SOURCE Champion of the Month
October 2017

Michael Alberto Bell
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
2nd Year Medical Student

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What do you do as your community engagement activity?
I volunteer at the Identify Clinic helping community members prepare applications to reclaim their vital records. I also volunteer at the Commodore Johns Rodgers School now and again, but am hoping to be volunteering there more regularly!

How much time do you spend on service per week/month?
4 hours

How did you begin to work with your community-based organization (CBO)?
I had heard very good things about the Identity Clinic in the past and joined the program after seeing one of their announcements that they were in need of Spanish-speakers.
What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?
I love hearing the narratives of community members and sharing these small moments with them. Each community member has a unique and wonderful story to tell. I love that the community’s needs drive this project. I feel more rooted from doing this work.

How do you find time for service in your busy schedule?
We plan our shifts far enough in advance that I am able to make time in my schedule for volunteering.

Besides finding the time, what barriers related to your service have you had to overcome?
Something that I am constantly working on is weeding out misassumptions. The way I approach service requires a lot of unlearning and relearning. Thankfully, I like being a student.

How has your training in Hopkins influenced the way you approach service?
I think in my training I’ve sought out and crossed paths with individuals who are unafraid to practice with eyes wide-open to the microhistories of East Baltimore. I must be conscientious of my status as a community member pertaining to Hopkins and think about the ways this echoes into my service. Hopkins and East Baltimore share a fraught, but symbiotic, history and it is important to acknowledge this dynamic.

How does your service shape your development as a health care professional?
Walking together with the community helps me personalize and realize the art of medicine. I was asking one of my patients what doctors could do better and their response was people won’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. For me, this highlighted how the profession has sufficient external metrics for the pursuit of knowledge, but metrics for the caring arts are fleeting and, so, requires extra vigilance as an individual professional.

What advice do you have for prospective students who are interested in community service?
In the words of a widely beloved radiology professor, “Go for it!”

What would you say to someone who is unsure of the impact his/her service would have on a community?
In the words of that same professor, “One view is no view.” I think this advice would apply here as well. Take a step back to examine why you are unsure and listen to the needs of the community you are serving. The rewards of community service are often unseen and unsung. Cultivating value independent of instant gratification is a useful skill.

What is the community service accomplishment that has affected you and/or your community the most?
Medical school is fatiguing. Medical school is time-consuming. Medical school is an automated escalator and, sometimes, I forget where it is going. Making it out of school and into the community feels like an accomplishment to me because it restores a sense that I am in control of my education and I am in control of how to use that education.

Final Comments Your mom would be proud of you. (Call her.) ☺️