A HEARTT For Liberia
Written by Tri Nguyen

Last month, I had the unique opportunity to go to Liberia and spend 3 weeks practicing medicine through the HEARTT program. Liberia's population is a little under 4 million people with a gross national income per capita of about $340 dollars and the life expectancy at birth is about 54/57 for males and females respectively. I had such an amazing experience. I saw things that I know I will never see again in the states.

Although I spent the majority of my time in the maternity/NICU, I did venture out for several days to see what the inpatient ward and outpatient clinic was like. The pathology in Liberia is overwhelming but the resources were scarce to none. Most of the children who show up to the Peds ER (under 5) for medical attention had already been close to death's door for several days. There is only a limited amount of antibiotics that are available and simple labs take a while to get back. There are no cultures that can be done. No needles for spinal tap. Oxygen is compressed to a maximum of 35% and often it is shared with multiple patients. The majority of the labs are paid for out of pocket from the already poor families and they are not allowed to leave until their debt is paid. In the inpatient unit, mortality is around 14%, with meningitis, malaria and pneumonia as the leading causes of death. In the NICU, perinatal asphyxia is the leading cause, followed by presumed sepsis.

With little to no prenatal care, neonatal malformation is something of a regularity, and unfortunately none of those babies survive. In many ways, there is a sense of natural selection that occurs here in Liberia, and although it is sad to ponder about how the majority of these children would do just fine in the US, I think in some ways it is best that they did not survive from the beginning given the severity of their disease and the lack of resources here.

I had such an amazing 3 weeks. The Liberians are wonderful people and are extremely grateful for the doctors and nurses who have over the years donated time and energy to help lift a nation ravaged by civil war. I am very grateful to be able to contribute to something very special. I hope everyone gets a chance at some point in their career to the same.

Welcome, Rev. Jane E. Dasher

The Dept of Pediatrics and the Dept of Spiritual Care at the GCH welcome our new Pediatric Chaplain, Rev. Jane E. Dasher, MDIV, BCC who began her ministry at the GCH on January 17, 2013. The Rev. Dasher served as chaplain at Sisters of Charity Hospital/St. Joseph Campus in Cheektowaga, NY prior to her appointment at Upstate. She previously served as a chaplain with Niagara Hospice, Mercy Hospital (Buffalo), and Prince William Hospital in Manassas, Virginia. She also served as a pastor in Presbyterian (USA) churches in Niagara Falls, Bethesda, MD, Manassas, VA and Wilmington, NC, and in Lutheran (ELCA) churches in East Amherst and Elma, NY.

Rev. Dasher is a Board Certified Chaplain in the Association of Professional Chaplains, having completed a three-year residency and fellowship in Clinical Pastoral Education at Grady Memorial Hospital and established a staff chaplain position at Hughes Spalding Children’s Hospital in Atlanta. She specialized in pediatrics, neonatology, peri-natal care, and crisis psychiatry and learning not to eat grits.

She was granted the Master of Divinity with Honors in Pastoral Care from Columbia Theological Seminary and is completing a Master of Science degree in Creativity and Change Leadership from Buffalo State. She is an alumnus of The Ohio State University and is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). This year Jane celebrates her twentieth year of ministry. An installation and reception will be held at a later date.

Rev. Dasher tells the Crier, “I love gardening, reading, writing, music of all kinds, being outdoors, and history of all eras. I also enjoy traveling especially to my adopted countries of Ireland and Jordan. My family has a history of working with children and advocating for children's needs. My grandmother taught in a one room school house in rural Ohio beginning when she was 17, my mother taught music and 2nd grade, and my sister is a school psychologist. My grandfather was a mail carrier delivering mail by horse and buggy. Other family members, both male and female, were/are in engineering fields. My family has been in the US for 13 generations. My role model is Mr. Rogers as he was a Presbyterian minister.”

We warmly welcome Rev. Dasher!

Well Represented by Researchers

The third annual Beyond the Doctorate Research Day will be held March 6 at 12:30 p.m. in 2231 Weiskotten Hall. Our own Aamer Imdad will be giving his oral presentation at 2 PM. Christy Tabarani and Steve Hicks will also be presenting their research at a poster session on the ninth floor of Weiskotten Hall at 3:30 PM. For more information, visit [www.upstate.edu/postdoc/postdoc_life/events.php](http://www.upstate.edu/postdoc/postdoc_life/events.php)

Dinner with Docs

On Tuesday, February 12th several of our pediatric faculty and residents had dinner with “Docs for Tots” which is a group of Upstate first and second year medical students who are interested in pediatrics. The turnout was great (of both faculty and students) and the students were greatly appreciative of everyone from the department who took the time to come...
and meet/eat with them. As Meghan Jacobs put it, “I know as a student these are the events where you learn the most and having amazing mentors makes this process so much easier.” Meghan is Co-President with Ali Stringham.

