



Community Health
Workers Initiative
The Honors College

**Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Data Science Institute**
University of Houston



Seeking to build healthy
communities through a
multidisciplinary approach to
overcoming barriers for underserved
populations.



HICH

ANNUAL REPORT

I stayed in HICH because of how much I learned and developed from just my first year. I also met my best friends through HICH. This organization has taught me a lot about the non-medical drivers of health as well as provided me with many opportunities. I was able to get research experience as well as work as a data analyst intern through CHWI. HICH has definitely changed my outlook on what healthcare is and who should be part of an individual's healthcare team. I know I'll use what I've learned in the future when I practice medicine.

-Vi Phan, HICH '24



I joined HICH because I was interested in the projects and getting to volunteer within the communities. Being a part of HICH, and progressively becoming more involved within leadership positions, I learned vital skills such as multitasking, time management, communication, and empathy for others.

-Thai Tran, HICH '24

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report will present greater detail about the various activities of Honors in Community Health (HICH), including challenges, successes, and future directions. It covers the 2023-2024 academic year, showcasing the ways that HICH provides students the support to build out their own projects, opportunities to develop their skills, and space to connect with other students.

Participating in HICH projects allows undergraduates to learn what it means to engage with their communities in meaningful ways and develop skills that will translate to careers in healthcare, public health, public service, and beyond. This year, project heads and volunteers worked hard to implement changes to their community projects and collaboration with community partners continues to be integral to the success of these projects. We are proud to highlight the continued growth and development of each project.

What is HICH?

Honors in Community Health started as an initiative through the Community Health Workers Initiative (CHWI) with the purpose of bringing together university students and residents of public housing through shared community health projects. The mission quickly expanded beyond public housing, and now includes partnerships and participants from across the Houston area including immigrant and refugee communities. Students that were initially working with the CHWI founded Honors in Community Health (HICH), hoping to expand on the projects that were originated in the CHW class. The key insight for the undergraduates is about the nature of community strength, which is learned by working side-by-side with people facing disparities in health, education, and income; our students do not see themselves as performing charitable work for the needy, but as partners in community flourishing. Undergraduate participation continues to grow with 202 members in the 2023-2024 academic year.

MISSION



Honors in Community Health (HICH) seeks to build healthy communities through a multidisciplinary approach to overcoming barriers for underserved populations. This collaborative, student-led organization uses its understanding of the social determinants of health to explore multiple types of service: community engagement, advocacy, and research. HICH provides all students at the University of Houston the opportunity to design, implement, and lead a wide variety of community health projects. Through support from the Honors College, HICH members are given the opportunity to pursue projects that best suit their interests, values, and goals.



SUMMARY: PROJECTS

WEAR

- The Wildlife and Environmental Advocacy and Relief (WEAR) project aims to bring awareness to environmental health disparities in the Greater-Houston area through research and civic engagement. Our goal is to use data and research to show how systemic racism has affected black and brown communities in Houston while also giving a platform to community members. Our unique partner-based structure connects a variety of Houston's leaders in environmental toxicology, architecture, biology, public health, data, etc. together with the goal of using green solutions to solve the city's environmental issues. We are an advocacy group who is striving for environmental health equity in Houston!



Creative Care

- The Creative Care project aims to collaborate with Cuney Homes to increase mental health outcomes through a curriculum that encourages self-expression, physical activity, and reflective writing. The Creative Care project is dedicated to providing a safe space for the children to be themselves and gain the tools needed to deal with their life stressors. Volunteers will develop and facilitate weekly creative wellness workshops for elementary and middle school-aged children. Creative Care is also beginning a partnership with a Houston Community Health Worker to lead a women's domestic violence support group, using art therapy to promote healing.



Responsive Resourcing

- Responsive Resourcing (RR) aims to recognize public health barriers unique to the diverse communities or "hubs" of Houston, as well as uncover the proper resources to help alleviate the health discrepancies in our hubs. RR allows students to gain perspective by engaging in weekly interactive workshops designed to grow awareness of resource gaps and allows collaboration with community health workers (CHWs). Through the experiences RR offers, students will learn about the social determinants of public health concerns specific to Houston and CHW's unique roles in merging between the community and health institutions.



