

Trail Rider Notes
Office of Rural Medical Education
May 2013

UNT | **HEALTH**
SCIENCE CENTER
TEXAS COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Celebrating *the* Rural Scholars

2013

NADINE ALDAHAN

MORGAN COLLOM

MARY CROWELL

JOANNA GIBBONS

BROOKE JORDAN

REBECCA PEEBLES

ROBERT MITCHELL



A WORD

from the Assistant Dean
of Rural Medical Education



In this issue of Trail Rider Notes, we are proud to present our fourth graduating cohort of Rural Scholars. These seven students have distinguished themselves throughout their four years as students

at the UNTHSC's Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. On Saturday, May 18th when they receive their Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree, they will have completed their next step toward realizing their dream of becoming a rural physician. Four years ago they committed to the Rural Scholars curriculum at TCOM because they believed this would be the best preparation for a life and practice in rural Texas. It appears from their comments that they still believe. From early immersion into rural community life to their rural community research project, they have seen how a practice founded in health promotion and disease prevention from an osteopathic perspective can lead to better health for rural Texans and healthier rural communities.

We continue to place the majority of our Rural Scholar graduates in primary care residencies. On July 1st, six of this year's graduates will begin family medicine residencies. Our seventh graduate will one day provide needed general surgery care to a rural population.

Our outstanding rural adjunct faculty continues to teach, guide, and mentor our Rural Scholars when they are rotating through their rural clinical rotations. These students will, I am sure, always remember these role models and will one day want to "give forward" to future students. We thank our rural faculty who give freely and unselfishly of their time to help prepare students for eventual rural practice. I congratulate our seven 2013 Rural Scholars and welcome them as colleagues.

Well done ROMERS!

John R. Bowling, DO, FACOFP, dist.
Assistant Dean of Rural Medical Education
Office of Rural Medical Education

Rural Medical Students Well Prepared

The Rural Scholars program at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine proudly presents the graduating class of 2013. Built around the longstanding Family Medicine Rural Tract (1992-2009), this program is designed to prepare the osteopathic graduate for life and practice in rural Texas. This class of 7 brings the total number of graduates to thirty-five, 85 % entering into primary care residencies.

In addition to the regular medical school curriculum, these students have done approximately 300 additional contact hours of didactic and clinical instruction. Each student is matched with a rural osteopathic family physician and establishes a longitudinal relationship with that physician and the community. During the 4 years of medical school the student will spend 24 weeks living and training in their assigned rural community. In addition to this Family Medicine experience, students complete their 3rd year core clinical rotations in a variety of rural locations (8 months). This total immersion in rural communities prepares them well for life and practice in rural Texas.

A key component of the Rural Scholars program is the Community Health Research Project. Each student, working in conjunction with the rural Family Medicine faculty and the community, chooses a health related problem in that community, identifies available resources, and develops an action plan to alleviate the problem. This project helps the student develop an analytical mindset and an understanding of the leadership role they will play as a community leader.



NADINE ALDAHAN

from Austin, Texas



Nadine started medical school after working several years in the semiconductor industry. She worked for Motorola/Freescale, Inc. as a process engineer and hardware manager.

She completed a Master's at UNT Health Science Center in Biomedical Sciences to help transition back to education. Upon matriculation into TCOM, she made the most out of every opportunity she was given throughout her medical education. She participated in several organizations on campus, was President of ACOFP, Vice President of SAAO, and class representative. In addition, she tutored anatomy and basic sciences and went on a medical mission trip to El Salvador. She has emerged a solid researcher, an award winning Rural Scholar and a budding physician that has a passion for families, especially the newborns that enrich those families.

As a Rural Scholar, Nadine has completed rotations in such diverse Texas communities as Clifton, Eastland, Jacksonville, Sweetwater, Stephenville, Sherman, Tyler, and Longview. She is certainly well traveled and has been very well received! One preceptor remarked, "Nadine is outgoing and uses this strength to seek out multiple medical experiences, she gets along well with everyone on the team, she is respectful of patients and compassionate." Is it any surprise that Nadine received the Texas Rural Health Association 2012 Rural Health Student of the Year Award? It wasn't a surprise to us either!

While completing the very rigorous core rotations required in year three, Nadine developed an award



winning research project that was presented at two events. Nadine was awarded second place for her poster presentation at the John Peter Smith Research Day. Her poster summarized colonoscopy practice in rural and urban areas. She examined whether or not any changes will be needed to current practices in those areas to ensure quality of procedure and patient care. This poster was also presented at our Research Appreciation Day at UNTHSC in 2012.

