CoLab Philadelphia: Co-Creation and Collaboration in the Kensington Neighborhood

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Introduction
• Kensington is a community in Philadelphia that is the center of the nation’s opioid epidemic
• We desired to create a space to engage those in the community to share stories
• We hoped to educate the rest of Philadelphia about the lives of families living in this neighborhood

Objective of Internship
• Be able to engage with a community in order to co-create an exhibit that accurately represented their thoughts on their community.

Reflection
• The staff in the Health Design Lab do not exclusively work in the lab; they work in different areas of Jefferson such as Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology, and Innovation.
• Their office is located in the old Federal Reserve bank vault in Center City, Philadelphia; this location enabled us to access the widespread population of Philadelphia communities
• I was able to spend time interacting with individuals in their community and witnessing firsthand what their obstacles to health were and what the residents needed but were not being given
• In the beginning of the summer, we prototyped out what the interior of the trailer would look like and interacted with the space to see what the experience would feel like
• I now understand these crucial steps of the design process: brainstorming, ideation, and prototyping
• Our prototypes evolved from the size of a shoebox to a room taped out with the dimensions of the actual trailer

Work profile
• The Health Design Lab aims to break the boundary between the medical and design worlds
• Our project aimed to rehumanize Kensington, shift the narrative of the opioid epidemic, and collaborate/create with the community
• My role was dedicated to the design and prototyping of the airstream trailer
• This summer I learned how rapidly design evolves; we went through about 10 different prototypes for our trailer before contracting out a design firm to put our plan into action
• One of the crucial steps was “body storming;” this exercise helps to determine if there are any gaps in the experience of the trailer’s exhibit
• The trailer in the Kensington neighborhood was the point of attraction for our events; residents were drawn in by the eccentric nature of our display
• The trailer’s final display was a physical manifestation of the impact of both art and community in the neighborhood of Kensington and the greater Philadelphia area

Looking ahead
• I now understand that a career in healthcare does not tie me solely to the clinical sphere
• I discovered a healthcare career that incorporates multiple disciplines

Questions
• How can other hospitals create spaces like the Health Design Lab?
• How can those with outside perspectives determine what communities like Kensington need the most?

Conclusion
The Health Design Lab, in its creation of the CoLab project and exhibit, demonstrates their belief that in order to solve healthcare problems, we need to start designing with collaboration of all backgrounds to make a widespread impact.

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