

Residents & Trainees

St. Mary's Regional Hospital Family Medicine Residency

Third Year Residents (Class of 2026)



Savannah Bender, MD

I grew up in Wichita, Kansas and completed my undergrad at Emporia State. It was in this small college town that I soon discovered my love for small-town primary care. I was inspired by a provider who could tell me the life story of every one of his patients, not just their medical conditions.

I went to the University of Kansas in Wichita for medical school, where I continued to focus on rural primary care. During this time, I also developed interests in women's health, addiction medicine, and preventative medicine.

Outside of medicine, I enjoy hiking with my husband, trying new breweries or wineries, taking our two rescue dogs for walks, and hosting board game nights with friends.



Erin Coscia, DO

I was born and raised in Indiana, where I attended the University of Notre Dame for my undergraduate education and Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine for medical school. I am passionate about my faith, family, and fitness. I enjoy staying active and attribute my competitive nature to growing up as the only girl in a set of triplets and constantly trying to keep up with my brothers (who, coincidentally, are also doctors). I have wanted to move to Colorado since I first started attending national training camps and competitions at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs in 2010. I competed in the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Trials and qualified for and competed on the US National Team for Modern Pentathlon in 2018. I am passionate about psychology and lifestyle medicine and look forward to helping my patients optimize their physical and mental health.



Daniyal Dar, MD

I was born and raised in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and moved to Los Angeles in my teens. I completed my undergraduate degree at UCLA and worked as an after-school high school instructor before starting medical school at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia. It was there I learned the true scope of Family medicine and instantly fell in love with it. I instantly fell in love with Grand Junction when I came for a second look and am looking forward to the full spectrum training in western Colorado. Outside of medicine, I enjoy playing table tennis, hiking, occasional video games, and baking.



Faith Hsu, MD

I was born in Houston, Texas but grew up in Southern California. After completing medical school at Western Homer Stryker MD School of Medicine in Kalamazoo, Michigan, I wanted to be closer to home and landed in Grand Junction, CO. I have loved living here due to the closeness to nature and abundance of activities in every season. I love the full spectrum nature of our training, especially the excellent inpatient training. In the future, I hope to improve my medical Mandarin skills to serve a bilingual population. In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors (running, hiking, camping, and cross country skiing) but also enjoy a quiet night crocheting on my couch.



Heidi Ness, MD

I was fortunate enough to grow up in Washington state with time in the Midwest, abroad, and in San Diego where I attended Point Loma Nazarene University for my undergraduate degree. Between university and medical school, I had several gap careers, including research, teaching abroad, and as an EMT in Seattle. I was proud to graduate from Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine at Washington State University as part of their third graduating cohort. The continuity and community aspects immediately drew me to family medicine, and I am very excited to pursue broad spectrum training here at St. Mary's! Outside of my professional life, you can find me hiking, surrounding myself with plants, and trying to find the bottom of my "to-be-read" pile.



Anna M Rasmussen, MD

I was born and raised in Los Angeles by a couple of outdoor enthusiasts who instilled a love of the American West in me on long RV trips growing up. I completed my undergraduate studies in History at Stanford University and worked at Google for 2 years after graduation. I undertook a career-change into medicine, completing pre-medical classes at the local college while working as a clinical nutrition research coordinator. I completed medical school at the University of California Irvine, where I studied Integrative Medicine alongside my allopathic coursework. I have continued these studies in residency, completing the University of Arizona Integrative Medicine in Residency online certification. My other medical interests include reproductive health, behavioral health, and palliative care. Outside of work, I enjoy yoga, dance, and hiking, and love hitting the trails and hot springs of Colorado's beautiful Western Slope, where I plan to stay after graduation.



Coleman Strosahl, MD

I was born and raised in northern Minnesota, where I survived many long winters, spent lots of time outdoors, and enjoyed the numerous beautiful lakes. I attended the University of Minnesota (go Gophers!) for both undergraduate and medical school. Family medicine was always my calling, as I loved the broad scope of practice and the patient connections that are created. My medical interests include sports medicine and rural medicine. While Minnesota is wonderful, I knew I wanted to spend some time near mountains, which led me to beautiful Grand Junction for residency. My wife, Kennedy, and I have enjoyed making our new home here on the Western Slope and exploring everything that it has to offer! Outside of medicine, I enjoy doing CrossFit, playing guitar, going to breweries, skiing, hunting, fishing, and anything else outdoors.



