Veterans History Project
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Service Through Listening

Who we are

• A diverse coalition of GWU students passionate about health, working with the Veterans History Project, the DC VA Community Living Center (CLC), The DC Center, and veterans in the community

A year long effort

• Hosted monthly birthday celebrations at the CLC
• Provided arts and crafts, played games, and served food to vets at the CLC
• Made “Thank You” posters for Veterans Day signed by GWU students
• Hosted Honor Flight screening at GWU
• Hosted a presentation from the Library of Congress staff promoting the Veterans History Project
• Connected with the DC Center and interviewed LGBT veterans
• Networked with the GW Student Veterans Association; maintained our presence on campus by spreading the word about the Veterans History Project
• Joined forces with the Healthy Teen Scholars ISCOPES Team to encourage students at Dunbar High School to engage in the Veterans History Project

Changes in the Community

• Interviewed a total of 4 veterans
• Raised awareness for the Veterans History Project, the importance of listening, and the need for community support for veterans
• Built new relationships with organizations for future VHP teams
• Offered our ears to veterans who wanted to share their stories

Recommendations

• Speak with members of the community for tips on communicating with veterans, and more importantly, how to listen
• Reach out to the DC Center, the GWU Veterans, and any other veterans organization you can find
• Veterans at the CLC want to spend time with you, go as often as you can
• Emphasize quality of interviews and service over quantity
• Watch Honor Flight, it will give you a sense of why this project is important and what you can get out of it

What we learned

• We do a lot of thinking and talking about ourselves but taking the time to listen to what others have to say enriches all of our lives.
• Interprofessional team-based service involves navigating different communication styles, power dynamics, and values which often makes it harder to move forward but ultimately leads to a stronger final product.
• Being able to consider other perspectives is an essential life skill. We have all learned not only to work with people from different backgrounds, but more importantly to value our unique human experiences.

Kudos

We’d like to thank the ISCOPES staff, especially our team advocate Donna Javellana; Paul Tschudi; the DC VA Community Living Center and Kathy Bixby; Monica Mohindra, Andrew Huber, and Bob Patrick from the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress; The DC Center; The GW Student Veteran Association; and the men and women who serve our country!

Find out how to interview a veteran in your life; visit http://www.loc.gov/vets/