



# Spirit of Service

Med+Peds Newsletter  
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Dear residents and applicants,

Welcome to interview season! The Spirit of Service is the Internal Medicine + Pediatrics Residency Program's annual newsletter. In this edition, you will find a message from one of our chiefs, an abstract published by one of our residents, and spotlights.



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## Chief Briefs



Hello! My name is Julian Hirschbaum, and I'm one of the Med+Peds Chief Residents, along with my fantastic colleague, Dr. Tiffany Pan. I'm fortunate to take on this role and give many thanks to Dr. Bekah Harding, the prior Chief Resident during the 2020-21 academic year. As a Chief Resident, I hope to support Med+Peds residents in exploring and accomplishing their career goals and strive to help them provide the best care possible for the people we are fortunate to care for.

I'm originally from Yardley, PA, a suburb outside of Philadelphia, but have been living West of the Mississippi for the past 15 years (Yes, I'm still an Eagles fan). After studying Philosophy and Biology at the University of Colorado, I attended A.T. Still University school of medicine in Arizona where I was able to carry out many clinical rotations within a FQHC called El Rio. After medical school, I knew that I wanted to continue providing for underserved patients and was grateful to match at LAC+USC.

I am currently applying for a fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology and am interested in working with adolescent and young adult populations as well as adults with congenital heart disease. While not at work or interviewing, I love to travel and see the world with my wife and travel partner, Lauren.

Hi everyone, my name is Tiffany Pan. I grew up in Saratoga, CA in the Bay Area. I went to UC Berkeley for college (Go Bears!) and majored in Psychology, then went to Keck School of Medicine of USC, stayed for residency, and have been here ever since. I stumbled into playing the violin as a child when my sister was taking lessons and have gotten to play in orchestra in some cool places, like the Sydney Opera House. I absolutely love coffee and make myself a cup of hand drip coffee every morning (even if I am running late). My interests include advocacy for underserved populations and transitional care. After chief year, I plan to continue working in general Med+Peds primary care.



Michelle Banh ('22), Tiffany Pan ('21), and Lissette Cervantes ('21)

# Staff Spotlight



Our favorite Chaos Coordinator

Q&A with Anna Torres-Lupercio, M+P Coordinator

### **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Huntington Park – it's a little suburb of LA and it's just a few miles away from the hospital, actually. I lived there until my early 20s. My childhood was a lot of fun. I grew up near the city library, so I was always there. I spent my weekends there. It was like my second home. I grew up in a neighborhood where all the kids played outside until dusk, so it was a really happy childhood.

### **What do you like to do for fun?**

I like taking my kids to concerts and museums. I took all of them to their first concerts. We also enjoy going on drives through neighborhoods that are full of architecture and old homes, just admiring the different styles of homes.

### **Any favorite concerts or museums?**

I think one of my favorite first concerts with them was when I took Izzie (she was like 7 at the time) to see Walk the Moon. It was her first show and it was her favorite band at the time. One of my favorite museums, I would have to say, is the Ronald Reagan library. We went while they had their titanic exhibit.

### **Any favorite neighborhoods?**

We like to go to old town Pasadena a lot near city hall which is so pretty with the Spanish architecture. We pretty much pick an area and just go for it.

### **What is your spirit vegetable?**

I would be broccoli. Because it's my daughter Izzie's favorite vegetable, and I always want to be her favorite. She's rolling her eyes at me right now, but that's why I chose broccoli. It's a family favorite.

### **How did you choose to work here at LAC+USC with the med peds program?**

I came across this job by chance. I was looking to transfer out of my previous job which was in one of the primary care clinics. I interviewed with Dr. Nichols and the chiefs and some of the residents, and I immediately knew that this was the job I wanted. I knew that would be a great fit for me – the way it was described to me, what it entailed. Dr. Nichols actually offered me the job within like an hour. So it was a win-win. I just feel so lucky and so happy to have a job that I love. It's so rewarding and it really, genuinely is a family.

### **Do you have any memories or experiences from working here?**

One of my favorite memories was being present at match day at USC. I think it was for the Keck Class of 2019, when the students found out where they matched, and it was amazing. There was so much joy and excitement everywhere. I had never witnessed or been a part of that, and it was really fun. I also enjoy all of our little get-togethers. It's fun to get out of the work setting and just hang out and talk and eat and enjoy each other. That's always one of my favorite parts – one of the perks.

### **How do you want to be remembered?**

I think I would want to be remembered as someone who was always there to share a hug or offer a kind word or just someone that people felt comfortable coming to and taking a weight off.



# Faculty Spotlight



Tracey Samko and Sweet Louise the mini pony

Q&A with Tracey Samko, class of 2015, ACT clinic attending, and Med+Peds Residency APD

## Where did you grow up?

I was born in Connecticut. I moved to Tennessee when I was three, lived there until I was 12, and moved to Massachusetts where I lived until I moved here for residency.

