

**Final Report to Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation
June 1, 2009
Submitted by the Boston Schweitzer Fellows Program
of The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship**

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship received \$25,000 in 2008 from the Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation to help support medical student Fellows in the 2008-2009 Boston Schweitzer Fellows Program. Fellows create and implement their own health-related community service projects to address unmet health needs in local, underserved communities. In addition to their service projects with local community-based agencies, Fellows participate in regular structured leadership development activities throughout the year.

The 2008-2009 Boston Schweitzer Fellows submitted their final reports in May. Among the 30 Fellows that completed the Fellowship, 5 were medical student Fellows supported by the Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation. A summary of their outcomes and achievements, accompanied by photos from their community service project or Fellowship activities, follows.

Fellows' Project Outcome Summaries

Matthew Bartek and Abraham Jaffe, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Akwaaba Health Initiative: Abraham and Matt worked on a community-based effort to



address the unmet health needs of Worcester's African-immigrant population. This collaborative effort between community members and medical school faculty and students, has at its center, the Akwaaba Free Health Clinic which delivers culturally-competent care to patients who lack access. Abraham and Matt oversaw the opening of the clinic in April 2008 then served as Clinic Managers, ensuring that

supplies and staff were in place each week for clinic and helping to create a plan for Akwaaba's growth. They helped to form a Board of Directors to provide strategic guidance for the clinic that consists of community leaders and medical staff, and created a larger "Friends of Akwaaba" network to help support and promote the mission of the clinic and improve the health of the African-immigrant community in Worcester. In the time since opening, there were over 500 patient visits at the Akwaaba Clinic, with available services including: physician visits, women's health visits including Pap smears and breast exams, free and anonymous HIV testing, blood work and select labs, aid with insurance enrollment, and counseling on how to access other area healthcare providers.

In his final report, Abraham highlights the personal impact the clinic had on a patient.

"One personal story I would like to share about my experience with the clinic involves an elderly woman who came to the clinic seeking care for her advanced arthritis that was making it very difficult and painful to walk. She met with Dr. Harvery Clermont and he diagnosed her with osteoarthritis. He prescribed some medications to help with the pain

and explained to her that her hip joint was very worn down and that she would most likely be in pain unless she opted for a total hip replacement. The thought of surgery was too much for her but she was open to using a cane if it would help her get around. I helped her find a cane in our storage room and got her a walker too that she said she wouldn't use. The cane seemed like a good fit and she quickly adapted to using it. She was very appreciative of all the help we gave her. She held my hand and thanked me for what had seemed like such a small task for me to do – finding a cane in the back room. But she was thankful that we were there to help, as she had no where else to go and had been suffering for a while in pain. She asked for my phone number and I gave it to her, telling her to call if she any questions or issues. She came back to the clinic a few times to be seen for other ailments or to get a refill of her meds. She always was so enthusiastic, positive, and would always hold my hand in thanks.”

Michael Dyer, Harvard Medical School



Mike collaborated with Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth (BAGLY) to offer health education and risk reduction services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth in the greater Boston area. One of his responsibilities was to provide HIV testing and counseling at BAGLY's weekly meetings and events. Mike also worked with BAGLY's Speaker's Bureau to develop a youth-led forum for

medical students around health care for GLBT youth.

In his final report, Mike discussed how he was able to increase the capacity of BAGLY while a Fellow. *“As a Schweitzer Fellow, I have also helped expand HIV counseling and testing services. Counseling and testing used to be offered every other week, but is now offered at each meeting. I serve as the tester and counselor at every other meeting. We have also started offering counseling and testing at our larger events; at the Halloween dance, where over 1,000 youth were in attendance, we conducted over twenty counseling and testing sessions with youth, most of whom do not normally attend our weekly meetings and therefore don't have access to our testing services at these meetings.”*

Pichamol Jirapinyo, Harvard Medical School



Boston Asthma Swim: Pichamol and her co-Fellow Benjamin Easter coordinated the Boston Asthma Swim Program. This program works with elementary school asthmatic students from Boston's Chinatown neighborhood. Every week, students and volunteers met for both an educational session and a swimming lesson. Students learned the basics of respiratory physiology, asthma care, and healthy lifestyle decisions. The exercise component empowered children to pursue a lifetime of

physical fitness.

In her monthly reports, Pichamol describes what the children learn about their own health.

“In November, the classroom portion is spent on teaching the children on the pathophysiology of asthma attack. The children get more used to measuring their lung capacities using the peak flow meters... In January, the curriculum focuses more on asthma triggers. A lot of activities were planned to make sure that the children are able to identify daily asthma triggers so that they can avoid getting close to them.”

Esohe Ohuoba, *Boston University Schools of Medicine and Public Health*
Massachusetts Department of Public Health: Esohe collaborated with the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program in Jamaica Plain to develop a women’s health curriculum that is culturally sensitive to new arrivals from Somalia. Her project was part of a comprehensive approach to empower women to understand and advocate for their own health, particularly in the areas of domestic violence, family planning, and sexually transmitted infections.

