



## Star of the Month

October 2021

### Ramona Poblete

Bloomberg School of Public Health



*Congratulations to our Star of the Month for October 2021 Ramona Poblete from the Bloomberg School of Public Health! Ramona has been working with our amazing partners at Art With A Heart to create program evaluation tools which are used to enhance in-school programming for Baltimore youth.*

*We spoke with Ramona about her service-learning experience and collaboration with Art With A Heart. Read more below!*

#### **Tell us a little bit about yourself. What program are you enrolled in, and what brought you to the Bloomberg School of Public Health?**

Hi! My name is Mona Poblete and I'm a part-time MPH student concentrating in Social and Behavioral sciences. Coming to JHSPH was a dream I set my mind to once I learned public health was a direction I wanted to go in. Not only is JHSPH one of the top Public Health Schools in the world, but it's also located in Baltimore, where I had started to build my life after graduating from Loyola University Maryland. Baltimore has such a great community feel and emphasis all over the city, and the city's commitment to community-level interventions is huge. So, to be able to stay in this environment, while also still maintaining those community connections I had made prior to enrolling in the MPH program, was super important to me and I'm blessed to be here.

#### **What made you want to get involved with Art With A Heart?**

I got involved with Art With a Heart through the Term 4 course 260.848.81 *Community-Based Practice Through Civic Engagement*, where one of the goals it to work with a community based organization to create an evaluation for their programming. This evaluation was created with the support of faculty Tyler Derreth and Maggie Wear and Art With A Heart Executive Director Randi Pupkin over the course of a few weeks, making sure the Community Based Organization was at the center of decisions and the material. There were also components of the course related to service-learning and I was able to use this course for some of my practicum hours. Luckily, I still had some hours to fulfill so I was able to continue this work with Art With A Heart on the evaluation since it's something that is needed and they needed support on.

#### **What are some of the activities that you have been involved with at Art With A Heart?**

Like I mentioned, the biggest thing we have worked on together is this program evaluation for in school programming focused on students' social and emotional growth. It is a lot of work! However, it takes a lot of team collaboration with Art With A Heart while also keeping in mind that I'm an outsider coming into their space. They are the ones who have already formed relationships with those who are administering this evaluation while I'm here to assist with taking in the data and turning it into recommendations. Currently, I'm working on collecting the data from the first round of evaluations so my hands are full, but the work is good and I'm really enjoying the experience.

#### **How does your community work complement what you're learning at the Bloomberg School of Public Health?**

I chose to pursue a public health career because it molded everything I loved into one: community, service, science, relationships, research, etc. So, coming into the program, I already knew that the community component of public health was crucial to my studies and something I wanted to make center. My career goal is to continue working in a non-profit setting with focuses on local-level interventions and be able to provide support where needed. This particular work with Art With A Heart is awesome because not only am I working with a non-profit that I know has had a huge impact on Baltimore City's population, but also I am able to apply the things I've learned in class to the real world and see it in action within a population I am interested in working with.

#### **What advice would you give to other students looking to volunteer here in Baltimore?**

Baltimore is a special city for so many reasons, through its landmarks, to its history, and particularly its people. Generally, I believe you don't truly get to know a place until you integrate within it, talk to its residents, and find connections with the people and places that lie there. Therefore, volunteering around Baltimore is a beautiful way to do all three of those things, and I hope students can connect with this city as much as I've been able to connect with it over the years. Also, SOURCE rocks!

#### **Thank you for all your dedication and service to our community!**