

Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program

Newsletter Summer 2017

Fellows at Work!

2016-17 Schweitzer Fellow
Nicole Paprocki mentors
high school students at Instituto
Health Sciences Career Academy

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Get to know our Current Fellows

Fellow Combines Dance with Public Health Oriented Service

*"My past experiences instilled in me a sense of justice, urging me to pursue a career in direct service and health advocacy. Outside of my academics, I avidly study Indian dance, and the Schweitzer Fellowship allows me to combine my interests in dance and public health oriented community service at Apna Ghar, an organization for immigrant survivors of domestic violence in Chicago. I will implement dance classes that focus on physical health education, free-flowing movement, and building self-confidence. **What I most enjoy about this work is having the privilege to help people stand a little taller and a little prouder after leaving a dance class with me. These small moments of transformation remind me why I am doing this work.**"*

Vidya Visvabharathy

is a 2017-18 Schweitzer Fellow and Masters of Public Health student at the University of Illinois, Chicago



New Fund Helps Fellow Support Immigrants, Refugees



Tarik Fikry Ibrahim, MD, was a neurosurgeon at Loyola University Chicago before his unexpected passing. While his accomplishments spoke for themselves, those who knew him best

remarked on his warmth and compassion. The Tarik F. Ibrahim Fund, inaugurated this year by a Fellow for Life who was deeply inspired by Dr. Ibrahim, supports a Schweitzer Fellow working with refugees or immigrants, honoring Dr. Ibrahim's calling of ensuring the health and well-being of underserved populations.

This year the Tarik F. Ibrahim Fund helps support fellow Mariam Aejaz, a University of Illinois Chicago Public Health student, whose project includes workshops focusing on personal and communal psycho-social wellbeing for immigrant and refugee women and children at the Rohingya Cultural Center.

To contribute to the Tarik F. Ibrahim Fund, contact our Development Staff at MHiggins@hmprg.org

Notes from the field

Twice a week I tutor a GED class for adults in the Austin community. My project aims to provide a pathway to empower formerly incarcerated residents toward economic independence and encourage students to set career goals. The following captures one of those days that made my work there feel like it had purpose beyond algebra and prepositions.

CJ is tough. There is a word under the brim of his Bulls baseball cap, tattooed on his forehead. I can't make out what it says. The word 'satan' is branded on the back of his hand. Despite his cavalier slouch, I can see his potential like a roman candle shooting off inside him. Last week, he didn't know I heard him say, "I'm sick of going to prison." Meaning, "That's why I'm here. That's why I gotta finish school."

We read an instructional lesson called *What is a trial?* I think, half the people in here know what a trial is better than some 30-year-old social studies handout about criminal justice system vocabulary. CJ finishes reading. He sits back, tosses the paper aside.

"I don't like this story."

I ask him, "What don't you like about it?"

"That's how they get you. The prosecutor gives you a plea bargain, he tells you if you take the plea, you get to go home. But he don't tell you if you take it, you got a **felony** on your record. Prosecutors got more power than the judge! It's that thing, what they call it, institutional racism."

The entire class has an engaging, thoughtful, open, brave discussion about racism and classism (my words, not theirs). It doesn't bridge the divide between us, but it lets them know; I know that I do not walk in their shoes but I am on their side.

Kelly Leffler is a nursing student at Rush University and a 2017-18 Schweitzer Fellow. She is partnering with Westside Health Authority.

About the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program



The Schweitzer Fellowship is a year-long service learning program for graduate students in health related professions who design and implement innovative direct service projects, aimed at improving the health and well being of underserved Chicago Area communities. Each year 30 outstanding Fellows are selected from Chicago's top graduate programs. Visit hmprg.org for more information and to apply.



30 Fellows
200 Service-hours
3000+ Alumni network

Cover Story: Building the Next Generation of Health Professionals

Nicole Paprocki is a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine student at Midwestern University. As a Fellow last year, she worked with students at Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy. Recognizing the potential of her students to become the next generation of health professionals, her project addressed educational and social barriers that low-income and diverse youth often face in pursuing health careers. Lack of representation in healthcare fields ultimately affects the health of communities.

