

Dr. Tonya (Ema) Touchstone joined the Shrine of the Black Madonna on Easter Sunday 1977. Tonya and her mother Talibah had visited the church for approximately a year but on that particular Sunday she told her mother they should join the church because she wanted to sit with the children in the balcony. Little did she know that the children in the balcony and the church family would become her second family and play an intricate role in her spiritual development and the essence of the woman she would become today.

As a member of Alkebulan Academy, she was in charge of the nursery at Shrine #2, participated in weekend activities and summer camps, and gave her life to GOD. In 1982 when Mtoto House opened in Detroit, Ema moved in and lived with 7 other Alkebulan Academy sisters for the next 4 years. This environment of communal living taught her the true meaning of sisterhood and the group process.

After finishing high school Ema moved to Washington D.C. to attend Howard University. During the summer after her first year of college she was a camp leader at the Alkebulan Academy camp in Houston, Texas. Thereafter, she would spend her summers participating in the Big Brother Big Sister Program, attending a medical school prep summer program, taking summer school classes, and working different jobs in Washington D.C... Her favorite job was working as a unit clerk in the emergency department at Children's National Hospital in Washington D.C.

In 1991, Tonya moved to Columbus, Ohio to participate in The Ohio State University Post-Baccalaureate Program for one year and then she attended The Ohio State University Medical School. Medical school was very hard and Ema needed to be rejuvenated by the spirit and the love of the people who knew her best. During her break, she decided to spend some time with her family in Detroit. Ema and her Alkebulan sister, Anana traveled to Shrines #9 and #10. This was exactly what she needed to continue with the stresses of medical school.

When it was time to decide what field of medicine and which residency program to join, Ema knew she needed to come back home to spend some time with her family; so she was very happy when she matched in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Michigan. During residency she participated in a program that taught high school mothers how to take care of their children, a medical mission in Africa, career day at various schools, and was a motivating keynote speaker at a middle school graduation. In March 1999, Tonya became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated which allowed her to continue to serve mankind.

In 2001, Tonya became an attending physician at Children's Hospital of Michigan emergency department. She earned a M.B.A. from University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2006. Dr. Herman Gray, president of Children's Hospital of Michigan, hired her as the Associate Vice-President of Medical Affairs (associate Chief Medical Officer) in 2011. Currently Ema is the Chief of Staff and Physician Advisor at Children's Hospital of Michigan. She also continues to work in the emergency department. During this time of advancement in her career she continues to participate in and support activities that enhance the lives of children and young adults throughout metro Detroit.