

# Health Connect



ANTELOPE VALLEY  
HOSPITAL

A facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District

A community newsletter from Antelope Valley Hospital

Summer 2018



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Ready**

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# Top-Quality Care and a Sustainable Future

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**Quality.** More than a seven-letter word, it is the lens through which we view everything we do. To ensure the highest level of quality for every patient, the hospital team has been refining our processes and doggedly implementing our new values.

The "C" grade recently awarded by the Leapfrog Group, an independent non-profit organization that acts as a watchdog for quality, safety and transparency at hospitals across the country, is a marked improvement over the "F" we received in 2016 and 2017. As an organization, we own our past failures and are committed to doing better. The new grade is proof positive that we are moving in the right direction, and we have every intention of attaining an "A" grade through a steadfast focus on quality.

Our commitment to quality also means ensuring Antelope Valley Hospital is here for generations to come. That is the driving force behind the financial recovery plan we are implementing. In the spirit of full transparency, we broadly distributed our plan detailing how we are improving efficiencies without sacrificing quality. We took a scientific approach using industry productivity standards for large nonprofit community hospitals. I am appreciative of the entire AVH team for their contributions to this process and the plan.

I had the privilege of seeing the professionalism, teamwork and compassion of the AV Hospital family after we received word of an active shooter on Highland High School's campus in May. From trauma to security to surgery, countless nurses, physicians and other staff mobilized within minutes of being notified we would likely be treating multiple victims. Fortunately, the situation was not as widespread as initially reported, but our staff rallied together and demonstrated that we are prepared for anything.

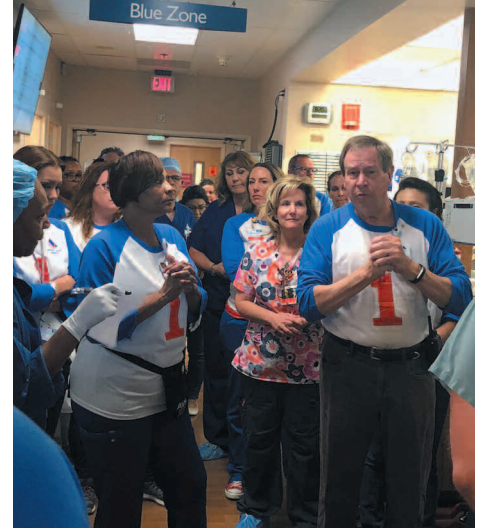
Our unwavering devotion to our neighbors, family, friends and each other is why we call ourselves Team AVH. As a team we respond to disasters; help our community; and deliver compassionate, top-quality care.

From our family to yours, we wish you a safe, healthy and memorable summer.

**Michael L. Wall**  
Chief Executive Officer

*Pictured on front cover, Dirt bike competitor, Jacob Harthill, before the crash.*





# Trauma Team Ready

**E**arly one Friday morning in May our community received a terrifying message: “An active shooter on Highland High School’s campus.” Initial reports indicated AV Hospital would receive upwards of 20 patients. So, as emergency responders were racing to the scene of the incident, our trauma team was quickly bracing for an onslaught of injured victims.

Additional physicians, nurses and other personnel poured into the hospital, ready to administer aid. **Larry Stock, M.D.**, our emergency department vice chair, began coordinating hospital staff and assigning triage areas, where patients would be grouped by the severity of their injuries.

“It was really remarkable to see the immediate response of so many hospital personnel,” said Dr. Stock. “This incident confirmed the value of having a trauma center right here in our community. We have the expertise and resources on hand to act fast when an emergency arises.”

Fortunately the incident wasn’t as widespread as initially feared. One student was shot in the arm. He had surgery and is expected to make a full recovery.

While this incident could have been much worse, it was an opportunity to review our emergency preparedness procedures and assure local residents that they can count on us to be there when disaster strikes, no matter how big or small.

## AV Hospital Trauma Center

Hospitals with trauma centers have more experience treating life-threatening injuries from motor vehicle accidents, gunshot wounds and serious falls than other medical centers. Antelope Valley Hospital:

- Is the only trauma center within 50 miles.
- Cares for more than 1,200 trauma patients per year.
- Has specially trained physicians, surgeons and nurses available 24/7.



