

# Senior Wellness: Young at Heart

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## Introduction

Our team consists of eleven dedicated members with eight MPH students and three medical students. With our various backgrounds and study focuses, we are able to bring together different skills and knowledge to our team.

- **Sibley Plaza**- located at North Capitol Street in Washington DC. Some of the residents living here have lived in this area for most of their life, while some are from different parts of the country and ended up in DC later in their life. The center consists of public housing apartments for the city. There are no age requirements for residents, eligibility is determined by income.
- **St. Mary's Court**- was a second site our group began working with in the spring on 24th Street in NW Washington DC. This center does have age eligibility requirements, all residents are over the age of 62 who are of low or middle income brackets.

Our projects consisted of a **mind-body balance**. For positive mental health we did various types of arts and crafts. For a healthy body we demonstrated healthy meal alternatives and senior friendly exercises.



**Mind**  
 - Holiday Themed Crafts  
 - Gardening



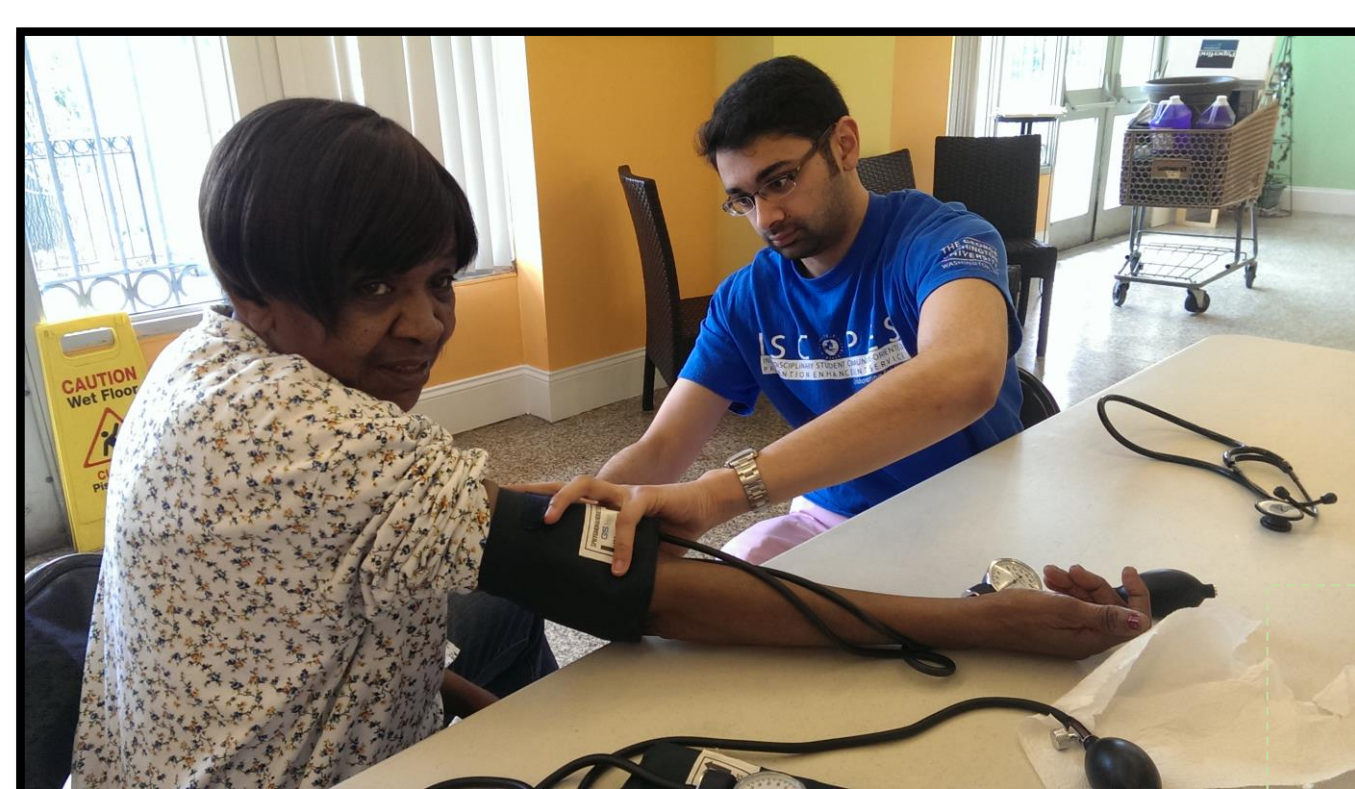
**Body**  
 - Laughter Yoga  
 - Healthy Eating  
 - Chair Aerobics  
 - Dancing



Thanksgiving Craft – Positive Turkey Cups



Showing an alternative to tacos – lettuce wraps!



Blood Pressure Checks



Swing Dancing

## Starter Project: What We Did and How We Did It



### Why focus on seniors and place an emphasis on mind-body balance?

- A fast growing segment in the US population
- While some seniors live in residential facilities that are integrated with the neighborhood some facilities are more isolated
- Many seniors live alone or do not have family nearby
- Limited mobility makes it difficult to travel and go out in the neighborhood daily

### Outcomes

- Over the course of the year, we had approximately 50 seniors participate at Sibley Plaza and 70 seniors participate at St. Mary's Court.
- Our time at these community sites provided seniors with social time on both a personal and community level
- We provided a connection to the larger community that may not be present
- We encouraged and sparked interest in residents' desire to try new foods

## What We Learned

*“A human body functions better as a whole when each body-part performs its function properly. Our inter-professional team made our service learning more efficient and effective as we learned to work together as one body. We learned very early in the program that we did not have enough time to hear everyone's opinion about food, activities, goals, health impact, fundraising, etc. When we each performed our function, our team's performance was more efficient. We plan to use this skill in the future by seeing our work as a part of the whole. We will be able to solve America's large health problems if we use the inter-professional team-based model.”*

*“Making connections can be as easy as sitting down next to someone and asking them how their day has been.”*

*“We were here to make as many meaningful changes as possible towards a healthier lifestyle. However, entrenched behaviors are difficult to change and as a group, we struggled with those barriers, but we managed to demonstrate as many subtle and fun changes as possible. In the end, ISCOPEs became more to our residents than an interprofessional learning community, but we became a trustworthy group of students eager and willing to create lasting relationships.”*

## Recommendations

1. **Get to know your team members.** Understand the strengths and weaknesses of each member and keep those in mind as you work as a team. Learn what they do outside of ISCOPEs!
2. **Communicate.** Develop a communication method from the beginning and delegate tasks and responsibilities among team members.
3. **Schedule a regular meeting time.** Try to set aside a weekly or biweekly meeting time to discuss anything happening.
4. **Get to know the population you are working with.** The more you understand the population you are serving, the more successful your implementations will be.
5. **Delegate tasks.** Be open to delegating tasks with planning and the actual implementation of activities. And communicate those tasks so the team understands who is doing what.



Painting Pumpkins



Planting Herbs



Senior Wellness Team

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