

SUPPORTING MEDICAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT IN THE SPECIALTY OF PSYCHIATRY

“This time of year we often receive requests for contributions to many worthy charities. I hope this year you will consider supporting the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Foundation with [a tax deductible contribution](#) to help continue the momentum that has been started with one of our priorities - working with medical students to encourage them to specialize in psychiatry. We all know there is a shortage of psychiatrists - and YOUR OPPF is doing more and more to address this growing concern. In recent months, through outreach to Ohio’s medical schools and Departments of Psychiatry, we have made contact with medical students and invited them to join APA and to submit an OPPF research paper. We have also let them know of possible funding for their research with a Helping Hands grant by our national partner, the American Psychiatric Foundation. A new initiative OPPF is considering involves becoming a Federal and State SEARCH grant partner to place medical students interested in psychiatry in underserved areas in Ohio. These efforts take time, paid staff and money to operate. This is where you can help - we need your support. Please consider [giving what you can](#) to expose medical students to the world of psychiatry like the two excellent examples below. Wishing you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.”

Dale Svendsen, MD, OPPF President

MOVING BEYOND HELPING HANDS GRANT SUPPORT TO CONTINUE OUTREACH IN OHIO

Two years ago under the leadership of Priya Sehgal, a group of nine medical students at The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences, identified an unmet need in our state and created an initiative to address it. The Asian-American Mental Health Outreach (AAMHO) working group developed a curriculum to address mental health issues and collaborated with community organizations to train Asian-American youth in northern Ohio. The American Psychiatric Foundation Helping Hands Grants initially supported this outreach. Due to the program’s success, additional funding will support AAMHO’s continuing outreach throughout Ohio. The commitment of these students to improving mental health awareness is truly inspiring.

“I have always been interested in education and community organizing within an underserved population. However, the Asian-American community, due to its relatively smaller size, younger history in the United States, cultural expectations and the stigma associated with mental illness, has historically not been a major focus for mental health outreach efforts. In some ways, the community’s unique and diverse needs have remained largely invisible. I wanted to help change this reality and bring attention to the Asian-American community’s needs. Thus, I formed a working group of nine medical students to address this problem and designed a vision for community outreach within the Asian-American



Pictured from left to right are students: Supriya Mahajan, Yoko Takashima, Stella Lai, Priya Sehgal, Kent Cabatingan, Brian Ahuja and Emily Troyer. Not shown: Jason Cho, Sonali Ganguly and Ish Bhalla

youth community. Although leading a group of medical students, collaborating with community organizations, creating a curriculum, writing a grant, traveling to training sites, conducting the trainings and drafting an IRB proposal was an intense experience, I love seeing a team of dedicated medical students collaborate and work toward a common goal. It is also incredibly satisfying to hear a group of youth openly discuss cultural barriers to mental health care and to see the ‘light bulbs’ go off as they learn a new statistic or fact about mental health. The Asian-American Mental Health Outreach team is grateful for The University of Toledo’s Public and Community Psychiatry program’s support to continue this work in the upcoming year. AAMHO is committed to educating youth so that they have the knowledge to emerge from the shadow of invisibility.”

Priya Sehgal, 4th-year Medical Student at The University of Toledo and recipient of the American Psychiatric Foundation’s 2010-2011 Helping Hands Grant

ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITIES ENCOURAGES SPECIALIZATION IN PSYCHIATRY

Women Leading Healthy Change” is a curriculum put together by medical students at the University of Cincinnati in collaboration with a local community-based organization, [Off the Streets](#) (OTS). OTS works with women coming out of a life of drug addiction and prostitution to move towards recovery and reintegration. *Women Leading Healthy Change* is a 10-week curriculum focusing on developing leadership skills and educating the women on topics in women’s health and mental health. The curriculum is co-led by a medical student and a graduate of the OTS program and includes opportunities for the women of OTS to teach medical students and residents. The project was recently funded by a Helping Hands Grant from the American Psychiatric Foundation (APF).



Rachel Robitz, (left) with Carolyn Dawson

“As the leader of this project, I was originally inspired to create this curriculum after learning about a program in India where they train women involved in commercial sex to be community health workers. The program there had amazing success, so I thought, “Why not Cincinnati?” The project changed many times throughout the year-long planning process, and it is incredibly rewarding to see the curriculum up and running. The whole process of creating this project has been filled with lessons: creating a program, writing a curriculum, writing a grant, writing an IRB proposal, working with a community partner, and leading a group of medical students. Although I’ve had many great mentors and teachers during this project, I think my greatest teacher has been Carolyn, our OTS graduate co-leader. Carolyn’s introduction to the streets was early in life. She lived for many years with undiagnosed bipolar disorder and substance abuse, bouncing from the streets to the jails/prisons. Today I am proud to call Carolyn a friend and colleague. She now has close to two years clean, is back in the lives of her kids, in a healthy relationship, voted for the first time in her life this past year, volunteers 12 hours a week with women currently on the streets, works for a mental health hotline, and has been critical to establishing our project. OTS is full of women like Carolyn, my heroes, and I am struck by the change and progress that can happen in women’s lives when they are supported and loved.”

Rachel Robitz, 4th-year Medical Student at The University of Cincinnati and recipient of the American Psychiatric Foundation’s 2011-2012 Helping Hands Grant

PLEASE SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION’S EFFORTS IN WORKING WITH MEDICAL STUDENTS!

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