Thomas Jefferson University’s CoLab: Health Beyond Walls

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Introduction
• The neighborhood of Kensington in Philadelphia is nationally known as a hotbed for the opioid epidemic
• CoLab PHL aims to promote health programming in this neighborhood while simultaneously providing a more nuanced view of this diverse area

Objective of Internship
CoLab PHL aims to engage with residents of Kensington and educate outsiders about this community’s beauty and resilience through health-related programming based out of a redesigned Airstream trailer.

Reflection
• We conducted 10+ interviews with various residents and community partners of Kensington to better understand the roles that beauty, resilience, community, and art play in their lives and in their work.
• We then edited and compiled these videos into a documentary-style video highlighting these core themes to better educate others on the nuanced realities of families living in this resource-lacking but beautiful area.
• To achieve these deliverables, we collaborated with documentary filmmakers, ethnographers, designers, and countless non-profit community partners.

Work profile
• Interviewed residents and community partners of Kensington
• Supported pop-up parks around the neighborhood combining fun games and food with health programming
• Compiled interviews into a documentary-style video highlighting overlooked aspects of Kensington

Looking ahead
• In October of this year, we will present our finalized Airstream trailer exhibit at Design Philly
• Also this past summer has solidified my desire to work in public health

Questions
• Because we did not include many metrics in our trailer’s activations, what was the impact of our health programming?
• Did we build a desired level of rapport with the community to continue future health programming?

Conclusion
• Working with the Health Design Lab has furthered my understanding of community-based care and the intersection of design thinking and health

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• We also developed various prototypes throughout the summer for our final Airstream trailer exhibit once again portraying the core themes of resilience and community found in Kensington
• However, this trailer was also used in health-specific programming through our pop-up parks that featured hand-made lemonade, popcorn, fun outdoor games, as well as blood pressure screenings and HIV testing