

Pedi Press 2.0

A Monthly Publication of the Department of Pediatrics



from the desk of Lara Shekerdeman . . .



As 2023 draws to a close, I want to thank all members of the Department of Pediatrics for all you have done to contribute to providing the best care possible for our patients and families, for advancing our educational and research missions, and for caring for each other and so many others over the past year.

In the past 12 months, we have witnessed remarkable growth, celebrated incredible accomplishments, and navigated hurdles and challenges together. I am so proud of the unwavering collaborative spirit you have consistently demonstrated- both personally and professionally. I am also grateful for the support that you have shown me as your Chair as I continue to grow into my leadership role. We are undoubtedly better together!

So - here's to all of you - our Department of Pediatrics, and here's to the exciting journey that lies ahead in 2024. I wish you all Happy Holidays and hope that you are able to spend some time away from work doing some of the things that you love to do with the people you love to be with. Finally, a big thank you those of you who have been caring for our patients and families during the coming days.

Best wishes,

Lara

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Psychology Faculty Specialists



Dr. Marni Axelrad (left) and **Dr. Beth Garland** (right) lead the Psychology Division Faculty Professional Development Program. This Program pairs new faculty members with mentors within Psychology to set them up for success during their first two years at BCM, supports small mentorship circles for faculty members at similar career points, and provides *targeted, non-physician specific* “Open House” and small group working meetings for psychologists applying for

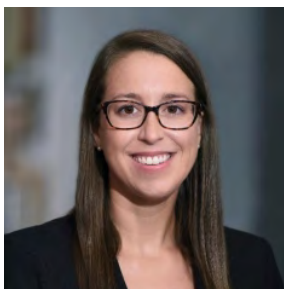


teaching awards, clinical awards, and promotion. Drs. Garland and Axelrad also invite quarterly speakers to discuss professional development topics such as Quality Improvement, Increasing Scholarly Activity for Clinician Educators, Engaging in Local and National Advocacy, and Statistics Reviews for Clinicians.

Dr. Stephanie Chapman leads the Psychology Integrated Behavioral Health Program in partnership with Texas Children’s Pediatrics. In addition to leading a team of psychologists and behavioral health clinicians who provide integrated behavioral health care within the pediatric primary care environment, Dr. Chapman herself provides brief, evidence-based interventions within TCP that reduce mental health stigma, increase access to care, and prevent the development of chronic mental health conditions. Her emphasis on provider education, in-clinic consultation with pediatric providers, and warm patient handoffs has also received rave reviews from her pediatric primary care colleagues!



Dr. Elizabeth Klinepeter leads a team of Autism specialists who provide ABA intervention to patients admitted to Texas Children’s Hospital with Autism and/or intellectual disability and severe behaviors. These patients are especially challenging to care for in the acute medical setting. Dr. Klinepeter’s team goes above and beyond for each patient to individualize treatment goals and interventions, provide staff education on the most effective ways to interact to decrease behavioral escalations, and ensure that every family leaves the hospital with a strong understanding of the next steps to care for their children. Her program has improved patient outcomes, decreased staff injuries, increased staff confidence in caring for patients with Autism/intellectual disability, and decreased readmissions for this vulnerable population.



In conjunction with her partners from Psychology and the TCH Cancer Center, **Dr. Lynnette Harris** has led the implementation of a novel tiered assessment approach to identifying the neurocognitive effects of brain tumor treatment in pediatric patients. This innovative methodology uses a combination of online-administered cognitive screenings, consultation with patients and their caregivers, and targeted neuropsychological assessment when needed to identify youth at high risk for academic challenges and to provide support for those in need of academic assistance. This program increases access to care, decreases wait times, and provides individualized assessments while also helping the TCH Cancer Center meet clinical standards that contribute to their consistently excellent USNWR ratings.





SPOTLIGHT ON

Diabetes & Endocrinology

Improving Community Outreach & Engagement



The division of **Diabetes and Endocrinology** has strived to improve community outreach and engagement over the past several years. **Dr. Bonnie McCann-Crosby** (left) and **Katelyn Yzquierdo MS, RD, CSP, LD** (right) have led this charge as co-leads of the **Community Diabetes Care Process Team**, a multidisciplinary quality team. Two patient and family diabetes events were hosted this year as a result of their leadership and partnership with community organizations. These events aim to foster community between the TCH endocrine team and patients, provide education to families on diabetes technology and research, and allow connections to form between those who are living with Type 1 diabetes.



