

## Introduction

### Welcome to Adult Healthy Literacy!

- Group of 10 students composed of MPH candidates and pre-medical undergraduates
- A group dedicated to providing factual, and culturally-sensitive information on health-related topics to our community partners

### Get to Know our Communities!

#### Mujeres Unidas - Mary's Center

- A support group for Spanish-speaking women
- Initiated discussions & activities that focused on health topics most pertinent to the values of the women & their families

#### Emery House

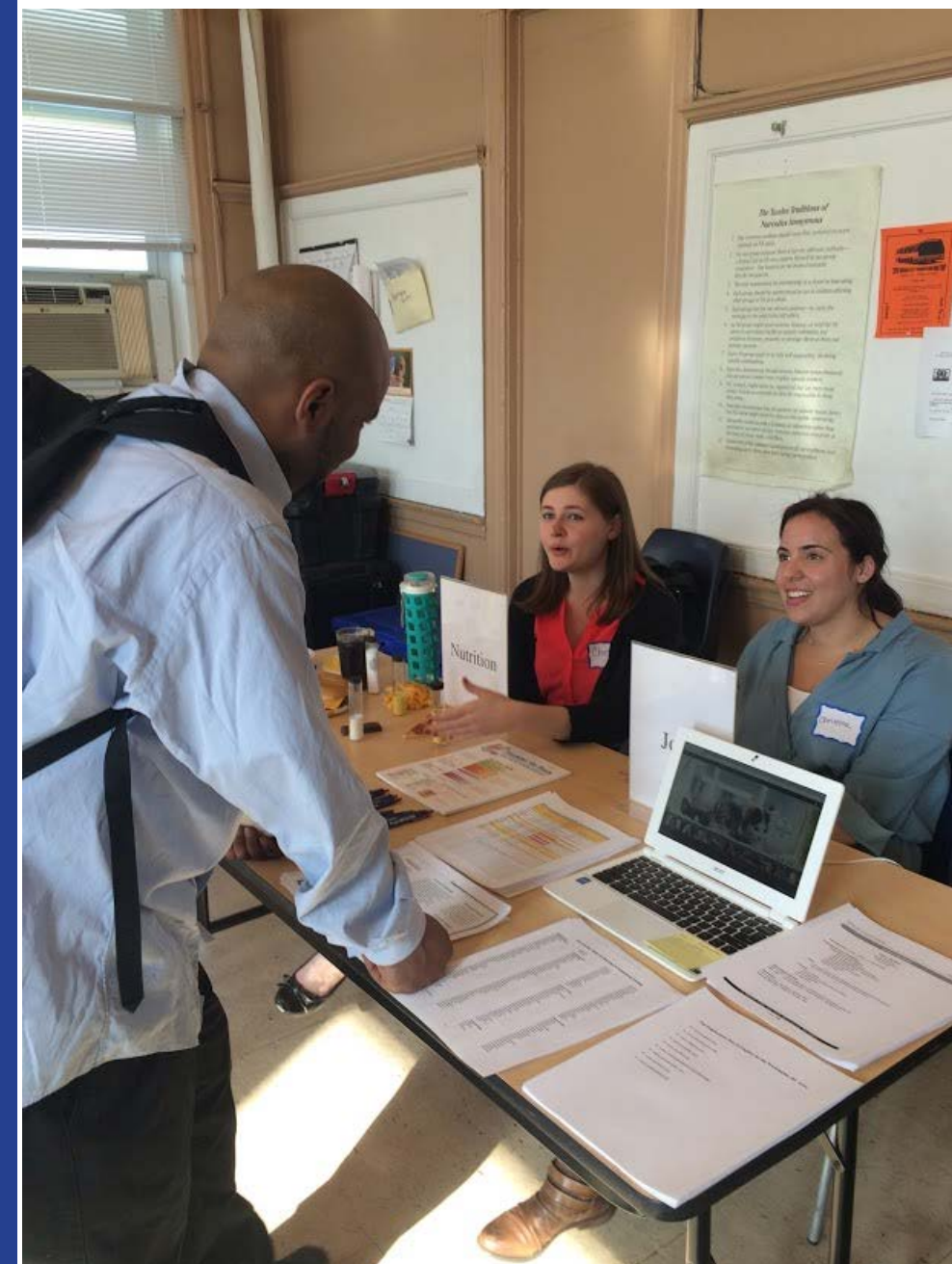
- A transitional work-bed program
- Established an open and safe communication environment with the men to discuss sensitive health topics
- Collaborated with Mr. Baylor & community partners to connect the men with health experts