SUMMARY: PROJECTS

Operation Fusion

- Operation Fusion aims to serve the refugee and immigrant children of Las Americas Newcomer School while partnering with Amaanah Refugee Services. The goal of Operation Fusion is to blend culture and health through education and empowerment to allow the students to define their identity and set their personal health goals. This program emphasizes explicitly channeling cultural diversity to promote a sense of agency and belonging. Volunteers will lead weekly interactive sessions encouraging students to build healthy habits and learn to utilize their home cultures as assets in their education, identity, and everyday lives.



BREATHE

- The Better Respiratory Education and Assistance Targeting Houston's Elementary (BREATHE) program is designed to provide respiratory health education to medically underserved youth. At its core, we aim to help students build better health awareness and provide tools that enable them to advocate for themselves. Our unique undergraduate-led structure focuses on interactive conversation-based learning that engages the students we work with, providing a fun and welcoming space to decrease respiratory health stigma and increase health literacy.



PEERS

- Project Engaging Encouraging Rising Students (PEERS), focuses on encouraging STEM education and providing mentorship to underserved students in grades 9-12. PEERS grew from and embodies the Community Health Workers (CHWs) model as simultaneous educators and advocates. Initially conceived in a CHW class, this program pairs high school students and the University of Houston undergraduates to create engaging community projects that are meaningful and relevant. In addition, facilitating community engagement through collaboration and project-based learning encourages both our members to pursue academic and professional development to advocate for improved health outcomes in their communities. Each student team presents their final project at the PEERS competition to compete for a monetary prize.



LEADERSHIP

FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS



Dr. Daniel
Price



Dr. Andrew
Kapral



Cindy
Paz



Karina
George



Cara
Shokler

DIRECTORS

Tammy Tran

Thai Tran



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Membership Coordinators

Rosemarie Le

Mielad Ziaee

Mariyah Kazim

Outreach Coordinators

Huriyah Hasnain

Kimeera Paladugu

Oluwatofunmi Jewesimi

Project Head Coordinators

Vi Pham

Cecilia Phan

Melody Tran

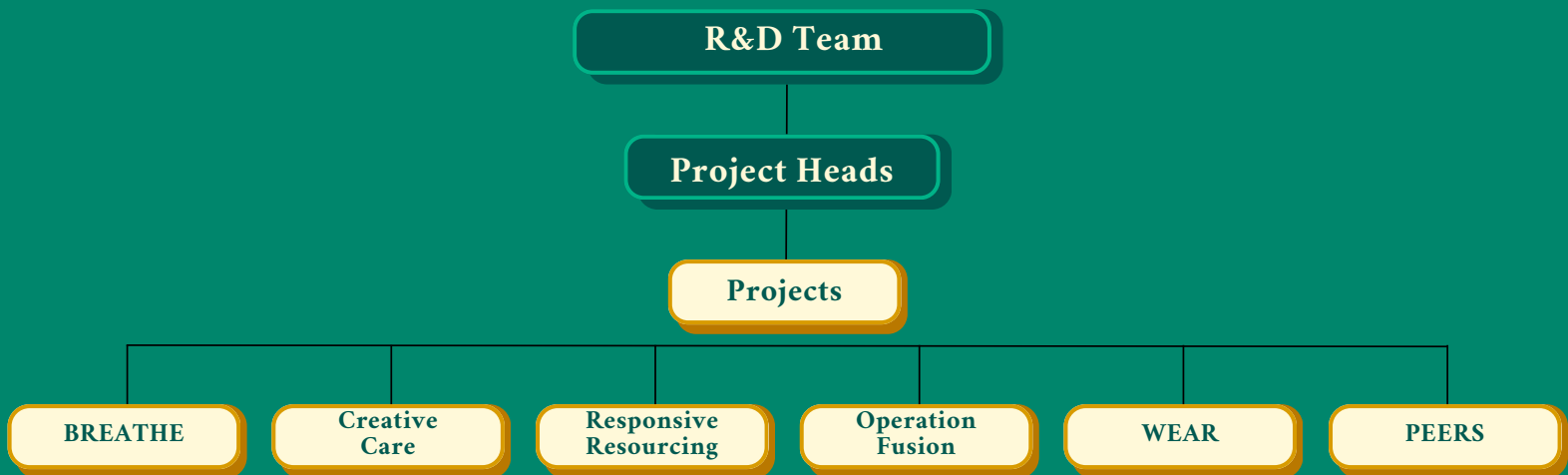
Eric Lee



STRUCTURE & MEMBERSHIP

HICH is made up of students from a wide range of backgrounds, each bringing unique perspectives and experiences to the organization. As a large and dynamic group, we've structured HICH to ensure that everyone can access the support and resources they need to thrive.

