



Mary Vader, D.O. Receives 2003 Harold E. Williamson Award for Volunteer Achievements

A Chinese proverb says that a child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark. Undoubtedly, Mary Vader, D.O. (or "Dr. Mary" as her young patients affectionately call her) has left a lasting imprint on the children of Montrose County and beyond, making her the ideal recipient for the 2003 Harold E. Williamson Award.

As the recipient of the award, Dr. Vader receives a \$10,000 donation from COPIC Medical Foundation to direct to the 501(c)(3) organization of her choice. Dr. Vader has elected to direct this donation to Montrose Medical Mission, an outreach clinic that provides free medical care for the uninsured.

Although there were many outstanding nominees presented to the Grants committee for this year's award, Dr. Jerome M. Buckley, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of COPIC, said that Dr. Vader's accomplishments were exceptional. "Dr. Vader is a consummate pediatrician. In her work for the underserved in Montrose as well as other parts of the world, she epitomizes the mission statement of the American Academy of Pediatrics, 'dedicated to the health of all children.'"

About Dr. Vader

Dr. Vader is a native of western Colorado, growing up on a ranch in Gunnison with 10 brothers and sisters. She left Colorado to obtain her education in Texas, and completed her residency training in pediatrics in Phoenix. Returning to Colorado in the early 1990s, she became a partner in Pediatric Associates, a clinic serving the Montrose, Olathe and Delta communities.

Dr. Vader's volunteer contributions in her community are significant. She serves as a volunteer preceptor for residents and medical students who rotate through Pediatric Associates during their rural medicine rotations. She is an assistant clinical professor of pediatrics for the University of Colorado School of Medicine and also teaches the county EMS program.

However, anyone close to her would argue that her true volunteer spirit lies with helping children. Here are just some of the ways Dr. Vader is reaching out to those in need:

Because of Dr. Vader's efforts, Dream Catchers, an organization that provides horse-assisted therapy for disabled children, became possible in western Colorado. She obtained the necessary grant money to establish the program which now helps children in Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel counties develop to their full potential.

- Dr. Vader was instrumental in establishing the Montrose Medical Mission, a non-profit outreach clinic that provides free medical care for the uninsured. The Mission is staffed by volunteer health care providers and other volunteers who share the organization's mission of providing high quality, cost effective health care to residents of Montrose County by promoting wellness, dignity, patient initiative, and health care access for the truly medically indigent. Often, you'll find Dr. Vader at the clinic on Monday nights caring for patients, serving as pharmacist, and even assisting with clerical duties. In addition to providing patient care, she also serves on the Mission's steering committee and assists with administrative functions and fundraising for the clinic.

- Serves as the medical consultant to the child protection team and helped develop the Child Abuse Response Team for the 7th Judicial District.
- Dr. Vader oversees and trains members of the group Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) to work with law enforcement to ensure proper collection and handling of evidence while providing compassionate care to the victim.
- Volunteered on four trips to Chile and Venezuela with Rotoplast, the Rotary International plastic surgery team that performs surgery on children with cleft lips and palates. In addition, for twelve years Dr. Vader has spent her vacations donating time and medical skills to a clinic among the Tarahumora Indians in the mountains of Chihuahua, Mexico.

In addition to all of her volunteer efforts, Dr. Vader is known to make house calls, and she's even been known to call in prescriptions at City Market and charge them to her own account when she knows her patient can't afford it. Dr. Vader was nominated by Michael V. Brezinsky, M.D., and he says that her devotion to children's issues and to her career in medicine is unique and refreshing, and we at COPIC agree.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Vader and all those nominated for this award. We wish to thank those who took the time to honor the outstanding physicians in their communities and the physicians whose tremendous contributions benefit us all.

This article was originally published in COPIC Topics Issue 89, December 2003

*Copyright 2003 by The COPIC Trust.
All rights reserved. No part of this
Publication may be produced or
Transmitted in any form or by any means
without written permission
from the publisher*