

THE COLUMBUS-ATHENS SCHWEITZER FELLOWS PROGRAM

Purpose: To facilitate service projects to benefit the Columbus and Athens communities, and simultaneously develop emerging professionals who have the skills to address unmet health-related needs throughout their careers.

**THE ALBERT
SCHWEITZER
FELLOWSHIP**
*Addressing Health Disparities
by Developing Leaders in Service*

“Seek always to do some good, somewhere. Every man has to seek in his own way to realize his true worth. You must give some time to your fellow man. For remember, you don’t live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here too.”
- Albert Schweitzer, PhD, MD

PROJECT 159

Background

Healthy aging in a broader spectrum entails a multidimensional process of lifelong learning and personal development focused on achieving autonomy and independence for older adults.

Approximately 80% of older adults have at least one chronic disease and can face significant challenges. Lack of access to health assistance and awareness among older adults can create severe limitation on their ability to exercise control over their lives and function properly.

Communities and individuals can promote healthy aging. As defined by McLaughlin (2012), healthily aging adults can be defined as an individual who is not only both physically and mentally healthy, but one who is socially engaged.

Project

Project 159 (named after the rate per 100,000 persons in Athens County who die from heart disease) focused on the prevention and intervention of chronic diseases by implementing healthy lifestyle programs in Athens County, Ohio.

This program educated participants on how to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle by:

- Empowering participants to take control of their health and decrease unhealthy behaviors
- Incorporating low-cost, healthy and easy recipes through cooking demonstrations
- Discussing different ways to manage stress and prevent falls through Tai Chi
- Exploring various components and the importance of a healthy lifestyle

Impact

Between 10-25 participants attended biweekly community engagements at The Plains, Athens Public Library and the Athens Community Center. Participants were presented with knowledge and skills on how to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Through educational seminars, games and simulations, participants reported:

- Gaining a better understanding on how to manage their chronic diseases
- Positive social interactions with other attendees of the program
- Changes made in their diet, mood, living situations (e.g., preventing falls and general safety) and overall well being

Some feedback from project participants included:

“I learned so much from this class especially on how to save more on my prescription drug costs.”

“I am happy to see there are more programs for older adults in the community.”

Partner

I would like to extend a special thank you to all my partner sites for helping me execute this project and spreading health education to our communities:

- Athens and The Plains Public Library
- UpBEAT (formerly SeniorBEAT)
- Live Healthy Appalachia

Acknowledgments:

I would like to extend a special thank you to my academic mentor, Dr. Sarah Adkins, PharmD and my site mentor Caitlin Bond, RDN, LD, UpBEAT Program Director.



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