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## ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Remember: Our newsletter is now electronic only. If you wish to receive the next issues via email, please send your email address to Alejandra Castillo at [alejandra@operationwalk.org](mailto:alejandra@operationwalk.org)

The newsletter can also be viewed on our webpage:  
[www.operationwalk.org](http://www.operationwalk.org)

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# OPERATION WALK LOS ANGELES

THE JOINT JOURNAL

## OPERATION WALK IRELAND

St. Patrick's Day is approaching and embracing the luck of the Irish, we wanted to spotlight our Ireland Team based in Galway, Ireland. We had a chance to sit down with their team leaders, Niamh Flynn, Claire Keating, and Grainne Duffy during our Team Leader's Meeting in February, and wanted to know what inspired these three ladies to help establish the first Operation Walk team in Europe and what inspires them to continue developing Operation Walk Ireland.



OpWalk Ireland nurses teaching their patients how to jig

Trevor Whelan

In just a few weeks, Operation Walk Ireland will be making their third mission trip to Vietnam. This year they will be participating in back-to-back missions, lasting over two weeks, with two teams totaling 146 volunteers. This more than quintuples the amount of team members they started with on their first mission in 2016. Their journey began when orthopaedic surgeon, Derek Bennett, showed a video of Operation Walk Chicago's missions to Vietnam to Niamh and Claire. Dr. Bennet asked if they would be interested in participating on a mission with the Chicago team, with the goal of creating their own chapter based in Ireland. Niamh's reply was immediate, "After seeing the impact these surgeries make, I didn't have to think twice. I signed up immediately."

Both Claire and Niamh participated in that inaugural trip, partnering with the Chicago chapter. Under the direction of Dr. David Stulberg, the combined team came together to form an international joint mission in Hanoi, Vietnam. During the trip, they performed 86 hip and knee replacements and engaged

in an educational program with the local orthopaedic surgeons and their respective teams. After that initial introduction, they were hooked and determined to develop a team of their own. Joined by Grainne Duffy, these three team leaders organized a team, with each volunteer raising their own funds to support travel, lodging, and food. Operation Walk Ireland's first independent mission took place in May 2017, back to the same hospital in Hanoi. They performed 64 joint replacement surgeries with their Vietnamese colleagues and developed educational aspects of the mission as well.



**Niamh Flynn, Claire Keating,  
and Grainne Duffy**

Their second mission occurred in March of 2018. On that mission they operated on 45 patients and replaced a total of 56 joints.

Together these ladies oversee procurement and shipping of instrumentation, medical supplies, and medications as well as recruiting volunteers and organizing travel and lodging logistics. They also supervise volunteers both in and out of the Operating Rooms, the care and sterilization of instruments, and patient care and recovery pre and post surgery. We are so proud to have them as a part of our Operation Walk family and are excited to see them in action during their third mission. We look forward to seeing continued growth in their chapter, as they serve both their community and patients around the world. Thank you for your dedication, best of luck and safe travels on your upcoming mission! 🍀

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SAVE THE DATE:

**Annual Angels Luncheon - May 1st, 2019**

**Annandale Golf Club**

All current Angels will receive an Evite soon. Please plan on bringing a guest who you think would enjoy joining the Angels. **If you would like to become an Angel, please contact Jeri Ward at (310) 493-8073.**

### SAVE THE DATE:

**Annual Gala - October 12th, 2019**

**Annandale Golf Club**

Mark your calendars! More details to follow.



## Follow us on social media!



**Facebook.com/  
OperationWalk**



**@OperationWalkLA**



**@OpWalkLA**

**WWW.OPERATIONWALK.ORG - (424) 558 - 8076**

## CUBA CARGO UPDATE

Our last 13 pallets are leaving our warehouse today, March 1st, on their way to Cuba. Congratulations to Mary Ellen Sieben on months of coordinating supplies and donations! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up to date on our work in Cuba. Just think of those lucky Angels who will be following the patients during the mission. You can be an Angel too!



## MEET THE STAFF:

### LYNNE ZAWACKI

I have worked with our Joint Replacement team since 1992 and have moved with the group each time we relocated with Dr. Dorr and Dr. Gilbert. I have participated in many of the earlier Operation Walk trips throughout the world and was changed as a person by them.

As an Orthopedic Nurse Coordinator I am working with Dr. Lawrence Dorr, Dr. Paul Gilbert, and Dr. Donald Longjohn 's hip and knee joint replacement patients.

I teach the preoperative classes for Dr. Longjohn and am relief instructor for Jeri Ward, RN Director of Education and Research who runs education classes for Dr. Dorr and Dr. Gilbert's patients. I review all

patients' medical history with the team prior to surgery and work with Internal Medicine Physicians and other consults to optimize patient health prior to surgery for the best possible outcomes. The more we know about our patients the better we can take care of them!

I communicate with nursing pre- operatively and post operatively, Physical and Occupational Therapists, and Anesthesiologists to plan for patient care issues. In the hospital, I assist with helping to identifying issues that help patient's recovery and facilitating communication with staff.

