

FOCUS ON UCSF FRESNO

September 2020



Teach

Local Students Start Training at UCSF to Become Physicians for the San Joaquin Valley



Photo: SJV PRIME students

By Brandy Ramos Nikaido

Increasing the number of physicians practicing in the San Joaquin Valley and diversifying the physician workforce are goals of the [UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education \(SJV PRIME\)](#). The second cohort of students in the UCSF SJV PRIME started classes in August. All 12 students admitted to the program call the San Joaquin Valley home. Fifty percent of them come from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine and 42% are the first in their families to graduate from college.

New information from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) confirms that the U.S. continues to face a doctor shortage. The AAMC's latest [study](#), estimates a shortfall of up to 139,000 physicians by 2033. The San Joaquin Valley, which already has one of the lowest ratios of practicing physicians in California, will continue to be disproportionately affected. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for more physicians, physician leaders, and physician

change makers in the region, especially those who come from the diverse communities they serve.

UCSF SJV PRIME is a tailored track for UCSF medical students who are committed to ensuring high-quality, culturally appropriate and accessible medical care to improve health for populations, communities and individuals in the San Joaquin Valley. To train up-and-coming physicians for the region, SJV PRIME utilizes the unique expertise of UCSF, UC Merced and UCSF faculty at UCSF Fresno, as researchers, educators and leaders in the fields of health and health care in the Valley.

The [UCSF SJV PRIME Matriculating Class of 2020](#) includes:

Inderpreet “Inder” Bal

Born in Selma and raised in the neighboring city of Kingsburg, Inderpreet is the daughter of two Sikh immigrant farmers. Her passion to help advance health in the region is ignited by several personal experiences she encountered while caring for her terminally ill mother. The end of her mother’s life journey and Inderpreet’s vision to deliver the highest possible level of patient care motivates her to return to the San Joaquin Valley. Inderpreet graduated from Fresno State.

Dariush Bazyani

Raised in Fresno, Dariush was exposed to medicine at a young age by his father, a pediatrician who has served the San Joaquin Valley for years. His interest in medicine grew while volunteering at a student-run free clinic during college. There, he was introduced to health disparities within vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. In the future, Dariush hopes to deliver equitable health care to Fresno residents and across the San Joaquin Valley. Dariush graduated from UC Irvine.

Seerut Bhullar

Seerut was raised in Clovis. She majored in economics at Boston University and came to appreciate how economics and health care intertwine. Working as an emergency department scribe in the San Joaquin Valley, she saw firsthand how the physician shortage impeded patient care. Moreover, she saw how social determinants of health, such as the language barriers faced by her Punjabi-speaking family and a significant number of patients in the emergency department, also prevented health care access. Seerut hopes to return to the Valley as a physician to provide health education and resources to underserved populations.

Allison “Alli” Gomez

Alli Gomez was born in Turlock. She graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a degree in Biological Sciences. Her plan is to return to Turlock as a physician to address the shortage of medical providers affecting the San Joaquin Valley. She is passionate about bringing health

education and advocacy back to her hometown, and hopes to serve her community as a physician, educator, and community leader.

Francisco Gomez-Alvarado

Fresno holds a special place in Francisco's heart. His family settled there after immigrating from Mexico. Francisco studied biophysics for his undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to the perk of enjoying his mother's fantastic cooking on a more regular basis, Francisco chose to attend UCSF and train in the Valley for the opportunity to develop a voice in places where he felt he didn't have one growing up. During his training, Francisco hopes to learn how to conduct impactful research, become a competent physician, and above all, strive to be a good person that is constant to his roots.

Charis Hoppe

Charis grew up in Merced, where she spent most days swimming to beat the Central Valley heat. Her water affinity led her to UC Santa Barbara, where she studied Cell & Developmental Biology and competed on the swimming team. Originally working in public health research, Charis decided to pursue medicine after meeting physicians who inspired her. Through volunteering in free clinics and abroad in Ethiopia, she witnessed health disparities but also saw how excellent medicine can change not only people's lives, but entire communities. In the SJV PRIME, she aims to become a physician who brings high-quality care to the very people who have shaped her into the person she is today.