From left, Steve Baker, Regina Rossall, and Kevin Von Tungeln.

# Community Leaders Round-out Hospital Board

The Antelope Valley Healthcare District (AVHD) Board of Directors recently appointed three community representatives to round-out the newly expanded nine-member board. The board was expanded as a provision of Measure H, which was passed by an overwhelming majority last fall. The measure established a new 501(c)3 nonprofit organization called Antelope Valley Hospital, Inc., that is to be governed by the nine-member board, which includes CEO Michael L. Wall; five publicly elected AVHD board members – Abdallah Farrukh, M.D.; Kristina Hong, RN, NP; Mateo Olivarez, RN; Don Parazo, M.D.; and Phil Tuso, M.D. – and these community representatives:

**Steve Baker**, an Antelope Valley resident for more than 50 years, has served as executive director of Grace Resource Center since 1991. Grace Resource Center helps underprivileged people access food, jobs, clothing, counseling and support. Steve has been affiliated with various community groups over the years, including Lancaster Sunrise Rotary Club, Antelope Valley YMCA and the Antelope Valley Homeless Coalition.

**Regina Rossall**, a 47-year resident of the Antelope Valley, serves as the superintendent for Westside Union School District. She has been on many community boards, ranging from educational services like the Antelope Valley College Foundation to economic groups like Antelope Valley Board of Trade. Regina also is a member of the Alpha Charter Guild, which helps fundraise for the hospital.

**Kevin Von Tungeln** is president of Thompson Von Tungeln, a legal firm that specializes in estate planning. He is on the board of directors of seven nonprofit organizations, including Grace Resource Center, Antelope Valley Sheriff's Booster Club and Lancaster West Rotary, among others. A 27-year resident of the Antelope Valley, Kevin frequently donates blood to the AVH Blood Donor Center.

*“I’m thrilled to have Steve, Regina and Kevin help forge a new path for healthcare in the Antelope Valley. They bring a wealth of experience, community knowledge, and insight as we look to tackle the health challenges of our region and build a new, larger medical center.”*

– Kristina Hong, RN, NP,  
AVHD board chair

# Blood Test Changes Pastor's Life



*Pastor Jim White now takes every opportunity to encourage other men to get a PSA test.*

**A** simple blood test can save your life. That's the message Palmdale United Methodist Church Pastor **Jim White** wants all men to hear.

Men over the age of 50 are routinely tested for the level of prostate-specific antigen or (PSA) in their blood as part of a regular physical. While Jim hadn't yet turned 50, his primary care physician **Satya Dandamudi, M.D.**, ordered the test. Surprisingly, the result indicated a PSA level that was higher than normal. He was referred to urologist **Donald Hannoun, M.D.**, for a biopsy. A week later the results were in: Pastor Jim had prostate cancer.

Cancer was found on half his prostate, a small gland that is part of the male reproductive system. Dr. Hannoun gave him several treatment options, ranging from radiation therapy to surgery. Jim opted for surgery.

"I wasn't too worried or freaked out because I had been reading a lot and found out how treatable it is," he said. "Because I was only 49, the chance of making a full recovery and continuing to be active throughout the rest of my life was pretty good."

Jim said he bonded with Dr. Hannoun, a Syriac Orthodox Christian, during a pre-op meeting, who said he would pray for him while doing the procedure. Jim's wife joked, "Just pray with your eyes open!"

Since the day of the surgery coincided with a blessing-of-the-hands celebration during National Hospital Week, the urologist asked Jim to pray over his hands.

"It was really touching," the pastor said. "I said a prayer not only for Dr. Hannoun but for all those working in the surgery unit that day."

Dr. Hannoun used the da Vinci Surgical System to perform a laparoscopic surgery, a minimally invasive procedure that uses several small incisions to remove the prostate. Jim was up and walking the very next day and released home 30 hours after surgery.

"The hospital staff made my stay as pleasant as possible with their friendly and courteous demeanor," he recalled.

