

PULSE

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PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION AT UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA HEALTH SYSTEM



Conway Scholarships help individuals like professional baker Michelle Bonsu transition to nursing careers.

PHOTOGRAPH © CHRISTINE KUETER

HELPING PEOPLE FIND THEIR CALLING

\$5 Million Gift Relieves Financial Burdens on Career-Changers Entering Nursing

MARINE BIOLOGISTS. POLITICAL LOBBYISTS. Attorneys. Bakery owners. UVA's Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) master's program brings together people from all walks of life who want to join the nursing profession. As the program celebrates its tenth year, a \$5 million transformative gift from Washington, D.C., philanthropists Joanne and Bill Conway continues to diversify the School of Nursing program's student body through scholarship support while fortifying its administrative and teaching base.

"The Conways are forging real, meaningful change in nursing," says Dorrie Fontaine, dean of UVA's School of Nursing, "because they're bringing even more people to nursing who look like, talk like, and understand the patients they serve. Their steadfast support means our school's doors are open even wider than before, and this purposeful, thoughtful inclusion and diversity will ultimately benefit us all."

The Conway's second \$5 million gift furthers

the couple's support of UVA's fast-track-to-nursing program for non-nurses entering the profession. Over five years, it will provide scholarships to more than 110 new nurses who will bring a range of skills and experience from outside the profession to the bedside, with a particular focus on students from underrepresented and minority groups, including men.

"Joanne and I are proud to continue to support the School of Nursing at UVA," Bill Conway says. "Our first gift worked out so well, and we are so proud of our existing scholars that we decided to make another gift, this time to support a fast track to nursing." The program is the first of its kind in Virginia and ranked second in the nation.

CNL students attend intensive academic courses in their first year and begin clinical rotations with mentorship the second year. They graduate with 1,000 clinical hours, fully eligible to become entry-level

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The Conways are forging real, meaningful change in nursing.



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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF M. C. WILHELM, MD

Advancing a Team-based Approach to Breast Cancer Care



Wilhelm Professor David Brenin collaborates with radiologist Carrie Rochman on new ways to treat breast cancer.

PHOTOGRAPH © STEPHANIE GROSS



WITH THE RECENT PASSING OF MORTON C. “MC” WILHELM, MD (Med ’47), UVA Cancer Center lost one of its greatest champions. As the first director and founder of UVA’s Breast Clinic and Breast Resource Center, Wilhelm pioneered a team-based approach to care, bringing together specialists across disciplines to collaborate on the best treatment for each patient. His novel approach also promoted patient education and supported efforts aimed at helping women understand their diagnoses and cope with the effects of their disease.

Wilhelm was also a dedicated history scholar and writer. As Joseph Helms Farrow Professor Emeritus in Surgical Oncology, he co-authored “A History of Cancer Care at the University of Virginia: 1901–2011.” He also became an enthusiastic and energetic volunteer for UVA’s Claude Moore Health Sciences Library’s Historical Collections and Services Department. Following his retirement in 2001, friends and grateful former patients created the Wilhelm Professorship for Diseases of the Breast in his honor. This prestigious professorship helps to attract or retain eminent scholars at the University who specialize in breast cancer treatment and care. Wilhelm and his wife, Jean, also contributed to the fund.

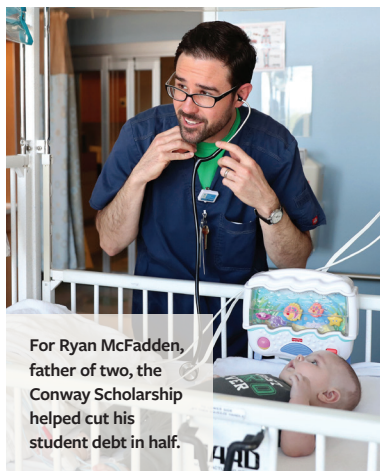
“Dr. Wilhelm was ahead of his time in how he practiced breast cancer care at UVA,” says David Brenin, MD, who currently holds the Wilhelm Professorship. “It is a privilege for me to hold the professorship that honors his contributions.”