Fellowship Activities

Throughout the year, Fellows actively participated in monthly Fellowship activities focused on their development as ‘leaders in service’ and were each responsible for working with a small group to organize a public outreach activity. To describe the impact that your grant had on the Fellows and community, included are summaries of three monthly meetings and the two of the seven public outreach activities organized by the 2008-2009 Boston Schweitzer Fellows.

Monthly Meetings

Fellows met monthly for two and a half hours and for two half-day retreats to address a range of topics related to health, community project design, working with community, cross-cultural issues, and Albert Schweitzer and his work and philosophy. Three meetings are described below.

Monthly Meeting – May 5, 2008



The first monthly meeting for the 2008-2009 Fellows was held on May 5 at Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. Shani Dowd, LCSW, Director, Institute for Linguistic and Cultural Skills, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, facilitated a discussion about culture, race, power dynamics, and Prochaska’s Stages of Change with the Fellows. She did an amazing job of engaging the Fellows, creating a safe setting for discussion, and challenging the Fellows about important issues around power.

Mid-Year Retreat - October 18, 2008



The mid-year retreat was held on October 18 at MGH Institute of Health Professions. The retreat began with an activity to learn more about how to work with people who have physical disabilities. The highlight of the retreat was Dr. Jim O’Connell, founder and street physician for Boston Health Care for the Homeless. He spoke about homelessness in Boston, his career as a physician, and the future for the next generation of health professionals who will be working with this population. One Fellow

remarked: *“AMAZING!! This is the reason I became a fellow...to be inspired! The guidance, wisdom, stories... it was all incredible.”*

Monthly Meeting – February 5, 2009



The February monthly meeting was held at Boston University School of Medicine. Claude-Alix Jacob, MPH, 1997-98 Chicago Schweitzer Fellow, Chief Public Health Officer for the City of Cambridge, MA spoke about his career path and current work in Cambridge. The group had an engaging discussion about public health issues and priorities in the City of Cambridge. Claude was also an inspiring example as one of nearly 2,000 alumni Fellows for Life.

Public Outreach Activities

Each year, the Boston Schweitzer Fellows conduct a series of public outreach activities that aim to: educate students in health related fields, professionals, and/or the general public about current local health disparities and unmet health needs; strengthen existing links among the Schweitzer Fellows Program, community agencies, and professional schools; identify new community organizations and other partners that the Schweitzer Fellows Program may collaborate with in the future; help Fellows develop leadership, organizational, and team building skills useful in future public education activities; and provide Fellows with an experience of collaborative and shared responsibility within a small interdisciplinary group. This year's Fellows organized and participated in six public outreach activities.

Jimmy Fund Walk, September 21, 2008



The 2008-2009 Boston Fellows continued an annual tradition of participating in Dana Farber Cancer Institute's Jimmy Fund Walk to raise funding and awareness for cancer research and treatment. Fellows and staff volunteered as food and fluid distributors at the starting line for 5-mile walkers. This was a very popular place for children who had received treatment at Dana Farber and their families to start walking from. Fellow Esohe Oluoba reflected on the experience. *"The*

experience was wonderful! It is amazing to witness the resiliency that children with cancer and their families can have. Seeing the teams and the home made t-shirts was a blessing, and a reminder that we should not take life for granted!"

Tufts Week of Service - September 12-17, 2008



The 2008-2009 Tufts-Schweitzer Fellows ambitiously organized a week-long series of events aimed at encouraging students on the medical campus located in Chinatown to learn more and become involved in their local community. Activities included a garden clean-up and mural painting at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School; volunteering with the Chinese Progressive Association to post flyers and information about voting and civic engagement; serving a meal at St. Francis

House homeless shelter; walking tours of Chinatown led by the Chinese Progressive Association; a lunch-time lecture by Professor Douglas Brugge about asthma among youth in Chinatown, and a reflection lunch the following week. Over 50 students participated in the activities and there is continuing enthusiasm to make this an annual tradition.

Harvard Public Outreach Group – February 19, 2009



The public outreach group from Harvard, Ashley Carlson, Michael Dyer, Benjamin Easter, Erin Pfeiffer, Pichamol Jirapinyo, and Carrie Tsai, organized a panel discussion at Harvard Medical School. The panel featured three youth leaders from the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender Youth (BAGLY). The event was well-attended primarily by Harvard medical students. The group engaged in a lively and often-times deeply personal discussion about best practices for health care professionals working with youth who identify at LGBT. Mike Dyer shared his thoughts about the event, *“It seemed worthwhile to have real patients present their perspectives on their medical care and experiences.”*

Expense Report

The funds (\$25,000) provided by Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation were used to support five 2008-2009 medical student Fellows in their projects and leadership development activities for medical student Fellows.

Direct Expenses	
Fees paid to Fellows (5 medical student projects at \$2,000/Fellow)	\$10,000
Leadership Development (orientation, symposia, monthly meetings)	\$15,000
Total Expenses	\$25,000