

Ray Antonelli



Greetings! My name is Ray and I am a UNC medical student with the incredibly good fortune of spending my 3rd year in the Asheville longitudinal program.

I grew up in the tiny town of Pittsboro, North Carolina then studied biochemistry and Spanish at NC State. After college, I took two years "off" to work for the US Environmental Protection Agency, where I studied the effects of drinking water pollutants on human health. My time at the EPA sparked an interest in prevention and population health, and with that mindset I continued with my plan to attend medical school.

Being from a small town, I feel totally at home here in the Asheville program. We are able to build meaningful long-term relationships with classmates, faculty, staff, and patients in a way that traditional third year students cannot. This affords us a tremendous number of opportunities to learn from our experiences and to personalize our schedules to fit our interests. On top of all of that, Asheville is an amazing place to be a student with countless opportunities to be active and have fun.

The attached picture tells a lot about who I am; I smile often, I love eating (there is SO much great eating in Asheville!!!!), and my artistic abilities are, well, completely unimproved from the time this picture was taken. :) A couple other fun facts: I have biked across the United States and I earned my pilot's license when I was 17.

Amelia Cline



Hi, I'm Amelia. I grew up in Raleigh, NC and took the short drive down to UNC Chapel Hill for undergrad. I studied Environmental Health Science at the School of Public Health and spent a few post grad years doing health services and public health research in Boston, MA. Slowly, but surely, I came around to the idea that I could do public health even better with a medical degree and ended up back in beautiful Chapel Hill. I chose the longitudinal program in Asheville because I thought the smaller environment and continuity with preceptors and patients would be the best way for me to learn the skills I came here to learn. And now that I'm up here I can't imagine doing it any other way. We often brag about

the front row access to attendings and procedures, but I think the special sauce out here has more to do with extra bits in the longitudinal program. We have great resources to continue the ethical

and personal reflections we came to rely on in the preclinical years and the flexibility and resources to cater the program to our interests. What I'm most thankful for day to day though is being surrounded by teachers and colleagues who are passionate and thoughtful about our education and the ways we are taught. They seem to *enjoy* teaching and eager to push us and watch us improve as individual learners who will one day be individual docs. Plus, if you're going to be stuck in the hospital for hours on end, it certainly doesn't hurt to have those hours broken up with glimpses of beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains out the windows!

Outside of med school life, I love to play in these beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, read books that have nothing to do with medicine, argue about politics, listen to Dolly Parton, and explore Asheville!

Hallum Dickens



Howdy! I'm Hallum. I am fortunate to be one of the students participating in the Asheville Longitudinal Curriculum, and one of the first students training in our rural hub down the road in Hendersonville. I am a NC native, born in New Bern, and raised in a small town in Franklin County called White Level. I completed my undergraduate studies in English/Chemistry/Biology as a Carolina Covenant Scholar at UNC in 2010. After graduating, I spent a year researching insulin signaling pathways at UNC and briefly studying stem cell

microfluidics at Georgia Tech before leaving the USA to work in the Republic of Georgia and then in Argentina as an English teacher. After a year teaching English, another year of hitch-hiking across South America back to NC, and two years cramming as much basic science into my head as possible back in med school at UNC-Chapel Hill, I am happy to finally be in the mountains studying and practicing medicine for the rural/underserved of Henderson County.

It is difficult to imagine a better place to study medicine. Since this is such a small group in comparison to our Chapel Hill peers, it is rare that we are not the only student on a given rotation. That means most of our work is one-on-one with our preceptors. We see and evaluate patients independently, and report directly to the attending. The attending/senior resident/resident/4th year student/other 3rd year student totem poll doesn't really exist here, so it is much easier to take ownership of our learning and really be involved in patient care. We don't go it alone though. We receive a great deal of support through weekly didactics, Master Clinician, Art of Medicine, and Ethics and Humanism series. So even though we often work with few other students, there is still a strong sense of collegiality and cooperation among our cohort. Having white space to pursue interests outside of the core curriculum is also a huge bonus. I have a particular interest in migrant health and underserved medicine, so I have been spending additional time doing psych home-visits with the ACT team, rotating through the ER, spending extra time at one of the oldest migrant farmworker clinics in the country at Blue Ridge Community Health Services, or backpacking at any one of the hundreds of trails and parkways within driving distance in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We

keep busy. Don't hesitate to shoot us an email if you have any questions!

hallum_dickens@med.unc.edu



Taylor Fie

Greetings! I'm Taylor, one of the third year medical students living it up in the Asheville program this year! I'm writing this bio while on call for surgery so I apologize for any grammatical errors or confusion in advance. I was born and raised on a family farm in Clyde, NC, about 30 minutes west of Asheville. I stayed close to home for undergrad, choosing to attend Western Carolina University where I majored in English literature and minored in Biology. While at WCU, I volunteered at a free clinic with a passionate group of

doctors and nurses, and my experiences there ended up fueling my decision to apply to medical school.

