



# TCMC Agency Brief

Information for Regional Agencies About the Community Immersion Experience

Summer 2014

## Community Immersion Experience Exceeds Expectations: TCMC Students Visit Heights Elementary Kids Cafe

As part of TCMC's Community Weeks curriculum, known as Community Immersion, several per-clinical students from the South campus visited with young students from the Heights Kids Cafe Program at Heights Elementary School in Wilkes-Barre. Kids Cafe is sponsored by the Commission on Economic Opportunity. Every day nearly 180 children attend the free program where they receive homework assistance, a nutritious evening meal and educational and physical activities. Students from the West campus volunteered at Hope Enterprises, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Williamsport that offers a variety of services to enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. In the North campus, student volunteered at the Center for Independent Living in Scranton that offers support for living options to people with disabilities.

"The biggest thing I took away from the experience at the Kids Cafe was how many different avenues were impacted in a positive way for these kids. The program ensures that the child gets a nutritious meal, learns about nutrition and how to make healthy meals at home, gets help with homework, learns about different physical activities, and most importantly gives them somewhere to be every afternoon. For me, these agency experiences have been about learning what I, as a physician, can offer my patient when they come in with problems that can't be solved by a prescription," says TCMC student Trevor Staub, pictured above with Kids Cafe students.

According to Jennifer Joyce, MD, TCMC's professor of Family Medicine, "TCMC's Community Immersion program connects our students with regional communities through partnerships with local service agencies. These partnerships introduce 'Community as Teacher' in our community based approach to health. Our goal for the program is for students to learn the power of collaboration in eliminating health disparities. Through the program, students reflect on the dominant and complex relationships between health and biology, genetics, environment and individual health behaviors. TCMC students see firsthand how socioeconomic status, the physical environment, discrimination, racism and literacy levels impact the health of individuals and communities. This is done through the lens of service as students participate in visits to dedicated local community agencies and structured interviews. Group discussions and guided reflective exercises complete the cycle. It is a great partnership for all."



*"The energy at the Kids Cafe in Wilkes Barre is incredible. The after school program is a true testament to a community addressing local needs. I was thoroughly impressed with the emphasis on nutrition and providing children with a safe outlet to learn and grow," said TCMC student, Mary Elyse Lynch, left, pictured with young learners at the Kids Cafe.*

## Community Immersion Goals & Objectives

*The Community Immersion Experience expands an understanding of health care needs by providing opportunities for students in teams to visit with various agencies that provide for family and community health.*

### Goal:

Develop Clinician-Community Relationships

### Learning Objectives:

- Discover diverse constructs/models of community
- Interpret community perceptions of health care (including myths and misconceptions)
- Relate to local community dynamics:
  - Demographic
  - Economic
  - Political
  - History of land use
  - Migration
  - Occupation
- Discover local environments and their impact on health
- Interpret the isolation of the health care community from the community at large
- Demonstrate respect for community integrity, cultural diversity, and multiple determinants of health
- Understand health-relevant policy
- Operate from an open-minded position
- Distinguish honest limits of medical care
- Illustrate the responsibility to contribute health expertise to public dialogue
- Demonstrate respect of community leadership
- Relate to the responsibility to work for health of the public:
  - Connect Community Health Research Project (CHRP) work with other community visits

TCMC is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.

## TCMC's Agency Partners

### SOUTH REGION

Commission on Economic Opportunity

Maternal & Family Health Services

Wyoming Valley Children's Association

Victims Resource Center

Kingston Active Adult Center

Cori's Place

Wyoming Valley Alcohol & Drug Services, Inc.

Day Development Program

The RedCo Group

White Haven Center

United Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

Family Service Association

**Thank You!**

# South Student Perspective

## Appreciating the Time Spent with Agencies

### Maternal and Family Services and Victims Resource Center

*Some of the most enlightening experiences I've had as a first year medical student at TCMC occurred while volunteering with various community agencies. Time spent at a day program for adults with intellectual disabilities taught me respect, appreciation, and love for all, despite differences. A day with Maternal Health and Family Services increased my understanding of the difficult situations some new families must learn to cope with, and of the available resources that can bless their lives. And the conversations I had at the Victims Resource Center helped me to bring the trials, hardships, and healing of those suffering from abuse into perspective. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I have been given, and hope that students and community agencies will continue to work together to build better communities.*

-Jason Jenson

### Wyoming Valley Drug and Alcohol Services & Day Development Program

*As a first year at TCMC, I have had the opportunity to experience my community and even further, spend time with those serving the community on the front lines. During my community weeks, I've spent time with those serving homeless shelters, food pantries, and drug and alcohol rehab services. Each has given me special insight into my community but has also given me insight on myself as it continually reminds me why I am entering medicine. I am thankful to both the area agencies and TCMC for giving me such a special experience so early in my training.*

-Aditya Eturi

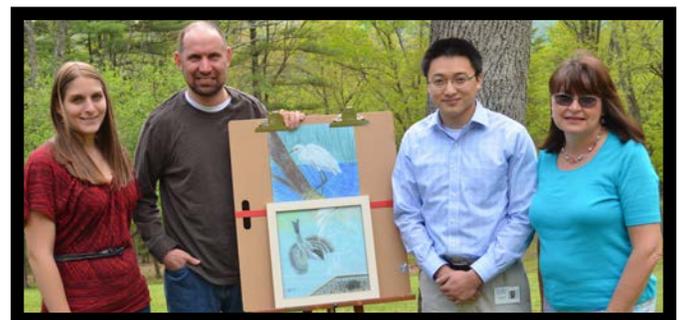
# South Family Perspective

The Family Centered Experience (FCE) program is an important part of TCMC's patient-centered, community-based curriculum. Each year during the Community Week Experience, first year students are paired with a patient, and visit the patient three times a year for two years to learn the human aspect and personal family experiences that arise from managing a chronic or serious illness. This year, Kathleen and Tony Gill of Schickshinny shared their experiences of coping with epilepsy for more than 20 years:

Kathleen and Tony Gill became involved in TCMC's Family Centered Experience through the NEPA Center for Independent Living. Tony Gill has been living with epilepsy since age 12. Together, they are committed to educating, advocating and raising awareness about epilepsy. "We agreed to participate because epilepsy is a disorder that affects 1 in 25 people," reports Kathleen Gill. "Having first hand experiences about epilepsy will enhance the learning experiences for the medical students. We were also involved with medical students at Thomas Jefferson University Medical School during Tony's numerous hospitalizations."

"We looked forward to each visit with Nicole and Bing. They were friendly, articulate, compassionate, and gave Tony their full attention as he answered their questions and spoke about his disorder and how it affected his life," says Kathleen. "Through this program TCMC students see the impact of a chronic illness in a person's life, but they also get to see that there is more to that person than the illness."

It also helps the Gill's inform others in the medical community that the Epilepsy Foundation of Eastern PA and the Epilepsy Foundation of America are the first sources of help and support for patients following diagnosis.



Tony shares his passion for art with TCMC students, Nicole Jezewski and Bing Shaoxu. Drawing birds and other nature scenes has played a major role in his rehabilitation after several major brain surgeries to control seizures. From left to right, Nicole Jezewski, Tony Gill, Bing Shaoxu and Kathleen Gill.

**If you or someone you know is interested in applying to become an FCE participant, please contact TCMC's Regional Campus Office at 570.504.9067 or email [rcr@tcmcd.org](mailto:rcr@tcmcd.org).**