AAP Conference Summary:

On Friday, October 1st, six year six students and two year five students from the Pediatric Interest Group began a journey to San Francisco for the American Academy of Pediatrics National Conference. We chose to carpool from the medical school to KCI and then boarded our first flight to Salt Lake City that would then connect us to our flight to San Francisco. We had planned and budgeted for this trip for many months and were quite excited to be on our way. We arrived in San Francisco late Friday evening and boarded our shuttle to our downtown hotel, The Parc 55 Wyndham. We then quickly unpacked and got into bed since our conference activities started early the next morning.

Our first priority on Saturday morning was to gather the group and board the provided shuttles to the Moscone Center where the majority of conference activities were held. We then picked up our official AAP passes and conference itinerary. From there, we each choose specific lectures to attend throughout the morning including: Common Pediatric Sport Injuries, Sudden Cardiac Death, Antibiotic Updates, and Pediatric Seizures. We learned that the conference provides all attendees a comprehensive CD with all conference powerpoints and lecture notes in case particular lectures overlap. All lectures are given by top specialists in their field and often include controversial topics and cutting age research. Physicians receive CME credits for their attendance so many lectures are geared for more experienced pediatricians. Despite the complex lecture material, many of the year six students found the lectures helpful.

Throughout the conference, programming is offered specifically for medical students interested in pediatrics. One such event included a Q&A panel made up of program directors from Washington, Oregon, California, Alabama, Oklahoma, & Florida. With regards to being from an accelerated BA/MD program, they shared that they would look for maturity, real world experiences, well-roundedness and recommended playing to our strengths, as well as explaining why we chose our program. With regards to out of town electives & sub-internships, they suggested doing them to enhance your education and to test out a location, but also stressed that out-of-towns can be a risk to your future application if you do not portray your best self. They also suggested the following steps to be a successful residency applicant:
1) Search for your identity. Don't be someone you're not.
2) Personal Statement - Don't buy one. Be egocentric, not patient-centric.
3) Don't sweat the small stuff. Scores are important but they aren't everything.
4) Be sure to explain gaps in medical school career. Own up to your mistakes and say what you learned from them.
5) Aim high, but be realistic. Of those who matched, they on average ranked 8 programs. Of those who did not match, they on average ranked 4 programs.
6) Do your homework about programs before interviewing there. ACGME, Freida, ABP pass
rates, program sites, current residents, studentdoctor.net, medfools.com, residencyandfellowship.com

7) It's all about the interview—the interview is the ranked the #1 most important factor used in ranking applicants. Show interest and never run out of questions for your interviewers. Interviewers remember who doesn't write thank you cards.

8) Look like a PC, not a Mac. Be conservative. Wear comfortable yet professional shoes.

9) Use technology wisely. Don't check your email/text messages anytime during the day.

10) Choose your location wisely—the location should help you recharge/reenergize in your free time.

11) Trust the Match algorithm, it favors students.

12) Have fun!

Throughout the weekend, our group continued to attend educational lectures as well as toured the AAP Conference Exhibit Hall. The exhibit hall featured hundreds of vendors that produce healthcare products for children, families, and pediatric physicians. We were able to visit many of these booths and learn about new, cutting-edge materials. Many children’s hospitals across the country also sponsor booths in the exhibit hall; therefore, students were able to receive residency information and ask questions.

Our group of students was also able to attend several banquets in order to network with other pediatricians, nurse practitioners, and additional healthcare staff. The Young Physicians Banquet occurred on Sunday evening and allowed each of us to meet several young physicians in our area of the country that practice pediatrics. The evening provided a glimpse of what our lives may look like in five to ten years when we finally complete all our training and begin our careers as attendings.

Lastly, Children’s Mercy Hospital invited our interest group to a local restaurant for an end of conference reception. That night, students were able to mingle among their pediatric facility in a very relaxed environment with food and drinks. We felt very honored to be invited and expressed our thankfulness to all physicians who spend time in medical academics.

Monday morning, our group checked out of the hotel and headed to the San Francisco Airport. We soon found out our flight out was delayed due to foggy weather conditions. We then realized we would not be able to make our connecting flight leaving Salt Lake City to Kansas City. Once weather conditions cleared in San Francisco, we safely made our way to Salt Lake City where we spent an additional night in a hotel. Finally on Tuesday morning, we returned to the Salt Lake City airport and boarded a flight home to Kansas City. Despite our unforeseen travel challenges, we all agreed that the conference trip was a helpful and educational experience. We all had taken away additional knowledge and insight into pediatrics.