I'm so excited to be back in the mountains with a great group of classmates, learning from an excellent team of physicians who truly care about my education. Third year here in Asheville is challenging, yet so rewarding. Working one-on-one with doctors and their patients, I have more independence and a greater sense of responsibility towards the patients I see. I feel driven to learn about the diseases they struggle with and to advocate for them as they navigate the medical waters. Getting to work with the same doctors for the entire year, and seeing patients multiple times in the clinic, I feel like an active participant on the team. The long-term partnership I have with my preceptors makes it easier to ask for feedback and to engage in conversations regarding patient care, doctoring, and clinical challenges. Day to day, I find inspiration in the patients I meet and the doctors who work with them, and day to day, I find that I know a little bit more on my journey to become a physician.

Amanda Gambill



Hi, my name is Amanda Gambill! I am a current third-year medical student here at UNC, and recipient of both the Sarah Graham Kenan Primary Care Medical Scholarship and the Lucius Blanchard Scholarship. I attended Wake Forest University for my undergraduate career, and graduated with a BS in Chemistry with biochemistry. I grew up in the western foothills of North Carolina, where my parents are cattle farmers. The mountains of NC have always felt like home for me, and the Asheville program felt like a natural choice because of that and my love for rural and underserved medicine. The summer between my 1st and 2nd year of medical school I participated in the Himalayan Health Exchange program, providing basic health care to rural areas in the Himalayan Mountains of India, a trip that could only be described as life changing. This passion for helping the underserved is at the

cornerstone of my desire to return to western North Carolina and practice family medicine in rural communities. Outside of medicine, I love to travel, and have been to 16 countries. I am always up for adventure, which fortunately, this mentality is exactly what the Asheville program encourages.

Devin Gibbs



Hi! I'm Devin, one of the third year med students lucky enough to be in the Asheville longitudinal program. Although initially the thought of leaving UNC made me wary, hearing about the relationships formed with preceptors and patients, having the time to explore your interests and passions, and the rave reviews of everyone in the program won me over.

Coming to Asheville has been the perfect decision for me! Attendings work with me one on one and have me actively take part in patient care. The white space during outpatient time allows me to read more deeply about my patients instead of just studying for shelves. It also gave me the exciting opportunity to follow a patient through therapy. Additionally, the small class size in

Asheville and regular get-togethers keep all the students connected.

In my free time, I give in to my foodie tendencies (Asheville is perfect for this) and go hiking whenever I get the chance.

Margo Hedlin



As my patients and preceptors regularly point out, I'm not from around here. I grew up in San Diego, where it's always 70 degrees and if you listen closely, you can probably hear the ocean. I had a carefree childhood frolicking on the beach and learning about sea creatures for fun, then I studied biology at Stanford, where it's always 70 degrees and if you listen closely, you can hear the techies concocting their newest idea for an iPhone app. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life when I graduated, so I lived in San

Francisco for two years trying to figure that out. After deciding to pursue medicine I came to UNC, because palm trees don't turn colors in the fall and boy is southern hospitality ever a wonderful thing. Since coming here I've discovered: seasons, biscuits, rock climbing, long bike rides on rolling country roads, summer afternoons on the porch, a sense of calm you can only get in the mountains, wonderful classmates, incredible professors, and deep-seated gratitude for the series of coincidences that led me to North Carolina, where I have the honor and privilege to study medicine.

In the few months I've been here in Asheville, my patients have taught me not only about medicine, but about the courage it takes to go under the knife, about resilience in the face of incurable disease, and about defining identity in the setting of a mental illness. A four year-old reminded me how incredible it is to discover the way the world works; a patient whose surgery left her with an unexpected ostomy taught me that life doesn't always go according to plan, but plans aren't what matter most. So rather than tell you the kind of medicine I want to practice or the communities I hope to serve, I'll leave you with this: I may not know what kind of doctor I'll become, but I'll do my best to be a good one.

