

# Pediatrics Monthly Newsletter

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August 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Whew! What a summer it has been! It has been a complicated and challenging time due to several unanticipated changes. Our administrative leaders, Tracy Goggin and Ericka Moore, have moved out of their roles. We thank Tracy for many, many years of service to the department and wish her well on the next chapter of her career! We also want to thank Ericka for her contributions to the Department and congratulate her as she moves up into her new BUMG-Tucson role!

There have also been changes to our Pediatric Office Coordinators. We want to acknowledge Diane Hagan and Theresa Alcoverde for stepping up and making sure our amazing Pediatrics Department continues to move forward with our many faceted missions! I also want to acknowledge our Divisions Chiefs, our clinic leaders and all the faculty for working with them to maintain continued clinical excellence. A special shout-out to a Pediatric Core Transitions Team assembled to assure smooth clinic operations during all the changes. This dedicated team included Drs. Brent Barber, Sydney Rice, Kimberly Gerhart, Kareem Shehab and Cori Daines.

But we are The Department of Pediatrics! Like our patients, we grow, we change, we develop! That is what makes us exciting, fresh and relevant! We now have a Pediatric Rheumatologist, our very own Dr. Marci Macaraeg! Though our revered Division Chief in Pediatric Endocrinology, Dr. Mark Wheeler, is retiring (see the spotlight below) he has built an amazing Division (keeping our last 2 fellows) and handing the reins to Dr. Cindy Chin. Dr. Anantha Harijith (Hari), spotlighted in the last Newsletter, is bringing two of his past fellows to join the team and other sections are also adding faculty members.

Our research facilities have also grown and developed. I step out of my office and look down the hall and see the new signs, like beacons to innovation! Lori Stratton and the development team have moved into a new space reflecting the success of our philanthropic efforts and the promise of support to come.

We have also undergone staffing changes in our education offices. Drs. Kareem Shehab and Rachel Cramton have expertly navigated those changes maintaining educational excellence for our students and residents as their teams are reset. A special shout-out to Lindsay Caruso and Michelle Goetz who have stepped up heroically, to support that effort.

Yes, there has been much change! But please know, that I am humbled and inspired to watch what you do each and every day and honored to be able to join you in our shared goal to help the children and their families we are dedicated to serve.

With Respect and Gratitude,  
Andy



# From Prototype to Powerhouse: A Decade of 3D Printing Innovation

In 2015, Dr. Michael Seckeler's 3D printing journey for normal and abnormal hearts began with modest means, big ideas, and a vision just starting to take shape. With an initial \$9,400 in funding and a single Dremel 3D Idea Builder, the foundation was laid for something far greater.

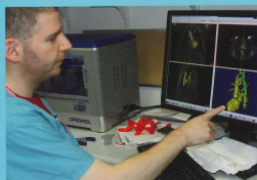
Today - 10 years later - that vision has transformed into a dynamic 3D printing program, now equipped with six printers Dr. Seckeler regularly prints 3D models of patient hearts to educate patients and families about their cardiac conditions and to help guide clinical case planning and develop novel transcatheter interventions. He has presented 16 abstracts at national conferences, published 18 manuscripts and one invited book chapter and been invited to speak at two regional and four national and international conferences about 3D printing in congenital heart disease.

Driven by innovation, determination, and a passion for problem-solving, Dr. Seckeler has turned a single machine into a hub of creativity and progress. This month, we celebrate the remarkable evolution of this initiative and recognize Dr. Seckeler's pioneering work in advancing 3D printing over the past decade.

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## THEN & NOW

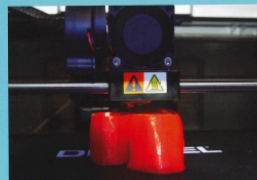
### Dr. Michael Seckeler Expands Teaching Methods with 3D Printer Technology



The 3-D model is converted from a CT scan.



A normal aorta (right) and a complex vascular ring (in red and white on the left).



The 3-D printer creating a model.

Pediatric cardiologist **Michael Seckeler, MD, MSc**, assistant professor, is using three-dimensional printing technology to transform teaching pediatric cardiology to medical students and residents at the **UA College of Medicine – Tucson**.

Thanks to a **UA Sarver Heart Center** fund that supports pediatric cardiology education, Dr. Seckeler received \$9,400 to purchase a **Dremel 3D Idea Builder** printer to create patient-specific 3D models of normal and abnormal hearts using computerized tomography (CT) and medical resonance imaging (MRI) scans.

The 3D models initially will be used to improve the educational experience for UA medical students and residents in pediatric cardiology.

