

SOURCE Champion of the Month
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What do you do as your community engagement activity?

I strive to incorporate community engagement in my research and my teaching.

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

In any given week it can be up to 20 hours.

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

I have and am currently working with several different organizations. Each working relationship has had a unique start: one organization found me looking for assistance; I sought out other CBO's because of their type of work; and some organizations were introductions by other faculty or community members. Although the origin of my relationship with CBO's vary there is a common thread that sustained our relationship – mutual respect.

What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

The three things that I gain from community service are:

1. A reminder that amazing work is being done in Baltimore.
2. The ability to make lasting change in the city where I live and work
3. The ability to learn from the agencies and organizations providing direct services to improve the salience of my research.

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

Because community service is a part of my teaching and research, I prioritize it. Yes, it is time consuming, but aren't all important endeavors?

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

To teach a Service-Learning course requires more than developing a dyadic class curriculum and materials. It requires framing a working experience to provide teachable moments, reflection, and feedback. This is a shift from just lecturing in a class for me to partnering with my students on their work and their learning. The resources to do this are double those of a dyadic teaching course, each year I must find a suitable project, organize the class to meet those project deliverables, and prepare the students for this unique experience.

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

It has instilled in me mindfulness that I am an ambassador of Johns Hopkins every time I go into the community. As an ambassador, I am responsible for improving the long established relationship between my institution and my community.

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

It makes me keenly aware that people are not empty vessels waiting for me to save them. If I have an "issue" for them to consider, I need their partnership, trust, and investment in solving the issue.

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

Listen. Ask questions when you don't understand and listen some more.

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

Ask questions and listen to find out if service would be impactful, in some cases it may not be the right time for your exact interests, but there maybe other opportunities for a student/community partnership that is mutually beneficial.

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

I have had several community service accomplishments impact my work decisions but to answer this question I will pick a recent success. I had the ability to work with Banner Neighborhoods Corporation in East Baltimore on a study focused on increasing smoke alarm coverage in homes in Baltimore City as a partnership with the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD). There were two main accomplishments that I am proud of, one professional and one personal. Professionally, we (a very large team of community members and organizations, Hopkins researchers, and staff) were able to learn some concrete strategies to improve the BCFD efforts for increasing smoke alarm coverage. Personally, I became aware of the type and quality of work being done at Banner and was pleased to join their organization as a board member.

Final Comments:

Baltimore is such an amazing city! Learning experiences can come from many environments, volunteering in Baltimore is one exceptionally memorable learning experience that is a treasure for students and faculty alike.



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