Now, just over a year later, Jim reflected on his doctor taking the unusual step of ordering the PSA test given he hadn't celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. "My primary care doctor was acting on intuition," he said. "I'm glad he did. Since it was caught early, it was easily treatable and I'm now cancer-free."

## HIGHLIGHTS

9 out of 10 prostate cancers are detected early before the cancer has spread.

Nearly 100% of men diagnosed when the cancer is still confined to the prostate gland are disease-free after five years.

There are many treatment options available depending upon the type and stage of the cancer and the individual's unique needs.



# Volunteers Honored for Service

**M**ore than 300 hospital volunteers were honored during the annual volunteer appreciation banquet.

We rely on the time, talent and compassion of these caring individuals (and canines) every day.

Special honors went to **Katie Christman** and **Lou Arnold**, who have volunteered for 35 and 30 years, respectively. Five volunteers were recognized for achieving a lifetime contribution of more than 10,000 hours:

- Betty Morgan 18,000 hours
- Shirley Beasley 16,000 hours
- Bobbie Patton 15,000 hours
- Judy Ibbotson 13,000 hours
- Lou Arnold 12,000 hours



Hospital CEO Michael Wall and COO/CFO Colette Nichols flank Bobbie Patton (second from left) and Shirley Beasley, two of the five lifetime achievement honorees who each volunteered more than 15,000 hours at the hospital.

**2017 VOLUNTEER IMPACT**

**58,000+** hours of service valued at \$1.6 million

17 chaplains provided **3,407** hours of pastoral care

10 dogs wagged-in **236** hours of pet therapy services

An infographic with three sections. The top section shows a hand holding a red number '1'. The middle section shows a hand holding a yellow number '2'. The bottom section shows a hand holding a green number '3' next to a paw print.

Pet therapy volunteers (and their handlers) smile for the camera at the annual volunteer recognition dinner.

**To become a volunteer:**

Visit [avhospital.org](http://avhospital.org)

Call 661-949-5105

Email [volunteers@avhospital.org](mailto:volunteers@avhospital.org)

An icon of a blue telephone handset next to a white envelope with a blue '@' symbol.





# Celebrities Tee-off for AV Hospital

Tournament celebrities, back row (from left): Darwin Cook; Mark Gottfried; Gary Payton; Eddie Murray; Ralph Sampson, Jr.; Spencer Haywood; Mike Woodson; Olden Polynice. Front row (from left) CEO Michael Wall; Johnny Manziel; Jim Harrick; COO/CFO Colette Nichols, Ph.D.; Cedric the Entertainer; Bill Russell; Al Downing; Jerry Royster; Theresa Lemus, AVH Foundation manager; and Nancy Kinley-Wood, AVH Foundation golf committee chairperson.

The Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrity Golf Tournament was more than sold out thanks, in part, to the many sports and entertainment celebrities in attendance. Held on a sunny April day at the Antelope Valley Country Club, the tournament raised nearly \$150,000. Funds will be used to support the hospital's greatest needs.



First place winners, from left: John Pryor; Brian Barcelona; Erik Jarvey; Olden Polynice; and Prithviraj Dharmaraja, M.D.



## Antelope Valley Hospital Foundation Gala

September 15, 2018  
Antelope Valley Fairgrounds

Featuring entertainment by  
**Clay Walker**

For more information about sponsorships or tickets:  
Call **661-949-5810** or email [Theresa.lemus@avhospital.org](mailto:Theresa.lemus@avhospital.org)





Trauma patient Jacob Harthill with his surgeon, Dr. Pavel Petrik, five days after the accident.

## Teen Rider Survives Gnarly Crash

**J**acob Harthill was barreling around a curve during a heated dirt bike race north of Lancaster when his life took a sharp turn. On the far side of the course, the 16-year-old missed a turn and crash-landed onto a creosote plant. Now, off the side of the path, he could not be seen by other racers until another rider overcorrected in the same spot and discovered Jacob bleeding from his neck. The young man immediately removed his own jersey to staunch the bleeding and was able to alert a third rider to summon for help. The rider's quick thinking helped save Jacob's life.

