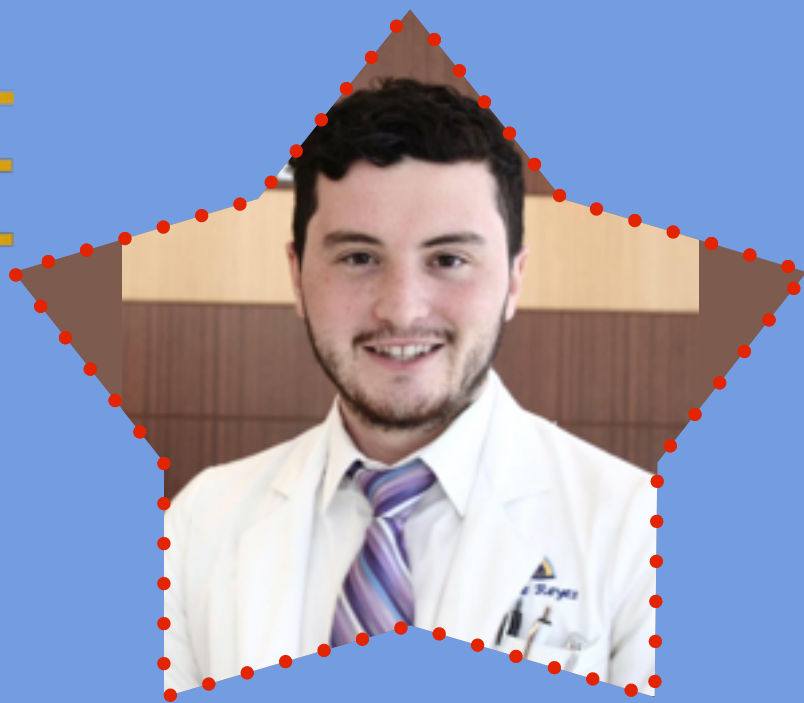




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Star of the Month April 2020

Jose Reyes
School of Medicine



What community engagement activities or programs have you been involved with? How did you begin to work with community-based organizations (CBOs) in Baltimore?

While in Baltimore, my goal was to have experience in both on-the-ground community engagement in addition to programmatic development of community-driven projects. My main direct form of community engagement was with Charm City Care Connection, where I served as a case manager for a year, helping navigate the intricate system that is our healthcare system. I made so many connections at this time, and still hear from community members I worked with! My major programmatic project was with the Baltimore Medical Systems and the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Board, in which we began the process of developing a bereavement program for Latina mothers who have lost a child or neonate, with this teaching me the relationships with other CBOs and community members to make a program that thrives. I met both these organizations through fairs that were put on by SOURCE during a health disparities course in my first week of medical school.

How do you find time for service in your busy schedule? Have things changed since the COVID-19 outbreak?

I make time for service by carving time out, as I would to study or go out with friends, making it so I give my volunteerism the same priority I do studying or other activities. Additionally, based on my schedule, I would shift my volunteer activities to

work around my life. For example, I recently rotated at different emergency departments outside of Baltimore, at which point I served as a mentor for Latinx undergrads. Because of the flexibility in how I volunteer, it has been relatively easy to transition during the COVID-19 outbreak to continue remote mentorship, but also look for other remote opportunities, such as Apart Not Alone, which connects volunteers with a vulnerable adult who is isolating during this outbreak.

How does your service shape your development as a health care professional? What do you enjoy about or gain through community service?

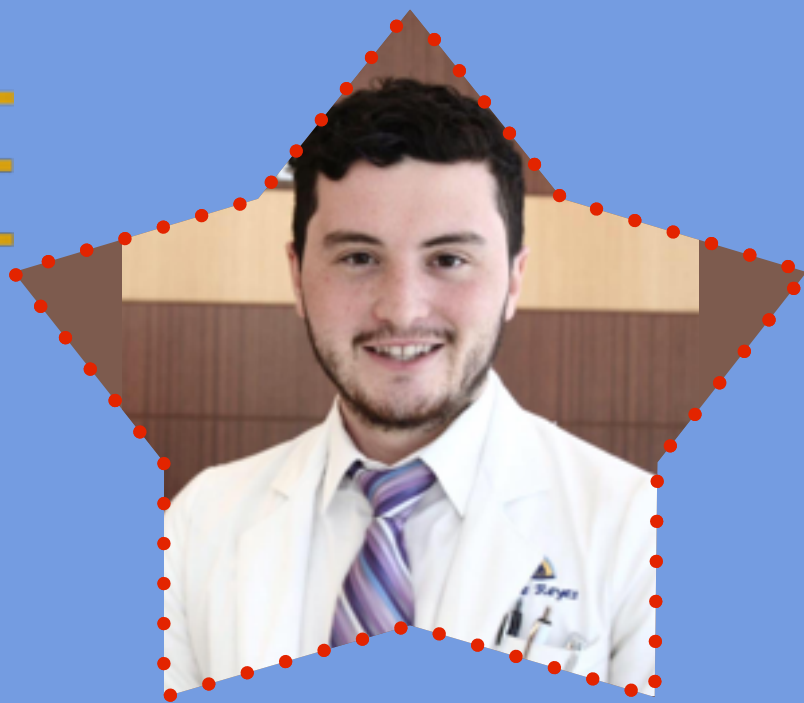
My service really influenced me to want to enter a field that would allow me to utilize my experiences to help people in a holistic manner, from helping them with their medical conditions to housing or social needs. Learning so much about community-driven partnerships, I allow my patients to lead discussions and frame our conversations around their needs. Additionally, hearing about issues from community members has developed my future research interests, helping my prioritize research ideas which community members have explicitly stated they would like fixed. From my community service, I mainly feel it is a grounding experience. Seeing the community outside of the hospital helps develop perspective, and also allows for deeper connections as people see you care enough to go to their homes and continue developing a mutual partnership.



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What advice do you have for prospective students who are interested in community service? What would you say to someone who is unsure of the impact his/her service would have on a community?

My advice would be to interview organizations you plan to work for. Take the time to sit with the person that will supervise you or with leadership and ask about how community members give feedback, how are initiatives decided on, and what room is there for independent projects. Some organizations have streamlined their ability to recruit volunteers, and therefore gain a disproportionate share of volunteers, but there are an equal number of organizations out there just as passionate, community-focused, and need where your impact could be greater! To those worried about their impact, sometimes it's hard to find tangible accomplishments, but take time to talk with

community members. Even if your project didn't hit the mark, if you made a friend or two in the community, built a relationship, and know something about their life, your work was a success.

Any final comments or plugs to promote volunteerism? Feel free to plug an opportunity with a CBO you work with and let others know how to get involved!

During the COVID-19 outbreak, a great program to volunteer for would be Apart Not Alone: [volunteers can sign up here](#). There are a plethora of opportunities to help around the hospital, but just remember the community is similarly struggling as our healthcare system!

Thank you Jose for all of your tremendous service to our community!



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