

Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship

Final Report

Using Public Health to Bend the Arc

Jordyn Seri

The Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship provided me with the finance and structure I needed in order to achieve my goal of bringing new public health education to Waltham locals, specifically youth and youth of color. Before I knew of this

fellowship and this project became a community outreach event, I had approached Lucas Malo of the Department of Community Service with an idea for a campus movie screening. I had heard that the documentary *Bending the Arc* was soon to be released, but there were no showings in the Boston area planned at the time. As a huge fan of Partners in Health (PIH), the organization the documentary is about, I wanted to find a way to view it and share it with my peers, who I thought would also enjoy the screening. I asked Lucas if the department could fund the cost of the license, which was \$500 at the time. He told me about the Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship, thereby turning my campus movie screening into a community outreach event. I went to an information session to learn more about the fellowship, where Will Brummett explained to me the intensity of the application. I was drawn in and very excited to apply after these experiences.

## **Narrative Report**

My first step during the application process was to find a community partner and campus supporter. I found Kaytie Dowcett from Waltham Partnership for Youth (WPY) at an event on campus. I pitched my project idea, and she said she'd love to be my community partner. I then asked my Health: Science, Society, and Policy professor, Sarah Curi, to be my campus supporter. Although she is a very busy woman, I convinced her to commit. My next step was to secure a site and date. While considering what location would be best, I attended with Kaytie two Waltham Network Providers Meetings, which is a regular gathering of a network of local community agencies. During the first meeting, I presented a short powerpoint about my project idea and quickly gained support from the community. The second meeting was in the beginning of the Spring semester. I told attendees about the project implementation stage I was at, asked for

any useful resources and contacts, and gained further support and feedback from the community. It was on this day that Kaytie and I decided on March 29th in the evening to be the date and time of my event. March 29th was a Thursday night before vacation from school for both Brandeis and the Waltham public schools, which made it seem more likely that families and students would be able to attend an evening program like this.

Now that the date was decided, I could continue on with securing a site. We chose McDevitt Middle School's auditorium as the site because Kaytie had organized a movie screening the year before and used the school for it. It had been a huge success, so we were hoping that we would get similar results since it seemed to be a good location and size. I set up a meeting with Michael Sabin, the principal, to pitch the project and ask to use the space. Unfortunately, he was sick the day I came in, but his assistant met with me and gave me a form to fill out. I completed the form with Kaytie's help and submitted it to the main office to await for approval. The Waltham Department of Facilities generously waived the rental equipment fee, leaving the custodial fee all that was left to pay for the space. However, reserving the space also meant there had to be security present at the event. I reached out to the Brandeis police, and they suggested I ask Waltham police. The Waltham police department generously offered to have an officer present at no charge. While all of this was happening, I was simultaneously creating a list of potential panelists and reaching out to some to gauge interest. The people I spoke with were interested but could not commit without knowing when or where the event would take place. Since I didn't have the site secured, I couldn't say that the date and time we chose was official. Understandably, this made getting anyone to commit difficult.

Once the paperwork was finally approved to secure the site and date, I began reaching out to potential panelists more intensely. It was difficult to reach some people I was interested in. I

emailed, called, left messages, and called again, but some people were just unreachable. Thankfully, I had backups in mind when one person dropped out and when someone was unavailable to come. Furthermore, Kaytie and I reached out to community members to find out if they knew of anyone who would be interested. Local community knowledge is how we found Mary Kate O'Malley, a registered nurse who has been on service trips in Haiti. I then found Ancito Ettiene, the Major Gifts Coordinator at Partners In Health, by reaching out to someone from PIH and emailing back and forth as they tried to find me someone who would be available. I then asked Herlyne Das, a fellow peer who is from Waltham and very involved in public health on many fronts on the Brandeis campus which I thought would make her another fantastic panelist. Finally, I met Georgie Simpson from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources at Accepted Students Day at Heller, where she was speaking about minority health. After she spoke, I asked her if she would be a panelist, and she agreed! Her agreeing to be a panelist finalized my full panel the Monday before the event. Overall, my well-rounded panel included a local community health professional, a major staff member for Partners in Health, a federal public health official, and an active Brandeis public health student who grew up as a youth of color in the area.