Kiranjot "Kiran" Kaur

Kiranjot was born in India and grew up in Fresno. She became interested in medicine after a family member was diagnosed with epilepsy. College clinical experiences and community engagement projects reaffirmed her interest and she developed a passion for working with underserved communities. As a part of the Diversity in Medicine program at UC Irvine, she learned about health disparities faced by many minorities and underserved populations, such as those in Fresno. In the SJV PRIME, she hopes to gain the knowledge to provide the best quality of care for the San Joaquin Valley and to be an advocate for health equity.

Rosa "Vanessa" Mora

Vanessa was born and raised in Fowler. She is the daughter of two Mexican immigrants and the second in her family to pursue higher education. She earned a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from UC Santa Barbara. After graduating, Vanessa was involved in clinical work, community outreach, and mentorship of underrepresented minority students. Most recently, Vanessa worked as a clinical research coordinator assistant for UCSF at San Francisco General Hospital. She is thrilled to be in the SJV PRIME and is looking forward to giving back to her community.

Jacob Perez-Stringer

Jacob is a small, rural town boy from Reedley who was told he didn't have the grades to become a nurse when enrolling at the local community college. He developed a passion for science in college and now he is a medical degree candidate at UCSF. He loves animals and tries to spend a lot of time outdoors being active. He enjoys interacting with people. He rarely takes himself seriously, and he plays sports whenever and wherever he can. Jacob graduated from Fresno State.

Kyle Shen

Kyle was born in Merced and attended UC Merced where he studied Molecular and Cell Biology. Growing up in the San Joaquin Valley, he saw how the physician shortage affected his friends and family, which started his interest in medicine. In high school and college, he volunteered in the Intensive Care Unit at the local hospital where he saw how a lack of physicians affected the health care system. In the future, he hopes to practice medicine in his hometown and help the underserved community in the Valley.

Christopher "Chris" Teran

Originally from Patterson, Christopher was inspired to pursue medicine by the impact of the local doctors and the difference they made in the eyes of his family and community. Born into a Latin-American immigrant family, he became a first-generation college student when he enrolled at Yale University, majoring in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry. While at Yale, he conducted research on Alzheimer's disease. After earning his bachelor's degree, Christopher continued to explore biomedical research at Stanford University. Christopher also worked to increase accessibility to health care by serving as a Spanish-English medical interpreter at free clinics and emergency rooms. He is thrilled to begin his journey as an SJV PRIME medical student and hopes to serve as a doctor providing care and improving health in Central Valley communities.

Samuel "Sam" Vydro

Samuel Vydro was born and raised in Fresno to a family of Russian immigrants. His mother was an internist and his father was a psychiatrist. Throughout his childhood, he saw many medical providers in the San Joaquin Valley and was inspired by their service to the culturally diverse community that made his family feel welcome. He graduated from UCLA with a degree in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution. He hopes to combine the research skills he has obtained and the compassion that has been inspired by the physicians around him to return to the Valley for his medical education and work to help overcome health care disparities.

The San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME) is the sixth program in the University of California's Programs in Medical Education. The program prepares medical students to be excellent clinicians and patient advocates for underserved communities, especially in the San Joaquin Valley. It was established in 2010 as a partnership among the UC Davis

School of Medicine, UC Merced, UCSF Fresno and the UCSF School of Medicine. The first class of students started in 2011.

Currently, there are 36 students in SJV PRIME, with the majority coming from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. With strong Valley connections, SJV PRIME students call the region home. Including the Class of 2020, SJV PRIME has graduated six cohorts for a total of 39 graduates who are currently conducting residency training.

In July 2018, the UCSF School of Medicine received approval from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education to establish UCSF Fresno as a regional branch medical campus to lead SJV PRIME. [Six students were admitted to the new UCSF SJV PRIME and started in the fall of 2019.](#) Including the recently admitted cohort of 12 students, there are now 18 students in the UCSF SJV PRIME. Students enrolled in the program spend 18 months at UCSF in San Francisco and then Fresno for the remainder of their medical school training. UC Merced continues to be an important partner in the program.

