

## Aaron Wilson welcomed as newest doctor

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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It was a long road with many stops that led Dr. Aaron Wilson to Melissa Memorial Hospital. After moving several times as a child and spending the last decade bouncing around from location to location for college, medical school, clinical rotations, residency and even some time spent doing missionary work, MMH's new family practice doctor is looking forward to planting roots and making a home in northeast Colorado.

His excitement is shared by MMH administrator John Ayoub, who only had nice things to say about the newest member to the MMH family.

"I couldn't be more excited to have Aaron here," Ayoub said. "He is just a top-notch person and clinician and we are excited he is committed to the community for a while. We hope to make it so he and his family never want to leave. Everyone who has the opportunity to interact with him is blown away by his personality."

Growing up, Wilson was no stranger to moving around. As the son of two teachers who also engaged in a great amount of Christian missionary work, Wilson was born in Indiana, but also spent time living in the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific, upstate New York, a small town in Minnesota and Virginia.

Missionary work greatly shaped the career path Wilson would pursue. From a very young age he knew he wanted to help people in some form.

"I grew up on missionary doctor books—stories of the different doctors who have gone overseas and helped people," Wilson explained of his early interest in being a doctor.

While in college at Southern University in Collegedale, Tenn., he debated pursuing a career as a teacher, preacher and even engineer. He engaged in religious studies and also earned a minor in chemistry as he initially planned to pursue a life as a missionary doctor. Wilson said while

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trying to decide his path in life, he almost felt like he was dodging his calling to be a doctor.

“I have no doubt that God wanted me to be a doctor,” Wilson explained.

He did not give up missionary work, however. While in college, Wilson actually spent a year in Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia teaching high school.

After college, Wilson attended medical school at American University of the Caribbean in Sint Maarten. Between his first and second year there, he continued to work as a missionary. He traveled to Chad in Africa, where he assisted an American doctor. He called the experience “absolutely amazing.” While there he helped with several surgeries and actually saw patients inflicted with AIDS and polio.

Wilson comes to Holyoke from Cheyenne, Wyo. where he completed three years of residency. Along for the ride are his wife Katie and his two daughters, Alie, 2, and Kara, 2 months.

Katie is a registered nurse and plans to work at the hospital part-time in the near future.

While accepting a position at a larger hospital in a city would have given Wilson a larger paycheck, he insisted on finding work in rural medicine. He didn't like the idea of working in a hospital where patients were moved in and out like a mill. He preferred to work in a rural setting where developing relationships with patients was much easier.

As these relationships are built, Wilson believes trust is formed as the patients can see that there is a genuine concern on the doctor's part. Work in rural medicine also allows Wilson to help patients in a variety of fields.

Wilson explained that the most rewarding aspect of working in a rural setting is having the opportunity to get to know families and watching as the kids grow up.

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“Right now my goals are pretty simple. Every day I pray that I will be the best doctor I can be,” Wilson said.

Although Wilson would like to pursue more missionary work in the future, perhaps going back to Africa to work as a doctor, right now he is excited to offer his children some stability and consistency as they can now call Holyoke home.

“We’re glad to be here, glad to be settled down,” Wilson said. “We’re enjoying the people a lot. Everyone is really super friendly here and they just go the extra mile, which is something we weren’t really used to in Cheyenne and my wife definitely wasn’t used to growing up in California.”

One thing that pleasantly surprised Wilson when he arrived in town was that the city is very well kept with a number of manicured lawns and large green trees.

When not working, Wilson stated that he enjoys a number of outdoor activities. He has rafted the Ocoee River in Tennessee, is scuba certified and has even gone cliff diving.

He is also a big fan of most all sports. While in high school he was recruited to play college basketball, but after seeing his older brother not meet his goals academically while trying to balance school and collegiate basketball, he decided to focus on school.

In the last 10 years Wilson has lived in close to 10 different cities. He is excited to start a new chapter of his life and stop living out of a suitcase as he prepares to begin his career in Holyoke.

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