

St. Luke's Medical Students Will Learn Location of Next Home on Match Day

By Sam Kennedy

BETHLEHEM - Imagine standing in a balloon-filled room with your closest supporters and friends you've studied with for the past four years. You, and each of your peers, hold an envelope that will determine your fate. When the clock counts down, you open the envelope to learn where you will spend the next three to seven years of your life.

This describes Match Day, a national rite of passage for medical school students moving onto residency programs. A complex algorithm matches the students' top choice of residencies with the programs' top choice of students. On March 18, the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia will welcome its Class of 2022, including 30 students who studied exclusively at Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine in Bethlehem.

This year's graduates spent nearly half of their medical education emersed in a global pandemic. This is the first year since 2019 that Match Day will be celebrated in person – a significant step forward.

"National Match Day is an unforgettable milestone for every medical student across the country," said Shaden Eldakar-Hein, MD. She is the Senior Associate Dean of Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine and Associate Professor, Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. "We are proud of graduating class of 2022 and look forward to learning where they will place. The residency programs they are matching to are adding amazing physicians to their teams."

Born and raised in the Lehigh Valley, Nicholas Roma, a Muhlenberg College graduate, hopes to match with St. Luke's combined residency and fellowship program in internal medicine and cardiology. It's the nation's only program of its kind.

"In 10 years, I envision my career at St. Luke's as an interventional cardiologist," he said, adding that St. Luke's electrophysiologist and faculty Darren Traub, MD nurtured his interest in the field. "Dr. Traub had a huge impact on my career. Inter-

ventional cardiology's one of the few careers where you have immediate impact. Heart attack patients come in with terrible chest pain, and after a 20-minute procedure, it's relieved. It's extraordinary."

Jessica Gude of Delaware wants to specialize in OB/GYN. She admits the babies drew her to the specialty, but her experience with gynecological surgery made her stay. She also enjoys the emotional spectrum from sharing the joy of a healthy baby to supporting patients through a loss or cancer diagnosis.

Raised by college professors in Seneca, South Carolina, Sarah Falta decided to follow the path of her grandfather, a Temple Medical School graduate. She hopes to match in internal medicine because it offers many options for further specialization, such as cardiology, pulmonary or intensive care medicine.

"I come from a scientific family where I was encouraged to be intellectually curious," she said. As an internal medicine physician, she can pursue her scientific interests while also interacting with people from all walks of life, which she relishes.

Emily Rothermel of Fleetwood decided to pursue a career in physical medicine & rehabilitation (PM&R) after a rotation with St. Luke's physiatrist Geeta Sathe, MD. Rothermel wants to work with children with neurological injuries and congenital conditions like spina bifida, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy. "I want to improve the quality of life for my patients, because at the end of the day, adding

life to one's years is as important as adding years to one's life."

The students all said they would recommend Temple/St. Luke's School of Medicine to anyone. They benefitted from the small class size and warm interaction of the professors, physician mentors, residents, fellows and other medical students.

"Temple/St. Luke's helped me grow and trust myself," Falta said. "It prepared me for starting residency, which is all you really want from medical school."

The Temple/St. Luke's Class of 2022 will graduate May 6 in Philadelphia. The medical school will welcome the incoming Class of 2026 in August.

For more information about Temple/St. Luke's please see www.sluhn.org/som and for other graduate medical education programs at St. Luke's University Health Network, please see www.sluhn.org/gme.