Malcolm Jefferson



Greetings everyone! My name is Malcolm Jefferson, and I'm a third year medical student currently participating in the UNC SOM Asheville program. I'm from Charlotte, NC (by way of Brooklyn, NY) and spent my undergraduate years in Baltimore, MD where I majored in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology. Before attending medical school at UNC, I worked as a Biostatistician for a biochemical profiling tech company in RTP, NC.

Being in Asheville for my clerkships has afforded me the opportunity to forge strong relationships with colleagues, faculty, and most importantly, patients. Everyone I've encountered is genuinely concerned about the quality of education I am receiving and is truly committed to instilling the importance of improving the health of this state's population.

I feel extremely privileged to be a part of this program and would encourage anyone interested in receiving a more hands-on clinical experience, bolstered by the holistic approach to continuity of care for the wonderful people of this region, to strongly consider this opportunity.

Nathaniel Linger



Hi! My name is Nathaniel Linger and I am having a blast as a 3rd year medical student in the Asheville program. I grew up 30 minutes away in the little town of Waynesville, so getting to come back to the mountains has been wonderful. Splitting my time between the hospital and clinic has allowed me to experience varied aspects of medicine while

maintaining connection with my core group of preceptors and advisors. It has thus far been an incredible and fulfilling experience; this is what I have been waiting for and looking forward to in my medical education. Asheville has proven to be an awesome place to live, and an even better place to learn medicine. In my free time I enjoy hiking and spending time outdoors soaking up all the beauty that Asheville has to offer. I would highly encourage other UNC students to choose Asheville for their rotations; you won't regret it!

Michaela McCuddy



My name is Michaela and I grew up in the small town of Yellow Springs, Ohio. I moved to NC where I went to UNC-CH for my undergraduate studies and then stayed on for medical school. I consider myself a successful transplant. I absolutely love this state and the peace it gives me to be in the mountains of Western NC. Some of the most valuable time I have here is spent taking my dog for long hikes and reflecting.

My first few months in third year have been filled with experiences that are both rewarding and incredibly challenging. We are learning to process the back-to-back struggles, joys and tragedies of our patients on a daily basis, while simultaneously laying our clinical foundation and trying to figure out what we want to do for the rest of our lives. I am continuously amazed at the support we receive from administrators, preceptors, professors and peers here in the Asheville program. They are fully committed to our learning and are equally committed to our wellbeing and happiness.

I feel so fortunate to have been able to participate not only in the Asheville program, but in the Hendersonville program as well. All of my outpatient clinics are located in this small "rural hub" and here I am able to experience a level of continuity with my patients and preceptors that few students will ever have. I am also able to spend time at a Federally Qualified Health Care Center and to learn with the dedicated physicians in MAHEC's rural residency program. My preceptors truly love to teach and are eager to provide me with any learning opportunities that I desire. I can't imagine a better learning experience and I am endlessly grateful.

Michael Parker



Hi, my name is Mike. I'm from Apex, NC and went to Clemson University where I majored in Agricultural Mechanization and Business with a minor in Non-Profit Leadership. After undergrad, I took a year off to teach English in Madrid, Spain. Outside of medicine I enjoy getting outdoors, playing the guitar, dancing and wood working.

I was attracted to the Asheville longitudinal curriculum because of the one on one time with attending physicians. Being able to regularly scrub into cases and be one on one with the surgeon and scrub tech has been an incredible experience. In addition, I feel as though our longitudinal preceptors are excited to have us come as they do not regularly have students. With the Emergency Department exposure, white space, and close interactions with classmates and preceptors I feel like I have had experiences I could not have had anywhere else. Not to mention, Asheville is a great place to live.

Yolanda Paylor



Hello! My name is Yolanda Paylor. I am a third year longitudinal medical student at the Asheville campus. I was born in Louisiana but raised in Hillsborough, NC. I attended Winston-Salem State University for undergraduate, graduating with a B.S. in Biology and double minoring in Chemistry and Dramatic Arts. I am what people call a “straight arrow,” going straight through to medical school from undergrad. I had the honor to serve as co-president of the UNC chapter of the Student National Medical Association. During my time serving in that role, our chapter won

National and Regional chapter of the year. An awesome achievement for such a hard-working group of individuals! I am also very lucky to have been accepted as one of the Kenan Primary Care Rural Scholars at UNC.

My time in Asheville has been an amazing experience. The longitudinal curriculum is best described as a delayed learning curve, followed by an “epiphany,” leading to increasing clarity. I am interested in exploring rural medicine and this program has granted many opportunities to work in rural Family Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/Gyn and Surgery practices. I believe that this program is great for my particular learning style and I have really enjoyed my experience thus far!