Additionally, Nadine presented another poster at the 2012 ACOG District XI Annual Meeting – a Texas OB/GYN meeting in Houston. She presented a poster titled "Expectant Management of Single Intrauterine Fetal Demise in Twin Gestation" along with her associates Dr. John Graham and Dr. Nicole Yost in Maternal Fetal Medicine, and her preceptor Dr. Ali Al-Housseini.

Nadine reported that her most impressionable rotation was with Dr. Kevin Blanton in Clifton, Texas. She completed 8 weeks with Dr. Blanton in year three and another 8 in year four. She stated, "I have learned a great deal about the wide variety of opportunities available in this type of practice." The Clifton experience provided considerable insight for Nadine as she found that she very much enjoyed delivering babies and is excited to find that a rural Family Medicine practice can have many specialties within it.

Nadine will be completing her Family Medicine Residency in Salinas, California at Natividad Medical Center. This is an unopposed residency program with heavy obstetrics training.

At some point Nadine Aldahan is likely to be teaching at a well-respected university or hospital. This will probably be after spending time in rural and underserved areas providing wide spectrum Family Medicine with Obstetrics. We wish her the best in the future and will miss her very much!

Quotes from Preceptors:

"Excellent student, highly motivated, very punctual, appropriately assertive, good technical skills, and great with patients."

"Good attitude, willingness to learn, assertive with patient care, knows how to find answers to her own questions."



MORGAN COLLOM

from Deer Park, Texas



Morgan was born in Nacogdoches, Texas and lived there until she was three when they moved to Deer Park, Texas for her dad’s job. Her grandparents have a farm just

north of Nacogdoches where she would go on weekends, holidays and during the summer. She enjoyed going fishing, hunting and four wheeling. Maybe that is why she decided to get involved in

the Rural Scholars program.

Quotes from Preceptors:

“Morgan’s strengths include her personality, professionalism and compassion for patients. She is a very strong student who seems to have gone into medicine for all the right reasons. She is one of the best rural students thus far.”

“Morgan is an excellent student, well read and overall one of the best students to rotate here in a long while. She is well ahead of her peers.”

She did well with the didactics in year one and two and then immersed herself in rotations in Lufkin, Cuero, Victoria and Crockett. Crockett is where she felt the greatest excitement and that was all about surgery. Ray Morrison, DO and Jeffrey Walker,

MD both shared with her their own passion for the surgical profession. Morgan stated that the most positive aspect of this rotation was the “one-on-one time I received with the preceptors and the great instruction they provided.” Morgan did all she could to get in on every surgery possible – even in her OB rotation where she was able to be first assist on a few C-sections. Morgan confessed, “I did my OB/GYN

rotation in Crockett so I could continue to learn from Dr. Walker and Dr. Morrison while there, it was a great experience.” Dr. Walker invited Morgan to attend the South Texas College of Surgeons Conference where she could begin to orient herself to the field and get to know others who could foster her interest.

While completing her family medicine rotation in Cuero, Texas with Dr. David Hill, Morgan reported that this was “a solid rotation.” She stated that there was a steady flow of patients and the preceptor provided autonomy and steady accessibility to ask questions. She went on to say that the clinic staff were very welcoming and she enjoyed this site.

While all Rural Scholars are required to complete a research project, they are not required to present this work. However, Morgan compiled her research and presented it in poster form at the UNTHSC Research Appreciation Day in 2012. This is admirable because this was done while Morgan was traveling from one rotation to the next in her third year.

She will be attending the University of Texas at Houston Memorial Hermann Hospital residency program for general surgery. This is the largest not-for-profit health system in Southeast Texas, Memorial Hermann has 12 hospitals and numerous specialty programs and services conveniently located throughout the Greater Houston area. Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center is one of the nation’s busiest Level I trauma centers and the primary teaching hospital for The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School.





UNT HEALTH
SCIENCE CENTER
 TEXAS COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE



First row left to right:

- Rebecca Peebles
- Morgan Collom
- Brooke Jordan

Second row left to right:

- Joanna Gibbons
- Nadine Aldahhan
- Mary Crowell

Third row left to right:

- Nadine Aldahhan
- Robert Mitchell



MARY CROWELL

from Kamiah, Idaho



Mary always knew she wanted to do medicine in some form. That path took her first to nursing where she served as a cardiac nurse for six years. She enjoyed the patients and the work, but felt that she could be doing more. That was when she decided to go to medical school. It was not easy to walk away from a solid income and everything that was familiar. But Mary knew that she wanted to have a greater impact and that was why she opted for medical school, she decided that being a rural physician was where she could contribute the most. She stated, "Coming from a rural area, I understand the challenges facing an underserved community. I would like to be able to provide quality care in any setting not just urban areas."

