be Still

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be Still

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CELEBRATION

Vol. 4, Summer 2020

Special thanks to Dean Elaine Wallace,
Patt Gately, Gena Meroth
and Suzanne Riskin, M.D.

> *“You may never get back this life, so do something in this lifetime worthy of celebration.”*
>
> *Debasish Mridha*


Take time to look....
GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

FORWARD BY DEAN WALLACE

I am heartened by all the submissions for this journal with the theme ***Celebration***. Although, one may question how or why celebration is a suitable theme this year amidst the pandemic, I would suggest that adversity is a significant teacher and can help us understand just how valuable the gift of life is and the importance of celebrating the simple and often overlooked experiences in our lives. This pandemic has certainly shown us the power of love, compassion for the suffering of others and the importance of connection. Please share this issue with friends and family and colleagues for inspiration and reflection. Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

Dr. Janet Lynn Roseman-Halsband, Editor

CELEBRATION IS THE LOUDEST AND GREATEST FORM OF EXPRESSING HONOR AND APPRECIATION. THE BEST WAY TO SHOW LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOR LIFE IS THROUGH CELEBRATION!

GIRL ON THE PIANO KEYS WAS A PAINTING I GIFTED TO A FRIEND ON HER BIRTHDAY. SHE SPENT THAT DAY AT A HOSPITAL RECOVERING FROM AN EPISODE OF SICKLE CELL ANEMIA. DESPITE THE SUFFERING SHE WAS UNDERGOING DUE TO THE DISEASE, SHE WOULD ALWAYS TREAT EVERYDAY LIKE IT WAS HER BIRTHDAY.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

BHARGAVI MADHU IS A FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT WHO IS INTERESTED IN CREATIVE ARTS AND THE MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM AND RELATED DISORDERS.

A Celebration of Progress

A bilateral thalamic stroke. For months, he laid in bed silently and slowly tracking us with his eyes as we visited him day after day. The nurses moved his body for him while a IV supplied him nutrients and a catheter collected his waste. The ventilator revved and took his breaths for him. For months we weren't sure what would come of his health. What would this do to him? him? Was this his new baseline? Would he ever recover?

Despite the uncertainty, a united healthcare team continued to the best of their ability. "Can you squeeze my hand with your hand? Can you wiggle your toes? Please follow my fingers with your eyes." Before we knew it, something changed. The ventilator was turned off and he was able to breathe on his own. The bed was empty and he was able to sit up in his chair. This persisted, day after day. He became more receptive to our words. He seemed more in tune with the environment around him. He was clearly present- emotionally, mentally, and physically. "Can you give us a thumbs up?" Slowly. Shakily. He raised his right hand and proudly presented his thumbs up. The room erupted into applause.

REENA PATEL IS A THIRD YEAR OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL STUDENT WHO ENJOYS CREATIVITY THROUGH VARIOUS AVENUES INCLUDING COOKING, DESIGNING, AND WRITING.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: REENA PATEL

Finding Will in Despair

Celebration is a word whose complexity and weight increases with each moment in my life. It is associated with happiness and admiration. Such feelings are invoked when I think about a time period in my life. This period shed light and brought a new meaning of celebration for me.

During the middle of my first semester of medical school, I began to have some concerning health symptoms. The symptoms pushed me to seek medical attention at an Urgent Care facility. The doctor seemed to brush away my symptoms for a much lighter diagnosis. He thought it was something that could simply be fixed with antibiotics and told me to wait it out. I had already waited long enough. At this point, I just broke down. I told the doctor it would be impossible to study for my upcoming exam with this uncertainty, not to mention the symptoms. No reaction. Nothing. No empathy. No other suggestions. Nothing. Defeated, I drove home where my anxiety heightened until my dad called a friend who suggested going to the ER—a deed I will always be thankful for.

After my symptoms were stabilized in the ER, I was waiting for my lab results to come back. I was almost expecting something small, as hinted by the urgent care doctor. Instead I was taken in for an MRI. It revealed cauda equina syndrome. The hospitalist was still waiting to speak with a neurologist who could confirm my symptoms with the diagnosis. However, she informed me that I would most likely have a portable catheter.

It struck me that I was never going be *normal* again. I would be that weird girl in school. Tears flowed down my face as I tried to study for my test. Eventually, the neurologist decided to see how I would perform on steroids without a catheter. From there, it was a waiting game. Eventually I was able to perform normally, but they wanted to keep me overnight for observation with steroid injections.

Although, it looked promising, but I still did not sleep that night. I just wanted to go home. In the morning, another wave of fear struck when the neurosurgeon suggested surgery would be a good option to prevent paralysis. Though the surgery did not have to be right away, he said the sooner the better.

