation, Interim Director Gerry O’Donnell states, “Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all throughout the greater Wyoming Valley. We are focused on long-term results that are measurable and sustainable. We know that we can have a positive impact on achieving this by helping a student get an education, especially one who has a strong desire to practice medicine in our area one day. By establishing The Appleseed Foundation Annual Scholarship at TCMC, we are part of ensuring that there is affordable, quality health care in the region.”

Scholarship Feature:
The Appleseed Foundation Annual Scholarship

To make a donation or for more information, please contact the Office of Annual Giving at 570.504.9619, or visit tcmc.edu/donate.
A Residency Story

Alexandra Belcher-Obejero-Paz, MD ‘15
Residency: Boston University Medical Center, Boston, MA
Specialty: Obstetrics & Gynecology
Hometown: Boston, MA

Alexandra Belcher-Obejero-Paz, MD ‘15, matched at Boston University Medical Center and has quickly transitioned from medical student to resident. Alexandra shares, “Being a resident is difficult, yet exhilarating! There is so much to learn and sometimes the learning curve seems insurmountable. However, every day I come out the other end a little more confident and a little more knowledgeable.”

When asked how The Commonwealth Medical College (TCMC) prepared her for residency, Alexandra says, “TCMC provided me with a great deal of patient exposure. Because of my TCMC mentors, I am confident with my physical and interviewing skills.”

The education Alexandra received has given her the ability to understand that clinical care is complex, just like each patient. She is putting her knowledge to the test. “Most importantly, I feel that I am constantly thinking about the full picture; that is, what is going on in the patient’s life that could be impacting their decision-making process and their health outcomes. This has been important with the patient population I serve at Boston University Medical Center,” she adds.

Once Alexandra completes her residency, she will be working for at least four years in an underserved community due to her status as a National Health Service Corps Scholar. She plans to split her time as a laborist and primary care practitioner in women’s health.

Alexandra’s advice for graduating medical students: “Fourth year is the best year of medical school with lots of anticipation and happy changes. Enjoy every moment and take the time to continue to strengthen friendships. Everything will work out as it should, so try not to sweat the small stuff.”

A Message from the President and Dean

The past year has been one of growth for TCMC. We expanded our network of clinical partners, most notably with our fourth campus at Guthrie in Sayre. We welcomed another MD class of over 100 students. And we learned that our economic impact to the region and state—another dimension of community wellbeing—amounts to $65.2 million annually.

We also officially launched the Campaign for Scholarships and Innovation. Our goal is to raise $15 million, with the priority being student scholarships, and at Gala 2015 we announced that in the silent phase we had already raised over 60% of that—$9.45 million.

Now, we must turn to essential progress in the areas of curriculum, research, partnerships, community initiatives, and new programs. In every one of these areas we will be focused on community, wellbeing, and innovation.

In curriculum we will be pushing the envelope of innovation, and strengthening the theme of community throughout the four years. All of our research at TCMC will be focused on addressing community needs, from cancer to health care quality. Our mission to improve community health can only be realized in collaboration with community partners. Our community initiatives have already begun to impact our communities, such as the Behavioral Health Initiative, a partnership with the Luperine Foundation, the Wright Center, Community Care Behavioral Health, and many dozens of agencies and other community partners represented on our large Advisory Committee, which is now up to a membership of over 80 people. We are also actively working on the development of several new degree programs, and a partnership with Gissinger’s Genomics initiative.

In the coming months, you will learn of our developing collaboration with the Baruch S. Blumberg Institute and the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Center of Bucks County innovation incubator in Doylestown.

I have been continually amazed by the sense of community, our collective and individual sense of ownership of the College and in particular of our commitment to student success, as embodied in our staff, faculty, and donors. TCMC’s focus on community wellbeing and push toward innovation are our unique strengths. I am humbled and honored to be a part of this team.

