



From: Mandi Sehgal, M.D. associate professor of Integrated Medical Science

On Tuesday, August 14th, the M1/M2 students participated in a student club fair in the COM Lobby. At the same time, we (myself, Drs. Foster and Sherling, and Christine Erie, MS3) hosted a very successful voter registration drive. We registered 17 new voters in one hour!

That same day, my son, Nikhil, who is 6 1/2, had the opportunity to come and visit "Mom's work". School was starting the next day and his camp had ended. So, he got to come and help with the voter registration booth and meet some of my colleagues.

When we arrived, one of the first students to say hello to Nikhil was Emmanuel "Manny" McNeely. Manny got down at Nikhil's eye level, and rather than talking to him like a child, talked to him as a 'regular person', asking him interesting questions about likes/dislikes, and even pointing out that they shared the same haircut. Nikhil was enamored (and I think Manny was too)!

Manny was incredibly thoughtful and kind and walked Nikhil around the crowded lobby, introducing him to his classmates who were equally kind, offering him treats from each of their booths.

Nikhil also got to meet one of my mentees, Javed Khanni. Similar to Manny, Javed got down on Nikhil's level and talked to him and truly paid attention to what he had to say.

They even agreed to pose for a picture, which I've attached.

As we were packing up for the day, Nikhil said that the day was "one of the best he had ever had" and that he couldn't wait to come back on a day when "you will be teaching Manny and Javed". He talked about both of them all the way home, asking if and when they could come over and hang out at our house. He was thrilled to have gotten to visit "Mom's work" and couldn't believe that I got to have that much fun every day.

My son is incredibly articulate for a 6 year old and has a large vocabulary. And while he has many friends his own age, he loves being around older kids (and clearly loved being around the med students) because they talk at his level.

Last night, as I put him to bed, before the first day of school (today), I asked him what the best part of his day was and he said, "hanging out with Manny, because he looks just like me, Mom." This morning, as I was filling out the stereotypical "first day of school sign", I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. He has consistently answered, "ninja, scientist, and police officer", however, this morning, he said all of those things, but added, "I want to be a doctor too, just like Manny!"

I want to thank you for understanding that diversity and representation by persons of color in our medical school class is incredibly important and matters. Thank you for fostering programs within our medical school that allow for persons of color to have the opportunities to apply and attend medical school.

Yesterday, my son saw 2 outstanding men of color, soon to be physicians, who "looked like him", and who he saw as role models and now aspires to be.

What was supposed to be a "day at Mom's work" turned in to much more, and for that, I am incredibly grateful.

Many thanks,

Mandi Sehgal, Nikhil's Mom