



SOURCE

Star of the Month

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What do you do as your community engagement activity? How did you begin to work with your community-based organization (CBO)?

I began volunteering at Gilchrist Hospice Center with SOURCE's Community Outreach Program (COP) as a first semester MSN student. As a COP volunteer I am able to receive guidance from professionals at Gilchrist Hospice Centers near Baltimore to be a companion with patients living at Gilchrist Baltimore Center.

I applied through SOURCE's COP program to be a Gilchrist volunteer a couple of hours per week Gilchrist Center in Downtown Baltimore because I wanted to learn about lived Baltimore experiences with patients who may benefit from student company. As a volunteer trainee, Gilchrist programs guided me through a training program to prepare to provide ethical and comfortable interactions with individuals experiencing debilitating mental and physical illnesses including patients at the end-of-life, family members, and pediatric patients with congenital disorders and relying on respite support.

How do you find time for service in your busy schedule? How much time do you spend on service per week/month?

I, like many busy students, tend to saturate hours per day either studying by the book or thinking about the study tasks ahead. I block one to four hours per week to arrive at Gilchrist Hospice Center and allow myself to focus at the bedside with a person whom helps me relieve stress by sharing one hour in calm conversation together. This hour free of homework broadens my purpose for being a nursing student and eases the "busy" I am guilty of exaggerating.

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

The service I provide is one hundred percent reciprocal. Providing companionship with pediatric respite care patients and adults at the end-of-life helps to practice bedside conversation with patients, families and nursing staff. I gain valuable experience being present with people who share experiences through stories and conversation I cannot find in my coursework.

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?

Breathe and remind yourself you are in school to learn how to heal and serve community members around you. Sacrificing a couple hours per week provides a service to others just as the Baltimore community serves you. I try to remind myself I will be viewed as a well-rounded, experienced nurse on paper if I can genuinely speak for the strong philanthropic community leaders I have gotten to know through SOURCE.

Any final comments or plugs to promote volunteerism? Feel free to plug an opportunity with your community engagement experience and how to get involved.

SOURCE's COP program is a phenomenal educational benefit. I am grateful that I was motivated to take advantage of mentors found at Gilchrist and SOURCE COP support staff while being a student. Being a student volunteer helps network me to new community members, settles moments of scholastic uncertainty, and lets me know there are many compassionate leaders in health inside and outside the Johns Hopkins community who are here in Baltimore to learn with.

Thank you, Claire, for all of your tremendous service to Baltimore!