“Diabetes Spring Fling” was held in March, in partnership with the Holcomb Family YMCA in Spring, Texas. It was an outdoor event for our patients and their families in a diabetes-friendly environment. The event featured games, face-painting, food trucks, crafts, and Zumba dancing!

More than 300 people, including 200 patients and their family members, 70 TCH/BCM employees, diabetes vendors, and volunteers, attended Diabetes Spring Fling.

A Diabetes fall festival-style event, **“DIA-BOO-TES BASH”**, was held in October at the Houston Health Museum. This event started in 2017 and was held again in 2019; however, due to the pandemic, it was placed on hold for several years. Its return was welcomed by our community of patients and caregivers!

At this year’s Dia-Boo-Tes Bash, patients and families enjoyed games, snacks, costume contests, face painting, pumpkin painting, trick-or-treating and interacting with our diabetes vendors. The event hosted 333 patients, 14 vendor representatives, and 81 TCH/BCM staff and volunteers for a grand total of 428 participants.



HIGHLIGHTS

The Public Health clinic boasts a wooden toy box that was hand-made by Dr. Jim Mitchell. It's one of the many ways the clinic seeks to make children feel comfortable and safe.



Dr. Karla Fredricks (Director of the Program for Immigrant and Refugee Child Health, Division of Global and Immigrant Health) and **Dr. Eric Russell** (Associate Director of the Program for Immigrant and Refugee Child Health, Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine) are working with colleagues from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Stanford, and the Migrant Clinicians Network to improve access to care for newly arrived immigrants with special healthcare needs. The endeavor, generously funded by an NIH COMPASS grant, includes identifying medically complex and high-risk immigrants soon after arrival in the US and connecting them to primary and specialty care in their final destinations. In addition, the collaborative effort supports research into barriers to access, facilitators of care, and other health-related needs in this unique population.



EVENTS

TCH The Woodlands held its 1st Annual Picnic on Saturday, September 23. They welcomed physicians and APPs from every department and their families to this event, and all had a great time. Thanks were extended to Drs. Swati Karmarkar, Emy Kuriakose, Ankhi Dutta, and Karen Tuano, who organized this fun day, and to the Department of Pediatrics, who supported this celebration!



They also resumed the Drs. Feigin Famous Ice Cream Cake Celebration for our BCM Early Career, Star, Master Clinician, Clark Faculty Service, Women of Excellence, and Outstanding Clinician Awardees on Friday, August 25. Their last in-person celebration was pre-pandemic in 2019, so 30+ awardees celebrated at the campus this year

from 2020-2023!



TCH The Woodlands hosted a new faculty orientation on Friday, August 11, to meet the new faculty and see some familiar smiling faces. It was such a great way to orient folks and welcome them to our campus!

Feast of Saint Arnold - On August 6, Brock Wagner and the team at Saint Arnold Brewing Company held their 13th annual Feast of Saint Arnold. The Feast supports the **Gutsy Kids Fund**, providing research support to the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Program and Camp "Survived It All" (SIA). The latter is a special weekend camp held for children who have inflammatory bowel disease and also for children who have undergone liver transplantation.

On August 28, Brock Wagner (center) presented a check for \$133,000 raised at the Feast to **Drs. Richard Kellermayer (l) and Benjamin Shneider (r)**.



