Who Are They?
by: V. Faye Jones, MD, PhD, MSPH, Associate Vice President for Health Affairs/Diversity Initiatives

Last month, a safety memo was sent out across the Health Science Center campus with recommendations on what to do when confronted by someone who is asking for money. Although the intent of the memo was meant to raise awareness and offer suggestions, it also initiated a discussion of how our perceptions of this population shape how we react.

You may wonder who is this population that is embedded in our Health Science community? In many ways, they are the part of us that go unseen, the background that is forever present. They are the marginalized, the forgotten. They are fathers, mothers, sons, daughters and friends. They may have been successful in their former lives or always have been on the edge. They may be employed, unemployed or underemployed. They may suffer from a physical or mental health issue that contributed to their situation or just be the victim of cruel circumstances. We tend to avoid making direct eye contact, maybe fearful that “they” may be you or a family member one day.

In 2016, Dr. Katie Leslie and associates explored the experiences of some of the individuals in our community who had experienced poverty and/or homelessness. What follows are narratives they shared with the research team.

- “... I look back on life and the things I took for granted in life not really being poverty-stricken, and then landing in the middle of poverty, it’s an eye opening experience when one didn’t grow up impoverished and you end up being in a poverty situation and how you deal with it on a day to day basis when you’re being scrutinized because you may be walking down the street with two or three backpacks because they’ve got the majority of your belongings in it. People see you, they cross the street or whateve-

- “Poverty is, first of all, not having anything. Then, through continually trying to be responsible and productive member, what I’m able to obtain, there’s so many obstacles to get it and then once I get it, the expenses of living takes it all away. I’m right back on step one.”

- “Hopeless, low self worth, low self esteem. You ain’t worth nothing. Suicidal thoughts, what’s the use. Almost want to give up.”

Let’s explore some statistics.....

In 2016, the Center for American Progress reported the percent of people in the US living below the poverty line of $24,340 for a family of four was 14%. The rate in KY was higher at 18.5% placing KY 47th in the nation. The percent of children living below the poverty line was even higher at 24.5%. A further breakdown revealed 20.4% of working-age women (ages 18 to 64 years of age) and 15.2% of working men lived below the poverty line. Additionally, minority populations...
of African Americans (30.2%), Latinos (30.6%), Native Americans (25.8%) had even higher rates than white (17.1%) and Asian (14.6%) populations. The percentage of households who were food insecure on average from 2014 to 2016, meaning that at some point during the year they experienced difficulty providing enough food due to a lack of money or resources, was reported to be 17.3%. Looking closer in Jefferson County, the poverty rate was 14.3% with 26% of children living in poverty. The 2015 food insecurity rate was 16.1%, with children reaching 17%.

The Coalition for the HOMELESS reports statistics specifically related to homelessness. There were 6,373 unduplicated homeless people served between October 1, 2015 and September 31, 2016 in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Although this represents a 5.4% decrease in the number of homeless people over the year prior, there continues to be many individuals and families who experience homelessness. Of the total number served, 743 were considered unsheltered although in reality, the unsheltered is believed to be higher because of the difficulty in locating and counting these individuals. Table 1 provides a further breakdown of subpopulations demonstrating single individuals who make-up 77% of the population, while children, less than 18 years of age, account for 17%. Fifty-six percent of the population were people with disabilities and 20% were victims of domestic violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics of Persons who have experienced homelessness</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of single individuals</td>
<td>4,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of homeless families</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people in families</td>
<td>1,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children (age less than 18, including unaccompanied youth)</td>
<td>1,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of unaccompanied 18-24 year olds</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>3,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of domestic violence**</td>
<td>1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronically homeless</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>706</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table adopted from the Coalition of Homeless website

**Chronic homelessness is self-reported and not verified until people are served. Chronically homeless persons or families must include a disabled member and be homeless over a year or four or more times in three years.**

These statistics give a superficial glimpse into the lives of many of the individuals and families we encounter. This may or may not change our perceptions and approach to the people we encounter, each of us has to decide that for ourselves, but in a March 2017 New York Times opinion article Pope Francis provided some guidance and suggested we should “give them the money, and don’t worry about it. …..Stop, look the person in the eyes, and touch his or her hands. The reason is to preserve dignity, to see another person not as a pathology or a social condition, but as a human, with a life whose value is equal to your own.” To explore this issue further, please join us for a Lunch and Learn entitled, From Compassion to Penalization: The variety of responses to Panhandling and their impacts, on October 18th at noon in the HSC Kornhauser auditorium.

