

Kimberly Dyer Martin '83

Pediatric Endocrinologist

For Kimberly Dyer Martin '83, the sky is the limit. It's been a mindset she's had for years—even as she has overcome some obstacles along the way.

Today, as a Pediatric Endocrinologist at Akron Children's Hospital, she has the opportunity to help children who are experiencing problems with growth, puberty, diabetes, and other disorders related to hormones and the glands that produce them. "I initially thought about becoming a general pediatrician, but during my pediatric residency, I really enjoyed learning about endocrinology," she said. "It involved the entire body and was very methodical." From there, Kim pursued her fellowship in pediatric endocrinology and has been in the field ever since.

It is a career she loves, not only because it combines her love of working with children, science and mathematics, but because she also gets to build relationships with the families she works with as she follows children with chronic illnesses.

"I'm proud of where I've come," Kim said. "My path wasn't always direct or easy, but Benchmark and my parents played a big role in teaching me that it had nothing to do with my intelligence, but just that I learn differently."

Kim came to Benchmark in second grade after having difficulty with reading and keeping up with her classmates (she later was diagnosed with dyslexia). "I remember my mother telling me, 'They [the teachers are her previous school] would teach you something, you would do really well at it, and then you would come back to it half a day later and

it would be completely gone.'" she said. "Retention was just not there for me. I was far behind in my reading, I had an inability to sound out words, and my writing was delayed."

Of her years at Benchmark, Kim not only recalls fond memories of the playground, zip wire, and outward bound course, but she also remembers the strategies she was taught to overcome her learning differences—many of which she still uses to this day.

"First of all, I have to be very organized by making lists," she said. "I get easily distracted, but if I make lists, I can keep up and keep on task. That is a skill I learned at Benchmark that I still use on a daily basis." She also said that she is big on highlighting and re-reading—especially when she needs to retain information. "When someone is giving a lecture I have to write everything down, I can then go back and read it to learn the information. I am much more of a visual learner than an auditory one," she said.

Kim said she also regularly uses strategies she learned at Benchmark to help overcome her issues with phonetics—especially being in the medical field. "I found that when I started medical school, people thought I had a stuttering issue because we were learning a lot of new words and I couldn't pronounce half of them," she said. "So I would be very careful to listen to how people would say the words and then I would just use the common vernacular. Over time, and with repetition, I eventually learned how to say most of the words."

Having earned a BA in



Biology from Lafayette College in 1996, an MA in Biomedical Ethics from Case Western Reserve University in 1999, and an MD from Case Western University School of Medicine in 2003, Kim has come far since her Benchmark days. And while she admits that it has not always been an easy road, her mindset of "anything is possible" has helped lead her to the success she has found today.

"With the support of my parents and Benchmark, I've always been very open about my learning differences," Kim said. "I was always told that I could do whatever I wanted to do; I just may have to work harder. That has taken me a long way. Benchmark is the only school I donate to because it's the only one that really mattered. Had I not been accepted to Benchmark, who knows where I would be."

Upon earning her MD, Kim moved back to the Philadelphia area, where she spent 2 years as a Pediatric Endocrinologist at Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia before moving on to her current role at Akron Children's Hospital in 2013.

For the future, Kim looks forward to the prospect of starting a fellowship program at Akron Children's Hospital, as well as spending time with her husband, Chuck, and their two children (ages 8 and 5). She said they are also excited to be in the process of adopting a third child. Her advice to current Benchmark students is to "have faith that with hard work, you can accomplish whatever you set your mind to. There are no limitations to what you can accomplish." 

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