

Proton therapy targets cancer without harming healthy cells

It sounds like power belonging only to a superhero: a high-powered beam that is able to zap a millimeter area within someone's body, and yet not harm the surrounding healthy cells.

Heroic – yes, but this is not in comic books. It's happening in real life, in nearby Jacksonville.

The University of Florida Proton Therapy Institute, located near Shands Jacksonville, is one of just five such facilities in the country, and one of 21 in the world.

In this rare treatment, nuclear technology is used to project protons into tumors at nearly the speed of light. Unlike traditional radiation therapy with X-rays, proton therapy helps reduce the incidence of secondary cancers and other potential side effects of treatment by reducing the amount of radiation to surrounding body parts.

"Proton therapy offers hope for increased cancer control and a better quality of life in cancer survivors," Dr. Nancy Mendenhall, the institute's medical director, said.

Opened in August 2006, the facility now treats more than 100 patients daily from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Proton Therapy Institute

UF's proton therapy treats cancer at nearly the speed of light – without the side effects of traditional radiation.

Patients are assigned to one of three treatment areas for the duration of treatment. Each area includes a large gantry resembling a Ferris wheel, but patients see only about 10 percent of the gantry. The majority is enclosed behind a wall, along with a 440,000-pound cyclotron that generates and accelerates protons to each gantry.

Appointments last an average of 30 minutes, with the proton treatment itself taking just one to three minutes. Patients return five days a week, for six to eight continuous weeks.

Daily therapy appointments provide

numerous opportunities for interaction among patients. The institute encourages camaraderie with social activities such as weekly "lunch bunch" gatherings, the hosting of guest pianists and the offering of a coffee bar in the modern, glass-enclosed lobby.

A high percentage of patients have prostate cancer, yet the patient age and type of cancer varies. Approximately 10 children are treated each day, as well as patients with sarcomas, head, neck and brain tumors, cancers of the lung and pancreas, and Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"Approximately 70 percent of our patients come from outside the Jacksonville area. We've had patients from 49 states and several foreign countries," Stuart Klein, executive director of the UF Proton Therapy Institute, said.

For more information about the institute, visit www.floridaproton.org.

By Susan Stewart

UF Voices

ELI achieves highest enrollment in history

During fall 2008, the English Language Institute (ELI), a University of Florida Division of Continuing Education department, achieved its highest enrollment of 214 students, since opening in 1955.



Megan Forbes

The institute offers extensive English-language programs, taught by UF faculty, which prepare students to speak English in academic and real-life settings. Students come from approximately 30 countries.

The institute's extensive Cultural Immersion Program enriches students' English-learning process by hosting ELI social activities throughout the Gainesville area. Students may participate in weekend trips, weekday activities and volunteer activities. Upcoming weekend activities include an annual trip to the Gainesville Spring Arts Festival on Saturday, March 28. Weekday activities include soccer, basketball and game nights.

On Saturday, April 4, ELI will partner with the Girl Scout Council of North Florida to host "Around the World in 240 Minutes," an event held to teach girls in grades 6 through 8 about ELI female students' home countries.

The public is welcome to attend ELI events. All attendees must sign-up for trips on the activities board outside ELI's main office, 315 Norman Hall, by 4 p.m. on the Thursday before the scheduled trip. Attendees also may sign-up on the ELI Web site, <http://www.eli.ufl.edu>.

The student section of ELI's Web site offers opportunities for students to network with their peers, professors, language assistants and the institute's alumni.

ELI is the only English-language program that hires two language assistants to aid listening/speaking course teachers. Assistants are undergraduate English-speakers who help students practice informal, conversational English and teach about American culture for four hours per week.

UF undergraduates interested in working as language assistants may contact Noreen Baker, ELI's listening/speaking coordinator, at noreenb@ufl.edu.

