

one of 12 teams at the Minnesota competition, held in April.

The case for the national event involved a young woman of limited financial means who had been diagnosed with lupus. She died in a hospital after several “hand-offs.” That’s the term for what happens when a patient is moved to another unit or turned over to other caregivers at a shift change; in the case of the woman with lupus, her providers failed to adequately communicate to each other the severity of her illness.

While the Dartmouth team didn’t win the national competition, the participants were nonetheless pleased by what they gained from the process. “I learned so much about interdisciplinary teamwork, both inside and outside the hospital,” says Sarkar, who did the financial analysis for the team’s presentation. “I also learned about the importance of the role of different types of health professionals for patient care.”

**Core:** “We recognize that this competition is not a substitute for true interprofessional teaching for our health-professional students,” says Ogrinc. “We’re working to make interprofessional teamwork a core part of our students’ learning.”

Even so, Reeves feels the competition is beneficial in its own right. “One could see that the students had gained an appreciation for each others’ contributions to the team,” she says, “as well as gained comfort in talking with—and disagreeing with—each other.”

LAURA STEPHENSON CARTER

## CLINICAL OBSERVATION

In this section, we highlight the human side of clinical academic medicine, putting a few questions to a physician at DMS-DHMC.

**Sarah Stearns, Ph.D.**

**Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and of Pediatrics**

*A pediatric psychologist, Stearns counsels children with acute or chronic medical problems and healthy children with behavioral or emotional difficulties. She also leads programs in effective parenting.*

**What made you decide to become a psychologist?**

I don’t think I can pinpoint any single event. I have always liked hearing people’s stories, and I suppose that, coupled with a desire to help children, led me to explore the field. I remember, early on, thinking I didn’t want a job where I might be bored. It’s been a great decision in that respect—I am never bored!

**If you weren’t a psychologist, what would you like to be?**

Probably an elementary schoolteacher. Many members of my family have been teachers, and I have great respect for that profession.

**What are your favorite books and movies?**

It’s hard to choose. Off the top of my head, I’d say I have enjoyed reading (and rereading) *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Ordinary People*. Both had good film adaptations of the novels, both novels presented some of the story from a child’s perspective, and both had at least one admirable adult character on whom the children relied.



**What are your favorite nonwork activities?**

I love being outside—gardening, canoeing, skiing, hiking, or playing tennis. I especially enjoy gardening. Planting bulbs in the fall is such an act of faith. I find it so exciting when they come up in the spring. I also collect Winnie-the-Pooh in different languages. I’m a beginning quilter. And I ran the

Chicago marathon a couple of times but have stopped running in the last three years.



**What place would you most like to travel to?**

I’d love to go back to Kenya, where I studied and lived for five months while I was a Dartmouth undergrad—I’m Class of 1990. I loved learning Swahili and speaking with my homestay families. I enjoyed all the things that were different—language, culture, food, clothing, wildlife—and yet I was impressed that despite all the differences, so much was similar. For example, on my most rural homestay, a little boy passed gas, and everyone laughed. I guess farting is funny for boys, no matter where they are from!

**What three people would you like to have over for dinner?**

Julia Child, Maya Angelou, and Roger Federer. All three seem to have a good sense of humor, and I think we’d laugh a lot. Julia could give me cooking tips, Maya would say a beautiful grace before the meal, and Roger could stay late for another cup of coffee.

**What advice would you offer to someone new to your field?**

It’s very important to find balance in your life. Find a good way to relax when you aren’t working, and be sure to protect your free time from the ever-encroaching demands of the job. Being a therapist is emotionally challenging on a good day and absolutely grueling on a hard day. It’s crucial to find time away from work in order to recharge your batteries.

**Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?**

I haven’t had a particularly showy career. As a therapist, most of what I do happens one-on-one, in closed sessions, between me and my patients. I make my difference in the world one family at a time. But I am pleased that I have been able to make some useful programmatic changes, like developing skills-based groups, in several of the places I have trained or worked.

**What about you would surprise most people?**

I think the parents I work with might be surprised to know that I don’t have any children.