Some people walked out of the surgery and did fine after a couple of months of recovery while others became paralyzed from the waist down. All I could think about was how was I going to finish medical school?

How would I become a doctor if I was in a wheelchair?

I was discharged only with steroids (and thankfully no catheter). In between the risks of surgery weighing me down, constant follow ups, and emotional distress, I ended up failing my test and my grades suffered markedly. There were only a few exams left to give me the opportunity to pass my first semester. I spoke with many different advisors and directors about my options. I didn't want to take a leave of absence because it would mean not being with my friends, but it was always in the back of my mind.

I had no idea how I would be able to take my tests, but the exam results were promising. I was back to normal. Then randomly, after two weeks, I found myself back at the hospital with the same issue. While I was studying on the hospital bed I laughed at the ridiculousness of my situation, while I was waiting to be catheterized.

Strangely, this time I was back to normal once they removed the catheter.

My neurosurgeon to this day has no idea why my MRI findings caused the two episodes of urinary retention back in October 2019, but no more. According to him, there should have been more episodes for my diagnosis.

I have been back to my normal healthy self and I did well during my first semester of medical school. Now, I spend many days finding motivation from my experience. I often wonder how I am so lucky that this syndrome is not causing any symptoms. How is it possible that I beat the odds against having a surgery?

The tears I shed during that phase of my life are different than the ones I am shedding right now as I am writing this. This story allows me to call my life in its entirety to be a celebration.

My very existence is rare and I am humbled that it is so. Every day, I celebrate my family who never left my side, my friends whose comfort knew no bounds, those professors who understood my pain, the staff at the hospital whose sincerity filled my heart with joy and finally, myself for somehow finding courage among all those tears to keep going forward.

- **ARTIST STATEMENT:** *This essay is about my emotional journey as I discovered what celebration means to me.*

DHRUTI HIRANI IS A FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT WHO IS INTERESTED IN HELPING UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES. SHE ALSO ENJOYS LEARNING ABOUT PHYSICIAN ADVOCACY THROUGH THE FOMA ORGANIZATION. SHE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE HER PARENTS: RAMESH AND KANTABEN, ALONG WITH HER SISTERS: BHAVISHA AND RIYA FOR THEIR INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT ALL HER LIFE. SHE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO MENTION BHAGWAN SWAMINARAYAN AND DHYANI SWAMI FOR THEIR UNCONDITIONAL GUIDANCE.

Modern day medicine places a major emphasis on appreciating spirituality. A patient's cultural and religious beliefs are integral when practicing medicine in order to provide the most humanistic care possible to patients. This photograph depicts the importance of medicine from a spiritual perspective. Medicine is an integral part of a medical professionals' life and it serves as a major defining characteristic of an individual. Though viewed as objective and subjective, *medicine and spirituality* are all one.

ARTISTS STATEMENT: KRUNAL PATEL

HINDU WEDDINGS TYPICALLY COMMENCE WITH A MENDHI CEREMONY IN WHICH THE BRIDE'S EXTREMITIES ARE DECORATED WITH A DARK BROWN PASTE MADE FROM A HENNA PLANT. THE APPLICATION OF MENDHI IS TO UTILIZE ITS' HERBAL MEDICINE QUALITIES TO SOOTHE NERVES AND RELIEVE ALL STRESSES BEFORE THE WEDDING DAY.

DESIGNS ARE IN THE FULL DISCRETION OF AND CREATED BASED ON THE BRIDE'S PERSONAL REQUESTS. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE BRIDE DESIRED TO CELEBRATE HER AND HER SOON-TO-BE HUSBAND'S PROFESSIONS OF CARDIOLOGY AND NEPHROLOGY, RESPECTIVELY, WITH IMAGES OF AN ELECTROCARDIOGRAM ON ONE HAND AND TWO KIDNEYS ON THE OTHER.

- About the photographer: **Ashesh Soni** is a sophomore student at Nova Southeastern University. At his sister's wedding on Martin Luther King Weekend 2020, he captured the image of the bride's (his sister) arms decorated with a traditional paste known as Henna. The weekend was a special and exciting time for Ashesh and his family since his oldest sister was getting married.
- About the artist: **Krunal Patel** is a third-year medical student understanding that spirituality is a major focus in medical education. He wrote this piece to demonstrate that medicine is more than just a career to students and physicians. Medicine is an art, medicine is a gift, and medicine is a part of who we are.