Emergency responders rushed to Jacob's aid, first transporting him to an open area from which he could

be airlifted to Antelope Valley Hospital's trauma center. Jacob's father, Mark, who was waiting for him at the finish line, heard that a rider was down and quickly realized it was his own son. He hurried to the hospital to be by his son's side. And the news was grim.

Mark watched helplessly as the teen was whisked off for emergency surgery. In the operating room, trauma surgeon **Pavel Petrik, M.D.**, was surprised by what he found. The cause of Jacob's neck wound turned out to be a four-inch long wood shard from the creosote plant, which had punctured his skin, broken off and lodged itself just above a major artery in the boy's chest.



Jacob's mother, Michelle, received news of her son's accident while grocery shopping in their hometown of Mission Viejo. "I dropped to my knees in the middle of the grocery store," she said. "I was scared to death."

Arriving in Lancaster as quickly as possible, she said all she could do is trust God and the medical staff to care for her son. "It was a complete act of God that Jake is still with us," she said. "He can be considered a true miracle."

*Had the wood fragment cut the artery, Dr. Petrik said Jacob would have bled to death in minutes. "Literally, a couple of millimeters in any direction and he wouldn't have made it," he said.*

Jacob spent four days in our critical care unit before being transferred to the pediatric unit for just one more day to make sure he was strong enough to go home.

Within weeks of an injury that nearly cost him his life, the high school sophomore returned to school and is eager to get back on his dirt bike. Dr. Petrik added that Jacob "should recover nicely from the injury and return to his normal function."

While the teen still has some healing to do, Michelle noted that her family is thankful for the care he received at Antelope Valley Hospital. "Everybody was amazing," she said. "I couldn't ask for a better hospital to get him through this."



# Donate Life Month Activities Honor the Gift of Life

In our continued commitment to raising awareness about the value of becoming an organ and tissue donor, we held our annual flag-raising ceremony and sent a team to the Donate Life Run/Walk.



## Flag-raising celebrates donor's life

Dave Meier, the father of Air Force test pilot Maj. Benjamin Meier was among the honored guests at our flag-raising ceremony. Following a tragic accident, Maj. Meier gave the gift of life to five people through the donation of his heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Dave (center), board member Don Parazo, M.D. (left) and CEO Michael Wall get ready to raise our new Donate Life flag.



## Hospital team walks for awareness

Several members of our critical care team participated in this year's Donate Life Run/Walk. From left to right in blue shirts: Suzanne Shoop, RN; Sandy Sandhu; Alicia Tiner-Torres, RN; Angelica Hernandez; and Susie McGuffee. Wearing the green donor family shirt is Susie's daughter, Maria Norton, whose father was an organ donor.

For more information about becoming an organ and tissue donor, visit [donatelifecalifornia.org](http://donatelifecalifornia.org).



# Palliative Care Team Delivers Comfort



*Palliative care team, from left to right: Daniel Khodabakhsh, M.D., medical director; Miranda Jennings, RN, coordinator; Linda Zuchegna, social services coordinator; and Kevin Brubaker, chaplain intern.*

**O**ften when a loved one is hurting, our first priority is to bring comfort and do whatever is possible to relieve the pain and stress. Here at Antelope Valley Hospital, we have a program dedicated to doing just that. It's called palliative care.

The team, led by **Daniel Khodabakhsh, M.D.**, and **Miranda Jennings, RN**, provides pain relief, comfort, and emotional and spiritual support to patients suffering from a serious injury or illness.

"Palliative care is a supportive service for hospitalized patients and their families," Dr. Khodabakhsh said. "Our goal is to help relieve patients' suffering as much as we can."

"Palliative care also helps caregivers while their loved one is in the hospital facing a serious illness," Miranda said.

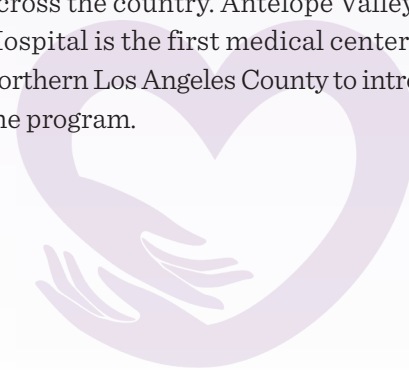
Patients and their families can access palliative care services through their attending doctor during their hospital stay.

