

Thomas Jefferson University Story Telling Projects 2021



MAZZONI



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WYSS



22

My internship at the Wyss Wellness Center has been eye opening. There are so many people with different cultures, backgrounds, and languages. I am incredibly lucky to be exposed to a clinical setting where 90% of patients require translating services. These immigrants, refugees, and folks from all different backgrounds come to Wyss for both social and medical problems. The providers work so hard to provide them with the best care, and I am very fortunate to get to see it and help out!

teach•er

/'tēCHər/

*person who helps students to acquire
knowledge, competence or virtue*

There is a popular metaphor about students that goes: "**A student is like a flower: it takes time and care for students to grow.**"

As a teacher, your goal to educate
To encourage curiosity
to help young minds develop
to uplift the future leaders of tomorrow

In many Philadelphia public schools there is a,
Lack of resources,
Poor school Leadership
Lack of trauma informed classroom design,
and misunderstood students,
all preventing the flowers from blossoming and showing
just how beautiful they can be

Inspired by an interview with a previous Philadelphia public school teacher

Anika Valery

BTG Site: Healthy NewsWorks

For my Storytelling Project, I interviewed a member of the Healthy NewsWorks team. She has been working with the organization for about a year and a half now and while she has many roles within Healthy NewsWorks, she has spent most of her career as a teacher, first in Philadelphia and then in South Bronx, New York. During my Interview with her two things that stuck out to me were her answers to my questions: “What did you love most about being a teacher?” and “What were some of the challenges of being a teacher in Philadelphia?” Her answers to these questions are what inspired the poem that I made. My hope is that the poem would bring acknowledgement to the less than ideal circumstances within Philadelphia schools that could be hindering the potential of many young students.

BTG STORYTELLING PROJECT

PREFACE:

A POEM WRITTEN WITH THE HELP OF THE CLIENTS

Goodmorning:

We are /silly/

Yet, we are bold.

We will be great.

We do climb.

We dream /happy/

We dream of mars-

We are stars

We will go far.

The Work We Do: A Literary Report

It was at a young age, around fourteen, that one of the supervisors of the clinic at Hall Mercer began helping individuals with intellectual disabilities. He grew up interacting with individuals with intellectual disabilities, went to camp with individuals with intellectual disabilities, and when asked what got him interested in this line of work his first response was a friend, one who had intellectual disabilities, one who he felt connected to and developed a unique perspective from.

The consideration that he has for his work precedes his eloquent sentiments as he has been working in Pennsylvania and with this specific demographic for seventeen years.

As a young student, I often reflect and marvel when I hear older adults speak on the amount of time they have spent in an occupation. I think to myself, how it must be for someone to do the same thing for many years, throughout the years and the different seasons in their life, two common themes seem to prevail when it comes to longevity, that is purpose and passion.

I came to the Hall Mercer site not truly knowing what exactly to expect, however, as I so often do I came with a large agenda on what I would accomplish, do, achieve, and how I would change and impact the group in a grandiose way.

What I received instead was not a grandiose change to the clinic from me, or grandiose change in me from the clinic. What I did find were small seeds planted. Seeds that were planted in me and seeds that were planted in the clinic.

The tasks were simple, create a comprehensive plan for the day that included creative, informational, innovative ways to engage the clientele. We were expected to bring our specific backgrounds and utilize skills we know in order to help our clients have an experience similar to what they would have in person.

As in person clients, they would learn certain skills, go on live tours around the city, build imperative social skills, form relationships with peers, and gain independence in whatever way that looked like for them.

The virtual world, had to be cultivated in a unique way, a way that strived to keep the social aspect and implement engagement. When I first arrived at the site I was told about the many clients who no longer joined or participated due to the times.

Me and another BTG intern worked to create a plan: one that needed to be flexible, one that needed to be personalized to the clients who showed up, and one that needed to be adjusted if saw fit.

Over the span of five weeks, I got to implement the art of being “quick on ones feet”, I got to spend time getting to know individuals in a genuine way, and I got the wonderful reward of getting closer to the clients over time.

Two things resonate with me from my experience, after a couple weeks of nonverbal interactions one of my clients said “hello” and “good morning” to me. In addition, after weeks of doing a mindfulness video, I found one of my clients who had not engaged in the video, one day, with their eyes closed meditating. These are the seeds that were planted. They were not immediate or abrupt, they took time to develop, they took repetition, and trust. We do a lot of things in one day, we have cooking competitions (in which I constantly came in second place), we explored the

ocean with vibrant and beautiful virtual tours, we talked about what we do that makes us happy, we danced, we sang, and we took time to give ourselves love. What I will take from is this, all people, deserve to be treated like people, and find solace and joy from being treated like people. What I will take is the power in continuing to show up, even if at first you do not see results. What I will take is the power of being flexible and knowing how to adjust. What I will take is the beauty of imagination and the connectivity of music and the contagiousness of joy.

If we have shared nothing else at this clinic we have shared bright smiles.

For the Hall Mercer supervisor, he is not going anywhere anytime soon.

He finds joy in seeing his clients happy, that is his favorite part about his job.

After asking what motivates him in his work, he states-

“I just like doing it, I like to come in with a positive attitude, I just enjoy working with the population and the people around me” -Supervisor at Hall Mercer

He misses the personal touch, being able to sense the clients, have them be in the flow of things, and maintain skills they did before things went virtual. When asked what he wants his clients to take away from the clinic it is their independence.

The clients come to the clinic to find ways to rely more on themselves. They strive to get connected to work and learning skills that will help them in the workplace.

When asked, if there were more resources what he would do, he dreams of opening another clinic, free of charge, and helping to add services that would assist with facilitating the sense of independence they aim to give the clients. Some clinics had to shut down during this time, leaving a demographic of clients in severe need.

He wants clients to get more of the great care and services provided at Hall Mercer to many others.

In regards, to BTG he would like for them to continue to interact, coming in, being creative, using their imagination, these are the wonderful jobs and the amazing jobs that they do.

I knew a small cohort of clients, but I can't help but think about those who were not apart of the program, those who could not join, those whose clinics shut down, what they get to do.

In a space where access, equity, and equitable care are things that we strive for as health care advocates and a part of the health profession, I want to know what we can do to help this demographic and the demographics that benefit the least when pandemics, natural disasters, and other such events take place.

