Lessons From Kalaupapa

ʻImi Hoʻōla is Hawaiian for “those who seek to heal.” Kalaupapa serves as an experience for these aspiring physicians to discover the value gained from understanding their own stories, backgrounds, and cultures. Students shared their stories and practiced their presentation skills. They were able to experience a CPR simulation with manikin patient technology at JABSOM’s SimTiki lab with Kristine Hara. A service project at Paepae o Heʻeia fishpond on O‘ahu, had students and faculty working together to sort and transport “twenty tons” of rocks across the water to support the fishpond walls. Students also met UH West O‘ahu professor and pediatrician, Dr. Ric Custodio, who inspired them with his own pathway story and a talk about technology and the future of medicine.

The SHA allowed students from Lāna‘i and Nānākuli to form solid and lasting relationships with each other and with the staff of NHCOE. Students quickly became unified as they engaged in activities that encourage learning, shared conversation and personal reflections, SHA lessons and activities enhanced participants’ understanding of their individual educational and (medical) career pathway.

About the author:
Amaya Hoopii-Baptista is a 9th grader at Lāna‘i High and Elementary School. She excels in math and dreams of becoming an OB/GYN in the future.

“ʻAʻohe pau ka ʻike i ka hālau hoʻokahi.”
All knowledge is not learned in just one school

September 2017
JABSOM Student Presents Her Research at the American Geriatric Society Meeting
by Keolamau Yee, MS3

Recently through the generous support of the NHCOE, I had the wonderful opportunity of attending the 2017 annual American Geriatrics Society (AGS) meeting in San Antonio, Texas. At this conference, I presented during a poster on the results of my research from the previous summer. The research I conducted focused on the problems geriatric care facilities face in transitioning between paper charts to electronic medical record systems. This is a common issue facing many clinicians across the country. My project highlighted the key pieces of health information-specifically end of life care decisions such as advance directives and code status—that can be misplaced or not recorded in the paper to EMR transition. My research discovered that only about a third of the patients’ records reviewed had advance directives in the paper chart and in the EMR. Additionally, many code statuses were not accurate due to an auto-population function that is used by the charting system. These findings are extremely important in attempting to provide quality care to elderly individuals. Moreover, providing care in a crisis and honoring the wishes of a patient is nearly impossible with confusing and conflicting code status information in the EMR. Our research indicated that greater care must be taken concerning entering and updating end of life wishes in the transition between paper charts and EMR.

Motivating and Supporting Our Authors: Piloting Writing Retreats at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health
by Chessa Harris, MBA

As academics and researchers committed to and passionate about Native Hawaiian health, we need to share our discoveries and experiences with the world. The most common way of doing this is through the publication of our work. Although most of us know that we should spend more time writing, we struggle with the competing demands of our profession and hesitate to put aside focused time to write.

With a self-reported 89% of Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH) faculty and staff currently working on a written piece for publication, it was recognized that there was a need to support and encourage faculty and staff in their academic and research endeavors. As a result, three writing retreats were sponsored by NHCOE and held in April and May in hopes that a dedicated, distraction-minimized atmosphere would spur creativity and motivate participants to achieve the next stage of their writing process. Each retreat was self-designed so that participants could create their own goals and determine how to best spend their retreat time.

Follow-up surveys completed by program participants indicates that the retreats allowed for greater productivity among faculty and staff. The structure of the retreat enabled participants to write more efficiently, and seeing others also engaged in writing helped to create a sense of community and shared purpose. Individuals remained on task to the point that many did not want to take a break, even for lunch! Many remarked that the retreats provided an opportunity to build relationships and connect with others in the Department in a fresh new way.

Given the overall positive response, the DNHH plans to continue offering workshops during AY 2017-2018. We hope to improve upon our early successes, and based on retreat feedback, will incorporate suggestions made by participants and offer facilitated workshops in combination with unique writing retreats.

A special mahalo to those individuals who assisted with the planning and execution of the retreats: Chessa Harris, MBA; Vanessa Wong, MS; Malia Lee, MS; Gregory Maksarinen, PhD; Danielle Moilan; Cynthia Boyler, GA; Kimberly Yamauchi, MD.

About the author:
Keolamau Yee is a third year medical student at JABSOM. She currently resides in Nu’uanu and aspires to practice Geriatric Medicine in the future.

Faculty and staff working at the NHCOE writing retreat
offer facilitated workshops in combination with unique writing retreats. To improve upon our early successes, and based on retreat feedback, we will incorporate suggestions made by participants and explore a fresh new way.

One participant remarked that the retreats provided an opportunity to build relationships and connect with others in the Department in a new environment. Faculty and staff working at the NHCOE writing retreat noted an increased productivity among faculty and staff. The structure of the retreat enabled participants to focus on their work and contributed to their motivation to continue writing.

Motivating and Supporting Our Authors: Piloting Writing Retreats at the Department of Longevity Science

Currently, many of our faculty and staff are working towards publication, but face challenges in finding the time to write due to the competing demands of their primary roles. Although most of us recognize the importance of publishing our work, we often struggle to make writing a priority. To address this issue, the NHCOE sponsored three writing retreats in April and May. These retreats were held to provide a dedicated, distraction-minimized atmosphere that would encourage creativity and motivate participation.

Our SRI interns have had great success. Of those we’ve been able to follow up with, 73% have been accepted into medical school (49% here at JABSOM), 3% have been accepted into other health science graduate school programs, and 23% are continuing research in their undergraduate programs. Interns have gone on to publish papers and present their posters at local and national conferences. Over 90% identified that this program has helped them refine their career goals to include research, as they had a greater understanding of the importance of research in health improvement, especially in health-disparate communities.

