

# COMMUNITY MATTERS

UPLIFTING THE WORK WE DO TOGETHER



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH  
Institute for Community Partnerships



WINTER 2022



## ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN INFANT HEALTH OUTCOMES

There are significant racial and ethnic disparities in health across the US, including stark disparities in infant and maternal mortality. African American mothers are over 3 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications and the African American infant mortality rate is over 2 times higher than that of their White counterparts.

LLUH ICP and its CHW team aim to address disparities and inequities by partnering with agencies focusing on the same goals. ICP recently got the opportunity to meet with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health Black Infant Health (BIH) program leaders to hear about the work the county is doing to address health disparities for Black mothers and infants. The BIH program offers stress management tools, peer support, and health education to empower pregnant and mothering African American women. Regan Kelso, an ICP CHW based in the LLUMC NICU, is working with the county's BIH team, collaborating on sharing our respective program's activities and goals. As a BIH guest speaker, Regan has given a window into the NICU experience.

To learn more about the SBCDPH Black Infant Health program visit  
<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/fhs/bih/>



## HONORING THE LEGACY OF REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



For the third year in a row CAPS hosted our annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service as a kick-off to a great year filled with intentional service in our community. To honor the great activist and scholar Dr. MLK Jr. we invited students and community members to join us at the Jardín de la Salud (Garden of Health), a community garden dedicated to food equity and justice in San Bernardino. Despite the pouring rain, over 50 volunteers braved the elements to help in different areas of the garden including weeding, clearing up the production area, and planting seeds for the new growth season.

Volunteers learned about the garden's mission for food justice and the lasting effects of food apartheid in our region. Afterwards the volunteers worked alongside community members to plant new seeds of hope at the garden. We look forward to a 2022 filled with learning, serving, and working together to increase justice and equity in our community.



Rockstar Students

Planting Seeds

Fruits of our Labor

## ROCKSTAR STUDENTS: MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

The **Transition 2 Success (T2S)** scholars program originated thanks to Loma Linda University's School of Medicine and generous alumni who wanted to support efforts to diversify medicine. A pilot of six high school students preparing to transition to college and six college students preparing to transition to the health professions were selected to participate. **The Transition 2 Success scholars program aims to support health career Pipeline students during the most challenging times of their academic journey.** This is done in a variety of ways, including pairing each student with a mentor. Simone DeShields, a fourth year medical student at Loma Linda University, eagerly agreed to mentor Jayleen Bell when the opportunity arose last year. Since then, their relationship has blossomed in more ways than either of them anticipated.

Jayleen Bell, a first year student at UCLA, was connected to Simone through the program when she was a senior at Middle College High School. She was seeking someone who could help her navigate the transition to college and provide encouragement and support. During their first conversation, Simone and Jayleen realized that they had a lot in common. Simone graduated from UCLA - Jayleen's dream school - and Simone majored in psychobiology, a major that Jayleen wished to pursue. **Their shared trajectory from college to aspiring doctors has played a role in strengthening their relationship.**

Simone wanted to be a mentor because, she explained, "I don't really have any black female doctors [in my family] to look up to. So I think being there and showing [Jayleen] it's very possible and if I can do it - and you're even better than I am - we're going to figure out how to get you there. For me at least, part of being in the position I'm in as a student and a future physician is really seeing how I can make sure that other people from backgrounds similar to mine can get to the same point and excel even further."

When asked about how Simone has influenced her, Jayleen said, "The one main thing that she's shown me is really that you can do things, like you can get there..."



Jayleen Bell, T2S mentee

She really inspires me to actually put in my best in what I do in school because sometimes I do feel like giving up but I know that I can call her and she'll reassure me that things are okay."

Jayleen also spoke about how she enjoys sharing her

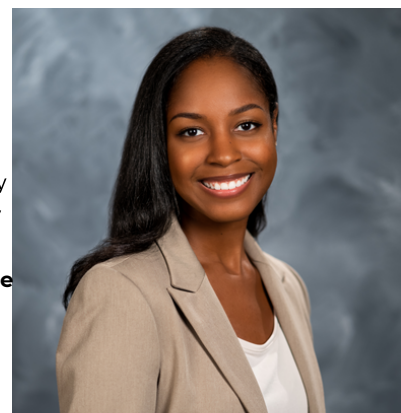
successes with Simone (like when she got accepted into UCLA). Simone gives her space to talk about her achievements as well as her frustrations. Simone added, "it is so exciting to celebrate those highs with her but for me it's also really exciting that she's able to trust me when she's having challenges. Like if she's just going through a hard time with school...I really appreciate and honor that she trusts me with that. So those moments to me are very valuable and cherished."

Simone has inspired Jayleen in other ways, too. "I'm getting the help from Simone that I am not able to get anywhere else...So [Simone] helping me out makes me want to help other people...I want to give back to my community...I want to help high schoolers and try to give that guidance to [them]." **Jayleen hopes to mentor students from her high school in San Bernardino in the near future.** She is driven, in part, by the impact that Simone has had on her.

When asked how they envision the future of their relationship, Simone said, "I do think as we progress it will become more and more of a sisterhood in a way because I mean we get along so easily...it's such an easy relationship...**We're definitely involved in a program together but for me this is just a relationship outside of that that we're going to continue regardless of where we are.** If she decides to go to medical school, of course whatever she ends up doing she's going to be great, but whatever I can give her outside of how we met, I'm 100% there for her."