Quote from Preceptors:

"Mary did a terrific job. Took good care of patients, exercised good judgment!"

"Some of Mary's greatest strengths include her personality and her work ethic. She establishes strong relationships with peers – coworkers."

Mary was influential in every clinical situation she experienced in medical school. Her nursing background gave her an edge, making patient contact familiar and easy. However, adding the physician's

Quote from Preceptor:

"Mary has a very calm and nurturing demeanor which put even the most troublesome patients at ease. Parents of patients enjoyed her interactions with the children and her calm professionalism."

perspective to her patient encounters added a powerful dimension to her effectiveness. Mary completed rotations in Spearman, Eastland and Longview, Texas.

This graduate is most proud of her trip to Guatemala. She was able to learn a great deal of medical Spanish and understand better what is involved in long term care for underserved populations in an international setting.

As one of only two osteopaths on the trip, when Mary treated a patient with OMM, the other students laughed until the patient remarked how much better she felt! Overall this was an eye-opening experience that she will benefit from for many years.



Mary was very moved by the experience in Guatemala and is grateful for all she learned there.

She will be doing her residency at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (EVCOM)/ Blue Ridge Healthcare in Morganton, North Carolina. We will miss her and know they will be delighted to have her gracious personality and depth of skill in their facility. After residency, she plans to work as a primary care physician in a rural setting in the United States or abroad.

Quote from Preceptor:

"She has a great personality, good core knowledge, and is a great medical student."



REBECCA PEEBLES

from El Paso, Texas



Becky is a military medical student. This means that she has obligations to the medical school, to the Rural Scholars Program and to the United States Air Force where she will be commissioned as a Captain upon graduation. This also means that she will complete a military residency and will begin serving the members and families of our armed forces in July.

Becky is also an athlete. When going out on rotations, one of the first questions she asked herself was, “where can I run or swim or cycle?” While Becky has covered a lot of ground in her rural rotations (Jacksonville, San Saba, Crockett, Fredericksburg, Plainview, and Sherman) it does not compare to the distance she has covered as a triathlete. She has completed 9 half marathons, 10 full marathons, 6 triathlons, 1 half Ironman, and numerous short distance races. She is indeed an athlete! This stamina has helped her as she has given each clinical experience her absolute best. The preceptors say so themselves: “This student’s strengths include compassion, knowledge, practicality, recall, the ability to relate to others, and using computer based technology. She is the very best student that I have encountered in her 3rd year rotation.” “This student well surpassed expectations. Her level of knowledge and critical thinking are more than appropriate at this point in training. She did not hesitate to interject her ideas for patient management. Becky is definitely ready to move on to the next phase of training.” “Becky did superb work and demonstrated excellence in her daily performance. She has a passion for primary care and it clearly showed. She did an

awesome job with colonoscopies showing skills well above a typical YR4 student. She has well balanced confidence and humility and is very intelligent. Of the 50+ students we train yearly, I would rate her in the top 5%.”

While at TCOM Becky has served as an officer at the local and national levels of the Student Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons.

