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

Naomi Frim-Abrams ’23, Sociology
Helen McArdle Institute, University of Sunderland
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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.

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

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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.

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