

Journeys

THE SIENA COLLEGE / ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE PROGRAM

Volume 8, Issue 1

Spring 2009

Doctor of Medicine with Distinction in Service (MDDS) Degree Track Approved at Albany Medical College - Kate Wagner



Students in the Siena College/Albany Medical College Program in Science, Humanities and Medicine now have a new opportunity to serve and be recognized for their commitment to service via a newly-approved degree track at Albany Medical College. The M.D. with Distinction in Service degree serves to recognize students at the medical college who have shown the greatest commitment to working with the underserved throughout their time in medical school. While open to all medical college students, individuals in the Siena/AMC program will have the opportunity to begin work toward this degree distinction while still at Siena.

The MDDS degree path involves multiple curricular elements as well as significant service work by the students, all with the goal of helping the students build a solid skill set that will enable them to become leaders in the field of service-based medicine. As part of this degree path, students are required to complete eight service events in both the first and second year of medical school, hold a leadership position in a service organization and spend a month working with an underserved population either in the U.S. or abroad. Students then design and implement a sustainable service project at a site of their choosing while addressing issues of organization, structure, needs-assessment and project evaluation. Students will choose a mentor to help monitor their progress toward degree completion and offer support as needed. After presentation of the final thesis project to the Community Service Thesis Committee, students will then present their project to the community either at a scientific meeting or through submission to a publication.

The MDDS degree path is a natural extension of the Siena/Albany Medical College Program that fosters and honors the qualities of humanitarianism, leadership and scholarly activity. The students in the Siena/AMC program will continue to enhance the AMC community by their strong ideals and now they have a new and exciting avenue to support these goals. We anxiously wait for the many ways their involvement with this degree path will enrich the health and well-being of communities around the world.



Matthew Cummings

Matthew Cummings, a member of the Siena Class of 2009 spent the fall of 2007 studying abroad at the Makerere University in Uganda. He then continued his work in Uganda during his 2008 summer of service where he worked with the Epidemiology and Surveillance Division at the Uganda Ministry of Health. During his

time in Uganda he participated in studies of cholera outbreaks, hepatitis E, typhoid and Marburg hemorrhagic fever.

Upon returning to the U.S., Matthew coauthored two publications, "Hepatitis E Joint Review Mission in Kitgum District" and "A Report on the Investigations Done in Bushenyi District Following the Marburg Case Exported to the Netherlands from the *Python Caves*." Subsequently, he presented topics from these papers and his experiences at the conference on Innovation in the Service of Human Dignity in November of 2008 at the University of Notre Dame and in the Spring 2009 issue of *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development* based at Columbia University.

(Continued on pg.2)

Program Update – Ed LaRow

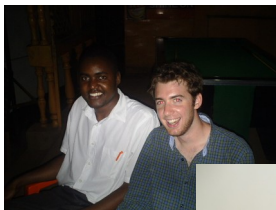
Many things are happening in the Program and we promise to publish these Newsletters at more frequent intervals. We would love to share your accomplishments (professional and personal) with the greater body. Please let me know and we will get the word out. We received a substantial grant from The Graham Hunter Foundation and have initiated an exchange between our AMC students and Dundee Medical College in Scotland. Karen Patricia '06 and Melissa Krueger '06 spent four weeks working in clinics in Dundee. Two Dundee fourth years spent the month of January in Albany. Ryan McIntire '07 and Andy Mustis '07 will be going to Dundee. I have begun another initiative and will be seeking funds to establish fellowships to allow recent graduates to do a second brief period of service prior to entering medical school. This year Matt Cummings will be partially funded for his stay in Senegal where he will take medical French. Matt hopes someday to work with *Medecins Sans Frontieres*.



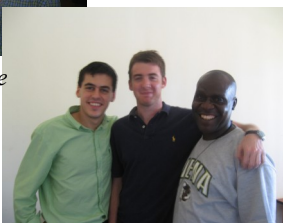
Betty (a nurse from Kitovu Mobile), Anthony, and I helping to prepare medications for a patient.

