

# COMMUNITY MATTERS

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE FRONTLINES



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH  
Institute for Community Partnerships



FALL 2021



### THE ROOT CAUSE COALITION CONFERENCE: CRISTIE GRANILLO



Root Cause Coalition is a national coalition of organizations committed to addressing and resolving the systemic root causes of health inequities. Every year the coalition holds a national summit on the social determinants of health to bring together representatives from health systems, nonprofits, and academic institutions, among others, to share best practices.

ICP's very own Cristie Granillo was selected as a speaker for the 2021 summit in October and shared her work on Community Health and Education Worker (CHEW) integration. Her presentation titled **"Redefining Chronic Absenteeism through Social Determinants of Health"** described the community-academic partnership that has been forged to implement the CHEW model. Congratulations Cristie on presenting at your first national conference!



### A JOURNEY TO LLU: PIPELINE ALUMNA VALERIA BORDES

Valeria Bordes grew up in San Bernardino and attended the Loma Linda Spanish Church. It was at the church where she initially heard about the LLU Pipeline programs.

She decided to participate in the summer program when she was seventeen. Valeria shared the significant impact the pipeline program had on her life trajectory, reflecting upon the importance of seeing people with higher education who shared the same cultural background as her. **"I got a glimpse of what an educational experience would be for me as a Hispanic female and the experience of being supported academically and professionally."** As a result, the pipeline program instilled confidence in her to pursue higher education.

Valeria became a young mother after high school and may not have continued to college had she not experienced the motivation and encouragement from the program. She reflected: **"Had I not experienced the pipeline program and had educational opportunities open up for me, I may not have perceived higher education possible for me as a young mother...Having that exposure really equipped me to see what was ahead and what the possibilities were."**

So, Valeria chose to go to college and eventually obtained her master's degree. The pipeline program highlighted the value of higher education, while providing support, encouragement, and resources.

One of the biggest gifts that the pipeline program provided was encouragement to dream big. **"You're not defined by anything...the sky literally is the limit."**



## VALERIA (CONTINUED)

**The experiences that you're exposed to highlight what you can be in the future and if you don't see it, if you don't get exposed to it, it may not happen because it never occurred to you as a possibility."**

Now, Valeria works for the Loma Linda Behavioral Medicine Center as a Clinical Therapist and is currently in the Doctorate Marriage and Family Therapy program. She is a proud mother of four children and a member of the Loma Linda University Church. Amidst her busy life, Valeria still finds ways to be involved in the community and is always looking for ways to grow and improve. **"Volunteering is important to me because I have volunteered in some way or another throughout my adolescence - it really built character for me... so I try to seek out, as much as possible, meaningful volunteer experiences where I...can give back. I truly love it."** Valeria's journey continues to come full circle, this past summer she was a presenter at our Discovery program speaking on mental health and careers in the profession to youth who share similar journeys to herself. Currently, Valeria mentors teenage girls beginning their educational journey.

At her job, she is able to apply her own experiences and lessons she learned throughout her journey. **"When I work with families...I get to talk about their challenges, highlight their strengths and culture. I find so much meaning in being able to work in our community, connect with families and help them discover their hope and strengths."** We are so proud of Valeria, her accomplishments, and the impact she continues to make.

Valeria is extremely grateful to the pipeline program and says that it continues to provide her with a network of mentors, academic support, and resources.

**"Being part of the pipeline program gives you academic and educational support....I can reach out to the [LLUH] pipeline program team and there will be continuous support and encouragement."**

With nearly 900 students in our group of alumni, CAPS is committed to offering lifelong support, resources, and mentorship to our students like Valeria. She is an inspiring and admirable part of our community and we are so grateful to be part of her story. We can't wait to be part of her future success!