As a writer, Public Health Student, and aspiring Physician I am constantly looking for ways to impact and make a true difference. I have found that making a true difference can not be rooted in clout, the need for esteem, the strife for validation, or anything other than a true and intention desire to do the things one sets out to do. As a young person entering into a field that needs desperate renovations and changes, I look to those who have walked before me, those who have made their differences, those who have seen it through, for help and a guide.

It is people like the supervisors at Hall Mercer that show me and remind me what it takes to do the jobs we do. It is the supervisors at Hall Mercer that help model how to make a difference, and how to be impactful. It is the supervisors at Hall Mercer who help to be a light in this journey of creating a more just world and a more wonderful place to be.

It is to them I am thankful for, to the clients I am grateful to have crossed paths with and who I hope to keep in contact with, and it is to the future I look to press on and have the longevity in ones work that I have seen.

Thank you Hall Mercer for your purpose and passion, for the seeds you have planted in the community, and in me, and for the seeds you have allowed me to place inside your clinic.

- *Future Medical Doctor, Writer, and Public Health Student*

“People think that teaching is a joke...”

With the pandemic, millions of parents are learning that this is anything but true as they rearrange their lives to support their children’s remote learning. However, this sentiment colored the conversation I had with the teacher I interviewed at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. Over the past 6 week, it was clear that early child education required a more unique skill set to juggle various children’s need while still having a discerning eye to know when a child might need one-on-one care. With almost two decades of experience, these are skills that Ms. T seems to have mastered. Still, that does not mean that every day will be a good day. Thankfully, that is when the sense of love and community fostered at the center is felt best.

This is the one of the reasons Ms. T gives for staying at Mercy for the past 5 years. She loves it here. She has built good relationships with her colleagues, the director, and other staff. She is happy knowing that whatever might happen in life that there is a team that will be there for her. Sometimes, the children would also be waiting in the wing with a hug to brighten her day. She sees the same love in the surrounding North Philadelphia community. Although she does not live here, she has built strong connection with many who live here. She understands that they might be people who do not have the best intention but firmly emphasized the strong sense of community in the area, especially among older residents. She also sees Mercy as a vital hub for the community through it’s adult day program as well as its adult education and workforce development program. Still, at the end of the day, her love for Mercy is centered on her love for her students.

This is exemplified best in the holiday festivities that they have at Mercy. Every year, they make a size list for the students in each class and then they go shopping. They host a holiday showcase and invite parents for an evening of fun. At the end, each child leaves with a bag filled with toys and clothes. The staff at Mercy understand that the parent may not be able to afford it. As such, they want to make sure that everyone goes home happy. The same can be said about how the center approaches the children’s nutrition. Each day, the students receive breakfast, lunch, and a snack. Each meal seems like a carbon copy of a MyPlate, giving the children the opportunity to learn about food allergies and build good dietary habits. In this way, Ms. T see herself as a safety net for her kids. Regardless of a student’s home life or whatever mood they are in, they can rely on her to always be there from them.

Unfortunately, the pandemic is limiting what she can do and at the same time given her the opportunity to instill other healthy habits. Handwashing and masking are at the top of the list. Thankfully, the younger students have been doing well on both fronts throughout the school year. She also has to get frequent COVID tests despite being fully vaccinated and had to learn new ways to show love that limit close contact. However, she appreciates the importance of these strategies to keep both herself and her students safe.

Surprisingly, the pandemic has also brought some welcomed change. The class size is smaller now to allow for social distancing. In a regular school year, that means Ms. T might have 20-22 students in her class, some of whom may have developmental delays. During the school year, there are programs that send occupational therapists and other workers with experience working

with special needs. However, their time they spent with the student might not be enough to help them thrive. This is more evident in the summer when many of these programs are not operating.

“I feel like people think that when somebody tells them that they are a teacher or that they work in childcare, they look at you like ‘oh that’s so easy you know’. It’s not. You have to have a lot of patience you have to have skills.”

This statement exemplifies how some people see early childhood education- as just a step above babysitting. Such incorrect assumptions allow us as a society to undervalue the people who do this work. Members of our care infrastructure are invaluable to the growth of the next generation. It is important that we treasure these truly compassionate people and the work that they do.



Community • Responsibility • Family •
Support Others • Mind Your Business •
United • Get Along With Each Other • No
Violence • Through The Good and the
Bad • If The Community Sticks
Together We Can Get Through
Anything • Priorities •
Pass Down Knowledge
Through Generations

Mercy
Neighborhood
Ministries

Ms.
Sherrel
Bev



Julia Testa

Bridging the Gaps

7/19/21

Storytelling Project

I had the pleasure of interviewing my co-teacher at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, Ms. Sheree Bey. Ms. Sheree has lived in Philadelphia her entire life, moving from South Philly to North Philly after having her first child. She now lives with her 4 children, and her youngest son Isaiah currently attends Mercy. I spoke with Ms. Sheree about her community and its strengths and weaknesses. The biggest theme that Ms. Sheree emphasized throughout the interview was the importance of minding your business and making sure that your priorities are in check. "Everybody wants to be the leader and then nobody wants to listen. Nobody wants to listen to ideas. They don't want to listen to what you have to say, what you think, how you feel. Some people just want to have it their way. If everybody bands together... and makes one big solution, everybody would be fine". Ms. Sheree believes that many people need to reestablish their priorities; bills, child care, etc. and ignore the influences of others that often appears through social media. Although her mantra of "mind your business" may seem cold, Ms. Sheree is anything but cold and selfish. While she will most definitely call you out if necessary, she is generous and honest and treats everyone equally. Without a second thought, she gives food and clothes to others in her community who she knows may need them. Within our classroom, Ms. Sheree is quick to reward the children's good behavior and admonish the bad behavior, not discriminating between children. She has found community with the neighbors on her block and they all look out for each other, sharing different up-keeping responsibilities. I am grateful to have been able to work alongside such a strong, intelligent, and powerful woman who has taught me not only a lot about her community, but also about how to treat others, work with children, and many valuable life lessons.

BTG Narrative Project:

“You gotta get up yourself kid, no one else is going to do it for you!”

