

Student Interns: *Natalie Correa, Drexel University College of Medicine; Sarah Awad, Drexel University College of Medicine*

Academic Preceptor: *Emily Spengler, MD – St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children*

Community Preceptors: *Kevin Weber, BA – Director of Recreation, Academic and Volunteer Services at NCS; Dawn George, MS, Psy.D – Director of Outpatient, Wellness, and Early Intervention Programs at NCS; Nicole Favuzzi-Qualls – Outcome Specialist for Generations, Supervised Residential Housing Programs at NCS*

## COMMUNITY PARTNER

Northern Children’s Services supports the healthy development of children, while stabilizing their families to build stronger communities. The Wellness and Resiliency Program offers intensive and individualized services that integrate therapeutic interventions and academic support, provides after-school during the academic year, and all day during the summer. The majority of students referred for participation in the afterschool and summer youth programs typically display behavioral challenges that manifest as multiple school suspensions, poor academic performance, impulsivity, and difficulty responding appropriately to school structure and authority figures. The program offers individual therapy, family and group therapy skills, social skill development, and homework help and tutoring.

## PROJECT

As Student Interns, we assisted in recreational and therapeutic activities with children in the Wellness and Resilience Program. We frequently assisted in de-escalation, resilience building strategies, implementation of coping skills and recreational day camp activities. As additional staff, we were often involved in pulling kids aside for de-escalation, mediation and redirection. Twice a week, we hosted small group sessions with teen mothers in the Generations I program. The group sessions provided information and resources for various life skills such as health/healthcare, values, decision making, communication, education, and career goals.

## CHALLENGES

- Anger management difficulties.
- Lack of/poor coping skills.
- Sociocultural views; engrained lessons about fighting and respect/disrespect.
- Hesitancy in building trust & forming relationships.
- Nature of our temporary placement as interns.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successful oral health presentations demonstrating proper brushing and flossing.
- Educational session about Emergency Medical Services (EMS) with an ambulance tour.
- Formed bonds with children through de-escalation and providing support during emotional outbursts.

## REFLECTION

“I decided to pursue a career in medicine to serve historically oppressed and underserved populations. My time at Northern Children’s Services during BTG gave me an opportunity to learn and implement skills that I will carry with me throughout my career. Working with the staff and clients helped me develop a trauma-informed lens and allowed me to reflect upon the disparities and injustices that lead to health inequities in marginalized populations. This summer was instrumental in developing skills that will allow me to become the physician I aspire to be.” - Natalie

“When I picked NCS as my BTG site, I was looking for a place that would challenge me and I certainly got that. Every moment was a learning experience and I feel as if I’ve gained a full range of new skills. Seeing these kids embrace and celebrate therapy was inspiring but learning how to contribute to their individual progress and reinforce their coping skills was the most powerful and rewarding aspect of the experience. I am certain I’ll be better equipped as a clinician because of the skills and insights gained during my time at NCS.” - Sarah

