

Staff Spotlight: Kalodiah Toma

We are so grateful for Kalodiah Toma, for all she has done and for being an amazing part of our team for almost 10 years! She goes above and beyond in all she does! Kalodiah is a UCSD alum and started with us as a Patient Assistant Program Volunteer, then as a Floor Manager. She excelled over the years, helping in all areas. There is no way to adequately summarize the full positive impact she has had.



Kalodiah and Lisa at the 2023 Annual Free Clinic Celebration



Kalodiah picking up food from Feeding San Diego

Kalodiah is the current Director of the Food Prescription Project at the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic. She has been a crucial contributor to the Food Project's growth over the past two years, a program designed to aid our patients facing high levels of food insecurity. In partnership with Feeding San Diego, UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic's Food Project is able to provide approximately 100 pounds of fresh produce and shelf-stable food to each patient who chooses to participate in the program.

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"I will greatly miss Kalodiah's presence in our office and her wealth of knowledge of the Free Clinic however I am so thankful she is choosing to stay a part of our team while she furthers her studies and gets her PhD!"
– Lisa Deferville



Nutrition Kitchen Volunteers Leading a healthy cooking class for our patients

Thank you to Feeding San Diego for your continual partnership and support!



Student Highlight:

We're so excited that 9 individuals who were Free Clinic Volunteers are now UCSD Medical Students.

"I remember my first day at the Downtown Free Clinic. The smell of the soup kitchen filled my nose, and I was greeted by two incredibly kind people, Kalodiah and Esmeralda. They introduced me to the clinic and showed me around. Little did I know that the family I would become a part of there over the next four years would shape me into the person I am today. When I received the life-changing news that I had been accepted into UCSD's School of Medicine, I was beyond thrilled. It wasn't just about pursuing my dream career—it was about being able to continue working with the people in my community. The free clinic played a pivotal role in my journey, propelling me towards success. I am dedicated to giving back to the people and the community right here in San Diego, as I would not be where I am today without them."
– Sarah Schwab, new UCSD Medical Student, former Free Clinic Volunteer

Student Highlight: Congratulations!

"I got involved with the Free Clinic as an undergrad and it holds a special place in my heart because it was the space in which I discovered my interest in medicine. It was my first glimpse into what community healthcare looked like and showed me the agency we had, as a collective, to bridge health inequities, particularly for communities that lack access to health and preventative care. Aside from that, I also really appreciated Free Clinic's patient-centered values and its emphasis on bi-directional learning between providers and patients, which drove my motivations to attend medical school here as I hope to translate them into my practice as a future clinician. Dr. Rodriguez was also such an inspirational figure to have worked with and I hope to continue to learn from her. Free Clinic was an incredibly formative experience for me and I am so thrilled to have the opportunity to be a part of it now as a medical student!"

– Kristine Ly, new UCSD Medical Student, former Free Clinic Volunteer



Pictured L to R: Alaa Erras, Alexis Oberg, Sarah Schwab, Shamim Khosrowjerdi, Jeffrey Chen and Kristine Ly
Not pictured: Angel Sambo, Cristina Mora and Yousif Awakeem

"The Free Clinic is a community of love. It feels like home, and I am so lucky to have worked with everyone here. I was able to go to the Free Clinic again this past month as a medical student and seeing patients I had worked with before felt like a full circle. It reminded me why I'm here. The trust that patients have with us is special, and people like Dr. Johnson and Dr. Rodriguez have shaped my idea of the type of doctor I aspire to be. I feel incredibly grateful to stay here for another four years and continue serving alongside so many special people at the Free Clinic!"

– Jeffrey Chen, new UCSD Medical Student, former Free Clinic Volunteer

**Congratulations
Dr. Natalie Rodriguez,
2023 Educator of the Year
Award Winner!**



This award from the California Academy of Family Physicians recognizes educational excellence in the field of family medicine. Dr. Rodriguez is a tireless advocate for medical students and residents while consistently demonstrating strong commitment and determination to provide quality care to underserved communities. We are so proud of you!

Donor Spotlight: Dr. Sagar Vaidya, MD, PhD



Dr. Vaidya works in rare disease drug development and has served as the vice president of clinical development at Travers Therapeutics since 2019.

Dr. Vaidya's passion for health equity and community health drew him to UCSD's SRFC when he moved to San Diego. "As soon as I arrived at the Downtown clinic and met Michelle, I knew SRFC was a family that I wanted to be a part of. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to serve and learn with our wonderful Downtown clinic team. I believe that healthcare is a basic right and should be offered to all people without judgement. Unfortunately, the world we live in does not reflect this yet. My participation at the clinic makes me feel like I'm helping make a small difference in getting us there," Dr. Vaidya states.

When asked why Travers provides philanthropic support for SRFC, Dr. Vaidya says, "Travers is a company that is committed to improving outcomes for patients with rare diseases, and this includes addressing health inequity by supporting our local community. Travers is proud to support the SRFC and help accomplish its important mission: to provide high-quality healthcare to the underserved and inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals."

Thank you to Travers and Dr. Vaidya for the continual support!