To register for this event please click here.
A Journey from India to UofL: Pediatric Dentistry Resident Sireesha (Siri) Kodali Tell Her Story

Hard-work is no stranger to Sireesha “Siri” Kodali, D.M.D., M.S.O.B., M.H.A., a second-year University of Louisville pediatric dentistry resident. Raised in an agricultural family located in the southern part of India, she endured circumstances that “made me strong from the inside.” As a youth, even going to school was a challenge—an hour bus ride, followed by a 30-minute walk.

With the vision to pursue a dental career not only for herself, but to fulfill the dream of her father, she started her education at Vishnu Dental College, followed by a year as an extern with an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in Vijayawada, India. The journey eventually brought Siri to Western Kentucky University as a graduate student.

Siri says while in Bowling Green, Ky., she grew in her communication skills, and gained a better understanding of United States cultures, values and beliefs through her volunteer work on and off campus. She also worked as a middle and high school tutor, and learned tuition through her role as a teaching and research assistant.

In furthering her career pursuit, Siri landed just one of three advanced standing seats to the UofL’s DMD program in Spring 2014, beating out more than 170 international student competitors for the chance to earn a UofL dental degree. She also enrolled in the School of Dentistry’s Masters in Oral Biology program.

It was during her time in these programs that Siri had the opportunity to conduct research with Ann Greenwell, D.M.D., M.S.D., program director of postdoctoral pediatric dental residency.

“Prior to my time with Dr. Greenwell, I never thought of doing a residency program - primarily because of financial reasons,” Siri said. “But there is something about kids - I felt I can and want to take care of them; they make me explore myself and I derive happiness from making them smile.”

Upon graduation from dental school, Siri secured a pediatric dental residency spot for international students at UofL. Residents see a large volume of immigrants and refugee patients from countries including Syria, Burma, Somali, Nepal, Vietnam and Ethiopia, and Siri says she is sensitive to cultural differences.

“As a young, single woman having come to the United States by myself, I understand the difficulties an immigrant can potentially face. I appreciate the strength and courage of these families just to meet their basic needs,” she said.

Siri says it’s eye-opening to hear some of the patient survival stories, and she feels blessed to help children get out of pain and motivate them to take care of their own oral health. She remembers a time when her own poor oral health as a child resulted in four cavities.

“I neither brushed before bed nor flossed, and never visited a dentist until dental school,” she said. “I came from a different country and different generation, where seeking dental care was only for an emergency toothache.”

Siri says now she knows the importance for children to establish a dental home at age one-year and maintain check-ups every six-months. Learning the specialty of pediatric dentistry – from behavioral management techniques to sedation, and even special needs patient care, she hopes to make a difference in the lives of many children throughout her career.
UofL Receives $13.8 Million to Study Use of Promising New Adult Stem Cell to Treat Heart Failure

The University of Louisville has received one of its largest grants for medical research in the school’s 219-year history, a $13.8 million award from the National Institutes of Health to study a promising new type of adult cardiac stem cell that has the potential to treat heart failure.

The announcement on Friday was made by Gregory Postel, M.D., interim president of UofL, and the study’s principal investigator, Roberto Bolli, M.D., director of UofL’s Institute of Molecular Cardiology. Bolli also serves as scientific director of the Cardiovascular Innovation Institute at UofL and as a professor and chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine at the School of Medicine.

“This is a prestigious grant reflecting the magnitude of the work being conducted here,” Postel said. “Being awarded this grant is a huge, huge accomplishment.”

Bolli thanked the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the NIH for their support. “It is critical that we have this type of support for the important research programs that we carry out, which can help patients around the world,” he said.