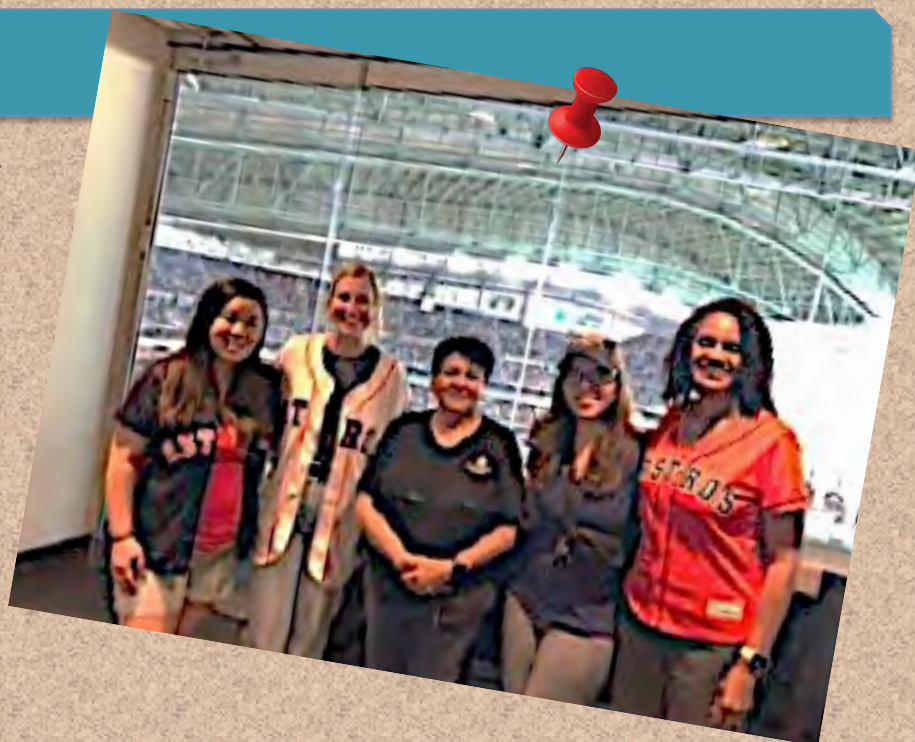
On August 12th, the Division of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition hosted a Karaoke Welcome Party for the new GHN Fellows at Spotlight Karaoke in the Galleria. The four new Gastroenterology Fellows are Drs. Neelima Agrawal, Gabriela Baez Bravo, Stephanie Leon Paredes and Jasmine Pendergrass. Dr. Shruti Sakhuja, who recently graduated from the GHN Fellowship, was welcomed as the new Pediatric Liver Transplant Medicine Fellow.



The **Diversity Council** hosted its 7th Annual Speed Mentorship event attended by residents, fellows and faculty seeking networking opportunities. **Drs. Asha Morrow, Esther Sampayo, Julianna Nichols, Jolie Britt, Davlyn Tillman and Gordon Schutze** were some of the faculty that attended the function and joined in having a traditional Latino dinner to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month. Attendees were given copies of The Diversity Council lookbook – a handbook offering learning and mentorship resources related to DEI.

The **Astros 4th Annual Peanut Free Zone Event** for TCH peanut-allergic patients and families was held in the summer. Janis Schmees Burke and Larry Catuzzi at the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority generously donated the suite for our families to have a safe environment at the park. Mr. Joe Penland and the Penland Foundation supports our event by sponsoring the peanut free catering at Minute Maid Park.

This year TCH was able to host 21 families (24 children with peanut allergy) in the suite at Minute Maid Park.



On September 9, 2023, TCH hosted the **annual Jeffrey Modell Foundation (JMF) Kids Day** at the Houston Astros vs San Diego Padres game. This kids' day was the first we hosted since 2019, right before the start of the COVID-19 the pandemic. More than 160 patients, their families, and staff members attended. Our community was very excited to celebrate a joyful occasion outside of the medical setting and the Astros WON!! The JMF is an international patient organization dedicated to advancing the care and research of primary immune deficiency diseases. They support centers all over the world in their mission. Texas Children's Hospital is a designated Diagnostic and Research Center led by **Dr. Lisa Forbes Satter**. The patients and their families are already looking forward to next year's event.



TCH food allergy patients, families, and IAR staff and faculty members had a glorious time on Saturday, September 16, 2023 for the **10th Annual Food Allergy Symposium**! This educational forum began in 2014 and has been in-person, virtual, and hybrid. We had an adult educational session and a child activity session with around 100 participants. This was the first time back in Houston in person since the pandemic, and the excitement was palpable! The symposium was a wonderful

Dr. Maria Pereira represented TCH/BCM Pediatric Rheumatology program as an invited speaker at the **Pediatric Latino American Association (ALAPE) Annual Meeting** in Guatemala City, September 27-29, 2023.



