

I have been a caregiver for most of my life. As the oldest of four siblings and a nanny throughout high school, I developed a love for children and took pride in my ability to help them grow. Although I haven't worked as a nanny in many years, I now get to live out my passion for caregiving through my clinical work. As an ophthalmology resident, caring for patients remains the most fulfilling part of my job. I find taking care of kids especially rewarding, as they can use the good vision we help them achieve for many years as they grow and pursue their own dreams. Additionally, I love piecing together the pediatrics "puzzle", integrating data from the ophthalmic and sensorimotor exams with neurologic signs, imaging, and history to arrive at a diagnosis.

Pediatric ophthalmology also allows me to delve into medical genetics and inherited disease, a passion that has been developed through my research work with Dr. Kimberly Stepien who focuses on inherited retinal degenerations (IRDs). Together we have presented scholarly work on two genes, *CRX* and *KCNV2*, both of which can result in IRDs when damaged. In addition to diving deep into ocular genetics and pathophysiology through research, I have also enjoyed exploring ocular pathology on a cellular level. There are very few things as awe-inspiring as looking through a microscope and examining a globe in cross section, and I love grounding my clinical ophthalmology work in this deeper understanding of eye disease. For these reasons, I plan to pursue pediatrics and ocular pathology fellowships after residency training.

Outside of these subspecialty interests, I plan to build an academic career focused on teaching. As a resident, I have facilitated countless medical student activities (case-based learning sessions, surgical fairs, advising sessions, slit lamp workshops, etc.) I also have given lectures to high school students, physician assistant students, emergency medicine residents, and emergency medicine nursing staff. Throughout my educational journey I've experienced the value of quality teaching and mentorship firsthand, and I am excited to now be in a position to share the knowledge I am gaining through residency training with others.

Finally, I hope to pair patient care with community service throughout my career. My upbringing in a small town showed me the beauty of being a caregiver for one's community, and I have been fortunate to participate in medical service throughout my educational journey. In college, I had the privilege of participating in two global health experiences in El Fuerte, Mexico as an ophthalmic technician. During these trips I not only learned the nuances of performing surgery in low resource settings, but also developed an appreciation for the transformative impact eye surgery can have on the recipient. As a medical student, I was able to develop leadership and advocacy skills in the setting of community engagement. Through my role as clinic coordinator for the MEDiC student-run free clinic I addressed health disparities through systemic advocacy efforts to improve our patients' access to care. Now as a resident, I continue to care for my community through our free eye clinics, utilizing the ophthalmic skills I've developed to provide eye care for uninsured patients.

Overall, I feel lucky to be working toward a career that includes so many of the things I love: taking care of patients, delving deeply into ocular pathology, educating future ophthalmologists, and serving my community.