



<http://www.upstate.edu/gch/education/crier.php>

### New Peds Neurology Faculty

We are delighted to be able to introduce both of our new Pediatric Neurologists to you in this issue. Dr. Sakonju and Dr. Zhang will introduce themselves to you in the following two articles:

#### Welcome Dr. Ai Sakonju



*Waterfalls are exciting because they have power, they have rainbows, they have songs, and they have boldness and craziness!* - Mehmet Murat Ildan

When I think back as to how I came to Upstate as a pediatric neurologist, this photo of our family at Chittenango Falls in August 2016 reminds me. I tell people that it had been a quiet dream made a long long time ago when I was an undergrad in Ithaca and walked near my first waterfall: I wanted to come back here to central New York and raise a family and do meaningful work. Everyone has a different idea of what they feel brings meaning to their life and part of that depends on the choices they've made and roads traveled.

I've come a long way, from escaping the fall of Saigon on my father's back running to the helicopters that would bring us to safety across an ocean away. We landed in Guam, then California, and eventually in Utah where I spent most of my childhood and eventually returned after residency in Baltimore. My husband and I spent time apart during residency as

he flew monthly to visit me with our then toddler and now 17 year old "little girl" in the photo. Our youngest child was born after all the years in residency and fellowship eight years after our eldest. My husband reaches out with his arms to take this photo of all of us, the same way he has kept us all together.

So, with a dream and hopefully some wisdom, we moved here to build and grow. We have been warmly welcomed by many and thank you all. And now at this stage in my life, after super-sub specializing in pediatric neuromuscular medicine, taking care of infants and children presenting with movement disorders with either or both peripheral and central nervous system causes, performing thousands of diagnostic EMGs, participating in advanced nerve graft intraoperative monitoring and SMA clinical trials, I turn towards this community with an open mind to see what are its needs and will respond by meeting and excelling at those programs in which we can all participate and be successful. I start with a quote about waterfalls and what makes them special, and end with a quote from someone who also loved waterfalls so much so that he would build a home to view water flowing by. I look forward to our working together.

*The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen.* - Frank Lloyd Wright

#### Welcome Dr. Guojun Zhang

My name is Guojun Zhang, and my wife is Qun Wang, who is a pathologist. Both of us are from China. We have two daughters, Meng and Evelyn. Meng is a third year medical student in New York City, and Evelyn is in the 4th grade in the elementary school.



I earned my medical degree from China Medical University in 1986 and practice as a general pediatrician/hospitalist for 10 years. I got my Ph.D. in China before I came to USA. I had been doing epilepsy research in Children's Hospital of Philadelphia/ University of Pennsylvania for 6 years as a postdoctoral fellow and senior research scientist. I completed a pediatric Internship in 2008 from Medical College of Wisconsin, a Pediatric Neurology Fellowship in 2012 and a Pediatric Epilepsy Fellowship in 2013 from University of California, Irvine. I joined the faculty at Children's Hospital of Orange County/University of California in 2013, and an assistant professor at Children's Hospital of San Antonio/Baylor College of Medicine in 2014. I and my wife are so excited to join the Upstate family. We are looking forward to work with you.

#### New Faculty Reception

The department was delighted to introduce 13 new pediatric providers to the Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital on Thursday, November 10 at the Syracuse Downtown Marriott. Everyone enjoyed meeting the new faculty and reconnecting with some old friends (Drs. Jan Bach and Jenica O'Malley). An added bonus was getting to see the newly renovated "Hotel Syracuse".



Pictured from L to R: Asalim Thabet, MD, Jenica O'Malley, DO, Melanie Comito, MD, Janice Bach, MD, Anne Reagan PsyD, Thomas Welch, MD Aditi Khokhar, MBBS, Ai Sakonju, MD, Angela Mojica, MD, Goujun Zhang, MD, Ramesh Sachdeva, MD, Ph.D., and Allison Fahy, MD. Samantha Jones, MD, was unable to join us.

### **The 2016 PEA Winners!**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual PEA (Patient Experience Awards) ceremony was held on November 30<sup>th</sup> to honor some of our Pediatric Bests! This year's winners included the following:

**Best Listener:** Outpatient- Laurie Clouston, Inpatient- Ariel Dean

**Most Enthusiastic:** Outpatient- Kelly Morrison, Inpatient- Jessica Owen

**Most Attentive:** Outpatient- Carol Lynn Zoll, Inpatient- Chris Swenson

**Best Communicator:** Outpatient- Tina Eberhard, Inpatient – Leigh Wilson

**Best Team Player:** Outpatient- Lorna Hyman, Inpatient- Karen MacNaught

**Best Attitude:** Outpatient- Joyce Baker, Inpatient- Sara LaPointe

**Dedication to Safety and Quality:** Outpatient- Deb Delaney. Inpatient- Michelle Jeski

**Rockin' Resident:** Khalia Grant

**MVP:** Outpatient- JoseMiguel Hernandez, Inpatient- Andrea Saya

Congratulations to all of the winners for these well deserved honors!