This was a quote said by our interviewee to a child playing basketball when you was pushed down by another child at the Visitation Home summer camp for the children of Kensington. This summer camp is one of the first of its kind at the Visitation Home in Kensington and it gives the opportunity for the children living there to have some fun during the summer and also get a bit of time to learn some material. The camp is run by a couple of camp counselors, but its lead by two main ones, and one of them is our interviewee.

She also has a child in the summer camp that at first was very quiet, but begins to talk more as time goes on. She grew to be one of the more talkative people at the camp. It seems that our interviewee is her best friend as well, as she laughs a whole lot with her daughter and is always goofing off around her. Once we were given the opportunity to talk to her it was understandable as to why their relationship is the way it is.

Our interviewee is currently a single mother that moved out a problematic marriage and moved to Virginia (she was originally from Philadelphia) to help herself and her child rebuild right before COVID. She was originally staying with her family at the time she moved and made the choice on her own to move out. So out in Virginia it was her and her daughter against the world. She eventually was “stuck” in Virginia due to COVID and she told herself that she would use this opportunity to get better.

The main thing that she wanted to tackle was her mental health as she felt that she has never attempted to tackle that topic before in her life. She states that mental health in the black community is still making strides to be more visible, so she never felt she had anyone to go to talk about her marriage or her other issues in life. Moreover, she felt that she got married because

that is what she felt she needed to do, not because she wanted. She loved him but didn't marry him for the right reasons. So she wanted to take the time to reevaluate her life not only for herself but also for her daughter. Her daughter was having panic attacks that she feels was because she was feeding off of her own poor mental health at the time. And it as she began to improve her mental health her relationship with her daughter was much better, proving her theory correct. She began to focus her attention to her passion of working with kids and she made plans to eventually open a daycare for kids in Philadelphia.

She thought that COVID was going to be her downfall because of the financial and mental state she was in, however, she said that she's the only one that can bring herself up, so she did. As she said before no one else is going to do it for her. When she talked about her story she repeated multiple times that she she's doing her own thing now and does not need anyone to do that.

Her story reminds me of a lot of the stories of the people living in Kensington. Those who are stuck in bad situations like she was stuck in a dangerous relationship. She had the opportunity to move to Virginia because she had a a very caring best friend, however those her live in Kensington may not have that opportunity. That is why places like Visitation Homes are so important because it gives people the chance to get their life back on track when they are not worried about surviving the day. They can focus on building positive habits at the Visitation Homes as the basic needs of living are taken care of. Permanent housing facilities are so important to give people the ability to hit a mini pause button. Some folk are stuck in the cycle of poverty, and never given the chance to get on their feet. Her story and the story of those who live at Visitation Homes illustrate what can happen when people are given the opportunity to restart.

Moreover, her story also sheds light on how mental health plays a factor into the lives of those who have fallen on difficult times, and the power it can have if those needs are addressed.



Steven Gravier-Leon

BTG Story-Telling Project

This collage was created to reflect the narrative of a Mexican native who has made Philadelphia their home. Their words filled with love when asked about their community and culture. Their love for the food, music and strong sense of community were cornerstones of their identity. Their resilience through the pandemic was a reflection of their strong community bonds that kept them grounded. Their love of community pushed them to get vaccinated to continue the protection of their family and community. The vibrant culture, diversity of food, lively music and unconditional love makes their community one of a kind.

Community Interview Questions and Answers

- What's great about your community (what do you love about it)?

The community is diversified and that there have been three organization the Southwest cod, the Kingsessing Recreation Center and the Francis Myers Recreation Center that have been around for over 30 years. The organization really do a great job of working together and share resources. OST always worked with elementary school at the rec center. They weren't able to locate a school with proper ventilation to teach down at the Southwest cod location.

- Will you share a favorite memory of living in this community?

A favorite memory is working with the block captain and crossing guards in the district. She stated that they used to have 62 crossing guards through the 12th police district. They always held block captain meeting and clean ups. They would hold a lunch for them each year were, elected officiation would give them gift cards. She also recalls a memory were two teachers were walking out of their school on a red light, one of them being a principle and she was shocked they tried cross the street on a red light. Secondly, that they didn't even take into account that there are other younger students that are watching and will emulate the actions of the elderly individuals.

- What are the resources and strengths of your community?

Resources and strengths of the community is that the different organization do a great job in sharing funding and resources. She went on to talk about how years ago with funding being a big issue a lot of these community groups would fight over the different resources and that were available to the community. The two recreation center the Kingsessing Recreation Center and the Francis Myers Recreation Center as well as the Southwest cod. These three organizations wrote to their local government to increase funding in their neighborhood and that through the efforts of the three organizations working together to raise awareness of the lack of funding issue and they were able to raise one million dollars for both the recreation centers. Research grants were made to help educate the community on why these issues are worth discussing.

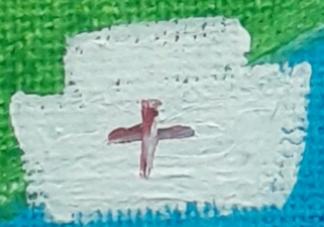
- How have the events of the past month affected your community?

Helping clients so that they won't get evicted, help individuals with gas and electric. Helping clients receive up to \$4500 every three months to pay their rent and \$2,000 for each utility. They also had tried to open to COVID- vaccine clinics two people signed up for the one and eight people for the other. These centers she said had to close down because people weren't getting vaccinated. The issue is because people are still scared of COVID and thinking that getting a vaccine may harm them. She also addressed the issue with the mail issues due to COVID and how this may have impacted individuals completing the COVID census information and consequently may lead to them not receiving the funding that is need to provide this programs. Individual's tried going to other people's homes to collect census information however, one of the individuals ended up getting COVID. Online camp has been a very difficult task since parents have to work and trust that their child will get online and take part in the activity which isn't always the case. She discussed how being a non-profit organization during COVID was difficult as they rely heavily on outside sources to generate support for the community outreach programs.

Biggest health issue effecting the community?

The biggest health issues that are effecting the community are food insecurity, diabetes, high blood pressure, literate, and lead poisoning. They also have violence as a major health issue of the community. Mental health issue, suicided and depression are also other issue that were mentioned by this community member due to low income housing. The pandemic has made this a lot harder. There are different programs for alcohol misuse, mental health issue that are part of the community. She mentioned that some of the neighborhood churches also provide after school activities for the individuals of the community. In addition, she mentioned that the recreation centers charge \$450 a child to attend summer camp so it leaves child and parents with no place to send their child to over the summer due to cost. Recreation centers were closed during the pandemic because of all the violence and the recreation centers had police officers at the site since there were two or three murders at the recreational centers. The major issue that is effect this community is having the resources need to care out necessary community education.

