

INSIDE *Medicine*

The Newsletter of the Department of Medicine

Welcome to 2022

Silver Linings

A message from the chair, Steve Abramson

This “Silver Linings” issue of the Newsletter, thanks again to the efforts of Stacy Bodziak and David Oshinsky, offers poignant reflections on family, nature, sport and meditation that keep each of us centered during life’s challenges. Certainly, the ever-evolving twists of the COVID pandemic have heightened the importance of such safe places that sustain. Challenged once again at work and at home, we move forward, buoyed by the individual strengths we find through our personal “Silver Linings.”

Hoping that 2022 will be the year the pandemic ends, my best wishes to you and your families for the New Year.



"Staying centered for Susan and me begins with family, blessed now with four grandchildren. Two, Noah and Aria, are shown here in Nantucket on our way to a wedding (no, contrary to common belief, jacket and tie is not my beach attire). In addition to family, idyllic moments for us may be found on a sailboat, where a perfect wind and sun can bring profound meditative calm."

Steven B. Abramson, MD

Executive Vice President and Vice Dean for Education, Faculty and Academic Affairs

Chair, Department of Medicine



"I remained centered this year through my photography."

Troi Santos

Department of Medicine IT



"This has been such a challenging year – but having a few family trips made all the difference to me. I've attached a selfie of us on a trip to Cape Cod. My wife Sudha is the acting assistant commissioner for the NYC DOHMH Bureau of Communicable Diseases – so it was a chance for us both to forget about Covid for a while and think of other things, such as Tularemia. (The cape is a hot spot.) The casual times with family (and our dog Luna) was a tonic for me."

Michael Phillips, MD

Chief Hospital Epidemiologist , NYU Langone Health System

Associate Director for Clinical Services, Division of Infectious Diseases and Immunology



"I remained grounded in this unsettling year by finding small occasions to be 100% present with each of my kids, individually. This exercise in focusing on the present actually helped remind me that everything I do at work contributes to improving the future our kids will inherit. Here is a picture from one of these occasions where my daughter 'took me out' to her favorite ice cream shop, Kreme & Krumb in Montclair, NJ."

Joseph Ravenell, MD, MS

Associate Professor, Departments of Medicine and Population Health

Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion



"It was a busy year with a big move from Minneapolis, MN, to NYU with my family. We are enjoying exploring the area, such as the lovely Hudson Valley and River."

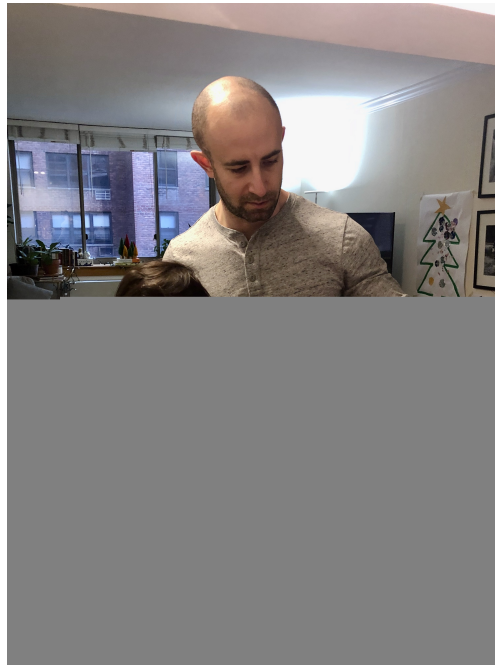
Aasma Shaukat, MD, MPH

Robert M. and Mary H. Glickman Professor of
Medicine and Gastroenterology
Director, Outcomes Research, Division of
Gastroenterology and Hepatology

"It's easy to get caught up in the chaos of COVID and let important moments pass us by as our minds become clouded with existential worries. I've stayed centered over the past year by focusing on family and trying to spend more time out of the hospital and off the internet. Cooking with my daughter has been a source of positivity throughout the past year. Working with my hands – and supervising a two-year-old in the kitchen – lets me live in the moment."

Gregory Katz, MD

Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine
Inpatient Site Director, Tisch Hospital
Associate Program Director, Internal Medicine
Residency Program





"What kept me focused in 2021 was not what I was doing, rather who I was with. In February we welcomed our daughter Eliza to the world. Getting back to basics, spending time together and enjoying the day to day small moments as much as the big holidays gives me the energy to keep going."

Adriana Quinones-Camacho, MD, FACC

Chief of Medicine, NYU Langone Health, Main Campus

Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine



"Since the pandemic, I have turned to running as an outstanding stress reliever. I run almost daily with friends, colleagues or family. A real highlight was running the New

York Marathon this November alongside my son Josh while raising money for NYU Langone."