She explains that the middle picture with Dr. Botash is their E-Board and that Dr. Botash is their Faculty Advisor. Thanks again to all of the faculty and residents who took the time out of their schedules to attend.

Father Daughter Dance for the GCH
Meanwhile, on the other side of town almost 700 dads and daughters danced the night away at the 11th Annual Father Daughter Valentine Ball. The event, presented by Eastside Vineyard Church, raised $32,000 to benefit pediatric cancer services at Upstate GCH. CNY Central did a story about one of the couples who attended this year.


Our own Dr. Neal Seidberg and his daughters (pictured) represented the department again this year and obviously had a great time doing so.

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow
It is not too late to help sponsor our own Dr. Jody Sima’s upcoming balding. Dr. Sima will be having her head shaved at the Annual St. Baldrick’s Foundation head shaving event at Kitty Hoyne’s Irish Pub on Sunday, March 3rd. Click here to sponsor Dr. Sima and the cancer kids she will be helping.

http://www.stbaldricks.org/participants/jodiesima

Meeting Face-to-iPad
Upstate Online featured an article about a new study testing the use of the FaceTime application on the iPad to observe medical students in clinical settings. Our very own Dr. Ann Botash, MD, is one of the study’s principal investigators.

http://upstateonline.info/static/Feb14-Feb212013/blog/story-1/index.html

The Portnoy Five
We received the following note from former resident Sharon Somekh (Class of 2009): “Just to update you, Joel and I now have 3 wonderful girls (Lital 6, Gfen 3 1/2, and Romie 7 months). We moved to Long Island this summer and just this month I started a new job as a general pediatrician at a great practice. The picture was taken in Caiseria a city north of Tel Aviv known for archeological finds. My cousin got married there in October. Hope everyone is doing well.”

In The News: Khaver Kirmani
The Arizona Central news recently featured a doctor who is familiar to many of us. In their online magazine, “What doctors wish parents knew” local neonatologist Khaver Kirmani (Class of 1998) was featured in a video entitled, “A doctor from Cardon Children’s Medical Center shares important information doctors wish parents knew about their babies and children”

http://www.azcentral.com/video/2147137710001

Randa (Khairallah) Razzouk
Former resident Randa (Khairallah) Razzouk (Class of 2010) sent us the following update: “I recently presented my research as an oral presentation at the RRI – Renal Research Institute’s 15th International Conference On Dialysis (Jan. 23-25 in Puerto Rico). The conference included participants for Europe, Canada and Australia, adult and peds nephrologists and fellows. My research was in the top best 3 abstracts! I attached a copy of the certificate”. Congratulations, Randa!

Welcome Abhay Kaul Singh
Congratulations to Priyanka and Avneet on the birth of baby boy Abhay Kaul Singh on 2/13/2013 at 8 lbs, 4.9 oz. Dad reports that Priyanka and Abhay are both doing fine.

Dates to Remember
- St. Baldrick’s Head Shaving – March 3rd
- Beyond the Doctorate – March 6th 12:30 p.m. in 2231 Weiskotten Hall for oral presentations. 3:30 PM for poster session on the ninth floor of Weiskotten.
- Match Day – Friday, March 15th
- Miracle Ride - May 19 - The 19th annual Miracle Ride Motorcycle ride for the GCH will be held at Spinning Wheel, N. Syracuse. Contact Marty Toper toperm@upstate.edu.

Pediatric Star-of-the-Month
By Lisa Blystone
The Pediatric Star of the Month is Astha Khanna who was nominated by a nurse for her help with a difficult patient. The nurses were thankful she was willing to help and the patient was able to get the care he needed. Astha has been nominated for several stars for her efforts on behalf of patients, parents and colleagues. Astha goes above and beyond on a regular basis, and those who work with her are very appreciative. Astha - please contact Patty or Lisa to pick out your Stars prize!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS
3/7 Christy Tabarani
3/13 Dan Kveselis
3/15 Robert Kanter
3/19 Nader Atallah
3/20 Maureen Butler
3/23 Bob Al Shareef
3/25 Ann Botash