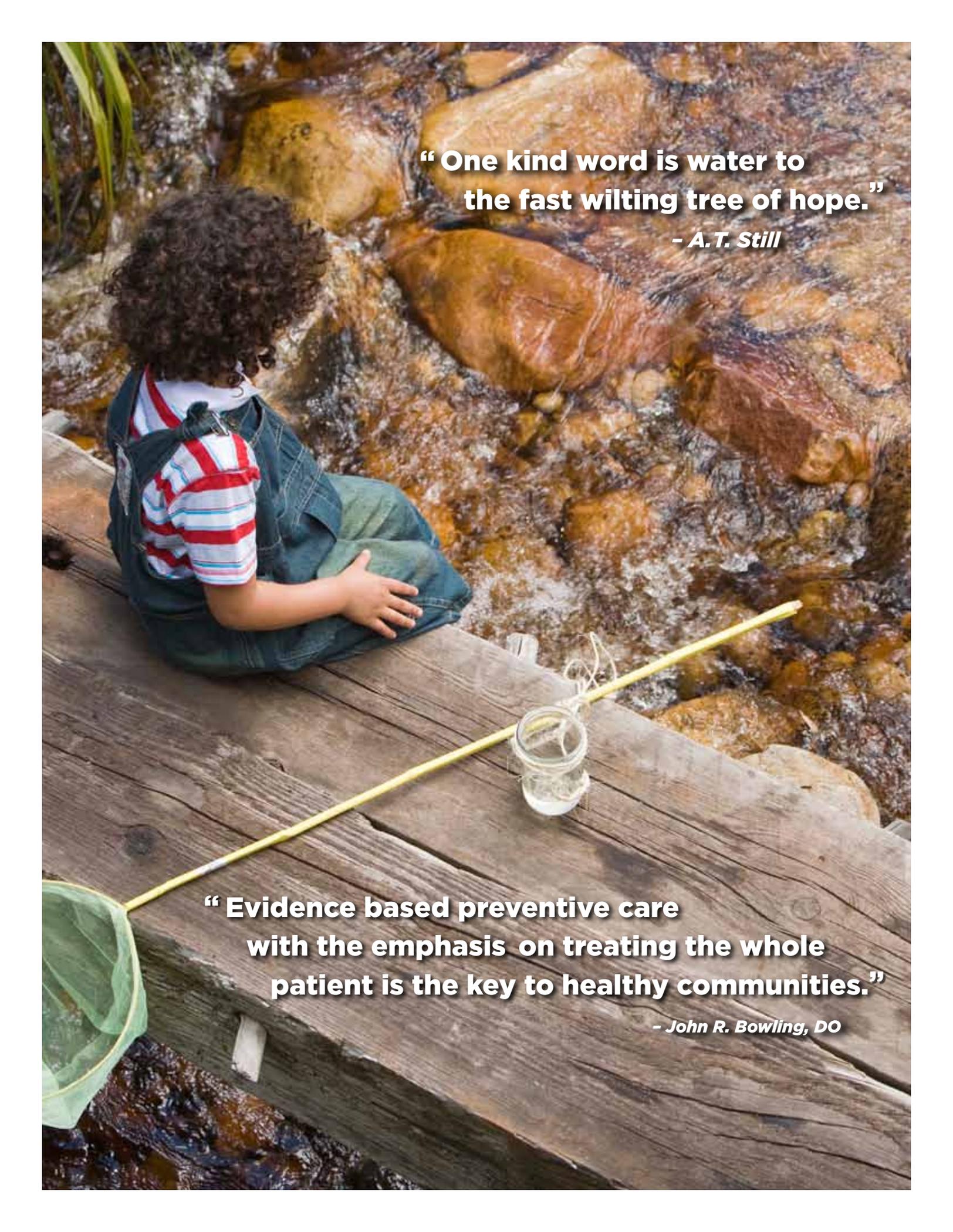
She made a medical mission trip to El Salvador in March 2011 and remarks that this experience taught her a great deal about how to use clinical diagnostic skills to provide the best care possible in areas where medical technology is minimal. She was also able to improve her osteopathic manipulation skills and use of the Spanish language, expanding her resources for future patient care.

Recently, Becky Downey became Becky Peebles. She and her new husband, TJ will be traveling to the west coast to Travis Air Force Base. Becky will complete her residency in Family Medicine in Fairfield, California at the David Grant USAF Medical Center which is the Air Force Medical Service’s flagship medical treatment facility in the United States. We are so proud of all Becky has accomplished and will miss her very much!

Quote from Preceptor:

“Student strengths include compassion, knowledge, ability to relate to others, practicality, recall, using computer based technology. She is the very best student that I have encountered in her 3rd year preceptorship.”





**“ One kind word is water to
the fast wilting tree of hope.”**

- A.T. Still

**“ Evidence based preventive care
with the emphasis on treating the whole
patient is the key to healthy communities.”**

- John R. Bowling, DO



JOANNA GIBBONS

from Highland Park, Texas



Joanna decided to be a rural doctor because of her dedication to vulnerable populations including those in rural medically underserved areas. One of her instructors described it this way, “Joanna’s actions always typified the characteristics of the quintessential osteopathic medical student; caring, involved, concerned, knowledgeable, humanistic and hands on. She will always be a tribute to her profession, wherever she chooses to serve.”