Each year during the month of November, an event known as "Movember" takes place. The event involved growing a mustache in order to raise awareness for issues related to men's health. This past year was my first time participating in "Movember", as I paired up with a male classmate and together we helped raise funds and awareness through social medical outreach. This essay reflects the experience I had with a patient who I had the privilege of knowing during my time as a urological medical assistant.

ARTIST STATEMENT: ELIYAH POLLAK

- The Celebration of Advocation

As a previous urological medical assistant, I became close friends with patients who had terminal prostrate cancer. I would change their catheters monthly, administer their therapy injections, and most importantly of all, I had the opportunity to get to know these patients and meet their loved ones. I noticed that many patients began to share their life story with me.

One patient for example was also an alumni of the University of Florida and we bonded immediately. Every time he came in, we would discuss the latest Gator football and basketball games and our experiences living in Gainesville. Given his amazing sense of humor and uplifting personality, no one would every know that he had less than a year to live since he was fighting a metastatic disease. He shared with me that he had sold both his house and car and had recently moved in with a close friend.

- This patient really impacted me-knowing his life was limited in the months to come, and given how poorly he was constantly feeling, he always asked about me. He genuinely wanted to know how I was doing and what was new in my life. I continued to see him at his appointments as he later became wheelchair bound and his health continued to decline. At the end of each visit, I'd wheel him out to the check-out desk as he made his follow up appointment.
    - Never knowing when I would see him again.
    - Never knowing which visit would be his last.
    - These were the thoughts constantly running through my mind.

Last year, during the month of “movember”, (men’s health awareness month) NSU-KPCOM was dedicated to raising awareness in honor of men’s health. I noticed that I was thinking of this patient a lot recently, as it had been almost a year since he received his prognosis.

Despite becoming deeply saddened when I think of this patient, I couldn’t be more grateful to have contributed to a cause that is very close to my heart with my medical school classmates. I’m happy that we can collectively celebrate the impact we made through raising over $9,000, in addition to raising awareness raised regarding vital issues relating to men’s health.

I AM CELEBRATING MY COMMMITMENT TO ADVOCATING FOR THIS CAUSE IN HIS HONOR!

ABOUT THE ARTIST : Eliyah Pollak

ELIYAH POLLAK IS A FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT. HER INTENT BEHIND THIS PIECE WAS TO SHARE A PERSONAL STORY DURING HER TIME WORKING AS A MEDICAL ASSISTANT.

Every Day Is Worth Celebrating

Celebration means a coming together as one to promote a common goal and appreciating the outcome. My time in Ahwa, Gujarat embodied this definition. As a part of a mission trip to India, I had the pleasure of working with a wonderful community in a beautiful country and meeting a group of people that welcomed us with open arms. Over the course of our journey, we went from being strangers from a distant land to becoming close friends, developing a bond that I will cherish forever.

Under the guidance of physicians, pharmacists, and many other healthcare workers, we were able to work with this community and improve their health to the best of our ability. Whether it was utilizing osteopathic techniques to alleviate musculoskeletal ailments, using breathing and behavioral techniques to aid patients suffering from psychiatric issues, or simply discussing preventive medicine and lifestyle tips, we did our very best to promote general wellness, health, and happiness among the locals of Ahwa. Together we were able to come together for a common goal- improving public health- and celebrated at the end of the trip the many strides we made.

However, as a gift, the community provided us with something much more meaningful- an open look at their way of celebrating life. They danced, sang, cooked us wonderfully tasting meals, took us around their beautiful land, and most importantly showed us that it matters not how much money one has, but rather how to make the most of one's time on this Earth. For me, this was the true celebration- a celebration of health promotion, of course, but additionally a celebration of culture, camaraderie, and community.

From the moment we walked into the medical center until the day our bus drove away as we waved goodbye to the many smiling faces, the locals provided us with the utmost hospitality and respect, and an intimate look into their lives. Together, we celebrated the art of medicine one interaction and one experience at a time. But most importantly, we celebrated life. The people of Ahwa are celebrating life in their own way, despite not having access to the same resources we take for granted every single day. That does not stop them from celebrating life, and this just goes to show that no matter how you live it, where you live it, or who you live it with, life is always worth *celebrating.*

Sundeep Gidugu enjoys writing about his life experiences and opinions as a third year medical student. He is interested in public health, health education, and working with underserved populations.

