



Volume 3

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The *HEAL* Story

By José E. Rodríguez M.D.

This edition marks the conclusion of the third year of the *HEAL* publication. *HEAL* was born in desperation. I had been an observer and participant in medical education for about 10 years when I began to feel a little burnt out. Not that I did not love teaching—I do. Nor did I hate seeing patients—I live for it. But I had been exposed to a darker side of what was a beautiful and inspiring career. A wise mentor had told me, “José, our career is sick. It is your job to ‘heal’ the career.” I had the idea of starting a creative writing group with the students, to try and direct their energies toward creativity and self-expression. I thought that if they shared their stories, they would grow closer to others. I hoped that it would help them respect and love those who were different from them and needed their help.

I began working with students on their “narratives.” I felt invigorated doing this work, and I wanted to share that emotion with the students and colleagues. I mentioned this project in a small group that I was fortunate to facilitate, and the magic began. Jordan Rogers, then a first year student, came to my office to speak about this “writing project.” Here is her story of what happened next:

“I had always dreamed of writing something that mattered to people, something that told the story of caring for patients from the perspective of people across the spectrum of medicine. Teaming up with Amanda Percy, who was a classmate of mine, we all came to the same conclusion: we needed to pursue making our ideas into a reality. Amanda came up with the name *HEAL*: *Humanism Evolving through Arts and Literature*, and worked tirelessly to make *HEAL* happen. . . . The amazing tales of patients, families, and even colleagues that unfurled through the creation of *HEAL* has and continues to be an astounding and wonderful part of my medical career.”

As the idea took hold, it became clear that we should put the creations of the students, faculty and staff into an annual publication. We applied for a grant from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation to publish two e-newsletters and 200 copies of a journal. They gave us a modest sum, and students began to send in stories, artwork, pictures, and poems. Zach Folzenlogen agreed to be the art director for the project, and soon after, Lisa Granville, through her Reynolds Grant, as well as the Department of Geriatrics and the Dean of the College of Medicine, all came together to fund 1000 copies of the first journal. That was more than we ever dreamed possible.

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Kristopher R. Shannon

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From those humble beginnings, we have watched *HEAL* grow. More faculty members, staff, students and patients, have contributed their work. *HEAL* is now featured online, and all publications can be found at <www.med.fsu.edu/page=heal.html>. *HEAL* has also received generous funding from the Department of Medical Humanities and Social Sciences for the past two years.

Those first students who embraced *HEAL* are about to graduate. I will be forever grateful for their energy and their courage to dream. We hope that *HEAL* gives you the joy that it has given us. Please share *HEAL* with your friends, your family, your patients, classmates, and peers. Enjoy the art, poetry, photography, and prose. As you experience its beauty, remember the beauty of sharing in the problems and the solutions of others. Remember the privilege of connecting with patients and embrace the joy that it can bring. Thank you for your support of this publication. May the joy of *HEAL* permeate through your life and bring you healing as you work to heal others.

This third edition features work from many local and international artists. The works featured here and in other *HEAL* volumes are available for purchase from the individual artists. For their contact information, and for other inquiries, please email the editors at heal@med.fsu.edu.

The Unexpected Ride

By Carlos Leon

Medical school is a journey with its ups and its downs
Friends become family, smiles may turn into frowns
Ultimately it's a battle that everyone is ready to win
And here is a little story about how it begins
In undergrad, the preparation starts with many things to be done
This includes getting good grades, volunteering, and limiting fun
Then comes applications, personal statements, and interview invites
For many this includes researching affordable flights
Next is the MCAT, which for many is rough
But nobody ever said medical school was easy, right? It's supposed to be tough
Some students will have many offers, others will have none
And just like that a new medical school semester will have begun
The first two years is full of lectures and books
Students will never forget all the hard work it took
There is so much information the student may not know where to start
But becoming a great doctor requires hard work, determination, and a good heart
After the boards, the excitement begins
Wearing our white coats together, we start to blend in
Into the hospitals we all go
Awaiting our patients whose histories are unknown
The relationships we build ultimately sharpen our craft
Some experiences will make us cry, some will make us laugh
We quickly learn that diseases are no longer just words in a book
Sadly, they represent our patients and the lives that they took
The last two years reality sinks in
Tough residents and attendings will thicken our skin
It's amazing how fast time really goes by
I'm halfway through medical school in the blink of an eye
What lies next I'm really not sure
But whatever it may be I'm ready to endure
As future physicians we are privileged indeed
To serve our society and patients in need