



THE JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (JABSOM) NEWSLETTER

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STIMULUS FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AT JABSOM: \$4 MILLION AND COUNTING

The Grants Development Office reports that JABSOM researchers were awarded \$4,022,919 in federal economic stimulus monies by October 5. Other stimulus proposals are awaiting award notices. The awards, funded through the National Institutes of Health, went to researchers in eight different JABSOM departments (For list, see **JABSOM PROJECTS FOR HAWAII'S HEALTH**, page 2).

Pictured right: Masters in Science Student Brittany Sato, a Kamehameha Schools graduate, in Dr. Abby Collier's Laboratory at JABSOM's Biomed Building. PHOTO BY DAVID BEALES





Damien as a young priest

“BLESSED DAMIEN”
By Kalani Brady, M.D.

When the Board of Health of the Kingdom of Hawai'i recommended to King Kamehameha V that he authorize the creation of a Hansen's Disease quarantine settlement on the remote peninsula of Moloka'i named Makanalua across from Kalaupapa, it was with regret for the unfortunate people who would spend the rest of their days there as much as for the good of the general population of Hawai'i who would be protected from the dreaded disease.

Those banished to Kalaupapa in the mid-nineteenth century entered a desolate, lawless environment filled with despair, drunkenness, and sexual slavery and abuse. The average life expectancy on arrival was five years, and in most cases the final steps on the road to death were marked by suffering, including worsening sores, and the loss of limbs.

Into this community came Father Damien in 1873. He had volunteered with the Bishop of Honolulu to be one of the initial priests assigned on a rotation to minister to those who were sentenced for life in Kalaupapa. He was to spend his 16 final years in this calling. He had been raised a stocky, sturdy man in a farming family, and had a stalwart, dogged personality which suited him well for the work. He started by ministering to the sick and dying, bandaging their wounds, and building their coffins and digging their graves when they passed. He continued by protecting the children and women, offering them a safe haven from the immorality which pervaded the peninsula.

And then a miracle happened in addition to those recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. In a disease to which only 3-5% of the human population is susceptible, a disease called by the Hawaiians “ma'i pake” (the Chinese sickness) and “ma'i ali'i” (sickness of the Hawaiian royalty/nobility) for the increased susceptibility of Polynesians and Asians to Hansen's Disease, Father Damien, a Caucasian, contracted leprosy in 1884. In the eyes of the patients, he was transformed from “one of them” to “one of us.” His stature as the leader of the community rose, and by his example of humility and love, the people of Kalaupapa regained a sense of dignity, forbearance, and acceptance of their condition, rediscovering the faith which had withered with their banishment.

Kalaupapa today is still a settlement for the remaining Hansen's Disease patients who were sent there in the 1940's and 1950's. It is still an isolated community of fishing, hunting, some farming, a community of the patients, those State workers helping in their care, and employees of the Kalaupapa National Historic Park. The spirit of Saint Damien can still be felt in its churches, in its glades, and in the minds of the residents: a spirit of humility, caring, and love.

JABSOM students have been making pilgrimages to Kalaupapa to learn its lessons for almost two decades. Regular trips have been led by Dr. Ben Young, Dr. Nanette Judd and their faculty, and have been continued by the faculty of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH). In fact, for the past six years, the DNHH faculty have provided the medical care to the Hansen's Disease patients, and have been blessed to become a trusted part of the intimate community of Kalaupapa.

Dr. Brady lectures on Damien at JABSOM before leaving for Rome (He will give another lecture Dec. 2, 12 noon, at UH Manoa, in Biomed D207)



JABSOM PROJECTS FOR HAWAII'S HEALTH: American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (from page 1)

DEPARTMENT	RESEARCHER	TITLE
Anatomy	Dr. Monika Ward	Minimum Y Gene Components
	Dr. W. Steven Ward	Institute for Biogenesis Research COBRE
Complementary and Alternative Medicine	Dr. Rosanne Harrigan	Master's in Clinical Research
	Dr. Kelley Withy	PEARLS: Pacific Education and Research for Leadership in Science
Cell & Molecular Biology	Dr. David Jameson	Dynamin: Ligand Interactions
Dean's Office	Dr. Gary Ostrander Dr. Richard Yanagihara Dr. Thomas Ernst	ROADMAP: Research Outcomes Accelerating Discoveries for Medical Applications and Practice
Medicine	Dr. Ralph Shoheit Dr. Rachel Boulay	Center for Cardiovascular Research: (1) COBRE (2) Education
	Dr. Thomas Ernst Dr. Bruce Shiramizu (Peds)	Chemotherapy effects on the brain among children with leukemia
	Dr. Linda Chang Dr. Thomas Ernst	Creating a Pediatric Imaging-Genomics Data Resource
Department of Native Hawaiian Health	Dr. J. Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula	PILI 'OHANA PROJECT: Partnerships to overcome obesity disparities in Hawai'i
Pediatrics	Dr. Bruce Shiramizu Melissa Agsalda (CMB)	HIV DNA in CNS Compartments; HIV-1 Proviral DNA
	Dr. Richard Yanagihara	(1) RCMI Translational Research Network (2) Networking Research Across America
Tropical Medicine	Dr. George Hui	High School Students Step Up to Biomedical Research