



RECORD

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National Institutes of Health

NIH Employees Begin Full-Time Return to the Office

Many employees are beginning the return to in-person work across NIH's campuses, as mandated by Executive Order. They are joining the many NIH'ers who had continued working on site at least several days a week.

Starting March 17, non-bargaining unit employees and bargaining unit employees who have an official duty station within 50 miles of a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) facility will return to in-person work, five days a week. NIH's leadership—including senior-level employees, supervisors and political appointees—who

have an official duty station within 50 miles of an HHS facility returned five days a week beginning Feb. 24.

"We understand that the transition back to a full-time physical workplace will be a

shift for many," said Julie Berko, director, NIH Office of Human Resources. "Across NIH, we have operated successfully as a hybrid organization for some time, and I have no doubt our workforce will remain

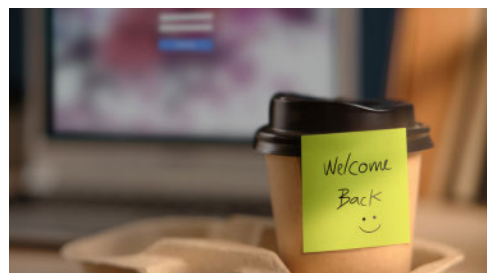
dedicated to supporting the NIH mission throughout this transition. I look forward to seeing how everyone continues to find new ways to collaborate and connect in our evolving work environment."

The influx of additional staff will be an adjustment for all. To help facilitate the transition, before returning, employees should review important resources about transportation and campus services.



NIH'ers walk past the Gateway Center toward NIH's staff entrance gates.
PHOTO: CHIA-CHI CHARLIE CHANG

SEE RTO, PAGE 4



RTO mental health tips, see p. 7

ALSO THIS ISSUE

- Explore How Food Connects Us; Feds Get Fit Returns3
- Milestones6
- Mental Health Tips for the Return7
- Local Musicians Entertain in the CC Atrium ... 8

Working Group Connects Lab Managers Across NIH

BY PATRICK SMITH

When you've seen one biomedical research laboratory, you've seen them all, right?

Not by a long shot, said Andrea Francesconi, senior technical laboratory manager at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and chair of the NIH Lab Managers Working Group.

"There are all sorts of differences," she said. "And that's why the working group is so useful. We have members from ICOs all across NIH and we share the kind of information that helps us

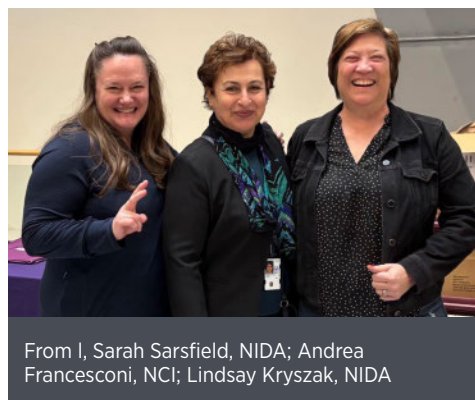
stay on top of best practices."

The group consists of about 45 representatives across five committees that support initiatives such as fire safety, emergency cold storage, inventory sharing and more.

Biologists, chemists, facility managers, safety specialists and others from across NIH institutes meet once a month and use a Teams group to stay connected day-to-day.

Information isn't all the lab managers share in their working group. An inventory of free lab supplies, equipment, chemicals and office supplies comprises the "NIH FreeStuff" web

site, where lab managers can share things like halogen light bulbs for microscopes and equipment to isolate RNA and DNA from



From l, Sarah Sarsfield, NIDA; Andrea Francesconi, NCI; Lindsay Kryszak, NIDA

SEE LAB MANAGERS, PAGE 7

Neurosurgeon to Discuss the Neural Code of Speech**March 19**

Dr. Edward Chang

Dr. Edward Chang, a professor of neurological surgery at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Weill Institute for Neurosciences, will deliver an NIH Director's Lecture on Wednesday, March 19, at 2 p.m., ET, at the Bldg. 10 Lipsett Amphitheater.

