

# Pediatrics Monthly Newsletter

December 2025

Happy Holidays to the faculty, staff, and friends of the Department of Pediatrics. I hope you and your loved ones have been well throughout the past year. It has been a wonderful year for the Department of Pediatrics, and I am writing to thank you for the part you have played in supporting our mission of patient care, research and education. I am extremely grateful to all of you. We have much to celebrate as our impact on the Tucson community and beyond continues to increase, improving the lives of the children we treat and their families.

We have accomplished a great deal in 2025! On the education front we have welcomed 16 new residents to the house staff, expanded the Pulmonary fellowship, and approved the fellowship for Neonatology. An encouraging trend we are noticing is the surge of UA students applying for Pediatric residency! Thank you to everyone who accepts students to shadow or provides mentoring; keep up the good work. Speaking of work, we have been able to hire 11 additional faculty members with recruitment continuing and our department growing.

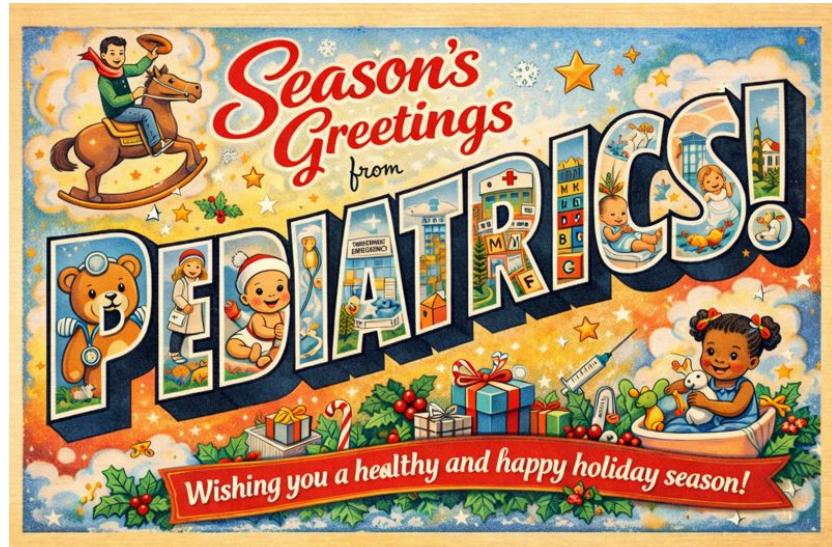
In fiscal year 2025 the department raised almost \$8,000,000 for research. This money came from more than 3,000 gifts from around 2,000 people or foundations. Every time you share how philanthropy has helped your research grow, donors realize the importance of giving. Thank you for giving tours, speaking at meetings, and treating the kids. It all adds up. In light of the challenges in securing grand funding, we had been successful in securing support and advancing our research. We have over \$7.5M between federal and non-federal grants in our current budget.

As 2025 comes to a close, changes are coming for 2026. As you all know, I will be stepping down from the Chair position to focus on my patients and research, and Dr. Chamberlain will be taking the helm and charting our course forward. I hope you all join me in welcoming her in the coming months. Enjoy this time with friends and loved ones. I could not be more excited about what we will accomplish in 2026, and look forward to working with all of you to achieve new heights.

With my very best wishes,

Dr. Fayed K. Ghishan

Fayed K. Ghishan, MD



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## Andrew W. Gardner, PhD, BCBA-D Trains in Costa Rica!

There continues to be a need for the dissemination of empirically supported practices for professionals in order to maximize effective care for families, children, and adolescents.

Dr. Andrew Gardner (Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Psychiatry) was recruited by the Rotary Foundation International and the Colegio de Profesionales en Psicología de Costa Rica (CPPCR, Psychology licensing board for Costa Rica) to provide 6 days of training in Spanish about various topics including: gold standard autism spectrum diagnostics, empirically supported treatment options for children with ASD and other NDD's, applied behavior analysis (ABA) foundations and related therapies, function-based assessment and treatment of challenging behavior including self-injurious behavior, parent management training (PMT/PCIT/RUBI) as well as symptomatology and challenges for children, families, and professionals related to a PANS/PANDAS/CPAE diagnosis. The training was limited to 50 psychologists with a waiting list, where many professionals traveled from remote parts of Costa Rica to attend in the capitol city of San Jose.

Aisha Baltodano, President of the San Pedro-Curridabat Rotary Club, stated: *"This project represents a significant advance in the care of people with autism in Costa Rica. Training psychologists in these strategies improves clinical practice and contributes to building a more inclusive and empathetic society."*

Read more [here!](#)



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## Pediatrics in the news

- ArizonaLEND: [Jennifer Arenas-Cárdenas, EdS, current ArizonaLEND trainee, was recently featured in a PBS News Hour segment called "Why Mothers with Young Children are Leaving the Workforce."](#)
- Arizona LEND: [ArizonaLEND Welcomes Dr. Chelsea Carr as Training Director](#)

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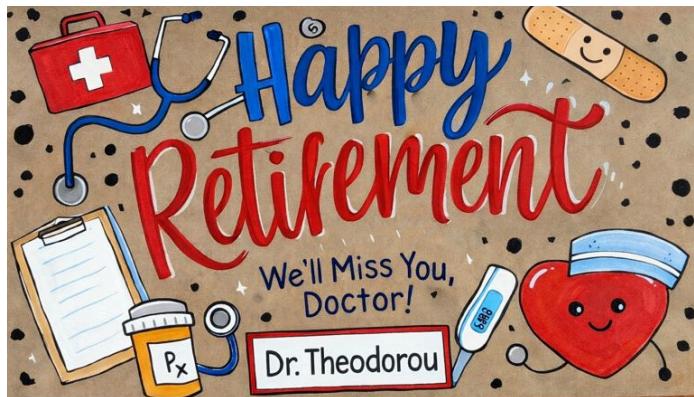
## Farewell Dr. Maria Theodorou

After 34 years of practicing as a general pediatrician, Dr. Maria Theodorou is retiring.