In his spare time he enjoys reading, writing, and spending time with friends and family.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: SUNDEEP GIDUGU

THIS WAS THE FIRST PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS GROUP FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER AT THE TAMPA CAMPUS OF NSU-KPCOM. THE STUDENTS FAR EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS, WORKING HARD AND WERE COMMITTED TO DOING BETTER EACH DAY. WHEN I POSED AS THEIR PATIENT, I WAS IMPRESSED. I KNOW HOW MUCH BETTER THEIR COMMUNITIES WILL BE WHEN THEY GRADUATE AND JOIN THE RANKS OF COMMUNITY HEALERS.

DR. SUZANNE RISKIN

A CELEBRATION Of Gabriella

Every year the post arrives on my stream. Gabriella's birthday. This year she would have been 15 then 16. Her younger brother having grown older than her. Her mom and dad a constant force in the community against pediatric diseases. They have been successful. REALLY successful. They had President Obama sign the Kids First Act. They have personal conversations with The Director of the NIH, Dr. Francis Collins about pediatric funding. They continue to raise their own money to fight. It is not only glioblastoma that they fight. Glioblastoma. The disease that took her away. They donate funds to a lot of various kids diseases.

When she was first diagnosed the blogs started off sweet, hopeful. There were parties and support groups for other children. Then she got worse- then better- then much worse. It started to really hit her, her eye became malformed and I cried every time the post went by about her update, with pictures. I felt so bad and did not know what to do. They had all the resources they needed. Heck they had direct access to one of the most brilliant minds in our time – the guy that mapped the human genome and runs the NIH. It didn't matter. She died.

A child died.

A child whose Grandma was my mother's bridesmaid. A child whose dad and aunt I knew as a kid. She died. Talk is bull----.

That is what the saucy 8 year old Gabriella would have said.

Literally said.

So every year the posts stream by, the updates and the void that sits behind them. I love the posts for the reminder of the life that she lived, little Gabriella who earned an honorary college degree. She was an inspirational spirit.

And I hate the posts. They make me sad. I hate that I get sad and I am appreciative of also not turning numb.

I used to say this as a student doctor. *Don't stop caring*. If you stop caring the job will suck. So I never did.

So I don't stop caring but still I dread the posts and like them. Should I donate every year? Should I do more? Does any of it matter?

Yes, yes, it matters because she would want it to. Because she would want the Kids First Act to save a life of another child. Because she would want it to matter.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriella_Miller_Kids_First_Research_Act
https://www.pinterest.com/pin/151222499961328744/
https://gramho.com/explore-hashtag/gabriellamiller

GABRIELLA

- **Suzanne Riskin, M.D.** is an Instructor of Basic Sciences at the Clearwater campus of NSU- KPCOM. She is interested in bringing narrative medicine to the curriculum because she is inspired by the works of her students. She received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and her M.D. degree from the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine. When she is not reviewing physiology and academic medicine materials she spends time floating down a river in a kayak and cooking up a great meal.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: SUZANNE RISKIN M.D.

The mission of medicine is to promote health and save lives. Unfortunately, one's actions in the medical field may sometimes never be enough to revitalize a patient. From my experience, the magnitude of the loss of a patients' life will never be fully appreciated until witnessed first-hand. This poem serves to illuminate one of sad truths of medicine and provide inspiration for medical professionals to continue to promote humanity and appreciate the true value of life.

ARTIST STATEMENT: KRUNAL PATEL

We just lost our fifth patient. My heart hurts and my head fills with frustration.

That is five families asking, “How could this be?” Is this really supposed to happen to me?

Happy families with huge smiles and grateful hugs have been replaced by a pit where my aching heart thuds.

What more could we have done? So our patient could once again see the sun.

My whole world doesn’t feel right. Deep inside I struggle with a fight.

If medicine is to heal Then why is despair the only emotion I feel?

I’m stuck, deep inside this black pit when their family saves me with words that I’d never expect to fit.

Thank you!

Did I hear that right? Or am I just dreaming in broad daylight?

I never imagined such a simple phrase could elevate me out of such a dejected mental phase.

Those two words gave me light.

Life is too short to be overcome by plight.

Learn to love smiles for they will take you miles.

Learn to give simple gestures of sympathy. It will transcend all of humanity.

Most importantly, learn to appreciate life.

Just live and let yourself thrive.

Share your love and never stop celebrating.

Appreciate every moment as if it was the most breath-taking.

Krunal Patel is a third-year medical student. He wrote this piece following his clinical clerkship in Internal Medicine to share his unforgettable experiences. His purpose for writing his poem, was to provide support and inspiration to those struggling with disheartening medical situations in medicine.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: KRUNAL PATEL

What began as an image became a story. I pictured hands raised into the air, basking in the moment and enjoying the little victories. I wanted to talk about a celebration yet not portray it as an isolated event. I didn't want to show happiness in a bubble, I wanted the truth behind it. I wanted to talk about the things that we fight the hardest for and the moments when we were inches from quitting but then didn't. These are the reasons *we celebrate*.