For more about SJV PRIME, go to: <https://meded.ucsf.edu/ucsf-san-joaquin-valley-prime-sjv-prime>



UCSF Fresno Liver Expo was a Potentially Life-Saving Event for Fresno Woman

Marina Roytman, MD, and Liver Expo volunteers

By Barbara Anderson

One Saturday morning last fall, Lisa Crespin had an open day on her calendar and decided to attend UCSF Fresno's free Liver Expo. Crespin was feeling good, other than being a little uncomfortably overweight, a condition she had struggled with most of her adult life. When she won a lottery drawing for a liver test at the Expo, she expected good results.

Crespin, 54, of Fresno, had no recognizable symptoms of liver disease, such as yellowing of the skin or eyes. A nondrinker, she knew she had diabetes, but said, "I thought I had a healthy liver." A free scan of her liver, however, showed Crespin had nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Follow-up tests done later would reveal other health problems, including a large tumor dangerously pressing against a kidney.

Having the liver scan likely saved her kidney – and possibly her life, Crespin said. "I was fortunate to be one of the persons who got the scan and was there at the Liver Expo that day."

The UCSF Liver Expo, an event offered for the first time in the community, was led and inspired by Marina Roytman, MD, a hepatologist and director of the UCSF Fresno Liver Program. Dr. Roytman had two main goals: educate the public about liver diseases and give people the opportunity to be tested for fatty liver disease, and hepatitis C, a blood-borne cause of liver scarring.

Liver diseases often have few or no symptoms and remain undiagnosed until the liver has been badly scarred; and contrary to common thought, not all liver diseases are caused by alcoholism, Dr. Roytman said. An unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, diabetes and being overweight are among the risk factors for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, a condition caused by a buildup of fat cells in the liver.

Fatty liver disease can progress to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), increasing the risk of liver cancer and can lead to liver failure. "It's critically important to diagnose cases early," Dr. Roytman said. "If we wait too long with the diagnosis then the patients will present with complications of cirrhosis, and this is what we do not want to happen."

The Liver Expo, held in October, attracted about 200 people. About 100 people were tested for hepatitis C, done with a finger stick to get a drop of blood. About two-dozen people were tested for fatty liver disease. In the past, testing for fatty liver disease required an invasive biopsy, but a sound-wave based tool, FibroScan, which Dr. Roytman has expanded the use of in Fresno, is painless and takes about 15 minutes.

FibroScan uses sound wave-based technology to measure fibrosis (scarring) and steatosis (fatty cell build-up) of the liver. Dr. Roytman explains: "Imagine a liver as a rubber ball. If the rubber ball is nice and soft and squishy, sound waves slowly go through it. If it's rock hard, like a cirrhotic liver, the sound waves go through faster. And if the rubber ball is all rubber, the sound wave is going to travel through it and not bump into any obstacles, but if there are fat cells, it is going to bump into the fatty liver deposits and the sound waves are going to be smaller."

The scan of Crespin's liver showed more than 66% of the liver cells had been replaced by fat and there was some scarring. She received the test results from Gieric Laput, MD, then a first-year

clinical fellow in the UCSF Fresno Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. Dr. Laput advised her to make an appointment with Dr. Roytman for further testing, but he also gave her some encouraging news. If she lost 10% of her body weight, or about 20 pounds, she could lower the fat in her liver and reverse some of the scarring.

“He scared me straight,” Crespin said of Dr. Laput. Since October, she has lost more than 70 pounds by incorporating a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and exercise. “Something clicked that day,” she said. “Now I know I have the ability to change and it’s just making better choices.”

Laput is happy he made an impact on Crespin. “This reminds me to strive for meaningful connections with my patients every day,” he said. The UCSF Fresno Liver Expo was a great opportunity to volunteer, he said. “As a physician in training, it was fulfilling to be part of an event where health care providers and patients interact as fellow members of the community. I was especially excited to witness how technology such as the FibroScan was employed with instantaneous effect. Within that short span of time, patients were able to have the severity of their liver disease assessed, have their test results interpreted, and then receive advice on the spot, which in the outpatient setting can take up to a few months. Thus, we were able to curtail delay and change many lives that single day. On an individual level, I strongly believe in empowering patients with knowledge that gives them agency to take an active role in their own health.”

