



# Journeys

THE SIENA COLLEGE / ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE PROGRAM

Fall 2017

## Program Update—Ed LaRow '59, Ph.D.



We welcomed 14 members for the Class of 2021, this is the 32<sup>nd</sup> class to begin their eight-year journey to the MD Degree.

This is a talented group of individuals selected from a national pool of 468 applicants. We currently have 108 students in the pipeline – 59 at Siena and 49 at AMC. To date, 237 have received their MD degrees. The Class of '13/'17 did Siena proud at the most recent AMC graduation. They represented 10% of the AMC class,

yet comprised 27% of the Honors Graduates, received 24% of the awards and made up 17% of AOA (their residencies are listed below).

The 31<sup>st</sup> annual picnic was held at Serra Manor and was the most successful to date. We had 90 attendees that included 35 medical students and two of the most recent graduates.

Sharon Hsu and Monica Hanna planned a surprise 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary party that had 100 students, faculty and friends show up for the celebration. There was an elaborate ruse to keep me in the dark about the party. This will be my last full year at the helm of the Program.

A Committee of Siena and AMC faculty and administrators met during the summer and fall of 2016 to develop a transition plan for the program. Two major changes have been recommended and put in place. All planning and logistics for the Summer of Service will be handled by the International Studies Office and AMC will play a greater role in the selection of the class. Siena will still make the final decision as to who will be interviewed for the program. We have initiated a feature highlighting accomplishments of program alumni... any suggestions for future candidates are most welcome.

## AMC Class of 2017 Residency Matches

Nicole Andrews—**Internal Medicine**, Stony Brook Teaching Hospital

Michael Ashamalla—**Internal Medicine**, Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine

Rani Berry—**Internal Medicine**, UCLA Medical Center

Jency Daniel—**Pediatrics**, New York Medical College-Westchester Medical Center

Alyssa Herrmann—**OB/GYN**, Cleveland Clinic

Daniel Lee—**Otolaryngology**, Albany Medical Center

Dylan Lee—**Internal Medicine**, Penn State University

Antony Mathew—**Emergency Medicine**, Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY

Joshua Mellor—**Pediatrics**, Brown University

Tini Ramineni—**Internal Medicine**, Cedar-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA

Amanda Tashjian—**OB/GYN**, Madigan Army Medical Center, Tacoma, WA

Kathryn Williams—**Ophthalmology**, Albany Medical Center

# My Summer in Nepal

By John Stone '18

I can still recall the feeling of shock that I felt upon my arrival in Kathmandu, Nepal this past summer. As we made our way along the



bumpy dirt roads heading south of the city to a small village named Lele, I took in my first glimpses of life in Nepal. Kathmandu operates at a chaotic pace, while the countryside just outside of the city encompasses some of the most stunning landscape I have seen. The main cause of the shock that I so vividly remember, however, was the immense level of poverty that I witnessed on that first day in Nepal.

I spent my summer of service at Anandaban Hospital, which is a leprosy hospital that cares for roughly 100 patients at a time. Anandaban is actually a Nepali word for “forest of joy,” and I quickly learned how fitting this name truly is. People from both Nepal and India travel for days to receive care at Anandaban, as the cost of treatment for anyone with leprosy is covered entirely by the hospital. Patients affected by leprosy suffer not only from their physical disabilities, but also are discriminated against by both their families and communities. The rejection and isolation that these people experience can be the most demoralizing aspect of the disease.

Despite these challenges, I found so many patients to maintain such a positive outlook on life. I spent most of my day in the wards getting to know patients.

After a few patients taught me some of their favorite Nepali board games, we often found ourselves playing these games for hours. I became close friends with a patient named Bharat, who actually was the same age as me. Bharat was forced to leave his university to receive treatment once he was diagnosed with leprosy.

Although he was unable to attend lectures, and often felt sick from his medication, I found Bharat studying on many afternoons. He even caught a local bus one Saturday to take his midterm exams. Becoming friends



with Bharat put so much of my own life into perspective, and I think often of his bravery and strength.

