

# Los Angeles Pediatric Society E-Newsletter

## Volume 2 No. 1

## March 2015

### PHYSICIANS IN TRAINING



#### **“WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?”**

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“What do you want to be when you grow up?” It is an age old question that every pediatrician has up his or her sleeve to engage in conversation with the entertaining five-year old. One of the best responses I received from a patient of mine was simply, “Eight.” By the time I was a high school student, I still did not have as clever or concrete of an answer. As the first in my family to pursue higher education, I played with many ideas, including becoming an architect, a visual effects artist, and a detective. The medical field was foreign to me.

It has been almost 12 years since my participation in the Eve and Gene Black Summer Medical Career Program as a high school student through the Los Angeles Pediatric Society. I came across an application while perusing a binder of summer programs in my high school’s Career Center and was accepted to a month-long experience at the Old County General Hospital of Los Angeles County at USC. Little did I know that I would be roaming the same hallways as a medical student and working with the same attendings who would later become my educators, deans, and mentors.

Reflecting back upon my experience as a participant of the summer program, I remember nodding in understanding when asked if I could feel the liver edge of an eleven-hour old infant when I clearly had no idea what I was doing. I remember being filmed in the operating room, because the documentary crew was fascinated by how a teenager was playing a part in brain surgery when I was really trying hard not to pass out. Besides these moments of naiveté, I remember the reality of adolescent parents, patients on ventilators, infants that could fit in my hands. By the end of the rotation, I had decided upon my career. That moment was during an evening spent in the trauma bay at County’s emergency room. I remember being asked if I wanted to help clean an infected wound suffered by a man following a fight, and saying, “Yes.” I also said, “Yes,” to becoming a doctor.

The opportunity to effect positive growth and shape the development of children greatly attracts me to the profession of pediatrics. Although I am just getting started, the journey thus far has been a humbling experience for me as a pediatrician. Alongside those before me, we engage first-hand with the grit of humanity in its most vulnerable state when it is first out of the womb or when it is leaving this world. I am thankful for programs such as the Eve and Gene Black Summer Medical Career Program, without which I probably would not have found medicine, my passion, and the answer to “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

*Henry Wu, M.D. completed his medical school training at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California and is a third-year physician resident in pediatrics at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. He will serve as a Co-Chief Resident in the upcoming academic year.*