The person interview has consented to the interview however, due to technology issue she was unable to print out sign and scan back over the Bridge the Gap Authorization Release Form.



MAZZONI



Jasmine Han
Mazzoni Center
Storytelling/Narrative Medicine Project

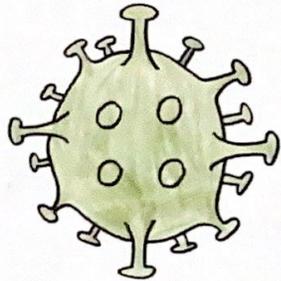
I have created my narrative medicine project about the resources and opportunities that the Mazzoni Center offers to its patients and the LGBTQ+ community. I interviewed one of the physicians at Mazzoni Center because as part of internship here, we were able to shadow nurses, physician assistants, and providers to learn about the care they provide. The provider expressed how accommodating and valuable the services at Mazzoni were - from a youth drop in on Wednesdays to provide Septa bus cards and HIV testing to legal and gender affirming services for transgender patients. The background of the canvas painting represents different colors and the openness and acceptance that the clinic provides to its patients as conveyed by our interviewee. There are medicine pills to represent the HAART medication regimen, a needle syringe to represent the new Cabenuva injection, a red ribbon to represent AIDS awareness, etc.

Jordan Crisci
Jefferson, OT

Bridging the Gaps
Summer 2021

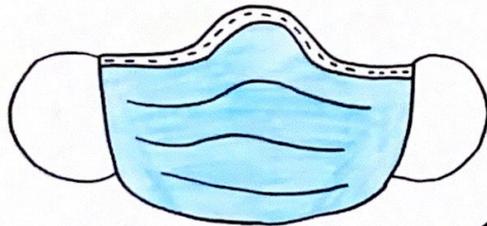
Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse Stories

"Socialization
for my child
was impossible."



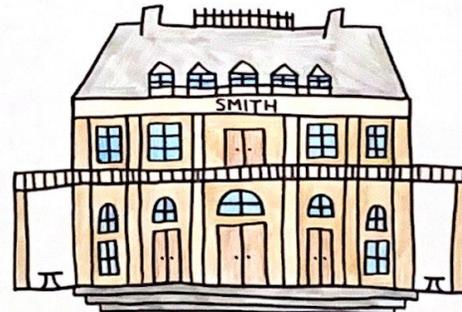
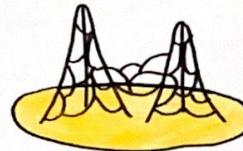
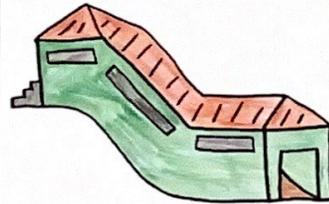
"COVID had
a major
impact on
my family."

"We didn't have access to
outdoor space."



"Masks limited how long
my kids could be
out playing for."

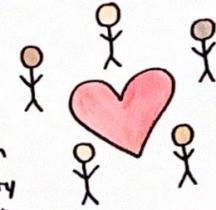
COVID-19



COMMUNITY

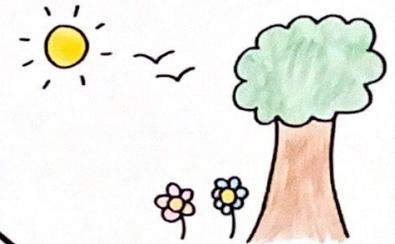
IMPACT

"They can
come make
friends again
here."

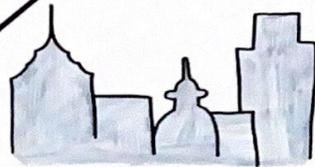


"We can
reconnect with
the community
again safely."

"I get to pass on the
experiences I had here
as a child to my kids."

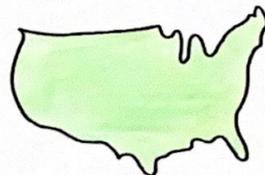


"Gets the kids
back outdoors
where they can
run and
play."



"I am a nanny from Philly
and I am here with the children
I watch."

"This playground does
not just belong to one
community, it's here
for everyone."



"We just
moved to
the suburbs
from the city."

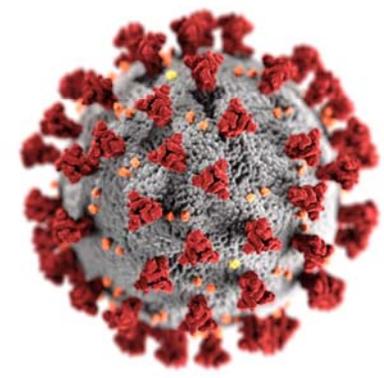
"We live in the suburbs of
Philadelphia. This is my
family's first time here."

"I am from Philly and used to come here
as a kid. Now I'm here with my cousins
from NY who are visiting."

Jordan Crisci (Jefferson OT)
BTG Summer 2021 (Smith Memorial Playground)

Storytelling Project - Description:

For this storytelling project I interviewed four adult guests that were at Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse one afternoon. My project contains illustrations and quotes that demonstrate their responses to my questions. I asked them to discuss what community they are from and who they were at the park with (bottom section), the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the children they were at the park with (left section), and the impact that Smith has on them and the children (right section). The middle section of the project depicts parts of the playground and playhouse.



This collage is meant to represent the experiences of the individual that I interviewed from the Nationalities Service Center (NSC). He originally came to Philadelphia as a refugee from Afghanistan. He found the NSC by googling refugee services. He eventually worked with their career services and was able to find a job at NSC doing that same kind of work that he once benefitted from. He takes pride in the fact that the people at NSC made him feel like a family member. He stated that he never felt like an outsider. He was able to collaborate with many people from different cultures. He believes that one of the most essential services provided by NSC is their food access program that helps to ensure that those in need receive adequate nutrition. When I asked him what he thought about cardiovascular health he told me about how he always tries to encourage his family to eat healthily to reduce the amount of plaque build up in their arteries.