Nicole started a program called Scholars de Salud for high school students interested in health. The Scholars expanded their healthcare network and acumen through visits from over 20 guest speakers, lab activities such as heart and brain dissections, and working on their own healthcare projects with the help of medical student mentors.

This experience confirmed Nicole's commitment to increasing diversity in medicine and empowering communities through health education and opportunities. Although she completed her Fellowship this spring, the Scholars de Salud Program will continue in Fall 2017 through a seed grant from the Schweitzer Fellows For Life alumni program.



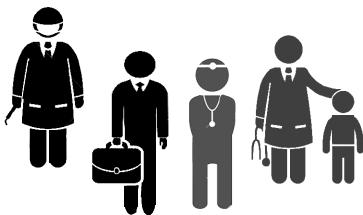
Fellows For Life

Fellows for Life 20-year Survey: What We Learned

Since 1996, Schweitzer Fellows have created and led projects to help underserved Chicago communities improve their health and wellbeing, while strengthening the skills and confidence to become lifelong leaders in service. We evaluate the program each year to examine its impact on both the communities and the Fellows. With the support of our funders, during our 20th anniversary year, we surveyed our alumni to learn how the Schweitzer program continues to influence them. We look forward to sharing the full report on our website soon, but here are some of the key findings:

1. Inter-professional Team Work

95% of respondents reported that their Schweitzer experience enhanced their ability to work as a team member in an **inter-professional environment**.



2. Impact on Fellows' Lives and Commitment to Service

Fellows report that they became better **leaders and advocates** (94%) and better able to work with community members with **different backgrounds than their own** (95%).



85% reported **living lives of service** through their careers + engagement with their communities.

3. Important Tools that Helped Fellows Become Leaders in Service



Supports, connections, mentors, and net-

Awareness of and commitment to addressing the **issues facing underserved communities**



Developing knowledge and skills

4. Connection to Community Sites and Continuation of Community Projects

60% of community projects **continued after Fellowships were completed**, with 36 projects still continuing.

35% of FFL reported that they stay in touch with the site where they completed their Fellowship project.



Read about the methods, key findings, and conclusions at hmprg.org



Meet Schweitzer Leadership Award Winner Ai-jen Poo

This year's Schweitzer Leadership Award recognizes celebrated activist, thought leader, and social innovator Ai-jen Poo, the Executive Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) and the Co-Director of Caring Across Generations. Her work is leading the way for increased wages and better working conditions for domestic workers, often immigrant women who are isolated, mistreated, and underpaid as home care workers. The Leadership Award honors an individual who has done significant work to mitigate the social determinants of health in their community, and whose commitment to service has influenced and inspired others. Ms. Poo's powerful speech brought tears to the eyes of our audience and renewed our commitment to protecting and advocating for vulnerable populations.

20+ Years of Chicago Schweitzer Fellows Making An Impact



Over **150** Community Partner Organizations



5000+ Community Members served in the 2016-17 Fellowship Year!



Fellows work in inter-professional teams and impact their communities during Service Days

Over **116,000** hours of Community Service



YogaCare: From Project to Non-Profit to Project Site!

YogaCare began as a collaboration between Greg Van Hyfte's Schweitzer community project (2009-10), Dr. Kohar Jones' community medicine work, and Julia Pedersen's community yoga work, and has grown to be a full-fledged nonprofit organization!



Greg Van Hyfte, Rachel Stones, Kohar Jones, and Sonia Oyola (YogaCare Board President)

Today, thanks to the dedication of their team and engaged community members, YogaCare co-develops affordable and culturally responsive mind-body practices with under-resourced Chicago communities.

YogaCare is the community site for 2017-18 Schweitzer Fellow Rachel Stones, a University of Chicago medical student. She is being mentored by former Fellows Kelli Bosak and Greg! This is the first time that a Schweitzer Fellow's project is being hosted by a non-profit organization that got its start as a previous Fellow's project. YogaCare keeps raising the bar!

Are YOU a passionate service-minded graduate student in the Chicago Area?



Applications Due in February, 2018
Read more at hmprg.org

Donate Today

We rely 100% on contributions from local supporters to make this important work possible. Make your tax-deductible contribution today.

Checks may be made out to Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Attn: Schweitzer Fundraising and mailed to
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