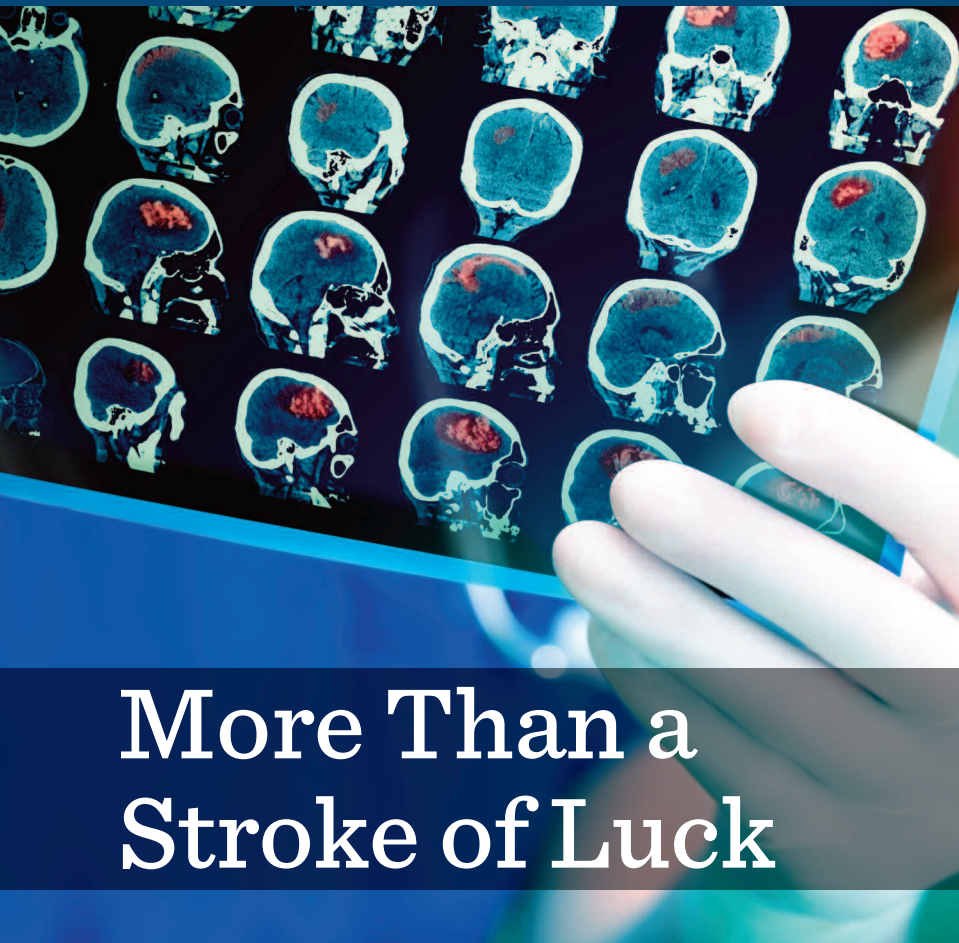
## Ensuring No One Dies Alone

We have just introduced a new program designed to ensure no patient will be alone when facing death. Whether a patient doesn't have any loved ones nearby or if relatives need to leave the patient's bedside, trained "No One Dies Alone" volunteers will be available to provide companionship during this time. Volunteers may simply sit with the patient or may hold their hand, read a book or play music.

Facing death alone without the support of loved ones can be a traumatic experience. The No One Dies Alone program allows volunteers to act as compassionate companions and offer comfort to dying patients.

Started in 2001, the No One Dies Alone program has spread to hundreds of hospitals, hospices and care facilities across the country. Antelope Valley Hospital is the first medical center in northern Los Angeles County to introduce the program.





# More Than a Stroke of Luck

**W**hen 19-year-old Makayla Prothro was found unresponsive on the kitchen floor earlier this year, it was clear she was having a medical emergency. Her diagnosis, however, was unexpected.