I enjoyed my time at Anandaban so much that I actually decided to stay in Nepal for an extra three weeks to go trekking. I hired a guide in Kathmandu, and we embarked on a 16-day, 120 mile hike around the Annapurna Himal. We would rest each night at small villages along the trail, and our trek even brought us over the Thorung La Pass (17,769 feet).



My time in Nepal this summer surpassed my expectations in almost every way. Although many people in Nepal may not have the material possessions or lifestyles that we aspire for in the West, I truly believe most Nepalese people are content and happy with their lives. I think that this happiness can be accounted for by people’s dedication to their families, friends, and faiths. Life in Nepal is rooted in forming meaningful relationships with others, and I will always cherish the friendships I made with patients and staff members at Anandaban. These six weeks have had such a meaningful impact on my life, and I cannot wait to return to Anandaban someday to return the favor.





Voluntary and humanitarian aid work is undoubtedly Dr. Fazila Lalani's passion. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to charitable efforts both in the United States and around the world. Dr. Lalani believes deeply in her ideals, and has worked tirelessly to make her ideas about human equality and compassion a reality.



### What humanitarian trips have you made as a medical professional?

I found and fell in love with emergency medicine after medical school. I went to Pakistan in 2005 as a fourth-year medical student, and then to Haiti in 2011 and Nepal in 2015 after the earthquakes. I returned to Haiti again in 2016. I have taught at a residency program in India four times in the last two years. I have been in Tanzania for the last six months, and I will stay here for a year. I plan to then go to Tajikistan for six months, and also to northern Pakistan for a month.



### What inspires you to serve?

I have this crazy notion that all human beings are exactly the same, brothers and sisters, and so we all deserve equal access to everything (a healthy and fulfilling life). Thanks to Siena, I have the skills, experience and knowledge required to deliver a functioning system of health care. I want to share my belief in this principle of equality with my brothers and sisters around the world.

### What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?

Just taking a look at the change your interventions and hard work and enthusiasm bring about is gratifying. Watching my residents teach medical students the chest pain differential, and nurses teaching other nurses how to use my old laptop to start doing a computerized data entry has been rewarding experience. I teach a nurses' lecture every Tuesday morning, and two weeks ago I was sick and texted them to cancel the class. When I woke up a couple of hours later, the students were quizzing each other using Dr. Fazila as their case based review. It was heaven to my eyes!

### What are some of the things you loved about Siena and the Program?

Being a part of the program solidified my love for international development and the Summer of Service gave me the confidence to start traveling independently and unidirectionally, towards this end goal.

### Do you have any words of advice for the rest of us going through the Program?

There is nothing easy about the path we've chosen- hard exams, long hours, missing out on parties, learning a whole new language. But you have to make it your own amazing adventure- have a dance party with your friends after studying all night long, travel the world, meet people, talk to everyone, find hobbies that



make you smile and feel proud of who you are when others might shame you for not memorizing the entire Krebs cycle. That's not what will be important six years from now, when



you're caring for patients, shocking SVT, putting in central lines, diagnosing cholecystitis with bedside ultrasound and trying to get your patients to stop smoking. This program and Dr. LaRow have been a little piece of heaven here on Earth.

## Siena Class of 2021: “Why I Chose Siena”

### **Gabrielle Lee**

*Guilderland, New York*

I came to Siena because the overall community was so incredibly welcoming, and the students and teachers alike are very friendly. I saw my brother and sister-in-law go through the same process here, and loved their feedback about the support they received.

### **Michael Tram**

*Irvine, California*

I chose Siena because from the moment I walked on campus, I could not imagine having my college experience anywhere else. I knew that Siena would be the perfect place for me to grow academically, socially, and personally. And so far, I absolutely love being a Saint!

### **Veda Chandwani**

*Sharon, Massachusetts*

I chose Siena because this school allowed me to indulge in my passion for service and medicine and combined them into one. The people I met during my interview and tour were so accepting and always willing to give a smile and a helping hand.

