

## Lateef Cannon



My name is Lateef Cannon, a third year medical student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I first came to western North Carolina in 2005. I attended undergraduate university at Warren Wilson College and completed my BS in Biochemistry at UNC Asheville. These beautiful mountains attract inspired people to live and work here, and I felt blessed to have learned from top notch educators in small academic settings.

Coming back to Asheville for my third year of medical school has offered the same intimate and high yield clinical experiences. My days are spent working alongside my outpatient clinical attending or as part of an inpatient resident care team. I have never felt like my time was wasted or I was an unnecessary appendage. I have opportunities to be a useful contributor to patient care and am constantly directed in my clinical learning.

Our curriculum has also allowed me to enjoy living in the mountains, affording enough time for the occasional adventure up into the hills via hike or bike. This area is a mountain biking mecca and I have enjoyed continuing to explore new trails. This year, I have been going to kayak roll sessions and hope to start to explore opportunities in white water rafting.

I feel blessed to have this opportunity to develop my medical knowledge and skills in such a nourishing environment. I have appreciated close connections with my colleagues and preceptors and continue to feel increasingly connected to the larger medical community of Asheville which has been so willing to support our learning.

## Brooke Crossley



Hi All! My name is Brooke Crossley and I can't say enough good things about the Asheville program. The best part has been going through this year of firsts with my cohort from Chapel Hill. First code stroke, first cholecystectomy, first baby delivered ( then a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and now I've lost count), first code STEMI and heart cath, then hugging the patient's wife when she cried in relief, saying the wrong thing to a patient and trying not to cry myself, sweating bullets during my first hospital presentation to an attending with no time to waste... now I can focus on the patient and not my nerves during presentations. I'm amazed at the progress I've seen in my teammates and in myself and I can't

imagine not having this special group of people to learn from and share these things with.

The academics do not disappoint either. Preceptors who really know me provide thoughtful, constructive feedback and get to see the progress. They expect you to "own" patient care here in Asheville. It's definitely not shadowing! There is so much opportunity here for all kinds of experience outside of the structured half-days. With so few students and a year to prove yourself, you can find an attending who actually wants to see you learn to suture correctly, or read a head CT, or whatever your goal is.

Initially it was a lot to take on but after working hard for nine months we all seem to be hitting our stride. I think we'll be prepared not just for 4<sup>th</sup> year, but for residency. BTW Asheville has some killer bars and restaurants. And I still found time to backcountry ski with my husband.

## Rachel Gooding



Hey, my name is Rachel and I'm one of the third year medical students in the Asheville Program. I was born and raised in Raleigh before attending undergrad at Appalachian State in Boone. My time as a Mountaineer taught me a good deal about biology and chemistry, but an even great deal more about how much I enjoy small learning environments and how amazing it is to live in the North Carolina Mountains. On an educational roll, I went straight into medical school at UNC after graduating from App State in 2011.

When I started med school, I knew that UNC had new up-and-coming satellite programs, but I initially had no interest at all. Why would I want to leave the Big House in Chapel Hill in order to receive "experimental" education with a longitudinal curriculum that no one else seems to have heard about? But then I learned more about the program: Oh, I get to spend the year with a small and supportive group of my peers? And I will have the opportunity to work one-on-one with the same physician preceptors for the entire school year? And I get to live in the Mountains? It actually sounded pretty awesome.

And it is. I'm the type of person who loves stability, so the Asheville Program has been perfect for me and there has been much to enjoy. I enjoy the variety of my week, covering all disciplines of medicine as I shift from obstetrics and gynecology on Mondays to psychiatry on Fridays. I enjoy that my preceptors and I have been able to get to know one another over the year, forming relationships of education, collaboration, and trust. I enjoy checking in on "my" patients whom I follow wherever their health care needs take them, whether it be to their annual physical exam, med checks, specialty appointments, or hospitalizations. I enjoy meeting up and hanging out with my nine classmates who are going through this strange and exciting experience along with me. And although it's tough on those days that I have to be at the hospital at dawn, I especially enjoy being able to look out the window and see the sun rising over the beautiful Appalachian Mountains of Asheville.