Dr. Pereira gave talks on Updates in Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis and Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. Other participants from BCM/TCH included: **Drs. Ricardo Quinonez** (Pediatric Hospital Medicine), **Manuel Silva** (Pulmonology), **Gerardo Cabeza-Meza** (Neonatology), **Armando Correa** (Medical Director of International and Destination Medicine), **Paola Alvarez-Malo** (Vice-President of International and Destination Medicine), and **Claudia Smith-Flores** (Business Development).



Dr. Cagri Toruner (site PI), **Shelby Brooks, ARNP**, **Susan Peters** (mother of a JIA patient), **Abigail Hernandez** (Research Coordinator), and **Drs. Olivia Kwan** and **Katie Stewart** (virtually) represented the TCH Rheumatology Team at the **Pediatric Rheumatology Care Outcomes Improvement Network (PR-COIN)** held both in-person in Seattle, WA, and virtually on October 12-13, 2023. The TCH Team presented a storyboard on the steps for building QI data infrastructure (Epic JIA Registry (master list), Epic JIA Smart Form) and our initial results of documentation rates of critically important data elements. (l-r, Shelby Brooks, Cagri Toruner, Susan Peters, Abigail Hernandez).

The Rheumatology Division was well represented for the **TCH Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month**, bringing awareness of rheumatic diseases on the Mark Wallace Bridge on September 13, 2023. Kudos to all our research coordinators (**Monica Guevara**, **Abigail Hernandez**, **Priscilla Vasquez** and **Divya Thomas**) who organized this event.



On October 15, a team of **CICU providers and nurses** competed in **Waco Ironman**, raising money for CICU Nurse Education. They raised >\$2300 and had lots of fun.

One of the participants on the bike course of Ironman collapsed, requiring CPR. Luckily, one of our team members on the bike course was a CICU nurse, and she delivered high quality CPR for almost 20 minutes, reviving the individual! The team later learned that he left the hospital and is doing great.



Our **PEM Division** had numerous faculty and fellows presenting at the **AAP National Conference and Exhibition** this year. Congratulations to **Saamia Masoom** (abstract platform presentation, best trainee abstract recipient), **Sarahjean Kerolle** (abstract platform presentation), **Aya Fanny** (poster abstract and workshop), **Deb Hsu** (SOEM Executive Committee Chair), **Marideth Rus** (EmergiQuiz moderator), **Andrea Cruz** (PEM CRC chair, Top 5 Articles Plenary), **Stephanie Leung** (PediSonoFest Workshop Leader), **Kiyetta Alade** (SOEM Ultrasound Program Chair), **Jason Choi** and **Caroline Wang** (PediSonoFest contestants), **Zach Foughty** (EmergiQuiz online case), **Nichole Davis** (abstract winner), **Brent Kaziny**, **Rohit Sheno**i (Poster presentations), **Elyse Portillo** (Health Literacy and Advocacy presentation), and **Shabana Yusuf** (PIR editorial board and AAP Program committee).

The **Social Work Team** of the **Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics** conducted an **Intensive Positive Parenting Workshop** for families on November 4. The workshop focused on building skills in children with developmental challenges, positive parenting strategies, preventing problem behaviors, effective responses to misbehavior and the importance of self-care. Parents and caregivers engaged in hands-on activities, group discussions, and problem solving with the social work facilitators.

If you are interested in learning more about the family programs offered through the Meyer Center, email





The Meyer Center for Development Pediatrics and Autism hosted a Halloween Festival, complete with costumes and a pumpkin-decorating contest.

The Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics presented several workshops, posters and platform presentations at our annual Society for Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics meeting held in Minneapolis in September 2023. It also was a good time of getting together and seeing old friends.



Several faculty members and social workers from Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics attended the annual fundraiser for Gigi's Playhouse in October. The non-profit organization provides free educational, therapeutic-based, and career development programs for individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and the community, through a replicable playhouse model.

Drs. Jennifer Benjamin and Satid Thammasitboon conducted workshops on Educational Design Research and Communities of Practice as part of Taiwan's Empowerment in Medical Education Research Program in Taipei, October 13-14, 2023. Numerous disciplinary scholars enjoyed learning and sharing knowledge and experiences in these interactive faculty development workshops.





The second **Pediatric Paracorporeal and Extracorporeal Therapies (PPETs)** summit was held at the NRI in October (faculty pictured here). This NIH sponsored symposium, hosted by the Division of Critical Care Medicine, brought together local, national and international experts to discuss advanced support technologies for children in a two-day summit which was followed by a simulation day.