Sincerely,
Steven J. Scheinman, MD
President and Dean

http://www.tcmc.edu/AlumniSpotlight
IN THE COMMONWEALTH, a dream at the turn of the 21st century became a reality in 2008. The founding of TCMC has indeed changed medical education and medical care in the communities within our 17-county region of northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

Today, TCMC is fully accredited and boasts graduating classes with success in passing national board exams and in securing prestigious residency programs. As TCMC prepares for the next stage in its evolution into a nationally-respected medical college, the Board of Trustees has approved a $15 million fundraising initiative, the Campaign for Scholarships and Innovation (CSI). The three themes for the campaign are Community, Wellbeing, and Innovation, which serve as the foundation for all that has been achieved and all that we will do in the years ahead. These themes will also guide the College as we share our message with the communities we serve and the nation.

TCMC provides a regionally-engaged and nationally-relevant medical education that is distinct and innovative. Our faculty are innovative leaders in medical education, research, and service. Our students represent a different future for health care and wellbeing—one committed to a lifetime of service in our communities.

Please join in supporting TCMC’s quest to be a national model for community-based medical education with a generous gift to the CSI.

Learn more about the CSI and TCMC’s commitment to Community, Wellbeing, and Innovation: campaign.tcmc.edu

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

COMMUNITY
The grounding of a medical education, research and service organization in 17 counties begins with a commitment to community care and wellbeing. As TCMC evolves in its innovative journey in medical education, research, and service, we will continue to align our commitment with community needs for the greatest impact.

WELLBEING
The founders of TCMC had a grand vision—to transform the health and wellbeing of the citizens of the area. Community health comes first at TCMC. Our medical education begins by addressing the most pressing healthcare needs in our communities. Working cooperatively with local hospitals, we see firsthand the most pressing health challenges, and we are responding.

INNOVATION
We do medical education differently. From the first day of medical school through graduation, our students are engaged with and learn from the people and organizations throughout the communities of the 17 counties we serve. Continuity of experience with patients in our communities is essential to developing the empathetic, dedicated physicians promised by our mission. Our four regional campuses and Family Centered Experience Program ensure that our students receive early clinical experience with local families and physician mentors. We were the first fully accredited medical college in the nation to require every student to participate in a Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship, an innovative approach to medical education. Additionally, Interprofessional Education is central to our curriculum and value system at TCMC.

www.tcmc.edu
TCMC broke records on October 17, 2015. Nearly 600 guests attended ‘Gala 2015: Black Ties for White Coats,’ which grossed over $431,000 in support of student scholarships. Both the attendance and gross total raised are the highest in the event’s seven-year run.

The evening marked the unveiling of the public phase of our Campaign for Scholarships and Innovation (CSI). Guests learned how the CSI will expand scholarships for future physicians and sustain growth and innovation as a regionally-focused, nationally-relevant medical college.

Additionally, we saluted six honorees who exemplify three key principles of TCMC’s mission: David and Ann Hawk for their commitment to community; Dr. Stanley and Theresa Dudrick for their dedication to wellbeing; and Peter and Sally Bohlin for their lifetime of creativity and innovation.

Look through even more Gala photos and watch the videos featured at the event: tcmc.edu/gala
According to the American Cancer Society, mortality rates from breast cancer have been declining for the last 25 years, resulting from early detection and targeted therapies, which are drugs that precisely identify and destroy cancer cells. Most breast cancers are fueled by estrogen and progesterone hormones, and/or human epidermal growth factor. Scientists have developed targeted therapies to block these hormones’ receptors, which are the pathways by which breast cancer cells are stimulated to grow. Once the receptors are blocked, the tumors starve and die.

Unfortunately, not all breast cancers respond to these treatments. Ten to 20% of tumors are deemed “triple negative,” because they do not have the three aforementioned hormone receptors. There are no targeted therapies for triple negative breast cancer (TNBC). It is extremely aggressive and the mortality rates are high.