He provided me with a great deal of insight on how the COVID-19 Pandemic affected both his personal life and his professional life at NSC. He felt a greater distance between him and his community due to the fact that people were quarantining in their homes. Even as things are returning to “normal” he has concerns due to the fact that the Delta variant of the virus is gaining traction. In terms of his work with NSC he was very fascinated to see how the organization has been able to transition to the online format. One of the service that they offer is escorting clients to their medical appointments. In the COVID-19 era they took to ordering Ubers and Lyfts for their clients. He has extremely high hopes for NSC. When asked about what he sees in its future he remarks that he hopes that one day NSC has its own hospital. He believes this will cut down on a lot of the bureaucracy that they regularly have to deal with when working with various health systems. He believes that these changes will ultimately lead to a better experience for the people who need their help the most.



"WE ARE NOT HORRIBLE PEOPLE, WE ARE JUST IN HORRIBLE SITUATIONS"

By Nehal Eloraby

Kensington and Philadelphia in general often gets a bad reputation for issues related to violence and drugs. After working in Kensington this summer, I found that this community wants the media to start portraying the positive things about their neighborhoods. I spoke with a member of the community (who we will name as Person A) in which she explained her frustrations about perceptions of Kensington. She states, "we are not horrible people, we are just in horrible situations". Person A wants others to know that people of Philadelphia are regular people with regular problems. Life happens to people and every person has their way of dealing with their problems. Person A disclosed that she just got out of an abusive relationship at the start of the COVID pandemic. She now hopes to build a better future for her daughter as a newly single mom.

During her marriage, she thought she could not make it on her own. She was only working for money and health insurance. She did not love her occupation and ultimately fell into depression. When Person A got the courage to leave her abusive marriage, she realized she needed to start chasing her own happiness and aspirations. However, to make ends meet, she worked multiple jobs such as delivering kidneys, selling kitchenware, and being a travel agent. When asked how COVID impacted her life, she explained it helped her slow her life down and stated "COVID made me ME again". From this interview, we established that regardless of where we are from, we as humans desire the same things from life. You never know what someone is going through and it is essential that we meet people where they are at without judgement.

Be kind

Love

We are Family

Be happy

Believe in yourself

Make it Fun

Be Positive

Enjoy your life

NC NEW GOURTLAND



**STORYTELLING/NARRATIVE MEDICINE PROJECT
BTG Program, 2021**

Sylwia Gutowska
Occupational Therapy Student
Thomas Jefferson University

Philadelphia Senior Center on the Avenue of the Arts
509 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19147

Q: What do you want people who do not know about your community to learn about it?

A: Philadelphia Senior Center in South Philly is a beautiful place for seniors to keep growing, learning, laughing, and connecting with the world around them. The center offers a wide range of services at little or no cost to members. The center is composed of well-trained, compassionate staff. It focuses on programming the resources available to them.

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Q: What is great about your community (what do you love about it)?

A: As an active member and employee, I can look from both perspectives. I know what is needed, and I know what I can do to provide for that need. I love having the ability to make a difference in other's life. I am willing and able to provide supportive and compassionate care for others to make a meaningful difference in someone's life every day. Dealing with the changes that come with aging and adjusting to life in a senior community can be challenging for some older adults. I believe that I have a positive impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing of those I care for and make a big difference in their quality of life. The effects of those relationships extend to the family and friends of those seniors who have the reassurance that their loved one is in good hands.

Additionally, working with seniors allowed me to have fun and enjoy other stories, experiences, and humor. I also enjoy the variety of activities and entertainment available. Many people I work with look forward to their interactions with me as a highlight of their day. My warm and empathetic presence in their lives can mean the difference between a dismal day and a

bright one. Seniors are also more willing to show their gratitude. They appreciate what I am doing for them, and they don't mind telling me that!

Q: Will you share a favorite memory of living in this community?

A: Yes! I remember celebrating one senior 101 birthday! She was joking that she was born before the Titanic sank. She has seen two World Wars, survived The Great Depression, Vietnam, and Korean War, and watched television come into existence! She always said that she was blessed to still live in her house, being cared for by her exceptional children. It is incredible to see people living a long and happy life. We had a surprise birthday party for her in our center with a cake, and we sang Happy Birthday! She was a darling and "regular" at the center.

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Q: What are the resources and strengths of your community?

A: Our Senior Center offers a wide variety of classes and programs designed to keep seniors physically and mentally active, including yoga, T'ai Chi, poetry, ceramics, photography, ballroom dance, Spanish, French, and line dancing. When the Covid-19 happened, the center continued to provide the resources for the seniors via Zoom. The staff was involved in the client's computer education on creating a Zoom account and how to use the platform. The seniors were able to sign up for the meetings of interest prior, and all the info was sent prior as a reminder. Also, seniors were getting a courtesy call day before. The community worked together as a team during those challenging times for all of us.

The Senior Center also has a 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. SOS Service Coordinators provide links to community resources for transportation, health care, pre-and post-hospital needs, socialization, nutritional support, and mental health counseling. In addition to social services, our Senior Center has various ancillary services that the service coordinator has available to support us, including regular health promotion education and screening programs, home support services to assist us with housekeeping tasks, and access to all Pennsylvania Senior Center programs and services.

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Q: How has Covid-19 affected your community?