Heart failure affects millions of people, and the most common cause is a heart attack. When a person suffers a heart attack, part of the heart muscle dies from lack of oxygen and is replaced with scar tissue, which does not contract. Because of the loss of muscle, the heart becomes weaker and less able to pump.

Until now, conventional treatments for heart failure have consisted of surgery or medications, which can alleviate symptoms but do not cure the disease. In contrast, Bolli’s focus has been on how to repair the heart itself and actually cure heart failure using a patient’s own stem cells. It is an approach that could revolutionize the treatment of heart disease.

The NIH grant is a continuation of a Program Project Grant (PPG) that Bolli and his team were originally awarded in 2005. The overall goal of this PPG is the use of stem cells to repair the damage caused by a heart attack by regenerating heart muscle in the area that died, replacing the scar tissue with new muscle and thereby making the heart stronger and able to pump more blood.

A PPG is a cluster of several projects with a common focus relating to one theme, in this case, the use of adult stem cells to repair the heart. It involves a collaboration among different investigators working as a team, a collaboration that otherwise might not be able to occur without funding.

The latest round of funding comes after Bolli and his colleagues discovered a new population of adult stem cells, called...
CMCs, in the heart three years ago.

“CMCs seem to be more effective,” Bolli said. “In addition to showing more promise than those we have used in the past, these cells also offer several advantages in that they can be produced more easily, faster, more consistently and in larger numbers than other adult stem cells, which have proven tricky.”

He said this would make them easier to apply for widespread use, as specialized labs to isolate the cells would not be needed as with other types of adult stem cells.

Bolli and his team want to find out what CMCs will do when transplanted into a diseased heart in mice and pigs, ultimately laying the groundwork for clinical trials in patients.

On Friday, Postel noted that the NIH didn’t just approve UofL’s grant application - a long, multistep process involving more than a dozen reviewers who are experts in the field - it funded the project with a perfect score and rare high praise. In fact, the committee reviewing the application concluded Bolli’s program was, quote “exceptional,” with “significant translational impact, an exceptional leader and investigative team and an exceptional environment.”

“We are continually striving for new and better ways to treat heart disease,” Bolli said. “I’m confident we are not that far from a cure.”

### Let's Do The Time Warp Again

The Kentucky Cancer Program at the University of Louisville invites breast cancer survivors to do the time warp again in celebration of survivorship at “The Rocky Horror Halloween Party,” an event to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The event will be held Tuesday, Oct. 10, at Buckhead Mountain Grill, 707 W. Riverside Dr., Jeffersonville, Ind. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6 p.m. Admission is free and open to breast cancer survivors only. Participants must register to attend by calling 502-852-6318.

Attendees are invited to dress for the occasion with prizes for the best Halloween costume and the best “Rocky Horror Picture Show” costume.

Rachel Platt of WHAS11’s “Great Day Live!” will emcee. The nonprofit theater company Acting Against Cancer will present “The Rocky Horror Halloween Party,” marking the fourth consecutive year the company has staged the production for Kentuckiana audiences.

The event is made possible with support from Buckhead Mountain Grill, Anthem BlueCross BlueShield and Rocky’s Italian Grill.

The Kentucky Cancer Program is the state mandated cancer control program jointly administered by the University of Louisville (West Region) and the University of Kentucky (East Region). At UofL, the program is sponsored by the James Graham Brown Cancer Center. The mission of the Kentucky Cancer Program is to reduce cancer incidence and mortality by promoting cancer education, research and service.
Nursing Faculty, Students Win Awards at Research!Louisville

As part of Research!Louisville earlier this month, School of Nursing Professor Marianne Hutti, Ph.D., A.P.R.N., received the Louisville Women in Medicine and Science award for the poster, “The Perinatal Grief Intensity Scale: A Clinical Screening Instrument for Identifying and Predicting Intense Grief and Need for Follow-Up after Perinatal Loss.” Members of her research team included Lynne Hall, Barbara Polivka, John Myers, Susan White, Janice Hill, Elizabeth Kloenne, Jaclyn Hayden, and Meredith Grisanti.