Raj Kumar, PhD, professor of biochemistry at TCMC and an internationally acclaimed researcher in the field of endocrine cancers, including breast cancer, is trying to change this. Given the lack of effective targets in this subtype of breast cancers and the grim survival statistics for patients, there is an urgent need to develop new and novel therapies for TNBC. Dr. Kumar wondered: if blocking the hormone pathway starved a hormone-positive tumor, what pathway could be blocked to starve a tumor not fed by hormones? What was feeding these aggressive cancers?

The answer turned out to be the glucocorticoid receptor (GR) which regulates the biological effects of cortisol, the body’s stress hormone, at the level of gene regulation. The adrenal glands release cortisol in response to fear or stress as part of a person’s fight-or-flight survival mechanism. However, prolonged stress—when the body is inundated with cortisol over and over—has been linked with a number of diseases, including cancer.

Dr. Kumar’s research indicates that higher gene expression of GR fuels TNBC. He discovered this by finding an elevated amount of GR in TNBC cells derived from patients with TNBC tumors. When he found high amounts of the receptors, he found a high proliferation of TNBC cancer cells. Similar results have been reported by other research groups. A recent study showed that GR antagonists could decrease TNBC tumor growth.

Dr. Kumar is now researching a novel pathway to block GR to prevent TNBC tumors from growing, which could improve survival rates for patients. “I have been successful so far in targeting glucocorticoid receptors,” Dr. Kumar said. “I’m now trying to identify a small molecule that can be developed into a drug capable of blocking the GR activity, which in turn may suppress specific target oncogenes.”

Dr. Kumar is now testing his hypothesis with cellular models at TCMC. His long term goal is a clinical drug trial for cancer patients.

Dr. Kumar has co-authored over 100 publications in highly reputed peer-reviewed scientific journals. In early August, he gave the keynote speech, “A Novel Therapeutic Approach for Triple Negative Breast Cancer,” at the World Congress on Breast Cancer in Birmingham, England, where he also chaired sessions on breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, side effects and pathology. The following month, he published his second book, Nuclear Receptors: From Structure to the Clinic (Springer), which he co-edited with his colleague Iain J. McEwan, PhD from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK.

“...The critical role that GR-mediated pathways may be playing in TNBC is an emerging area of investigation and further research should lead to better treatment for patients who require more aggressive interventions. If my work could help prolong even one life, it will all be worth it.”

RAJ KUMAR, PHD
T CMC held the Class of 2019 White Coat Ceremony on August 7, welcoming 105 students to our seventh doctor of medicine (MD) class.

Howard H. Weitz, MD, MACP, FACC, the Bernard L. Segal Professor in Clinical Cardiology at Jefferson Medical College, director of the Division of Cardiology and the Jefferson Heart Institute, senior vice chair for Academic Affairs in the Department of Medicine, and the clinical director of Jefferson’s Heart and Vascular Service Line, presented the Dr. Lester Saidman Memorial Lecture.

Dr. Weitz told the audience the key secrets of success to being a physician and healer. His message to the new medical students was that when they look back on their careers, their relationships with their patients and their families will provide the most important memories.

White coats were provided by The Stanley J. Dudrick, MD, and Alan G. Goldstein Endowed Fund.

CLASS NOTES

Rachel Bruzio and Vince Giannotti, both of the MD Class of 2016, were married on September 6, in Scranton. Rachel and Vince met during first-year orientation at TCMC.

Eric Drago, MD ’17, is engaged to Noelle Vrablic. A September 2016 wedding is planned at Ehrhardt’s Waterfront Resort in Hawley, PA.

Mike Farrell, MBS ’10, MD ’14, proposed to his wife Lydia outside of TCMC’s Medical Sciences Building on Match Day 2014, and married on October 24 in Delaware.

Andrew Gilmore, MD ’18, is engaged to Cindy Mancini.

Several TCMC students attended the annual Pennsylvania Medical Society Conference in Hershey in October. John Trickett, MD ’18, earned the role of Medical Student Trustee. Leanne Wozniak, MD ’19, won the position of student representative for the Pennsylvania Medical Political Action Committee. Also, several students acted as delegates for their respective counties as well as for TCMC.