The catering also came together the week of the event. There was a registration page created for the event, but I was unsure if it was indicative of how many people were going to show up, so it was difficult to estimate how much food to provide. The event was scheduled from 5:30-8:30PM, meaning that I had to provide dinner. Kaytie suggested I use The Chateau, a local restaurant that sometimes gives discounts to WPY for their events. They agreed to give me a 25% discount, but the catering was still too expensive for my budget. Luckily the contingency fund allowed me to go over budget.

In terms of marketing, I spent time driving around Waltham throughout this whole process to ask small businesses, organizations, and churches if I could leave flyers I created to tell others about the event. Of the 39 places I visited, all 39 agreed to showcase my flyer. I also was in contact with 45 different individuals and organizations over the span of the semester in order to organize the event. I made a Facebook page to reach college age students, sent information out on the WPY listserv, tabled in upper Usdan, and visited Africano (a local nonprofit for Waltham youth), the Waltham Trailblazers (a Waltham High School Club that discusses public health issues such as substance abuse) and The Boys and Girls Club to further spread the word. To further help Waltham youth, there was a table set up at the event with information about several public health related job opportunities in the area specifically for Waltham high school students. I also had a recruiter, Gus Cervini, from Boston Children's Hospital in attendance so that he could speak with the kids. He actually told Kaytie to tell him the names of any of the kids who attended the event that applied to an internship with him so that he could put their resumes at the top.

For volunteer recruitment and support for the event, I asked Will to purchase the movie license during one of our one-on-one meetings. There ended up being a three year license for \$300 that was offered, which was much better than the original \$500 for one year that was offered. Throughout the process I was also vetting volunteers, and I ended up recruiting five of my peers commit to helping me advertise, working the registration table, setting up catering, directing attendees, photographing the event, and making sure it all ran smoothly.

Overall, this project was successful in narrowing the gap I found in the amount of local public health educational opportunities available and the number of Waltham locals employed by public health related industries. When I started this project, I found a community need for this

event after looking at census data that showed that three of the most common industries for females in Waltham are health care and social assistance, educational services, and professional, scientific, and social services. Waltham leads in the latter two industries compared to Massachusetts as a whole. Professional, scientific, and social services and educational services are also two of the top three industries for Waltham males, with health care and social assistance being the smallest of the seven industries reported on. Waltham leads compared to Massachusetts in the first two industries mentioned for males.

This data gave me a good view of what type of education would be beneficial to Waltham community members. Health care and social assistance, educational services, and professional, scientific, and social services are all directly related to the work done by Partners in Health. Since these are the three largest industries for females in Waltham, further education about them would help female students and adult community members advance in a competitive field. Since two of these industries are also of major significance to male community members, we can see that the general population of Waltham could benefit from this area of education, too. Since health care and social assistance are the smallest of the seven industries reported on for males, education in the public health field may help to bring more people into the industry. The community has educational programs to prevent illegal dumping and farming and agriculture, but I couldn't find any educational programs about public health, science, or global assistance. My project aimed to change that.

Using Public Health to Bend the Arc helped to bring the critical role of public health to light to over 45 people who attended the event in Waltham. The event successfully addressed the issue I was working toward solving. Although there is still much work to be done, I feel that I have made a difference. My project has been completed, but I plan for it to continue in future

years. Brandeis has access to the documentary for three years, so I have been notifying professors who may be interested in showing it in their classes that they can use it. Additionally, if any clubs on campus wish to use it, it is available to them as well through the Department of Community Service. The event itself can also be replicated in the future if a student would like to do so.

## **Evaluation**

I chose to use a survey to evaluate the impact of the event. At first I thought I would do a pre-event survey and a post-event survey, but after some guidance from my campus supporter I decided it would be too difficult to collect responses for two surveys; one is difficult enough. This was good advice, as I was only able to collect six responses for my survey. I designed it on Google forms and asked Will, Dr. Curi, and Kaytie to look it over. I had printed copies available for attendees to complete at the event and sent the online version out to the listserv that WPY uses where we advertised the event before.

All of the survey questions were on a five point scale.

- All six respondents rated the movie a 5 for how interesting they found the documentary, as well as how informative they found the Q&A panel session.
- Four people responded about how much they enjoyed speaking with the Brandeis students at the end. This average score was a 4.5 out of 5.
- The question about how helpful the open internships information was got three responses: a 3, 4, and 5.
- Finally, 5/6 respondents gave a 5 for the question asking how much they feel they learned about public health from this event. The other respondent gave it a 4.

