



**Jefferson**

Philadelphia University +  
Thomas Jefferson University

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

# Health Mentors Program Newsletter

Volume 12, ISSUE 1 | Fall 2018/Winter 2019 | Jefferson Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education (JCIPE)

## HMP Newsletter Editors:

### Couple & Family Therapy

#### Student:

Elizabeth O. Adewale

### Medical Student:

Tara "TJ" Cahanap

### Occupational Therapy

#### Student:

Samantha Burke

## IN THIS ISSUE

Art as Medicine P2-3

Spring Meetings P3

A Health Mentor's Reflection P4

HM Recruitment P4

## Happy holidays, mentors!

By Samantha Burke

We hope you're doing well. For many of us, after three whirlwind semesters that challenged and changed us, the Health Mentors Program has already come to an end. It's been a rewarding journey where we get to discover the rewards of thinking and working together for the benefit of our mentors, in addition to gaining a better understanding of the healthcare system and the people it serves while we are still in school.

In the third and final project of the program, student teams work with their mentors to choose a method for advocacy at the community or organizational level. As many of us know, quality healthcare, food, transportation, education, and accessibility to any of these things are unfortunately not distributed equally in our society. This third and final stretch of the Health Mentors Program allowed us to see that we can often do much more than we think when it comes to the difficulties or injustices that our mentors and future patients face. Changes often don't

happen until people who care speak up. Students here at Jefferson might now more fully embrace the idea that those people can and should be us.

We hope that you are taking full advantage of this period of relaxation and reflection on the year ahead. We want to express our gratitude for the knowledge and experience that you were kind enough to give to us, whether you've just begun being a mentor or are a seasoned veteran! Thank you for taking time out of your lives to improve the next generation of healthcare professionals.

It is our hope that 2019 treats you wonderfully. Cheers!

# Art as Medicine

By T.J. Cahanap

The magic of music. The enchantment of the theater. The delight of reading and writing. We all know the age-old saying about art being good for the soul. But what if art could heal us in more ways than we previously thought? A recent comprehensive review published in the *American Journal of Public Health* explored the relationship between engagement with the creative arts and physiological and psychological outcomes and has proven just that. The review explored four areas of creative artistic expression—music engagement, visual arts, movement-based creative expression, and expressive writing—and concluded that there are clear indications that they *all* result in significantly positive effects on health regarding factors like reduction in anxiety and stress hormones, improved medical outcomes, and even marked increases in pain control.

Although the connection between art and wellness has long existed in culture and history, the movement today—supported by exciting research through clinical trials, scientific data, and case reviews—is centered on encouraging employment of this powerful healing tool on an institutional and societal level within the healthcare field.

Programs all over the world like Art Rx at the Keck School of Medicine at USC and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing in England have recognized the extraordinary role that the creative arts can play in the journey we all take towards wellness. Thanks to programs like these and the researchers, physicians, patients, and policymakers who have taken the first steps towards integrating opportunities for art into healthcare, slowly but surely, we've begun revolutionizing the role that “art” has had in our “art of medicine”.

Here at Jefferson, students, physicians, and patients alike have many opportunities to incorporate the arts into their lives, fostering qualities that help them contribute to their communities of healing. Health Professionals students at Jefferson have the chance to take Humanities Selectives like the Healer's Art or pursue graduate and continuing education programs concentrated in fields like Art Therapy. Patients at Jefferson living with many kinds of conditions have access to programs within the discipline of art therapy as well as other programs—like our very own HMP—that encourage them to tell their stories and take charge of their healing journey.

Here are some key messages about these connections to keep in mind as you explore opportunities for art in your own lives:

- After engaging with the arts, 79% of people in deprived communities in London ate more healthily, 77% engaged in more physical activity, and 82% enjoyed greater wellbeing.
- Music therapy reduces agitation and need for medication in 67% of people with dementia.
- Studies involving movement-based creative expression like dance have shown improvement in physical symptoms and ambulation like shoulder range of motion in breast cancer patients.
- Expressive writing amongst patients living with trauma has shown decreased pain, fatigue, and increased psychological well-being, and has even been shown to improve post-intervention CD4+ lymphocyte counts in patients living with HIV.
- Studies show evidence that use of art and music reduces hospital stays, with studies showing earlier discharges among patients taking part in visual and performing arts interventions than among those not doing so, and even decreased need of narcotic pain medication relative to their counterparts.

As summarized by Heather L. Stuckey, DEd, and Dr. Jeremy Nobel in their Review in AJPH, “Use of the arts in healing... complements the biomedical view by focusing on not only sickness and symptoms themselves but the holistic nature of the person... Through creativity and imagination, we find our identity and our reservoir of healing.”

Stuckey HL, Nobel J. The connection between art, healing, and public health: a review of current literature. *Am J Public Health*. 2010;100(2):254-63.

artrx | Our Mission. USC Art Rx | Los Angeles | Artrx. <https://www.artrx.usc.edu/about>. Accessed December 27, 2018.

Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing. What is Arts in Health? | Arts Health and Wellbeing. <http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/>. Accessed December 27, 2018.

Arts & Humanities in Medical School Promote Empathy & Inoculate Against Burnout. <https://www.jefferson.edu/university/news/2018/01/30/arts-and-humanities-promote-empathy-in-medical-students.html>. Published January 30, 2018. Accessed December 27, 2018.

## Upcoming Spring Meetings

Details for the meetings are included in the letters to the Health Mentors.

For Year One mentors, students will come to your home for the Meeting 2 visit (if you are comfortable with this) or they will schedule a time to meet you on campus.

For Year Two mentors, your meetings with the students are complete.

HMP Staff will be in touch in late spring to confirm if you are available to sign up to meet with a new team in fall 2019.

# A Health Mentor's Reflection

*My team and I met at my home on a Friday in April. The next day I fell in the kitchen and broke my right hip. I had a total hip replacement at Jefferson. During that hospital stay, I looked up during rounds to see one of my old team members. She recognized the name, stayed behind to comfort me, and told the team members about my accident. Two later visited me. I was released to rehab to return to Jeff 18 hours later in severe chronic heart failure with possible lung or vascular clot. During intake, the resident physician exhibited such courtesy and full explanation I asked if she had taken part in the mentor program. She had and told my relatives and me what a difference it made in meeting and caring for patients as she progressed in her studies. My family was so impressed with her. At 9 am, I was admitted as a cardiac patient and the team gathered by my bed to discuss the test results and course of treatment. Again a young male resident looked familiar and he came back to tell me he had been part of a mentor group I had. It works.*

## Spread the Word, Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for Health Mentors from all different backgrounds who are at least 18 years of age and are living with a chronic condition or impairment (high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, blindness, etc.) or are a caretaker to someone who is living with a chronic condition or impairment and who enjoys sharing their personal health experiences.

Health Mentor volunteers should:

- Enjoy interacting with students from all health professions
- Be comfortable sharing personal stories about their life experiences as well as health and wellness goals
- Have some flexibility with time to meet with students

If you know someone who is interested in learning more about the Health Mentors Program, please have them contact Sarah Dallas at **215-955-8601** or by email **HMP@jefferson.edu**.

Or they can visit our website to complete an online application:  
**[www.jefferson.edu/health-mentor](http://www.jefferson.edu/health-mentor)**