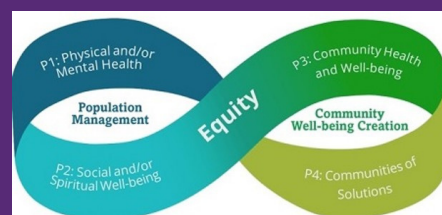
## A RESEARCH-BASED COLLABORATIVE CHNA

ICP's Community Health Development (CHD, aka Community Benefit) department conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every 3 years. Our 2019 CHNA helped form the priority areas for our 2020-2022 Community Health Implementation Strategy on behalf of Loma Linda University Health's (LLUH) four licensed hospitals. This process allows us to better understand the community we work in collaborative partnership with, identifies health challenges including diabetes, asthma, behavioral health issues, as well as guides our organization's impact and strategies for our priority populations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

For our CHNA report due in 2022, we will work through an academically robust and collaborative approach developed by the CHD team and LLUH's School of Public Health (SPH). The SPH team (directed by Dr. Karl McCleary, with team members Drs. Wiafe, Shah and Baba-Djara as technical leads, and Drs. Sealy and Spencer-Hwang as technical advisors) will support CHD with in-depth analysis of community progress. The school will use their research-based skillset to implement a process focused on experienced research staff involvement and an orientation towards our most vulnerable community members. There will be a community assets and strengths inventory utilizing a Health Equity Framework in addition to the established key informant interviews, community conversations (or focus group discussions) and Social Determinants of Health data typically represented.

Additionally, SPH is involving graduate students specifically selected from our local community to ensure we better understand the results and outcomes from our region. In this way the synergistic teams will replicate and enhance the typical process of CHNA data collection, analysis, and reporting.

We are excited to share more! Please find our current CHD publications here, and please look for our upcoming CHNA-2022 in the middle of next year.



## PARTNERING IN SB PLANNING

Did you miss you at the Downtown Specific Plan public workshops? You can still participate by providing your input! Take the Downtown Specific Plan Public Survey: [Surveymonkey.com/r/FutureSB\\_Downtown](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FutureSB_Downtown) (or in [Spanish](#)) Survey closes January 9, 2022!



## BLOSSOMING IN COMMUNITY WITH BRITTANY MCPHEE



Brittany McPhee is a second year medical student at Loma Linda University. At least once a week, she volunteers through CAPS at the Jardín de la Salud, an LLUH community garden in San Bernardino geared towards advancing food justice and combating the loss of green spaces in the region. She was first attracted to the garden because of her love of being outside in nature as well as her passion for health and community engagement.

Brittany prioritizes going to the garden because it's a space to destress and build meaningful relationships. Over time, she has befriended many community members who are involved at the garden. These members are SB locals passionate about growing their own food and learning from one another. The garden was started in 2019 to help low-income community members have the access to grow their own organic produce and have a safe place to exercise with their families. **"This year we've even started staying a little after and we'll share food or they'll give me some of their crops which is super generous and just get to talking about their families."** Some folks recently asked Brittany whether they should get the COVID-19 vaccine. This is just one example of the trusting relationships that Brittany has formed by routinely volunteering at the garden. Brittany's relationships at the garden continue to blossom alongside the vegetables.

Brittany has learned a lot from her experience volunteering at the garden and from the community. **"[They] want to take control of their health and help the community and I think when we empower them that they will have so much more of an**

**impact than we ever could because they're living the experience and still making a difference and I think that's the most beautiful thing."**

Brittany's motivation for volunteering at the garden has evolved into more than wanting to be outside in nature; she finds herself wanting to go to the garden to see the people who she has befriended and to continue to grow those relationships. One of the biggest takeaways for Brittany regarding her experience volunteering at the garden is that by, **"showing up and doing a little bit at a time, overtime grows into a lot bigger of an impact."**

If you are trying to decide where to volunteer, Brittany recommends picking something that you're passionate about and over time you will find other meaning from it. **"Pick something that plays to your strengths or what you're excited about because then you'll go more often and be more apt to do it even on a really busy day."**

**"The garden is a great place to be - take a step back from being inside, studying, staring at a screen all day to connect with community members and connect with nature and make a difference... This is a newer garden so there is so much work to be done and they have really big goals!"**

Thank you, Brittany, for your commitment to the community and for all of your hard work! You are an inspiration!





## PRODUCE RX: FLIPPING THE MEDICAL MODEL



The Produce Rx program was introduced at the Jardín de la Salud in San Bernardino in October 2020, and now has a group of dedicated members. This program was designed to address health concerns such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity among

community members by flipping the medical model of prescribing drugs. Instead the program focuses on bridging access to preventive health solutions such as a higher consumption of fruits and vegetables and regular physical activity. Patients are referred from the SAC Health System (SACHS), Community Health Workers, or the community as a non-clinical way to address chronic disease. The intention of this program is to provide community members with the tools needed to improve their overall health through healthier lifestyle choices such as consumption of organic fruits and vegetables and exercise. Community Health Workers, program coordinators, and Loma Linda University graduate students provide training and support through gardening, workshops, and check-in meetings. Participants also receive a bi-weekly box of free organic produce to help implement the skills they have learned in the workshops. This donor funded program aims to equip participants with the knowledge, support, and ability to make these healthy lifestyle choices and improve their overall health.