Her clinical experiences as a Rural Scholar have placed her in rotations throughout Texas including Crockett, Sweetwater, Victoria, Whitesboro, Nacogdoches and Bells. She reported that each of these rotations taught her about the unique features of a rural medical practice, “I saw how one person could affect an entire community and change how people approach health.” Her Family Medicine preceptor was Dr. Bruce Maniet in Bells, Texas, a true advocate of the osteopathic profession and of educating up-and-coming DOs.

One particularly unique experience for Joanna was an international family medicine rotation that she completed in Israel. This rotation provided an appreciation for effective resource utilization in underserved areas with both geographical and political barriers to healthcare.

In 2011, Joanna was selected as an Undergraduate Fellow in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM). She spent that year immersing herself in learning, teaching and researching this specialized form of care which is one of the defining features of being an osteopathic physician. Joanna started early, developing her OMM skills serving as a Teaching Assistant for this department throughout her second year of medical school. Dr. Walsh comments, “Joanna is an enthusiastic and eager student who enveloped herself into the OMM teaching program. Her smile and compassion immediately set patients at ease. She is well respected by her fellow students, patients, and clinic staff.”

In 2010 she was commended for her commitment to serving in the community as she was awarded the Gold TOUCH Service Award for over 100 hours of community service. These hours were spent teaching adult literacy classes and promoting health education and screening at multiple health fairs.

Joanna’s leadership skills were immediately evident in 2009/2010 when she served as the President of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association (TOMA) Student Organization and was the Student Representative on the TOMA Board of Directors. Her peers remarked that she was “inspiring and inclusive” throughout her tenure in this position.

This determined medical student has been very active in research, having participated in 4 studies including her Community Health Research Project on “Individual Disaster Preparedness in East Grayson and West Fannin Counties.”

Joanna was outstanding in her commitment to advocate for health policy that would result in healthier rural populations. She went to Austin in 2009, 2011 and 2013 to help advocate for statewide rural policy.

Joanna will be doing her Family Medicine residency at Ventura County Medical Center in Ventura, California. She will bring a unique blend of a very tender spirit and a commanding diligence in the care of her patients to this medical program. We miss her already!



Quote from Preceptor:

“Joanna’s actions always typified the characteristics of the quintessential osteopathic medical student; caring, involved, concerned, knowledgeable, humanistic and hands on. She will always be a tribute to her profession, wherever she chooses to serve.”



BROOKE JORDAN

from Keller, Texas



One of Brooke’s preceptors remarked, “She is undoubtedly the most complete student that I have ever had the privilege to teach. She will be a fantastic doctor and an asset to the profession.” That description is how most people would describe Brooke. She is intelligent, committed and an impressive communicator. Brooke has worked with Dr. Howard Dickey in Comanche, Texas throughout her entire 4 years of medical school. During that time she has evolved in several ways. She started out watching and learned that Dr. Dickey expects a lot of “doing” from his students. She quickly began taking responsibility for whatever her skill level would permit. As she became more familiar with this preceptor, she began to simply do more. She knew how and when to ask questions and get the answers she needed to proceed with more autonomy. Finally, in her fourth year with Dr. Dickey, Brooke was able to function at the level of the intern she was about to become: seeing

all of their clinic patients, rounding and dictating on all of their inpatients, and working up all of their ER patients.

Quotes from Preceptors:

“Brooke is among the best students I have taught. She was excellent in every way on this rotation and if she continues in family medicine I would be very interested in her returning to this area.”

“Brooke’s strengths include her knowledge, compassion and ability to effectively communicate. Excellent medical student.”

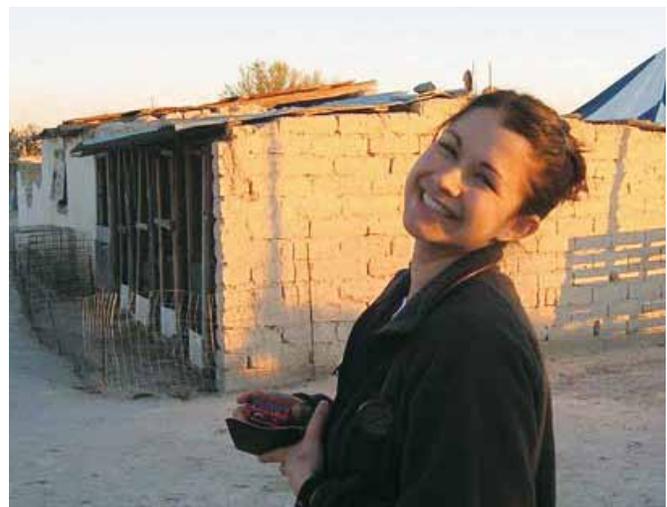
Brooke wanted to enhance her understanding of geriatrics in year four and chose to complete her required rotation with the geriatrics department at UNT Health Science Center. She described this as a valuable experience, “I was able to spend two weeks working with Dr. Mathe