By the time of Crespin’s appointment with Dr. Roytman, she had accomplished a 10% weight loss. “She had already done the important thing,” Dr. Roytman said. But patients with liver cirrhosis are at risk of certain conditions, such as liver cancer, and that needed to be ruled out. An ultrasound showed a worrisome spot on the liver. A CT scan alleviated worry about the spot, but it showed a large mass on the left side of Crespin’s abdomen. “It was a completely unexpected finding,” Dr. Roytman said.

More imaging of Crespin’s abdomen showed the tumor was displacing her left kidney and the findings were consistent with fat-related soft-tissue cancer, which left untreated could be life-threatening. Her case was taken before a multidisciplinary Tumor Board at Community Regional Medical Center and it was determined surgery was the best option. In June, Amir Fathi, a UCSF Fresno surgeon who specializes in surgeries of the liver and pancreas, removed the mass intact from Crespin’s abdomen in an eight-hour operation that included repositioning and realigning the colon and kidney.

After surgery, results from an examination of the mass held more surprises. The tumor was noncancerous. Crespin’s case was an extremely rare occurrence with less than five such cases reported in medical literature, Dr. Fathi said. She had a very rare condition where the mass was comprised of six smaller parts consisting of six of her lymph nodes that had been completely taken over by benign fatty deposits of up to 20 times bigger than normal lymph nodes.

But without the FibroScan of her liver leading to discovery of the tumor, the results could have been far different, Dr. Fathi said. The UCSF Fresno Liver Expo allowed people like Crespin to get tested for rare, silent diseases, he said. “It was a one of a kind screening event that has never

happened in the central San Joaquin Valley before and opened up opportunities to screen the patients not only about their liver but about other parts of their abdomen as well, eventually.”

Crespin is recovering well from the surgery, and is looking forward to seeing her son, who is 21, go to medical school and become a doctor. “I feel today, at 54, to tell you the truth, better than I felt at 30,” she said. She advises others to take advantage of free screenings. “I encourage people who are overweight that if you feel something, don’t just say it’s weight. It could be such as what was happening to me.”

Crespin is an example of who the Liver Expo was designed for, and the outcome “is definitely more than I was hoping to accomplish,” Dr. Roytman said. She is planning a second UCSF Fresno Liver Expo for the community on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon. This one, due to COVID-19, will be a “virtual” event.

“This is a service UCSF Fresno can offer to the people in the Valley,” Dr. Roytman said. “We have a huge problem here with people being overweight, obese, with high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes – all risk factors for fatty liver disease. This is why we want to give people access to the FibroScan screening.”

UCSF Fresno Division of Dermatology Seeks to Ramp up Research, Make New Treatments Available Locally



Luis Dehesa, MD, and Gregory Simpson, MD

By Barbara Anderson

UCSF Fresno dermatologists are conducting clinical research trials of a potential new medicine for patients with atopic dermatitis, a chronic, inflammatory skin condition with flare ups of severe itching that can damage skin, lead to infection, affect sleep and give rise to anxiety and depression.

Luis Dehesa, MD, and Gregory Simpson, MD, are completing a six-month multinational, multicenter Phase 3b double-blind study of adult patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis who have had a documented history of inadequate response to treatment with topical or other medications. The study is evaluating upadacitinib, a medication currently approved for rheumatoid arthritis, as a potential new pill therapy for atopic dermatitis.

The atopic dermatitis trials are the first research studies to be conducted at the UCSF Fresno Division of Dermatology, which became a division of the Department of Internal Medicine in 2010. Drs. Dehesa and Simpson plan for additional studies in coming months.

Atopic dermatitis is the most common form of eczema affecting nearly 10 million children and 16.5 million adults in the United States, according to the National Eczema Association. There is no known cure, but the condition can be controlled.

