

Bridging the Gaps



Summer Fun at HMS

Student Interns: Adeayo Adenusi, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine
Dylan Maskell, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine
Franklin King, Drexel University College of Medicine
Kayla Buchanan, Drexel University College of Medicine

Academic Preceptors: Stacy Ellen, DO, Drexel University College of Medicine
Joan Gluch, PhD, RDH, PHDHP, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

Community Preceptors: Julie Conway, SLPD, CCC-SLP, ATP, HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy
Teresa Giardina, M.S.Ed, HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy

COMMUNITY PARTNER

HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy located in the University City neighborhood of West Philadelphia, serves students aged 5 to 21 who have cerebral palsy or other complex physical/intellectual disabilities. HMS School's mission focuses on enabling all students to reach their maximum potential in an academic context, but also to help them thrive outside of the HMS setting. They do this by promoting independence and improving the quality of life for their students in a safe and secure environment, so that each student can lead a fulfilling, stimulating life, now and as an adult. www.hmsschool.org

BACKGROUND

Cerebral Palsy is the most common motor disability in childhood. Each case is completely different and complex in its own way, but is generally caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain that impacts the individual's ability to control their muscles. HMS is one of two schools in the country that provides holistic care to the Cerebral Palsy population. The school provides physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, dance movement therapy, music therapy, adaptive physical education, recreation therapy, theatre, and art, many of which are not mandatory to provide.

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

Interns at this site were assigned to different classrooms and assisted with the daily activities of the students throughout the school day. Interns were also invited to shadow students' sessions in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy throughout the summer. During weekly meetings with community preceptors, the interns had the chance to learn about and discuss various aspects of care for individuals with cerebral palsy, such as specialized dental care and feeding challenges.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Received training in adaptive feeding strategies, Augmentative and Alternative Communication device use, and learned to safely and effectively transfer students from one mobility aid to another
- Created and participated in switch activated and adapted games for the students to engage in
- Integrated ourselves into the classroom setting to help students with their daily activities
- Helped coordinate and assist with CVI friendly lesson plans and means of communication for students



REFLECTION

Adeayo Adenusi: "My summer with HMS has been unlike anything that I have experienced before. Prior to beginning my journey at HMS, I was very nervous and was not quite sure what to expect. As the summer progressed however, I began to feel much more comfortable and confident interacting with children with Cerebral Palsy. In addition to this, I was able to uncover new ways of becoming a better advocate for the special needs population. After going through my experience with Bridging the Gaps, combined with the bonds I have formed while working with the students, I can confidently say that I am going to miss each and everyone one of them. Reflecting on their personal stories and witnessing how far they have come has motivated me to continue in my pursuits for more accessible healthcare across all disciplines."

Kayla Buchanan: "Spending time at HMS was unlike any experience I've had; although I was a bit intimidated at first to enter this space out of fear that I wouldn't know how to be helpful, it became clear that the most natural thing to do was just connect with the kids. The students at HMS are sweet, hilarious, and full of life, and I am so thankful to have had the chance to get to know them. I also learned a great deal from interacting with the teachers, administrators, nurses, and therapists at HMS and how these disciplines all come together to form the greater HMS community."

Franklin King: "The time I spent at HMS this summer has been an invaluable experience that I hope to carry many lessons from into my future career in medicine. Working with a complete care team demonstrated the necessity of a variety of interventions such as OT, PT, and speech therapy in ensuring children with cerebral palsy have the tools to succeed in life. In my interactions with the kids at HMS I learned so much about the unique communication strategies they each used and came to know them for the beautiful people they are. It was a privilege to learn and grow alongside the people I came into contact with during my internship, and I would recommend this experience to anyone entering into a healthcare field."

Dylan Maskell: "Nothing can prepare you for the transformative experience you will gain from being able to work at HMS. Throughout the summer I had the pleasure of forming meaningful relationships with both the staff and students at the school. This experience reaffirmed the passion I have for working with this population and has prepared me for the interactions I will have with patients. I can't wait to carry this experience with me throughout my career and life."