White coats were provided by The Stanley J. Dudrick, MD, and Alan G. Goldstein Endowed Fund.

TCMC’s Newest Regional Campus

In July, Guthrie and TCMC signed an educational partnership agreement, marking Guthrie as TCMC’s fourth regional campus. This affiliation means Guthrie will be a clinical education site for a significant number of TCMC’s medical students.

Joseph Scopelliti, MD, CEO and president of Guthrie, said: “Guthrie has a long tradition in medical education dating back to our first interns in 1925. Partnering with a medical school in a larger role is exemplary of the learning environment which we have sought for our entire system. Our focus on providing excellent, integrated health with an emphasis on continuous learning meant that we wanted to find a partner who shared those same values and goals. We have found that partner in TCMC.”

Steven J. Scheinman, MD, president and dean of TCMC, said: “We are tremendously excited to be formalizing this partnership. Guthrie has a long and impressive history of medical education, and as an integrated system Guthrie will give our students an excellent experience in 21st-century medicine. Dr. Scopelliti and his team have been excellent partners in these discussions. It is clear that our two organizations share the same mission and values, to improve the care of patients throughout this region and to strengthen the physician workforce.”

Below: Howard H. Weitz, MD, MACP, FACC, presented this year’s Dr. Lester Saidman Memorial Lecture. The lecture series honors Lester Saidman, MD, a well-respected physician and educator from Luzerne County. L to R (front): Carol Saidman Greenwald; Melissa Saidman; Steven J. Schermerman, MD, president and dean of TCMC; Howard H. Weitz, MD, MACP, FACC; Karen Ganez, PhD, MPH; Sheila Saidman; Emily Steven Kehweiler, MD, L to R (back): Bruce Saidman, MD; Ben Weitz; David Greenwald, MD; Jakob Saidman, MD2.
Spotlight on KATHLEEN TIGUE, MD, FAAP

Academy of Clinical Educators (ACE) Faculty Fellow

From the time she was chief resident at the University of Rochester Medical Center to her present role as assistant professor of pediatrics at TCMC, Kathleen “Kate” Tigue, MD, FAAP, has been able to combine her two passions: pediatrics and teaching.

Dr. Tigue came home to the Scranton area in 2000 to raise her children, now ranging in age from nine months to 16 years. When she heard her colleagues discussing a new medical school in northeastern Pennsylvania, Dr. Tigue was eager to get involved. “I could see how a medical school would be a boon for the community by improving health care,” she said.

When TCMC’s charter class arrived, Dr. Tigue served as both assistant professor and regional education coordinator (REC) for pediatrics for the North Campus. She found the students’ excitement contagious.

“They’re inquisitive nature is energizing,” she said. “I like that TCMC’s curriculum allows physicians such an extended period of time with their students. It’s gratifying to see students learn and master new skills.”

Dr. Tigue is the chair of the Pediatric Council of the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which works on behalf of pediatricians on issues regarding proper insurance payments from insurance companies to ensure children receive coverage. She is also the managing partner of Pediatrics of Northeastern Pennsylvania.
TCMC Study Shows $65 Million Impact on Local and State Economies

The results of a recent economic and community impact study showed that TCMC contributed $65 million to northeastern and north central Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth as a whole in its fiscal year 2014.

“Ten years, TCMC grew from an idea among friends to an economic engine and significant employer for this region,” said President and Dean Steven J. Scheinman, MD. “When you combine our monetary impact and $36.9 million ($28.4 million direct impact and $8.5 million indirect impact) of TCMC operations on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in FY14 equaled $65.2 million in FY14.

Teri Ooms, executive director of The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development, said, “TCMC is a true regional asset—one that delivers economic impact to the region, but equally as important, delivers qualitative impact beyond the nature and purpose of a traditional medical school. TCMC engages its faculty, staff and students in the communities they serve. Their volunteerism and philanthropy are critical to the region. Further, TCMC has been engaged in providing healthcare career education to disadvantaged high school students throughout the region for a number of years.”

