Overview

COVID-19 has kept most Princeton students off-campus through Fall 2020. Though challenging in many ways, this has opened up the opportunity for Service Focus students to engage in their own communities in new and exciting ways. To support local service engagement in a time of great need, Service Focus Winter Grants were created to support short-term impactful student projects in partnership with local community partners, to be completed during winter break. 23 current Service Focus students applied for and received grants to support their local service engagement. Grant recipients received up to $750 to support their projects, with $250 to student time, $250 honoraria for community partner’s time, and up to $250 for necessary materials.

Grant Summaries

Jessica Lee
Following her work with this organization via the RISE Initiative this past summer, Jessica will be working with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) over winter break. She will be doing research on the media coverage of AAPIs in regards to relevant social and economic issues -- in doing so, she hopes to shed light on the need for broader recognition and better representation of this immensely diverse, wide-ranging racial group.

Truth Betts-McCullum
Truth will be working with eStem Public Charter High School by hosting Saturday Sessions with eStem’s lead counselor to help students with the college admission progress. Truth also plans to host a college admissions panel and create an admissions resource guide.

Daisy Bissonette
Daisy will be leading a book club at the high school she attended, with the book and discussions focused on mental health. Additionally, Daisy will be compiling a resource list for students and families that want to access digital library resources from local and statewide libraries.

Maddy Chong
Continuing from her summer internship, Maddy will be working with the Greater Trenton College Access Network. Many community organizations are in the process of recruiting high school students for their programs, and Maddy will be coordinating presentations to Trenton High School students to aid in the recruitment process.

Allison Chou
Wanting to continue the great work and deep conversations surrounding health equity from her Service Focus group, Allison will be working with Jefferson Medical College Health Design Lab on its COVID Testing
Initiative project. Allison will help gather narratives from those involved in the project, ranging from the healthcare workers to the actual patients. These testimonies will then be used to help identify the community needs and better inform response to the ongoing pandemic.

Ashley Chung
As an extension of Service Focus’s Health & Care Cohort experience, Ashley will be working with the Jefferson Medical College Health Design Lab on the COVID Testing Initiative project to gather more qualitative data on the concerns of patients at testing sites. By interviewing patients, community residents, and healthcare workers, Ashley will use these narratives to identify community needs in relation to Philadelphia’s response to COVID.

Mary Davis
Mary’s visit to Philadelphia and her discussions on equitable healthcare with Service Focus throughout her sophomore year motivated her to pursue an internship with the Health Design Lab in Philadelphia. She will be interviewing patients, physicians, and community members who interact with a new free COVID-19 testing facility. Her goal will be to assist the Health Design Lab in evaluating the impact of this lab on the surrounding community.

Michael Fording
Michael will be continuing his work with Bridgeport Mutual Aid in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He is working to organize volunteers and communicate and engage with the community to advance the group’s mission to deliver food pantry donations to quarantined and Covid-positive Bridgeport residents.

Maryam Kamel
Inspired by classes she had taken through the Global Health Program and her experience as a member of the Service Focus Health & Care Cohort, Maryam will be working with the Jefferson Medical College Health Design Lab on their COVID Testing Initiative, which makes COVID testing freely available in two underserved neighborhoods in northwest Philadelphia. Along with a few of her peers from the Service Focus Health & Care Cohort, Maryam will help the Health Design Lab gather more qualitative data on the concerns of patients presenting at these testing sites. She will also assist in identifying emergent community needs through conducting interviews and gathering narratives from patients, community residents, and healthcare workers.

Rachel Kulchar
Rachel will be using the bioinformatics software R to analyze donor patterns to maximize contributions to Hearts & Homes for Refugees. She will also act as a dental consultant in teaching families oral hygiene techniques on a dental model, send families dental care packages, help set up dental appointments/translate for those who can only speak Persian, and call insurance companies to understand the refugee families’ benefits and explain those benefits to the families.

Marissa Mejia
During the summer of 2020, Marissa served remotely with Land to Learn, a small nonprofit organization based in the New York Hudson Valley that aims to grow a movement for food justice and community wellness through implementing interdisciplinary garden-based education programs in underfunded public schools. During this winter break, Marissa will continue to work closely with Land to Learn’s staff to coordinate and publicize initiatives that reach out to the largely underprivileged communities that this organization works with. By supporting and promoting Land to Learn’s fundraising efforts and outreach programs, she will help students and their families gain access to the education and locally-grown, organic food that they deserve.

Emma Moriarty
Continuing her work from her Bogle Fellowship, Emma will be working with Unseen: The Trafficked Truth on building a website for survivors of sex trafficking who wish to share their stories. Emma has been a part of the Unseen team since its formation and is looking forward to increasing the group’s reach so that any survivor who wishes to be heard has the chance to do so.

Tanvi Nibhanupudi
Based on her work with the Service Focus Health & Care cohort during the semester, Tanvi will be working with the Jefferson Medical College Health Design Lab to gather data on their COVID testing initiative. Collecting the narratives of patients, community residents, and healthcare workers at the testing sites will help shape the city’s response to COVID-19 in underserved neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

Leila Owens
Building upon years of work with the global peace non-profit CISV USA, Leila helped plan an indigenous rights activity at the organizations virtual board meeting. This activity aimed to educate and inspire incoming youth leadership from across the nation on current social justice issues.

Oyinade Oyenusi
Oyinade will be working with the Health Design Lab to obtain more qualitative data on the concerns of patients presenting at Philadelphia testing sites, including information regarding what barriers to accessing care and testing they are currently facing. Additionally, she will receive training on conducting interviews and will have the opportunity to gather narratives from patients, community residents, and healthcare workers.

Celine Plan
As a member of Princeton Mutual Aid, Celine is working with a team of neighbors to establish PMA’s legal status, raise funds for economic relief, and build solidarity in Princeton, NJ.

Serena Starks
Serena will be working with a 2nd grade teacher at Victoria Elementary School to provide over 100 books with an audio recording for her students. Due to the pandemic, the 1st graders did not finish learning how to read and will benefit greatly by receiving books over the break.

Vian Wagatsuma
Driven by her passion to fight social injustice and to advocate for underrepresented communities, Vian will be interning at the Logische Phantasie Lab, where she will be working on a project investigating the abuse of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act.

Samantha Chin
Inspired by her experience as a member of the Service Focus Health & Care cohort, Samantha will be working with the Jefferson Health Design Lab on their COVID Testing Initiative project. Through this project, Samantha hopes to work towards minimizing healthcare obstacles that have been exacerbated by Covid-19 for some of Philadelphia’s most vulnerable populations.

Rishike Deshide –
Caroline will be working with the Jefferson Health Design Lab on their COVID Testing Initiative Project.

Halle Mitchell
Halle will be working with State College Community Theatre, a community theatre organization that has had a large impact on her life, in order to organize and execute a Trivia Night fundraiser to be held at the end of January.
Caroline Subbiah
Caroline will be working with the Jefferson Health Design Lab on their COVID Testing Initiative Project.