Chang is a neurosurgeon who treats adults with difficult-to-control epilepsy, brain tumors, trigeminal neuralgia, hemifacial spasm and movement disorders. He specializes in advanced brain mapping methods to preserve crucial areas for speech and motor functions in the brain. He also has extensive experience with implantable devices that stimulate specific nerves to relieve seizure, movement, pain and other disorders.

For his talk, part of the Wednesday Afternoon Lecture Series, Chang will describe critical advances over the last decade in deciphering the cortical signals that underlie our ability to hear and speak words.

For those unable to attend in person, the event will be hosted on NIH videocast at <https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=55027>.

Gladyshev to Present Mahoney Lecture on Aging**April 2**

Dr. Vadim Gladyshev, a renowned biologist in aging research, will deliver the next NIH Florence Mahoney Lecture on Aging, titled, "Targeting Aging, Longevity and Rejuvenation." The event will take place in Lipsett Amphitheater in Bldg. 10 on the NIH Bethesda campus and via videocast on April 2 at 2 p.m. ET.



Dr. Vadim Gladyshev

Gladyshev will discuss recent advances in the field, offering insights that could transform the way biomedicine addresses aging and its associated health challenges.

Recognized as a "Redox Pioneer," Gladyshev currently is professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, director of the Center for Redox

Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and a faculty member of the Broad Institute. He is the principal investigator of the Gladyshev lab, where he focuses on understanding the mechanisms

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ZILLY!**Inn's Therapy Dog Turns 11**

On Valentine's Day, the Children's Inn at NIH celebrated Zilly the therapy dog's 11th birthday.

The Inn community gathered to celebrate her birthday at a gathering in the Inn's community kitchen. Tables were set up with dog-themed treats, such as red and pink frosted cookies shaped like dog bones, as well as stickers and crafts about everyone's favorite Australian Labradoodle.

Zilly arrived at the Inn just before her first birthday in 2015. She has served as



Zilly, the Children's Inn at NIH therapy dog, celebrates his 11th birthday.

the Inn's certified therapy dog ever since.

The hypoallergenic mix between a Labrador retriever and poodle has quickly created bonds

with newcomers both young and old, providing a furry friend for anyone who might want one, whether they are visiting the Inn for a few hours or staying for several months.

Through her role as a certified therapy dog, Zilly also makes regular visits to families undergoing inpatient treatments at the Clinical Center. Before her party, she took time to do that, brightening the days of some of the children who aren't yet able to leave the hospital.

behind aging, rejuvenation and lifespan control using a combination of experimental and computational approaches. His work spans various dimensions of biology, including selenium biochemistry, where he discovered the full set of human selenoprotein genes responsible for the role of selenium in biology and medicine.

Gladyshev is most notably recognized for his contributions to the study of longevity and the aging process. His team has made significant strides in uncovering the molecular bases for natural variation in lifespan across species. By studying long-lived organisms, such as naked mole-rats and microbats, and analyzing large datasets across mammals or yeast isolates, his team has identified "longevity signatures." These signatures are molecular patterns, derived from transcriptomic, metabolomic or proteomic analyses, that helped uncover basic principles of lifespan control. He also has been a leader in developing quantitative biomarkers of aging, including first mouse, single-cell, causal and organ-specific aging clocks.

Prior to his current positions, Gladyshev was the Charles Bessey Professor of Biochemistry and director of the Redox Biology Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he began his teaching career and established his lab in 1998. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Moscow State University, followed by postdoctoral training at NIH under Dr. Thressa Stadtman and Dr. Dolph L. Hatfield.

Gladyshev is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences. He has received many awards including the NIH Pioneer, Transformative and Eureka awards to study aging.

The NIH Mahoney lectures are sponsored by NIA and named in honor of Florence Stephenson Mahoney (1899–2002), who devoted much of her life to successfully advocating for the creation of

NIA and increased support for NIH.

New AI-Powered Feed Connects Scientists

The National Cancer Institute's (NCI) NanCI iOS app has a new feed that uses AI to provide personalized recommendations for research papers and science news. The free app also allows users to create folders, bookmark relevant papers and add a description of their focus to each folder to guide the recommendations. These folders function like "scientific playlists" that help users grow, share, and enjoy scientific information.

