



# Pediatric Crier

## Department of Pediatrics Newsletter

<http://www.upstate.edu/gch/academics/newsletter.php>

### New Faculty: Welcome Kate Okhman

UPAC warmly welcomes a very familiar face to the team. Dr. Kate Okhman shared the following with the Crier: "Hi everyone! Many of you may remember me as Kate, a recent graduate from our own Upstate Pediatric Program, and may already know a fair amount about me. For those of you who don't know me, I first became acquainted with UPAC as a refugee pediatric patient, when my family moved to Syracuse from Belarus in September of 2000. From that point, I've considered Syracuse my hometown and dreamed of giving back to the community while raising my own family. I graduated from LeMoyne College, which is local to Syracuse, and then had a bit of an adventure completing my medical degree through Ross University as an international student. I was extremely happy to return to Syracuse for my Pediatric Residency at Upstate. My husband, Valeriy, who immigrated to Syracuse with his family from Kazakhstan, specializes in automotive business locally at Spicer's Auto Center. We have two daughters, 3 year old Maya, and a 5 month old Ella. In my spare time,



I foremost enjoy spending time with my family doing all kinds of things, such as going to local parks, traveling, swimming, singing at our local Russian-speaking

church, and having movie nights. I am now looking forward to working with everyone as a general pediatrician at Upstate Pediatrics Office and UPAC starting this fall."

### New Program Director: Welcome Dr. Beth Nelsen

The Department is excited to announce/introduce our new residency program director. Beth Nelsen, MD already has a long history with the

department. So, she is extremely well prepared for her new role as program director. The Crier asked Dr. Nelsen if she would re-introduce herself to us and she shared the following:

"This is all John Andrade's fault. When I was a chief resident 10 years ago and he was the program director I worked very closely with him and thought, 'I think I want to be a program director some day.' I admired him (and I still do), and I was fascinated with the work that he did - he ran the program but still connected with the residents every day on the floors or in clinic. When Gloria approached me about being an associate program director I said yes, but I'm going to miss all of interview season because I'm having a baby. Emily will be seven next month and I joke that she's been alive nearly as long as I've been in the program administration.

I hope that I can maintain the same level of enthusiasm I've had for the residency program over the last 10 years while I build on what Gloria has done for the program over the last 7 years as program director. After completing my chief year and joining the faculty in 2010, I have stayed engaged with the program as a resident advisor. Over the last 7 years as associate program director, I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a number of things through the Association of Pediatric Program Directors (APPD), including my participation last year in Leadership in Educational Academic Development (LEAD), a 10-month leadership training program for APDs and PDs. All of my experiences here and through APPD have prepared me for what lies ahead.

I am ready for and excited about my new role. While nothing in the immediate term will change dramatically, I really want to put a focus back on resident education and along with that, provide greater support to faculty in their role as teachers. Thank you John and Gloria for being great role models for me!"



(Dr. Elizabeth Nelsen on the right)

We look forward to working with Dr. Nelsen in her new role!

### Intern Retreat, 2019

Our 15 interns headed off for their intern retreat on Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. This year's retreat was held at the DoubleTree in East Syracuse. After a night on their own, they were joined by Drs. Nelsen and Ajagbe for some team building activities including the annual "flip the blanket" and "drop the egg" assignments. We are pleased to announce that all eggs survived their second floor fall. New this year, each of the interns received a copy of the book *How Doctors Think* and will be having a book club this year to go through the book together. Overall, everyone had a great time (including the eggs) and enjoyed the chance to spend some uninterrupted time together!



### Promotions!

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Nienke Dosa on her promotion to Professor of Pediatrics and Dr. Christopher Fortner on his promotion to Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics. This is a well deserved recognition for both of them.

### AOA-Elect

Congratulations to our very own Dr. Danielle Daniels who was nominated by the students and subsequently elected to become a member of AOA as a resident. The chapter seeks new resident members who have strengths in any or all of the following areas: Gifted teaching, Outstanding patient care skills, Professionalism, Servant leadership, Research and scholarship, Character, trustworthiness, Caring, compassion, and Teamwork. Student nominations for Danielle included, "Dr. Daniels is a true leader", "She is professional, kind-hearted and a great teacher", and "She is

extremely hard-working and dedicated at what is being done.” We have to say the students have good taste. This was a well deserved honor for Danielle.