Louisville Women in Medicine and Science also chose the following second and third place awards:
- Second place to Andrea Merchak, Research Staff, Institute for Cellular Therapeutics, for “PD-L1/CD86 expression ratio as a possible biomarker for tolerance in chimeric kidney transplant recipients.”
- Third place to School of Medicine Associate Professor Jennifer Koch for “Gender Differences in the Experience of Internal Medicine Residents.”

Also at Research!Louisville, Ph.D. student Barbara Cave received the School of Nursing Graduate Student Poster Award for her poster, “Changing the Epidemiology of Hepatitis C Exposure in Kentucky.” Members of her research team were Kathy Sanders, Heather Beeber, James O'Donnell, and Laura Smart.

Professor Barbara Polivka and Anna Jorayeva, postdoctoral scholar, were co-authors of the poster that won in the Research Staff category. The poster was titled “Current Practice of Bronchodilator Reversibility Measurement Underestimates Asthma in the Older Adult.”
What does it mean to participate as urban residents in processes of local governance? What forms of participatory processes do residents perceive as fair, accessible, desirable, and effective? How are these perceptions shaped by community histories of marginalization and exclusion? These questions have helped to guide the development of a new research project at the UofL, funded by the Cooperative Consortium on Transdisciplinary Social Justice Research (CCTSJR). This project includes faculty and students from both the social and health sciences, working in collaboration with community groups in West Louisville and staff from the Louisville Metro Government. Ultimately, this research strives to identify how West Louisville residents participate with, and think about, Louisville Metro’s community engagement processes in order to create tools for assessing ongoing participatory processes.

It’s no secret that there are a multitude of disparities affecting residents of West Louisville. It is also true that Louisville Metro Government has, and continues to engage, with residents in a variety of programs to address those disparities. However, there has been little to no research on how those same residents perceive efforts by Louisville Metro to engage their community. This project aims to change this, with a study that provides benefit to both the community and government, by changing the culture around community engagement efforts and building capacity for better government engagement.

As scholars focusing on questions of participation, the engagement and inclusion of community members and organizations is central to this research. For this project, researchers are working closely with two main community partners: the West Louisville Community Council and Louisville Forward, an agency of Louisville Metro Government. Co-PI Smith, a specialist in community engagement and Brownfields Program Manager at Louisville Forward, commits a portion of her time through Metro to this research. The West Louisville Community Council is the foundation for initial participatory process evaluation, and represents the power and promise of citizen engagement in city politics. The Council is the community’s
response to reformulating redevelopment plans for the Heritage West at 30th and Muhammad Ali, the proposed site for the cancelled FoodPort project.

To date, researchers have focused on obtaining a baseline for resident sentiment through surveys administered at several different Louisville Metro-sponsored events in West Louisville. These have included: community dialogue forums on the Redlining project; Brownfield Redevelopment workshops; the Heritage West site redevelopment presentations and open house; and Comprehensive Plan community input events. Participants at these events were asked about their perceptions of previous Louisville Metro community engagement efforts as well as their perception of the current event in which they participated, their level of personal involvement in the community, and preferences for public engagement. The research is now turning towards qualitative data collection, where interviews and focus groups with West Louisville residents will help to develop a rich description of participatory processes. By using a community-engaged approach to research, and by including students in the entire spectrum of the research process, the project team hopes to implement practices focused upon inclusion and diversity in both the process and topic of this work.

This study was one of 14 funded projects in the inaugural round of CCTSJR awards within the University of Louisville. The research team, headed by Dr. Angela Storey from the Department of Anthropology, also includes Drs. Daniel DeCaro (Urban and Public Affairs; Psychology), David Johnson (School of Public Health and Information Sciences), Lauren Heberle (Sociology; Center for Environmental Policy and Management), and Allison Smith (Biology; Louisville Metro Government), as well as students Jeremy Jackson (CCTSJR Undergraduate Research Fellow), and Chris Wales (Doctoral student, Urban and Public Affairs).
HSC Diversity and Inclusion

A Celebration of 31 Years of Loyal Service: Mrs. Mary Joshua

Mrs. Mary Joshua, Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, recently retired from the University of Louisville after 31 years of loyal service. Mrs. Joshua was a passionate and caring individual, her dedication has always gone above and beyond to help her students succeed throughout the course of their career. Thank you Mrs. Joshua for all of the hard work you have put in, and for the paths you have paved for so many. We wish you nothing but the best in this next chapter of your life, and we hope that your favorite quote will live on around the HSC campus for years to come, “Team work makes the dream work!”

