



Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve

"I'm a person that likes to just jump in and get my hands dirty...I like the idea of being on the front line of things," observes Stacie Solt, M.D.

A first-year resident specializing in emergency medicine at Drexel University College of Medicine, Dr. Solt has a history of jumping in and serving on a community's front lines. She has long been involved in community outreach and social justice, and she sees emergency medicine as an extension of that altruism.

Dr. Solt moved to Philadelphia from San Francisco this past June, and it is the first time she has lived outside the Bay Area. While eager to do her residency in a different geographic region, Dr. Solt says she benefited from "a long-term relationship with [her] community" back in San Francisco in terms of being able to become invested in the neighborhood in a meaningful way.

Dr. Solt's high school, Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory, in inner city San Francisco, upheld a strong social justice component and its motto is "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve." Dr. Solt found she enjoyed volunteering and fundraising, so she continued the work well after graduation. She explains, "[I like] to be a part of the community I'm living in, and so I find opportunities to figure out how I can contribute to the city, not only work-wise but in my free time too." Dr. Solt even returned to work for her high school after she graduated and before she began medical school.

For Dr. Solt, emergency medicine provides a strong link to this awareness of social justice and community involvement. She observes, "There's a certain amount of excitement about not really knowing what's going to happen on a given day. You can't really predict who's going to walk in the door.... I've always been interested in public health and community activism...and I felt like being in the emergency room really gave me [that] connection."

As an emergency room doctor in a major city, Dr. Solt is also exposed to many cases of penetrating trauma, such as shootings and stabbings. She says that it can be emotionally challenging to see these patients come in as victims of violence, particularly when they are young.

Associate professor in emergency medicine and residency program director Edward Ramoska, M.D., MPH, concurs that emergency medicine tends to attract physicians who "like to get involved." Unknown medical emergencies present themselves, yet "you're the one to jump up and run towards the frenzy rather than run away from it." He says that Dr. Solt "has been doing extremely well since she started. It's been noted by multiple faculty that she's a very



Stacie Solt, M.D.

kind, caring clinician who really takes time with her patients.”

Dr. Solt explains that in the ER, “you get to see a lot of what’s lacking...in the greater community.” For many people who do not carry medical insurance, the emergency room acts as their primary care physician. “They can’t afford it because they’re making too much money to qualify for public aid, but don’t have enough to pay for health insurance themselves,” she says.

Since emergency room doctors do not turn away uninsured patients, this contributes to overcrowding, one of the bigger challenges in the field. “We end up seeing...a high number of low-acuity patients who need help and support but may not have anywhere else to go besides the emergency room,” she says.

The continuing scare over the H1N1 virus is another example of how emergency medicine puts Dr. Solt on the front lines of what’s happening in a community. She explains that the emergency department had to make decisions regarding whether or not to test everyone who came in with symptoms for the virus. “So you really have to deal with what’s going on in the greater community very upfront,” she says, “because they come through the doors.”

As a San Francisco native, Dr. Solt is particularly excited to be in Philadelphia, the home of American rowing. Although, she says with a laugh, that enthusiasm may change once the temperature drops and the snows come. A four-year rower during her undergraduate career at Stanford, she says, “Philadelphia is Disneyland for rowers...I get excited every time I drive along Boathouse Row, even in traffic.” For someone who enjoys being connected to her community, it doesn’t get much more Philadelphia than Boathouse Row.