

LEND TRAINEE BIO

NAME: KYLIE GRAVES

DISCIPLINE: MEDICINE, FAMILY ADVOCATE

Past/current experiences working in the field of disabilities:

My experience with disability began when I was one year old and my brother was born with Down syndrome. In early elementary school I would volunteer at his Special Olympics practices and help at UPS for DownS events, enjoying the community of people surrounding me and the level of acceptance my brother would encounter in those spaces. As I grew older, I helped start a Best Buddies chapter at my high school, alongside my brother and his twin sister, and began volunteering at Camp SOAR, an overnight, week-long camp designed for kids and young adults ages 8-19 with a disability. Camp SOAR opened my eyes to all the career paths available to help support individuals with disabilities and their families and helped me network with other likeminded individuals who also hoped to dedicate their life to supporting this patient population and their families. I began working as a personal care assistant for one of the campers I met at Camp SOAR and found this experience to be pivotal in helping me decide to pursue a career in medicine. In college, I studied Neuroscience with a minor in autism spectrum disorders where I was able to further broaden my understanding of disability and gain some clinical experience working with individuals with ASD. I remained involved in Best Buddies throughout college, including interning for Best Buddies to provide summer programming through the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, I interned for the Autism Program at Boston Children's Hospital where I worked under Developmental and Behavioral Pediatricians to help identify community resources for families who had a child with ASD. As a medical student, I have maintained my involvement with Camp SOAR during the summer months and begun volunteering at Gigi's Playhouse in Rockford multiple days per week. I have also begun researching how disability is currently taught to medical students with the goal of identifying areas that require further training to equip future doctors with the skills to meet the needs of their patients. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had to work within the disability community and aim to continue learning about ways in which I can better support my future patients through my studies and future career.

Goals for your LEND training experience:

I am honored to have the opportunity to participate in LEND to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of the disability community and further develop a network of likeminded, interdisciplinary colleagues whose goal is to support and advocate alongside this patient population. I hope to gain insight into the ways in which all the represented disciplines can work together to support individuals and their families and am interested to learn more about the advocacy and policy initiatives currently in action, and how I can strengthen my involvement.

What you wish to contribute, in the future, as an advocate/professional/family member in the field:

I want to be an advocate, resource, and trusted member of the care team for my future patients and their families. I plan to remain involved with research that will improve the care of patients with disabilities while helping to train the next generation of medical professionals to be inclusive and well-prepared to treat all their patients equitably. As a sibling, I hope to continue learning from my brother on how to best support his needs as he navigates adulthood.