## What was your childhood like?

It was good. My parents are both coaches, so there was a lot of emphasis on teams and sports and being a good team player. We moved because my dad got a job in rural Tennessee, and that was an amazing place to grow up. The town was really small. We didn't have a grocery store or a stop light or stop sign. We rode our bikes everywhere and were totally unsupervised and played in the woods. When we moved to suburban Massachusetts, it was a culture shock at the time. I had never locked my front door. I wasn't familiar with public transportation. I adjusted and it was fine. I was a swimmer when I was young. When I got to high school, I did field hockey in the fall, swimming in the winter (it was cold), and track in the spring, but I really hate running so I switched to tennis in the end.

## Where did you go for school?

I went for undergrad to Tufts outside of Boston, and then I went to UMass for medical school in Worcester, and then I came here for residency.

## What do you like to do for fun?

I enjoy watching TV. I love to play with my dogs. When I'm on a heavy work schedule I just need to turn my brain off, but when I'm on vacation I read a lot. I like to do the NYT crossword puzzles. Sadly, I'm more of a Monday through Thursday person. I like the Spelling Bee too. I like to eat but I do not cook, so I exclusively eat takeout.

## Favorite movie, show, book?

Favorite movie: *The Princess Bride*. Favorite TV show: *30 Rock*. Favorite book: *The History of Love* by Nicole Krauss.

## How did you choose to work here?

I wanted to work with urban underserved populations, and when I interviewed here for residency, I felt that I had met my people. I felt that I could really thrive in this environment. I'm from Massachusetts and had never lived in California before. Coming here to interview was actually my first time in California. I felt that if I didn't leave Massachusetts now then I never would and the program seemed awesome, so I ranked it #1 and I matched here, and I feel so incredibly lucky that I did. It changed the whole trajectory of my life.

## Do you have any favorite memories or experiences from working here?

I think a lot of memories are just day-to-day things, like people who you're hanging out with when you're on call, or when you happen to be in the hospital and people are around and work is not so bad. Once, I was on call with my friends in peds, Cara and Sheryl, and my wife brought my dog and smuggled her up the elevator, and we had a pug party in the peds workroom. That was a really wonderful time. (It was a slow night.)

## How would you like to be remembered?

I hope to be remembered as somebody who cared. I don't really have any aspirations to make a name for myself outside the work I'm doing with individuals. I hope my legacy is that I cared a lot about people and that that caring made a difference in individual lives. And hopefully we continue to have a transgender program – that'd be great.

*The interviewers have decided Dr. Samko's spirit vegetable would be a carrot because she is a visionary.*

# Welcome Dr. Kalashnikova!



## Mariya Kalashnikova, Med+Peds Clinic Attending

I was born in Kiev, Ukraine. I moved to the US when I was 8 and grew up in Northern California in Mountain View. I went to Stanford for undergrad, Keck for med school, and left the west coast when my husband and I couples matched for residency. I did residency in Boston at Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's and worked there at a community health center for 2 years before coming back to LA.

### **What were your other positions prior to now?**

I worked for 2 years doing Med+Peds primary care at a Brigham-affiliated community health center, very similar to an FHQC. Boston doesn't have a segregated private-public payer system, so our center served a Spanish-speaking urban underserved community, as well as the surrounding community. I also worked on expanding access to treatment for substance use disorders in primary care,

working with suboxone in opioid use disorder and alcohol use disorder. I also did some work with internal medicine residents on their junior humanistic curriculum, where we piloted group therapy for residents with trained psychologists.

### **Can you tell us about your current life here?**

Life here is wonderful. I am married to my husband, Evan Shannon, who is an internist. He is just starting as faculty at UCLA. He is based clinically at the VA. He researches racial disparities in inpatient care, so if any residents out there are interested in general medicine research, he can be your mentor. We have two beautiful girls: a 2-year-old named Naomi and a 4-month-old named Camille. We also have a dog named Robyn, like the Swedish pop singer. My mom is still in Northern California. LA feels like home, so it feels good to be back.

### **What do you look forward to doing here?**

I think that my experiences as a med student here shaped the kind of doctor that I want to be. I am passionate about working with the working poor, the urban underserved. When the vast majority of my day involves me speaking Spanish, it makes me very happy. I really love the breadth of Med+Peds primary care, and for me, the breadth is part of the sustainability because I tend to gravitate toward complex disease management, particularly in adults. If I did that all the time, I would be exhausted, so I like the balance of being able to do preventative care for families. I hope to be able to bring some expertise around the topic of substance use disorders to the clinic. I also love medical education, so the fact that I get to work in a residency primary care clinic – that was a no-brainer!

### **What are your interests outside of medicine?**

I love to cook and eat. I'm having so much fun rediscovering LA restaurants, reading Eater and LA Taco. I was a huge Jonathan Gold fan. He was the LA Times restaurant critic and he died of pancreatic cancer a few years ago, the only food writer to have won a Pulitzer (I think and who did a lot to uplift mom-and-pop stores. I love to cook. I love concerts and music.

## **Med+Peds Newsletter Staff**

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