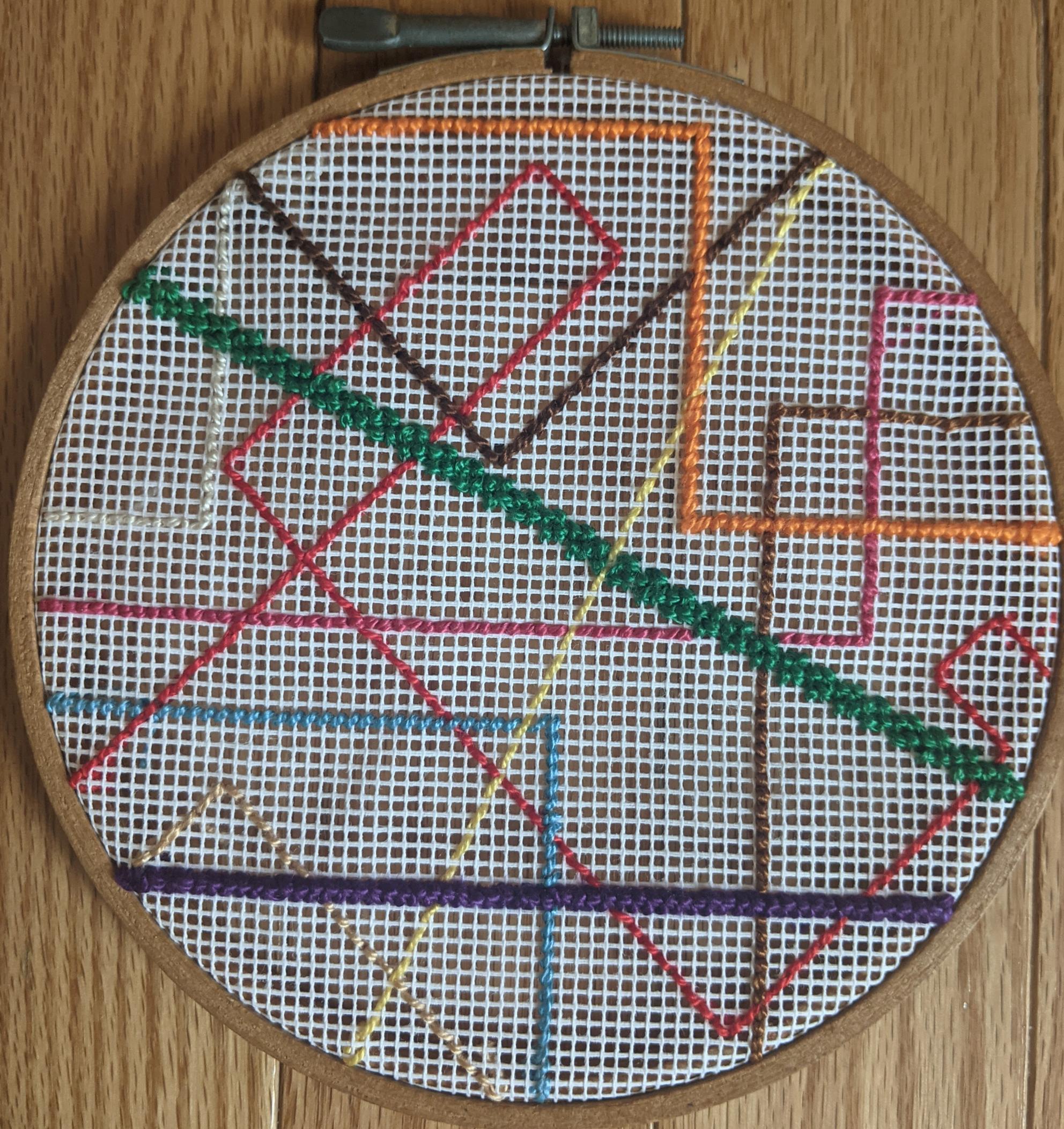
A: The Covid-19 is still affecting our community. We are not back to normal, nor not sure if we ever will be. The sense of security was shattered. Many seniors are scared because they knew someone close to them who contracted the Covid-19 and passed away. Covid-19 took a heavy toll on our seniors because they were identified as a group at high risk, and strict governmental restrictions were imposed on them (and still are). I was and am very concerned about their mental and physical health. The employees working from home were performing wellness checks on regular basics, and we had a helpline for seniors who need someone to talk to because they live alone or need to "vent." Many seniors reported a decline in activity level, decrease in sleep quality, wellbeing, and cognitive functioning. Social distancing became social isolation for many. Much lost the sense of connection; therefore, we created a Zoom group for those who wanted to engage in group conversations. We also focused on successful coping strategies and connected the seniors with additional resources like Grab and Go lunches for those capable of coming to the center and Meals on Wheels delivered directly to their door. Additionally, we were providing cash vouchers, and currently, we are working on distributing Farmer's Market vouchers that can be either mailed to the seniors or picked up in person. We have noticed that although many people want to go back to "normal," our seniors are hesitant and share concerns with us.

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Q: How have the events of the last month affected you and your community (going back to "normal")?

A: Honestly, it was not easy to transition from work at home environment to work in person. We had been working from home for 14 months. Now that we are back in person, we need to follow many safety precautions and have limited people's capacity in the senior center. Before the pandemic, we had an open-door policy where the members could have just come, eat a meal with their friends, and play cards or piano in the dining room if they wanted to. Now, the front door is closed, and you need to call prior and schedule an appointment to do anything. You are not allowed to eat indoors and outdoors in the garden area or socialize with others, and if you do, you need to keep a distance. You really can feel the seriousness and alertness of all of us when

we meet. I realized how different everything is now. It is hard to be optimistic especially knowing that there is another variant going around. We are being strong and going through this together as a community with a mutual dependence and increased awareness of our vulnerability. Nonetheless, we realized the most common positive consequence of the pandemic was that we saw an increased awareness of the importance of our social connections. The pandemic has limited our ability to connect face to face with friends and families, and it has highlighted just how vulnerable some of our members and neighbors might be.



My embroidery project represents the interconnectedness of the people who make up the Mazzone Center. My interviewee, a physician at the clinic, spoke about how the diversity and different strengths of Mazzone Center staff members and patients has created a really strong human network. My art is representative of the interwoven paths of the staff and patients who come and go, traveling through the clinic along individual, not necessarily linear, paths.

Sophia Huang
BTG Storytelling Project: Description
July 19, 2021

For my storytelling project, I interviewed one of Nationalities Service Center's case managers, who, as a child of immigrants herself, was first inspired to work with refugee and immigrant youth in Philadelphia "to ensure that this group of students had a sense of community and felt supported through high school and in preparation for adulthood." NSC works with refugees and immigrants from all across the world, and while cultural diversity is celebrated, a sense of belonging and community is also fostered by the organization as families start new lives in Philadelphia. Thus, in my project, I wanted to feature the simultaneous importance of diversity and community by showcasing important symbols from the various cultures and home countries of the refugee youth I have been working with in a single collage. I learned about these symbols through the conversations I had with them about their cultures and traditions throughout this summer's youth group sessions. While each individual symbol in the piece represents a different culture, a line connects all of them together to show community. The piece also shows words that capture the core values of NSC.