Maria Elena Bastian is a Community Health Worker by trade and the fearless leader of the Produce Rx program. An avid gardener herself, Maria Elena has been with the program since the very beginning. Her passion for community and addressing food insecurity has played a vital role in the program's success.

When asked about the program Maria Elena shared, **"Produce Rx is an important program that I hope we can continue introducing, not just to the San Bernardino community, but all throughout the county."**

The program has been well received by participants. Produce Rx participants meet regularly to tend to the garden, participate in workshops, and have even arranged group hikes. They have a strong support system and a group message to share their latest recipes. **"They have created a bond from how they greet each other, how they cook, and how they use certain fruits and vegetables in their diet. It is nice, it is nice to see how between them they are helping each other"**.

The program hopes to grow to continue to address barriers such as limited access to healthy foods and overall improve the health of the community. **"I think Produce Rx is important and, you know, an innovative program to help the community. I have been seeing how the community is coming together, especially since the start. They are not just classmates, they have built relationships and have become a family. When you do that and have the knowledge the participants have, they start thinking about how they are doing things and wanting to improve their health."**

For more information about the Produce Rx program email Maria Elena Bastian at [mariaelenabastian@huertadelvalle.org](mailto:mariaelenabastian@huertadelvalle.org)



### ICP TOWNHALL: GATHERING WITH PURPOSE

On November 11th 2021 ICP hosted our quarterly Town Hall meeting. Here our community comes together to learn, ask questions, and engage in meaningful conversations. Our November Town Hall had the honor of having Chairman Ken Ramirez from the Yahaaviatam Clan (aka San Manuel Band of Indians of the Serrano tribe) sharing about the history of the region and the tribe's ongoing partnership with Loma Linda University Health. We also heard from three of our Pipeline alumni students who are currently on campus! Edwin Choque (Medicine), Cornelius Froese (Nursing) and Briana Ramirez (Pharmacy) shared on the impact of the Pipeline programs and their journey towards higher education. To learn more about our pipeline programs please see the information below and read Valeria's story above !





## HOPE ON THE HOLIDAYS

It's important to connect to our community, especially during the holiday season. Alongside our LLUSA, SOTA, and School of Medicine students, CAPS helped put together and deliver 57 boxes of food and hygiene items the last week of November!

These boxes were filled with food for the holidays, hygiene items, and staple goods for families, lovingly wrapped by our students! These boxes were hand-delivered to 42 of the families we work with on a regular basis through the Community Health Worker program and 15 families at the Time for Change Foundation, an organization helping unhoused families find stability. Thank you to our students, staff, and community for their efforts in making this happen!

## CHRISTMAS FIESTA 2021

The CAPS Christmas Fiesta event hosted over 100 people from our local community programs providing food, fun, and gifts. In collaboration with LLUSA, SOTA, ALAS, HNP, and more the CAPS team had activities such as piñatas, face painting, and ornament making. Families came together and enjoy delicious tamales and champurrado by our own garden member and community leader, Sandra Bonola. We even had a musical rendition by the CKC music students! Over 100 gifts were given out to community families with any remaining gifts being donated to our CHEW team who will share them with families in our community and hospital. Thanks to everyone who made this event possible, together we were able to bring holiday cheer to our local community!



## CAPS OPPORTUNITIES MLK JR. DAY OF SERVICE 2022

For the 3rd year our CAPS team is honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by serving alongside our community on Monday, January 17th. Join our team as we help our local community garden continue to build food equity!

[Sign up now!](#)



## PIPELINE WORKSHOP SPEAKERS NEEDED!

Are you passionate about helping youth succeed? Share your knowledge with our pipeline alumni! Workshops are every 1st Wednesday evening of the month and we need YOU.

Topics of Interest:

- Letters of Recommendation
- Resume building
- & more!

E-mail  
[llupipelines@llu.edu](mailto:llupipelines@llu.edu)  
today!



**LISTEN**



**RESPECT**

ICP.LLU.EDU  
ICP@LLU.EDU



**ENGAGE**



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
Institute for Community Partnerships