

Education has always been a foundational pillar in my personal and professional endeavors, one that has led me to where I am now. Aristotle said, “The roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet.” As I have laid down my foundational roots of medical knowledge, the fruit is now to be enjoyed by my patients and their families. Children are the foundational pillars of society, and must be built sturdily to fully achieve their potential. My passion for pediatrics is driven by an understanding that empowerment comes from being educated about your body’s functioning. As a physician, I want to ensure every upcoming generation is mindful of their health to better empower and advocate for themselves.

Primarily, my background in performing arts afforded me the extraordinary opportunity to deeply connect with the audience to transport them to another world. This skill later became my greatest tool for pediatric patient care, as this magical connection enabled me to gain young patients’ trust, while simultaneously allowing me to provide any necessary medical care. When working with children of varying ages, I have transformed my 27-year-old personality to fit one of a 7-year-old or even a 17-year-old, to relate and build a meaningful bond with my patients. I was able to employ this essential skill during my Junior year of my undergraduate education, where I embarked on a medical mission trip to the Bahamas. While there, my team sought to educate young women in the hopes that they became their own health advocates. I spent my time teaching the young women about health, hygiene, and sexual education. My most significant connection was with a 15-year-old girl named Vanique. At the end of the third day, Vanique asked for my phone number to keep in touch. Approximately 9 months after the trip, I received a call from an unknown number. I felt humbled when I recognized Vanique’s voice on the other line; as a result, the connection I established with Vanique is one I have sought with each patient, and will continue to seek with future patients. I will strive to provide a safe place to express their concerns, and cultivate an open relationship that will allow for exceptional patient care.

I wanted to continue my passion for educating and empowering children about their health, so I spent the summer after my first year of medical school at Camp Kudzu, a camp for children with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus. I was responsible for ten 10-year-old boys, wherein I had two missions: ensure they had an enjoyable camp experience and teach them to properly monitor their sugar levels. By the end of week, the campers felt empowered about their condition. My time with the campers provided me with a skillset that parallels the necessary qualities of a future pediatric physician. Through my compassion, patience, gentle nature and dependability, I set a precedent for how my campers can approach future interactions with their physicians. These are characteristics central to pediatrics; therefore, I am confident my experiences have well-equipped me for a successful career as a physician.

My time at Camp Kudzu inspired me to start the T1DE Project, an initiative to establish a Type 1 Diabetes camp in Puerto Rico. The initiative teaches children of low socioeconomic status how to advocate for themselves, regarding their condition, to gain equal opportunity in healthcare. As a result, I intend to display the same creativity and capability during my time as a pediatric physician by supporting community and global outreach projects.

When asked what specialty I wanted to choose, I have always said pediatrics. When asked what my back up plan was, I answered, “plans A through Z are all pediatrics.” I have never doubted pediatrics is my specialty, as no other patient population has enriched my life the way children

have. Every connection I make reinforces I have chosen a specialty that highlights my ability to be a confidant, advocate, and empowering role model. Consequently, my strong patient connections will aid me in practicing evidence-based medicine. My goal is to educate my patients and their families to build a fortified alliance and establish lasting outcomes.