### **Sarah Goh**

*Seattle, Washington*

I came to Siena for its relationship aspect. I could see myself having good teacher, student, and advisor relationships. For other schools, it was all about what I could bring to make the school look better but for Siena it was all about what they could do to help me grow as a passionate student and beyond.

### **Christina Carey**

*Huntington, New York*

I chose to come to Siena because of the sense of community that you get the second you walk on campus. Everyone is so caring and supportive of one another, and I can't imagine going to college anywhere else!

## Siena Class of 2018 Summer of Service

I was blessed to have the opportunity to live and serve in the Botshabelo orphanage for 4 weeks this past summer. Because these children did not speak my language, every action I did meant so much more to me because of the effort I put into it. I wasn't doing things out of routine anymore; for every thought I wanted to express I had to think of a way to make all those around me understand. I didn't have to worry about being genuine, because everything I did or said, I actually meant, I actually thought about. The children taught me to be sincere in everything I did. They taught me that effort doesn't go unnoticed and that love and gratitude transcends all barriers.

-Monica Hanna  
Mahilsburg, South Africa



We spent our summer in Kathmandu, Nepal where we taught English to students and lived in a children's home. During this eye opening trip, we built strong relationships with the children, teachers, and caretakers, and learned how to live with much less than we are used to. We not only achieved a deeper understanding of how privileged we are, but also learned how to find beauty and joy in simplicity.

-Irene Joseph, Alexa Trovato, Samatha Sattler  
Kathmandu, Nepal





During our summer of service in Kolkata, India we worked at various homes including homes for the elderly, homes for handicapped children and adults, and an orphanage. Our experiences were truly profound and the lessons we learned about ourselves and the people we served will carry with us throughout our future careers as physicians. We strengthened our skills in communication, caring for those in need, and loving all with open arms.

-Niki Wadwha, Jennifer Park, Kathryn Fortune, Kristiana Hanna, Katherine Lipinski  
Kolkata, India



My trip to the Missions of Charity site in Tamil Nadu, India, was a life changing experience that has humbled and changed me in unimaginable ways. Spending time with disabled children, speaking my native language, and roaming around the streets of this impoverished country taught me to find joys in the simplest actions and selfless service. The memories I made with the sisters and these children will live with me and inspire me and my career as a physician.

-Padmaja Sundaram  
Tamil Nadu, India



We spent six weeks at St. Gabriel's School in Fontaine Haiti, a rural village on the northern plateau. During that time we taught a variety of English classes at a few local primary and secondary schools. Through our experience we built strong relationships with the people in the village of Fontaine and gained deeper insights to the struggles of others.

-Greg Altman, Katie Burke  
Fontaine, Haiti



In our trip to Managua, Nicaragua, we spent six weeks doing service, working in a preschool for malnourished children and volunteering in a community center for underprivileged adolescents. We made incredible, lasting relationships, immersed ourselves in and learned about the culture of Nicaragua, and all the while, we were able to improve and use our Spanish on a daily basis. Nicaragua is a beautiful country with amazing people, but also with some challenges to overcome, and we were humbled to have been able to serve and learn alongside the people there this past summer.

-Nicole Romanzo, Brian Talbot  
Managua, Nicaragua



While volunteering at Centro de Esperanza, we had the opportunity to provide homework help to younger children and teach English to older students and single mothers. While spending time with our students, we often learned about their painful realities, which were difficult for us to hear, but hardly ever rocked the spirited students and took away their opportunity to smile. In fact, this was characteristic of all of Oaxaca, a city of colorfully painted streets and parading people offering, not a single smile, but countless.

Samir El-Sawaf, Erik Reidel, Divya Disani  
Oaxaca, Mexico



Habitat for Humanity



Seniors at AMC Picnic



Sophomore-Freshmen Dinner



Dr. LaRow Speaking at AMC Picnic



AMC Poster Presentation



Haiti Dinner



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

Loudonville, NY 12211  
515 Loudon Road  
c/o Siena College Admissions Office  
Siena/Albany Medical College Program