Responses to the question asking to name something they learned from the event include: “All the different skills that public health encompasses.” “Impact of compassionate individuals.” “Public health matters!” “Every small act can help those who are underprivileged.” and “I learned how much people in poor countries are affected by low/poor healthcare.” In response to asking what they liked about the event, responses include: “Bringing people together; the panelists, connecting young people to ideas about careers.” “Extremely informative.” “The format was powerful - documentary followed by panel of experts.” “The amazing work Dr Farmer and crew did in developing countries.” “I liked learning about the healthcare systems in different low income counties.” and “I thoroughly enjoyed learning about the healthcare systems about places like Rwanda.”

Suggested improvements for the event include getting more teachers at the high school involved so that there is a bigger turn out in the future, changing the schedule, getting the audience more involved, and the run time. In the additional comments section respondents wrote “Thank you for putting this event on.” “Congrats - great job!” “This was a truly great experience and I am truly glad I came.” and “This was a wonderful learning experience.”

I definitely wish I had gotten more high school teachers involved. One of them that I reached out to offered extra credit to students who came and completed the survey, but I wish I had thought to make this a school-wide engagement. I’m not sure how I could have gotten the audience more involved, but I will keep that in mind in the future. I agree that the run time was a little long, but in order to do everything (food, screening, panel session), three hours was how much time was needed. Perhaps if this was done with a shorter movie in the future it wouldn’t have to be as long.



A link to the Google survey I used can be found below:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpR\\_TaO402IcAMNIPQmj3Wj1BPMKAa\\_ep00-kxCeBrx18QPw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpR_TaO402IcAMNIPQmj3Wj1BPMKAa_ep00-kxCeBrx18QPw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **Final Budget**

A link to my Google budget sheet can be found below. As you'll see in the budget sheet, I was allocated \$1,000 for this project. My total expenditures for the project totaled to \$1,146.88 to cover unexpected janitor costs and last minute food charges which were over my original estimate. The Department of Community Service granted my two contingency fund application requests (for \$191 and for \$20) during the semester to cover both of these unforeseen costs. With my contingency funds, I was allowed a total of \$1,211, and spent \$1, 146.88, leaving me \$64.12 unspent.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aHnbabNoUuohgHp2-gL4PG1FFKH2jvRclH8qwzNb9HA/edit?usp=sharing>

### **Personal Growth/Reflection and Final Thoughts**

This experience has helped me learn and grow both personally and professionally. I heightened my professional network, practiced clear communication, used organizational skills in order to keep track of all of the moving parts, coordinated to fit the schedules of the many people I worked with, learned the difficulties of budgeting, and learned improvisation skills through planning and implementing this program. I contacted professionals in the public health field when looking for panelists, and now know someone who works at Partners in Health (Ancito Ettiene) and at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources (Georgia Simpson). I also learned the importance of imparting important information to my community partner,

campus supporter, the panelists, attendees, and those I work with at the public schools as clearly and as early as possible. This helps prevent confusion and to keep things moving along in the planning process. It also allows you more time in case you hit roadblocks along the way. I budgeted the estimated cost of this project, but I knew that it was more than likely that an unexpected expense will pop up. I was right. I got a taste of learning how to handle sudden changes in the budget and other aspects of the program by improvising. For example, when I found out I didn't have enough money budgeted for security, I was lucky that the Waltham Police Department volunteered. When catering became too expensive, I was lucky that I had the contingency fund.

Personally, this fellowship allowed me to share my passion for public health with others in a meaningful way. I learned that I like to work in public health on the community level and that program coordination might be a good way for me to go about that. I don't know what kind of work I'd like to do exactly, but this experience helped me to better figure out what direction to search in. For that I am very grateful. Additionally, I got to meet community members that I otherwise never would have met, such as Kaytie, Julie Najjumba from Africano, and others. Julie and I have become friends, and she has since asked me to help her write grant applications for her organization. We have met several times to select potential grants to apply to in the future. Kaytie and I have gotten lunch to get to know each other outside of the fellowship as well. I also got coffee with Ancito, one of the panelists, since the event. It feels great to be building connections such as these in the community and the Boston area. I only wish I had the opportunity to do so sooner.