Matthew Cummings (continued)

This past summer I spent about three months in Uganda working and traveling around the East African nation. I had studied abroad there during the fall 2007 semester and, with the opportunity to travel to a developing country for my Summer of Service, I knew I had to return to Uganda. For the first month of my stay I worked with my fellow student Anthony Conte at an HIV/AIDS clinic and rural outreach service in Masaka Regional Referral Hospital, located in southwestern Uganda. Anthony and I assisted the two physicians there in documenting patient histories, medication regimens and supplied the clinic with toys and athletic equipment that we used to play with the children who came to the hospital every Friday for their pediatric visits. Drs. John and Francis Ssali, the two excellent and compassionate physicians at the clinic, taught us extremely valuable lessons, both scientifically and personally, about the true nature of medicine. Dr. Francis was able to further convey his lessons to the Siena community as he came to campus to give a talk on HIV/AIDS in Uganda this past fall. This experience, in addition to our trips to rural communities to distribute antiretrovirals (the drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS) left a lasting mark



Dr. Francis and me



Anthony, Dr. John, and me at the Uganda Cares HIV/AIDS clinic at Masaka

on me and Anthony that we will be forever grateful for. After Anthony departed Uganda, I began working with the Epidemiology and Surveillance Division at the Uganda Ministry of Health with Mr. Luswa Lukwago and Dr. Joseph Wamala, epidemiologists I had met during my semester abroad. During this time, I was able to travel around the country with the teams from the Ministry as they investigated outbreaks of communicable diseases such as hepatitis

E, cholera, typhoid, meningitis, and Marburg hemorrhagic fever. This experience was, to put it simply, incredible. With the help of Mr. Luswa and Dr. Wamala, I was able to bear witness to levels of poverty and preventable disease that I believe undoubtedly will impact my future in medicine in working with the underserved and neglected. I cannot express my thankfulness to the Albany Med program for providing me with this opportunity to

travel to Uganda and for all that I have gained from my experiences.



AMC Class of 2008 Heads on to Residency

- Micheal Freeman - **Pediatrics**. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Pittsburgh, PA.
- Jennifer Trachsler - **Pathology**. Albany Medical Center. Albany, NY.
- Elaine Giannakos - **Pediatrics**. John Hopkins Medical Center. Baltimore, MD.
- Vasudha Kogani - **Family Medicine**. Thomas Jefferson University. Philadelphia, PA.
- Jeannine Miranne - **OB-GYN**. Women and Infants. Providence, RI.
- Blake Moore - **Orthopedic Surgery**. Geisinger Health System. Danville, PA.
- Maya Nanda - **Pediatrics**. NYU School of Medicine. New York, NY.
- Victoria Varga - **Otolaryngology**. University of Chicago Medical Center. Chicago, IL.

AMC Class of 2009 Heads on to Residency

- Adam Coleman - **Internal Medicine**. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, NH.
- Courtney McHale - **Family Medicine**. Georgetown University Medical Center. Washington, DC
- Joan Paul - **Transitional year (will be doing research)**. California.
- Mary Paul - **Pediatrics**. Baylor Medical Center. Richardson, TX.
- John Gall - **Emergency Medicine**. Louisville Medical Center. Louisville, KY.
- Kim Robinson - **Child Psychology**. University of Kentucky Medical Center. Lexington, KY.
- Erica Goyal - **Family Medicine**. Harbor UCLA Medical Center. Torrance, CA.
- Rob Hirten - **Internal Medicine**. Einstein Medical Center. New York, NY.



Our students continue to excel at the Medical College. The eight students in the Class of 2008 comprised 6% of the graduating class yet made up 17% of AOA (The Medical Honor Society). 27% of those graduated with Honors and 12% received Academic Awards. Micheal Freeman graduated *Magna cum laude* with a Distinction in the Study of Biomedical Ethics. He received the R.J. Wharton Prize and the Vosburgh Scholarship. Jeannine Marianne graduated *Magna cum laude* and received the Gold Humanism Scholar and the Kenneth M. Archibold Prize. Elaine Giannakos graduated *cum laude* and received the Kevin D. Barron Neuroscience Award and the Pediatric Faculty Prize. Vasudha Koganti received the Martin & Irma Feldstein Family Practice Scholarship and Victoria Varga graduated *cum laude*.