Kwok-Kin Wong, MD, PhD

Director, Division of Hematology and Medical Oncology
Anne Murnick Cogan and David H. Cogan Professor of Oncology



"With the limitations resulting from the Covid pandemic, we don't go to the theatre, opera, restaurants, concerts or other social events, but we have purpose in life, which gives us strength. Caring for patients and being with family always have been most important, and that is even more valued at this time. We are blessed that our two small grandchildren are 'in our pod,' so we can see them often. Life remains good for us, and we are thankful."

Anthony J. Grieco, MD, MACP

Professor of Medicine
Associate Dean



"I really don't have any hobbies! I've been in search for some (or at least one) for many years, but I keep coming up dry. The one (or two) constants that I have in my life are my family and my work. I remained centered by taking care of both of them, focusing on their needs and making sure they continued to move forward under such unique circumstances. I remained positive by concentrating on the task in front of me and viewing it more as an opportunity than a threat."

Patricia Gaeta, MBA

Senior Administrator, Department of Medicine



"What kept my family grounded in this year of constant turmoil? It was definitely our Covid-Dog Lily. A terrier-mix rescue from Kentucky, Lily has brought joy and peace to our house as each of us takes turns receiving pet therapy. If I'm being perfectly honest, there are times when I look longingly at her simple life of eating, pooping, sleeping and barking at strangers, but then I realize that thankfully those years are still further down the road for me..."

Neil Shapiro, MD

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine

Associate Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program



"To stay centered I have been intentional about focusing on personal wellness. Making time to exercise and getting adequate sleep and making sure to keep my stress levels low. While I still work on weekends, it's not to the same levels as I have done in the past."

Renee Williams, MD, MHPE

Associate Chair, Saul J. Farber Program in Health Equity

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine



"This year at the end of PGY3 and before starting chief year, my sister (also a Bellevue pediatrics attending!) and I took a trip to California, starting in SF and making our way down Highway 1. My favorite part of the trip was a bike ride starting in Fisherman's Wharf going across the Golden Gate Bridge to Sausalito. I managed to not look down the entire time (despite my fear of heights)."

Neha Nagpal, MD

Executive Chief Resident, Internal Medicine

"Wow...how I remained centered? That is the perfect question at the end of this very trying year. Our family's tiny patio which allowed us to gather and celebrate; watch the sun rise and iconic NY tug boats; and lastly to nurture a little herb garden." ~ Anna , Raman, Jake, Zoe and Chellam

Anna Nolan, MD

Professor of Medicine and Environmental
Medicine
Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care





"Playing golf has long been my preference to stay centered. It is often said that one learns a great deal about one's playing partner's character during a round of golf, also that it's full of life lessons. Along those lines is a recent situation where I had to adjust to unusual course conditions as shown in this photo. Adjusting to unexpected events in order to move a small white ball along a grassy field is fun. Sometimes I make new friends too."

Michael Perskin, MD

Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine

Section Chief, Geriatrics, Tisch Hospital



"Obviously the primary concern in a pandemic is to stay safe and healthy. As a family, we are fortunate to not have any serious cases of COVID-19 or any serious financial issues. This allowed us to try to make the best out of the new situation. There are couple of things that actually worked in my favor. First, as a computational scientist, I could continue my research without major disruptions. In fact, I was able to focus better and write a couple of successful grant applications. Second, I did not have to commute to work and this gave me an extra 2.5-3 hours a day to dedicate to my 10-year old son. We had ample time to enjoy our hobbies and pick up new activities. When the weather was good, we would go biking for long 10-mile tours in Long Island: we called these "adventures" and we even came up with our own song about it. We played music, we built and launched water rockets, we learned everything about past and ongoing efforts in space exploration, we embarked on robotics projects, we started played tennis... All this quality time with my son, not only kept me centered, but really inspired me to keep working as hard as ever."

Aristotelis Tsirigos, PhD

Co-director, Division of Precision Medicine, Department of Medicine



"The past year has taught me to slow down and spend more time with family. We enjoy more outdoor activities like skiing, skating, and tennis. Here, my son Sean and I are hiking along the Palisades on a recent cool Autumn day."

Michael LoCurcio, MD

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine

Associate Chair for Education, Department of Medicine

Director, Core Medicine Clerkship



"Many silver linings in our household this year were centered around welcoming our baby Ella in March. A highlight was traveling back to California to see my family and having her meet her (nearly) 94-year-old great grandma Gonnie!"