Brooke Terkovich, MD

I grew up in Jackson, WY. Before going to medical school, I attended Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA, where I majored in biology. I also completed a year of work as a research assistant in a hematology lab at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Cambridge, MA. I attended the University of Colorado School of Medicine, where I was part of the Rural Track Program and a leader in the Wilderness Medicine Interest Group. While in medical school I completed a 6-month placement in Montrose, CO. I have a love for the outdoors, and I am an avid kayaker, hiker, and backpacker. In my free time, I volunteer with Mesa County Search and Rescue, where I get to combine my love of the outdoors and medicine to help keep others safe as they explore the diverse landscapes that Mesa County has to offer.



Michaela Thurston, MD

I was born and raised in the Denver area and attended college at the University of Alabama. After completing my undergraduate degree in psychology, I served with AmeriCorps on projects related to natural disaster preparedness and response throughout the southeastern United States. I later worked as a certified nurse assistant and a substitute teacher before attending medical school at the University of Colorado.

I have found a home in Grand Junction with my interest in full-spectrum family practice. I also have particular interests in women's health, pediatrics, and clinical education. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, especially my nieces and nephew. I also like to try out new baking recipes, reading, and enjoy western Colorado's great outdoors.

Second Year Residents (Class of 2027)



Connor Diaz, MD

I grew up in Fort Collins, CO, where my childhood was filled with forest hikes, river adventures, and soccer games. I studied biology, Spanish, and neuropsychology at Creighton University in Omaha, NE, and later discovered my passion for family medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

During my rotations, I was drawn to the continuity and holistic care that family medicine offers.

When my parents moved to Buena Vista, CO, I realized I wanted to serve rural, mountainous communities—places where doctors are few and resourcefulness is essential. That goal led me to St. Mary's Family Medicine Residency, where I believe I'll gain the full-spectrum training needed to thrive in these settings. My dog, Hatch, and I are thrilled to return to Colorado and join the SMFMR family.

Outside of medicine, you'll find me fly fishing in the Gunnison Gorge, mountain biking the Lunch Loops, hiking through McInnis and Dominguez-Escalante Canyons, paddle boarding on the Colorado River, or skiing at Powderhorn.



Brock Englestead, DO

I was born and raised in Cedar City, Utah, which is where I fell in love with the mountains and my beautiful wife. I enjoy hiking, fishing, sports, and any excuse to be outside.

My time in small communities gave me a passion for rural medicine. I want to provide healthcare access to communities in need. My wife and kids are the greatest part of my world. I chose family medicine to help families improve their quality of life. My goal is to help the community live healthier and happier lives.



Sophia Jaeckel DO

I was born and raised around the Denver area, receiving my undergraduate degree in neuroscience at the University of Colorado. I obtained my osteopathic medical degree from Kansas City University. I am passionate about: integrating the often-fragmented elements of our health and lives, rural health care, exploring the rivers and mountains of the Western Slope, and fresh air.



Joshua Law, MD

I was born in Missouri, was a toddler in Denver, and I really did my growing up in Alabama and Mississippi. Despite having lived in multiple states, Colorado is the place that I most love, and I have been working to return to the state for many years now.

I did my undergraduate at the University of Mississippi where I studied religion and biology. Afterwards, I taught middle school science in Brooklyn and Denver. I then moved to Cambridge, England to pursue a degree in the history and philosophy of medicine. I attended medical school at East Tennessee State University.

I love dogs, cats, and the outdoors. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and learn in Grand Junction.



William Mullen MD

I was born in Greeley, Colorado, but grew up in South Louisiana in a big Cajun family, where I played football and tennis. I went on to study medical humanities at Baylor University, where volunteering as an EMT sparked my passion for patient-centered care and inspired me to pursue medicine. During college, I also competed in rock climbing and developed a deep love for the outdoors through climbing trips across the country.

I attended LSU Health Shreveport for medical school, where I gained a strong appreciation for rural family medicine while caring for patients in North Louisiana. During a fourth-year rotation at St. Mary's, I immediately felt at home and knew it was where I wanted to train.

Outside of medicine, I enjoy hiking with my dog, Ziggy, climbing, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, reading, playing tennis, and cooking. My medical interests include full-spectrum care, emergency medicine, and wilderness medicine. My wife Mary and I are thrilled to make Grand Junction our new home and explore everything the Western Slope has to offer.