Summer of Service – Meredith Chan Manila, Philippines

Meredith Chan

As I took a deep breath, I savored the palpable mingling of barbecued banana, rotisserie pork and car exhaust that filled the air. I closed my eyes and listened to the cacophony of car horns and the dulcet sounds of a language I usually only hear within the walls of my home. The scents and sounds evoked distant memories of childhood summers spent with my Grandma. Exhale. Open. Yes, I was definitely back in the Philippines. I knew, though, that this trip would be much different from the times I have come and spent my days lounging in the sun, sipping on cold *kalamansi*. I would be spending the next three months volunteering at Hospicio de San Jose, an orphanage administered by the Daughters of Charity located in Metro Manila.

For eight weeks, my friends Catherine Cagino, Jennifer Dinnel and Jenny Shim and I worked with about 30 children, ranging from a few months old to 6 years old. We fed, bathed and played with them, giving each a nickname and getting to know their individual personalities. To call the experience life-changing would be inadequate. I went from a clueless babysitter to a caregiver familiar with the different, nuanced tactics needed to soothe and humor each child. Still today, thinking about Ken's large head, Reign's crooked smile, Jonas' penguin walk and Car-



Jennifer Dinnel

lito's "bah-bah-bah" brings a smile to my face and the intense yearning to go back home and check on my babies.

Particularly special to me was the opportunity to share my culture with my friends. Seeing them experience a country I've been to countless times compelled me to view things in a way I've never done before. I had taken for granted all these years the natural beauty of both the islands and its gregarious, fun-loving people. I left the Philippines feeling closer to my culture and taking deeper pride in what it means to be Filipino.

During our time there, I discovered a lot about myself. I learned that my body can withstand the weight of 12 preschoolers at once, that I'm really good at stepping on 6-inch spiders and also that I shouldn't eat the baby food (Cipro is a godsend!). But most importantly, I realized how lucky I am to have spent time with children that I would never have come into contact with otherwise. They taught me a lesson I could not have learned elsewhere: if a child smiles when you walk into a room, you've done something really special.



Jenny Shim



1

Summer of Service Locations for Class of 2009

- Dolores Blais, Amanda Wingle and Erica Troy (photo 4)- **Kigali, Rwanda**
- Thomas Cacciola and Alexander Chapman- **St. Georges, Grenada**
- Meredith Chan, Jenny Shim, and Jennifer Dinnel - **Manila, Philippines**
- Anthony Conte, Matthew Cummings and Midhuna William (photo 2)- **Kibuye, Uganda**
- Katelyn Moretti (photo 1) and Samuel Ogden- **Suchitoto, El Salvador**
- Roshni Naik (photo 3)- **San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala**



2



3

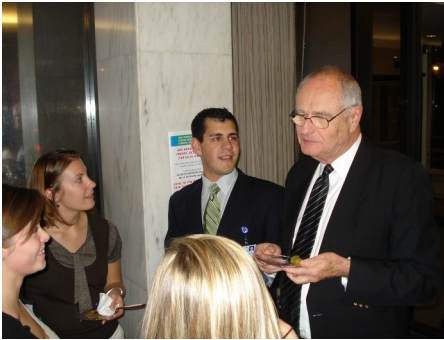


4

Program Events 2008 - Senior Slideshow

Honorary Degree Reception for Dr. LaRow

Oct. 2008



Senior Slideshow

March 2009

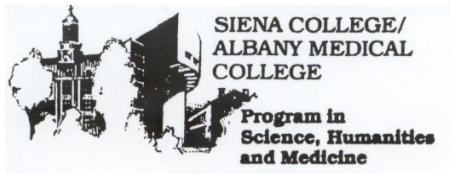


Immaculee Ilibagiza

March 2008



Special thanks to Charlotte Goldfine '11 and Dolores Blais '09



Siena/Albany Medical College Program
C/O Siena College Admissions Office
515 Loudon Road
Loudonville, NY 12211

We want to hear from you!
To submit information for publishing or to receive this newsletter electronically please, contact:
Dr. Ed LaRow
larow@siena.edu