



## New Direction

### Talented microbiologist now calls area home

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The new director of cell processing at Tchefuncte Cardiovascular Associates in Covington is smart, pretty and hails from Santiago, Chile.

Carolina Allers, Ph. D., has joined the ground breaking company in adult stem cell research and is in charge of processing, or expanding the mesenchymal cells after they are taken from the patient and supervising their expansion so they can successfully be infused into the patient to treat them.

Hand-picked by Dr. Jose Minguell to join their practice, she had worked with him in Chile as an undergraduate student. Allers said that the culture surrounding the medical field is very different in the United States. She likes the fact that she is working for a company that is conducting research and making a difference in the medical field as well as patients' lives.

Candidates for the protocols in cardiovascular, ALS and spinal cord injury stem cell therapy must all meet certain criteria. Allers says that the procedures involving the preparation of the cells are successful most of the time. Progress of patients in the research is being monitored carefully and regularly.

Coming from a different culture, climate and lifestyle, Allers said that in Chile, Christmas comes when it is summer. "The sun is shining and it's winter. I love it, but I don't like the rain," she said. Christmas in Chile is full of long days and hot weather, "Very different, she said.

The first time she was away from home was when she received a grant to study at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. "It was very hard being away from home, from my family. But it was only for three months," she said.

The next time she was in New York City at New York University. She says her family has said this, traveling away from Chile, is her future. She said that Mandeville and Covington are very different from New York with everything closing early and limited entertainment areas for young people. But she is looking to become more involved with cultural and other groups in the area and has subscribed to the Louisiana Philharmonic season in New Orleans.

“I love music—all types of music,” said Allers. “And I have already made some Chilean friends here. I also love the natural parks here, being able to walk and enjoy nature.”

She also said that the customs are different. In Chile, the party lasts longer. “You may have dinner with the family at midnight and eat and open presents all night. Here, it is more about the family, with 40 in one house for the holiday. The people here are very friendly,” she said. She does miss the mountains, but is enjoying her work tremendously.

“This is a different world from university research to FDA regulations,” she said. “I’m still learning.”

Allers will be following patients after their treatments, following their progress in the protocols.

Allers said that she got interested in secondary school when “A biology teacher showed me a different world.” She has loved science, and molecular and microbiology since.

She holds a Ph. D. in biomedical sciences from the Facultad de Medicina, Universidad de Chile. She was most recently on the faculty of the Facultad de Medicina Clinica Alemana-Universidad del Desarrollo as a professor. She has been involved in several grants and research activities with several papers, books, and presentations to her credit.