



## NURSE PRACTITIONER

MEET **DEANNA KOZITZA MASON, PhD**, FSHS CLASS OF 1992, PATIENT ADVOCATE AND HEALTH EDUCATOR.

### Deanna Kozitza Mason, PhD, RN, CNP-peds

Dr. Deanna Mason takes to heart the words of author Wendell Berry: *“No matter how much one may love the world as a whole, one can live fully in it only by living responsibly in some small part of it.”* Currently, Deanna’s ‘small part of the world’ is Madrid, Spain, where she and her family reside. Furthermore, she seeks to live responsibly in her personal life as well as in her career which blends education and health care to improve individual lives in her community, especially those of vulnerable and diverse populations.

At the heart of Dr. Mason’s work is the philosophy that education is the key to improving lives. She is the founder and director of Split Rock SL, a consulting company focused on health education for families, and she’s a board member of the José Cabedo Foundation which assists economically disadvantaged community members with health and education. Deanna works with charitable organizations to address the health care needs of irregular immigrants in Spain. Personally, she provides free nursing services and inspires those becoming nurses to start seeing the nameless poor. She is also an author, columnist, patient advocate, and presenter on the topics of health care and the effects of spirituality on adolescent behavior.

Her education includes attending Gustavus Adolphus College for her bachelor’s degree in nursing and the College of St. Catherine for her master’s degree as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. She received her doctorate from the University of North Dakota in 2010. Her degrees led to her work as a licensed school nurse, nurse educator, patient education specialist, researcher, university professor, public health nurse, and reviewer for international journals. She currently is an entrepreneurial nurse with her own private practice and an author of books on Proactive Parenting. She has received awards for her work as a nurse educator: the

Innovation in International Education award from Saint Louis University-Madrid and a distinguished alumni award from Gustavus Adolphus College for her work in health care for undocumented immigrants.

Dr. Mason recalls three high school teachers who left indelible marks on her life, and the influence of each is evident in the successful person she has become. Her biology teacher first introduced her to the career of nurse practitioner and advised how she might become one. *“That small direction from a teacher I admired set me on my path and helped me chart my course.”* Deanna’s career combining health care and education was likely inspired by her FHS science teacher.

Deanna’s sociology teacher taught her about people different from herself, surpassing the socio-economic level of the previous generation, and having confidence to dream big. He introduced her to the larger world on a trip to CLOSE UP in Washington, DC, to study politics, look beyond Faribault, MN, and meet people from all over the country. She states, *“I know his actions have formed how I run the philanthropic part of my business; I don’t want any child with potential to waste it.”*

Deanna credits her orchestra director with connecting her to music and teaching her about music’s ability to express emotions that are bottled up inside. *“I remember him every time I rosin my bow and tune my strings.”* Music continues to enhance her life as she plays piano, violin, and guitar with her two children.

Successful people often produce ripples of influence that impact others. With Deanna’s dedication to improving the lives of those in “her small part of the world”, she is making a splash, and the ripples she creates are ever-widening and far-reaching.