## Tom Jarrett



I was born in Pittsburgh, PA and at eleven moved to my father's hometown Adelaide, South Australia for five years. I then returned to the United States, finishing high school in Lewisville, NC, where my parents built a psychiatry practice. Since high school I lived in Chapel Hill finishing college, entering the workforce, and most recently matriculating to medical school. Crossing these boundaries has given me the capacity to see life from various perspectives, work with, and become friends with some incredible students. In the Asheville program, I found "The Grasshoppers" (as we are fondly called here) to be a most collegial, compassionate, familial, intimate, and academically rigorous group of classmates and friends.

In college where my unique combination of learning styles was first challenged by impersonal and high-volume science based education, only through experimentation, adaptation, perseverance, and setback have I

ultimately been successful. Asheville, as a clinical training site, allows me to implement my complement of self-directed learning strategies learned over the years. So if a sense of service, the need to be an integral part of a team, and self-directed learning is important to you, I would encourage you to apply to the Asheville program. If you do decide to make Asheville the place of your third year medical education as I did, the relief many medical students feel at the end of third year will be replaced with a sense of sadness that a great year of medical education has come to a close.

## Stephen Kimmel



Hi, my name is Stephen Kimmel and I graduated from Western Carolina University with a BS in Emergency Medical Care which prepared me to work as a Paramedic. Before matriculating at UNC School of Medicine, I worked on Ambulances for 7 years.

I grew up in Banner Elk, North Carolina where I met and married my high school sweetheart Erin. We now have two daughters Vivienne, 3, and Brittain, 5 months. When I am not on the search for a lost pink pony cup or something similar, I enjoy getting outside to kayak, bike, or run. On the best of days in Asheville you can swing all three. I have enjoyed all the classic things about the

Asheville program, but in particular the opportunity to intellectually participate in the care of patients. As a third year student in Asheville, it is often just you and the attending so as students we have an opportunity to shape the plan, something I've found to be both stimulating and rewarding.

## Susan Li



Hey all, I'm so glad that you are interested in the Asheville curriculum. My name is Susan Li. I got my undergraduate degree at Davidson College in Chemistry, and came straight to UNC thereafter. I can honestly say that being accepted into the Asheville program was the best thing to happen to me during medical school...for so many reasons. For the sake of time I will just share my top 3:

1) This is hands-down the best learning opportunity I could have imagined during medical school. We work one-on-one with attendings, take charge of our own patients, and see different aspects of medicine on a weekly basis. The amount of responsibility and the degree of autonomy we are given really forces you to learn on a deeper level.

2) The faculty and staff here are absolutely amazing, and they have taught me not only the science, but more importantly the art of medicine. I went to a small school for undergrad and found it overwhelming to be at such a large school like UNC, where I was just another face in the crowd. In Asheville, you will never be another face in the crowd. In many ways, I have come to regard the people of Asheville (from faculty to colleagues to patients) as family. I can honestly say that I feel like part of the care team. It's amazing to wander down the halls of Mission Hospital and run into 3-4 people you can stop to chat with.

3) Asheville is chill, period. I was completely burnt-out by the end of MS2, and was not sure how I would make it through the rest of med school without taking some type of break. Well, I got that break here in Asheville.

Don't get me wrong--we work long, hard hours as well; there is just a lot less "sitting" and a lot more "doing,"--so you do still get to keep a lot of your weekends. Oh yeah, the large gamut of local breweries here have really helped with the burn-out problem too.

Even if you don't end up applying to Asheville, you should at least come if only to see what this amazing city (and all its' beautiful people) is all about.

## **Nellie O'Connor**



My name is Nellie O'Connor and I am one of the third year medical students participating in the Asheville program this year. I grew up in Raleigh, NC and went to undergrad at UNC in Chapel Hill so this has been my first year living in the mountains of western NC. I am glad I got to spend this year here because I love the supportive community. (Not to mention, the breathtaking views of mountain scenery from every floor of the hospital!) I studied Chemistry in undergrad and have known for a long time that medicine was what I wanted to do. I could not be happier spending this year in Asheville doing something that I truly love!

To any second years reading this bio, don't let any scary stories you have heard about third year make you nervous about the next step on your path. Although there has been a lot of work, third year has been fantastic. I would assume that third year will be exciting no matter how or where you do it, but getting to spend my third year with the lovely people that work hard to make the Asheville program such a success has truly been a blessing! The atmosphere here is encouraging and supportive. And they have done an excellent job adapting to the needs of the medical students that present as the year moves forward. I chose to participate in this program because I value the idea of forming relationships with patients and being fortunate enough to learn their stories, not just the medical parts of their stories. And, I have been able to do just that this year. I even got to deliver the first baby of one of my patients! Throughout the year, I have been able to adjust the curriculum to fit in experiences that interest me. I have followed many patients to surgery or therapy. I have also been able to schedule extra time working in the particular fields that interest me with incredible attendings who are excited to work with medical students.

