

Professor honored for sickle cell work

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Daniel Kim-Shapiro, professor of physics at Wake Forest University, recently received a MERIT Award from the National Institutes for Health to continue his pioneering research on sickle-cell anemia. Rarely granted, the MERIT (for Method to Extend Research in Time) awards extend funding for promising research without requiring the researcher to apply for additional funds.



Kim-Shapiro

The \$343,920 MERIT award is renewable each year for up to 10 years.

Kim-Shapiro and his collaborators, including Bruce King in Wake Forest's chemistry department, are investigating nitric oxide and how it might promote better blood flow in sickle-cell patients. Hemoglobin is carried through the bloodstream by red blood cells, which must squeeze through blood vessels to deliver oxygen to the body. In sickle-cell anemia, the red blood cells form rods and become rigid, which prevents them from passing through blood vessels.

The researchers contributed to the discovery that nitrite, a salt used to preserve food, is converted to nitric oxide in the body. They have already filed a patent for the use of nitrite for treating certain cardiovascular conditions. They also seek to understand more thoroughly how the nitrite-to-nitric oxide conversion process works and then pursue possible clinical applications of the salt in treatment of sickle cell anemia and other diseases.

Kim-Shapiro was a keynote speaker at the North Carolina Sickle Cell Program Conference held in Raleigh April 27. He joined the Wake Forest faculty in 1996.

Sickle cell

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Hispanic population," she commented. "We pick up a lot of babies with sickle cell disease who are Hispanic. That means that we are serving a more diverse population."

Despite the growing numbers of Hispanics who frequent the SCDAP, sickle cell awareness remains low among non-black ethnic groups.

"Unfortunately, a lot of people still think that sickle cell disease affects just African Americans, but that's not true," Robinson stated.

In an effort to break down the stereotypes that render sickle cell a black problem, the SCDAP selected its first Hispanic poster child, Hosea Najaro Jr., this year.

A fourth grader at Griffith Elementary, Najaro's family has been visiting the SCDAP since they moved here from Long Island, NY when he was a toddler.

His father, Hosea Sr., mother, Gloria and sister, Nancy, 14 all carry the sickle cell trait. Mr. Najaro, who is originally from El Salvador, said that they knew Hosea was likely to have



Photo by Layla Farmer

The Najaro family: mother, Gloria, sister, Nancy, and father Hosea Sr.

the disease long before he was born.

"They did a test on us before my daughter was born and they told us that she got the trait. They explained to us that probably ... the next child that we gonna have, he was gonna be with the sickle cell," he said.

Hosea Jr. was diagnosed in utero.

"When they did the test on her in the womb, they told us

that he was going to be a positive with the sickle cell," his father explained. "They asked us did we want to have the baby or did we want to have an abortion and I told them that we gonna have the baby. We just gonna try to deal with him - whatever situation that he gonna go through, we're gonna go (through it) with him too."

At 10, Hosea Jr. is a happy go-lucky child with a quiet

demeanor and a deceptively innocent face. As the newest SCDAP poster child, he bears the burden of sickle cell for all those who suffer like him, willing to share his own pain so that others can find the strength to seek help.

Mr. Najaro admitted that he had some reservations about allowing his son to take the project on, but said his son was more than willing.

Meals

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well with Joines. "To give back \$7 million to the feds isn't something I like to do," he said. "We need to spend all that we can, particularly when we can feed hungry kids."

The hope is that the new, collaborative approach will spark an increase in participation.

"I think if we get the word out, if people are more aware that our children are not being fed in the summer and that families are trying to stretch their budgets, then something can be done," stated Nan Griswold, executive director of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina.

Florence Corpening, executive director of the YWCA, has agreed to do her part in bridging the gap between the resources available and the children who need them.

"We have created a new program called 'Healthy Walking and Eating Breakfast Club,' that means that ... over

300 children will walk to Brunson or to Kennedy School to have breakfast every single morning," she told the audience. "We will have over 300 children for the first time, who will add to those numbers so that money does not have to go back to the state, and we use it right here in our county."

The YWCA was pleased to play such an important role in feeding children, Corpening said.

Volunteers are needed to help the summer feeding program run smoothly. Several local faith-based organizations have already agreed to help out, including the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem, Calvary Baptist, Union Baptist and United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist.

The Summer Feeding Program for Hungry Children will be held at 21 locations countywide this summer. For more information, or to volunteer, visit www.cityofws.org, click on the link to the mayor's office, and then the link for the summer feeding program.

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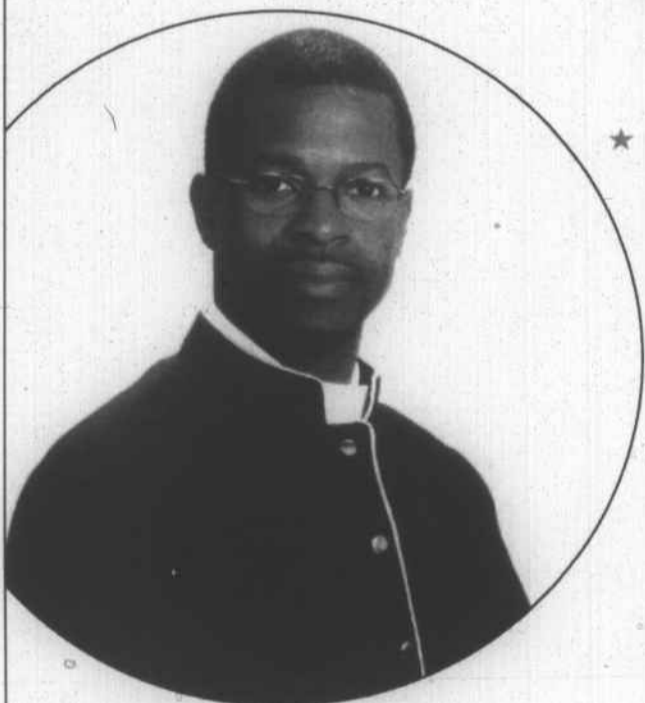
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I recall for many years, it seemed that no other banking institution expressed any interest in the economic well-being of East Winston. It was very difficult for me to comprehend why this attitude existed when looking at the high income levels of so many families who resided in and around the East Winston Community. But thanks be to God, M&F Bank was able to see beyond the attitude that existed in areas of other communities in this city and was able to recognize the powerful financial resources that were prevalent then and now. Their establishing a banking facility in the eastern part of Winston-Salem appears to have influenced other banks to take another look at the community, and now, many of them have established facilities in the area. It gives me a great sense of pride when I think of the many services that M&F has provided for the church which I have been privileged to pastor for more than twenty years. Not only the church, but the entire community has benefited greatly, and we wish them many more years of success."

- Rev. Connie G. Robinson, Union Chapel Baptist Church

"When we moved back to the area 5 years ago, it was our intention to do business with a neighborhood bank, and M&F Bank was our first choice. When we walked in, we were welcomed so warmly and we've never been treated any other way since then. It just feels like home, and we don't ever plan to bank anywhere else." - Barry & Emma Nesmith



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