on the Palliative Care service at Harris Methodist hospital, and mainly participated in complex family meetings deciding termination of care and managing difficult to treat pain in oncology patients. I had not previously been exposed to these situations enough to feel confident in my ability to manage them, and now I can say that I will be able to approach situations such as these in residency with confidence.”

Brooke did a medical mission trip to Saltillo, Mexico and helped to provide physical exams and medications to patients both in the city and out on

the rural “ranchos.” She found that she did, in fact, remember some of her high school Spanish, and came to believe that regardless of how dysfunctional the healthcare system is in the United States, we are immensely fortunate to at least have one. It astounded her to see how incredibly grateful the people of Saltillo were just because the students showed up and cared.

Brooke will be completing her residency in Family Medicine at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. This program is renowned for its commitment to training physicians who want to practice in underserved communities and make a difference in people’s lives. We are delighted with Brooke’s commitment to rural family medicine and will miss her a great deal.





ROBERT MITCHELL

from Ropesville, Texas



Robert grew up in Ropesville, Texas a community of 400. He went to kindergarten through high school in the same building – now THAT is rural. After graduating from Texas A&M, Robert went to the University of Florida to start a PhD in Chemistry. He didn't stay very long because he was soon accepted into TCOM.

Quote from Preceptor:

"This student doctor has a great love of medical knowledge. He has a well-balanced background in rural health care. He will be a great physician."

This graduate is someone who knew long ago that being in a rural community was where he would be most content. He states, "I am never more unhappy than when I am in the city, I prefer rural life. And as a physician, I enjoy actually knowing each of my patients." Robert has done clinical rotations in

more rural settings than any other student doctor in this 2013 class. He has had clinical experiences in these Texas communities: Sweetwater, Crockett, Plainview, Nacogdoches, Fredericksburg, Sherman, Graham, Denison, and Liberty. Liberty is where Robert has been for his four years of continuity with a family medicine DO, Dr. Steven Ellerbe. Robert reported this was his favorite rotation; "Dr. Ellerbe is me in 25 years... we are alike in so many ways. He actually founded one of the organizations I belonged to at A&M." This family medicine doctor taught Robert a great deal about how to enjoy having a student and how to offer the student a



Quote from Preceptor:

"Good work ethic and genuine interest in assessing patients in a holistic method rather than chief complaint focus., thorough on history and exam skills, confident but not cavalier about treatment regimens, used evidenced-based best practices, good reception by patients and staff."

perfect balance between autonomy and guidance.

Throughout medical school Robert has not only done the required Rural Scholar activities, but was an advocate of rural health throughout. He was a member of the Rural Health Organization on campus in his first year and then in year two was elected President. During his presidency, the program

grew by 50%. Robert made it a point to establish a collaborative relationship with the Physician Assistant's program and welcomed them for the first time into this organization. In year three Robert was National Rural Health Association Student Representative. Robert also participated in four different mission trips with the Christian Medical Association. He went to Mexico twice, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Robert plans to complete his Family Medicine residency in Corpus Christi, Texas at Christus Spohn Memorial Hospital. Ultimately Robert hopes to be able to practice medicine in a rural community in the southeastern part of the state, he has already started looking. He is a great example of a true rural student and we will miss him.

**“ I believe our Rural Scholars are prepared
to accept the health care challenges
facing rural Texas ”** - John R. Bowling, DO



OFFICE OF RURAL MEDICAL EDUCATION

John R. Bowling, DO, FACOFP Dist.
Professor and Assistant Dean of Rural
Medical Education

A. Clifton Cage, DO
Assistant Professor

Kimberly Hankins, MSW
Director of Rural Community Relations

Ana Luz Chiapa-Scifres, MS, MPH
Director of Research & Evaluation

Kaily Owens, BS
Executive Assistant

Jennifer De La Fuente, AAS
Senior Administrative Assistant

Andrea Bennett, BS
Project Coordinator

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RURAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM VISIT: www.unthsc.edu/RuralMed or contact us at 817-735-2275.



TEXAS COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

UNT Health Science Center
3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76107-2699