The CCM Faculty APP group held a retreat which was a marvelous team-building event. Pictured here are the PICU APP group (above) and the CICU APP group (left). The participants all completed a pecha kucha exercise to tell their personal story.

A team from the ICU participated in the Periwinkle Foundation Kickball Tournament on October 14, and won 2 of their 4 games!

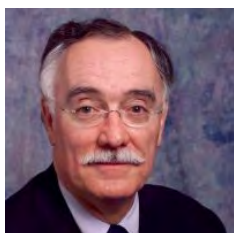




Dr. Peter Hotez was recognized by the Texas Children's Board of Trustees with a unique **Board Resolution** in appreciation of his *"outstanding contributions vaccine research, his remarkable leadership and steadfast dedication to Texas Children's and to many underserved people and areas across the world."*

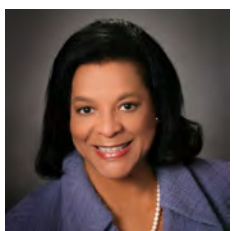
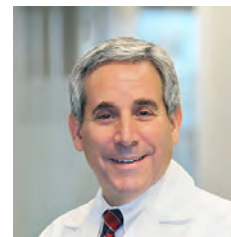


Dr. Lara Shekerdemian and **Dr. Andrea Dean** are among the 84 new national members of the **American Pediatric Society for 2024**. APS members are recognized child-health leaders of extraordinary achievement who work together to shape the future of academic pediatrics. New members will be recognized during the APS Presidential Plenary at the Pediatric Academic Societies 2024 Meeting.



Dr. Morey Haymond received the **2023 Mayo Clinic Distinguished Alumni Award**. He defined the regulation of leucine and protein metabolism, and his use of minidose glucagon and dosing algorithm are now common practice in pediatric and diabetes practice. The award was established in 1981 by the Mayo Clinic Board of Trustees to acknowledge and show appreciation for exceptional contributions of Mayo Clinic alumni to medicine.

Dr. Sheldon L. Kaplan received the **American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Infectious Diseases 2023 Award for Lifetime Contribution to Infectious Diseases Education**. This award is given annually to a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics who has made outstanding contributions to education in infectious diseases.



Dr. Charleta Guillory received the **2023 Charles W. Daeschner, Jr., Lifetime Achievement Award** from the **Texas Pediatric Society** during its annual business meeting in September. This is the highest award bestowed by the organization and recognizes Dr. Guillory's lifetime contributions to the health and welfare of children, her passion for advocating for vulnerable children, and her dedicated service of leadership on the TPS Executive Board, Executive Legislative Committee, and other TPS committees throughout the years. At the meeting, she also received the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Special Achievement Award** in recognition of her exceptional commitment to serving the needs of Texas infants and families, as well as for her outstanding contributions during her term as the 2021-2022 Texas Pediatric Society president.



Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, under the direction of **Drs. Peter Hotez and Maria Elena Bottazzi**, was awarded the **2023 David and Beatrix Hamburg Award** for their development of a recombinant protein-based COVID-19 vaccine technology. In addition to Drs. Hotez and Bottazzi, several other team members from the Texas Children's Hospital's Center for Vaccine Development were recognized:

Wen-Hsiang Chen, Ph.D.,

assay development and quality control unit leader

Jason Kimata, Ph.D., genetic engineering unit leader

Jungsoon Lee, Ph.D., process development unit leader

Zhuyun Liu, M.S., process development unit leader

Jeroen Pollet, Ph.D., formulation and delivery unit leader

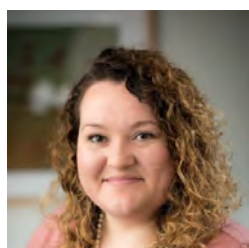
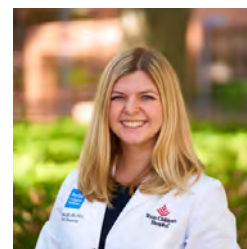
Bin Zhan, M.D., molecular biology unit leader





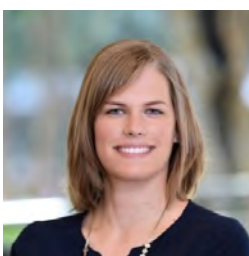
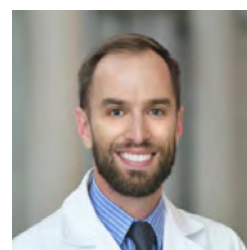
Martha Curry, MS, APRN, CPNP, RN, was awarded the **Distinguished Clinician Award** from the **American College of Rheumatology (ACR)** and the **Association of Rheumatology Professionals (ARP) Membership and Awards Committee** for her outstanding contributions to the field.

