

Chapter Member Spotlight



Name: Varsha Mona Puri (goes by Mona)

Practice location: CHLA General Pediatrics Division

Number of years in practice: 20 years

I grew up in the bay area. Undergrad and medical school took me to Chicago for ten years. I went to University of Chicago for undergrad and Chicago Osteopathic school for medical school. But what shaped me was my two years off in between. I worked as a Domestic Violence Supervisor at Apna Ghar (a South Asian Women DV shelter on the north side of Chicago) and traveled to rural Gujarat, India to work at Gram Seva Hospital where they branched out to local villages populated by landless laborers.

They went into the community to provide early education, nutrition programs and monthly medical screenings. I really got to understand the concepts behind grassroots interventions and the power of prevention. Those experiences shaped my perspectives as I started my journey into medicine.

I also trained at Children's Hospital Orange County and completed a one year training in Adolescent Medicine at CHLA before deciding to return to general peds working with immigrant and underserved communities.

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

I see my daughter off to school and listen to the radio while drinking homemade Chai on my way to work.

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

One word: time. It gets the best of all of us. It feels like a race to lunch and then a race to the end of the day.

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

Consistent therapy with a wonderful therapist. I have learned not to hold onto things, rather, talk about them, process them, and do better. For over my 20 years, my core and identity have strengthened to allow me to pursue and live out my life intentions. Nothing is easy, but it sure is worth it. I take satisfaction over ease any day.

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

I play with my daughter and listen to her talk about her 6 yo epiphanies. A couple times a week I

make it to a HIIT class in Highland Park that I always feel grateful to attend (not so much during the class). And, when I can, I love going to the Yoga House in Pasadena.

From what/whom does your inspiration or motivation stem?

To help those who work the hardest and are seen the least and always, always, children and the potential for goodness in everyone.

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

Create space and prioritize relationships with those you love and whose company you enjoy even in the busiest parts of life. Humans are tribal in nature and have evolved to survive together.