"We couldn't wake her," said Makayla's grandmother, **Debra Smith**. "She stopped breathing. We called 911. Paramedics rushed her to AV Hospital."

She was met by emergency room physician **Travis Deuson, M.D.**, who discovered she had suffered a ruptured aneurysm, which is when a blood vessel balloons and bursts. In Makayla's case, blood leaked into the space around the brain producing a condition known as a "subarachnoid hemorrhage."

Stroke Program Coordinator **Colleen Littlejohn, RN**, consoled Debra, explaining Makayla's condition, treatment options and prognosis. The key to Makayla's survival was getting her quickly diagnosed and stabilized. She was then transported to Los Robles Regional Medical Center for specialized treatment.

As the area's only Advanced Primary Stroke Center, Antelope Valley Hospital cares for more than 800 strokes a year. We have a dedicated team of trained staff members, including neurologists, available 24/7 to promptly diagnose every patient who exhibits signs of stroke.

"Our team has the expertise to treat many types of stroke," said Colleen. "In some cases, though, it is better for the patient to be stabilized here and transported to another facility that has specialty surgeons with extensive experience treating specific types of stroke."

AV Hospital was the vital link to Makayla's survival. After a lengthy hospital stay, the Palmdale teen returned home and is progressing each day toward recovery.

Debra is grateful for the "amazing" care her granddaughter received and especially appreciates Colleen's emotional support throughout the ordeal.

"Without Colleen, I don't think I would have made it," Debra said. "And if it wasn't for AV Hospital and Dr. Deuson, I wouldn't have Makayla now."

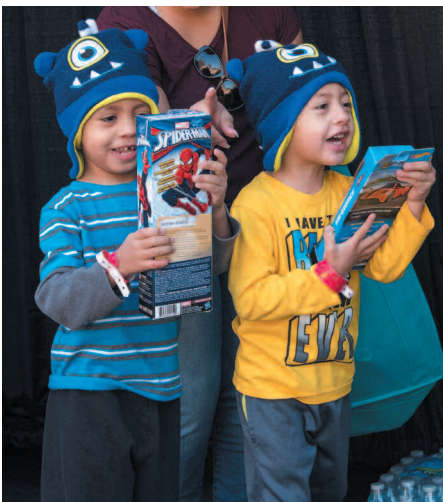


*Makayla Prothro*



# Hospital's Support of Children's Center Spans Three Decades

The Children's Center of Antelope Valley improves community health by protecting kids from neglect and abuse.



In 1988 the Antelope Valley was transforming from a quiet Los Angeles suburb to a growing and vibrant community. With this growth came some unfortunate notoriety: *Time Magazine* named the area the "Child Abuse Capital of the Nation." This got the attention of AV Hospital's leadership team.

In response they brought together a group of physicians, business leaders, and local politicians to discuss what could be done to stop the epidemic of child abuse and neglect that was plaguing their beloved community. Their solution: the creation of the AV Child Abuse Center, which is now known as The Children's Center of the Antelope Valley (CCAV). AVH made the initial financial investment to get the organization started.

Thirty years later, our commitment to their mission and the children of the Antelope Valley remains as

strong as ever. In addition to donating seed money to kick-off the capital campaign that led to the construction of the center's 15,000 square-foot facility at Fern and Jackman, AVH is an ongoing sponsor of the Heartsounds annual fundraising gala and co-hosted the Holiday Jam with CCAV in 2016 and 2017.

The Holiday Jam helps at-risk children celebrate the holidays. Last December more than 8,500 kids were treated to toys, lunch, Santa pictures, and family activities designed to promote wellness and family bonding.

Plans are already underway for Holiday Jam 2018, which promises to bring more surprises to invited children and their caregivers.

Partnerships like this one demonstrate our dedication to the health and wellbeing of future generations.

"Enough is enough" is the motto of CCAV because child abuse and neglect is 100 percent preventable.