Lukas Ommen, MD

I was born in Lander, WY, but moved to Buena Vista, CO, when I was two. Growing up in this small mountain town, surrounded by my mom's family, I learned the value of community and the strong relationships that come with rural living. My mom, a Family Nurse Practitioner, worked at the local clinic, and her example sparked my early interest in medicine and science.

I earned my biology degree from Colorado State University and went on to the University of Colorado School of Medicine, where I joined the rural program. That experience deepened my commitment to providing primary care in underserved areas. I've always loved the Western Slope—visiting for outdoor adventures and sports camps—and I'm excited to continue my training in Grand Junction.

My medical interests include full-spectrum care, sports medicine, and wilderness medicine. Outside of medicine, I enjoy hiking, backpacking, photography, hunting, fishing, basketball, and soccer, especially with my wife and our dog.



Mikayla Pulliam, MD

I was born and raised in Los Alamos, New Mexico. For my undergraduate studies, I attended New Mexico State University in Southern New Mexico. I attended medical school at the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine.

From the start of medical school, I always knew I wanted to go into family medicine. At UNM, my passion within family medicine grew to include women's health and addiction medicine. I also hope to make a positive impact by increasing access to primary care in rural communities. I believe the education at St. Mary's will train me to be an excellent family medicine physician.

Outside of the hospital, I enjoy spending as much of my free time in the outdoors – biking, running, skiing, or hiking – and I am excited to live in Grand Junction to enjoy incredible access to the outdoors.



Jaquelyn Speed, DO

I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, and attended St. Mary's University for my undergraduate studies. After earning my degree in Psychology, I spent several years managing a business before deciding to return to school to follow my dreams. I went on to attend the University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine, where I earned my medical degree and also completed a Master of Public Health.

My interests in medicine include full-spectrum care, women's health and obstetrics, and serving underserved communities. I'm incredibly excited to be joining the St. Mary's Family Medicine Residency family.

Outside of medicine, I love spending time with my family, traveling and exploring new places, gardening, cooking, and being outdoors as much as possible. I'm also a huge animal lover and share my home with two dogs and a kitty.



Emma Talbott, DO

I was born and raised here in the Grand Valley and grew up learning to love all the amazing outdoor activities this area has to offer. After attending college at the University of Colorado at Boulder, I spent some years traveling and working on my dad's ranch, and then I was accepted to A.T. Still University, College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Missouri.

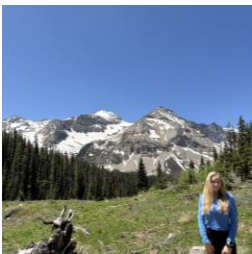
I chose family medicine because I love the variety that the specialty offers, and I love that family medicine docs have the privilege of having long-term relationships with their patients. My interests include osteopathic manipulative medicine and lifestyle and preventative medicine. In my free time I love to craft, garden, fish, travel, and mostly have adventures with my wonderful husband and the cutest dogs in the world: my German Shepherd and two mini weenie dogs!

First year Residents (Class of 2028)



Trevor D. Anderson, DO

Inspired by my hometown family doctor in Nephi, Utah, I pursued medicine at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine after studying Biology at Utah State University. My main career goal is to provide comprehensive, patient-centered care and build strong relationships with those I serve. When I'm not working, I enjoy leading a balanced life: you'll almost always find me with a book in hand, spending time with my wife and our dog, gardening, meditating, or enjoying outdoor activities like fishing and hiking. My family and I are very excited to make Grand Junction our home with its incredible outdoor access and the community-oriented spirit that makes it an awesome place to live and grow.



McKenna Bocancea, DO

I am a Western Slope native and elated to return to my roots as a resident physician at St. Mary's, serving the community that helped raise me. After graduating from Western Colorado University with a degree in biology, I moved to Las Vegas, Nevada to complete medical school at Touro University Nevada College of Osteopathic Medicine. Growing up in Montrose, I saw first-hand the value of lasting relationships alongside the breadth of knowledge needed in a rural community. I always knew I wanted to be a family medicine physician and serve rural areas while providing comprehensive, equitable, and compassionate care. In addition to rural medicine, I am passionate about women's health, dermatology, lifestyle and preventative medicine. I am confident St. Mary's residency program will equip me with the skills and knowledge to be an exceptional physician. In my free time, I love spending time outdoors with my husband and our golden retriever.