"We're excited to launch the new NanCI feed," said Dr. Oliver Bogler, director of the NCI Center for Cancer Training. "We believe that this new feature will help users stay up-to-date on the latest research and connect with other members of the NanCI community."

To learn more, visit <https://go.nih.gov/at5FcXb>.

NEI Releases First YouTube Short

In a new one-minute video, NEI Director Dr. Michael Chiang talks about the BLINK trial and how NEI-funded research may help slow myopia progression in teenagers.

The video is available on YouTube and on social media. See: <https://bit.ly/43INrXg>.



NEI YouTube short features Dr. Michael Chiang

NIH Wellbeing Coordinator Explores How Food Connects Us

BY JAN TORTARELLA

Our shared human experience begins with our connection to food, uniting us through a fundamental need for nourishment and nurture. This year's National Nutrition Month theme, "Food Connects Us," speaks to this awareness.

National Nutrition Month began in 1973 as National Nutrition Week, and it became a

consumption, the food chain within our life cycles reflects our deep interdependence on one another biologically, economically and importantly, socially.

Food is more than simply fuel to bridge the gap between waking up and going to sleep. It is a ritual, an experience, an opportunity for connection that brings people together in a collective wholeness. Whether nourishing an infant, having a meaningful conversation over coffee, hosting a family celebration, providing a comforting meal at the end of life, our reliance on one another for nutrition transcends the transactional experience; it reveals our innate reliance on human connection.

Studies have shown that social connection promotes health and well-being and can reduce the risk of various illnesses including heart disease, stroke, dementia and depression.

This March, as we reflect on our shared human experience around food, the invitation is to consider all the ways in which food connects us to one another and nurtures our

collective well-being.

For 'Food Connects Us' resources, visit Recipes for Connection: <https://bit.ly/4khXt1w> and Wellness@NIH / Food & Nutrition: <https://bit.ly/41CuYV9>.

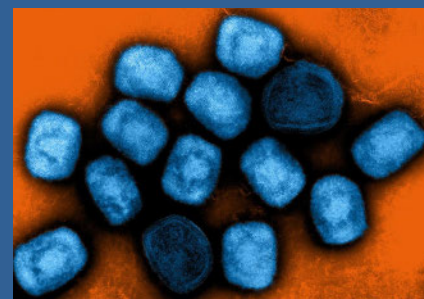
Jan Tortarella, NIH's Wellness Program coordinator, is a registered dietitian.



Clinical Center well-being ambassadors (from l) Sasha Manurung, a physical therapist, and Daanish Memon, an orthopedic specialist, and Jan Tortarella, program specialist with ORS, host a well-being resources coffee hour for the CC Rehabilitation Medicine Department in February.

month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing interest in nutrition. Every year, in March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recognizes the continued importance of food as a central component of our health.

We are all intertwined through food from the beginning to the end of life. From cultivation, production, distribution and



ON THE COVER: Colorized transmission electron micrograph of mpox virus particles (blue) cultivated and purified from cell culture.

IMAGE: NIAID

The NIH Record

Since 1949, the *NIH Record* has been published biweekly by the Staff News and Public Inquiries Branch, Office of Communications and Public Liaison, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

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Feds Get Fit is Back

Birds of a feather get healthier together. "Chirpy" is here! This spring, join NIH for the next installment of the virtual, team-friendly six-week health challenge.

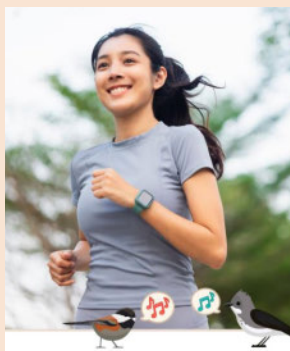
In Chirpy, you'll earn points and chirps for recording physical activity, in addition to practicing mindful meditation. This challenge is filled with fun, easy tracking and supported with hundreds of delicious recipes to try. Build well-being behaviors that last.

Registration starts Monday, March 17 and runs through Monday, April 7.

Learn more and register at: <https://bit.ly/4ksA7X1>.