### Kenya with Carlee

*By contributing writer, Carlee Lenehan*  
Phil and I spent the month of August in Kisumu, Kenya! WOW what a crazy adventure we had. Not only was this global health rotation academically challenging but also life altering! An experience that can only be learned when you are forced out of your comfort bubble. We both returned to the USA stronger, more patient, and humbler doctors than before we left. This journey quickly makes you grateful for the resources we have here in the USA. The Obama Children’s Hospital is a world of its own. You walk in and you are immediately pulled to do work. There is always something to do, someone to help, or someone to teach. This hospital is the referral hospital serving more than 100 districts and sub district hospitals in more than 10 counties in Western Kenya. From diagnoses I had never heard of to typical febrile seizures, the amount of pathology from bed to bed (sometimes in the same bed) was undeniably impressive. Over the course of just a few weeks we were able to become comfortable with leading rounds, teaching medical students, and offering advice to families. When not assisting on rounds, we would spend time stabilizing patients. We both quickly learned about available medications and treatment options for a limited-resource center and how to make do with what you have. It was both thrilling and terrifying working alongside the team in Kisumu, and everyday brought a new challenge. Each child that came into the hospital offered something new to learn. Teaching medical students was also a highlight of this trip. From pediatric pathologies to hands on CPR lessons, we were both able to teach willing and motivated young future doctors about our passion- pediatrics. It was also rewarding to have hands go up at the end of a lecture with curiosity bursting throughout the room.

It was not all work and no play. Phil and I also had the opportunity to go on Safari at Masai Mara (you may recognize from National Geographic and Planet Earth!) We saw lions, elephants, cheetahs, hippos.. We saw it all! We spent 2 nights in a tent and even explored a Masai village! You will see Phil in one of the

pics taking part in one of the tribe ceremonies! Another weekend we were also able to climb the rainforest in Kenya called Kakamega! The views were stellar! It is hard to put words on a blank paper descriptive enough to explain how I was impacted by my experience in Kenya. I was challenged to learn by living and am left with a renewed sense of passion, peace, and joy for life. I hope to continue with this mentality, investing in my relationships and honing my sense of purpose within my own community. I will never forget that Kenyan smile and will cherish the experience for the rest of life.



### Thank you, Dr. Kennedy

We would like to take a few moments to specially thank Dr. Gloria Kennedy for her seven years as our program director. Since she did so much of her best work quietly without drawing any attention to herself, the Crier thought it would be worthwhile to name just a few of her accomplishments.



Under her leadership, in 2019 we received our highest scores on the ACGME resident survey and were higher in many areas than the national average. She created a Wellness Curriculum which included a weekly Noon conference series and wellness days built into the schedule. She created the academic half day of teaching conferences with protected time for residents. She created and developed the four Career Pathways as a part of our curriculum based on the new recommendations of the ACGME. We saw our Board Pass Rates rise by 20 points over the past two years. After our last ACGME site visit, we are fully accredited with no citations. She was able to increase our resident complement by two residents per year, and she worked hard to obtain a resident work space/lounge in the Children’s Hospital (coming soon).

As a part of wellness, she has continually worked toward creating a fun and enjoyable

work environment for the residents including purchasing them tutus, capes, and silly socks. She has knitted each of the new moms a baby hat or sweater. She has kept the lounge and library continually stocked with snacks she has purchased with her own money. And she purchases treats for each of the monthly “Food and Feelings” sessions with Anne Reagan. There are countless other unseen acts of caring and kindness she has done throughout her time as program director. This is just a small sampling of what Dr. Kennedy has done for our program over the past seven years. I hope she knows how much she is appreciated and how much she will be missed. Especially by her residents.

### The Mike Bristol Crystal Award

Congratulations to Dr. Steve Blatt who received the "Mike Bristol Crystal Award at the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Gala on 9/20. The award is given to honor a community member who has shown exceptional commitment to improving the lives of Central New York’s most vulnerable children. This was to recognize his many years of directing the ENHANCE program for foster kids.



Dr. Howard Weinberger was asked to give some comments at the ceremony and he was kind enough to share them with the Crier since they also give some of the rich history of our department:

‘It’s a special pleasure for me to have been asked to make some comments about Dr Steven Blatt, in recognition of his CASA award tonight. In doing so, I will emphasize the second A in CASA – Advocacy – because that is Steve’s strength and why we are honoring him tonight. I should briefly mention my ‘credentials’ as the person in the room tonight who has known Steve in his professional life about the longest – perhaps, even longer than his wife, Liz.