This structure not only fosters collaboration but also empowers members to create and lead their own projects. The diversity within our community enriches our initiatives and strengthens our ability to make a meaningful impact.



General Body Membership

- HICH Members: 202
- Fall Distinguished Members: 24
- Spring Distinguished Members: 34

Year Composition

- Freshman: 29.7%
- Sophomore: 34%
- Junior: 20.3%
- Senior: 15.1%
- Post-bacc: 0.9%

TIMELINE

August

08

Fall GBM #1

New members got to know each other through “Speed Dating”, where they discussed their goals, project expectations, and advice.

Number of Members Attended: 63



September

27

Fall GBM #2

Members participated in a scavenger hunt where they discussed different non-medical drivers of health and brainstormed solutions.

Number of Members Attended: 73



October

23

Fall GBM #3

Members were surveyed on questions related to community health and non-medical drivers of health. Their answers were used to play Family Feud!

Number of Members Attended: 43



November

16

Fall GBM #4

Directors gave an overview on resume tips. Members then played a game where they found errors in sample resumes. Officers then conducted mock interviews in small groups.

Number of Members Attended: 40



TIMELINE



Spring GBM #1

January

30

Members were split into small groups and rotated through project heads, getting to know all of our HICH projects through small activities.

Number of Members Attended: 77



Spring GBM #2

February

21

Members completed a survey on the impact of non-medical drivers of health and then given an new “identity” based on it. They were grouped, given a budget, and tasked with pitching a community health program.

Number of Members Attended: 58



Spring GBM #3

March

20

Guest speaker Farrah Hmaidan spoke about her journey as a community health worker, her involvement in Data & Society initiatives, and her experience as a non-traditional medical school applicant..

Number of Members Attended: 51



TIMELINE

October

09

Finding Research and
Scholarships
Workshop



February

07

Medical Debate
Workshop



February

26

Intro to Data Science
Workshop



March

25

Intro to
Epidemiology
Workshop



April

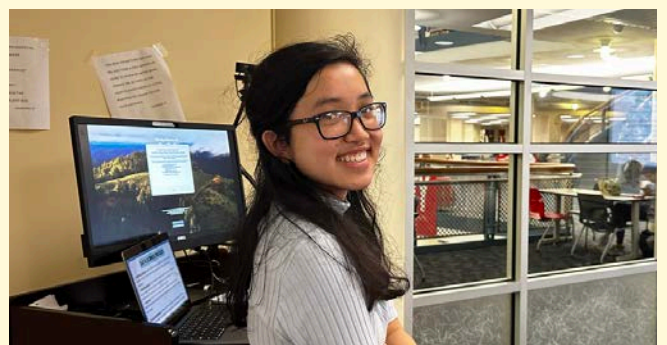
04

Resume Workshop

April

09

Create Your Own
Project Workshop



SOCIALS

September 11th: Ice Cream Social
September 18th: Campus Tour Social
October 5th: Karaoke and Game Night Social
October 30th: Spooky Game Social
November 14th: Grab n' Go Social
November 28th: Winter Games Social
December 1st: BRUH x HICH Field Day Social
January 31st: Cougar Grounds Social
February 14th: Valentine's Day Social
March 5th: Board to Death Social
March 27th: Easter Social



MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Pharis Fellowship

- 2023 (7 out of 12)
 - Salma Abbady, Nawar Ahmed, Zeba Bhanji, Abigail Burns, Mariyah Kazim, Carlos Mendieta, Johana Villanueva
- 2024 (5 out of 12)
 - Nikhila Achanta, Rosemarie Faustina Le, Joey Hernandez, Aihanuwa Ale-Opinion, Morgan Turner

UH Houston Scholars (2023-2024)

- Rosemarie Faustina Le, Angela Nguyen, Haley Romine, Melody Tran

UH Outstanding First Year Students

- Tarashree Dorairaj

MD Anderson Partnership for Careers in Cancer Science (2024)

- Melody Tran and Jenna Zamil

Albert Schweitzer Fellowship

- Mielad Ziaee and Kimeera Paladugu

Community Health Worker Certified

- Eno Mbaba and Emily Jose

UH Community Health Worker Initiative (CHWI) Interns

- Huriyah Hasnain, Mariyah Kazim, Vi Pham, Tammy Tran



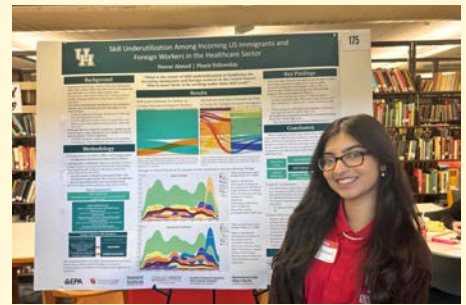
MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Scholarships:

- Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship Campus Nominees
 - Taylor Cornett
 - Rosemarie Faustina Le
- Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Grant
 - Tammy Tran (Vietnam)
- Phi Beta Kappa Key Into Public Service Scholarship
 - Briana Azad (2023)
 - Mielad Ziaee (2024)
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship
 - Mielad Ziaee (2024)

Conferences:

- APHA (American Public Health Association)
 - Operation Fusion: Tammy Tran, Thai Tran, Vynashvi Davaluri
 - Mielad Ziaee and Vivienne Pham
- Undergraduate Research Day
 - PEERS, WEAR, Nawar Ahmed, Zeba Bhanji, Tammy Tran, Melody Tran, Kimeera Paladugu
- TEACH-S
 - Operation Fusion: Tammy Tran, Thai Tran, Vynashvi Davaluri



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

"Participating in HICH's mentorship program as both a mentor and mentee has been incredibly rewarding, as I've learned that growth is a two-way street. The program allowed me to bond with people I might not have connected with otherwise, and it truly highlights the value of sharing knowledge and supporting one another within our community." -Huriyah Hasnain, HICH '24



The HICH mentorship program, in its fourth year, successfully connected experienced HICH upperclassmen and alumni with current undergraduate members. Mentors and mentees were thoughtfully matched based on academic pursuits, career goals, and shared interests. HICH developed monthly themes to guide meetings and interactions, and throughout the year, mentors provided valuable guidance on navigating college and engaging with community health, fostering both personal and professional growth. This program not only strengthened the bonds within the HICH community but also offered participants a fulfilling experience and the opportunity to form lasting friendships.

- 26 Mentors
 - Alumni (12): 46%
 - Upperclassmen (14): 54%
- 37 Mentees

BREATHE

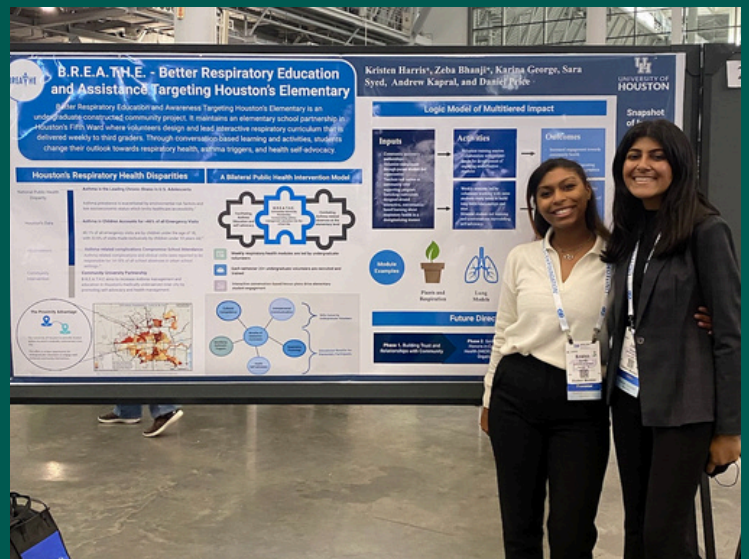
Accomplishments

- Collaborated with WEAR
- Joined Houston Health Department Asthma Coalition
- Established new community partner in 3rd Ward



Summary

- BREATHE collaborated with WEAR at the Lyons Ave Renaissance Festival on March 23, 2024. This event included engaging activities such as crafting lung models and playing various games. Through this event, we effectively raised awareness about asthma and the importance of recycling among children.
- In addition, we're delighted to announce our official membership in the Houston Health Department Asthma Coalition. We have also initiated weekly volunteering sessions at the Alice McKean Young Neighborhood Library, in collaboration with the Houston Public Library.



