Where Miracles Happen Every Day!

mir*a*cle \ 'mir-i-kel \ 1: an extraordinary event manifesting a supernatural work of God 2: an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing or accomplishment

Miracles come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes, a miracle is small and cuddly and eagerly anticipated...like the more than 3,000 babies born annually at Northridge Hospital Medical Center.

Sometimes, a miracle is sudden and unexpected and unspeakably scary...like the more than 1,000 traumas treated annually by the team of elite surgeons and skilled critical care staff at the hospital's Level II Trauma Center. And, sometimes, a miracle is somewhere in between.

But, one thing is certain. At Northridge Hospital, miracles are more than just a hospital motto – for the past 50 years, they've been an everyday reality.

"At NHMC, miracles happen every day because of the passion and commitment to excellence that is exemplified by our physicians, nurses and hospital staff around the clock," affirms ***Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Executive Ann Dechairo-Marino, PhD, RN.*** *"We are dedicated to superior patient care which translates to recoveries and cures – those everyday miracles that make such a difference in the lives of those who live in our community."*

miracle\'mir-i-kel\#1

Jewelry Store Owner Survives Point-Blank Shooting

Ishac Ohanessian's miracle can be measured in minutes. In May 2004, the 63-year-old Encino jewelry store owner was shot at point-blank range during a robbery. Within 36 minutes from the paramedic's arrival on the scene, Mr. Ohanessian was in the operating room at NHMC – undergoing the first of eight surgeries.

Mr. Ohanessian, his daughter and grandchildren

His heart ventricle was torn apart and he was in full cardiac arrest. The trauma doctors massaged his heart while repairing the major injuries – and miraculously, his heart recovered. To complicate matters, his stomach, liver and kidney also required extensive repair – and he developed a gangrenous gall bladder.

Mr. Ohanessian required 36 blood products (units of red blood cells, plasmanate, platelets and cryoprecipitate) from a total of 54 volunteer donors – and was also our first patient to receive recombinant factor VIIa (a coagulation product for treating acute bleeding, life and limb-threatening hemorrhage in surgical settings).

Rochelle Ellinger, RN

He started gradually waking up on his 10th day and remained in ICU for another six weeks. After being admitted in what can only be called "a near death state", he went home to his family on the 56th day – well on his way to full recovery.

"Mr. Ohanessian's survival and recovery is an excellent example of why our Trauma Center is so important to our community. The entire dedicated response from **EMS** to **ER** to **OR** to **ICU** saved this man's life," acknowledged **Rochelle Ellinger, Critical Care RN,** with 11 years at the hospital.

"I was very fortunate and received extraordinary care," declared Mr. Ohanessian. "Do you think I should change my birthday?"

Miracle #2

Gamma Knife Gives 89-Year-Old New Lease On Life

Seven years ago, retired colonel **John Haskin** was diagnosed with Trigeminal Neuralgia (TN), considered the most painful affliction known to medical practice. TN causes episodes of intense, stabbing, electric shock-like pain in the face. In the previous six months, he had suffered severe debilitating left facial pain when he spoke or ate. He was referred to **Dr. Mark Liker, Medical Director**, **Northridge Hospital's Gamma Knife Center**, for evaluation.

John Haskin

A Gamma Knife is a state-of-the-art, non-invasive, outpatient procedure which uses 201 rays of gamma radiation to treat brain tumors and trigeminal conditions. There are less than 100 Gamma Knives in the United States and only one in the San Fernando Valley.

Mr. Haskin underwent Gamma Knife Radiosurgery to his left trigeminal nerve – and was sent home after a few hours observation. At his six-week post-operative visit, he expressed sincere joy that he had not experienced any symptoms in the prior two weeks. "You cannot measure how happy I am with the results of my radiosurgery," says Mr. Haskin. To date, Mr. Haskin has not experienced any facial pain and has returned to an active lifestyle – another Northridge Hospital miracle!

Miracle #3

Seven Sisters Share Tonsillectomy Record

When the **Berrera family** of Canoga Park kept battling colds, coughs and sore throats back in 1958, they decided that their best approach would be the accepted treatment of that day – tonsillectomy... times seven!

The seven Berrera sisters – ages 3 to 12 – got their tonsils removed at the same time! **Dr. Robert E. Meyer** of Canoga Park performed the surgeries in a single morning – and set a hospital record for the number of tonsillectomies performed one after the other on a single family in a single day.

Miracle #4

Thank Heaven For Little Girls!

Three babies from the same family in the hospital's first two years! That's the "everyday" miracle experienced by **Mrs. Erle Richardson** of Northridge back in the late 1950's. Daughter Carol was born just 55 days after the hospital opened in 1955, daughter Peggy joined the family in September 1956, and, daughter Jean arrived in November of 1957. The new mother was the first to deliver two – and then three – babies at the hospital. **Dr. Georg Cech** delivered each of the Richardson "miracles".

Miracle #5

Patient Recovers From Three Life-Threatening Injuries

After 46-year-old **Chaucer (KC) Rideaux's** automobile tumbled down the freeway embankment and flipped over three times, the paramedics needed the Jaws-of-Life to pry him from the vehicle. He was suffering a seizure as they pulled into the NHMC Trauma Center.