Shelby Brooks, MSN, ARNP, CPNP-PC was awarded this year's **Most Passionate Pediatric Rheumatology Nurse Provider** and the **Kids Matter Too Award** at the 2023 16th Annual Rheumatology Nurses Society Conference in Austin.



Jennifer Cervantes, MSW, LCSW-S received the **2023 Early Achievement Award** from the **University of Houston Clear Lake**, the first time a social worker has ever received such award.

Dr. Daniel DeSalvo earned the **Outstanding Pediatric Principal Investigator Award** from T1D Exchange, a nonprofit that facilitates research and drives improvements in care and outcomes for people with type 1 diabetes. The award honors exceptional leaders who have gone above and beyond in their modeling of QI methodologies in a clinical setting.



Dr. Nichole Davis is the recipient of the **AAP's Dr Steven Krug Junior Investigator Award** for her abstract on pediatric preparedness for healthcare professionals

Dr. Karen Tuano received the **2023 Ambulatory Practitioner Award for Excellence in Patient Care**.



Dr. Jill Weatherhead received the 2023 Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society's Young Investigator Award, presented to a physician who completed pediatric infectious diseases fellowship training seven years or less from the award date and whose independent and productive research has made outstanding contributions to the field of pediatric infectious diseases.

Dr. Miriah Gillispie-Taylor, Dr. Jessica Nguyen, Dr. Anna Thompson, and Amanda Braddock received the **2023-2024 Southern Group on Educational Affairs (SGEA) Innovation in Medical Education Award** for the project "Harnessing the Power of Social Media for Good: Using Instagram as a Formative Assessment Tool." This award is intended to provide recognition for individuals who have developed an innovative approach to medical education and to support the participation of SGEA members in activities that promote educational scholarship.

Drs. Andrea Ramirez, Maria Pereira, and Luis Paxtor, Fellowship Coordinator were awarded another large national training salary support grant. The team has been selected as the first ever recipient of the prestigious **State of Texas Association of Rheumatologists (STAR) Fellowship Training Award Endowment** (from the Rheumatology Research Foundation).



Dr. Marni Axelrad was appointed Co-Chair of Clinical Practice Committee of the Infant and Early Childhood Special Interest Group, Division of Pediatric Psychology, American Psychological Association.

Dr. Susan Blaney hosted the inaugural TXCH Research Elevator Pitch Completion. Seventeen faculty members competed, explaining their research in lay language and seven judges scored the pitches. Congratulations to the awardees: 1st place, **Dr. Robin Parihar**; 2nd place, **Dr. Alison Bertuch**; and 3rd place, **Dr. Raj Venkatramani**.

Shelby Brooks, ARNP, hosted a 6-week virtual pre-health student webinar series with the Williamson County and Harris County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) for high school students (typically juniors/seniors) interested in a healthcare career, every Tuesday beginning September 19, 2023 until October 24, 2023.

Jennifer Cervantes, MSW, LCSW-S was named Advocacy Co-Chair for the Society for Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics.

Dr. Eric Chiou was appointed Director of the Neurogastroenterology and Motility Program.

Dr. Jayna Dave

-- elected a member of the Society for Pediatric Research.
-- co-lead of the Community-Based Research in Nutrition workgroup across the six USDA/ARS Human Nutrition Research Centers.

Dinah L. Godwin, MSW, LCSW-S was named board member for Society of Developmental Pediatric.

Dr. Sanjiv (Sonny) Harpavat was name Chair of the AAP Section on Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition Executive Committee.

Dr. Catherine Mary Healy has been appointed to the Committee for Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics as of July 2023.

