

Chapter Member Spotlight



Name: Lindsay M. Andras, MD

Associate Division Chief and Director of The Spine Program at the Children's Orthopaedic Center

Practice location: Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

Number of years in practice: 10

Although I really enjoy calling southern California home, I originally grew up in a small town in Illinois. My father, also an orthopaedic surgeon, comes from a large farming family, and most of my spare time in adolescence was spent working on the farm and riding horses. I attended Emory University where I completed my undergraduate degree, medical school, and residency. I came to CHLA for fellowship training and was fortunate to continue as staff and have my mentors become my partners. I was also able to recruit my sister, an anesthesiologist, to the CHLA team.

Within pediatric orthopaedics, my focus is on the pediatric spine. Scoliosis runs in my family and seeing how our treatments have changed from when my mother and aunt were teenagers to today is truly remarkable. Having said that, we still have areas for improvement, and I love having an opportunity to help continue that advancement. For example, our accelerated discharge protocols now have patients typically leaving the hospital in 2-3 days and returning to full sports and activities by 3 months. I also particularly like early onset scoliosis, as I follow many of those patients for years. It is really a joy watching them grow up and getting to know them and their families so well.

What do you do before work that sets the tone for your day?

Like most surgeons, my days quickly get busy with surgery, consults, and meetings. It's important to carve out some time in the day for myself, usually first thing in the morning. Most days, I take my dog Arthur for a walk and then go for a run before heading to the hospital. Running always brings me peace of mind and in the summer months I often catch a beautiful Southern California sunrise, which is a nice bonus!

What are some challenges or struggles that you face at work?

Although we have come a long way in the treatment of scoliosis, there are still many unknowns. I often find it challenging, even a little frustrating, to explain that in idiopathic cases we really don't know the cause, aside from a possible genetic component.

How do you work through or overcome your challenges or struggles?

As a former Marine, my father always reiterated to us as kids to "Keep your head down and keep moving." Although we are tired of hearing that phrase, it is great advice for challenging times. I

am very optimistic that as we gain better understanding, we can predict the progression of scoliosis. This motivates me daily.

After work, what do you do for your own wellness?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time sailing and skiing, which both provide a sense of active relaxation. I once heard someone say that being out on the ocean or up in the mountains makes you feel “small in a good way,” and I think for me, this is true. The time I can spend in nature and be still with my thoughts provides me with peace and perspective.

From what/whom does your inspiration or motivation stem?

I am constantly inspired by my patients’ incredible strength and stories. I feel so fortunate to have such a rewarding profession. I appreciate watching patients return to the activities they enjoy and helping them overcome the medical challenges they have faced. Whether it’s a child with special needs who can walk farther or an elite gymnast who can compete with vigor, seeing them get back to “the business of being a kid” is truly an amazing privilege.

I am also motivated by my amazing team, who go above and beyond to provide our patients with exceptional care. It is such a privilege to collaborate, and I really credit Dr. Vern Tolo, who is a true visionary and created a diverse, supportive, and stimulating working environment.

Wellness Tip: What is the one thing you would recommend to our readership to do each day to take care of oneself?

Outsource what you can! There are many things (patient care, surgery, research, spending time with family and friends) that I personally need and want to do...but laundry doesn't make that list ☺

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