Dr. Harold Marks

According to **Dr. Harold Marks, Trauma Surgeon**, Mr. Rideaux had sustained three life-threatening injuries – severe brain injury, massive liver and renal lacerations, and multiple rib fractures – any of which by themselves might be life-threatening. He had two punctured lungs and two broken thigh bones with a huge loss of blood. He also had bleeding into the chest and abdomen, requiring three chest tubes and an inferior vena cava filter to catch any large blood clots.

Unconscious for 18 days, Mr. Rideaux spent 23 days in ICU and five days in a Medical/Surgical unit – as well as another 12 weeks in acute inpatient rehabilitation, making slow but steady progress every day. Working with the professionals from the **Center for Rehabilitation Medicine**, Mr. Rideaux graduated from wheelchair to walker to cane to... nothing!

KC Rideaux (second from left) and family

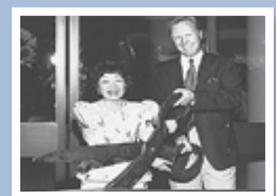
Nine months after the accident, Mr. Rideaux celebrated his "graduation" from the **TGI-Care Brain Injury Day Treatment** program with family and friends, including the team of NHMC professionals who directed his recovery. Just another not-so-ordinary miracle from NHMC.

1982 1989

• 1982 – Dan Adams (below left) named 3rd hospital Administrator • June 1984 – Hospital designated as Trauma Center; 600 patients treated the first year • July 1984 – Olympic torch relay point on the way to Los Angeles from Greece • 1989 – Jeff Flocken (below right) named 4th hospital Administrator

1990 1993

• 1990 – Farr Tower opens in dedication to the memory of James I. Farr (wife May Farr below) • 1992 – Pediatric Intensive Care Unit opens with 8 beds • 1993 – Betty Weiland Ambulatory Surgical Center & Thomas & Dorothy Leavey Cancer Center dedicated (below)



Miracle #6

Accident Becomes Life-Altering Experience

October 15, 2002 began as an ordinary day for **Regina Adad**, driving her 8-year-old daughter Jessica to school. Then, the day turned anything but ordinary – and literally changed her life.

Regina Adad (in red) and family

The 37-year-old Chatsworth resident remembers the crash – and not being able to breathe. When the paramedics arrived she was unconscious, cool and clammy with no blood pressure and no obvious signs of injuries.

Upon arrival at the hospital five minutes later, an ultrasound showed a large amount of blood in her abdomen. Within 20 minutes, she was on her way to surgery – with a kiss from her daughter.

Ms. Adad had sustained massive liver injuries – among the most difficult traumas to control – and the trauma team worked for 5.5 hours to repair the Grade III fracture of the right lobe of her liver, a ruptured artery and evacuate five large subsplenic hematomas.

According to **Dr. Shawki Saad, Trauma/Vascular Surgeon and Medical Director of Trauma Services**, Ms. Adad required massive transfusions. She was on a respirator in ICU for 11 days, followed by three days on a Medical/Surgical unit before being stable enough to go home.

Dr. Shawki Saad

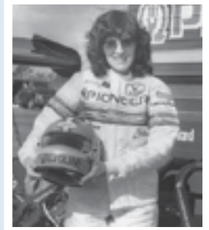
"It takes a well-organized team to get through a trauma like Regina's successfully," remembers Dr. Saad.

Today, Ms. Adad is in her senior year of nursing school. "I will be forever grateful for what the nursing staff gave to me while I was recovering – and am very determined to become a nurse so I can give back to someone else," she says. Another Northridge Hospital miracle...that will benefit others!

Miracle #7

Racer Shirley Muldowney Stages Miraculous Comeback

Four-time world champion top fuel dragster **Shirley Muldowney** knows about miracles – because she lived through one. On June 29, 1984, a front tire failure on her nitro-fueled dragster caused a high speed crash, at over 250 miles per hour, that nearly ended her life.



Shirley Muldowney

One of the worst accidents in drag racing history, the tube came out of the tire and wrapped itself around the spindle, sending the car violently off course. The roll cage, designed to break off from the rest of the car and protect the driver, broke apart – leaving Muldowney's legs and feet exposed while the car rolled, bounced and skidded for almost 600 feet. She lost consciousness; her left foot was nearly severed and her leg was crushed. She sustained two compound fractures of the right leg and her ankle was broken – plus, her right thumb was completely severed.

Fifteen months later, after undergoing several surgeries and skin grafts at other hospitals, Ms. Muldowney began her rehabilitation at Northridge Hospital's **Center for Rehabilitation Medicine**. Her "drive" and desire to race again inspired many during her several months of therapy at Northridge Hospital.

"About six months after the accident, I decided I wanted to go back into racing," remembers Ms. Muldowney. "As a result, right from the beginning, my physical therapy was designed to help get me back in a race car, not just to help me walk and regain normal function."

