

SOURCE Champion of the Month
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"Don't overwork yourself and don't get focused on the results. You will likely never be able to measure your impact. The reward has to be in the service itself."

What do you do as your community engagement activity?

Regularly I'm at Moveable Feast doing meal preparation and every month I coordinate and participate in a day of service with the Men in Nursing Club. I try to help SOURCE out as needed as well.

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

It depends, some weeks it can get as high as 10 hrs/week but usually it's around 4. It completely depends on my school commitments at the time.

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

Through the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Group at the School of Nursing, we meet weekly and we're all pretty service minded. Someone mentioned Moveable Feast in casual conversation and it sounded interesting. The Men in Nursing Club is mostly about creating bonding opportunities through service and taking a day every month to spend time with each other away from school.

What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

It's a respite. I spend an ungodly amount of time developing my nursing and healthcare skills so I purposely look for opportunities that are outside of that spectrum. Some people look for opportunities to apply and develop their skills but I like the change of pace.

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

If you find something you find fun then it becomes a leisure time activity, and everybody needs a little time for leisure or you have to reassess what you're doing.

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

Time is the only barrier I've had. In my experience, if you are willing to help out and able to do what's required, not many people turn away a helping hand.

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

Hopkins will get you in the door anywhere. The name carries a lot of responsibility but it will also give you access.

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

I'm still figuring out what exactly my role as a health care professional is going to be. In my experience you never know what you get out of something until it manifests down the road.

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

Don't get intimidated by commitment requirements and don't overdo it right away. Hopkins is pretty intense, and adding regular time commitments can be tough. Start small, reach out to a few different organizations (you can find some on the SOURCE website), and try a few out doing short term or one-time commitments. If you find one you really gel with then you're on your way. Also the organization will know that you are a student first, don't burn yourself out, if you are getting slammed at school then let your organization know, they will understand.

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

Don't worry about it. I've been at this a while and the number one reason I see people burn out is the martyrdom syndrome. Don't overwork yourself and don't get focused on the results. You will likely never be able to measure your impact. The reward has to be in the service itself.

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

I'm pretty proud of the way I've helped transform the Men in Nursing Club into a service-oriented organization but like I said before, if you're measuring accomplishment, you're in the wrong game.

Final comments:

Just reach out, be proactive and have fun. Check out Moveable Feast (<http://www.mfeast.org>), and the SOURCE website.



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