

SPAN 266: SPRING 2020
FINAL BILINGUAL TRANSFORMATION PAPER
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English

The service learning activities that I participated in this semester helped me grow as a Spanish student and pre-medical student. This semester, I volunteered at two health fairs sponsored by EVMS: one at Newport News and the other at the Eastern Shore. These Health Fairs were informative and eye-opening for me because I had the opportunity to learn about the minority populations in our area and practice my Spanish-speaking skills at these health fairs.

The first health fair that I volunteered took place at the Denbigh United Presbyterian Church in Newport News, Virginia. There, we primarily served the local refugee population, which included those from Iran, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern countries. While adults and parents received healthcare services from the EVMS healthcare staff, the remaining EVMS volunteers and I looked after the children. It was a beautiful day outside, so we spent most of the time playing kickball and soccer. Besides playing outside, we played lots of games and colored inside the church classroom. Even though I did not get the chance to observe the screening process or help with the healthcare part of the health fair, I really enjoyed my time there. I had the opportunity to interact with the kids, and I was able to bond with some of them during the little time we had. In addition, I got to talk with some of the medical students volunteering at the health fair. Since I am interested in attending medical school, they gave me some helpful pointers about the application process. They were able to relate to my concerns about applying to medical school and the rigor of the coursework, but they all agreed that experiences like the health fairs are incredibly rewarding. From this health fair, I just saw a small fraction of people

who have limited access to healthcare, and volunteer organizations like the one from EVMS are greatly needed to provide quality care that everyone deserves.

The second health fair that I volunteered took place at the Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Onley, Virginia. Although I was there for a short time, I helped to translate at the registration tables for the EVMS volunteers and the patients. Also, I was able to interact with the kids there, and the weather was perfect outside to play soccer with them. This health fair was different from the one in Newport News because most of the people that came were of Hispanic origin and work across the Eastern Shore as migrant farmers. I was able to use the vocabulary that we learned in class to speak with the patients, and I was able to inform them about the services offered, which included blood pressure testing, diabetes screening, and a CPR class. However, I wish that I could have spent more time there. There were already so many volunteers that my classmates and I felt displaced. After the screening process was over, many of us were standing around, not knowing how else to help out. In addition, since we only stayed for 2 hours, there was not much to do within that time window. Nonetheless, I had fun getting to know the Hispanic community at the Eastern shore and applying what I have learned in class. From this experience, I learned that working at the community level to educate the public is an effective way to prevent conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Even though blood pressure and diabetes screenings are simple tests, they play a significant role in maintaining the health of a community that has limited access to healthcare.

Español

Al principio de este semestre, uno de mis principales objetivos era entender las dificultades que enfrentan las poblaciones de inmigrantes en los E.E.U.U cuando se trata de recibir atención médica. También quería aprender vocabulario médico para usar cuando soy voluntario para las ferias de salud. De esta clase y este semestre, aprendí que no importa cuán pequeña sea su contribución, hace la diferencia. Estas ferias de salud me dieron la oportunidad para comunicarse con algunas personas que no tienen acceso a cuidado de salud como yo. Estas conversaciones abrieron mi perspectiva sobre la crisis de cuidado de salud en los E.E.U.U. Antes de este semestre, siempre pensaba que el cuidado de salud tiene que ser privada. Sin embargo, de las ferias de salud y las conversaciones en TalkAbroad que yo tuve con personas alrededor del mundo, necesitamos un sistema público que puede dar la atención médica necesaria a las personas que no tienen acceso a cuidado de salud. Independientemente de si usted es ciudadano, todas de las personas aquí tienen derecho a la atención médica. Por eso, al tomar la clase de SPAN 266, aprendí que puedes hacer una diferencia al retribuir a la comunidad.