### **New Team Leader**

The position of Team Leader for the Pediatric Specialty clinics, Auth Group and Medical Records has been filled by Kathy Valentino. She started on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Dina Mawson wrote, "Kathy has experience as a practice manager in a medical office and as a medical records supervisor in a hospital medical records office. She's been in Pediatrics at UH as Jenn Speicher's assistant, and Leola's before her. She also has a coding certification. In her new position, she will be putting all of her talents to use! I am very excited to have Kathy as our new Team Leader!"

In an exclusive interview, Kathy tells the Crier, "Dina Mawson has taken on additional administrative duties in her role so it was decided to add a Team Leader to take over some of the supervisory responsibility. I will be supervising all of the front desk/clerical staff for the Pediatric Specialty Clinics as well as the Medical Records and Authorization Group. I have thoroughly enjoyed working in pediatrics and have been looking for a way to stay in the department while taking on some higher level responsibilities. This position came up and it seemed like a perfect fit for what I have been looking for. I decided to take a leap of faith and apply and am so grateful to have been given this opportunity. With all the wonderful experience I have gained throughout my career, I am looking forward to getting back into supervision and using my business and coding knowledge. I will miss greatly all the people I work with in the children's hospital but look forward to this new and exciting challenge!"

Congratulations, Kathy!

### **Upstate Gala**

Several of the members of the department were able to take part in the 2016 Upstate Gala at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown (formerly the Hotel Syracuse) on Friday, November 18. Proceeds from this year's Gala will benefit "Brighter Beginnings," the campaign to support a new maternity unit and nursery at Upstate University Hospital's Community Campus.

Several of the Pediatric Residents were very happy to do their part in supporting such a worthy cause.



### **GCH's Newest Nurse Managers**

In addition to all of the new faculty, the GCH has also had some new additions. After several retirements among our nurse managers, Linda McAleer helped to recruit an exciting new group of highly qualified individuals to fill the openings. The newest nurse managers include:

-Amie Lorini- 11E

-Kerryanna Kershner- 11 G

-Erin Shortslef- 12F PICU

-Molly Napier- Peds Heme/Onc

-Lisa Winkler- UPAC

And one Assistant Nurse Manager:

- Nikki Christopher-12 E

The Crier had the opportunity to find out a little bit more about some of our newbies:

- Kerryanna Kershner shares the following: "After 8 years in the USAF, I went back to school and earned my BSN in 1995. I have worked in both home care and acute care and have specialized in case management, staff development, wound and ostomy care and pediatrics. I come to my new role as 11G manager after 6 years in our PICU."

-Amie Lorini writes: I've been a member of the Upstate team since 1999, and specifically with the inpatient pediatric surgical unit since it opened in 2003. I am a certified Reiki practitioner, and enjoy using Reiki therapy to help alleviate the stress and pain experienced by children during hospitalization. I have 2 small children, and love spending time camping with my family.

A warm welcome to all of our new faculty and nurses.



### Dancing For the Kids

Last month we reported that students at SU and Cornell would be participating in their annual dance marathons to benefit the kids of the GCH. Between SU's OttoTHON and Cornell's Big Red THON, the student dancers and their supporters raised over \$132,000. Held Nov. 5, the Cornell Big Red Thon pulled in \$21,000, while SU's OttoTHON, held Nov. 6, raised more than \$111,000. More than 1,400 students had registered to participate in the two events.

Upstate Online reported that "After six hours of dancing, marking the event's halfway point, SU students dancing in the OttoTHON marched to Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital and performed the morale dance where patients could watch from the windows. The morale dance is a routine learned by all participants that they do to reinvigorate the group when fatigue sets in. Patients waved to the dancers and cheered them on as they performed." The GCH and all the kids of CNY appreciate

<http://upstateonline.info/static/Nov10-Nov172016/blog/story-3/index.html>



### Welcome, Baby Rohlfling

Congratulations to Amanda on the arrival of Joshua Andrew Rohlfling. Joshua was born on October 14, 2016, weighing in at 7lbs 14oz. Amanda tells us, "We are so happy to finally meet him!"



### In the News:

The Fall issue of St. Joseph's "Caring Connection" included the following picture and caption: "Back to school means smiles and good health for Primary Care Center-West patients pictures with Dr. Hilliary Sismondo (left) and Dr. Jose Vargas (right)."



It is worth noting that both Dr. Sismondo (2016) and Dr. Vargas (1989) are former Upstate Pediatric Residents.

### December Events

- Department Holiday Party – 12/7 (2 PM – Kinney Ctr)
- Housestaff faculty – 12/22 (Noon – Kinney Ctr)

(Reminder -Secret Faculty/Resident Santas have until 12/22)



### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12/1 Gloria Kennedy
- 12/9 Meghan Jacobs
- 12/11 Mike Bowler
- 12/16 Kathie Contello
- 12/23 Robert Lebel
- 12/24 Linda McAleer
- 12/26 Tom Welch, Sunny Kainth
- 12/27 Melissa Jones
- 12/28 Jennifer Nead