Caleb Pearce



Originally born in Louisiana, I moved to North Carolina at the age of 10. I graduated from a high school in the small town of Mocksville, NC and then continued to North Carolina State University where I completed a degree in biology. After graduation, I returned to Baton Rouge, Louisiana to serve in inner-city schools tutoring 6th grade children through an AmeriCorps program. I then returned to Chapel Hill for medical school. I am an active person and enjoy outdoor activities. I love watching college football (no matter the team, but prefer my LSU Bayou Bengals and my Wolfpack) and dabbling in golf whenever possible. I am currently interested in internal medicine and/or pediatrics.

I adore being in the outdoors and as far away from city life as possible. Logically, the Asheville program and the beautiful Appalachian mountains were the perfect fit. Not only is the scenery spectacular, the people around here are friendly and relaxed (which suits my personality well). Further, my preceptors genuinely care about my education and continuously inquire about what I am learning and what I desire to learn. They have given me the autonomy to work with my own patients and construct a management plan for each patient visit. I have also had unique opportunities to assist in numerous procedures (both operative and clinical) that I would not have been able to participate in elsewhere. I have also noticed that the leadership of the Asheville program is outstanding, incredibly personable, and proactive about ensuring students obtain an optimal educational experience.

Margo Pray



Hi All! My name is Margo Pray and I am one of the third year students in UNC's Asheville program! I'm excited that you are interested in the Asheville program. I went to Appalachian State for undergrad, so I'm excited to be back in the mountains -- It's beautiful here when I'm not in the hospital or in clinic. I am one of the Rural Primary Care Scholars at UNC as well, so it's great to be able to do my family medicine, pediatrics, and OB/GYN at rural clinics around Asheville. Working with an underserved population is so rewarding but is not without its challenges, and it has been so important for me to experience the challenges of rural medicine firsthand and begin to think of solutions. I also love to hike and backpack with my pup- so there's no better place than Western NC!

I encourage you to look at the Asheville program due to the strength of the teaching and the quality of clinical experiences you receive. I work one on one with all of my preceptors, and get quizzed and taught about EKGs, medications, and diseases weekly, which challenges me to really read and know how to be resourceful because there is a lot I don't know! I also love being so involved in my patient's care- I call them with their lab results, follow them into the hospital if they get sick, and see them over the course of the year. The relationships you build are incredible, and just as a third year you really feel the positive impact you can have on patient care! We also get extra training sessions in cardiology, radiology, and emergency medicine shifts in the ED- all of which have helped me to be well-rounded and more comfortable with acutely ill patients, EKGs, chest x-rays, and more. If you have other questions about the Asheville program don't hesitate to ask- I am so thankful to be here and am truly having a blast. The food, beer, music, and festivals in Asheville also are nice to enjoy when you have some free time ;)

Philip Ramirez



I define myself in several ways; a brother to 4, military brat, soldier and medic, to list a few. As a military brat, I moved around quite a bit, at ages 8, 10, 13 and 16. The first two moves were within California and the others to Goldsboro and Durham, NC. As a soldier and medic, I had the pleasure of serving our country during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Upon returning, I earned my baccalaureate at The University of North Carolina. Currently, I am happily meandering my way through a quest to fulfill my childhood dream of becoming a Medical Doctor.

So far, part 3 of '*Quest MD*' can be summed up in one word: amazing. Asheville's astonishing aesthetics are second only to the experiences. The unique one-on-one, year-round tutelage with vetted practitioners is rapidly improving my clinical acumen and building my confidence necessary for patient satisfaction and efficient practice. We have personalized ethical and moral discussions providing multiple perspectives of clinical conundrums from classmates and teachers. These discussions are granting me lenses to clarify stakeholders and identify resolutions in difficult medical situations that will be invaluable moving forward. The staff is irreplaceable, providing wonderful administrative assistance and interpersonal relations. The learning experience, support and ambiance mingle into a well-balanced work-life profile for a 3rd year medical student. If given the opportunity, I would absolutely choose Asheville again, as it is simply amazing.

Eleanor Saunders



Hello hello! I'm Eleanor Saunders, long time inhabitant of Chapel Hill (birth, undergrad, work, first half of med school), thrilled to have a new city to call my own. After exactly four months, Asheville feels like home.