Dr. Marisa Hilliard

-- appointed as the sole psychologist on the Professional Practice Committee of the American Diabetes Association (ADA). This committee publishes the standards of care for the ADA.
-- appointed as the sole psychologist on the International Society of Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes, which publishes the international care guidelines for pediatric/adolescent diabetes care.
-- elected as Chair of the American Diabetes Association's Behavioral Medicine and Psychology Interest Group.

Dr. Lisa Kahalley was appointed Co-Chair of the Survivorship Special Interest Track for the Society for Neuro-Oncology.

Dr. Katherine Y. King

-- invited to Chair the American Society of Hematology Committee for Immunology and Host Defense, 2024-2025.
-- serves as "camping director" for her daughter's girl scout troop.

Drs. Teresia O'Connor is co-lead for the Community-Based Research in Nutrition workgroup across the six USDA/ARS Human Nutrition Research Centers.

Dr. Eyal Muscal was an invited moderator for a Concurrent session on Cognitive impairment in Children with Systemic lupus erythematosus at the Lupus 21st Century 2023 Conference, Naples, Florida, September 27-30, 2023.

Dr. Debra Palazzi was elected president-elect of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society, the world's largest organization of professionals dedicated to the treatment, control, and eradication of infectious diseases affecting children.

Dr. Rayne Rouse

-- invited to serve as chair of this year's American Association for Cancer Research Pediatric Cancer Research Grants Scientific Review Committee. This committee is responsible for overseeing the distribution of grants intended to support postdoctoral or clinical research fellows working on mentored pediatric cancer research projects.
-- and a team of Dan L. Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers were awarded a P20 grant from the National Cancer Institute to partner with Texas Southern University, a historically Black college and university, to create the BCM/TSU Collaborative Union for Cancer Research, Education and Disparities (CURED).

Dr. Angelique Tate was recognized for "Caught You Caring."

Dr. Cagri Toruner was accepted for the 2023 UTHealth Houston Institute for Implementation Science Workshop.

Dr. Alexis Wood was elected as Chair-elect of the Epidemiology Research Interest Section of the American Society for Nutrition.

Getting to Know TCH Government Relations Team

Did you know Texas Children's has its own dedicated team of government relations professionals? Meet our small but mighty **Government Relations Team, Johnna Carlson and Meredith Cooke.**

Meet Johnna!



As the Assistant Vice President of Government Relations, Johnna leads the local, state, and federal government relations efforts for the Texas Children's Hospital system. Johnna has over 16 years of experience with federal and state government, government relations, and politics - including almost 7 years as a congressional staffer within the Texas

congressional delegation. She received her undergraduate degree from The University of Texas at Austin and, while working full-time on Capitol Hill, Johnna obtained her Master's degree in Political Communication from Johns Hopkins University. She first joined Texas Children's in 2013 as a member of the Government Relations team. Johnna returned to a congressional staff role in 2017 working for Congressman Michael McCaul and eventually became his Chief of Staff. Johnna returned to Texas Children's in 2019 and is honored to support the hospital's mission to create a healthier future for children and women throughout our global community.

Meet Meredith!



Meredith serves as Manager of Government Relations where she leads the day-to-day activities of local Austin and state government relations efforts for the Texas Children's Hospital system. Meredith began her legislative career in the Texas House of Representatives as an intern in 2010.

She returned in 2016 to work as the Legislative Director to former Texas State Representative John M. Zerwas, M.D. Meredith was an Account Director at an association management company and a Marketing Coordinator for a healthcare system during the time between her tenures at the Texas Legislature. She most recently served as the Policy Director for a trade association representing the life sciences industry in Texas prior to joining Texas Children's Hospital. Meredith holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Studies from The University of Texas at Austin, and is proud to advocate on behalf of Texas Children's and the patients and families whom we serve.

What does the GR team do?

Our mission is to enhance Texas Children's reputation as one of the top children's hospital systems in the state, nation, and world by leveraging our leadership and expertise in patient care, education, and research in public policy discussions with government stakeholders. We amplify our voice by partnering with aligned external stakeholders to advance pediatric and maternal health and well-being by advocating for policies and funding that promote and support access to high-quality, comprehensive health care.

Simply put, our GR team are registered lobbyists that advocate on behalf of the Texas Children's system at every level of government. They set and deploy the strategies behind Texas Children's engagement with elected officials, all while navigating the ever-changing political dynamics. Johnna and Meredith are here to serve as resource to you and are delighted to answer any questions about the political landscape, Texas Children's strategy, and advocacy efforts.

