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Medical Sociology

December 1, 2023

Service Learning Project Reflection

Throughout this semester, we were given the task to plan, implement, and create a fundraiser for Heart of Virginia Free Clinic and their dental care program. Cohesively as a class, we considered many options to raise money on Longwood University's campus. We decided on cookie sales, friendship bracelet making, pie a professor, and caricature drawings. To execute our plan, as a class we divided ourselves into committees to effectively get the job done. I joined the advertising committee and worked along fellow classmates to create fliers and discuss advertising techniques. Within our group, we created a visually appealing flier that would speak to the college community. In order to spread the word most efficiently, each member of our team reached out to other groups in which they had connections with to inform them of our event. This included Greek Life, sports teams, clubs, and even friend groups. Specifically, I reached out to my sorority, friends on sports teams, and other friends throughout campus. I not only shared the details of our event with them, but furthermore asked them to spread the word as well. With Longwood University being a smaller campus, word of mouth is an effective tactic to spread information. Throughout the semester, we had multiple opportunities in class to meet with our teams to discuss and evaluate our plan of action. If we felt alterations needed to be made, we would implement accordingly. On the day of the event, the entire class met in the middle grounds of campus to work the event. Each group effort came together to produce a very positive outcome. The process displayed the positive results of teamwork and effective communication.

As the advertising group, we encouraged campus traversers as they passed by to stop by and learn about our fundraiser. Personally, I would explain the Heart of Virginia Free Clinic to them and what the goal of our fundraiser was. Even if people did not donate, it was great to see them stop by because we were still able to raise awareness. I sent small messages out to people on the morning of the occasion to remind them of our event. I feel like my involvement in the advertising group, along with others, aided in a successful turnout.

Over the past few months, we have analyzed the aspects of the medical system, from a sociological viewpoint. A large topic we discussed was the prevalence of inaccessible healthcare for people in the United States. There are many reasons why healthcare is inaccessible such as excessive costs, difficulties getting an appointment, and disparities. Factors such as racism, poverty, and lack of education are just a few factors contributing to inequities. For example, in the powerpoint *Racism and Health*, it is stated that African Americans had higher death rates than Whites for 9 out of the 15 leading causes of death.

The Heart of Virginia Free Clinic offers medical care to the people of Prince Edward County who do not have insurance. Like we have learned in class, the excessive costs of healthcare make it impossible for many to have access to it. This clinic provides people with the opportunity to receive necessary and adequate care without worrying about costs or unequal treatment. As I reflect on this experience, I have realized that I take for granted the privileges I am provided with. As a White female, I do not experience the inequities that many individuals unfortunately do. Not only did this fundraiser make me appreciate the accessibility I have, but it provided me with the opportunity to identify ways our healthcare system can improve. While we learn these ways in the classroom, actively planning and participating in a fundraiser is most impactful.

