Profiles of Success

Meet Elsa Parra . . .

Growing up in San Antonio, Texas, Cristina’s parents demonstrated the value of cultivating community through health care, and Cristina used to volunteer her summers at her parents’ community clinic.

Through the San Francisco Area Health Education Center (AHEC) partnership with AmeriCorps Cristina Elsa was able to participate in the Operation Access program, which utilizes volunteers to provide free surgeries to needy patients.

“Volunteering my summers at my parents community clinic introduced me to how engaged a community can become when their local providers commit to service.”

About the Program

- The Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) program is authorized through Title VII of the Public Health Service Act.
- San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium (SFCCC) serves as an AHEC for San Francisco, California. As one of its health careers “pipeline” activities, SFCCC hosts AmeriCorps members through the National Association of Community Health Centers Community HealthCorps. In 2012-13, twenty-two AmeriCorps members served full-time in local “safety net” health care settings, providing outreach, health education, case management, volunteer coordination, and other needed services. In addition, they received training on a wide variety of health care topics and gained first-hand exposure to community and public health careers. Most are planning to further their education or pursue employment in a related field.
- Find more information at: www.sfccc.org

According to Elsa . . .

“Seeing the commitment to service surgeons have at Operation Access inspires me and reassures me that a career in medicine lies in my future. Ultimately, I hope to provide care as a physician, but the medical community requires more than talented, committed physicians to be successful. San Francisco AHEC’s partnership with Operation Access reminds me that health goes beyond the doctor’s office. I enjoy exploring the innovation in identifying ways to impact community health outside of the doctor’s office. For this reason, I will be pursuing a Masters of Public Health in Global Health at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., before pursuing a medical degree.”

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