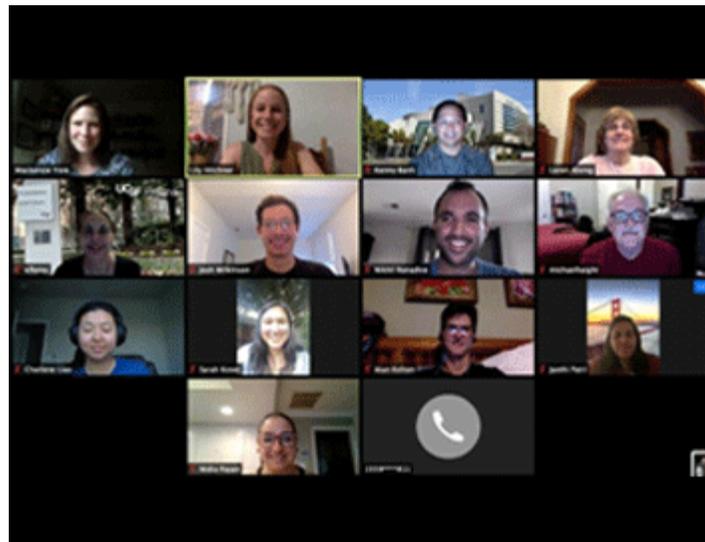
The UCSF Fresno study is evaluating the efficacy and safety of upadacitinib pills versus dupilumab, a biologic injection already approved for treatment of adults with atopic dermatitis. Patients in the study receive either upadacitinib tablets or a dupilumab injection. “If they get the active injection, then they receive placebo tablets and if they get active tablets, they get the placebo injection,” Dr. Dehesa said. Neither the patients nor the physicians know which patient receives upadacitinib versus dupilumab.

The patients in the study have done well, Drs. Dehesa and Simpson said. The patients now will be enrolled and receive upadacitinib tablets for one year in a follow-up study. The objective of the second study is to assess the long-term safety and tolerability and efficacy of upadacitinib. “We’re looking at the best dosage and side effects in the last phase before they approve the medication,” Dr. Dehesa said.

Research in dermatology is shifting focus to atopic dermatitis from psoriasis, said Dr. Dehesa, who, prior to his UCSF assistant clinical professorship, completed a year as a research fellow at the University of Miami Hospital where he participated in multiple clinical trials for psoriasis and lupus, among others. Over the past 10 to 15 years, as many as 11 new drugs have been approved for psoriasis, a chronic skin disease that causes itchy, scaly, red patches, Dr. Dehesa said. “In the next few years, I expect a revolution of new medications for atopic dermatitis like we saw 10 years ago for psoriasis.”

The upadacitinib trials could be just the beginning of research at UCSF Fresno. UCSF Fresno serves a very diverse patient population suffering from severe conditions who could be helped by new medications from clinical trials, Dr. Dehesa said.

Clinical research trials provide patients access to good medicines, Dr. Simpson said. “Our focus is always on Fresno and a population that can’t afford to have the newest medications,” he said. “Our mission is to try and get those medications for our patients.”



UCSF Fresno Health Equity Action Lab Addresses Health Disparities and Inequities

Zoom meeting of the UCSF Fresno Health Equity Action Lab

By Barbara Anderson

A unique effort is underway at UCSF Fresno as a newly created Health Equity Action Lab has been launched to address health disparities and inequities experienced by the diverse patient population served in the San Joaquin Valley.

“The purpose of the UCSF Fresno Health Equity Action Lab is to bring together physicians and others from the different programs to learn about health inequities, to share the work they are doing in this arena (outreach programs, research, etc.), and to brainstorm about other ways to improve the health of our communities,” said Lori Weichenthal, MD, UCSF Fresno assistant dean of Graduate Medical Education, associate program director of Emergency Medicine, and UCSF professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine.

Understanding social, environmental, and structural factors affecting patient populations is important for all physicians, and especially in Fresno, where there are huge disparities in life

expectancy, access to care, exposure to air pollution, and poverty, among other inequities and disparities, said Mackensie Yore, MD, a fourth-year resident in Emergency Medicine who developed the Health Equity Action Lab with the support of Dr. Weichenthal and Kenny Banh, MD, UCSF Fresno assistant dean of Undergraduate Medical Education, Education Fellowship director, San Joaquin Valley PRIME assistant director, and UCSF assistant clinical professor of Emergency Medicine.

“Fresno seems to me to be the perfect place to have a strong emphasis on health equity because our patient population could benefit so much,” Dr. Yore said. “The lab is a place to gain a better understanding of the resources available to patients who need them as a part of our treatment plans.”