Thank you and congratulations Mrs. Mary Joshua!
The Colored Orphans home was the first institution of welfare for African Americans in Louisville, KY. A coalition of African American churches in Louisville formed the home in 1877 to offer education and a stable social environment for children. Originally the home was founded and housed at Taylor Barracks at 3rd and Oak streets, however in 1878 the American Missionary Association donated a larger facility at 18th and Dumesnil Streets which would house the orphanage for more than five decades. The home received both monetary and material support from black churches and civic groups around the city. The Ladies Sewing Circle made the home its special project working to donate furniture, blankets, sheets, and clothing. Many other women’s groups would hold fund-raising events to benefit the home, including baking cakes and pies for the residents and to sell.

Larger churches, most notably the First Street Baptist Church, and organizations such as the United Brothers of Friendship gave annual contributions to help with the home’s upkeep. At the homes peak it supported around 70 children and operated on less than $5,000 annually. For three decades the home was supported only by the city’s black community, but in 1909 Reverend Elijah Harris was elected president and set out with the goal of drawing white benefactors. One of the first white supporters was James B. Speed, in 1910 Mr. Speed gave $500, an amount that was greater than all other white contributors combined. Soon after it became fashionable for the wealthy whites to support the home, this lead to the board of directors being dominated by whites. As time went on a yearly grant was established by the Louisville Welfare League that provided 90 percent of the home’s funds.

In 1921 the Louisville Welfare league released their annual report which described the home as “unsanitary and totally unfit for any use. Yet this building continues to house children... This is the only colored orphanage in the city and the conditions are so wretched that it should either acquire a new building or cease to operate.” Still, two years later, there were 67 children living in the home designed to house 25, often with three children sleeping to one bed. In 1928 the home moved to a larger location at 1224 Dixie Hwy, and closed its doors in 1935.
Upcoming Diversity Events & Announcements

- **From Compassion to Penalization: The Variety of Responses to Panhandling and their Impacts**
  **Wednesday, October 18, 12:00pm—1:00pm**
  HSC Kornhauser Auditorium
  This lunch and learn panel will explore issues related to poverty, homelessness and in particular pan-handling and both Louisville’s and UofL’s response to what is really a complex social issue. At this lunch and learn we’ll hear from those that are called to enforce safety concerns related to panhandling, the known impacts of panhandling ordinances, and those who understand why panhandling exists and why it’s needed. The audience will be given opportunity to share their perspectives on how panhandling is approached at UofL and in Louisville which considers itself a compassionate city.
  * Pizza will be provided to the first 100 people to RSVP. To RSVP [click here](#).

- **Undercover in North Korea**
  **Wednesday, October 18, 6:30pm—8:00pm**
  Louisville Free Public Library—Main Libray, 301 York Street
  Suki Kim is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Without You, There Is No Us*. The book chronicles the six months Kim spent teaching English to the 19-year-old sons of North Korea's ruling class at a brand-new university staffed only by foreigners. She is the only writer to go undercover in North Korea to investigate and write a book from the inside.

- **MAGS CV Workshop**
  **Friday, October 20, 12:00—4:00pm**
  UofL Cultural Center Multipurpose room
  Need Help with your CV? This will be an interactive session on developing a Curriculum Vita (CV). Please bring your CV to get personal assistance.

- **UofL SOM Pediatric Grand Rounds — “Social Determinants: Using Culture as Catalysts for Health”**
  **Friday, October 27, 8:00—9:00am**
  Second Floor Auditorium, Norton Hospital
  Theo Edmunds, JD, MHA, MFA
  1) Learn how arts and culture can be used to mitigate the negative health impacts of poverty
  2) Learn how arts and culture can catalyze communities toward developing more health protective poli-
  3) Learn how arts and culture innovators are using the social-ecological model to transform cultural producers into a new population health prevention workforce