In response to the same question, Jayleen replied, "For me, I hope that I keep this relationship with Simone... I'm really appreciative of her and I look up to her. And I hope to see everything that she plans to do and I hope to tell her like, 'hey I got out of college and I'm going to medical school.' I hope that the relationship lasts a long time because I would like to update her about all of this and continue to talk with her about everything and hear how she's doing...**Simone is like an older sister that I never had.**" T2S has been so successful that there are plans to expand the program to more students in 2022.

Of the six college students who participated in the program, two have been accepted to Loma Linda University and two are currently applying. **We are so proud of our Pipeline students and mentors for how much they have achieved!**



Simone DeShields, T2S mentor



## MEANINGFUL COLLABORATIONS: CHW IMPACT AND COLLABORATION AMONG PROGRAMS

While Community Health Workers (CHWs) are well-established in health systems in many low- and middle-income countries, it is a rather new profession in the US. CHWs are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of, and have a close understanding of, the communities they serve. This trusting relationship enables them to serve as a liaison between the health system and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. The CHW workforce at LLUH is growing and they are currently integrated into the Behavioral Medicine Center (BMC)/Behavioral Health Institute (BHI), Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Diabetes Treatment Center (DTC), and the Emergency Department (through the Trauma Team's Violence Intervention Program) as well as working with the unhoused population. The CHW team has presented to LLU School of Medicine students as well as LLU School of Public Health students to share the impact of the program and educate the next generation of health professionals on how to utilize this workforce. The team shared their experiences working as part of an interdisciplinary team, connecting patients to necessary resources, teaching coping skills, and their passion for the exceptional work they do.

The CHWs opened up opportunities for students to shadow them so they may see the impact of the program firsthand. Emily Bedolla, a first year global health MPH student, reflected on her experience shadowing a CHW in the NICU and shared, "I got to see the dynamic of the doctors, nurses, social workers, and CHWs and how they communicate as part of a team". We hope more students take advantage of the opportunity to shadow this diverse workforce and experience their connection to the community. If you would like to shadow a CHW, please email [chw@llu.edu](mailto:chw@llu.edu), for more information.



### A HEART FOR COMMUNITY

After more than 25 years in the security industry, Nicole Martinez Camacho took the leap to make a career change and be trained as a Community Health Worker (CHW); her first step on the journey to joining the team at the LLUH Institute for Community Partnerships. Nicole was inspired by an urge to help others, working directly with participants in a local drug and alcohol program. This was a great opportunity to gain experience and knowledge. She simultaneously enrolled in the Community Health Worker certificate program at San Manuel Gateway College and soon after made the transition to becoming one of the first CHWs for the new community health initiative launched by LLUH.

In her role as a CHW, Nicole artfully navigates the demands of working with multiple families at a time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Nicole's primary function is to build a trusting relationship with families and help them to

eliminate barriers to resources, in preparation for post-discharge access to care. She collaboratively works with families in many ways including goal setting/skill building, managing stress, navigating healthcare systems, and empowering them to advocate for themselves. Nicole is committed to helping families overcome social determinants of health so they may have improved health outcomes and thrive.

Over the course of the pandemic, Nicole has been an exemplary CHW, going above and beyond to serve families during this difficult time. As a result of her efforts Nicole was recently recognized for her tenacious work ethic and unrelenting service to families with a Letter of Appreciation from NICU staff. During the pandemic, Nicole took on the added responsibility of assisting with a breastmilk pickup and delivery support service for mothers who were COVID-19 positive, and therefore not allowed on the unit, but wanted to provide breast milk to their infant. Nicole directly worked with families throughout the Inland Empire to coordinate dropping off necessary supplies, picking up breast milk, and delivering the breast milk for infants in the NICU.

CHWs like Nicole have been essential in healthcare delivery and public health interventions throughout the pandemic. Nicole is just one fine example of the exemplary team of Community Health Workers at ICP who are dedicated to working with families to address the social determinants of health and increase health equity.

## ROCKSTAR STUDENTS: PIPELINE SUPPORT AS A LIFELONG COMMITMENT



Over the holidays, CAPS invited the Transition 2 Success Scholars to campus for a fun-filled dinner. Once gathered, students shared about the positive impact the Pipeline and T2S programs have had on their journey. Each student is currently pursuing higher

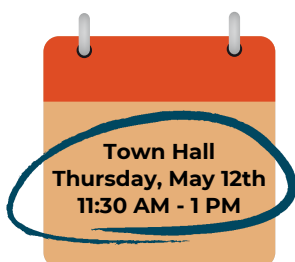
education and all are grateful for the opportunities gained through mentorship and support. CAPS continues to support Pipeline students for life, recently hosting our quarterly

gathering of alumni at LLU. With over 10 alumni currently attending LLU for various programs, we aim to further support their journey. As a gift each student was granted a \$2,000 scholarship and will receive ongoing support from our team. We are so proud of our alumni!



## ICP TOWNHALL: WE GO FURTHER TOGETHER

Every quarter ICP hosts a Town Hall meeting to bring staff, students, and community members together to learn, ask questions, and engage in meaningful conversations. The topic and guests are different each quarter so don't miss the opportunity to participate in the stimulating discussion. The next Town Hall is scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2022 and will be held virtually. Contact [icp@llu.edu](mailto:icp@llu.edu) to learn more.



## CAPS OPPORTUNITIES

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