

USD researchers honored with Nelson Faculty Research Grant

University of South Dakota researchers Gina Forster and Ranjit Koodali are the recipients of a \$12,000 grant from the Nelson Faculty Research Grant Committee of the USD Graduate School for their proposal, "Developing Nanotechnology to Deliver Neuropeptides to the Brain."

Forster, Ph.D., associate professor of basic biomedical sciences, and Koodali, Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry, are working together to develop a different drug delivery method for the anti-anxiety drug antisauvagine (ASV). In addition to developing a new delivery method for ASV, the project will

utilize the assistance of undergraduate and graduate students in the lab and provides an opportunity for additional funding through the National Institute of Health.

Forster's research interests include the study of neurobiology that underlies anxiety states and addiction. Her National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded research examines the neurobiological and behavioral interaction between stress and drug abuse, with a major focus on monoamine and neuroendocrine systems and anxiety behaviors. Forster's collaboration with Drs. Raluca Gaher and Jeffrey Simons in the USD Department of

theme. We still kind of look at the same stuff every year, but we kind of gear it toward that theme," she said.

Each group of students had a chance to make their own music, as well.

On the concluding day of the class, the younger students went on the lawn of the museum and learned to play makeshift drums made out of folding chairs and empty water jugs.

On June 7, the older students gave a concert for their parents and other assorted family members.

Reeves said many students return year after year.

"This morning I had two older girls that aged out that have taken it all three years ... and they like it so much that they volunteered this summer," she said.

For more information about the National Music Museum, visit www.nmmusd.org.

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Even the weather cooperated, said Scott Mollman, production manager/technical director.

"We got a little nervous on Sunday when we saw rainclouds forming, and thought for sure we were going to have to move (the performance)," he said. "But by the end of the day they cleared up."

The festival was organized by Coyoteopoly, a University of South Dakota student-run corporation that provides charitable work to the area.

Coyoteopoly students worked 18 months securing the financing for the festival, but the actual theatre company worked together only four weeks designing and rehearsing the production.

"I'm an actor by trade and have worked for a lot of different companies and had a lot of different kinds of experiences," Gordon-Bland said. "And we were just blessed to have a really healthy, professional, talented and creatively productive company, where all of our artists walked away with having a really positive experience."

Audience members "walked away" with the same kind of experience, with many remarking on the response to the production by the children who saw it.

"I'm not talking about 9- or 10-year-olds - I'm talking about little, little kids," Gordon-Bland said. "On Friday night the small kids were all sitting near the front, which I think is the best place to see a play in the park. That gets you the most engaged."

"They were just eating it up, and it's surprising because so many grown-ups think they're going to struggle with Shakespeare or Shakespeare's language ... and there's something for kids that it seems to operate for them on a different level, on a more intuitive level. Maybe they don't let their brains get in the way yet," she said.

While the festival went off without a hitch, in the months and weeks leading up to it, organizers had no idea what to expect.

"There was no real way we could guesstimate (attendance) reasonably

accurately," Huckabee said. "It would have been nothing more than a wild guess. So, I cautioned everybody, 'Don't throw out numbers when you don't have a basis for them, because people are going to rely on them. Just tell them the truth - we don't know.' Now we know. That's what's different."

"For me, as artistic director, the metric is much more qualitative than quantitative, so I didn't have a picture in mind, where we would have to get so many people," Gordon-Bland added. "What was important to me was that we impact the community, and that might have meant having 50 people there, quite frankly."

The extent to which that impact was felt will become clearer as a series of after-action reports is completed.

"It's probably a pretty safe conclusion to say everybody bought something," Huckabee said. "If they didn't buy a T-shirt, they certainly did business with the vendors or bought something in town. ..."

"So, for 1,300 people, I think we can honestly say there was an economic impact that was favorable to the community," he said.

In terms of the production itself, the organizers are looking to things that can be improved upon, and other changes that can be made.

In fact, some changes were even made between the Friday and Saturday performances.

"The first change was, we inserted an intermission, which was really needed," Huckabee said. "Second, we moved the whole audience up 50 feet closer to the stage. ..."

"We're all learning, being our first (festival), and one of the things that we learned that was really key was, until you physically get people in the (performance) space, you don't know how many people it really can accommodate," he said.

Gordon-Bland said that what the audience of next year's festival will see won't be that different from this year.

However, there are some areas on which organizers will focus, such as the workshops.

"We need to continue to strategize about how to reach high school students, because we really only had a smattering of high

school students who were involved," Gordon-Bland said. "We had some wonderful workshops being taught on a high school level, for a combination of artists in the community, artists in the company and faculty, and there were some really great topics."

Mollman said the festival may see a change in how sound is projected, using large speakers on stands.

"Any time you're amplifying sound you're losing some of the natural sound of the actor's voice," he said. "Also, when you're using speakers, you've got some people sitting 10 feet from the speaker, and some people sitting 150 feet away."

Both Huckabee and Gordon-Bland said more vendors may be added to the park, as well.

"The benefit of doing these after-action reports is, the students will pick up literally where we left off, as opposed to starting over," Huckabee said. "That's the business learning piece: Even though you change personnel, you don't want to have to re-learn lessons that it took you so long to try and learn."

This will be especially helpful due to the fact that the second festival will have a much shorter planning period than the first.

"We're going to be working under a highly-accelerated timeframe," Gordon-Bland said.

"We had almost two years to put this together, and now we're going to go from 18 months to nine months to fundraise."

All of the organizers expressed their thanks to the community administrators and residents for their support.

