

Pediatrics Monthly Newsletter

♦
January 2026

For those I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting, I serve as the Assistant Administrator for the Department of Pediatrics and recently celebrated my one-year anniversary with the department. This past year has brought significant learning, relationship-building, and growth. It truly takes about a year to understand a department's strengths and uncover meaningful opportunities for improvement, and I'm grateful for the insights gained.

Our greatest resource is our team—the staff who show up each day ready to do their best work. teamwork, resilience, and adaptability have been evident throughout the year, and I am honored to work alongside such dedicated colleagues.

Over the past year, we reviewed our processes to reinforce best practices and identify areas for improvement. Using tools like KAIZEN and process mapping, our frontline staff helped discover more efficient ways to complete daily tasks. Our team also created the Rewards and Recognition Program, improved communication efforts, and launched this monthly newsletter—small but meaningful steps toward strengthening our work culture.

We have also navigated a long period of transition, including staffing changes in key positions. With new leadership arriving, change continues to shape our path forward. I remain committed to supporting the department and am always willing to lend an ear whenever needed. With sincere gratitude for the opportunity to be part of this department, I wish you a wonderful start to the year and look forward to the exciting times ahead.

I want to express my appreciation to the finance team (Leisa, Carlene, Crystal, and Donna); the administrative support team (Casey, Cindy, and Dayana); the GME team (Lindsay, Michelle, and Elizabeth); the development support team (Katie, Lori, and our newest member, Claudia); the Banner OC team and Supervisor/Analyst (Diane, Rachael C., Edna, Rachael H., and Annie); and finally, to my partners in crime—Lori S., Theresa A., and Ericka. I am grateful for the knowledge, patience, and friendship each of you has shared.

Teresa Reyna
Assistant Administrator



AndraHeart Visiting Professor James F. Cnota, MD



Monday, February 9th
2:00 - 3:00pm
Maternal & Fetal Cardiology Talk
SHC Room 4134

Tuesday, February 10th
12:00 - 1:00pm
Pediatrics and Genetics & Genomics Grand Rounds
HSIB 322



Dr. Abhilasha Madhvi
Post-Doc in Hem/Onc lab

Dr. Divya Peethambaran
Post-Doc in Neonatology lab

Pricila Moly & Ammar Mehdi
Research Assistant IVs in Nephrology lab



Welcome!

Claudia Bacelis
Administrative Assistant
Development



Get to know Claudia:

1. What's a rare talent/something you do well?
 - a. I easily adapt to my environment and to those around me.
2. What you enjoy doing most?
 - b. I enjoy watching old re-run shows, thrifting is my therapy and so is dance!
3. What drew you to Tucson, AZ or the University of Arizona?
 - a. My husband, two kids, and I moved to Tucson in 2015 in search of better education. We have many Wildcats in our family! I've always wondered what it would be like to work in a prestigious university like UA and here I am!
4. Anything else you may want to share?
 - a. I love to meet new people and make connections.

Happy Milestone Work Anniversary



Dr. Lauren Naile
Kala Kimpel Keanu, multi media specialist cardiology
Ganga Reddy Velma, Researcher – gastro/hepatology

Pediatrics in the news

- The newly renovated Pediatric Emergency Department is now open!
 - [Banner article](#)
 - [Kgun9 News](#)



Donor / Steele CRC Spotlight

One Million Steps for OCD Walk at Kiwanis Park in Tempe AZ. Thank you to Dr. Kracht for speaking, and student research assistants Josie Voss and Kylie Midtun for attending as well!



Thank you to 4th Year PhD student Grace McKenzie who shared her research with the Kiwanis Club of the Desert!



THANK
you

Thank you, Dr. Geovana Leite for speaking to the Mesa Buckhorn Elks, who continue to support pediatric medical research at Steele CRC!



Upcoming Community Events & Volunteer Opportunities:

Kids of Steele

Rummage Sale

Saturday Feb. 7th @ 12pm - 3:00pm

Located at the driving range

1555 E Rancho Vistoso Blvd in Oro Valley



- Raffle tickets for sale
- Grille @ The Turn open for business!
- Do some shopping, and come see what people have for sale at their tables!
- Come visit Kids of Steele at their tent & learn what they are all about!

1555 e Rancho Vistoso Blvd Oro Valley Arizona 85755



Steele Children's
Research Center



Desert Gold Childhood Cancer Walk

Sunday Feb 15th @ 8:30am

Brandi Fenton Park - 3482 E River Rd

Register using the QR code below



Walk with a Doc

Saturday Feb. 14th @ 8:00am

Michelle Burr, PhD candidate
Cellular & Molecular Medicine

Interested in leading a walk or know someone
in another department who would?!

- 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

Questions?

Contact Lori Castro at

loricastro@arizona.edu or 520-626-1614



Saturday, February 14, 2026
8:00 AM

The Rillito River Park ramada east of Swan Road
on the south bank just north of Camp Lowell.

From Swan go east on Paseo De Los Rios (you'll see the blue Rillito River Park wall). Once on Paseo De Los Rios take the immediate left. That road will take you into the parking lot.



This walking program is a fun and safe place to take a walk (at your own pace), learn health tips from local healthcare providers, and meet new friends. The event is FREE and all are welcome!

Future walks will be held on the 2nd Saturday of every month.

Questions?

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loricastro@arizona.edu or
520.626.1614



CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS

JOIN US FOR OUR KOS 2026 MEMBERSHIP EVENT

family fun for all to include science experiments,
service projects, and tour of
one of the labs at The University of Arizona
Steele Children's Research Center!
Sunday, February 22nd, 2026
3:00pm-4:30pm
Health Sciences Plaza, 1501 N Campbell Ave.
parking at Lot #2030 located at Mabel and Martin Street



Don't forget / Upcoming action items:

- Faculty portfolio (UA Vitae annual reviews) - **Last day for faculty to submit is Saturday, 1/31/26!**
 - Please reach out to Cindy Thompson at crthompson@arizona.edu if you need assistance!
- Accounting team group email: peds-finance@list.arizona.edu
- UA [Life & Work Connections](#)
- Don't forget to recognize employees (both faculty & staff) doing an excellent job!
 - You can recognize faculty, staff, residents, anyone in the Peds department!
 - Recognition can be sent to that person's direct supervisor.
 - Then the supervisor should email to Casey Nelson at caseycastle@arizona.edu.
- Creative Arts For Lowering Mental Stress (CALM) - hosted by the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health ([click here for more info!](#))
 - 2/3/2026 from 12:30-1:30pm: Tai Chi & Qui Gong
 - 3/3/2026 from 12:30-1:30pm: Zen Doodling
 - 4/7/2026 from 4:00-5:00pm: Healing Dance
 - 5/7/2026 from 12:30-1:30pm: Sound Bath Meditation

Thank you for reading!

For suggestions contact:
Casey Nelson
caseycastle@arizona.edu
medicine.arizona.edu/pediatrics



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.