

# The Atlanta Experience

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Each year, half of the fourth year residents spend 6 months away from Duke furthering their experience in pediatric orthopaedics. For the fourth straight year, these residents have been working under the guidance of the attending staff at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Scottish Rite campus.

I was fortunate to recently spend 6 months at CHOA. The program boasts eight faculty members, covering the gamut of elective pediatric orthopaedics. They maintain a high-volume clinical practice that afforded me an extensive operative and office experience. From scoliosis to shoulder instability, from spatial frames to palliative cerebral palsy releases, I saw it all. The techniques, tricks and pearls collected from eight skilled surgeons are worth their weight in gold.

In addition, CHOA operates the busiest pediatric ER in the southeast, treating almost 100 fractures a week. It is impossible to leave Atlanta and not have developed expertise in fracture reduction, casting and most importantly decision-making as it pertains to pediatric trauma. The faculty has a trusting relationship with the residents and expects us to develop autonomy in the ER.

In Dr Dennis Devito and Dr Cliff Willimon, the Duke residents have two alumni, advocates and friends. At the end of every 3-month cycle, we all get together to mark the departure of a Duke resident. Dr Willimon will also frequently invite residents out for a meal, on a day trip or to his home. The Duke family spirit truly does extend all the way to Georgia!

Above all, the Atlanta experience was remarkable for the camaraderie and mentorship provided by the attending surgeons. They are approachable, humble and dedicated to teaching. I believe that every Duke resident leaves Atlanta more skilled, more confident and a better physician. I look forward to watching many generations to come benefit from this unique learning experience.

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