

Children's book inspires the next generation of doctors

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Tulane School of Science and Engineering alumna Ashley Denmark introduces children to the world of medicine via her new book published earlier this year. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Dr. Ashley Denmark's daughter, Olivia, had a front row seat for watching her mom become a physician. When Denmark started medical school, she was nine months pregnant with Olivia, who is now 6 and who serves as the inspiration for a new children's book, *Olivia's Doctor Adventures*, published earlier this year.

Denmark earned a master's degree in neuroscience from the [Tulane School of Science and Engineering](#) in 2010 before studying medicine at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in South Carolina.

"My daughter underwent surgery, and her stay in the hospital really sparked her interest in medicine," said Denmark, who practices family medicine. "When I didn't find a children's book that addressed her curiosity, I decided to write one myself."

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While Disney's Doc McStuffins may seem like direct competition for the fictitious Olivia, Denmark said the two characters and storylines offer very different looks into the world of medicine.

"Olivia's Doctor Adventures is designed to give children a real medical vocabulary and to teach them about the different types of doctors they can become," she said.

The book introduces 11 fields including pulmonology, cardiology, psychiatry and ophthalmology. McStuffins, also an African-American girl, treats stuffed toys and animals that come to life when she puts on a magical stethoscope.

Since the book's release in February, Denmark has introduced an accompanying activity kit that arrives with the book and includes a patient gown, doctor's gloves and a mask.

Now a mother of three, Denmark said she and her husband look to their children for inspiration.

"Growing up, I didn't have anyone to explain to me all the types of doctors I could become," says Denmark. "By writing this book, I can help more children gain the exposure to the medical field that I never had."