Friends make all the difference when you want to improve healthy behaviors.

Grab some colleagues and form a team. And don't forget to use the mobile app for tracking your progress.



TRANSPORTATION

Getting Around and Road Safety

Major construction projects continue on the main campus in Bethesda and can impact the commute.

For the next several years, the entrance at Center Drive and Old Georgetown Road will remain closed due to construction of the Clinical Center's Surgery, Radiology and Laboratory Medicine (SRLM) wing. This closure will include Center Drive from Old Georgetown Rd. to just past the front of the Northwest Child Care Center, as well as Convent Drive north of MLP-9.

Several other ongoing projects are in various stages, including Vaccine Research Center (VRC) expansion, an electrical switching station and emergency generators building, and the Center Drive utility tunnel. For the most up-to-date information on construction impacts, visit: <https://traffic.nih.gov>.

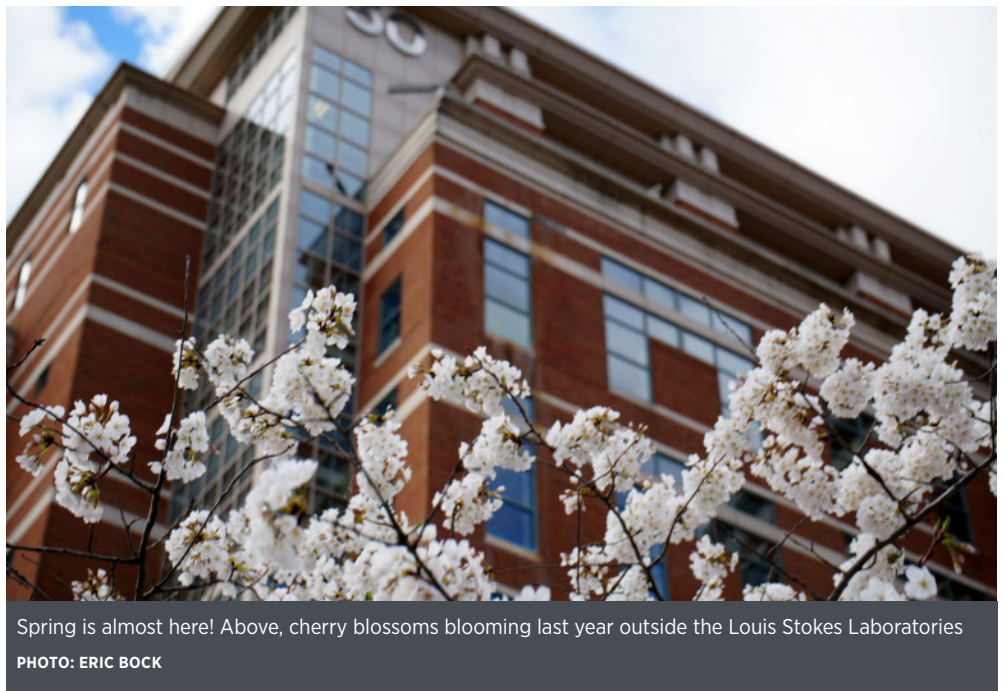
As more cars and pedestrians return to the main campus and drive around construction projects, roadway safety is a top priority. NIH'ers: remain alert and obey all traffic rules. In addition, pedestrians should always use crosswalks and motorists should always yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. On its campuses, the NIH Police will enforce the 25 MPH maximum speed limit, distracted driving laws and parking regulations.

Commuter Benefits

Before applying for commuter benefits, employees must ensure their duty station and current status (non-remote) are correct in the NIH Enterprise Directory (NED) profile at <https://ned.nih.gov/search/>. They will then be eligible to apply for a parking permit or enroll in the NIH Transshare Program, a commuter subsidy initiative, or enroll in or establish a carpool or vanpool through the Commuting and Parking Services (CAPS) system at <https://commuter.ors.od.nih.gov>.

Parking

Parking will be extremely challenging on the main campus due to the high volume of staff returning and ongoing construction projects.



