

SOURCE Champion of the Month
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“Volunteerism is a way to engage with the real world while in a very academic place! It will challenge what you learn and give you new perspective and passion!!”

What do you do as your community engagement activity?

Charm City Clinic Case Manager & Auxiliary Board Member (Operations Committee)

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

Varies, but about 20-25 hours a month

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

When I first moved to Baltimore, I took some time to explore various organizations to find which ones matched my skill set and interests. I found out about Charm City Clinic through the SOURCE volunteer fair.

What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

There are so many benefits to service! As a student moving to a new community, partnering with the community through service is one of the best ways to get to know Baltimore. From volunteering at CCC I gained so much from skills in supporting clients navigating social services, understanding challenges with health access and care, to developing lasting relationships with families. Although not perfect, working as a case manager at CCC, I have seen the lives of clients and families improve over time. They have become able to advocate for

themselves in settings that have created barriers to prevent them from having their basic human needs. Additionally, through service I have also learned a lot about myself as a person, things I need to improve upon, what I am passionate about in this world, and how I can form my career to support my community.

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

That can be a challenge! I decided to commit to working with only one organization (CCC) in Baltimore. Engaging in longitudinal service was also a big priority for me. I just put the hours volunteering at clinic and with the Operations Board in my calendar, as well as set aside the hours to work with my clients and went from there!

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

In doing any kind of service or work, it can be difficult to find a balance between devoting yourself to your job and taking care of yourself! Through my experience volunteering at CCC I would frequently reflect on that balance. I needed to develop boundaries for my work and critically think about how my time would be best spent with the organization.

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

My patients, classmates, mentors have all influenced the way I engage in service in Baltimore. In the hospital, often we see failures of the health care system as well as the result of economic and social injustice. It continues to motivate me to engage with patients outside the hospital setting. Talking with classmates and mentors about the work they are doing and the paths they have taken always continues to inspire me and reframe the way I think about service.

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

Engaging in service helps me understand the most important dimensions of my patient, their struggles, their values, their social and economic situations and their hopes! It also gives me drive to include community engagement or policy work as part of my future career.

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

Great!!! Baltimore is a community that has so much need – and has been oppressed historically by so many institutions. Find out what organizations and needs are out there and then decide what will be the best fit for you! Go in with a critical and loving eye, your time, effort and perspective can very valuable!

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

That is very normal and it is good to be concerned about impact of your work on the community, both positive and negative! I think there are ways to work towards a community partnership that minimizes negative effects on the community. Involve the clients, community leaders in developing and shaping your organization. Continuously ask for feedback and evaluate the impact of your work!

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

One of my first clients at CCC was a single dad also caring for his grandparents in a home in Baltimore. Working with this client over a period of 2+ years, celebrating his accomplishments of getting a temp job and then being promoted to manager, go to his PCP, therapist and psychiatrist regularly, bring his child to consistent doctor’s appointments, advocate for his child in school – it all has been incredibly inspiring!

Final Comments

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