Megan Forbes

Director, English Language Institute

Top Stories

Gators get their groove on during Dance for Life program

Dance for Life, a free, therapeutic dance program for people with Parkinson's disease, offers University of Florida students, faculty, staff and UF Movement Disorders Center (MDC) patients an opportunity to come together and dance.

Dance for Life is designed to reduce motor and non-motor symptoms and enhance the well-being of Parkinson's disease patients.

Program partners for Dance for Life include MDC and the UF College of Fine Arts' Center for the Arts in Healthcare (CAHRE).

"Dance for Life not only fits within the mission and goals of the program's partners, but also highlights the benefits of dance for Parkinson's patients," said Jill Sonke-Henderson, who serves as director of CAHRE, assistant director of Shands Arts in Medicine and co-director of Dance for Life.

Dr. Hubert Fernandez, associate professor of UF's department of neurology and co-director of both MDC and Dance for Life, said the program assists Parkinson's disease patients with non-motor (mental) symptoms, including depression and anxiety, as well as motor symptoms such as coordination difficulties and gait freezing. Gait freezing occurs when lack of coordination inhibits the movement of a certain



Jill Sonke-Henderson

UF students join with Parkinson's patients for a therapeutic dance class.

body part.

Dancing helps patients use visual cues and develop muscle memory to overcome gait freezing. Movement becomes second nature, so patients are able to walk without conscious effort, Fernandez said.

Music is also effective therapy for depression and anxiety. The program provides patients with muscle therapy, rigorous exercise, and visual and auditory cuing in a fun way, he said.

The MDC refers patients to the program, but anyone with Parkinson's disease is welcome.

The new Dance for Life program began on Jan. 26 with approximately 12 older participants and 10 UF students. Weekly classes will continue each Monday until April 20 – with the exception of no class on March 9. A culminating event is scheduled to take place in late April.

The sessions are held from 1 to 2:15 p.m. at the UF Orthopaedic Institute's Biomechanics and Motion Analysis Laboratory, 3450 Hull Road off 34th Street.

Classes are led by Kelly Cawthon, UF

School of Theatre and Dance professor, and Lauren Arce, Artist in Residence for Shands Arts in Medicine. Student-leaders assist as part of the School of Theatre and Dance teaching-methods course.

"The collaboration between the students and the older participants is just rich and wonderful," Sonke-Henderson said.

"Dance for Life gives students a sense of bringing their art out of the studio and into the world," she said. Any UF student may volunteer for the program by calling Shands Arts in Medicine at 352-265-0151 or by e-mailing Sonke-Henderson at jsonke@ufl.edu.

Patients' friends and family members are encouraged to attend and participate in an informal performance at the culminating event in April, she said. The event date has not yet been determined.

It is possible that faculty and staff may join in the performance to show patients that "we're all in this together," Fernandez said. "You dance, and we'll dance for you."

By Bridget Brennan

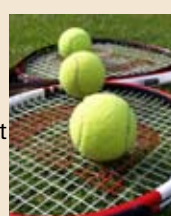
Happenings

Listings in this section are a sampling of events at the University of Florida, compiled from entries listed in the full calendar that appears on the Web at calendar.ufl.edu. To submit an event online, visit <http://calendar.ufl.edu/submit/>.

March 5
Bob Graham Center for Public Service presents "Presidential Lecture Series: The Media and the New Administration." Ocora at Pugh Hall, 7 p.m. Free and open to the public. Call 352-846-2032 or visit <http://www.graham.centers.ufl.edu> for more information.

March 6
Gator Gymnastics vs. Michigan. O'Connell Center, 7 p.m. Call 352-375-4683 or visit <http://www.gatorzone.com> for more information.

March 8
Gator Men's Tennis vs. Vanderbilt. Linder Stadium at Ring Tennis Complex, 1 p.m. Call 352-375-4683 or visit <http://www.gatorzone.com> for more information.



March 17
Samuel Proctor Oral History Program presents "Florida Black History: Where We Stand in the Age of Barack Obama." Smathers Library East, 6 p.m. Free and open to the public. Call 352-846-2032 or visit <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/east.html> for more information.