Spring is almost here! Above, cherry blossoms blooming last year outside the Louis Stokes Laboratories

PHOTO: ERIC BOCK

All vehicles parking on the main campus, and at 6701 and 6705 Rockledge Drive (for occupants of those buildings only), excluding visitor's vehicles, must display a valid NIH parking permit. This permit must hang from the vehicle's rearview mirror, clearly visible through the windshield, while parking in NIH lots and garages. Any vehicle without a valid permit risks receiving a parking ticket.

Before returning to the office, employees should check to ensure their permit has not expired. Parking permits may be requested online through CAPS or by emailing nihparkingoffice@nih.gov. Online permit requests will be mailed to the employee's specified home address as detailed in CAPS in 5-10 business days. To

obtain a permit, a valid NIH identification card and a copy of a valid vehicle registration certificate for each vehicle registered must be submitted.

Several of NIH's multi-level parking (MLP) garages have undergone or are undergoing repairs and restoration. MLP-6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 all have projects underway. Repairs are taking place in phases to minimize impact to employees.

To accommodate overflow parking, an express shuttle takes employees from surface lots 41 and 42 directly to Bldg. 10's south entrance. The "Building 10 Express Shuttle" will run in the mornings from 6:30 to 9:50 a.m. and in the afternoons from 4:30 p.m. to 7:48 p.m. Shuttle service is open to



View of Wilson Drive toward the James Shannon Building, more commonly known as Bldg. 1.

PHOTO: LYDIA POLIMENI



A campus shuttle in front of the Clinical Center

all NIH staff. The shuttle's schedule can be viewed at <https://go.nih.gov/bFT5wUz>.

For a map of parking locations on the main campus, see: <https://ors.od.nih.gov/maps/Pages/Employee-Access-Map.aspx>.

NIH Transhare

Due to limited parking, employees are encouraged to take advantage of the NIH Transhare Program, a mass transportation fare subsidy that allows qualified employees to receive up to \$325 per month applicable to public transportation. The subsidy can be used to cover travel costs on the WMATA Metrorail, Metrobus, Montgomery County Ride-On buses, VRE, MARC Train or MTA commuter bus. The subsidy cannot be used to pay for parking.

Transhare programs are available to employees who turn in their NIH parking permit. To enroll, visit <https://commuter.ors.od.nih.gov>. Program benefits are loaded directly onto a SmartTrip card on the 1st of every month.

Some transit providers do not have SmartTrip card readers. For information on how to use transit benefits in these instances, visit: <https://go.nih.gov/m2YVYgh>.

Before returning to campus, current members should log into the CAPS System to verify their declaration cost is correct. To determine that cost, visit: <https://www.wmata.com/schedules/trip-planner/>. They should also tap their SmartTrip cards at a Metro fare gate, SmartTrip fare vending machine or SmartTrip reader. Cards that have been inactive for an extended time might be inoperable.

Participating Transhare members are permitted to receive up to six (6) daily parking permits per calendar quarter in the event a member needs to drive to work unexpectedly.

To manage an account, visit: <https://commuter.ors.od.nih.gov>. For more info about the Transhare Program or parking, email nihparkingoffice@nih.gov or call 301-496-5050.

NIH Rideshare

NIH offers a free carpool and vanpool matching service through the NIH Rideshare Program. It's open to all employees and contractors with a PIV card who are seeking both temporary and permanent ride-sharing options.

The program allows employees to find others interested in carpooling or establishing vanpools who live and work near them. For those who join a vanpool, members can receive up to 12 daily parking permits per calendar quarter.

Benefits of carpooling or vanpooling include easily accessible, designated carpool spaces reserved until 11:00 am, access to HOV lanes and eligibility for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Guaranteed Ride Home Program.

Those interested in establishing a carpool or vanpool can email nihparkingoffice@nih.gov for more information.

NIH Shuttles

Shuttle services are provided throughout the day on the main campus for employees, patients and visitors. Additional shuttle services are provided to the following locations: Rockledge, Fishers Lane, White Flint III, and Medical Center. All NIH shuttles are equipped with bike racks.

Additionally, NCI Shady Grove operates free shuttle loops to the Shady Grove Metro Station and Bldg. 31 on NIH's main campus. To ride the shuttle, employees must show their NIH badge. Visitors need to secure a shuttle pass from their sponsor.

