



# SOURCE

## Star of the Month September 2019

**Sharon Pang**  
School of Medicine  
M.D. Candidate



### What do you do as your community engagement activity? How did you begin to volunteer?

I have been volunteering with Selfhelp, a virtual senior center, since the spring of 2016. The organization sets up a platform of different classes that homebound seniors can attend to stimulate intellectual conversations and strong relationship bonding. As a volunteer, I facilitate poetry discussions with the homebound seniors. I always enjoy speaking to them and learning about their stories.

I am also a SOURCE governing board member for the SOM. This is a really fun position because I get to help spread the word about SOURCE and come up with more creative ways to get my fellow students involved in community service. One great experience I had last year was serving as a Reflection Leader at one of the Tri-School Days of Service at the House of Ruth. This year I am working with our new student group, Engaging Homelessness, to set up volunteering opportunities in our neighborhood. We are still in the midst of planning, but hope to help teach health classes at a community organization.

### How do you find time for service in your busy schedule? How much time do you spend on service per week/month?

Finding time can get difficult. Fortunately Selfhelp is virtual, so I am able to fit it into my schedule easily. I try to teach one class each month or every other month. I would say I spend a few hours a month on service, and hopefully that will go up this year!

### How does your service shape your development as a health care professional? What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

I find that service is a really important part of my development as a health care professional because it is a reminder of why I decided to go into health care – to serve those in need and may be unable to take care of themselves. Furthermore, community service helps me learn more about the community I live in and partake in my neighbors' needs. I enjoy getting to know the people I serve and being a part of a vision for a more compassionate and friendly future.

### What advice do you have for prospective students who are interested in community service? What would you say to someone who is unsure of the impact his/her service would have on a community?

Find what you are most interested in doing and do that! You'll have a plethora of opportunities as a student, but what is most important is to find an activity that you are passionate about and will keep you coming back for more!

It's alright to be unsure of what impact your service might have, but as long as you are responding to the community's needs (you can talk to volunteer organizations and community members to clarify what the needs are) then you're on the right track. It's important to respond to what the community needs rather than to impose what you think that the community needs.

### Any final comments or plugs to promote volunteerism? Feel free to plug an opportunity with your community engagement experience and how to get involved.

If you are also interested in volunteering with Selfhelp contact me and I can connect you with their administration. It's a really fun service opportunity and very flexible with time!

If you are interested in engaging people experiencing homelessness, SOURCE has some great partners online. Also stay tuned for what our club is planning for this upcoming year!

Finally, don't forget that the service is not about us, but about the people we are serving. Think about their experiences and needs and how you can respond appropriately. Although your schedule will always be busy, finding time to serve the community will make your time here even more enjoyable and significant!

**Thank you, Sharon, for all of your service to our community and for your efforts connecting medical students to volunteer opportunities here in Baltimore!**