50

Service Hours

35

Undergraduate
Student Volunteers

Project Heads:
Zeba Bhanji, Noelle Nguyen &
Shimonee Shah

Creative Care

Accomplishments

- Completed lessons about self-expression, goal-setting, gratefulness, Black history, teamwork, and environmental education



Summary

Creative Care has had an amazing Spring, with our last “fun in the sun” session closing out the semester! We are proud to have accumulated over 170 volunteer hours and 250 children across all 21 sessions in the 2023-2024 year! From active outdoor activities to Black History Month presentations and DIY terrariums, we have had an incredible time with the kids at Cuney Homes. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for their contributions to the Creative Care project! We look forward to starting sessions back up again in the Fall semester and welcome all new and returning members!



170

Service Hours

35

Undergraduate
Student
Volunteers

255

Students
Served

Project Heads:

Eno Mbaba, Sarthak Nath &
Nadia Syed

Responsive Resourcing

Accomplishments

- 3 RM Sessions Held
- 150 Resources Updated
- 6 Workshops Themes
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Food Stamps
 - Being a CHW
 - Transportation and Infrastructure
 - Language Barriers
 - Childcare



Summary

Responsive Resourcing (RR) had an amazing year with its 25 volunteers, who found over 150 resources to assist local community health workers! Besides resource matching meetings, RR had numerous workshops from Environmental Sustainability to Being a CHW to Childcare. Recently, RR hosted its CPR Workshop which allowed more than 30 people to become CPR certified for free! We would like to thank our volunteers for all of their hard work and engagement! We would also like to thank Christina for her tireless work as a RR Project Head these past few years, and we are excited to welcome Anika and Elyse as new project heads! We cannot wait to see what RR does in the future!



75

Service Hours

25

Undergraduate
Student
Volunteers

150

Resources
Updated

Project Heads:

Christina Kuruvilla &
Rosemarie Le

Operation Fusion

Accomplishments

- 25 sessions held
- Presented at 2023 APHA conference
- 7 Themes Discussed
 - Culture & Identity
 - Nutrition
 - Exercise
 - Anatomy
 - First Aid
 - Social/Emotional Health



Summary

Every Friday, volunteers led sessions about personal health and cultural identity to a classroom of immigrant and refugee students at Las Americas Newcomer School. Within its second year of implementation, project heads have been able to establish new themes and increase the amount of activities for students to enjoy. Operation Fusion discussed seven themes this year: culture & identity, nutrition, exercise, anatomy, first aid, and social/emotional health.



95

Service Hours

24

Undergraduate
Student
Volunteers

40

Students
Served

Project Heads:

Tammy Tran, Thai Tran,
Angel Nguyen & Nawar
Ahmed

WEAR

Accomplishments

- 18 General Sessions Held
- 10 Research Sessions Held
- Taught children how to propagate pothos plants
- Fifth Ward Renaissance Festival w/BREATHE!
- Presented 4 Research Posters at URD and CHWI Conference
- Began our ArcGIS Story Map Project



Summary

On Undergraduate Research Day (URD), WEAR had 4 research posters dealing with different aspects of the Fifth Ward Cancer Cluster. We looked into the history, financial burdens and lack of resources, other health effects caused by the carcinogens in the area, and potential green solutions to the cancer cluster. We want to give a special thanks to Dr. Price, Dr. Kapral, and our amazing, dedicated members who participated.



150
Service Hours

36
Undergraduate
Student
Volunteers

10
Research
Sessions Held

Project Heads:
Briana Azad, Carlos
Mendieta, Loyed Siby, Ritesh
Ravi & Elizabeth Tran

PEERS

Accomplishments

- 16 Sessions Held at East Early HS and Austin HS
- Students learned the value of community-health research
- Students visited campus for Professional Development Day
- Developed health initiatives in response to obesity epidemic in Houston
- Successful competition day!

Summary

- PEERS (Project Engagement Encouraging Rising Students) hosted an on-campus Professional Development Day for students from East Early High School on March 22nd! Students were able to learn about various career pathways from professionals and engage with current UH students during our student panel session. We would like to thank our HICH alumni and leadership team who participated in our event and student mentors who helped facilitate this event!
- PEERS is gearing up towards competition day in early May where students will present a culmination of their research project that they have worked on since January. This year's theme is related to obesity: If you were given 5 million dollars, how would you improve the lives of Houstonians with obesity? Group projects from East Early and Austin High School will compete against each other for best project and win a cash prize! If any HICH students would like to volunteer for competition day, please reach out to PEERS.

120
Service Hours

20
Undergraduate
Student
Volunteers

47
Students
Served

Project Heads:
Kendyl Donald, Sana Al
Taima, Haley Romine &
Imani Wasonga

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