"Laying a solid foundation of normal and abnormal cardiac anatomy is necessary for students learning cardiology," explained Dr. Seckeler. "The increased availability of 3D printers has created a new opportunity and method for teaching."

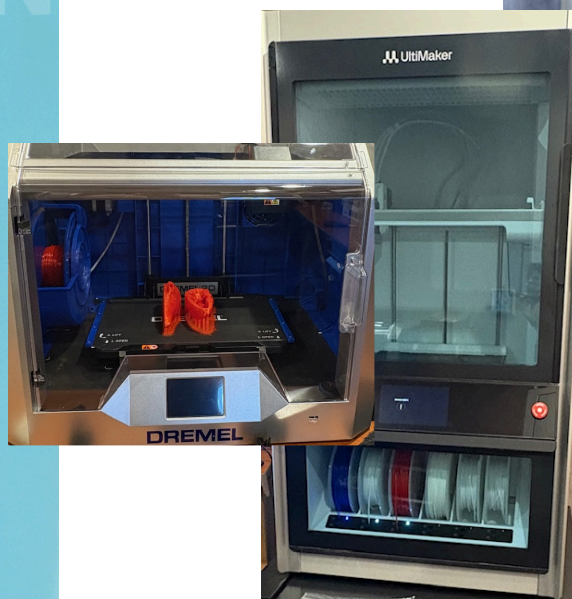
Dr. Seckeler already has begun using 3D models with trainees.

"Complex congenital heart lesions can be very difficult to conceptualize," said Pediatric Chief Resident **Ian Thomas, MD**. "3D printing technology gives residents and other trainees something tangible to learn from, which will improve patient care."

In addition, Dr. Seckeler plans to use 3D models to help patients and their families understand their specific congenital heart defects.

*Dr. Seckeler already has begun using 3D models with trainees.*

"Congenital heart defects and their treatment are complex and can be difficult for families to comprehend," said Dr. Seckeler. "Providing a model they can hold in their hands can help them understand what needs to be done to fix their child's heart."



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## Faculty Spotlight: Endocrinology



Mark Wheeler, MD  
Professor Emeritus

**What do you consider your proudest achievement over your 30+ year tenure?**

*Helping to build the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology, including establishing a Pediatric Endocrinology Fellowship program and providing excellent Pediatric Endocrinology clinical care for the children and adolescents of Southern Arizona.*

**What advice do you always give your students, residents, or fellows?**

*"Whatever you are, be a good one." ~ Abraham Lincoln*

**How did you maintain empathy and resilience through the challenges of clinical practice?**

*My faith in God serves as a powerful foundation for cultivating both empathy and resilience.*

**If you could go back in time and give advice to your younger self starting out, what would it be?**

*Buy Apple and Microsoft stock in the 1980s.*

**What kept you motivated and passionate after all these years?**

*The relationships with the patients, their families, and with my great colleagues. For example, it always instills in me a great sense of encouragement upon seeing children with diabetes and their families progress from the feelings of being overwhelmed, fearful, and confused when they first discover their child has diabetes to the disciplined, informed, proactive, and competent individuals, who manage the daily complexities of diabetes management with confidence and grace. I trust that our Pediatric Endocrinology team has helped to facilitate this transition and continues to be there for ongoing support and management assistance.*

**What are you looking forward to in retirement?**

*Not being on call. Time to spend with family and the opportunities to do more volunteer work.*

**What's one thing your colleagues might not know about you?**

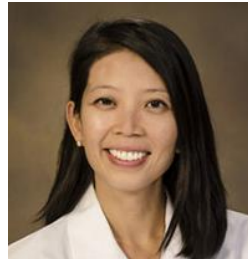
*Between my second and third years of medical school, a friend and I rode mopeds from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina to Chicago, Illinois.*

**What's your favorite coffee spot or lunch place?**

*Any place with chocolate.*

**Any words of encouragement or wisdom for the future generations of physicians or researchers?**

*"I know not how to aid you, save in the assurance of one of mature age, and much severe experience, that you can not fail, if you resolutely determine, that you will not." ~ Abraham Lincoln*



Cindy Chin, MD  
Associate Professor

We are excited to congratulate Dr. Chin on her well-deserved promotion to Division Chief of Pediatric Endocrinology!



**Can you tell us about your journey into endocrinology? What drew you to this field?**

*In college, I took an endocrinology class. At that time, I thought I would never go into endocrinology. Obviously, I changed my mind! Overall, I think pediatric endocrinology is an optimistic field where therapies are available which can greatly improve a patient's life. I also love getting to follow our patients long-term.*

**What aspect of patient care do you feel most passionate about?**

*Having families feel seen and heard during a clinic visit. We are not trying to fit them into cookie cutter ideals of what healthy looks like. Rather, we want to partner with families so their children can be the best versions of themselves.*

**What do you enjoy doing outside of medicine?**

*Reading, hiking, fostering my child's entrepreneurial endeavors*

**What's your go-to comfort food or favorite meal?**

*Dessert – as Dr. Wheeler says, we have to keep exercising our pancreas.*

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## Welcome to our new Pediatric Faculty Members!