UCSF Fresno’s decision to open the lab to all residencies sets it apart from other health equity projects. Health equity tracks for residents typically are targeted to a specific training program, such as Emergency Medicine, Dr. Yore said. She considered limiting the UCSF Fresno lab to Emergency Medicine but opened it to all nine of UCSF Fresno’s residency programs, 18 fellowship programs and the three physician assistant residency programs after conducting a campus-wide survey that showed widespread interest.

Establishing the UCSF Fresno Health Equity Action Lab allows physicians, like Dr. Yore, to improve health on a community scale. During medical school at Stanford, Dr. Yore studied emergency medical care in Tanzania for a master’s in Global Health from UCSF, and she chose to specialize in Emergency Medicine because, “I wanted a career where I could be a full-time physician, but have the ability to take on community-engaged projects and policy work,” she said. “I hope to get back into Global Health, but in the past several years, I realized we have a lot of work to do right here.”

The UCSF Fresno Health Equity Action Lab provides the mechanism for many different health professionals to work together to address health inequities. Participants will be given selected readings on health equity issues, and Dr. Yore wants to arrange conversations and collaborations with community-based organizations and local institutions who serve at-risk groups of Fresnoans.

“I hope this can grow and turn into a really thriving and growing community of people who want to be community engaged and work across departments; and for this to be a lasting program at UCSF Fresno,” Dr. Yore said.

Inspire

UCSF Fresno
People Spotlight



Lacey Leonard

UCSF Fresno's success and growth are a direct result of the dedication and inspiration of our faculty, staff, residents, fellows, students, alumni, partners, donors and friends. In each issue of Focus, we introduce you to the people who contribute to the greatness of UCSF Fresno through informal interviews.

This month, please meet **Lacey Leonard, MBA**, Student Life Development Specialist/Marketing Coordinator at UCSF Fresno.

What is your name? Nickname?

Lacey Leonard aka "Lace" to family.

Where did you grow up and where did you go to school (high school, college, any other degrees and/or certifications)?

I grew up in Fresno and graduated from Edison High School. I went to Fresno State on a track scholarship and have a bachelors' degree in Communications and a Master of Business Administration.

How long have you worked for UCSF Fresno? What is your current title/current role? And what does it entail?

I have worked at UCSF Fresno for eight years. My current title is Student Life Development Specialist/Marketing Coordinator. My current role entails everything from student scholarships, reimbursements, community outreach and engagement, website design, student leadership activities, and a host of other programs.

What is the favorite aspect of your job or working for UCSF Fresno?

My favorite aspect of my job is meeting students and helping them manifest their dream career of becoming a physician. I especially love attending high school career fairs and sharing information about medical schools to students who have a passion for medicine.

You recently joined the [UCSF Fresno COVID-19 Equity Project](#) team that was awarded a grant from the City of Fresno to work with community-based organizations to expand COVID-19 testing in underserved communities, especially southwest and southeast Fresno. What is your role? What does it mean personally to you to be involved in this project?

Yes, I will be working and collaborating with a coalition of 16 community-based organizations and assisting with crafting marketing strategies, social media, public service announcements and coordinating communications in an effort to get as many people to attend testing sites, as possible. Being from southwest Fresno, this project is personal to me because I know how we are being affected by COVID-19 in the Black community.

What is at the top of your personal or professional to-do list?

The top of my personal to-do list includes expanding my personal brand as a motivational speaker/influencer, releasing an app I am currently working on for the NFL, and potentially investing in a behavioral health facility.

If you could pick up an instant skill what would it be and why?

If I could pick up an instant skill, it would be to sing because I love singing in the shower! And I am a car singer.

The zombie apocalypse is coming. Which three people from UCSF Fresno would you pick to be on your team and why?

I would pick Bobby McCon, computer resource specialist (who is retiring soon), because he is calm and can handle pressure. Dieu Nguyen, facilities administrative assistant, because she's an awesome cook and could get creative if food was scarce and Loren Alving, MD, program director of the UCSF San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education and director of the UCSF Fresno Alzheimer and Memory Center, because she's fit and knows how to survive in various terrains because she's an avid world traveler.

Have you had your 15 minutes of fame yet? If yes, what was it and when? If no, what would you like to be famous for?

