

# Journeys

THE SIENA COLLEGE / ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE PROGRAM

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Fall 2007



## 20th Anniversary Gala

By Dr. Ed LaRow '59

As the saying goes, *better late than never*. So here we are well into the 21st year of the program and we are finally highlighting the wonderful celebration of the founding of the Siena/AMC Program. Undergraduates, medical students, alumni physicians and administrators from both schools filled the Maloney Great Room in the Sarazen Student Union. Patrick Marinello '08 and Dr. Sarah Levasseur '03/'07 were co-masters of the ceremony. Dr. Robert Paeglow was made an honorary member of the program for the service he has performed throughout his career. He has been a role model for our students so it was nice to be able to upstage the American Association of Medical Colleges who, a week later, named him "Humanitarian of the Year" at their annual meeting in Seattle.

Two graduates that exemplified the philosophy of the program were invited to speak. Dr. Michael Ganey '96/'00 could not attend - he and his wife are

medical missionaries in Kenya - but he sent slides and a personal testimony. Dr. Amisha Malhotra '90/'94 also spoke briefly about her numerous trips to Kenya, Botswana and South Africa where she works with AIDS patients.

We had an outstanding slide show created by Ali Valimahomed '08 highlighting all the summers of service since the inception of the program. Dr. Alan Miller (co-founder) and I had the pleasure to cut the 20th anniversary cake. The celebration concluded with another slide show of activities of our current students with a beautiful duet ("When You Believe") performed by Amy Mathew '08 and Sam Ogden '09. A full set of pictures from this event can be viewed at the Siena/AMC website [www.siena.edu/amc](http://www.siena.edu/amc).



## Siena College

By Dr. Ed LaRow '59

As you will see in this newsletter, this year has been a busy year. I will highlight some events for you:

- We currently have 52 students at the undergraduate level. This includes 16 freshmen who are a very academically talented group. I might add they are a "nice" group of young men and women.
- The sophomores have really stepped up and have developed a new exciting program in inner city Albany (see following article).
- We are also in the planning stages for the sixth annual Spring into Science Program - developed for middle school students in Catholic schools in Albany, Troy and Schenectady. Patrick Marinello '08 ran this program last year and has volunteered to do so again this year. He was very successful in getting



the large number of volunteers needed to make this event successful.

- Half the junior class is studying abroad in Russia, France, Spain, Italy, Ecuador, Uganda and India.
- The Ferraioli Foundation supported the two students who worked in Ecuador last summer. We appreciate this assistance and look for additional one-time grants to assist us in funding the Summer of Service.

### Alumni Happenings:

1. Amisha Malhotra '90/'04 is an assistant professor at Robert Wood Johnson. She represented the Siena/AMC Program on a panel at this years AAMC meetings.
2. Mike Monaco '01/'05 succeeded Mike Colon '99/'03 as chief resident in pediatrics at Yale Hospital.



### Dinner Patrons (alphabetically):

- Maria Bajas Boulos, M.D. '90
- Mr. and Mrs. Gary E. Baumgart
- Mary & Orion Colfer, M.D. '93
- John Cummings
- Kelly Curtis, M.D. '04
- P. Roy Gregware
- Walter K. Kicinski '62
- Susanna Park, M.D. '97
- Raina & Rowan Paul
- Donna Shue, M.D. '96
- John J. Walker, M.D.



## Read for the Stars

By Mallorie Simons '10

Everyone knows of Siena College's love for helping others and its desire to be actively involved in the community. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the sophomore class in the Albany Medical Program, as well as two additional interested students, have ventured into Arbor Hill Elementary School to interact with children who have difficulty learning in their regular classroom setting.

