

SOURCE Champion of the Month
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"You're only here for a short time (even 4 years sometimes seems short), see more of Baltimore outside of Hopkins. Community service is one of the best ways to do that."

What do you do as your community engagement activity?

I work with the Incentive Mentoring Program (IMP), a JHU student group program that fosters the academic and personal growth of students at Dunbar High School. Volunteers provide after-school tutoring for the students and, in turn, the students design and participate in monthly community service projects to benefit others. At IMP, I am a Grandparent (GP) which means I oversee a few houses. A house is a collection of mentors and a head of household (HoH) that manages the mentors (and mentors themselves). I make sure each student has their needs met and mentors are engaged.

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

3-4hrs/week, 25hrs/month

How did you begin to work with your community-based organization (CBO)?

I have been with IMP for 3.5 years. I joined in November 2010. A friend of mine (Adi Noiman) had talked about it and encouraged me to join.

What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

I love seeing how students transform within our program. Many start out seeming to hate being involved with the mentors, even though they all had to willingly sign up and agree to be in the program. After showing students we're not giving up on them, we can actually help. Seeing your student succeed after a long line of failures, yours and theirs, is indescribable.

How do you find time for service in your busy schedule?

My PhD allows for a relatively flexible schedule, which helps. I also do a lot of my work via emails and calls, which is helpful because I am on my computer most of the day. I can also call people via Gmail while

writing emails about what we were discussing as action items, which makes things quicker. But most of all, I schedule time for IMP just like any other meeting on my calendar and treat it with the same regard.

Besides finding the time, what barriers related to your service have you had to overcome?

Students who are struggling don't necessarily want your help or connect to you. Finding a common ground and building trust takes time and energy. Many of us aren't used to failing so frequently as I have with student bond-building. Learning how to fail effectively and to keep moving forward takes time.

How has your training in Hopkins influenced the way you approach service?

Hopkins has great resources to all its students. Realizing that not everyone has the same resources helps you understand what my students need. They have provided a great model of effective education that we can build on.

How does your service shape your development as a health care professional?

IMP has given me invaluable skills for delegation and management. I have learned better ways to deal with conflict and get meetings back on track. These skills are more transferable than some of my training within my program.

What advice do you have for prospective students who are interested in community service?

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What would you say to someone who is unsure of the impact his/her service would have on a community?

I'd say 3 things: 1) You will absolutely make no impact if you do no service, 2) Everything is useful, even if it may not seem so at the time, and 3) if not you, then who?

What is the community service accomplishment that has affected you and/or your community the most?

We have a student when first joining the program was failing all of his classes, skipping many of them, and avoiding all calls and texts from us. He is graduating this year and actively reaches out to us without pressure. We couldn't be more proud – these achievements are what our work is all about.

Final comments:

If interested, please visit <http://www.incentivementoringprogram.org/volunteer>, or email volunteer@incentivementoringprogram.org. Also our (high school) students don't disappear in the summer, so opportunities are available year round.



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