Brenin shares his mentor’s team-centered approach to caring for patients. He also serves as the leader of UVA Cancer Center’s weekly multidisciplinary breast conference. As co-director of the Breast Cancer Program and a member of UVA’s faculty since 2002, Brenin continues to build upon Wilhelm’s commitment to innovation and excellence in breast cancer care.

In his research efforts, Brenin is focused on discovering new treatments and therapies for breast cancer. Together with UVA radiologist Carrie Rochman, he is leading one of the first nationwide clinical trials investigating the use of focused ultrasound to treat benign breast tumors. Within the next year, he hopes to begin a new study to treat malignant tumors using focused ultrasound in combination with immunotherapy.

“This research uses the multidisciplinary approach to advancing cancer care that Dr. Wilhelm embraced, as I work side-by-side with a radiologist to find the best treatment for breast cancer patients,” Brenin says. “Today, that team approach is the quality standard of care for breast cancer patients throughout the U.S., but Dr. Wilhelm was a true leader in our region in modern breast cancer care.” ●

Helping People Find Their Calling—continued from page 1



For Ryan McFadden, father of two, the Conway Scholarship helped cut his student debt in half.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE DAILY PROGRESS/RYAN M. KELLY

nurses. Many rise quickly into leadership and management positions.

Most CNL students come to nursing later in life, and many have families. As students, they don’t have access to undergraduate scholarships, can’t serve as teaching assistants, and don’t have time for even part-time jobs. While UVA’s program costs significantly less than other top nursing schools, CNL students can graduate with between \$40,000 and \$50,000 in debt.

“As a father of two preschool-aged children, the stressors of changing careers and attending graduate school full-time were greatly reduced knowing that I

wouldn’t be faced with absolutely crippling debt upon graduation,” says UVA pediatric nurse Ryan McFadden, who graduated from the program in 2015. “Though I still had to take out federal loans, my debt is half of what it would have been had I not received the Conway Scholarship.”

The CNL program currently includes more than a quarter of students from underrepresented and minority groups. It also enjoys strong participation from men, who make up nearly 19 percent of the program’s student body. ●

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

JONATHAN KIPNIS, PHD

RETHINKING NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE

In 2015, Jonathan Kipnis' research team made a discovery that overturned decades of textbook teaching. They discovered that the brain and the immune system are directly connected through lymphatic vessels long thought not to exist.

Kipnis—Harrison Distinguished Professor, chair of the Department of Neuroscience, and director of the Center for Brain Immunology and Glia (BIG)—and his team began exploring the implications of the finding and discovered numerous immune cells in the protective tissue around the brain. These cells play a critical but previously underappreciated role in battling neurological diseases.

“Not only are these immune cells present in the areas near the brain, they are integral to its function,” he explains. “When the brain is injured, when the spinal cord is injured, the recovery is much, much worse without them.”

UVA scientists theorize that if you can harness the cells' power, a number of treatment options for neurological disease and injury open up. Take Alzheimer's disease. Normally, lymphatic vessels remove collections of proteins that can form in the brain. But, if immune cells are dysfunctional, the vessels do not work properly either. If the vessels are not working, the “chunks” cannot be digested. If we can understand how to “unclog” the vessels, we could possibly restore memory function.

The connection also gives scientists a new place to look when investigating immune attacks experienced by patients with multiple sclerosis. Kipnis and his team suspect the cells may be important in the development and progression of numerous neurological and cognitive disorders. They also demonstrated that the immune system directly affects, and even controls, social behavior—a finding that could one day revolutionize treatment for autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia.

SPEEDING DISCOVERY

Under Kipnis's direction, UVA's Department of Neuroscience will build capacity in neuroimmunology and neurodegenerative diseases. UVA's strengths in these areas have already made rapid developments possible.

Philanthropy is essential to moving these discoveries from concept to the clinic. “Private support helps us build fruitful collaborations across the University,” Kipnis says. “It provides



PHOTOGRAPH © JACKSON SMITH

vital resources that help us attract star faculty and fellows and speeds exciting research. It helps investigators explore their ideas and follow their passions. Most importantly, to keep up with ‘tomorrow's science’ we need ‘tomorrow's equipment,’ which is often only possible through philanthropic support.”