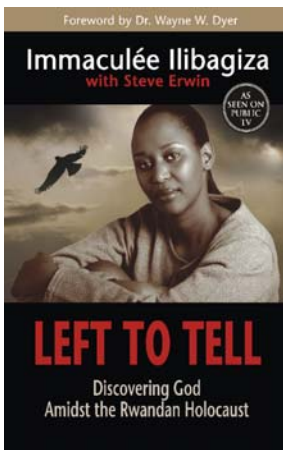
We call our mission Read for the Stars, and our primary goal is to promote literacy and education in the inner city elementary school districts. For two hours every Thursday, we create a fun learning environment for 12 students ranging from first to sixth grade. Our day consists of the following: an icebreaker, two

"hands-on" workshops dealing with reading and science and individual tutoring sessions.

We have established great relationships with the children and they always greet us with hugs and large smiles. Our plan for the future is to spread our mission to other elementary schools in Albany and Troy. Next year, we hope to make Read for the Stars a club at Siena so that all interested students can participate in the Siena tradition of helping others while watching ourselves grow.



## Survivor of the Rwandan Holocaust to Speak at Siena



We are pleased to announce that Immaculee Ilibagiza will be in attendance at our fourth annual spring banquet. After spending time with our Siena/AMC students, the AMC Program will sponsor her for a major address to the campus-wide community. Ilibagiza is the author of *Left to Tell* and her second book will be published just prior to her campus visit. She has been the subject of a number of documentaries and was the recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi International Award for Reconciliation and Peace (2007). She was a finalist

for "Most Inspiring People of the Year 2006" and was recently awarded an honorary degree from Notre Dame. She is currently in Rwanda filming a documentary to be shown on NBC in December. Her story of forgiveness is a story that Siena students will find interesting. The college is committed to having her come to campus on March 12, but need your help. Would you be willing to be a benefactor for a gift of \$500? You will be listed in the evening's program and given special seating. Checks can be made out to Siena College and sent to Ed LaRow @ Siena/AMC Program, 515 Loudon Road, Loudonville, New York 12211.

## Summer of Service Locations for Class of 2008

- Karina Davis and Patrick Marinello — **Marigat, Kenya**
- Krzysztof Dryzmalski and Taylor Kahnke — **Cochabamba, Bolivia**
- Victoria Fernandes and Alex Riccio — **Nocomoto, Fiji**
- Amy Matthew and Ali Valimahomed — **Piuntza, Ecuador**
- Heather Petrat and Aman Shah — **Kabula, Kenya**

## AMC Class of 2007 Heads on to Residency

- Keith Bartomolei — **Internal Medicine**, New England Medical Center
- Megan Baumgart — **Internal Medicine**, Brown University
- Maureen Condon — **Emergency Medicine**, University of Rochester
- Randy Kimball — **Surgery**, Abington Memorial Hospital
- Calvin Leung — **Internal Medicine**, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center
- Sarah Levasseur — **Surgery**, Virginia Mason Medical Center
- Michael Loosemore — **Dermatology**, Drexel, MCP, Hahneman Medical Center
- Anita Reddy — **Physical Medicine**, Rush University Medical Center
- Karl Robstadt — **Pathology**, Albany Medical Center Hospital
- Dan Thompson — **Emergency Medicine**, University of California



By Dr. Kate Wagner '90

There are exciting new developments with Siena/AMC Program students at the Medical College this year. Thanks to generous support from the Graham Hunter Foundation, we have created a partnership with the University of Dundee Medical School in Dundee, Scotland. As part of this program, two of our medical students will be spending their second summer of service at an urban clinic in Dundee, focusing on underserved and needy populations in the city.

The project will include work at urban clinics as well as drug-treatment facilities and homeless shelters. AMC will then be hosting two students from the University of Dundee for their community medicine rotation. These students will be placed at urban clinics in Albany and also have the opportunity to work with local attending physicians at homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation facilities and free clinics. It is a wonderful project with countless educational benefits and we are so grateful to the Graham Hunter Foundation for allowing it to happen. Our third-year medical students have also kicked off a year-long campaign to increase awareness about