DIVERSITY



COMMUNITY

connect



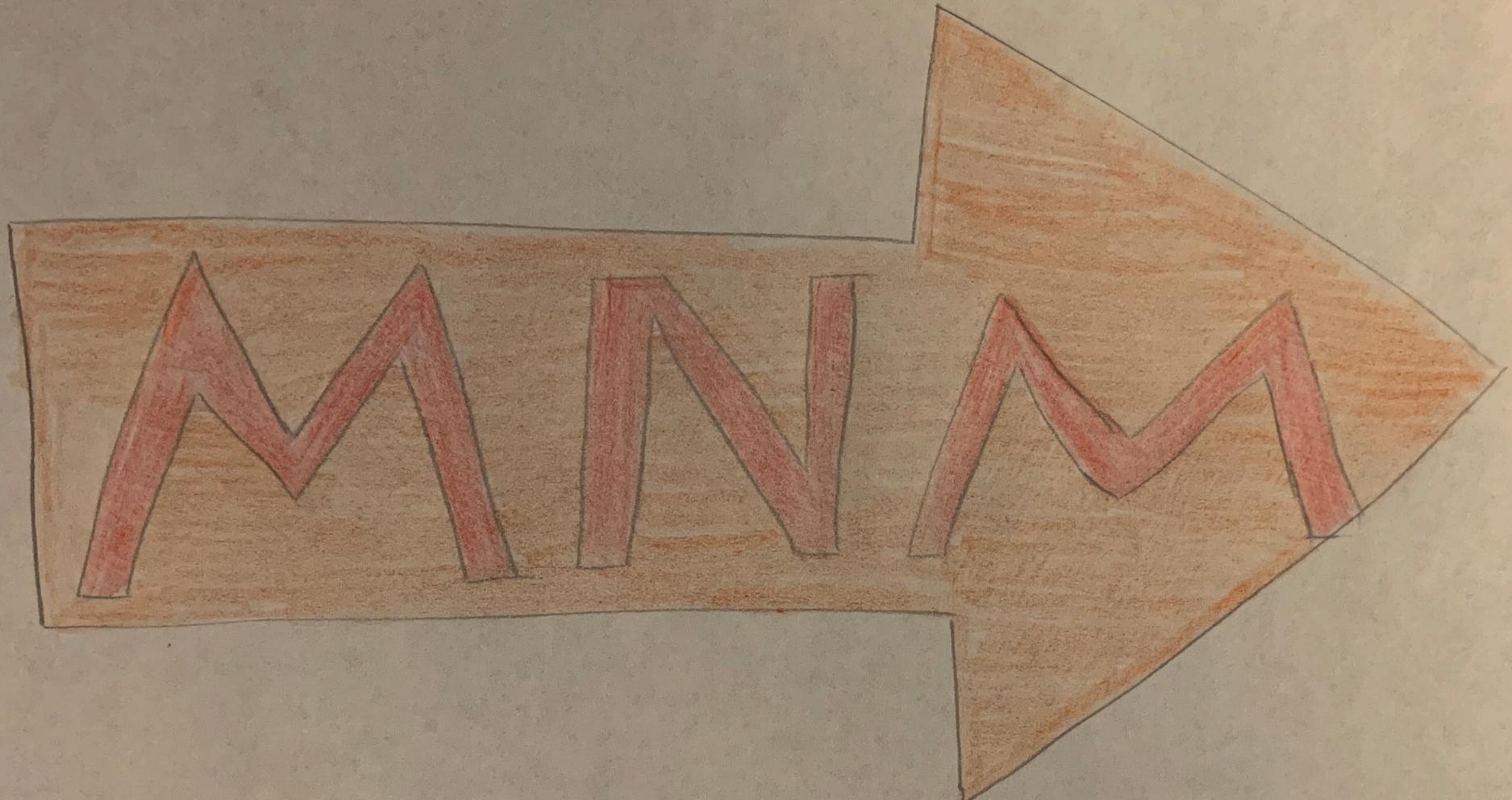
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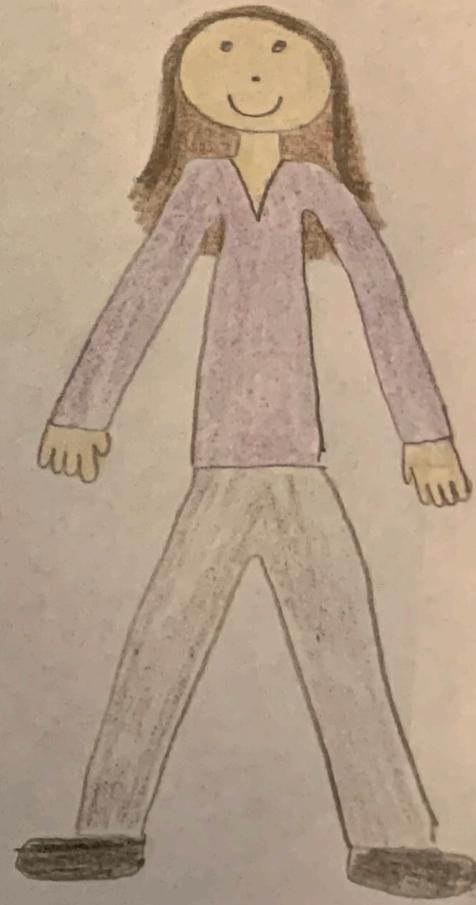
INSPIRE

Heather Morey
Storytelling Paragraph

I interviewed the teacher that I am co-teaching with this summer at Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. She has worked here for almost thirty years and she keeps coming back because of her love for the kids and the organization's family oriented nature. Mercy Neighborhood Ministries mission is to serve all, and one way they accomplish this is through preparing their local community's children for the future. Through a supportive staff and many educational opportunities, the children's growth and development are fostered so that they know they can be their best self in life and create their own bright future. My teacher commented that seeing some of the children that she taught in the past as now educated and successful adults is rewarding and reflects positively on herself and Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. In my drawing I wanted to convey that Mercy Neighborhood Ministries plays a supportive role in helping children create a successful future for themselves as adults.



Paves The Way
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To The future!



Interview transcript:

What do you want people who don't know about Philly FIGHT Pediatrics to learn about it?

