



## WHO'S THIS

# Hometown Doc

A pediatrician finds ways to serve three of the things he loves most: children, Morgantown, and West Virginia.

## ➔ A SINGLE DAY CHANGED THE COURSE of Bryce Harvey's life.

Harvey grew up in Morgantown and spent his first two years at WVU studying veterinary medicine. His original plan was to end up at Ohio State, and to that end, he was searching for additional volunteer hours to boost his academic resume. His sister noted that he liked children and suggested that he look into volunteering at WVU's children's hospital. Harvey thought it was a great idea.

The first day of volunteering was simple. He took toys to sick children. He spent time with them when their parents had to leave. Those few hours was all it took. By the end of the day, a desire

to improve the lives of the children had blossomed into an undeniable passion.

"I had always loved kids, but had never really been around sick kids until then," Harvey says. "One day kind of changed everything. I realized that if I could make a difference, that's what I wanted to do. The next day I contacted my adviser and asked if it was too late to switch to pediatrics."

Today, Bryce Harvey, M.D., is the associate program director of the pediatric residency program at WVU's School of Medicine. He believes that, in a way, all doctors are teachers; it's their mission not only to treat conditions, but to educate patients and their families on health and best practices for living. But with the

pediatric residency program, Harvey has opted for the additional responsibility of teaching the future professionals who want to improve the lives of children throughout the state. Under his guidance, the pediatric residents he works with watch children and their families develop and grow over the course of their three-year stay.

One of Harvey's primary interests is training pediatric professionals who will stay in the state of West Virginia to provide care for the underserved communities of Appalachia. Medical residencies work much like a sports draft: students rank their top locations to learn, and must serve at whichever of those locations rank them the highest. Because of this structure, residents



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who want to serve Appalachia tend to be self-selecting for the WVU program.

"We don't get too many applicants who want to live on a beach training in West Virginia," Harvey says.

To boost the likelihood of a long-term investment in the region even further, the program offers a "rural pediatric track." This allows medical students in their third year to bypass the draft and sign a contract committing to practice in the state.

"That's why I focused on this academic side rather than trying to go out into practice: to increase the quality of children's care throughout West Virginia," Harvey says. "If we can find residents that we can recruit who will practice in areas of need in the state, that's my goal."

Harvey credits his success at WVU to the Morgantown public schools he grew up in. He was born in Wheeling but, when he was two, his family moved to a farm just south of Morgantown that has been in his family since the 1850s. He attended Brown's Chapel elementary on Grafton Road in the last year of its existence, then Ridgedale Elementary, followed by South Middle School. It was at Morgantown High that he believes the quality of the city's educational system really began to shine for him.

"They did a great job of finding what felt like college-level educators," Harvey

says. "We would have teaching assistants come over from the university. We were able to take university classes at the time. I couldn't have been more prepared for WVU. Obviously, I have a lot of pride in this state and in this community. I couldn't have dreamed of a better education, and I always feel disheartened when someone leaves for Pittsburgh or some other big metropolitan city for its school systems. I think that the schools in West Virginia are underrated, especially in Morgantown."

From his patients' perspective, a visit to Harvey's outpatient clinic is much like a visit to a private practice. A full, board-certified medical doctor sees them first, interacting with the child and the family, and taking a full medical history. The family is then also seen by an attending physician who has graduated medical school but is still training to become board certified. The doctor and attending physician together discuss appropriate treatment, antibiotic stewardship, and other forms of evidence-based patient care with the family.

Despite the quality and noble intentions of WVU's pediatrics program, it is sometimes overlooked when compared with other local practices that have much higher patient loads. Much to Harvey's excitement, that may change in the near future.

On June 4 of this year, seven current

and former patients of WVU's children's hospital donned hard hats and shovels to break ground on a new children's hospital tower. The top floor has been sponsored by WVU football legend Jeff "Hoss" Hostetler, who now serves on an advisory council for the new hospital. The project is personal for Hostetler, who had three children of his own who battled serious medical conditions. The former WVU quarterback donated \$100,000 to the building but also sought out other sports professionals to match his contribution. He was able to secure financial commitments from a number of colleagues in the sports world, including his father-in-law, former Mountaineers football coach Don Nehlen.

The new eight-story WVU Medicine Children's hospital is a \$150 million project that will take about three years to construct. It will house 155 beds, including an intensive care unit, a neonatal care unit, and an obstetrics unit, with room for expansion.

"Morgantown is built around this university," Harvey says. He believes the new hospital will be just one more reason for children and their families to call the city home.

"I'm in love with it. I'm in love with the people. I think Morgantown is amazing."

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