Jordan Scher, MD

Chief Resident, Inpatient, Internal Medicine



"What kept me centered during this past year of upheaval was my meditation practice. I first became interested in mindfulness and meditation through a class I took during medical school many years ago. It was then that I learned the importance of stillness, of solitude, and of being attuned to myself and the people around me. Over the past year, I re-committed myself to at least one hour a week of deep meditation practice. And I even joined a dear friend's global meditation collective, where a group of us from around the world meet weekly over Zoom and reflect and meditate together.

Mindfulness keeps me focused on gratitude and purpose. It's the reason I always wear a pin on my white coat that says 'Breathe' – a gentle reminder in a challenging world."

Ofole Mgbako, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine and Population Health

Section Chief of Infectious Diseases, Bellevue Hospital

Clinical Pillar Lead, NYU Institute for Excellence in Health Equity



"After 20 years here in the Department of Medicine and another 23 between the Medical Library and NYU School of Social Work, I've decided to retire. I leave with the fondest of memories! Some of the best times I've had in my life have been with my NYU family, right here on NYU ground. But now it's time to hit the beach on a regular basis without having to keep track of my vacations days! I will miss you all."

Xiomara Cruz, MA

Coordinator, Credentialing and Appointments



"I recently had the pleasure of participating in a dance sport competition and can proudly announce that I won first and second place in a couple of rounds of the 2021 Nationals Dance With Me Studios ballroom competition in December."

Jennifer Dong, MD

Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine

"This past year I have enjoyed finding balance through creative outlets, including crafting projects, baking experiments, and writing. Creating something new can be a humbling experience, requiring a good bit of learning and problem-solving along the way, but it's always a rewarding endeavor, no matter how imperfect the end result."

Meagan Bruskewicz

Administrative Assistant, Department of
Medicine





"Cycling is an important activity to distract me and keep me out of trouble. On 5/1/21 (date of attached picture) my wife and I did a Foodie Fondo, sponsored by Bike New York. We did three in 2021; this one was dedicated to 'Stop AAPI Hate' and honored Asian cooks in New York. I try to bike every weekend and often that's with my wife, who got an e-bike for her birthday this year. I've done about 1100 miles this year, which is disappointing! I also started riding CitiBike on the second day that it opened 7.5 years ago, so this month I hit 4500 miles, riding from Grand Central Terminal to the VA and NYU and up to 222 E. 41st St and otherwise all over Manhattan."

David Goldfarb, MD

Professor, Departments of Medicine, and Neuroscience and Physiology

Chief, Nephrology at NY Harbor VA Medical Center

Clinical Director, Division of Nephrology



"This year my family has made the most of weekends together, taking as many jaunts outside the city as possible. We've been exploring small towns along the Hudson Valley (who knew a four-year-old would be interested in antiquing?) and have hit a bunch of local beaches."

Daniel Sartori, MD

Assistant Professor of Medicine

Associate Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program



"I go three hours before low tide. All I need are my water shoes, my bathing suit, and the blue 'Zipper' inner tube that I inflated twenty years ago and haven't had to touch since. I put the tube on my back and clamber down the wooded North Shore sand bluff that our house sits on. In one minute I'm on Sand Street Beach. I hop in and float out of Stony Brook Harbor into Smithtown Bay past the four rock jetties built by the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. After a mile I get out, walk a hundred yards east across the peninsula, stop for a few sips of water from an artesian-well pipe, and plop my tube onto West Meadow Creek—a salt marsh ecosystem very different from the harbor and the bay. After the full moon each month I can actually see the waning gibbous moon falling westward through the sky, relaxing its pull on the Sound, bending space-time, floating me home.

My chief complaint about today's cellphone world is the terribly low signal-to-noise ratio. Over 90% of the emails, phone calls, texts, and mail I receive is noise. When I'm out there on the salt marsh with my boon companions the sun, the moon, the wind, the water, the ospreys, the egrets, the cormorants, and thousands of fiddler crabs, it's all signal, no noise. Now and then I'll give myself a 360-degree spin and take

in the whole panoply—all twelve houses of the zodiac—for a couple of rotations. Einstein said, 'I believe in Spinoza's God, Who reveals Himself in the lawful harmony of the world.' Tubing made me a Pantheist.

I've gone fifty times since getting infected at the height of the pandemic in March 2020. Spring and summer couldn't care less about Covid and, for two hours, neither could I."

Michael Tanner, MD

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine

Co-Director, Master Scholars Program in Humanistic Medicine





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