Accommodation is incredible, quality of care here is much better than going to a healthcare center, see refugees very quickly, see a lot of people who live in poverty that come here

What's great about the patients at Philly FIGHT pediatrics?

Very diverse, large spanish speaking population, very much in need of more than just healthcare

Will you share a favorite memory of working with this patient population or working at Philadelphia FIGHT pediatrics?

-Patients come in with a lot of anxiety about registration, some don't even know their child's birthdate

-I check them in and check them out and when I see them at the check out, they are so much more relieved

-Patient is saying thank you 1000x because they feel like they have accomplished something that they thought would be super hard for them

What is one thing that you want us (medical students to know) that doctors working here would not know about our patients?

-How much time it takes from start to finish, the registration process, making them feel at peace, whoever is at the front really sets the tone for whoever is coming in

-Communication is key

-Very important to have two bilingual people at the front desk

-Working as quickly as possible to get the patient to the back

-Sometimes a disconnect as a front desk worker, hard to get as many details from patients because everything is so administrative at the front, people do not open up the same way they do when you are getting medical/clinical details as an MA or MD

-from MA side, need to be resourceful and take time with patient bc it is hard to have those conversations at the front desk with everyone else around
-Need to establish conversation and have compassion with the patients

What are the resources and strengths of your role within Philly FIGHT pediatrics?

-I've only been here 2 months
-Knowing who to go to and the resources at Philly FIGHT- they have so many, you just have to know about them
-Not even doing my full job here, but I am learning how the system is here before a new sight opens up and then I can take my skills there
-Learning how things work here and how things get done here

-Working at FQHC vs Drexel:

-FQHCs are more chaotic, which has pluses and minuses... chaotic, but they see everyone. Since I've been here, I don't think I have turned one patient away

-see patients that are uninsured and even though they do sliding pay scale here, you don't have to pay as much as at other places where money is an issue

-The providers are different, they are more independent and less needy (schedule their own appointments) at other places I've worked have seen doctors where their only priority is seeing patients and they would never want to schedule their own patients

-communication could be better at FQHC all across

Starting work during Covid (2 months prior):

-Didn't feel like it was an issue being unvaccinated when I spoke to the office manager

How has covid-19 affected you and your community and your connection with the patients?

- I'm a people person, so I've never really socially distanced from my family and friends; have family members with friends who have passed away from it, so I know it is very real, but it hasn't personally affected me like that vs other coworkers completely socially distanced and isolated themselves

-Patient wise, I have had patients who missed appointments; trying to find a balance between following CDC guidelines and getting patients in safely
-I am not vaccinated, thankful that I haven't gotten it yet

-Anything that you want to talk about or for us to know?

Fight is in transition to be better for sure. With that said, there is a lot of pain and hurt right now with doctors being stretched, but in the long term it will be better, more quality care not just from providers but all of staff; being more structured

-What aspect of health does Philly FIGHT peds do a great job of promoting/addressing?

HIV

Refugee health

Stephanie Lin
SKMC at TJU
Storytelling project

Covid-19 undoubtedly affected us all, as a country, cities, communities, and individuals. Folks were struggling to keep themselves afloat when they lost their jobs, when the city went on lock downs, and the unexpected became the normality.

However, this impacted the undocumented and uninsured communities more so than any other community. Our stimulus bills did not provide them with relief and thus they were left with little to no choices but to work throughout the pandemic. Without documentations, undocumented folk were the most at risk for being laid off with no benefits. Restaurants and buildings closed, thus the limited jobs that undocumented folk had access to were no longer profitable. Many within the community found themselves financially insecure which lead to trickling down effects of being food insecure, increase of family tensions, isolation, depression, and increased anxiety for what their future holds. However, they are also skeptical and afraid of the government.

Many undocumented immigrants left their families in another country in order to make more money, or to escape from persecution. My social worker and I have been working closely with an elderly undocumented woman, Angela, in her multitude of needs that she has. I remember her seeing her in the clinic room with the doors open and tears streaming down her face. After her initial intake, I stayed in the room, and asked her what's wrong. She unloaded her life to me. I sat there, listened, and provided her with the emotional support that she needed at the moment, and debriefed with my social worker afterwards.

Angela is a Mexican immigrant in her 60s who has been in America for an upwards of 2 decades. She speaks only Spanish. She has three children one of whom passed away in her teens. She was heartbroken because she lost her child in Mexico recently due to COVID and was grieving her loss. She was depressed, had congestive heart failure, and so many other co morbidities. Her child in the United States has a psychiatric condition that limits them from being able to partake in the work force. So now she is the main income provider for her child (in their 30s) in the United States, and her grandchildren in Mexico. However, she was laid off due to COVID and with her health conditions, she needed to see a multitude of specialties in order for her health to not deteriorate. The main source of motivation she had to continue looking for employment non-stop at her age, and continue to obtain the care that she needs, is her family. Our social worker, I, and the whole team have pulled many strings to help her. Angela is an individual with so many needs and insurmountable barriers. Our doctors were able to get her a pro-bono cardiologist for her to monitor her heart conditions and we were able to get an appointment for her at the office. However, she needed a referral from a health clinic in order for her to be seen for free, but there was little to no language assistance available for her at the clinic. We had to call the health centers multiple times to check to see if a nurse was able to triage her and get her in rather than waiting a year to make an appointment. None of which, she would have been able to navigate on her own. Our team updated her with the good news and the bad, and we made sure that we went through all the information with her before each of her appointments. We would have her come into our office, and escort her to her meetings to ensure that

she'd be able to get the proper care that she needed and that she knew how to get there. We also showed her where the food pantry was so that she was able to grab food for herself. There's only so much that we could do on our end to assist her with navigating this complex health and welfare systems that neglect undocumented immigrants making them one of the most vulnerable communities. Angela is a fighter – even with all the events that took place in her life during COVID, she continued to persevere.

Angela is just one of the many undocumented folks that we assist. We see so many folks in our community who are dealing with the same aftermath of COVID. For them, coming to our clinic is just for their follow-up care so that they can get their medications and maintain their health to continue working. For us, it's a privilege to be able to be in a position to assist them with any care and connecting them with resources that they need but are not aware of, so that they don't have to deal with their circumstances alone.