An app called the "AMC Shuttle for NIH" featuring real-time information for transit buses with notifications and schedules is available for download on Apple's App store and Google Play.

For up-to-date information, including a shuttle route map, visit: <https://go.nih.gov/7QEbmFD>.

CAMPUS SERVICES

There are many resources available to NIH employees, including dining services, fitness centers, workplace safety and the NIH Library.

Dining Services

There are five cafeterias, four coffee bars and three concession stands across the main campus. For hours of operation, menus and a list of off-campus food locations, visit: <https://go.nih.gov/3NHCJT1>.

Additionally, the 2025 Food Truck program returned to the 10H parking lot. Starting on March 17, trucks will operate five days a week from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or until food sells out. A list of food trucks can be found at <https://govemployee.com/nih/food-trucks/>. And, the popular Community Market will continue on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Bldg. 10 south lawn (or lobby in inclement weather). Vendors feature such offerings as fresh produce, baked goods, jams, honey, soaps, jewelry and more.

Fitness

NIH has two fitness centers on the main campus (in Bldgs. 31 and 53) and one at Rockledge. These locations are offering a Spring into Health membership special that waives the start-up fee (April and May). They also offer scheduled group equipment orientations and some in-person fitness classes



Treadmills and elliptical machines in the Bldg. 31 Fitness Center

will gradually resume. The Bldg. 31 fitness center features new strength equipment.

For more information, see: <https://bit.ly/3ETdI54>. To learn more about fitness and wellness tips and activities, see: <https://go.nih.gov/epfmhZx>.

Workplace Safety

Many duty stations have had limited activity over the past few years. To ensure the space is safe and comfortable, supervisors should have already surveyed duty stations to ensure these environments are safe. Contact NIH's Division of Occupational Health and Safety for more information.

Employees who are injured or experience health issues at NIH facilities should report their symptoms to the Occupational Medical Service (OMS) at their clinic, over the phone or online at myCority (<https://bit.ly/3X-raqMD>). There are five OMS clinics across NIH's facilities. To find the closest clinic, visit: <https://go.nih.gov/uX67qWN>.

DOHS also provides free ergonomic evaluations, which can be conducted in different settings including office, laboratory, patient care and industrial workspaces. For self-guided ergonomic adjustments to your workstation, go to myCority, select the "New Questionnaire" button and complete the *NIH Computer Workstation Ergonomic Adjustment Guide*. For further assistance, email DOHS to schedule a workstation evaluation at NIHErgonomic@mail.nih.gov.

NIH Library

The NIH Library supports NIH programs and select HHS agencies.

Located in the Clinical Center, the NIH Library provides access to over 20,000 electronic journals, 180,000 eBooks and over 50 databases. It also provides services in 3D printing, bibliometrics, bioinformatics, data management and analysis, document delivery, editing, emerging technologies, literature searches, reference questions, specialized librarians, systematic reviews, training and translations. For a list of services, see: <https://www.nihlibrary.nih.gov/services>.

The NIH Library is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For the latest transition guidance and resources related to presidential actions, see this site on the employee intranet: <https://employees.nih.gov/pages/transition-guidance-nih-staff/index.aspx>. **R**

THE END OF AN ERA Remembering Martin

Dr. George R. Martin, a world-renowned connective tissue biologist and co-inven-



Dr. George R. Martin

tor of Matrigel®, died on Jan. 1 at the age of 91. He played senior roles at the National Institute of Dental Research (now the National

Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research) and at the National Institute on Aging.

Martin's former colleagues and trainees praised his mentorship, insight and contagious love of science. Several of his colleagues commented that his passing marks the "end of an era" in his field.

Martin received a B.S. in chemistry from Colgate University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester. The following year, in 1959, he joined the NIDR laboratory of Dr. Karl Piez.

For the next 30 years, Martin studied connective tissue at NIDCR. He focused first on collagen, the most abundant protein in the body and a major component of skin, muscles, bones and joints. He sought to better understand how collagen abnormalities contribute to human diseases such as Osteogenesis imperfecta ("brittle bone disease") and Ehlers-Danlos syndromes.

