



ALL THINGS IGNATIAN

Celebrating Mission at Creighton University

Creighton
UNIVERSITY
School of Medicine

Music in Healthcare: Unconventional Healing and Student Growth

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Origin

Have you ever purchased a cup of coffee after 9 PM? Have you ever done so multiple times in a week? To say I was unprepared for the stress and toll that medical school would have on me is an understatement. A month into school, I needed something to help curb the pressure. I found some friends who enjoyed making music as much as I did and figured out a time when we could play. We started out as humbly as any group of middle schoolers who ever dared to start a band did, sitting on the floor of the living room jamming to whatever music came to our minds. Eventually, Harrison and I had the idea to combine our music with our schooling by bringing our instruments to the Bergan Mercy lobby.

During one of the coldest days of January, we nervously headed to the hospital for the first time. I remember opening my violin case and hearing just how out of tune it was. I figured it would be so easy to just pack up and head out and nobody would know. But we didn't do that. We started playing our music, and I was lost in the connection we had with each other and the people listening. Over the next year, in this same spot, we had a lot of smiles, a few encouraging words, and a couple of returning listeners. The easiest part of music is making a connection with someone else because you don't have to stress at all. You can share emotion and memory without a single word being spoken.

When we met Dr. McKillip, we discovered our interests were parallel and very soon, we were playing music in different wards for long term care patients. The experience of being in a part of these lives with barely any words spoken between us will be with us forever. As we became more established in our connections with Bergan, we decided to reach out to the rest of the med school and beyond! We established the club Cura Musicalis and through it, we created a few new traditions for our fellow students including caroling at the hospital around Christmas time, a Med school talent show, and even a barbershop octet. We have worked hard to create a program that spreads wellness to

Activities

Students perform individually or in small groups in the Bergan-Mercy Hospital lobby throughout the year.



Groups of students formed caroling choirs that sang Christmas carols in the Bergan-Mercy Hospital in the Winter.

Select students have been invited to perform in patient rooms at the bedside in the hospital alongside the Palliative Care team.



In the Spring, a group of students prepared barbershop music that was performed for residents of the Josie Harper Hospice House at their bedside.



Reflections

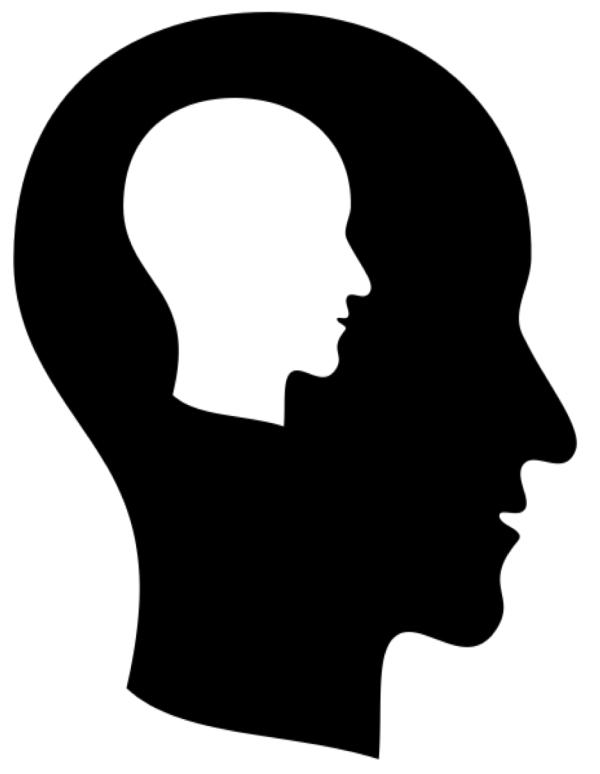
Personally, my most meaningful moment was when our barbershop octet sang for a lady in the Josie Harper Hospice House who used to be a high school music teacher. After we sang for her she said the most meaningful words of the day: "Soon I'll be out of here. One way or another. But your music has given me hope. It has healed me. Music has a way of doing that. I appreciate you much, much more than you know. Always remember, those who sing pray twice." In this moment, we were more than simple medical students. We were healers. We were able to use our music to come together as a family and to envelope this woman in our love and care.

- Nicholas Braukmann, M2

Medical school takes a toll on all of us, especially in how it demands so much of our time and mental energy towards a seemingly never-ending storm of information and powerpoint slides. Perhaps most challenging is the pressure to give up time towards other passions and interests. Through this volunteer experience, I was able to bring two of my passions together in music and helping those in need in the medical environment while also building invaluable bonds with my classmates I sang alongside. When I look back on my early years of medical school, I know I will always remember the moments like I had, volunteering with my classmates to sing barbershop at the Hospice House and its impact on my understanding of what it means to heal and be healed.

- Harrison VanDolah, M2

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Cultivating humility,
relationality into practice
of medicine

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Service Learning;
Interest Groups



MISSION WEEK