Fostering Community Leadership: Lay Health Educator Program

Faraah Bekheet - Johns Hopkins School of Medicine candidate, SOURCE Service Scholar
Mark Carter - Executive Director of New Song Community Learning Center
Panagis Galiatsatos - Co-Founder and Director of Medicine for the Greater Good, Johns Hopkins Hospital

Introduction
New Song Community Learning Center ("NSCLC") is a K-8 school in Sandtown-Winchester dedicated to the academic and emotional growth of its students. Its leaders also aim to offer the facility and its staff as a source of support for the community. To help fulfill this goal, the Lay Health Educator Program ("LHEP") was proposed to empower NSCLC parents with health information that can be applied to their own lives and allow them to be peer-to-peer educators. Medicine for the Greater Good ("MGG") developed the LHEP and has previously worked with Baltimore ethnic and religious groups. Their faculty provided guidance on logistics and curriculum.

Project Goals
1. Hold relevant health-related workshops that provide parents the opportunity to positively impact their family and community as peer-to-peer educators
2. Develop a needs-assessed and trauma-informed curriculum
3. Prioritize conversation and interaction over a traditional teacher-student dynamic.
4. Build infrastructure that ensures sustainability

Scholar Activities & Outcomes
Partnering with members of three groups led to the below outcomes:

Framework for a series of health seminars:

"Meet & Greet"
Hand out snacks to parents and students during dismissal

"Chat & Chew"
Introduce program to parents and conduct needs assessment over dinner

Series of Seminars, Example Topics -
Insurance, Mental Health, Diabetes, Nutrition, Medication Management, Adolescent Health

Graduation
Opportunity to receive a recommendation letter and/or list MGG as a reference for applications

Sustainability
Conduct annually; Graduates formally or informally share knowledge gained with peers

Lessons Learned
- Service teams should proactively gather and incorporate community opinion into a project, as opposed to developing first and asking later
- It is crucial to build rapport with a community before any meaningful conversation and change can take place
- Brainstorming in groups is helpful in taking advantage of different perspectives

The Year Ahead
- Continue needs assessment
- Further training of medical students in adult-learner methodology
- Work with NSCLC, MGG, and medical students to review and edit curriculum
- Facilitate planned activities
- Open outlets for feedback
- Support graduates in taking the information to their community

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