After 15 years, he turned his attention to the basement membrane, a thin sheet of collagen and other molecules that separates different cell layers and provides structural support to tissues throughout the body.

A member of Martin's research team, Dr. Pamela Robey, now an NIDCR senior investigator, co-discovered a protein called laminin in the basement membrane. Scientists now know that laminins are a large family of sugar-coated proteins (glycoproteins) found in all animals. They are critical to basic cellular processes such as the growth and repair of nerve cells and

the formation of muscles.

Robey remembers Dr. Martin as "the epitome of a mentor." She adds: "I will be forever grateful for all that he taught me about doing cutting-edge—but more importantly, meaningful—research."

Together with fellow NIDCR scientist Dr. Hynda Kleinman, Martin developed Matrigel®, a specialized gel that promotes cell growth on a 3-D surface. Matrigel mimics the natural environment of most mammalian cells.

Today, Matrigel is widely used in labs around the world to investigate complex cell activities and to study cells that were previously impossible to grow. Matrigel has provided new insights into nerve growth, blood vessel formation and stem and cancer cell biology. It is also being used to screen cancer drugs and to develop artificial tissues that mimic organ function.

Reflecting on their time together, Kleinman praised Martin as a significant mentor. "I quickly came to respect [Martin] for his way of doing things, his work ethic and kindness."

In 1989, Martin became the scientific director of NIA and director of the Gerontology Research Center. In addition to fostering studies on normal aging and age-associated diseases, he championed angiogenesis assays using Matrigel® and better animal models to study prostate cancer. "It was a magical time for all of us who loved science," recalls Dr. Walter Horton, who worked with him at NIA.

Martin retired from NIA in 1994, then moved to Palo Alto, Calif. to become the first employee of a biomedical research company where he worked for 10 years. There, he applied his expertise in connective tissue biology to develop new therapeutics targeting fibrosis and inflammation.

After returning to Maryland, he continued a physically and mentally active lifestyle. He loved traveling, skiing, playing golf, mountain climbing, discussing current events, and gathering friends for an icy morning dip in Deep Creek Lake. He continued almost daily visits to NIH and the gym until his last illness.

Martin is survived by his wife, whom he met when they were both working at NIH, three children, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Lab Managers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

biological fluids. Before making a purchase, all NIH researchers can check the NIH FreeStuff website.

For instance, late last year a new lab in the National Cancer Institute (NCI) claimed \$22,000 worth of free chemical reagents and supplies from the site.

“That example really highlights the cost-savings benefit of the NIH FreeStuff website” said Francesconi.

Biologist Dr. Charlie Drinnan serves as lab manager for the National Eye Institute’s (NEI) Neurobiology, Neurodegeneration and Repair Laboratory. In addition to his research with bioengineering and regenerative medicine, Drinnan said he spends time each month working on initiatives of the group.

“It’s something I build into my schedule,” he said.

Last year, Drinnan helped lead an effort to update the lab’s safety policies.

“After Covid, we lost some of the continuity,” he said. “It’s important to keep things like that up to date.”


The working group has compiled a catalog of NIH-wide standard operating procedures (SOPs) that covers safety, lab operations, acquisitions, NIH resources and more. The list contains step-by-step procedures for everything from hazardous spills to cryogenic safety and biological and chemical waste disposal. There is a working group committee dedicated to establishing a “one stop shop” for researchers to access important SOPs.

In addition to monthly meetings, the LMWG hosts science-related vendor capabilities meetings each month. Representatives from companies like Fisher, Bio-Rad Laboratories and others join LMWG members via Teams for a discussion on what they can provide to the NIH community.

The LMWG is open to all NIH staff.

“You don’t have to manage a lab to join the

group,” Francesconi said. “Representatives identify, troubleshoot and resolve issues to improve laboratory function. They commit to two-year terms, serve on a committee and perform tasks as needed.”

To learn more visit <https://go.nih.gov/Y2LWVGX>. To inquire about joining, email LMWG@nih.gov. 