Seen & Heard

Sadler to receive national science education award

Troy Sadler, assistant professor of the University of Florida College of Education, soon will receive one of science education's premier honors. The National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) is scheduled to present him with its Early Career Research Award at the group's upcoming annual conference in April. The annual award recognizes outstanding research contributions in the field of science education within five years of receiving a doctoral degree. Sadler joins a select group of internationally recognized researchers to have received the honor.

Sadler is a key player in UF's ambitious Science for Life initiative—a nine-college effort, supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He also is the principal investigator of a new \$1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation.



Troy Sadler

Rathore appointed as FPS/ Florida vice president

Dr. Mobeen H. Rathore has been selected as vice president of the Florida Pediatric Society (FPS)/Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics. Rathore is professor and associate chairman at University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville and chief of pediatric infectious diseases at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Pring, Brockman named 2008 AAAS fellows

Daryl Pring and H. Jane Brockman recently were named 2008 Fellows by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Daryl Pring is an emeritus faculty member and longtime courtesy professor with the IFAS plant pathology department. H. Jane Brockman is a professor with the zoology department who holds an affiliate appointment with IFAS' entomology and nematology department. Both faculty members were inducted in February at the AAAS annual meeting in Chicago.

March 19
O'Connell Center presents "Jeff Dunham." O'Connell Center, 7:30 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. Call 352-392-5500 or visit <http://www.oconnellcenter.ufl.edu> for more information.

March 20
Dance Alive presents "Danscape." Phillips Center, 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$15-35. Open to the public. Call 352-392-ARTS(2787) or visit <http://www.performingarts.ufl.edu> for more information.

Artwork connects campus and Gainesville

The artwork of Brad Smith, teaching lab specialist in sculpture at the University of Florida School of Art and Art History, has been installed between 13th Street and Norman Hall.

The sculpture, "Rejoined," was funded by the Community Redevelopment Agency and coordinated by the Gainesville Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs' Art in Public Places Trust.

"Rejoined" includes materials previously removed from the old Federal Building downtown. "The design, a split column joined by three stainless steel bars, was to symbolize the old made new," Smith said. "It also was to act as a symbolic gateway connecting UF with the redeveloped University Heights neighborhood."



Note This

Study abroad in Antarctica

The department of tourism, recreation and sport management at the University of Florida is offering students a rare opportunity to study abroad in Antarctica during the fall 2009 semester. The application deadline is March 31. To obtain more information, visit www.abroad.ufl.edu.

Budget news available on Web site

For current campus budget information, visit <http://budget.president.ufl.edu/> or click on the blue "Budget News" on the UF homepage, www.ufl.edu.

Award nominations sought

The College of Education at the University of Florida is pleased to announce the 7th annual Engaged Scholarship award competition for faculty, graduate students and community members. Nominations are due by March 16. For more information, call 352-392-0728 or e-mail jpalgon@coe.ufl.edu.

Another Gator story from InsideTheGatorNation.com

"I have vague images of sitting in the top row of Florida Gym during my aunt's graduation in 1971. (I was 4 years old). I thought this place (UF) was cool... During my high school years, my older brother attended UF and I visited each weekend... I graduated UF in 1989 and moved to Michigan... I will always be a Gator and remember the great education and life experiences I had there. So much so, that I have been asked and have accepted a role on the board of advisors for Center for Supply Chain Management in the Warrington College of Business. I see it as my way of giving back to the university that gave me so much."

John Peppers

Upcoming video opportunities to tell your own story include:

- March 4**, Plaza of the Americas, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- March 6**, Outside Gate 1, O'Connell Center, 6 p.m., prior to the gymnastics meet vs. Michigan at 7 p.m.
- March 17**, McKethan Stadium, 5:30 p.m., prior to the baseball game vs. FSU at 6:30 p.m.