### Why is Adult Health Literacy Important?

- Health literacy is defined as “the ability to obtain, process, and understand health information to make informed decisions about health care”

### What's the problem?

- Cost of low health literacy is **\$237 billion** to the U.S. economy, which means up to 17% of healthcare expenditures may not be necessary
- Health care system is difficult to navigate
- Health system is designed to generate profits through insurance instead of being incentivized to produce better patient outcomes
- Some advertising & marketing communities present misleading & sometimes misinformed information that clouds people's ability to identify trustworthy health information
- Cuts to public health programs prevent people from accessing quality care & having available resources to receive the care they need
- The ACA has provided millions with health insurance that are now expected to learn how to navigate the healthcare system for the first time



Christine and Christina talk to the men at Emery House about nutrition!



Pumpkin painting at Mary's Center



Sandy chats with visitors at the Emery House Health Fair



The team prepares for a Healthy Relationships workshop at Emery House!

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

### Why Adult Health Literacy?

- Nearly 9/10 Americans have difficulty using the health information provided in health care facilities, media, and communities
- 17% of all personal healthcare spending could be avoided with better health literacy.
- There is a history of racist medical experimentation and health disparities that create mistrust in public health programs and recommendations among minority groups
- Most patient education materials are written above the average adult's reading level
- Those with poor health literacy typically have higher healthcare costs

### Why Emery House and Mary's Center?

Emery House: Through an implementation on medication compliance, we were able to address the myth that a person who takes a drug will have all of the listed side effects.

Mary's Center: We were able to overcome language barriers to demonstrate hands-on the importance of hand washing during flu season through a family-friendly activity.

### Our Implementations

Our service projects focused on increasing and improving knowledge and awareness of a variety of health literacy topics!

- Health information: where and how to locate valid medical information
- Computer literacy: utilizing the Internet to find information on health, jobs, and professional development
- Medication literacy: how to recognize and comply with the information presented on a prescription label
- Healthy relationships: education and discussion surrounding HIV/AIDS, prostate cancer, and open communication
- Dental care: oral health education from our community partner, Smile Services
- Summer safety: staying active, safe, and hydrated during the hottest months of the year
- Stress relief: remaining calm and finding positive affirmations in times of stress



**We tried to take the last 5-10 minutes of the implementation to go around the room and ask each person something they learned or something they would share with someone who did not attend the implementation. We learned a lot about what the participants took away from the class, where they still had questions, and what was important to them. Answers sometimes surprised us and it let us know that participants were paying attention or found the information valuable.**

## Recommendations

- Think outside the box when scheduling meeting times.
- Spend time outside of meetings and implementations with team members.
- Take time to learn the different gifts and interests of team members.
- Assign roles at the beginning of the year to establish a pattern
- Don't get discouraged if you are not able to work with a site as much as planned.
  - Think of creative ways to improve health literacy within that community even if you aren't there (i.e. send “goodie” bags with educational materials or create a fun video.)
- Step up, step back.
  - Ask team members that have contributed a lot to “step back” and team members that have not contributed as much to “step up.” Create a culture of shared responsibility and do not be afraid to ask each other (with love) to fulfill tasks.

## What We Learned

- Plan everything much earlier than you think you need to. Set early deadlines!
- Maintain clear and consistent communication. Meeting agendas and minutes (with action items!) are an incredibly helpful reference to stay organized and on top of things.
- It is important to keep team members actively involved with each site, especially those who cannot attend implementations.
- Our community members want to take an active role in improving their health and wellbeing. Keep them at the forefront of everything.
- It is of utmost importance to earn and maintain the trust and respect of your community members.
- With the broad range of tasks to prepare and lead implementations, use the interdisciplinary team to your benefit! Delegate and spread out the work. Allow people to use their expertise as well as to practice new skills.



## Kudos

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic help of our Team Advocate, Lauren Violette, and our wonderful coaches, Karyn Pomerantz and Sandy Hoar.

We would also like to thank our contacts at site, Mr. Baylor and Maria, as well as the amazing men and women we worked with this year.

Huge thanks to Smile Services, DC Health Link, Back on My Feet, Whitman-Walker, and our other community partners!