# AVH Highlights

## Fastest Heart Attack Response Time in L.A. County

AV Hospital has the fastest average response time for treating heart attacks in Los Angeles County. One of 37 STEMI (ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction) Receiving Centers in the county, AVH's door-to-balloon time averages just 44 minutes. That is significantly lower than the national standard of 60 minutes.

STEMI, the most common type of heart attack, is caused by a complete blockage of blood flow to an artery in the heart. It is critical to open the blocked vessel to allow blood flow to be restored to the heart as quickly as possible. Door-to-balloon time refers to the length of time between a patient's arrival to the hospital to receiving lifesaving coronary intervention.



## Breast Milk Drive Helps Tiniest Patients

Nearly 26 gallons (or exactly 3,320 ounces) of human breast milk was donated during our first ever breast milk drive. Donated breast milk benefits newborns in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) that are born prematurely, are seriously ill or are not able to breastfeed. We care for more than 400 infants in our NICU each year and last year used 75 gallons of donor breast milk for some of our most fragile patients.

As a designated Milk Depot, our Women & Infants Pavilion is always accepting breast milk donations. For more information call 661-726-6210.

*Diana Hernandez poses with her two boys after making a significant breast milk donation.*





Respiratory therapist Rhonda Rhoni looks over a patient during an “Every 15 Minutes” simulation in partnership with Littlerock High School.

## Dangers of Driving Strike “Every 15 Minutes”

Several students from local high schools were brought to our trauma center this spring as part of the “Every 15 Minutes” program, which teaches about the dangers of drunk or distracted driving. While this was a simulation, our trauma team always jumps into action in hopes of making an impact on the lives of these young people.



## Enjoy the Fair, Help the Hospital

Fun times at the fair are right around the corner. Consider purchasing your tickets in advance through the AV Fair’s pre-sale fundraising program. The hospital receives \$2 for every ticket purchased through this program before July 1. Each ticket purchased between July 1 and August 16 generates \$1 for the hospital. Carnival wristbands and season passes are also eligible. All you have to do is buy your tickets through [avfair.com](http://avfair.com), click “Fundraising Tickets,” and select “AV Hospital” as your beneficiary.

*HealthConnect* is published by the Antelope Valley Hospital marketing department as a service to the community. For inquiries email [marketing@avhospital.org](mailto:marketing@avhospital.org).

### Antelope Valley Hospital Contact Numbers

Main Number  
661-949-5000

Blood Donor Center  
661-949-5622

Foundation  
661-949-5810

OB Clinic  
661-726-6180

Volunteers  
661-949-5105

### Antelope Valley Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors

Kristina Hong, RN, Chair  
Mateo Olivarez, RN  
Phil Tuso, M.D.  
Abdallah S. Farrukh, M.D.  
Don Parazo, M.D.  
Steve Baker  
Regina Rossall  
Kevin Von Tungeln  
Michael L. Wall, CEO

*Information in this publication is intended to educate readers about subjects pertinent to their health. Information should not be considered medical advice or treatment nor should it be used as a substitute for a physician consultation.*





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1600 West Avenue J | Lancaster, CA 93534  
661-949-5000 | avhospital.org

# The Lucky Ducky Days of Summer are Back!

Antelope Valley Hospital Blood Donor Center  
Annual Summer Blood Drive

## June 19 thru September 20

*All blood donated here stays in the Antelope Valley and supports the hospital's lifesaving role in this community.*



Be a *lifesaver*  
this summer.

All donors receive a **FREE**  
**CHOLESTEROL TEST**



BLOOD  
DONOR  
CENTER

When you donate during the summer blood drive, you'll become a member of the Lucky Ducky crowd, a select group of blood donors that we count on to donate when our need is great. Each time you donate this summer you will receive a free rubber duck, and your name will be entered into our monthly prize drawing. **Bring in this newsletter for an extra raffle ticket.**

The Blood Donor Center offers hours to meet busy schedules. Drop by **44105 15th Street West, Suite 305**, or call **661-949-5622** to set up an appointment.

### Blood Donor Center Hours

Tuesday and Thursday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Wednesday: 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. (1st and 3rd of each month)

16-year-old donors are welcome with a signed parent consent form. Download the form at [avhospital.org](http://avhospital.org).