

# Bridging the Gaps



## Aging in a Supportive Community

### Student Interns

Kaira Crenshaw, Thomas Jefferson University, College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Occupational Therapy  
Sydney Rosenthal, Thomas Jefferson University, College of Pharmacy

### Academic Preceptors

Amanda Lyons, OTD, MS, OTR/L, Thomas Jefferson University, College of Rehabilitation Sciences, Occupational Therapy  
Mary M. Hess, PharmD, FASHP, FCCM, FCCP, BCCCP, Thomas Jefferson University, College of Pharmacy

### Community Preceptors

Mary Ellen Bolden, BSW, Philadelphia Senior Center  
Julie Nelson, BS, Philadelphia Senior Center



COMMUNITY PARTNER



- The Philadelphia Senior Center on the Avenue of the Arts serves members aged 55 and older in the greater Philadelphia community.
- Offers a wide range of services at little or no cost to members. The center provides prepared food pickup farmers market vouchers, health-promoting services, and resources for seniors to learn, grow and discover new ways to be actively engaged in living.
- As part of PSC's Services on Site (SOS) program, service coordinators assist seniors living in affordable-housing properties with a comprehensive array of health and supportive services to maintain their independence and dignity.
- <https://www.newcourtland.org/senior-centers/>



## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Launched in 1949 the Philadelphia Senior Center (PSC) is the third oldest senior center in the country and one of the largest in Pennsylvania. Today those who are served at the two PSC Branches are homebound and active seniors. Older people come to PSC center from every zip code in Philadelphia and represent a wide range of racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Today, PSC works to maintain a balance of programs and services. An example being Transportation, Housing Counseling, Meals, Social Services, Exercise and Health & Creative Education for the well, impaired and for the frail.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ JOYS

## TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

### Experience:

- Interns provided educational opportunities regarding various health topics such as cardiovascular health, oral health, heat exhaustion, and mental health.
- Interns were responsible for distributing farmers market vouchers to eligible seniors to help promote fruit and vegetable consumption. The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) provides these vouchers annually.
- Interns identified at-risk seniors through nutritional risk assessments done over the phone.
- Interns made booklets to distribute at New Courtland sites for the Best Day of my Life So Far program.
- One intern promoted the senior's participation in physical activity by teaching weekly yoga classes.

### Accomplishments:

- Successfully assisting facility in distributing farmers market vouchers
- Successfully promoting various health topics amongst older population through weekly presentations
- Successfully promoting socialization amongst seniors through interacting with members of the facility.

### Challenges :

- Several members were unwilling to participate in discussion regarding health topics during presentations
- Lack of resources available to provide seniors with to contribute to health
- COVID limited the number of members at the PSC

### Joys:

- Bonding with members and staff and creating meaningful connections
- Socializing with seniors who reported spending large amounts of time alone

## REFLECTION

**Kaira:** I really enjoyed my experience at the Philadelphia senior center, and I learned a lot from all the members and staff, and I am so grateful for them. My biggest take away from the experience is to always treat others with kindness. Also, everyone has at least one thing they could teach you. I look forward to continuing to find opportunities to help serve underserved populations in the future.

**Sydney:** I enjoyed learning from and getting to know the seniors who attend the Philadelphia Senior Center. This experience helped me to understand the opportunities and programs available to seniors in the Philadelphia area. There is a large range of seniors who attend the center--some enjoy programming while others are there for food or social services. Most of the seniors who attend the center are independent and healthy. These seniors crave activities and mental stimulation as well as a sense of community. I am grateful that a center like this exists and am hopeful that in a couple of months it will be filled with seniors as it was pre COVID.