Ethan Castro, DO

Hi there, I'm Ethan. I was born and raised in North Texas, where I spent time on the lake fishing and enjoying water sports. I also enjoy taking my motorcycle out for a ride to decompress, collecting gemstones, crystals, watching movies with my dog and cat, and spending time with my son. Growing up, I took road trips to Colorado for fly fishing and fell in love with the freestone rivers and mountain breeze. After completing my Master's at CU Boulder, I went on to medical school at the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine.

During my clinical years in San Diego, I found a passion for obstetrics and integrative medicine. I then spent a couple of years in the U.S. Army at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, before returning to Colorado to join St. Mary's.

I love Grand Junction not just for its natural beauty, but for the way the community embodies resilience and resourcefulness. Everyone at St. Mary's has been incredibly welcoming, and I'm excited to be part of the team!



Sulafa Elhassan, MD

I was born, raised, and earned my MD in Omdurman, Sudan, and later practiced medicine in both Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Collectively, these experiences shaped my passion for family medicine, especially the continuity of care and long-term patient relationships it fosters. I am particularly dedicated to managing chronic diseases, addressing infectious conditions, and supporting maternal health—areas where I know I can make a meaningful difference. In 2015, I moved to Denver, Colorado, to be with my family, and I immediately fell in love with the state's welcoming community and natural beauty. When I visited Grand Junction in February 2025, I fell in love with it, especially the mountains and the peaceful flow of the Colorado River. Outside of medicine, I enjoy cooking Mediterranean meals, cheering on my kids at soccer games, and mentoring others. As I prepare to begin my residency, Grand Junction feels like the ideal place to grow as a doctor, a mother, and a community member.



Julianne McGough, DO

Hi everyone! My name is Julianne, and I am so thrilled to have matched at St. Mary's Family Medicine Residency. I am originally from Casper, WY, but have been in the front range the last 10 years. A little about me, I enjoy skiing, cooking, hiking, and doing all those things with Jack, my amazing husband! It is wonderful being in Junction near to great hiking and skiing, as well as joining an intimate community focused on giving back and growing! Career wise, I hope to practice full spectrum family medicine and seek to help patients identify their health and life goals and work with them to make those a reality!



Dylan Mechling, MD

I was born and raised in Glenwood Springs, CO and have always loved the Western Slope's natural beauty, outdoor activities, and close-knit communities. Some of my best childhood memories are from summer weekends on Grand Mesa. During my high school summers, I worked construction across the region, including in Grand Junction, which actually played a role in me deciding to pursue medicine! I studied Chemical and Biological Engineering at CU Boulder and was lucky to stay in-state for medical school at the University of Colorado. During med school, I fell in love with family medicine for its focus on long-term relationships and full-spectrum care. With my goal to practice on the Western Slope, Saint Mary's quickly became my dream residency. Outside of medicine, you'll usually find me outdoors—hiking in the Colorado National Monument, camping up on Grand Mesa, or skiing at Powderhorn.



Katie Metzler, DO

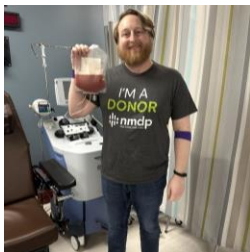
I was born and raised just outside Denver, Colorado, where growing up “mountain adjacent” sparked a lifelong love for the outdoors. I studied Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology at the University of Colorado Boulder while working full-time as an EMT in the emergency department. These experiences deepened my interest in the intersection of science and human connection, naturally leading me to primary care. I earned my DO from Rocky Vista University and am thrilled to be entering the field of Family Medicine. My medical passions include full-spectrum primary care, women’s health, family planning, adolescent medicine, behavioral health, addiction medicine, and community health and education. Outside of medicine, I love spending time with my husband Tanner and our two dogs, Murphy and Stevie. I enjoy crafting, creating, and being outdoors—whether trail running, biking, or simply soaking up the sun. As a lifelong Front Range native, I’m so excited to begin my career on the Western Slope and to serve the vibrant communities of Grand Junction.



Jamie Pfahl, MD

In 2008, I relocated to Colorado from rural western New York to complete my undergrad degrees in Integrative Physiology and Russian Studies at University of Colorado Boulder. Before starting medical school at the University of Colorado, I spent nearly a decade working in public health and bike advocacy across the state. Through the School of Medicine's Rural Program, I was lucky enough to spend my clerkship year at Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs, which further cemented my love of Colorado's western slope.