“There are so many things we still do not know. I believe that to do good science, you have to be passionate. If you are passionate in your work, it will lead to something great.”

FUTURE IMPACT

Neuroimmunology is one of the fastest growing scientific disciplines, and UVA's Center for Brain Immunology and Glia is leading this game-changing field. UVA is also the first in the nation to offer students a chance to train in neuroimmunology research. By preparing future leaders in the field, UVA will accelerate the search for new treatments for Alzheimer's, autism, brain tumors, traumatic brain injury, and more.

“This connection between the immune system and the brain fundamentally changes the way we look at neurological disease and injury. Because the immune system is so easily accessible, can we target it for the benefit of the brain? The possibilities are endless.”



PHOTOGRAPH © JACKSON SMITH



We do all we can to help our young patients reach their full potential—physically, mentally, and emotionally.



A STORY OF GIVING

Thanks to the Soho Center and UVA Children’s Hospital, Thousands of Young Patients—and Their Siblings—Receive Free Books!



WHAT DO BOOKS MEAN TO CHILDREN VISITING UVA Children’s Hospital and its clinics? Books help calm fears and make wait times pass more quickly. They take some of the anxiety out of a hospital or doctor visit. Whether it’s Curious George or Tucker Mouse, the characters from cherished books take young patients to imaginary new worlds beyond the hospital’s or clinic’s walls. And that’s the point.

Another point is to help children develop a love of reading and learn to read well. It’s a mission that the Soho Center has promoted for 45 years, fostering literacy and school success for hundreds of thousands of children.

That’s why Soho has donated more than 200,000 quality children’s books to UVA Children’s Hospital, with more to come. That’s about \$3 million of great books. All are being given away free to young patients and their brothers and sisters as they arrive for appointments. Every child visiting UVA Children’s Hospital and its pediatric clinics can choose and take home a free book at each visit. The book giveaways extend from the Battle Building to outpatient clinics and even the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where parents are encouraged to read aloud to their new babies.

“Everything Soho does is a labor of love,” says Jeanna Beker, Soho Center’s founder and director. “Decades ago, my husband George and I decided that Soho would offer free programs and services and help tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of children each year. That’s exactly what we do every year—with the help of very generous donors, innovative partnerships with nonprofits and agencies, and a diverse group of supportive individuals and organizations.”

“We do all we can to help our young patients reach their full potential—physically, mentally, and emotionally,” says Jim Nataro, MD, physician-in-chief, UVA Children’s Hospital. “I am delighted by our partnership with the Soho Center and Jeanna and George Beker. We are extremely grateful for their generous gifts of books and for their personal commitment to UVA Children’s Hospital.”

For the families visiting UVA Children’s Hospital or related clinics, the books are a happy surprise.

“They look at me and say ‘REALLY? This is for my child to keep? Are you SURE?’” says hospital teacher Patty Carrubba. “The toddlers grasp their ‘prize’ and thank me over and over. There’s a five-year-old boy with autism who spends countless hours searching a pop-up book for the animal in the trees. There are low-income families who are astounded to have new, beautiful books to enjoy. Thanks to Soho, we have wonderful books for toddlers to teens.”

The Soho Center also gives quality books to programs across Virginia, including Head Start classrooms, after-school programs, early childhood programs, and public library summer feeding/reading programs. For information on Soho’s Book Giveaways, please visit www.child2000.org/books and see www.child2000.org/literacy for tips to help children love books and reading. ●

DID YOU KNOW?

UVA CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL records more than 105,000 outpatient visits each year, along with 3,100+ inpatient admissions.

HARNESSING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Foundation Gift Advances Mission of the Beirne B. Carter Center for Immunology Research

VIRGINIA BUSINESSMAN AND philanthropist Beirne Carter (Col '48) was a man before his time, a visionary who believed that immunology research could advance the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Before succumbing to a rare type of cancer in 1989, Carter gave a \$3.5 million gift that led to the creation of the Beirne B. Carter Center for Immunology Research at UVA. In celebration of the center's 25th anniversary, the Beirne B. Carter Foundation recently made a \$1.5 million gift to the center to propel its mission forward.

