The atrium at the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (SSOM) was filled with screams and tears of joy as 127 medical students learned the next steps in their medical careers.

"This is a day of opportunity. We don't know what's ahead," said Dr. Linda Brubaker, dean of the Stritch School of Medicine, moments before the students opened envelopes that would reveal where they had matched for their residency. "Wherever you go, whatever you do know that we have unconditional pride in you. We know that you will be a success and bloom where you are planted, leaving each place better than when you arrived."

Elected by the SSOM Class of 2012, Kevin Simpson, MD, received the award for outstanding clinical faculty, and Theresa Kristopaitis, MD, received the award for outstanding basic science faculty.

In honor of the dedication to service that they observed in the faculty, the Class of 2012 presented a $2700 check to the Community Health Clinic, the largest free clinic in the Chicago area. Many students and faculty donate their time and talents at this clinic to bring medical care to those in need.

In the same room where the medical students received their first white coats, together they opened the green envelopes that revealed the location where they would see their first patients as MDs. Here are some interesting facts of what was inside those envelopes:
• 3 percent of the class matched early in the military match
• 3 percent of the class is delaying their residency till 2013 to pursue additional education and research opportunities
• 39 percent of the class is going into a primary care residency
• 24 percent are going into specialties, including 8 percent in emergency medicine and 6 percent in obstetrics and gynecology
• 68 percent of the class is staying in the Midwest, 43 percent is staying in Illinois and 17 percent are staying at Loyola
• 5 percent are heading to the southern states, 15 percent to the East Coast and 13 percent to the western states