View the full report: tcmc.edu/economicimpact

Significant Findings of the Study:

- The economic impact of TCMC operations on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in FY14 equaled $80,4 million direct impact and $165 million indirect impact.
- TCMC supports 464 direct full-time equivalent positions, representing 263 people directly employed by TCMC, and 101 indirect full-time equivalent positions.
- The statewide government revenue impact of TCMC equaled almost $2.3 million in FY14.
- TCMC employees and students generate more than $1.9 million annually in charitable donations and volunteer services, including about $800,000 donated to local charitable organizations and more than $1.1 million in the value of volunteer time provided to area communities.
- TCMC increases access to education through its Regional Education Academy for Careers in Health—Higher Education Academies (REACH-HEI) a pipeline program for students in northeastern Pennsylvania who are interested in health-related professions.

Donor Spotlight: Dr. Gino Mori and Mrs. Jean Cavalieri Mori Endowed Scholarship

B orn and raised in Old Forge, PA, Gino Mori, MD, FACS, has dedicated his life to caring for his patients, for the community, and for students throughout the region.

After graduating from Old Forge High School, Keystone College and what was then Penn State College, Dr. Gino (as he prefers to be called) earned his Doctorate of Medicine at Jefferson Medical College. Following an internship at the Scranton State General Hospital, he completed a four-year residency in General Surgery at the Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Together with his brother Hugo Mori, MD, Charles Barnion, MD, and their partners, he became the founding president of Delta Medix and its Breast Care Center in Scranton, PA.

Throughout his career, Dr. Gino served in leadership roles in the medical and higher education communities. He was president of the Lackawanna County Medical Society and has held seats on the boards of Keystone College and Penn State Worthington Scranton. He received the Alumni Fellow Award from the Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Gino married his high school sweetheart, Joan Cavalieri, with whom he had five children. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary shortly before she died in 2006. Both he and Joan were dedicated to a lifetime of learning. Even in retirement, he continues to take classes.

With the establishment of The Dr. Gino and Mrs. Jean Cavalieri Mori Endowed Scholarship at TCMC, Dr. Gino once again has demonstrated his commitment to community and excellence in the medical profession.

A Special Commemorative Poster

Dr. Gino Mori recently commissioned the world-renowned graphic artist Milton Glaser to honor TCMC and its goals by designing a poster. The poster titled “Good Care Begins with Caring” commemorates the establishment of The Dr. Gino and Mrs. Jean Cavalieri Mori Endowed Scholarship. The framed poster hangs in the lobby of TCMC’s Medical Sciences Building in Scranton.

Milton Glaser shares his thoughts while designing the poster for TCMC:

“I began with the meaning of the word ‘care’ and then related it to the idea of ‘caring.’ The image is symbolic of our institution’s attitude. We reach for our audience through the pleasurable image of a flowering bouquet, resting on a classical column, the latter suggesting traditional skill and understanding.

“All significant posters combine words and images to effectively convey their message, but are only effective when they are believed.”

Learn more about The Dr. Gino and Mrs. Joan Cavalieri Mori Endowed Scholarship, as well as the commemorative Milton Glaser poster: tcmc.edu/mori

MOST SUCCESSFUL GOLF CLASSIC TO DATE

TCMC’s 7th Annual Golf Classic, held on June 8, at Glenmaura National Golf Club, grossed over $87,000 in support of student scholarships.

Right: PNC Bank served as the tournament’s presenting sponsor. L to R: Peter Danchak, regional president of PNC Bank; Steven J. Scheinman, MD, president and dean of TCMC; John Meeks, president of Thermolife, Inc.; Nick Parise, vice president of wealth management at PNC Bank.

www.tcmc.edu
This report recognizes gifts received in fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015), including any matching gifts.