ARTIST STATEMENT: ANGEL MAURICIO MARQUEZ

- Lips chapped
- The passing winds burn
- From the smell of salt, I’d say it’s close
- but it’s never easy remembering the beginning.

- These toes have gone numb,
- cyclically slamming down onto the concrete
- Joints stiff,
- like a hinged gate left alone after a Floridian summer.

- How close could we be?
- I’m not quite sure if this scene seems familiar
- or if it’s simply a figment from my memories,
- a thought recycled from a distant youth with blurry blockbuster daydreams

- My legs and hands start cramping.
- The right knee buckles but I straighten back up
- as if a single thin string
- held together all these broken things
- from falling into pieces.

- If I slowed, I'd topple over, I thought.
- The tiny voice settles in
- doubting my decisions,
- pain its main ally.

- Dissonant, my mind.
- Yet around the corner I see gull's
- swimming against the elements.

- The ocean waves before my eyes, its crash a valiant battle cry.
- So I raise my arms into the night
- and stumble across that yellow line.

- The tape falls
- and sinks below the grains of sand.
- A wail escapes itself from beneath my hands.

- Knees drop down onto the ground.
- too many failures, I cannot count.
- Tears collect at the corners of my mouth
- and I think to myself,
- now this
- is a celebration

- **Angel Mauricio Marquez is a Latin American first generation army soldier, third year osteopathic medical student and occasional writer.**

ABOUT THE ARTIST: ANGEL MAURICIO MARQUEZ

Celebration of Pride

It was a bright Sunday morning and the last day of June when I made my way down the streets of New York City. The people that passed me as I walked down the busy streets were dressed in vibrant colors and shades of the rainbow. As I walked, I felt an immense feeling of happiness and joy from each and every one of the people that passed me. We were all headed to our own individual celebrations whether it was a tight knit party with close friends, to the busy piers for the day festival or, like me, to the massive parade down in the west village. The celebration that was occurring on this day was one of pride.

There were 5 million others in NYC from all around the world, for it was the world pride celebration for 2019. Due to it being the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Inn riots in NYC, it was set to be the biggest pride the world had ever seen. The Stonewall riots were the start of the LGBT social revolution. In the 1960's, LGBT people had to go to underground and secretive places to express themselves. Police often raided these underground bars and social gatherings in order to repress and strike fear into the LGBT people. On June 28th, 1969, my community finally fought back to stand up against this repression and hate. They did not want to spend any more of their days in fear or hiding their love and pride of being themselves. This is why we celebrate pride, and this is why I knew I had to be there to commemorate the fifty years of grueling work that my community had done before me.

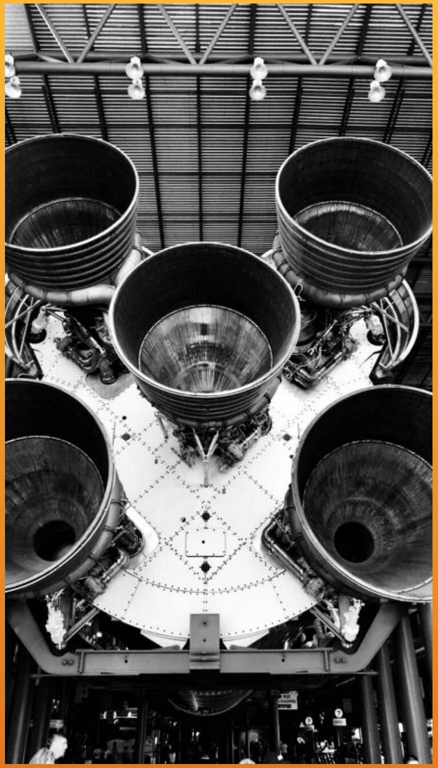
As I finally made it down to the parade, I started to see the numerous floats and people parading right next to the historical monument that was the Stonewall Inn. There were so many rainbow pride flags flowing freely in the air. People were bursting with love and pride for who they were. I could feel only happiness in this moment to openly be the gay man that I am for all of those that had fought to allow me to do that. All are welcome at pride, for it is a place where anyone can come to show their love and their true self no matter where you came from. Every pride celebration has filled me up with positive energy that I take into my life and pour into others throughout the year. It keeps me smiling through the hardships, and it is the celebration I look forward to the most each and every year.

