BE WISE IMMUNIZE

"The TMA/AMA/EPCMS student chapter held their first annual Be Wise Immunize immunization drive last month on the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine campus. The Be Wise Immunize program is a public health initiative of the Texas Medical Association that works to improve vaccination rates in Texas through education and hands-on immunization clinics. All required immunizations were provided and administered by the Caring for Children Foundation of Texas. The student chapter will be receiving a grant from the Texas Medical Association to put towards next year's event."

Azadeh Nasrazadani, PhD, MSII, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine, El Paso, Texas.

MEDICAL STUDENT ESSAY

I was matched to PLFSOM in February and brought my husband to visit El Paso in March, but unfortunately it was during a crazy dust storm. It was the first time either of us had experienced anything like that. I could not show him the mountains because there was no visibility, and besides the dust it was raining too. My husband basically moved to this city without really experiencing all the great things El Paso had to offer, except for the excellent Mexican food of course. He jokingly asked, "Where in the world are you taking me?" I simply replied, "It's really neat! You have to just wait and see." He was anxious about moving here too, because he just graduated with a B.S. in Biology and did not know what kind of job he would find. After applying to teaching jobs for a month with no response, he finally had several interviews in one week. He was offed a job at a west side high school the week before classes began. He has been enjoying his role as a high school science teacher here in El Paso. The other night it was very windy so I walked out of our home and to me it looked like it was snowing, except I saw no snow on the ground, which was odd. I yelled for him to come outside, "It's snowing!" He looked outside and said, "That's dust." We laughed about that for a while. We have thoroughly enjoyed exploring El Paso and experiencing the great things this city has to offer. El Paso is the friendliest city I have ever been to, and I have already made friendships that will last a lifetime.

I told my husband the other night, "Honey, remember before we came here to El Paso and I had all this self-doubt, and you assured me that if anyone could do it, I could? I want to thank you for that because you made it so much easier for me. And now I know I can do it too!" That was after my first semester of medical school at PLFSOM, and it was not easy. The first unit on Health and Disease was a roller-coaster for me, mainly because I had been out of school for some time working as a nurse in Denver, Colorado. Although I had a lot of clinical experience, I had some self-doubt about my ability to do well in the classroom. Was I really smart enough to do this and did I have what it takes? I pushed myself to find out the answers to those questions. I studied like mad, cried over biochemistry, and dreamt about physiology and pathology. But I still did not know if I could really do it until I got through my first exam and received my score, an "A" on my first test! It was verification of all the hard work I put in and it paid off; now I know I can do this and succeed. Paul L. Foster School of Medicine is not everything I thought it would be, it is way more.

Every week there are new schemes, case presentations, and medical skills to learn. We spend an entire week learning about dysphagia, for example, and how to diagnose the multitude of different causes using a scheme. Then we learn the pathology, microbiology, embryology, pharmacology, anatomy, physiology and so on of those different diagnoses. We have a standardized patient that presents with dysphagia, we diagnose and plan treatment for the patient, and we write a SOAP note; all of this is intended to integrate the material we have been learning while preparing us for STEP exams. This integrated curriculum really helps organize the material in a way that helps repeat important concepts while keeping it interesting. Even after countless hours of studying, including 2000 notecards, 11 posters, and a notebook full of colorful important concepts, I still call medical school fun. There was not just one class or person that made me fall in love with this school, but it was a multitude of experiences and people throughout the whole community of TTUHSC and El Paso that contributed to my fantastic experience here at PLFSOM. My dreams are really coming true here in El Paso. I am so happy and grateful to be here!

Leigha Sharp, MSI, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine, El Paso, Texas.