She began her career with Kachina Pediatrics, at what is now called the North Hills Clinic, which in 1993 transitioned from UA to UMC and now to Banner. Throughout her career, she has cared for generations of families, providing reassurance, guidance and excellent care to her patients. In addition to the care she has provided her patients and their families, she has educated countless medical students and residents, transforming their experiences in undergraduate and graduate medical education and impacting future clinicians. Finally, she has served as an inspiration and mentor to many of her colleagues, offering support, encouragement and sage advice when needed.

We thank her for all she has done for our community, and wish her all the best in this next chapter of her life.

Dr. Helene Felman  
General Pediatrics Division Chief



Thank you for keeping up with PCards while Carlene was on vacation — you did a great job! Carlene will be pleased and surprised when she returns...

Congratulations



**DONNA ETTER**

**Employee Of The Quarter**

Please join us in congratulating Donna Etter on being selected as Employee of the Quarter! Her hard work and commitment have not gone unnoticed. Below are some of the comments Donna has received that highlight the difference she makes every day.

Thank you for helping out at the Panda Bus event — your support made a difference!

Thank you for all you're doing to ensure the master DOE file is up to date and accurate...

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Florence High School - Girls Soccer  
Steele Children's Research Center is out in the communities!



Courtney's Courage continues to support our cancer research!  
Read more about their mission [here](#).

They are also planning a 5k run in February 2026. More to come in future newsletters.



Kids of Steele (KOS) Adopt a Family  
They adopted 13 families this year!  
Read more about the families [here](#).



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## Don't forget / Upcoming action items:

- Faculty portfolio (UA Vitae annual reviews):
  - Please reach out to Cindy Thompson at [crthompson@arizona.edu](mailto:crthompson@arizona.edu) if you need assistance!
- Accounting team group email: [peds-finance@list.arizona.edu](mailto:peds-finance@list.arizona.edu)
- Our Promotion & Tenure (P&T) process is moving along.
- UA [Life & Work Connections](#)
- Don't forget to recognize employees (both faculty & staff) doing an excellent job!

## Upcoming UA / Banner Holiday Time Off:

- UA Holidays & Winter Closure: Wednesday 12/24 through Friday 1/2.
  - Returning 1/5/26
- Banner Holidays: Thursday 12/25 and Thursday 1/1

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## Supporting Our Clinics Through Teamwork

Our Pediatric UA/Banner Administrative Team recently came together for a team-building activity focused on giving back. The team collected snacks to create “goodie boxes” for staff at three pediatric clinics and personally delivered them to each location.

In addition, painted rocks were shared with the Kids of Steele Rock Garden at the Wilmot clinic for our patients to enjoy.

This initiative allowed our team to strengthen collaboration while showing appreciation and support for the clinics we serve.



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# Upcoming Community Events & Volunteer Opportunities:

## Walk with a Doc

Join **Dr. Cindy Chin** at Rillito River Park ramada east of Swan Road on the south bank just north of Camp Lowell.

**Saturday January 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am**

- Health benefits:
  - Reduces the risk of coronary heart disease
  - Improves blood pressure and blood sugar levels
  - Reduces the risk of osteoporosis
  - Aids in maintaining body weight and lowers the risk of obesity
  - Enhances mental well-being
  - Reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer
  - Improves blood lipid profile
  - Reduces the risk of Type 2 diabetes

Interested in leading a walk?

- Anyone can lead the walk, such as a researcher, PhD, or even medical students!
  - 2nd Saturday of each month
  - We still need to fill:
    - March
    - April
    - September
    - October
    - November
    - December

Email Lori Castro at [loricastro@arizona.edu](mailto:loricastro@arizona.edu)



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# Thank you for reading!

For suggestions contact:  
Casey Nelson  
[caseycastle@arizona.edu](mailto:caseycastle@arizona.edu)  
[medicine.arizona.edu/pediatrics](http://medicine.arizona.edu/pediatrics)

A graphic featuring three stylized human figures in a row. The figure on the left holds a red speech bubble with the word 'REFER'. The middle figure holds a green speech bubble with the word 'YOUR'. The figure on the right holds a yellow speech bubble with the word 'FRIENDS'. Below this graphic is a box containing text.

**Open positions in Pediatrics:**

Banner:  
[Click here!](#)

UA:  
[Click here!](#)

A graphic featuring a large, hollow speech bubble with the words 'Don't forget' written inside in a cursive font. Below this graphic is a box containing text.

**Operational reminders:**

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