About the artist: **BRYCE SABADE**

BRYCE SEBADE IS A FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT. HE GREW UP IN A SMALL TOWN IN NEBRASKA AND RECEIVED HIS B.S. IN SPANISH AND HIS M.S. IN ANATOMY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

KOMAL PATEL PHOTOGRAPHS

FIRST YEAR OSTEOPATHIC MEDICAL STUDENT, HARSH PATEL, HAS DREAMED OF STARTING MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR AS LONG AS HE CAN REMEMBER. THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN AT HIS WHITE COAT CEREMONY.



SATURN V, THE ROCKET THAT TOOK THE FIRST MEN TO THE MOON

MECHANICAL ENGINEER GRADUATE JUHI PATEL CELEBRATING HER GRADUATION.

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

CELEBRATION OF ANOTHER DAY

Komal Patel, MPH, photographer is a second year medical student.

Harsh Patel (who assisted on set up for photographs) is a first year medical student.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

When I walked into my first dermatology rotation, the world felt like a new and scary place. The first few weeks I was rushed through seeing an enormous amount of patients daily but was not being able to examine or ask questions myself. Because I am an intrinsically-motivated person, and in the field of medicine, not being able to interact with patients made me feel worthless.

It is saddening to realize some physicians are motived extrinsically, by financial means and nothing else, and get lost in the routine. One day during my rotation, when I was shadowing the second physician, he allowed me to talk and examine patients. He laughed. He smiled. He cared. I watched him sit down next to his patient to explain the surgery process to them in-depth.

I saw a light in his eyes that reminded me why I decided to pursue medicine. That feels like a win to me. In the end, I believe that good health is a thing to *be celebrated*… and so are the physicians that continue to invest in their patients honoring the true service of medicine.

I am impressed by physicians who continue to devote themselves to really caring for people –even after 20 years of working. Surgery is one of the scariest things that patients can experience and feeling safe and understood by your doctor is the least you could ask for.

This physician renewed my hope in why we go through so much as medical students – to care for and understand your patients as people and not just a process. Let’s continue to celebrate those that invest their time into the true service of medicine.

Mara Seat is a first year medical student who is goal-driven and interested in practicing in Obstetrics and Gynecology. She believes the field of medicine is deeply rooted in humanities, and that each time you‘re with a patient is a chance to connect and understand people better. She is from Sarasota, Florida and is looking forward to one day working in the state of Florida

ABOUT THE ARTIST: MARA SEAT

We experienced a lot in the NICU. It was very, very trying. Getting to the point where we could coordinate our bottle squeezes with the swallowing pattern of a newborn with a cleft palate was not something that we expected to have to do as new parents.

Many parents were not able (either financially or perhaps mentally) to be there with their babies. That was even harder to see. But the nurses are there, doing the best that they can. And sometimes there are volunteers that come to hold and talk to the babies that are healthy enough.

Childbirth is supposed to be such a happy time. The staff try to keep your hopes up as best they can, but being in this space and situation was still thoroughly tough. I hope you are all able to find some stillness and some thankfulness in whatever spaces you are currently in, even if they are not quite what you had imagined.

ARTIST STATEMENT: KATHERINE TAYLOR

Post-Celebration Celebration

Our first daughter, Aleena, was born in Celebration.
Her name means noble, fair, light, and proud.
I met her on my chest, for only a second.
Her cries were not sufficiently loud.

They whisked her away; a pediatrician came.
Her air-permeating words soon filled the room.
She said, “Aleena may have a syndrome. She has a cleft palate. And her jaw is unusually small.”
My daughter has a syndrome? What kind of syndrome? I could not comprehend this at all.

They needed to move her, where they could take better care.
I next saw her in an industrial cart.
Shipped with a face-engulfing, pressurized oxygen mask.
Along with a large piece of my heart.

Our celebrations of heading home were dashed, delayed.
Overnight, both her lungs had collapsed.
She was transferred again. Oh, can't we just win?
At least my doctor was able to let me out of my own hospital trap.

We arrived early next morning to see our new babe.
Sleep-deprived, frazzled, bewildered, nerves unbearably thin.
A shift change. Of course. My tears came with force.
They were not yet able to let us come in.

Her only hope was a machine that would give oxygen to her blood
To give her lungs time to recover, to reset.
She was at her third hospital in her first days of life.
She hadn't even reached the 48 hour mark yet.

We had to make the decision to try this machine.
In a stark conference room we sat.
We learned of the dangers of possible strokes and clotting and bleeding.
But we asked them to start the machine right away---STAT.

