

Jennifer A. Sidari, MD Memorial Scholarship

An Indelible Mark



Just weeks after The Commonwealth Medical College (TCMC) celebrated the first ever MD graduation ceremony, one of the promising new doctors, Jennifer Sidari, passed away unexpectedly on May 29 leaving a tremendous void where her extraordinary talent, passion, and ambition should have been. A member of TCMC's charter class and a graduate of The University of Scranton, Jennifer was a compassionate and joyful daughter, sister, friend, classmate and doctor who deeply cared for the welfare of others and worked tirelessly for their benefit.

She attended Wyoming Area Catholic School from 1992-2001 where she began to exhibit an insatiable love of learning and of helping others. These traits continued to grow as she attended Wyoming Area High School from 2001 to 2005 where she competed in Softball and Volleyball and found her love for the sciences. This drive was polished at the University of Scranton where she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a double major in Biology and Philosophy, and was a member of the SJLA, the Jesuit Liberal Arts Honor Society. Locally, Jennifer volunteered at clinics in Scranton and the Care and Concern Clinic in Pittston, Pennsylvania. Nationally and internationally, she operated a pediatric clinic in Haiti this past spring and had also taken trips to South Africa and Oakland, California to work with HIV infected children and pediatric infectious diseases.

“Jennifer’s character demonstrated depth of compassion, humility and commitment to justice,” said Janet Townsend, MD, chair, Department of Family, Community, and Rural Health at TCMC. “She was able to form partnerships and friendships where ever she went. To be in her presence as she learned and reflected on her experiences was a great joy.”

Valerie D. Weber, MD, MS, chair, Department of Clinical Sciences and associate dean for Clinical Affairs at TCMC, witnessed Jennifer’s extraordinary compassion. “Jennifer radiated joy when working with children,” Dr Weber said. “Some people live their whole lives without finding their calling-but it was clear Jennifer had found hers and she would have become an outstanding pediatrician. Although she will be greatly missed, she left an indelible mark on TCMC and on those she touched during her time caring for patients as a medical student.”

Despite her shortened life, Jennifer was already nationally recognized for her accomplishments. She was nominated by the American Medical Association for its Physicians of Tomorrow Award and TCMC honored her with its Global Pride Award, established in memory of Jennifer’s mentor, Dr. Raymond Smego.

While she received many accolades, Jennifer will most be remembered for her selflessness, her smile and her loving spirit. “Jennifer was a remarkable student and a remarkable individual and was going to be a wonderful doctor, stated Steven J. Scheinman, MD, TCMC president and dean. “Her class, the charter class of TCMC, included many stars; but among them, she stood out. There was an exuberant joy about everything she did. She was passionate about helping people and about children and was tremendously excited to be heading to a career in pediatrics. Her patients would have been fortunate to have such a wonderful doctor. In her commitment to TCMC, to her classmates, to her family, and to her community, she exemplified the best hopes of the founder of the College.”

Jennifer is survived by her parents, Pete and Patty, two siblings, Peter and Vicky, her fiancé John, and many extended family members, all of whom hope Jennifer’s life’s work will be continued by her TCMC classmates and all who knew her. The Jennifer Sidari, M.D. Scholarship Fund was established at TCMC in her memory as well as Scholarship Funds at Wyoming Area High School and The Luzerne Foundation.

This \$1500 scholarship is awarded to two graduating Wyoming Area seniors who exhibit and share Jenn’s selfless caring for others and her quest for excellence in the medical and health care professions. All applicants must have achieved a minimum 90 cumulative GPA or equivalent in high school, submit an essay for review and may have to attend an interview. Last year two \$1500 scholarships were awarded in Jennifer's name.

Essay Required: In a solid essay of at least 500 words tell us: How important is it to continue to educate yourself in college or trade school and beyond and how will you pass your knowledge on to others?