As an NFL wife, whose husband played several years in the league, I have had my share of fame being a part of the 1%. I have participated in the annual Super Bowl Fashion Show with different celebrities. I am also a part of the [NFL's Off the Field Players' Wives' Association](#) where we have raised funds for local and national charitable organizations such as St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, and the Kwamie Lassiter Foundation. I have also been the keynote speaker at the [Women of the NFL National Conference](#). Lastly, I was recently cast on [Ellen's digital series "Momsplaining" with celebrity](#)

[host, Kristen Bell](#), that aired in June. Even with all that, I hope to be famous one day for inspiring lives, creating change and becoming a nationally known motivational speaker.

Do you have a favorite cause or charity you wish people knew more about? What is it and why is it near and dear to you?

The [Hip Hop Architecture Camp](#) uses hip hop culture as a catalyst to introduce underrepresented youth to architecture, urban planning and design. They pride themselves on removing financial barriers involved with participation in high quality programs for communities who are underrepresented in careers related to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts/architecture and math). This is near and dear to me because my oldest son, Landon, participated in the program, which he absolutely loved! And it birthed the desire to pursue architecture and urban planning when he goes to college. This is something that is so important I believe because it allows students to gain exposure to underrepresented careers. Being a member of [Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.](#), and my husband a brother of [Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.](#), we are both committed to public service and scholarship.

What is the most important thing you would like people to know about you? Or what else would you like to add about you, your background or family?

One of the most important things I would like people to know about me is that I am passionate about my faith, my family and my purpose. My husband Louis and I have been very blessed. Although, my biggest accomplishment will never be money. It will be who I raised – two amazing boys, Landon and Lleyton.



Grateful Patient Donates \$500k, Supports UCSF Fresno's Efforts to Improve Health

UCSF Fresno banner

By Brandy Ramos Nikaido

UCSF Fresno is extremely grateful and pleased to announce a substantial gift from a prominent San Joaquin Valley community member. The donor, who wished to go unnamed, said, the contribution was a way of paying it forward to help others who may need the same outstanding patient care provided by faculty physicians at UCSF Fresno. The \$500,000 donation will benefit UCSF Fresno's greatest areas of need.

Donations are always appreciated, but this gift comes at a time when it is needed most. Like many organizations, COVID-19 has had a serious and negative financial impact on UCSF Fresno, with resources being diverted to cover unexpected costs associated with the pandemic, such as COVID-19 related research. UCSF Fresno is absorbing the costs of these unfunded studies

to better understand the impact on Valley populations and effectiveness of treatments and potential treatments. UCSF Fresno also stepped up to provide alternative housing for frontline UCSF Fresno physicians to self-isolate after being exposed to the novel coronavirus or out of concern for vulnerable family members. UCSF Fresno started its alternative housing and other wellness programs before the state initiated its Project Roomkey.

Additional costs were incurred to minimize the spread of COVID-19 on the UCSF Fresno campus. These included necessary measures to transition from on-site learning and working to distance learning and telecommuting. Technology was upgraded and secured to accommodate virtual graduation, new resident orientation, continuing medical education and Grand Rounds lectures among other activities.

Established in 1975, UCSF Fresno is focused on improving health in California's San Joaquin Valley through excellence in teaching and patient care, innovative clinical research and community partnerships.

UCSF Fresno is the largest academic physician-training program between San Francisco and Los Angeles. UCSF Fresno currently provides residency training in eight medical specialties and fellowship training (advanced training beyond residency) in 18 medical sub-specialties, one dental oral maxillofacial surgery residency and three physician assistant residency programs.

Roughly 50% of UCSF Fresno graduates remain in the Central Valley to provide care and more than 80% stay in the state to practice.

The expertise of faculty physicians at the UCSF Fresno branch campus makes UCSF quality care available locally. The grateful patient's successful outcome is the direct result of faculty expertise and collaboration among colleagues at UCSF Fresno.

To help UCSF Fresno improve health for you and your loved ones, please consider making a gift. For more information regarding giving options, please contact Cynthia Harris, UCSF Fresno

Director of Development, at (559) 499-6425, charris@fresno.ucsf.edu or go to: <https://www.fresno.ucsf.edu/give/>