The ethics curriculum is another unique part of the Asheville program. With this curriculum, we are challenged to continue thinking critically about the ethics of medicine throughout our third year. It is easy to forget to reflect on the activities of one's day during the busy schedule of third year and I have greatly appreciated having time carved out of the schedule each month to reflect on and discuss the ethics of medicine. Next year I will be applying for a residency spot in Family Medicine. I highly recommend this program to everyone going into their third year of medicine!



## **Sarah Rhodes**

Hi! My name is Sarah Rhodes, and I am one of the lucky 10 Ashevilleians this year. I've lived in North Carolina most of my life (Concord growing up, then Davidson College, then Chapel Hill). However, I've also traveled extensively, and out of all the places

I've been, Asheville is where I've felt most at home! I have been pleasantly surprised at how much fun I've had during 3<sup>rd</sup> year. People here really are exceptionally welcoming (even the surgeons were, on the whole, less intimidating than anticipated).

The longitudinal program was admittedly overwhelming at first, but now I look forward to going into clinic each day to see patients and preceptors with whom I have built relationships. Expect to be always on the go here – with a different clinic every half-day, there is never a boring moment! There really is free time, which I have used variously to follow patients, explore other medical areas of interest, run, hike, study, and generally keep life in order.

After less than a year here, my husband and I feel very much at home. Asheville has disappointed me only in that it does not have a pediatric residency program! However, I am planning to spend as much of 4<sup>th</sup> year as possible up here in the mountains, either in the city or in the surrounding rural communities.

## **Nisha Verma**



majority of my fourth year here as well.

Hi everyone! My name is Nisha Verma, and I am so happy to be spending my third year in Asheville as part of the longitudinal curriculum. I was born and raised in Greensboro, NC. I went to undergrad at UNC-Chapel Hill and graduated with a double major in Biology and Anthropology. During college, I developed a strong interest in women's health and particularly in the doctor's role in preventing intimate partner violence, which drove me to apply to medical school. I graduated from college in 2011 and went straight from college into medical school at UNC. As happy as I was in Chapel Hill, after 6 years there I was excited to be able to explore a new part of the state. I fell in love with Asheville almost immediately and have decided to spend the

The Asheville program has connected me with incredible mentors that I have been able to build strong relationships with and learn from all year. I have often stopped and thought after a day of seeing patients in clinic, writing up their notes, and then calling them about their lab values, "Wow, I feel like a real doctor!" I have really enjoyed how much responsibility and ownership of our patients this program allows. I have also appreciated the flexibility the Asheville program provides, giving us half-days to explore areas of medicine that appeal to us. I have spent half-days doing extra shifts on the labor and delivery floor, learning from the doctors at the child abuse clinic, spending an afternoon suturing in the ED, and sometimes just catching up on studying. With the support of the wonderful staff here, I have also had the opportunity to create and execute an interdisciplinary intimate partner violence training for students in the area. And on days off, there is no end to the delicious food and beer, beautiful scenery, and welcoming people!



## **Alex Werner**

Hey y'all, my name is Alex and I'm an MS3 in the Asheville program. For me, joining the Asheville program was a great decision. I grew up in Chapel Hill, NC and went to East Chapel Hill

High. I went to Columbia University in NYC for college. Then I went to Nicaragua for a year to do some research. In those five years, I satisfied my craving for big cities and world travel.

Coming back to Chapel Hill was great for my first two years of med school. But I then discovered I had a new craving, this time for mountains and for rural communities. I realized that despite being a diehard Tar Heel since I was old enough to know the good guys from the bad guys, I really didn't know much about the Tar Heel State of NC. Slowly but surely since moving here, I have fallen in love with Western North Carolina.

My favorite part about the Asheville program is the one-on-one relationship with faculty preceptors. The one-on-one relationships allow them to treat us like their interns. The expectations are high, and you have to work really hard. But a few months in, you start feeling much closer to a real MD instead of feeling like you're pretending all the time. Instead of being one of many students and residents, all the focus is on you. If you want to be put on the fast track and start acting like an intern in your third year of medical school, then this program is for you. Good luck in your studies, and GO HEELS.