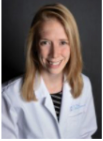


2015 Urban Scholars



Jason Blair was born in Chicago and grew up in Long Beach, CA before graduating from Duke University with a degree in History and minor in Religion. He lived and worked in Argentina for 2.5 years with a Christian ministry focused on university students before returning to the U.S., where he spent over 7 years working with Wake County Human Services in Raleigh. Initially a case manager, he soon transitioned to a focus on public health efforts with the HIV/STD Community Program. These experiences and a lifetime of residing in urban areas provided many opportunities to witness gaps in how we address health, and to learn about many non-health factors that have a significant impact on the human experience. Jason looks forward to combining his faith with medical practice while working with people of all ages and from all over the world to address health, spiritual, social, and other issues in life that affect a person's overall well-being.



Kate Neitzke is from the outskirts of Washington DC in Alexandria, Virginia. She studied Biology and French at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. She spent a year as a nursing assistant at a medical respite facility for homeless men in Washington DC, where she developed a specific interest in healthcare for the homeless and in addressing health disparities in urban areas. She enjoys the pace of work and diversity of patients in urban settings, and has loved getting to know her new home in Charlotte. She is interested in combining primary care and psychiatry in her future practice to more fully address the medical needs of urban underserved patients.



Melissa Rolfsen grew up in Baton Rouge, LA, completed her undergraduate program at University of Georgia, and is currently in her third year at UNC School of Medicine (Class of 2018) completing her rotations at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte. Prior to beginning medical school, she taught two years (2010-2012) of Earth and Environmental Science at Garinger High School through Teach For America. This built a passion for school health and led her to obtain her Masters of Public Health in Health Behavior (2014) from UNC's Gillings School of Global Public Health before pursuing medical school. She helped launch the PATCH Program (Propelling Adolescents Towards Degrees in Healthcare) during the 2nd year of her MPH. Melissa hopes to work in a school-based health center one day in order to merge her two main passions for working with adolescents and education. She hopes to ensure that a lack of quality and affordable healthcare doesn't hinder any of her patients from achieving success in the classroom or in attaining their long-term dreams in life.



Janitra Venkatestan, originally from Greensboro, NC, Janitra graduated from UNC in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. She then taught 8th grade Science for two years at KIPP Charlotte through Teach for America (TFA) in the Queen City. Through her work with TFA, she learned of the need to address gaps in healthcare access in order to better achieve educational equality so she returned to UNC for medical school. At UNC she most enjoys serving patients with limited access to quality care whether it's through the student-run clinic SHAC or as a Kenan Urban Underserved Scholar which gave her the opportunity to work with several Charlotte area physicians who work hard to provide quality healthcare for those patients with limited access. When it came to deciding where she wanted to complete her clinical rotations, she was delighted to be accepted to UNC SOM's Charlotte Campus so that she could continue the work she had started as a teacher. When not working throughout various clinics all over Charlotte, she likes to read, spend time with family and friends and try new places to eat!