



Dogs, turtles and healing beyond the hospital door

By Michal Ruprecht / October 8, 2025



Rosario Luna sat on a bench adjacent to the main doors of the Stanford Hospital. She wanted to be as far away from her husband and brother-in-law as possible. “My husband’s on one side and then his brother’s on the other, and they’re just kind of like staring at each other. I feel that tense vibe,” she said. Luna was at the hospital visiting her father-in-law, who was in the operating room getting his gallbladder removed. “I’m feeling a little overwhelmed,” she said. “I suffer [from] anxiety. I had to step out for a minute.” (Michal Ruprecht/Peninsula Press)

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I last set foot in my medical school’s hospital in late June. I still remember that day — and the whirlwind of emotions I felt.

abnormal growth on the MRI scan of a middle schooler; the quiet strength of the mom I assured everything was going to be OK with her son; and the awful pain of standing outside the room of a dying newborn.

Months later, I found myself standing outside Stanford Hospital, where that flurry of emotions hit me again. But this time, I didn't have scrubs on. I didn't have a stethoscope wrapped around my neck either. I replaced it with a camera. I was there to observe, as a journalist.

I did just that, and I watched as patients and hospital employees streamed into and out of the building from the circular driveway of the hospital. These photographs tell the stories of the people I met while on my first photo shoot.

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Michal Ruprecht is the 2025-26 Stanford Global Health Media Fellow and a fourth-year medical student at Wayne State University School of Medicine. He previously worked at NPR as the AAAS Mass Media Fellow and has interned with ABC News, MedPage Today and the American Public Health Association. Prior to that, Michal was a reporter at The Michigan Daily, the University of Michigan's independent daily student newspaper. Beyond reporting, Michal is a member of the Association of Health Care Journalists membership committee. Michal graduated with honors and a B.S. in neuroscience from the University of Michigan in 2022, where he leveraged community action and social change to partner with individuals affected by the Flint water crisis. He serves on the boards of the Michigan Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Riley's Way Foundation.

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