The Department of Native Hawaiian Health Hosts Eleven Summer Research Interns

DNHH Summer Research Internship (SRI) provides undergraduate students who are interested in careers in the health sciences a 10-week intensive research-training program in clinical, community, and translational research. The program seeks to inspire minority students to include health science research in their careers. The SRI program is grounded in a cultural-based education model, which has been shown to positively impact educational outcomes such as student engagement, achievement, and behavior and has been shown to be superior to traditional Western-based strategies in increasing parity for diverse students.

The program is designed to provide interns with foundational research skills, enhance professional development, discover the vital role research plays in advancing and promoting health, and understand the integral role of culture in health research. The unique hands-on, culture-based curriculum allows interns to immerse themselves in Native Hawaiian (NH) ideology, cultural practices, and protocol in order to enhance their understanding of the connection between culture and health. In collaboration with Queen’s Medical Center’s SRI, interns attend weekly research lectures and professional development group seminars, engage in peer mentorship, shadow physicians, tour medical education and clinical facilities, and engage in cultural practices. Under the direction of an expert research mentor, the interns complete a research project focusing on a medical condition that disproportionally affects Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) populations. The summer culminates in a formal research paper and presentation of their study at a poster session.

Our SRI interns have been very successful. Of those who are responsive to follow up, 73% have been accepted to medical school (49% here at JABSOM), 3% have been accepted into other health science graduate school programs, and 23% are continuing research in their undergraduate programs. Interns have gone on to publish papers and present their posters at local and national conferences. Over 90% identified that this program has helped them refine their career goals to include research, as they had a greater understanding of the importance of research in health improvement, especially in health-disparate communities.

“Tis is a whole side of medicine I never knew of. I feel so grateful to see medicine from a cultural perspective—it makes so much more sense!” - Anonymous Intern

“I no longer say “if” I go to med school...I say “when” I go to med school. This program made me see that it’s not such a far-off goal. I can do it!” - Anonymous Intern

The Department of Native Hawaiian Health

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"What I appreciated most about this program was the emphasis on community health... and health disparities...I have never been more excited to take action and do my part to eliminate disparities" - SRI 2015 Intern

Student Research Interns 2017
Lessons From Kalaupapa
by Jennifer Ha

As the daughter of an ʻImi Hoʻōla faculty member, I grew up listening to stories of Kalaupapa. The ʻImi Hoʻōla trip to Kalaupapa is a yearly ritual for our entire family. Before the trip, we practice hiking stairs with my dad as he prepares for the trek in and out. After the trip, we look through photos he’s taken as he narrates the details: the churches on Damien road, the luʻau food, singing together with patients, the ghost stories, the cliff hike. After years of imagining the experience, I finally had the opportunity to join my dad with the ʻImi staff and students on their annual trip to Kalaupapa this past March.

For the past 40 years, ʻImi Hoʻōla staff and students have been traveling to Kalaupapa as part of a service learning project to learn about the history of Hansen’s disease in Hawaii. In 1866, patients with Hansen’s disease, or Leprosy, were quarantined in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease. Approximately 8,000 individuals, the majority of them Native Hawaiian, were banished to Kalaupapa, an isolated settlement on the island of Molokaʻi.

One of my most memorable experiences during the trip was visiting Moku Puakala, a collection of graves next to the historic St. Philomena Church in Kalawao. I was most struck by the graves that were unmarked, looking upon the enclosed grass field and reading the line, “Over 7000 people have been buried on the peninsula since January 1866.” I felt the gravity of loss and pain that these patients felt as they were treated as “lepers”, isolated physically and socially from their families and homes. I remembered the mother who had described in the film, “Kalaupapa Heaven,” the agony of watching her child being taken from her, unable to touch or hold her baby, as she shared, “To come here meant to die.”

While the history of Kalaupapa embodies violations upon human dignity, it is also a story of dignity reclaimed by patients and their advocates. These people built a community of hope, love, and faith in the face of mistreatment; people with unforgettable strength choosing “to love, and be loved, and to always care about the next guy,” as one patient commented.

ʻImi Hoʻōla is Hawaiian for “those who seek to heal.” Kalaupapa serves as an experience for these aspiring physicians to learn about the art of healing. Healing is not only about repairing the body. It is also about the work behind grieving, gathering, and opening oneself to the wisdom and suffering in others. Valuing the connections we have to others, to the past, and to our local communities and histories, is an act of care and a movement toward collective healing. As a place of learning and remembrance, Kalaupapa reminds us that we are all asked to take part in this healing by carrying forward what we learn with us as as students, doctors, teachers, and community members.

About the author:
Jennifer is a rising senior at Yale University majoring in Humanities and Education Studies. She is spending the summer in New Haven teaching a philosophy class and co-directing the Ulysses S. Grant summer academic enrichment program for middle school students in New Haven Public Schools.

Aloha to the NH JABSOM Class of 2021!
Charles Akiona, Malia Brennan, David George Camacho, Max Castanera, Jacob Castro, Bryce Chang, Joshua Freitas, Edy Gomes, Russell Kackley, Jerrick Laimana, Cherisse Sen, Kadee-Kalia Tamashiro, Amanda Wasko, Chelsea Yin.

Edits/Writer: Malia Lee, MD, Lisa Kabikina, MD and Kimberly Yamauchi, MPA Layout Editor: Cynthia Baylor éminence grise: Winona Lee, MD

Nū 'Oli o NHCOE is a newsletter of NHCOE at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of JABSOM or of the University of Hawai‘i. Suggestions and submissions are welcome. Please submit to nhcoe@hawaii.edu - Mahalo!

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