

Bridging the Gaps



Farming as a Tool for Gap Bridging

Student Interns:

Chidinma Wilson, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine
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Academic Preceptors:

Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine
Ann L. O'Sullivan, PhD, FAAN, CPNP, University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing

Community Preceptors:

Tyler Holmberg, Co-Director, Sankofa Community Farm at Bartram's Garden

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Sankofa Farms is an Afrocentric agricultural organization focused on youth development, community health and food sovereignty.

- The farmers produce over 15,000 pounds of food yearly
- This site is powered by about 1,500 volunteers, 50 local families, and 20 high school interns.
- *Sankofa* is derived from the Akan people of West Africa and challenges each to remain cognizant of the past while charging towards the future, the idea of “remembering” as a tool for healing and growing.



PROJECT

BTG interns assisted with coordinating the youth program at Sankofa Farm which included the following activities:

- Weekly, thirty-minute health-related wellness workshops followed by discussions with high school students
- One-on-one time with students to build connection and understanding during field work.
- Close work with cooking staff to teach students about food sovereignty and prepare meals for every member of the farm.

PROJECT OUTCOMES



- Supported youth development of cultural identity through cooking and examining origins of food
- Fostered student understanding of health-related concepts such as nutrition and oral health
- Contributed to growth and development of summer crops

REFLECTION

“This summer experience has positively impacted my professional and personal life. I thoroughly enjoyed learning about agriculture from an African diasporic lens, an acquired experience that both shed light on the storied past of certain crops and helped contextualize their role in today’s culture. Also, I enjoyed speaking with staff members and students as we worked together, which helped me learn more about beautiful aspects of the Southwest and West Philadelphia communities: cohesiveness, familial ties, and oral storytelling traditions. The wisdom I gained from coworkers and students will continue to inform my decision making as I work towards becoming a compassionate physician and impactful community partner.”

- Chidinma Wilson

"The BTG CHIP experience provides me with the opportunity to interact with the urban farmers in the Southwest Philadelphia community. The farmers at Sankofa practice natural agriculture and African diasporic rooted farming as a method of healing from America’s heavy history, particularly when discussing slavery. As an important takeaway, I hope to center my care around patient education when I become a nurse. Taken together, I aspire to treat my patients with an abundance of patience in my future role as a healthcare provider.”

- Annie Yang