From l, Marshonna Forgues, NCI; Minoo Shakoury-Elizeh, NIDDK; Helen Cawley, NCI

Mental Health Tips for Return-to-Office

The full-time return-to-office process can stir up a mix of emotions. Beyond acclimating to the many facets and logistics of in-person work again, staff will have to adapt to the emotional and psychological shifts that come with such transitions. You might experience some challenges that might include adjusting to commute times again, feeling less autonomy or balancing personal life with office demands.

The NIH Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has devised a short guide for the NIH community as employees navigate the return-to-office transition.

Go easy on yourself and others.

It’s normal to experience anxiety during transitions. We will likely all react a bit differently to returning to on-site work, so have patience and empathy for yourself and your colleagues as you reconnect and navigate the new reality of your workplace.

Plan and adjust.

Small tasks, such as making your lunch at home, packing your work bag the night before and planning when to take breaks can help your workday run more smoothly.

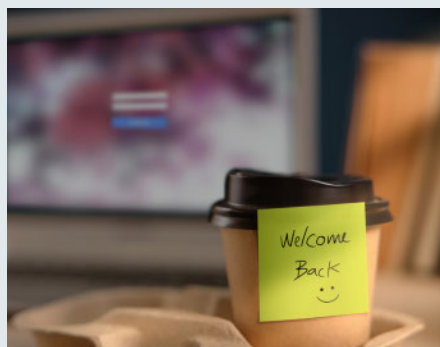


PHOTO: BLACK SALMON/SHUTTERSTOCK

Prioritize positivity.

Actively build a list of what you have gained that is important to you, such as social connection, improved access to leaders or quicker problem-solving. Help channel positive energy, and you will all gain.

Take care of your mental and physical health.

Practice self-care. If returning to the office full time feels overwhelming, embrace mindfulness as your anchor. Set aside time each day for a few moments of reflection, setting an intention to stay present and open to in-person dynamics.

Seek out support systems: If you feel anxiety, need to adjust your health habits or just want some support with your wellness, the EAP offers a variety of self-care resources to help you manage this transition.

Having tools and best practices—like clear communication, flexible options, where possible, and a supportive work culture—can make all the difference in navigating this change with a positive mindset.

For more resources, please see:

- Strategies to Reduce Stress: <https://go.nih.gov/Il5ygSd>
- Heart Walk on campus: <https://go.nih.gov/y2XWBsW>
- Wellness at NIH: <https://go.nih.gov/UBv8PEo>

For EAP contact information, see: <https://go.nih.gov/34cHxwZ>.



Above, Victoria Zhong; below, pianists Sarina Li (seated), Daya Wampler (l) and Zhong at their Music in the Atrium performance

Local Musicians Entertain in the CC Atrium

PHOTOS: JANICE DURAN

Two recent concerts in the Music in the Atrium series at the Clinical Center brought joy to NIH staff, patients and visitors.

On Feb. 21, three internationally acclaimed young pianists dazzled those in attendance with their skillful, emotive performance. Held in conjunction with the European Academy of Music and Art, the concert featured Daya Wampler (12), Sarina Li (12) and Victoria Zhong (15), who played classical selections, including works by Chopin, Schumann and Liszt.

The three pianists from Maryland have between 8 and 11 years of piano-playing experience under the tutelage of Dr. Bella E. Oster. They have consistently been selected as winners of the International Association of Musically Gifted Children's International Piano

Contest for the past six years. Alongside a group of other students, they have performed locally and nationally, as well as in some of the most prestigious concert halls around the world.

Recently, staff and patients also were treated to a performance by Kassia Music, a dynamic ensemble renowned for its captivating performances and innovative programming. The group blends classical traditions with folk and rhythmic influences from around the globe. The ensemble's resident composer-performers, Sam Post and Bernard Vallandingham, infuse their works with diverse musical elements such as classical, ragtime and Eastern European folk music.

Since its inception in 2016, Kassia Music has won first prize at the Misbin Memorial Chamber Music Competition multiple times. They serve as the ensemble-in-residence at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda, Md.



Above, from l, Kassia musicians Bernard Vallandingham on violin, Sam Post on piano and Susanna Mendlow on cello; below l, the full ensemble. Below r, Wampler at the piano