I first met Steve, in my capacity as a long term member of the faculty at Upstate Medical University, when Steve

was a med student, trying to decide on a specialty for his career. Later, during his Residency in Pediatrics, I was one of the Directors of our Residency Program where I watched him develop his clinical skills. After completion of his Residency, Steve left Syracuse for further training during a Fellowship at U of Pittsburgh. We were successful in recruiting Steve back as a Junior faculty member in the General Pediatric Division when I was the Director of that Division. We quickly became colleagues and I recognized his commitment to care for the 'underserved' children we saw in our outpatient clinics.

In an ancient Hebrew text, titled Pirke Avot – translated as Ethics of our Fathers, Ben Zoma is quoted as saying: Who is wise? And he answers: He who learns from everyone. My greatest pleasure, as a faculty member, occurs when I can learn from my students. Now that I am almost retired, Steve is my supervisor, and I have the pleasure of learning from him every week in our clinic. And I see how he mentors those young doctors and nurses who together continue to care for the underserved children and their families.

Almost 30 years ago, I was asked by staff at the Onondaga County Dept of Social Services to develop a program to provide medical care for children in Foster care – at the time, there were almost 900 kids in Foster care at any one time. As a smart administrator, I delegated the request to Steve Blatt who accepted the challenge and called the program ENHANCE which stood for Excellence in Health Care for Abused and Neglected Children. Steve and the staff he recruited have been outstanding advocates for the children and families they serve and it has been my greatest reward to have watched Steve himself develop into such a forceful advocate for children.

Steve's interest in Advocacy was not a surprise development. His late father, Burton Blatt, was Dean of the School of Education at SU where he developed The Center on Human Policy. His career was dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities. (As they say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.) After Burt's death, Steve and a co-author published a monograph entitled 'In Search of the Promised Land- The Collected Papers of Burton Blatt.' In a closing few reflections on his father's legacy, Steve wrote about his father, 'The issues that Burton Blatt wrote about in the early 60's are still present 40 years later. The details of the problems may have changed, but the good

advice that he wrote about many years ago remain constant. He expressed thoughts on the right way and the wrong way to interact with another human being. He stated that *To observe sorrow untouched is to cause it to continue.*'

I think those same words could be said about our honoree tonight. Just like his father, Steve is an optimist. And just like his father, he always does his best to make the world better."

Congratulations, Steve, for this well-deserved honor!

### Caption Contest Winner!



We had some great entries for the SIM Day photo caption contest (not to mention great actors in the picture, itself). First, our three runners-up:

"See one, do one, right Chris? Oh hello camera, this is my 2nd!" - Nate Meuser-Herr

"Wearing your heart on your sleeve has its risks. But sometimes, all you need to mend it is a smile--and a cast." – Dean Karahalios

"I got it after only 2 tries" – Joan Pellegrino

### and the winner is.....

"Remember when you had two arms? #codewhiteleftside" – Vaishali Adlakha

Congratulations, Vaishali. You can come pick up your prize from the Crier.

### In the News...



Two of our pediatric faculty were recently featured on "Healthlink on Air". Dr. Beth Nelsen did an interview on handling sensitive issues in a pediatric office visit. You can listen online at: <http://blogs.upstate.edu/healthlinkonair/2019/09/12/handling-sensitive-issues-in-a-pediatric-office-visit/>

Dr. Jody Sima spoke about how "Survivorship is a lifelong phase of cancer care" at <http://blogs.upstate.edu/healthlinkonair/2019/09/12/survivorship-is-a-lifelong-phase-of-cancer-care/>.

### Barb Delany's Retirement Party

Our beloved Barb Delaney abandoned us after 32 years of service (18 in Peds). She was honored with a retirement party on 9/19. We will miss her very much but wish her the best.

### Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

On Friday, Sept 27<sup>th</sup>, the GCH celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special day of festivities. In the afternoon the entire Upstate staff was invited to celebrate with ice cream sundaes and cupcakes. There was another event that evening and the GCH's namesake, Tom Golisano made an additional gift of \$3 million to establish Golisano Center for Special Needs. For more about this incredibly generous donation and the impact it will have on healthcare in CNY, see <http://www.upstate.edu/news/articles/2019/golisanofoundationgift.php>

### In Memory – Dr. Charles Reiners

Former resident and longtime faculty member of our department, Dr. Charles Reiners passed away on 9/23. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Reiners family. Dr. Reiner's obituary is at <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/name/charles-reiners-obituary?pid=194022243>

### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/1 Stuart Trust  
10/15 Alicia Pekarsky  
10/17 Laura Miller  
10/18 Scott Corrigan, Jennifer Myszewski  
10/22 Howard Weinberger  
10/23 Uzma Rani, Frank Smith, Suzanne Addabbo