

# The Role of Community Arts Organizations in Health and Wellbeing: Sunderland, England

## Introduction

- Worked under the University of Sunderland's Health Sciences Department to explore healthcare in Sunderland
- Spent time shadowing and assisting local arts organizations with wellbeing-related work
- Conducted research about health inequalities and social prescribing

## Objective of Internship

To better understand healthcare within a UK context, as well as the state of health in Sunderland; to learn how local community and arts organizations as well as the UK's social prescribing initiative are contributing to better health and wellbeing for residents.

## Work profile

- Documented events for various arts organizations, assisted with programming
- Attended funding and administrative meetings for community organizations to understand ongoing projects
- Visited social service organizations and interviewed staff, such as the Sunderland Refugee Center and Addiction Recovery Foundation
- Assisted a PhD student with research about health inequalities in Sunderland's districts, as well as evaluation visits to social prescribing organizations

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Funded by CHW under the Global Health Internships Program

## Reflection

- **Projects**
  - Assisted Sea Change Lab with hands-on youth arts workshops exploring coastal identity
  - Created blog posts and reflections
  - Conducted literature review on social prescribing/health inequalities in Sunderland
  - Assisted in qualitatively evaluating social prescribing organizations
  - Attended Cultural Spring, an arts outreach and education organization, events and facilitated youth programming
  - Met with staff at the Northeast photography network to learn about their work addressing community wellbeing, as well as their current research



*An arts workshop with students in Horden, UK through the Sea Change Lab exploring how the arts can be used as a way to express students' coastal identities*

## Looking ahead

- This internship has made me think about how I can incorporate patient-focused initiatives, such as social prescribing, into my sociological independent work for the coming year, as well as consider nontraditional approaches to wellbeing, such as engagement with the arts.

## Questions

- Can social prescribing be effectively implemented in the US?
- How can the NHS better support efficiency in their healthcare system?

## Conclusion

- My experience has taught me much about the NHS, as well as introduced me to new approaches to patient-centered care. I have a new appreciation for the role of community organizations in facilitating healthy lifestyles, as well as the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach in providing effective care.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to give a BIG thank you to all of the wonderful staff at the University of Sunderland and all of the organizations I shadowed, and especially Dr. Yitka Graham for being an incredibly devoted supervisor. I also would like to thank GHP and CHW for their generous support in making this internship possible.