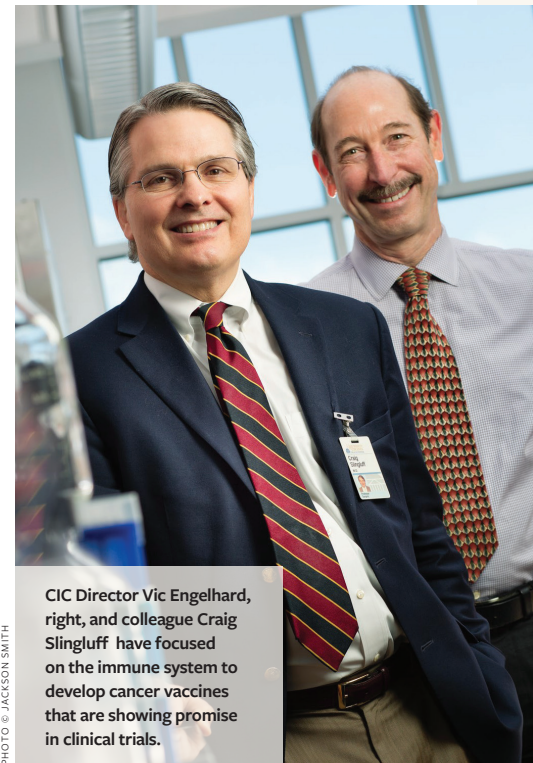
"We are grateful for Beirne Carter's vision and for the continued support of his family," says Vic Engelhard, director of the Carter Immunology Center (CIC). "Without their commitment, the University of Virginia would not have the leading program in immunology that we have today. Their support allows us to produce the strong body of research that provides the foundation for so many life-changing treatments and therapies."

Carter's daughter, Rossie Carter Hutcheson, serves as president of the Beirne B. Carter Foundation and has continued supporting her father's vision over the past two decades. The foundation's total giving to the CIC exceeds \$11 million—supporting a state-

of-the-art building, fundamental disease research, collaborative science across disciplines, and training for the next generation of scientists.

The CIC includes more than 45 investigators who strive to unlock the immune system's potential to fight diseases such as cancer, type 1 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, multiple sclerosis, systemic lupus, AIDS, allergies, immune deficiencies, and infectious disease. Engelhard and CIC researcher Craig Slingluff, MD, and their colleagues, for example, developed a method to identify molecular cancer markers that appear on tumor cells, enabling them to develop several cancer vaccines that are showing promise for patients in clinical trials. CIC researchers Tom Braciale and Amber Cardani have developed a new approach to treating viral pneumonia using common allergy and asthma drugs. Tim Bullock defined a new molecule that plays a critical role in triggering immune responses to infections and diseases, uncovering a potential target for future treatments. And Jonathan Kipnis' research team discovered rare and powerful immune cells in the brain that may play a role in neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's.

"Today, more than ever, I see an exciting exchange between basic discovery and translational and clinical opportunities,"



CIC Director Vic Engelhard, right, and colleague Craig Slingluff have focused on the immune system to develop cancer vaccines that are showing promise in clinical trials.

PHOTO © JACKSON SMITH

Engelhard says. "As the center grows to encompass more elements of immunology, we look forward to many future accomplishments in terms of applying our scientific understanding to treating people with disease." ●

GROWING THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

WHY IS UVA'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RISING SO QUICKLY in research ranking? A major reason is its Strategic Hiring Initiative (SHI), a \$60 million investment for hiring 30–32 new faculty, primarily physician-scientists. The new hires will fill strategic spots among the school's faculty, with the goal of strengthening existing collaborative research groups and catalyzing new initiatives and collaborations. These new faculty will fall primarily in the key priorities of organ transplant, metabolic disorders, precision medicine, and regenerative medicine, building on current strengths in cancer, cardiovascular disease, and neurosciences.