There are a lot of happy scenes and spaces in this town. I appreciate how the out-of-doors unites people from all walks of life. In Pediatrics clinic, we talk about using DEET bug repellent for young children since so many families go camping. At Mission hospital, nearly every other car wears a bike rack on back. The value of yoga and other forms of health consciousness seems to extend into more varied socioeconomic layers than it would elsewhere.

It's fun to be here, fun to be a rare, appreciated species as a med student rather than a more invasive one in Chapel Hill. We have a lot of one-on-one contact with physicians, all of whom are very nice. We work hard and play hard. I hope you will have the same wonderful experience our class has of liking each other immensely, getting together to hike, contra dance, get to know each other's families and friends, and explore restaurants. Biking with a fellow classmate one weekend, the wind in our hair and the leaves at their peak burst of color, I yelled over the downhill whoosh, "can you believe *this* is our third year of med school?"

The busy we keep is a very nice, independent, rewarding type of busy.

Charles Semelka



"Hi, I'm Charles a med student working with your doctor." This is my usual introduction as I step into a patient's room. I'm still conscientious of being a medical student, but as 3rd year has progressed I've noticed some changes. My preceptors encourage me to hone my medical reasoning and techniques. I feel comfortable communicating with patients and physicians. I am confident with exams from painful legs, to damaged hearts, and troubled minds. Third year is an important step towards becoming a doctor, but my experience in Asheville has been more than typical.

I followed a patient into the hospital as he was being treated for liver failure. When I entered his hospital room, he gave me a big smile and thanked me for being there. Building a trusting relationship with patients is one of the joys in medicine. I worked as a home care aide throughout college, and I still talk with some of my patients and their families. The program directors in Asheville have worked with me to shape my learning experience. I have worked in clinics, which provide health care to low-income populations and for Spanish speaking patients. Third year of medical school is more than learning medicine. I am part of a wonderful group of classmates. We like to hike mountain trails, sample the city's cuisine, listen to live music, and just plain have fun.

Soon, I will introduce myself to patients by saying, "Hi, I'm Charles. I'm your doctor."

Eric Tran



I'm from the San Francisco Bay Area and for undergrad, I studied English/Creative Writing at Stanford. I moved to Wilmington, NC after graduation to get my MFA in Creative Writing and then moved to Chapel Hill after that. I chose the Asheville program (or it chose me)

because of its small seminar-like approach to learning: regular didactics with instructors and students you'll remember and have worked with, a challenging but supportive ethics discussion group, and close relationships with preceptors. The program also encourages and provides time for you to continue your interests outside of school, whether its sports or arts or nature or touring restaurants.

Daniel White



I'm Daniel White from Cherryville, North Carolina. After going to Duke University for undergrad and doing research in colon cancer at East Carolina, I came to UNC medical school. Growing up in a rural community, I was able to experience the importance and potential of primary care medicine. UNC has a great understanding of the priority primary care should have and I found a perfect home for myself in their Kenan Primary Care Medical Scholars Program and the longitudinal program in Asheville. Coming to Asheville for my third year of medical school has been the perfect fit for my learning style and medical interests.

Jenna Wiley



Howdy. I'm Jenna Wiley, transplanted to North Carolina via California. I went to school at UC Santa Barbara, worked and lived in San Francisco and Durham for a few years doing clinical lab science and scuba diving physiology research, and traveled across Nepal, India and SE Asia before starting med school.

The Asheville program is truly unique. I appreciate the autonomy in designing our schedules, allowing us time to explore specialties catered to our interests and allowing the flexibility for us to decide if we'd rather go on a hike or scrub in on a valve replacement, both of which add immense value to our student lives. The relationships we develop with our preceptors allows them to provide meaningful mentorship truly catered to our individual interests. I have also really enjoyed getting to be in a place with a smaller group of medical students and residents and experiencing more community medicine in contrast to the more academic medicine in Chapel Hill. Plus, the Asheville program does a wonderful job reminding us of the humanism in medicine, giving us space to discuss ethical dilemmas we face.

One of the sealing deals for me to choose this program was the exposure to emergency medicine. We rotate through the ED at least three times a month. Although I'm considering a future in

emergency medicine, I firmly believe the learning opportunities in forming differential diagnoses and understanding the role of the ED within in the constraints of the current health care system, not to mention the exposure to procedures, is insurmountable even if I were not interested in EM. That being said, the curriculum has allowed me to set up ride-alongs with EMS and AirCare as well as add additional shifts in the ED as my time allows.

If you are thinking about the program and feel confident that you have enough self-motivation to fill in your time with valuable experiences, then it's definitely worth checking out.