Zaineb Saeed, MD  
Started in July in Gen Peds

Jeremy Gneck, MD  
Started in August in Gen Peds  
Was one of our residents!

Sarah Green, MD  
Started in August in Endo  
Was one of our Endo Fellows!

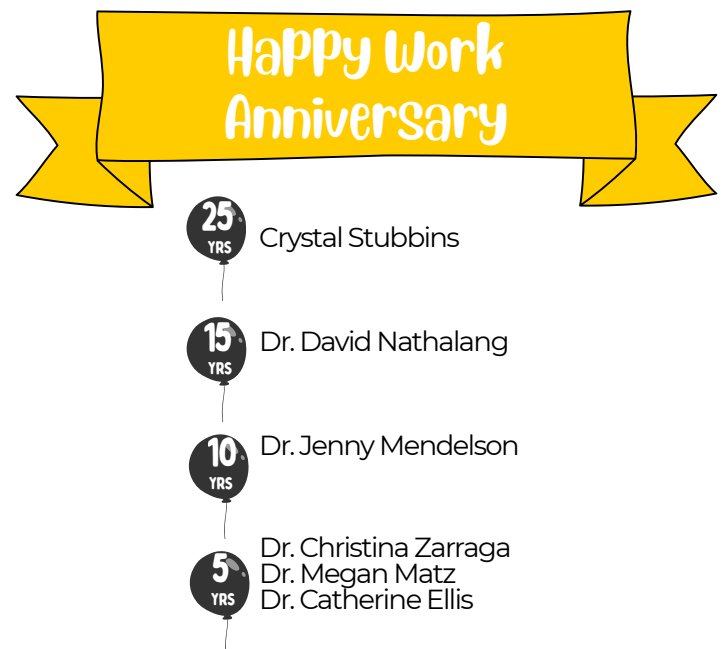
Nadine-Stella Achenjang, MD  
Starting in September in Neonatology

Mackenzie Stice, MD  
Starting in September in Hospital Med



## Welcome to our new PGY1s:

Tasnim Al Mairi, MBBS  
Rouzi Alhalak, MBBS  
Deepthi Bandaru, MBBS  
Haley Barefoot, MD  
Nidhi Beniwal, MBBS  
Natalie Caryl, MD  
Katelyn Desalvo, MD  
Noah Glende, DO  
Ciara June, MD  
Mamta Kothari, DO  
Jennifer Morales Pichardo, DO  
Esteban Robinson Bours, MD  
Asma Qasim, MD  
Rita Tran, DO  
Gregory Vallee, MBBCh  
Alex Van Morren, DO



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## Upcoming Community Events & Volunteer Opportunities:



### Community Events:

- Jazmine's Journey:
  - July 1st through September 30th, Jazmine's Journey is partnering with Krispy Kreme to raise funds for families impacted by pediatric cancer. When you purchase a Digital Dozen (one dozen original glazed donuts) using our fundraiser link, 50% of every order goes directly to Jazmine's Journey! That means you're making a difference with every delicious bite.
    - ➡ Order here: **Krispy Kreme YUM!**
- PANDA Fundraising:
  - Bashas, AJ's and Food City are the Bashas' family of stores nonprofit for September 2025.
- Type 1 Diabetes Research Breakthroughs
  - Presented by Father's Day Council
  - Michael S. Kuhns, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Immunobiology
  - Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 4:00om
  - At COM-T, Pediatrics
  - RSVP to Lori Castro via email by September 22nd  
[loricastro@arizona.edu](mailto:loricastro@arizona.edu)
- CF Education Day, sponsored by PFAC
  - Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. 9am - 12pm
  - In person at 655 N. Alvernon Way
  - RSVP via text:
- Hyundai Hope on Wheels:
  - Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025
  - 10am - 12pm
  - COM-T Social Hall



### Open positions in Pediatrics:

Banner:  
[Click here!](#)

UA:  
[Click here!](#)



### Operational reminders:

- Planning to travel? Don't forget to notify your Banner Coordinators and UA Admins.

*Thank you for reading!*

For suggestions contact:

Casey Nelson

[caseycastle@arizona.edu](mailto:caseycastle@arizona.edu)

[medicine.arizona.edu/pediatrics](https://medicine.arizona.edu/pediatrics)

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