NEW STRATEGIC HIRES (1/17 –4/17)

Ananda Basu, MD, and **Rita Basu, MD**, professors of medicine (endocrinology) who will collaborate with Boris Kovatchev on the artificial pancreas

Philip Bourne, director of the Data Science Institute, regarded nationally and internationally as a top researcher in informatics and data

Francine Garrett-Bakelman, MD, assistant professor of medicine, hematology/oncology and biochemistry/molecular genetics, an expert on the genetics of leukemia and lead investigator on the NASA "Twins" project, studying the effects of weightlessness on the human genome



PHOTOGRAPH © DAN ADDISON

José Oberholzer, MD, director, Charles O. Strickler Transplant Center, is an international expert in the robotics of organ transplantation and a researcher in cell therapies for diabetes and other endocrine disorders. Under Oberholzer's guidance, UVA's transplant center will be the only one in the nation able to transplant all solid organs. ●

A LEGACY OF BREAKING BARRIERS

A Memorial Scholarship Honors Dr. Kaye Halsey's Guiding Principles and Continues Her Legacy

JACQUELINE KAYE HALSEY, MD, completed her Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency Training at the University of Virginia Medical Center in 1982 after graduating from UVA School of Medicine in 1978. She was only the *second* woman in the history of UVA's OB/GYN residency program to complete this training.

"Kaye started her medical career during an era when women's career opportunities were limited," notes Christine Shaw, Dr. Halsey's life partner. "This did not stop her from dreaming about social change. She was encouraged by her parents to pursue her interests in math and science. She was smart, strong willed, courageous and determined to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. She was the perfect individual to help break down gender barriers in the medical profession."

Upon completion of her residency, Dr. Halsey opened her own practice in Charlottesville, where she practiced for 32 years. Dr. Halsey also served as Section Chief at Martha Jefferson Hospital for the OB/GYN Department in 1987 and 1988 and Chief of Surgery in 1994 and 1995.

"She quickly became part of the fabric of the community," Christine says. "Kaye was a talented surgeon and compassionate advocate for her patients. She loved all of her patients and spent over three decades providing for their health and well-being, many of whom spanned multiple generations of the same family."

Dr. Halsey passed away on August 12, 2016 due to a sudden and unexpected heart attack. Her legacy, however, continues on with the establishment of the J. Kaye Halsey, MD Memorial Scholarship in Obstetrics and Gynecology.



Dr. J. Kaye Halsey helped pave the way for future generations of women in medicine.



I would like each recipient to know what an amazing person Dr. Halsey was and how the principles of diversity and inclusivity guided her throughout her life and medical career.



"I would like each recipient of this scholarship to know what an amazing person Dr. Halsey was and how the principles of diversity and inclusivity guided her throughout her life and medical career," Christine explains. "I hope each recipient is inspired not only to provide extraordinary healthcare but to also dream about affecting positive change in our society. There are still many barriers that exist today. Kaye would appreciate her legacy being carried on in this manner."

This scholarship offers financial assistance to a female fourth-year medical student who is pursuing residency training in Obstetrics/Gynecology, demonstrates respect for diversity, abides by the principles of inclusivity, and wants to continue Dr. Halsey's legacy in making a difference in women's health. The first recipient of this scholarship, awarded on March 17, 2017, is Sarah Podwika.

"Dr. Halsey was an incredible student, physician, and friend," says Jef Ferguson, MD, MBA, chair of the OB/GYN department at UVA. "This scholarship is a fitting way to honor her life's work, and will provide motivation and inspiration to doctors hoping to change the way care is delivered in the future." ●



Christine Shaw (left) created the J. Kaye Halsey, MD Memorial Scholarship to support OB/GYN residents like Sarah Podwika (right) and to honor Dr. Halsey (shown here in her medical class photo)

PHOTOGRAPH © STEPHANIE GROSS

FOSTERING THE “ART” OF MEDICINE

\$1 Million Gift Creates a Faculty Fund in UVA’s Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities



Dr. Dan Becker teaches students essential communication skills and how to take a holistic approach to healing and self-care.

PHOTOGRAPH © JACKSON SMITH

EVERY DAY, NEW SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS are leading to innovative new treatments for disease. But is science alone enough? For many patients—and their physicians—good health goes well beyond medical interventions. In UVA’s Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities, medical and nursing students and faculty learn to look at patients holistically—tapping into their personal experiences and backgrounds to help them heal.