Extrocorporeal Membrane Oxygenation---ECMO.
That is what kept her alive for 4 grueling days.
The first time we saw her, in this third hospital
She was enveloped in a cyanotic blue haze.

There were so many helpers, my husband, relatives, friends, the nurses,
a social worker, and physicians.
They all tasked me with pumping my "liquid gold milk."
I could do nothing else under those trying conditions.
It is the only thing I could do to help.

She had 3 or 4 baby roommates in her less critical, shared hospital room.
They cycled in and out, one by one, there was a girl with a giant pink head bow.
But her first roommate was a boy. Adopted. Austin bound. What a joy.
After each, I felt guilty, wondering how many more days were left for us now?

We were waiting for her eating to improve.
We wanted so much for her to eat feeding tube-free.
We wanted so much for her to finally be home.
We were tired of being a party of two and not three.

We stuck it out there for 56 days and 56 long, lonely nights.
My husband and I would alternate “good” days and “bad.”
We were constantly thinking of her when we were not there.
What an absolutely tumultuous time that we had.

Then, it was finally time to celebrate!
But wait, not yet, not too soon.
The night before discharge, she started to snore.
And alarms quickly filled her room.

Her oxygen had dropped, her airway not protected.
The hospital “gifted” us an oxygen tank.
Along with her feeding tube, special bottles, an alarm of our own.
It would have been easier to transport loot from a bank.

Her outpatient specialist appointments were weekly.
Everything but her brain and heart were followed, monitored, and inspected.
Couple that with feeding, tube care, worry when the apnea alarm chimed a beware.
My own health was very neglected.

But that is the role of a parent.
To give your child everything that you've got.
I even weaned her off her tube at 1 years old.
I did not want her to be a tube-using tot.

I would gladly do it again if needed.
It took me 7 years to be able to say this simple thought.
Hormones make you forget some of the pain of childbirth.
Time makes you more willing to strive than to not.

This rhyme is imperfect, just like life's course.
You're set, then you get sidetracked again.
We're safe and home for now; no oxygen or apnea or tubes.
In celebration, we say ***Ameen.***

I have always loved writing creatively and more recently found the field of medical humanities. Whichever specialty I choose to practice in as a D.O., I will try to include writing, reading, and sharing patient and physician experiences in some form.

ARTISTS STATEMENT: KATHERINE TAYLOR

I am a D.O. candidate in my first year of study at the Tampa Bay campus. I have a husband, children, and two lovely in-laws in my household. We're an eclectic mix and it definitely makes life more interesting. I'm just trying to balance parenthood with medical school and a long commute. It is a very unique time to be studying medicine; I hope we can all stay well and safe through this pandemic.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: KATHERINE TAYLOR

EXPRESSION OF CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

BRITTANY DERYNDA

A knock, a firm hand placed on the shoulder, I said; “How are you feeling today? I am sorry that I kept you waiting so long” although, it had only been minutes since the pair were placed in the room.

An older man, 85 years or so, sits with his face entangled in tubing, breathing with the help of his oxygen tank, *Click, Whoosh. Click, Whoosh. Click, Whoosh.* His wife’s wrinkled fingers interlaced within his.

“I am doing great! I walked up a whole flight of stairs yesterday without stopping. You see these here?” as he pointed to a picture of his grandchildren in his wallet, “I chased them around all night on New Year’s with this oxygen tank!”

“I love to hear that Mr. Smith, that’s really great! Only 5 treatments left. You are doing great. Any heart burn or nausea recently?”

“Oh, none of that”

“Jon tell him the truth.” Mr. Smith’s wife studied him as took a deep breath. *Click, Whoosh. Click, Whoosh. Click, Whoosh.*

“Well, nausea the past week but only in the mornings. And well the heartburn has gotten pretty bad doc.”

“I can give you something for those both, I’ll send some Omeprazole and Zofran to your pharmacy right away. Anything else I can do for you today Mr. Smith?”

“Nope I’m all good, come on Nancy, we have to get to your hair appointment on time. Oh, and one thing for you, newbie,” turning to face me, the fly on the wall, watching, examining, staying very still. “Take the time to greet your patients, apologize for being late, and remember; it could always be worse. I’m going to beat this cancer; you wait and see” *Click, whoosh. Click, Whoosh. Click, Whoosh.*

And with that, the patient with stage 4 prostate cancer walked out of the clinic, wife in hand and a smile from ear to ear, despite the cancer that had metastasized to his lungs and bones. He was grateful to be alive.

- **About the artist**: Brittany Berynda

BRITTANY DERYNDA IS A FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT.