# Using Public Health to Bend the Arc Survey

Thank you for attending Using Public Health to Bend the Arc! Please complete the following survey about your experience.

\* Required

Please write your name if you are receiving extra credit for completing this survey

(your answers will not be shared with your teacher)

Your answer

What grade are you in? \*

(Write "parent," "teacher," "community member," "Brandeis student," "Brandeis staff/faculty" or other title if this not applicable)

Your answer

What is your ethnicity? \*

(Check all that apply)

- Black
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Native American or American
- Indian Asian/Pacific Islander
- White
- Other:



## How did you hear about this event? \*

(Check all that apply)

- I saw a flyer in school
- I saw a flyer in Waltham
- My parent told me about it
- My teacher told me about it
- My friend told me about it
- Waltham Partnership for Youth newsletter
- Other:

## How interesting did you find the documentary? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very interesting

## How informative did you find the Q&A panel session? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very informative

## How much did you enjoy speaking with Brandeis students studying public health?

(Skip if you did not participate in this)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disliked very much	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Enjoyed very much



How helpful is the information about finding public health related jobs and internships that you got through this event?

(Skip if not relevant to you)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very helpful

How much do you feel you learned about public health from this event? \*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nothing at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A lot

What is one thing you learned from this event? \*

Your answer

What is something you liked about this event? \*

Your answer

What about the event could have been improved? \*

Your answer

Please write your email if you would like to be emailed information about the documentary, Partners In Health, the panelists, and career fair professionals.

Your answer

Do you have suggestions for other films, speakers, topics, or activities you'd like to see at future community events?

Your answer



## Additional comments

Your answer

**SUBMIT**

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

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Transaction Date	Amount	Total Funds Remaining	Description	Vendor	Payment Type (P-Card, Reimbursement, Invoice, Stipend, etc.)
Starting Amount	\$1,000.00	\$64.12	Committe-granted funds		
1/26/2018	-\$287.28		27 copies of Mountains Beyond Mountains Digital License to the Documentary Bending the Arc	Amazon	Coupa
3/14/2018	-\$300.00		150 flyers from copy center; english	Tugg Products	P-Card; Will paid
3/12/2018	-\$22.50		100 copies from copy center; spanish	Copy Center	On-campus; Charge line
3/14/2018	-\$15.00		100 copies from copy center: creole	copy Center	on-campus; Charge line
3/20/2018	-\$15.00		120 copies from copy center; english	copy center	on-campus; Charge line
3/20/2018	-\$18.00		30 copies of program	copy center	on-campus; Charge line
3/27/2018	-\$4.50		30 copies of survey	copy center	on-campus; Charge line
3/27/2018	-\$3.60				
3/28/2018	\$191.00		contingency funds granted for food for event	Lucas and Will	From existing Rich/Collins budget
3/28/2018	-\$348.00		Chateua mischarge	chateu	P-card; Jordyn Paid
	\$348.00		Chateua corrected mischarge	Chateau Restaurant, Waltham	P-card; Jordyn Paid
3/28/2018	-\$261.00		Chateau Restaurant Food for the Event	Chateau Restaurant, Waltham	P-Card
3/27/2018	-\$60.00		Jordyn gift to panelists	jordyn reimbursement	Jordyn reimbursement; got petty cash;
			jordyn's gift to panelists was reimbursed by petty cash because it couldn't be reimbursed via rich/collins due to university rules on donations; so the total left in her rich/collins account doesn't include the \$60		
4/11/2018	\$60.00		Janitor Cost for McDevitt	McDevitt Middle School	Katie doing the invoice
4/9/2018	-\$220.00				
4/9/2018	\$20.00		Contingency funds to cover extra janitor cost	contingency	Will-approved; Contingency
			jordyn's gift to panelists was reimbursed by petty cash because it couldn't be reimbursed via rich/collins due to university rules on donations; so the total left in her rich/collins account doesn't include the \$60		
4/11/2018	\$60.00		Although I emailed copy center about this charge in June to remind them to charge it, they didn't do it in the final budget for June so it was never taken out of the account.		
6/30/2018	\$22.50				
<b>Total Amount Spent</b>	<b>\$1,146.88</b>				

\*originally charged \$348 but it was the wrong amount so \$348 was put back on the card; so the charges read "-348, +348, -261" in hte p-card