### Summer of Service— Patrick Marinello '08 Marigat, Kenya



“Ladies and Gentlemen, please fasten your seatbelts and return your tray tables and seatbacks to their original position as we prepare for our landing.” This familiar phrase indicated the start of an experience for my classmate Karina Davis and I this May as our plane landed in Nairobi, Kenya. We were headed for Marigat, Kenya – a small town of approximately 3,000 in Kenya’s Rift Valley. Sister Martina, our host, graciously greeted us

at the airport – holding a crinkled piece of paper with our names printed on it. For the next six weeks we lived with Sister Martina and four of her fellow Mill Hill Sisters in their convent residence. Karina and I worked in the clinic with Sister Martina. Three days a week we worked on the compound and in the surrounding village. We helped with administrative duties in the clinic as well as helping tend to the patients. The clinic had several missions. They provided HIV/AIDS ART treatment to all individuals who were afflicted with the disease, wellcare and immunization for children and prenatal care for expectant mothers. The clinic would charge a modest fee if the patient could afford to pay; otherwise they were given treatment for free. The other two days of the week, the clinic went “on the road” and traveled up to 3 hours in a 4x4 vehicle to villages that would otherwise receive no medical care. It was impressive to see how grateful they were for our services.

When Karina and I were not working in the clinic, we were socializing with the children and residents of Marigat. The community treated us with the utmost respect and hospitality. They generously gave their time, shared stories of their joys and hardships and welcomed us into their home.

Our six weeks in Kenya went fast and every moment was memorable. As we sat on the plane and prepared for takeoff, I looked out the window knowing that Kenya had become a familiar place to me and, thanks to Sister Martina and the rest of the Marigat community, a part of me will always remain in Kenya.

health literacy issues in Albany and beyond. This project began as the focus of their research for their second summer of service. The presentation was offered initially in poster format at Medical Student Investigation Day in September. It was so well received that it was converted into a slide format that has been presented at Obstetrical Grand Rounds, will be presented at the NYS Academy of Family Physicians meeting in Lake Placid, N.Y. this January and will be implemented as part of the Health Care and Society curriculum offered to all students at the Medical College. The presentation was also discussed by the medical student section of the AMA at their fall meeting and, as a result, this presentation will be offered to all students at the medical colleges in New York State. Several of the medical students are also working on a multi-year, grant-supported research project focusing on health literacy as a result of their initial efforts on this topic. What began as a summer investigation has really taken off and become a tool to educate hundreds of medical students and physicians in the Capital Region and beyond.

### Summer of Service— Victoria Fernandes '08 Nocomoto, Fiji



Alex Riccio and I spent six weeks in the isolated village of Nocomoto on the island of Kadavu. As our boat neared the sea-side village we saw children peering at us from behind palms and huts. The adults greeted us with shouts of “Bula!” (meaning hello). The village was surrounded by hills

where the men of the village grew their cash crop, yagona (a plant used to make a popular drink called “cava”), and their sustenance crop (tarot and daloh). Every day we ate the fish we caught or the coconuts we collected.

Our original project was to build a sea wall to stop the erosion that was threatening the sea-side huts in the village. However, because of a strike, the village elders met and decided that I should start a kindergarten in the village. The next day I began teaching English, math, spelling, Fijian, physical education and arts and crafts to 18 children between ages three and five. My classroom was a one-room building with a small chalkboard on the floor and no desks or chairs. While I was at school, Alex, along with the village men, built the sea wall. They collected rocks downstream and then filled wire cages with them. The idea was that the segment built would serve as a template and the government would send them supplies to finish it.

At night we would sit underneath the mango trees and talk to the villagers or crowd into a tiny hut to socialize. It was during these times that I realized how hard the villagers had it. Yet, despite their difficulties, they were optimistic and happy. They would ask me questions about my life back in America. In their eyes, America was still the land of opportunity, and they dreamed of going there. Unfortunately, our six weeks were soon up. As we left, they villagers stood on the shore and sang us a farewell song in Fijian. I wished that we didn't have to leave quite yet. As the palm trees and the huts shrank in the distance, I cried thinking of the village full of people who reinforced our desire to serve those in need.



# Program Events 2007

## 20th Anniversary Gala



## READ for the Stars



## Winter 2007 OD Heck Dance



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We want to hear from you!  
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