Artists Statement: Kristina Fritz

This personal essay provides a first-hand account of a patient and their family celebrating a change in perspective brought about by experiencing a clinical trial.

The Medicinal Power of Small Celebrations

In 2001, a ten-year-old blonde girl from Florida often complained of fainting spells. She would stand up and walk a few steps and pass out. Her face would become very pale, especially around her mouth and her limbs were cold and her quality of life was starting to deteriorate. She could not participate in school events and slept most of the day. Her parents were concerned and brought her to a doctor. Her heart was severely hypertrophied, but they could not discern the underlying cause. She had normal blood pressure, no arrhythmias, but an echocardiogram showed a leaky right sided atrioventricular heart valve. Her physicians wanted to determine via cardiac catheterization imaging, if there was a small hole or valvular disorder that could be fixed and return the child's quality of life.

The parents had hope, and they were looking forward to being able to help their daughter and hear the news that her problem could be fixed. After the cardiac catheterization, the physicians determined that no anatomic abnormality existed, but that she had high pulmonary pressures that could indicate pulmonary hypertension. “Don’t read the internet!” was the doctor’s advice. “The disease, which I believe is pulmonary hypertension, is being heavily researched and many advances have been made and the internet is not entirely up to date.”

The physician told her parents that there was a specialist in New York that was currently researching this problem and thought that he/she could provide some answers and solutions for the little girl. Although, it was not the news that the parents had expected, the medication the physician prescribed did improve their daughter's current quality of life and they had a name of a specialist. The parents hoped that the specialist could offer a new solution that could bring their daughter back to health, maybe even a cure.

The child's parents did read information about her diagnosis on the internet and immediately regretted it. The words they read haunted their daily thoughts. "Sudden death. Five to ten-year prognosis." However, they were determined to find answers. Within three months they had scheduled an appointment with the New York specialist and signed their daughter up as a subject in the specialist's five-year research study.

She would be required to spend a week participating in tests and would consult with the specialist at the end of the week. These parents would do anything to try to find some answers for their daughter's health challenges and only wanted to help their daughter. When they arrived at the New York hospital, they were given a list of tests that the young girl would have to undertake and a map of the hospital. The family felt like they were easily lost in a maze of hospital staff, patients, and jargon they did not understand.

Their days consisted of waking up early, navigating themselves to the part of the hospital that performed the test, and waiting until the tests could be performed. The tests were many, including: PET, CT, XRAY, stress tests, family blood work, pulmonary function test, plethysmography, echocardiograms, tracer tests, etc. After the first day of testing, the family went back to their hotel and celebrated getting through the day by going out to dinner at the small restaurant that was next to the hotel. They realized how lucky they were to participate in this study without any fees and when they initially traveled to New York, they thought that their daughter would not survive. Now, they realized that their child was most likely one of the least sick patients in the study.

They were feeling much more optimistic after speaking with other patients in the study throughout the day. That dinner ending the first day of the trial, was an unplanned celebration and today is still an important memory that changed the perspective of the entire family.

A celebration need not always be a large social gathering, especially in medicine. For families with loved one who are ill, a little bit of good news, a new perspective, or a small kindness becomes a thing worthy of celebration.

In our lives, there are many formalized celebrations shaped by our society; religious, geographical, familial. However, in medicine, smaller, less formal, and more spontaneous celebrations are often witnessed. Patients, families, and doctors celebrate positive test results, lifestyle changes, or answers to their health problems. Small celebrations can inspire hope and they can bring joy and relief that can have a healing effect for patients and their families. After that dinner, that eleven-year-old girl was celebrated and encouraged.

She was going to live.

About the artist: **Kristina Fritz**

KRISTINA FRITZ IS A FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT. SHE RECEIVED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND BIOLOGY, AS WELL AS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AND BIO-ENGINEERING FROM FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY. SHE IS INTERESTED IN *THE ART OF MEDICINE* AND HOW PATIENT CARE AFFECTS THE PATIENT'S HEALING PROCESS AND OVERALL HEALTH.

Joy in the mourning

In the dust,
there it was.
All my dreams
with scattered hopes
in the past
she left behind.

LUDONIR SEBASTIANY, MD, MS.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Dr. Ludonir Sebastiany is a physician resident at Community Health of South Florida specializing in Family Medicine. He played football for the Seminoles at Florida State University. He was a member Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-professional honor society, where he was extensively involved in community service events throughout Tallahassee, as well as U-SSTRIDE, a pipeline program devoted to serving rural, minority and underserved communities.

In the future, Sebastian hopes to utilize his fluency in Creole, French, Spanish, and German to improve the health of individuals, both foreign and domestic.