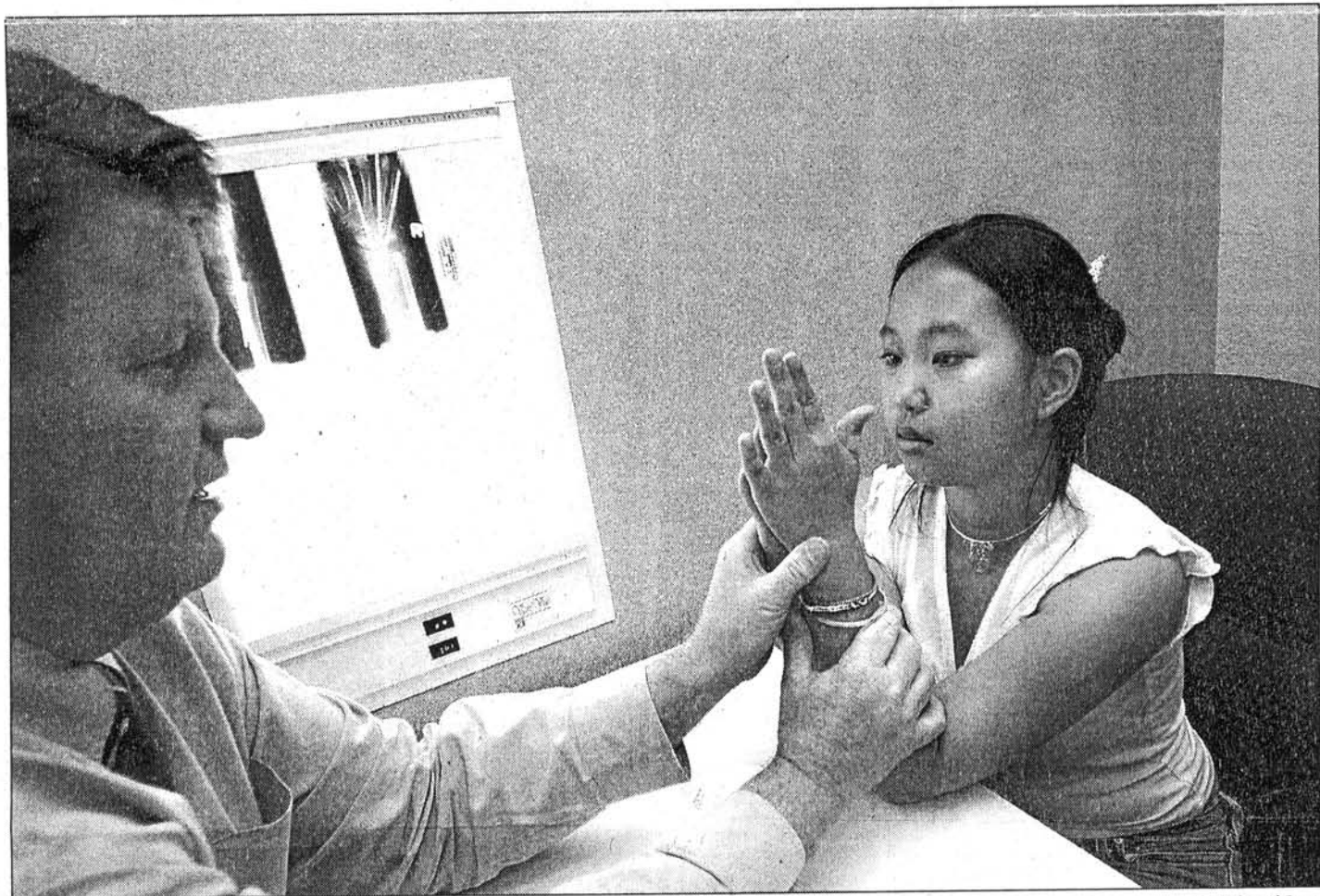


"I just want to thank them (the doctors and nurses) and the community for caring about me. I didn't expect them to care so much."

YANG VUE



Associated Press

Dr. Larry Livengood examines the reattached hand of Yang Vue Monday in Appleton. Livengood reattached Yang's hand after it was severed by her stepfather eight years ago.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Hospital honors young victim who nearly lost a hand 8 years ago

Associated Press

APPLETON — A hospital that treated a 10-year-old girl whose hand was severed in a murder-suicide welcomed her back and gave her \$14,000 — eight years later and just in time for her to attend college.

Yang Vue left Appleton for California after the 1995 attack, but she returned for Tuesday's presentation at St. Elizabeth Hospital. The doctor who reattached Vue's hand, the postman who kept her alive until paramedics arrived and other hospital workers attended.

Vue plans to study at California State University in Chico, near her home. She's considering a medical career, she said.

The doctors and nurses who helped her recover had an effect on her, she said.

"I just want to thank them and the community for caring about me," Vue

said. "I didn't expect them to care so much."

Vue's stepfather, Song Chou Van, attacked Vue's mother, Song Lee Vang, with a knife, killing her. He then slashed at Vue, severing her right hand at the wrist as she raised it to defend herself. He also sliced her face from ear to ear, then killed himself.

Martin Laurin was on his regular postal route that day, June 15, 1995, and saw a bleeding Vue come out of her home's garage. Laurin carried her to safety, and cleared her airway with a handkerchief while a neighbor called police.

On Tuesday, Vue and Laurin met for the first time since the attack.

"I finally have a chance to thank you," Vue said.

Laurin responded, "I just did what I thought I had to do."

Dr. Larry Livengood reattached Vue's

hand, and others stitched the serious injuries to her face.

Vue visited Livengood in his office Monday. The doctor shook her right hand. Its range of motion and sensation were nearly normal.

"You're a lefty now, but this is a great result for a hand that has been off," Livengood told her.

St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation collected about \$8,000 for Vue when the attack happened and invested it. The fund grew to \$14,000.

Foundation Director Lisa Weiner called Vue several months ago and told her about the fund.

Contacting Vue became a priority for Weiner once she began thinking about retiring.

"I wanted to tie up this one loose end," Weiner said. "I don't want to bring back the past, but celebrate the present and future for her."