

## Ingram Scholar Alumni Spotlight



**LAURA BALLENGER**, Class of 2010

### **DEGREES**

B.A., Molecular and Cellular Biology, Spanish, Vanderbilt University  
M.D., Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

### **CURRENT LOCATION**

Columbus, Ohio

### **CURRENT EMPLOYER**

Nationwide Children's Hospital

### **CURRENT OCCUPATION**

Pediatric Rheumatology Fellow

### **DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER PATH**

As early as high school, I knew that I wanted to work with and serve children. Through my experiences in undergraduate, I chose a path in medicine, and my clinical rotations in medical school confirmed that I wanted to pursue a career in pediatrics. I completed Pediatric Residency at Nationwide Children's Hospital in 2017 and will complete fellowship training in Pediatric Rheumatology this coming July. I am staying at Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University to start a faculty role as a Pediatric Rheumatologist where I will care for children with arthritis and other autoimmune diseases.

**HOW DID THE INGRAM SCHOLARS PROGRAM PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE DOING TODAY?**

The program showed me the importance of considering the long-term impacts of your service efforts rather than only the short-term benefits. I enjoy pediatric medicine because I am able to make an impact on a child's future. As I care for children in the pediatric rheumatology clinic, I have to consider how will I help their immediate symptoms, but more importantly, how will I empower them to have a life without limitations in the long term.

**IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE THE INGRAM SCHOLARS PROGRAM IN THREE WORDS WHAT WOULD THEY BE?**

Truly Inspiring People

**WHAT DOES THE INGRAM SCHOLAR COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?**

I know that they are and will be a constant community in my life, regardless of the time that has passed. My class recently shared life updates and even though it has been quite some time since I have talked with them, it felt like we were right back exchanging updates on Vanderbilt's campus.

**BEST INGRAM SCHOLAR MEMORY**

My favorite memories are from my summer project with Tyler Severance in Cusco, Peru. We spent some of our time working at a care facility for children with severe disabilities. One day, Tyler coordinated a trip to the zoo with many volunteers and children. The zoo was only across the street but the facility did not typically have enough staff or volunteers to take all of the children. I will never forget the joy that this field truly brought to everyone involved.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT SCHOLARS WHO WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR INGRAM SCHOLAR EXPERIENCE?**

You will learn the most from your amazing peers. Everyone in the program has unique life experiences, views and beliefs. Take all of the opportunities to engage in conversations and participate in service, whether local or as a summer project, with them!