

Bridging the Gaps



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
College of
Medicine

Empowering the Youth through Unconditional Love and Grace

Student Intern: Zoey HeeYun Na, Drexel University College of Medicine
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Community Preceptor: Hector Cid, Corps Officer/Pastor at Salvation Army

COMMUNITY PARTNER



The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. For over 150 years, The Salvation Army has represented hope to millions of people in need worldwide. Through its community centers and a network of volunteers, The Salvation Army is on the front line each and every day in nearly every zip code across the United States — feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, emergency disaster relief, addressing poverty with a myriad of social services, and offering congregational life, educational and wellness programs for the youth and seniors.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

The Summer Day Camp at The Salvation Army of Reading is an seven-week program held Monday through Friday dedicated to children of ages **6-13**. Being one of the most affordable summer camps for children in Reading, one of the most poverty stricken cities in the state of Pennsylvania, the summer camp provides enriching educational program to children who may not be able to receive the same experience at home or at school. Moreover, almost **70%** of the population being Hispanic or Latino immigrants, many of their parents do not speak English at all which may limit their learning at an English spoken schools. In order to help reduce the educational gap, each summer, a group of **25 to 50** children are exposed to a creative learning environment that enriches their learning through daily activities including arts and crafts, reading books, and field trips.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ JOYS

- Mentoring
- Citizenship awards
- Human Anatomy Week
- Natural Phenomenon Week
- Costume Week
- Hershey Park Field Trip
- Pool Day

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

The Bridging the Gaps student intern assisted the staff to help students be engaged fully in daily activities while ensuring to provide a safe and positive learning environment for the children. The intern collaborated with the staff members to plan, lead, and present to students a range of activities including dance, arts and crafts, music, reading, board games, and physical education that would enrich their educational, social, and personal development. The intern was also encouraged to incorporate their medical knowledge to inspire students and enrich their learning process for all ages. Interns are expected to serve as a mentor for the children as well as a dependable adult who could help them develop positive character and encompass respect and kindness towards the staff and towards one another.

REFLECTION

“Working at The Salvation Army of Reading Summer Camp has helped me realize how it is a privilege to be invited into the children’s lives and to be able to communicate with them their thoughts and their feelings as they open up to us. As an adult, especially having the understanding of the Reading community these children come from — one of the poverty-stricken cities in Pennsylvania — has left me feeling heavily responsible to provide these children with a safe environment in which they feel safe to fully be themselves. Though at times it was overwhelming to be working with up to 25 children every day, both physically and mentally, the energy these children brought in each day to the camp in turn energized me to be able to push throughout the entire 8 weeks. As I now see these innocent children just beings that deserve compassion, unconditional love and grace, I realize that is the true purpose of serving others and the essence of becoming a physician.”