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CTP Fellows Final Reflection

I can identify numerous personal highlights when I reflect back on my time spent as a 2011-2012 fellow for the Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership in the Professions.

The highlights began with the annual fellows retreat that took place last August. I had the pleasure of meeting graduate students training in every area and was interested in “picking the brain” of everyone I met. I was intrigued by the business students who seemed to have the ability to talk their way through any problem. I could not wait to hear the perspective of the nursing students when the topics of health care and inter-professional relationships arose. I found that I admired the persistence of the education students as they described all the roadblocks and red-tape they overcame and worked around in their desire to teach the next generation. The questions that arose among us were as interesting as the answers each fellow presented.

In addition to the intellectual stimulation I experienced, I also had an amazing time at our retreat. I hiked a few trails at Pennyrile State Park with my co-fellows and went canoeing (activities that an indoor girl such as myself rarely engages in). My fellows and I ate great food and lounged in the sunshine for almost an entire weekend. For me this brought me more than a much-needed mini-vacation. It offered me the opportunity and
space to think about something other than just the medical textbooks I had been studying. It offered me the chance to reflect on the reasons I decided to enter the profession - something I had not done since matriculating into medical school. That weekend, I remembered that medicine was more than just a job - it was a calling. I remembered that I loved medicine, despite its shortcomings, because it was a tool that could be used to do good. It was a tool that, when implemented, could bring not just comfort and solace to a people but also progress to a society. Medicine, I remembered - when I removed my nose from my medical books for a time - was a very good thing. It was the instrument by which I would help minister to the brokenness of humanity. It sounds lofty, I’m sure, but that is what the fellows retreat did for me. It allowed me to stop thinking about my workload and start thinking about how I could use my work to do more than just earn a paycheck for myself.

Another highlight of my experience as a CTP Fellow was learning what my project would be. After hearing all the project descriptions at the annual fellows’ retreat, I was instantly drawn to the Refugee and Immigrant Support Group. As the daughter of immigrants, I witnessed firsthand the difficulty associated with attempting to establish a new life in a foreign country. As a child growing up in South Florida, many of my closest friends were undocumented Latinos (although I did not know this until I was much older). When the time came for us to get jobs or go to college, I enjoyed incredible freedoms and opportunities as an American citizen that they did not. Despite being amazingly bright and driven, many of my friends have been significantly retarded in their ability to start their own adult lives because of their immigration status. When it came
time for them to seek help, many found that the systems designed to help immigrants and refugees were too cumbersome to navigate. I developed a certain tenderness-of-heart for anyone recently arriving to this country and I knew that working with the Refugee and Immigrant Support group was exactly what I wanted to do.

An additional highlight of my experience as a CT Fellow was meeting Cal Turner, Jr. Apart from being a gregarious, good-natured guy, he also inspired me. I was so encouraged by the way he and his family had used their wealth to do so much good for this country. I appreciated his heart for the poor and his vision for us as soon-to-be young professionals. He understood that we would very soon be in positions of authority and that, as professionals, we would be able to aid those who needed help. I saw him as an average person using what he had been given to create change for people who needed it most. Meeting him assured me that average people, like myself, can do great things for others when they are committed to living generous lives.

In summation, I will say that I had an amazing year as a 2011-2012 CTP Fellow. More than anything, my experience with the program has produced in me a desire to use my leadership and professional skills to do more than just pass the time creating a life for myself. In providing me with the opportunity to engage with professionals from different disciplines, it has also taught me that our goals are much more closely aligned than I previously could have imagined.