Interested in advocacy? Contact the GR team!

Texas Children's encourages our colleagues to participate in legislative advocacy, debate, and discussion and even in political campaigns. To read the policy on Workforce Engagement in Legislative Advocacy, click [HERE](#).

Ways you can connect with government officials!

- First, find out who represents you by visiting the Texas Tribune's website: <https://www.texastribune.org/directory/>
- Second, contact your representatives. Call, email, visit on your own time with your *personal* phone/email. You have a unique perspective and expertise to share and representatives want to hear from you!

FRIENDS, AND OTHER LIFE EVENTS



Daisy Tran Vita, TCH Supervisor, Food Allergy Program Lead Research Nurse, and her husband Eric, are excited to announce the birth of **Oliver Paul** on 9/15/2023



Nursery News



New Babies
Division of Psychology
Dr. Kate Cutitta (August)
Dr. Katie Gallagher (October)
Dr. Ashley Teasdale (November)

Members of **The Meyer Center for Developmental Pediatrics and Autism** have babies coming soon!
Dr. JB Swanson-Zamora is due Dec 2023
Lauri Ramirez, RN is due Dec 2023
Dr. Janki Patel is due March 2024!



New College Students, Psychology

Neva Cline, child of **Dr. Ginger Depp-Cline** (UT Austin)
Jacob Taylor, child of **Dr. Stephanie Chapman** (University of Houston)

Dr. Kendal Hirschi received an MBA degree in Management



Everett Alonzo, on Monday, August 7, completed his **24th** omalizumab/placebo injection as a participant in the NIH-Funded Prevention of Asthma in High Risk Kids (PARK) clinical trial! This marks the completion of his treatment period, during which he did not miss even one injection! Given his initial anxiety over the injection, this is a huge accomplishment at his 5 years of age. His parents, **Amy and Jonathan Alonzo**, are both TCH employees and have been such engaged and enthusiastic participants for the study!

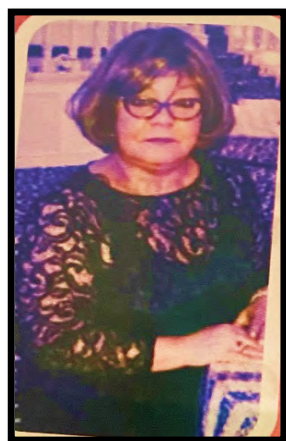
Dr. Anson Koshy's painting “Belonging” was selected for the juried gallery at the Art on the Avenue event held at Spring Street Studios on November 4. This is the largest charitable art auction in Houston, with proceeds from the event supporting the local non-profit Avenue CDC and its mission of creating and sustaining affordable housing in Houston. More than 250 local professional artists participated in this annual event.



Dr. Johanna Domer joined the DBP faculty October 2023. She and her daughter **Mari** moved from the Phoenix Arizona area. **Mari** has just started school at Pershing Middle School in Houston and has already won an art award!



Nikki Gambhir, MBChB participated in the TCS Amsterdam Half Marathon in the Netherlands



Our beloved friend and colleague, **Stephanie Gail Mayberry**, passed away peacefully on October 6, 2023. She will be deeply missed by her son, **Elton “DeJuan” Mayberry**, numerous family members, as well as the many colleagues, friends, and patients in her BCM/TCH family.

Dr. Desiree Lynell Evans recently honored **Dr. Robert F. Austin** in Mr. Wallace’s Blog: On The Mark with these words: “... we honor the founder of Texas Children’s Community Cares Program, **Dr. Robert F. Austin**, who passed away earlier this year. Dr. Austin left his mark on Texas Children’s, our entire community and so many of you — it is my honor to tell his story and share how Texas Children’s is honoring his legacy.” You can read her article here: <https://www.onthemark.org/blog/honoring-dr-robert-austin-founder-of-texas-childrens-community-cares-program>



Dr. Lee Ligon and her husband **Gordon Borden** thank the department, and especially the Chair and Administration and The Center for Research, Innovation and Scholarship, for your kindness, condolences, and support after the loss of their son **Matthew Freeman Borden**, November 2023.