“We help our students and colleagues learn to pay the right attention to their patients, to find out who they are outside the exam room,” says Daniel Becker, MD, MPH. “Who were they before they were sick? Do they have support from family or friends? There are ways of listening and seeing that lead to improved outcomes.”

Becker, the Tussi and John Kluge Professor of Palliative Medicine, directs UVA’s Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities, an interdisciplinary community of scholars, teachers, and practitioners who explore the connections between illness, health, and the humanities. Recently, Carol Angle, MD, made a \$1 million gift to endow the center’s first faculty development fund. Angle, a pediatric nephrologist and toxicologist, conducted groundbreaking studies on the effects of lead poisoning in the 1950s and co-founded the nation’s first poison control center in 1957. The fund she established will provide research support to a faculty member with an interest in biomedical ethics, humanities, or social sciences.

“Medicine sets a high bar,” says Angle. “We ask for professional competence, critical thinking, honesty, and integrity. At graduation, new physicians are far more worried about whether they can handle a cardiac arrest than give support in a hospice setting. In time, most clinicians develop a comfortable rapport

with patients. Our current medical curriculum works to build that understanding and empathy. The Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities plays a large role in this process and extends the ways that personal support from a physician can help patients make informed decisions.”

“This endowment will support our efforts to ensure that our medical and nursing communities continue to value the essential communication skills necessary to be an excellent clinician: seeing, listening, finding meaning, making meaning,” says Becker, who retires next year after 33 years at UVA. “In my career, I’ve been very fortunate to know people like Dr. Angle and her extraordinary family.”

As part of UVA’s medical community, the center offers programs such as Medical Center Hour, a public forum on timely medical topics; an online literary journal, *Hospital Drive* magazine; summer research opportunities for medical students with diverse backgrounds; elective courses for medical, nursing, law, business, and public health students looking for interdisciplinary experiences that link healthcare to social and cultural trends; and special electives that offer 1:1 mentoring in writing, visual art, or music.

“A background in ethics or the humanities helps us think about patients differently,” Becker explains. “Clinical work is stressful, and clinicians can learn to be less apt to complain or judge; more apt to wonder, to keep an open mind, to remain enthralled by the variety of human experience, to stay humble.”

“I have been one of Dr. Becker’s patients since 2000 and have a respect for him as a superb and empathetic physician,” says Angle. “I hope that this fellowship fosters physicians in his mold. This is an excellent program, and supporting it is deeply rewarding.” ●

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PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION AT UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA HEALTH SYSTEM

RISING IN THE RATINGS



PHOTOGRAPH © DAN ADDISON

UVA is investing in new faculty like Daniel “Trey” Lee, MD, who heads up UVA’s pediatric bone marrow transplant program and leads clinical trials in immunotherapy.

CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN FACULTY and resources is paying off for UVA’s Schools of Medicine and Nursing. This year, in its Best Graduate Schools issue, *U.S. News and World Report* ranked UVA School of Medicine 24th in the nation in primary care and 27th in research. UVA School of Nursing’s Clinical Nurse Leader program ranked second in the nation, while the school’s Psychiatric/Mental Health Practitioner program ranked seventh, the Doctor of Nursing Practice program ranked 18th, and the Family Nurse Practitioner program ranked 20th.

In addition, the UVA School of Medicine jumped from 35th in the nation in grant funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The rise in 2015–16, from a previous 40th place ranking, reflects an increase in funding from \$101.2 million to \$126 million, a 24.5 percent increase. This is the largest increase among all 50 institutions in the rankings, published by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. When compared only to public institutions, UVA School of Medicine ranks 16th in the nation in NIH funding. ●

HITTING THE AIRWAVES FOR UVA CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL

RAYGAN BATTON, who has been cancer-free for more than two years after being diagnosed with stage IV high-risk neuroblastoma, and Charles Ancona, UVA Children’s Hospital committee member, answer calls at the 2017 Cares for Kids Radiothon. This year’s event raised \$60,000 for a four-year total exceeding \$360,000 for children and families at UVA Children’s Hospital. ●



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