After surgery, I help to perform incision care and teaching discharge instructions with patients and families.



**Lynne Zawacki, RN, BSN,  
Certified Orthopedic Nurse.  
Bachelors of Science in Nursing USC Department  
of Nursing.  
Nurse of the Year Award 1991, 1999.  
Doone McDougal USC Nursing Award for  
Compassionate Nursing care.**

Knowing what to expect is reassuring for patients and their families. I follow patients after they go home as a resource to answer questions, address concerns, and facilitate communication with surgeons.

I love this role, as I have the opportunity to follow patients through the entire process of their surgery, and help provide continuity of care. Watching people progress and get better is very exciting and we are there to cheer them on! I truly value the team process, as it really does take everyone with their unique skills to give the best care to our patients. I am grateful to be a part of our team.

## LISA FUJIMOTO

I have always wanted to make a difference in people's lives. I was born and raised in West Los Angeles. I attended UCLA and graduated with a degree in biochemistry. I originally planned on going into Pharmacy. When that did not work out, I continued to work as a lab technician and a phlebotomist at UCLA. My coworker at the time mentioned I should look into becoming a PA. "What is a PA?" I asked (I had not heard of PA's before!) The rest is history.



I immediately pursued this avenue, and attended the PA program at USC. After experiencing my orthopedic rotation at the old LA County hospital, I was certain I would specialize in orthopedics! After graduation, I persisted in finding an orthopedic position, turned down several jobs, until the stars aligned and fate brought me to Dr. Dorr! Dr. Dorr and his team took me in under their wings as a new graduate with no prior experience, trained me, and shaped me into who I am today. For this, I am eternally grateful.

I began working with Dr. Dorr and his team in March of 2002 (17 years ago!) I started at Hollywood Presbyterian under the umbrella of the Dorr Arthritis Institute. I transferred to Centinela Hospital soon thereafter, and became Dr. Dorr's right and left hands. We moved to Good Samaritan Hospital (and this is when Dr. Gilbert joined our team), and we are currently at Keck USC. Who would have known that I would be so lucky to become a part of this well oiled team. What an amazing opportunity to work, collaborate, operate with, and take care of patients hand in hand with Dr. Dorr and Dr. Gilbert, who love what they do and genuinely care.



### **P.A. Lisa Fujimoto in action during various Operation Walk missions**

My first Operation Walk trip was in 2004. Ever since my eye-opening experience many moons ago, I have remained active because it is the perfect avenue for giving back. Seeing patients get their lives back warms my heart. In my "spare time," I try to keep physically active, I enjoy snowboarding in the winter, playing basketball with my 7 and 5 year old children, and try to keep up with their endless energy. I love traveling, especially with my family, broadening my children's horizons, and opening their eyes to new experiences around the world.

# GIRL SCOUT'S SILVER AWARD PROJECT FOR OPERATION WALK

Last summer, Kelly Gee was having fun making waterproof bracelets with her mom, giving them to friends and family as gifts. Kelly is a Girl Scout and her Silver Award project was approaching. She had seen her mom, Jane, dedicate time to Operation Walk both as an Angel and as a member of the Dinner Fundraising Committee. She asked how she could help with our organization and they decided she would make bracelets for the patients on our upcoming trip to Cuba.

Kelly is thirteen years old and has been a member of Troop #9585 for six years. The Silver Award project is the second highest award given by The Girl Scouts of the USA and is the highest award that a Girl Scout Cadette can earn. The steps in proposing a Silver Award project include exploring your community to identify an issue or cause that you care about, choosing to work independently or as a part of a team, specifying the objective of your project, developing a plan of action, putting that plan into motion, and sharing your journey. Each project must have a minimum of fifty hours contributed and must be approved by the council.

As they continued to get requests for bracelets, Kelly and Jane realized that she may be able to do something more. Kelly set a goal for herself to raise one hundred dollars by selling bracelets to her friends, family, and schoolmates. The proceeds would go towards hospitality bags that contained items each patient could use (a pen, activity book, and hand cream).



Kelly and Jane harnessed the power of social media, networking through friends to inform a greater audience about her project. She made over double of her initial goal and was able to add a magnifying lens card, lip balm, and a journal to each bag.

Jane says that it has been a rewarding journey for Kelly to set a goal, exceed it, and see what she is capable of doing for others. Through her fundraising process, Kelly has learned about the patients that Operation Walk serves, how joint replacement surgery can change their lives, and how to appreciate the things we have and not take them for granted. Kelly can't wait to see photographs of patients in Cuba receiving the bags that she put together and is thankful to be a part of our 2019 mission to Havana.

We are proud to be the recipient of Kelly's hard work and the focus of her Silver Award project. Thank you Kelly and Jane for your efforts and dedication and for helping to make our mission a success!



**Girl Scout Kelly and her mom,  
OpWalk volunteer, Jane Song-Gee**



**OPERATION WALK**

**Would you like to submit an article to the newsletter?  
Tell us how surgery changed your life! Submit your letters,  
questions, and photos to: [cami@operationwalk.org](mailto:cami@operationwalk.org)**

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