"It's really inspiring, and completely essential to what we're doing," Gordon-Bland said. "Vermillion is the kind of community that's ready to support this type of endeavor, and that's very, very exciting."

"The business model that I hope to sustain is that this all remains free for all parties concerned," Huckabee added. "I think it's giving back to the community, and that's something students need to learn, is successful businesses give back to the customers. They don't just take."

"And we're grateful to the community for showing up and supporting the entire production," he said.

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through sixth-graders, who met June 4-7, and first- through third-graders, who met June 11-14.

The courses were designed to educate the students about instruments using a Star Wars theme.

This theme changes from year to year, Reeves said.

"The first several years we did it, I didn't have an overall theme," she said. "We did mini themes each day, so we did 'curator for a day,' sometimes we did instruments by type, so we would look at all the percussion instruments one day, and another day we would look at all the woodwind instruments."

"About seven or eight years ago we started to have an overall

JONES'

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which has grown in popularity over the years thanks, in part, to the bread-baking skills of Larry Smith.

The Peterses added a new wing to the building in 2000 that currently houses Jones' Ace Hardware and Vermillion's municipal liquor store, which the couple manages.

Wells Fargo will remain at its current location, and Mister Smith's also is not going away - it will, in fact, be renovated, and the dining area may be even be expanded.

"One thing that the Targets and the Ikeas of the world has taught us is that you can operate a good, high quality eatery in the middle of a general merchandise store," Starr said. "If you do it right, it can be very successful. We've done a very good job with it, and we can do better job with it."

The space currently occupied by Jones' Ace Hardware will be vacated once the larger hardware store is located in the building space now housing Jones' Foods.

"Mr. Smith's Bakery, Café and Catering will stay open

throughout the construction phase; Wells Fargo will be open also," Starr said. "Ace Hardware obviously will be open."

Once the grocery business closes next month, the portion of the building where it is currently housed will be partitioned off from the other existing businesses in that structure.

"That will be so that we can come in and start tearing down walls, ripping up the floors - we are essentially going to gut this building," Starr said. "When you step into this thing once it reopens, you will not have any idea that a grocery store once occupied the space."

It is hoped that the new, improved and larger Jones' Ace Hardware will be open by mid-September or early October.

"It is a very aggressive schedule," Starr said. "Whether or not we are able to hit that - we'll have to see what contractors are available."

Jones' Ace Hardware currently operates a small engine repair shop in a building across the alley from the main store. That shop will become part of the new hardware store.

Jones' had also operated a small greenhouse on the south side of the main building for most of the last 17 years. It has not been in use for the last 18

months.

"We're talking about putting a roof on that and using it year-round," he said. "Then the hardware store will simply slide over here to the grocery store (location), and the spot that currently houses the hardware store will be leased out."

Store management is currently discussing that lease, Starr said, with a couple of interested individuals.

"Nothing is imminent. We cannot make any kind of an announcement at this time, but they are a couple of players that do not currently have a presence in Clay County," he said. "So it works well for the city of Vermillion, also."

Jones' Ace Hardware, once housed in what was the food store, will have more than double the floor space that it has currently.

Starr said management is trying its best to look out for its employees who will be affected by this major change.

"We are making every attempt to place as many of our full-time people as possible," he said. "I can't honestly say that we will be able to find something for everybody, but are certainly going to be making the effort to make sure these people are taken care of. It's a tough deal - you can't make any promises, but these people have been so good to us, and they've come to know the community and we've gotten to know them."

"We know their strengths and we want to find something for them, preferably within our company if at all possible," Starr said, "so we are working to do that as we speak."

Ace Hardware has store locations throughout the United States.

"They have a very large presence in the Midwest," Starr said. "They are based out of Chicago, our warehouse is located in La Crosse, WI, we've been with these folks for 12 years now and they are a

fantastic company to work with."

The current Jones' Hardware store in Vermillion has consistently had its limitations.

"I can't tell you how often we have to deal with a customer who walks into the store and is looking for something special ... looking for some fitting, some coupling or some other item, and we can't satisfy the customer's need," Starr said. "We don't have the room, we don't have the inventory, and this happens almost daily."

"If we can't satisfy their needs, more than likely nobody else in Vermillion can, either, which forces them to go to Yankton, or Sioux City or Sioux Falls," he said. "Hopefully, that is not going to happen once the new Jones' Ace Hardware opens up."

Starr will continue to oversee the operations of the several retail businesses operated by the Peterses in several southeast South Dakota communities.

After the remodeling is complete in Vermillion, Gregg and Nicki will operate hardware stores in Vermillion and Madison, and grocery stores in Elk Point, Parker and Viborg.

"The things that have made us special are the things that the big boys won't do, don't care to do, don't want to do," he said. "We always did them, but unfortunately it has become tougher and tougher to operate in a big box world. We did the best we could, and we're very proud of what we've accomplished, and we're excited for the changes that are ahead."

Someday, there may be a Jones' Food Center in Vermillion once again.

"If the right opportunity were to present itself within a year or so, absolutely. Nikki Peters has already made that comment that if the right opportunity presented itself, they would get another Jones' Food Center open tomorrow," Starr said.

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July 17, 2012	Ramada Convention Center	Aberdeen	7:00 PM
July 18, 2012	Ramkota Hotel	Sioux Falls	7:00 PM
July 19, 2012	MTI Tech. Center (1800 E. Spruce)	Mitchell	7:00 PM
July 24, 2012	Ramkota Hotel	Pierre	7:00 PM
July 25, 2012	Ramada Hotel	Rapid City	7:00 PM

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