Just last year, this Northridge Hospital miracle patient was inducted into the International Motor Sports Hall of Fame and was named to Indy's 50th Anniversary Memorable Moments #2 and the World Finals 40th Anniversary Memorable Moments #5.

"The miracle is not that we do this work, but that we are happy to do it."

– Mother Teresa

I Remember When...

When Northridge Hospital opened 50 years ago, the medical staff numbered 200; today, the medical staff has grown to more than 800. Among the physicians currently practicing at the hospital are nine who have been on staff for 40+ years. A few of those long-time physicians shared some of their memories with us.

Dr. Gene Carp, General Surgery, Northridge

"I started my practice in 1952 and lived in Northridge, so when the hospital opened, I joined the staff – right from the first brick!" declares Dr. Gene Carp, general surgery, who has been on staff for 50 years. "I've been in the teaching program at the Family Practice Center since it was organized and have no plans to retire."

Dr. Hubert Goldman, Internal Medicine, Northridge

"I remember covering for other doctors at Northridge Hospital during the 1960s," says Dr. Hubert Goldman, internal medicine. "When I passed my boards, doctors of internal medicine were the experts on everything. But, to practice good medicine today, we consult frequently with multiple subspecialists who offer great expertise."

Dr. Gordon McGregor, Family Practice, Northridge

Dr. Gordon McGregor began practicing medicine in Reseda, and started bringing patients to Northridge Hospital shortly after it opened. "I practiced obstetrics and remember delivering babies when it was a one-story building and there was only one other hospital in the Valley," remembers Dr. McGregor. "We had a single operating room – and, many times, had beds in the hallway when the hospital was over capacity."

Dr. Sol Weiss, Family Practice, Reseda

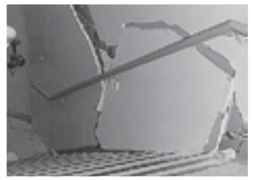
Dr. Sol Weiss has been involved with Northridge Hospital for the past 41 years. He invented emergency tracheotomy instruments, still sold around the world, and recently authored a book on medicine and physics. He recalls, "This hospital has grown from a tiny one-story hospital, in an outlying area, to a major medical and trauma center, with state-of-the-art technology that serves a key metropolitan community."

Northridge Hospital Employees for 25 Years or More

Mary Lu Ackley
Olga Alvarez
Richard Amato
Constancia Aquino
Ilna Ayuso
Esther Bacon
David Ballow
Mary Barbera
Cindy Barrett
Judith Bassman
Gayle Batiste
Elsa Bautista
Nancy Bennett
Jill Berg
Daniel Boyle
Kathleen Boyle
Carmen Caldera
Jeanette Cann
Alene Chambers
Nancy Cole
Sheila Conary-Thum
Yulia Cortez
Alan Costales
Gregory Cousin
Adrienne Crone
Angelita Cuaresma
Fred Davis
Carol Delgado
Ladonna Della-Gala
Susana Domingo-Pastor
Maria Dransfeldt
Mary Dunbar
Mary Ann Fassett
Barbara Fazendin
Esequiel Flores
Judy Gabrielli
Blair Galbreath
Janet Gilmartin
Jerry Gobler
Maria Gomez
Roselia Gomez
Ninfa Gonzales
Daniel Goodwin
Mary Grim
Diane Guerrero
David Hankowski
Joy Hankowski
Opal Harmon
Edna Hermosura
Linda Holbrook
Kristian Johnson
Debra Jusko
Alicia Kalinowski
Candice Kander
Julie Kim
Gary Kirsch
Sandra Latham
Diana Leff
Grace Leland
Elpidia Lintag
Bruce Little
Ruth Locascio
Sonni Logan
Nancy Loos
Teresa Magee
Lorenzo Mariscal
Maria Martinez
Terri Messenie
Diana Miranda-Duke
Victoria Morrison
Mary Murphy
Bonnie Nowaczyk
Anahid O Toole
Margaret Oard
Deborah Ogden
Betty Olivier
Ramon Pablo
Evelyn Padua
Susan Paulsen
Lynne Pennala
Theresa Pete
Linda Pickford
Rosalind Pinney-Rambus
Ola Pointer
Carol Portnoy
Tarulatta Rakholia
Suzanne Ramos
Carol Reale
Linda Regina
Patricia Reno
Abelardo Reyes
Antonia Reyes
Angie Roldan
Nancy Rood
Ronald Rozanski
Valerie Sandzimier-Eachus
Aileen Schieffer
Kenneth Seltzer
Linda Shapiro
Thomas Sheehan
Nadine Smeke
Robert Soikkeli
Thomas Speer
Jennifer Strutt
Margaret Takimoto
Lynne Underhill
Anna Vargis
Blas Villalobos
Noreen Williams

1993 1997

• February 1993 – Founders Wall dedicated; Dr. Donald Martyn and Dr. Lillian Paula Seitsive honored • January 1994 – Hospital rallies to serve community after Northridge Earthquake! • 1997 – Roger Seaver (below) named 5th hospital Administrator



1998 2000

• May 1999 – Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) purchases hospital • December 1999 – Pediatric Express Care Opens (1st patient below) • 2000 – Women's Center opens