As an avid trail runner, bike enthusiast, intermittent rock climber, and mediocre skier, I am thrilled to live in a place that has great access to so many wonderful opportunities for outdoor recreation. When I'm not working or adventuring, you can find me cuddling my geriatric kitty, doodling, or making jewelry - especially out of upcycled bike components! I'm excited to get involved in the local bike scene to bring my passion for and experience in health equity and healthcare quality improvement to the Grand Valley.



Jeremiah Shipman, MD

I was born and raised in Kansas, growing up in a world where the 300-foot elevation of the Flint Hills were an impressive amount of height. I have family across the Front Range and frequently visited Colorado while growing up.

I attended Kansas State University for undergrad (go Cats!) and the University of Kansas in Kansas City for medical school, where my rural family medicine experiences solidified family medicine as my future (and now current) career. I loved my interview with Grand Junction, remembering the town fondly from a stop at the Applebee’s on a road trip in 2019.

If I am not in the hospital I am backpacking, being a cat dad to Hershey, DMing some sort of tabletop role playing game, or being an amateur tiki bartender.

Behavioral Health Trainees



Areesha Azam, Doctoral Fellow

Hey all! My name is Areesha and I am super excited to be part of the team at St. Mary’s. I received my undergraduate degree in Psychology, my master’s in Couple, Marriage, and Family Therapy, and will receive my PhD in 2026 (hopefully) in the same field. All my education is within Texas, so I am excited to spend some time in the mountains.

When I have some free time, I love riding horses, reading books, and watching true crime. I cannot wait to work with the fantastic team at St. Mary’s!



Brooke Mecham, Masters of Social Work Student Intern

I'm Brooke Mecham, a Master of Social Work candidate at Colorado Mesa University. I earned my bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in field and organismal studies from Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. My professional journey began with the National Forest Service, and I've held various roles in Denali National Park, Alaska.

Eventually, I found my true calling in Social Work—a field I'm deeply passionate about. I've worked in Child Welfare with the Department of Human Services and am excited to continue my path in Integrated Health.

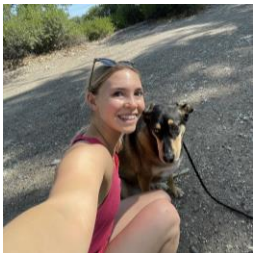
Although I was raised in Berea, Kentucky, I now call the Western Slope of Colorado home. I love exploring the mountains and deserts through skiing, trail running, and climbing with my husband and our dog.



Ryan McKissen, Masters of Social Work Student Intern

I was born and raised in Grand Junction. After finishing high school, I went to college at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota where I graduated with a degree in education. I developed a passion for teaching reading. For the past ten years, I have been a third grade teacher with the Mesa County School District where I spent an abundant amount of time working with kids and their families.

Recently, I have developed an interest in family therapy and behavioral interventions for students. I aspire to be an asset to the community in new ways outside of the classroom. In my free time, I like to read, hike, be outdoors, play with my dogs, and spend time with family.



Aurora O'Connor, Post-Masters Intern

My name is Aurora, and I was born in Colorado and was raised across the United States before coming back for High School and College. I received both my bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Colorado Mesa University.

I'm passionate about supporting the whole individual and view therapy from a whole person and systems perspective. My passion lies in the impact of trauma and life events on the brain and development. I approach therapy with warmth, curiosity, and a commitment to creating a space where clients feel safe, seen, and genuinely supported. My background includes clinical training in integrated behavioral health settings, and I'm currently completing my post-master's residency as I work toward licensure in social work. I'm particularly interested in trauma-informed care, and the intersection of mental health and health equity.

What drew me to this residency was the opportunity to learn from an interdisciplinary team and deepen my work in medical and community-based settings. I love the sense of connection and collaboration here. Outside of work, I enjoy hiking, barre classes, early morning coffee, and exploring the beauty of Western Colorado—Grand Junction has truly surprised me with its warmth, community, and endless trails.



Rylee Zitterkopf, Masters of Social Work Student Intern

Hi, my name is Rylee Zitterkopf! I completed my undergrad at Colorado State University and am currently pursuing my Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at Colorado Mesa University. Prior to my experience with St. Mary's Family Medicine Clinic, I worked as a special educator, where I learned the value of patience, empathy, and individualized care.

Through active listening and tailored support, I strive to create a space where people feel valued and heard. Outside of my professional life, you would likely find me paddleboarding, cuddling my corgi and two cats, or watching supercross/motocross. I am honored to be a part of the team and embark on this new journey!