Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth

Tenth Annual Minnesota Indian Health Service Trip

Ojibwe Nations: Bois Forte, Cass Lake, Fond du Lac, Red Lake and White Earth

March 9 – March 17, 2019

Bois Forte: Sage Hellerstedt, Briana Krewson, Matthew Stanton
Cass Lake: Katherine Amano, Steffany Humala, Lisa Francomacaro, Sofia Rodriguez
Fond Du Lac: Karin Piveral, Jonathan Busam, Sadhana Puri
Red Lake: Cindy Li, Jennie Murillo, Eric Lu, Linda Kenge
White Earth: Sarah Baranes, Sarah Kovan, Mackenzie Haberman, Anirudh Udutha, Kyla Rodgers

Faculty Advisors
Shawn O’Leary, Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement
Matthew Duncan, MD; Associate Dean of Student Affairs

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Introduction
This was the tenth year that we offered this exciting experiential cultural learning opportunity to the Dartmouth community. This year thirteen medical students and six Masters of Public Health students participated in the trip. Students were divided into five reservation teams to go to the Bois Forte, Cass Lake, Fond du Lac, Red Lake and White Earth reservations.

Trip Goals
- To build on the relationships with the Ojibwe communities initiated by past groups of Geisel medical students and create new relationships
- To listen, observe, and begin to understand the healthcare and social issues facing Ojibwe communities through direct, personal interactions.
- To provide meaningful community service, developed in collaboration with community leaders.
- To share what we learned by raising awareness among our colleagues and peers at the Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine.

Curriculum
The curriculum included the following Pre-Trip sessions:
- What are the reservation communities we visit and why
- Introduction to Cultural Awareness in American Indian Health by Shawn O’Leary
- Five student-led sessions. Topics typically covered are Historical Trauma, Addiction, Food Insecurity, Manomin (wild rice), Reservation Land Rights, Violence, Indigenous Health, and Human Trafficking of Native American Women

Post-Trip, we had a structured group reflection and a community wide presentation. All students also complete a Pre- and Post-Trip Assessment.

Trip Reports (Bois Forte, Cass Lake, Fond du Lac, Red Lake and White Earth)

Team Bois Forte: Sage Hellerstedt, Briana Krewson, Matthew Stanton

Monday, March 11, 2019
We had an early morning this morning as the drive from Fortune Bay to the Nett Lake clinic is about one hour. The largest town we passed through on our way to Nett Lake was Cook, MN. Cook is the town with the nearest grocery store to the Nett Lake Reservation, unfortunately this
The grocery store recently burned down and now the residents of Nett Lake have to travel over an hour for fresh groceries.

We accidentally entered the health service building instead of the clinic when we arrived. The clinic, as it turns out, is connected to the elementary school. There is no other school on reservation property; after elementary school, students attend the North Woods School off reservation property and mixed in with non-tribal students.

We first met with Sue Larson, who is an engaging and kind-hearted woman. She manages both the Nett Lake and Vermillion health clinics. Sue gave us a tour of the Nett Lake clinic and explained how the clinic is funded and how the funds coming from IHS are limited. She stressed the clinic efforts to get as many patients as they can another form of primary insurance.

Next, we headed back to the health service building to meet with the mental health workers: Erin, Melissa, Mary, Netty. They run programs for the homeless and for adults with mental health issues. They are strong patient advocates and will go out of their way for their patients and often spend considerable time driving clients to appointments who have otherwise limited means of transportation. Meeting with them was very inspiring. The mental health coordinators are very busy and overbooked, and not all patients actually come to appointments. There is a stigma in the community where all the mental health folk are called “crazy.” Eventually, Melissa is going to get her masters, so she is a licensed therapist.

After that, we talked with Paula in the clinic lab. She showed us all the kits she uses to collect samples, the majority of which are sent to Duluth for testing (about 130 miles). We then walked over to the fitness center with Wendy Long, a nurse practitioner. The fitness center coordinator who showed us around was also very nice (a theme we found during our time at Bois Forte). The fitness center was empty when we arrived, but it was in great condition. It is just across the street from the school, clinic, and tribal building.
We went to the Nett Lake store for lunch, also known as the C-store. It is pretty much an average gas station store, though they do have a deli where many of the health care workers buy lunch. Matt and Briana tried their wild rice burgers (along with lots of fries!).

After lunch we met with Wendy, the NP we mentioned before. We talked with her for a while about her patient population and her work. She likes spending more time with patients at this clinic compared to Cook Hospital, where she worked previously. She said only 10-15% of her patients that are referred to mental health follow up with the referral.

Finally, we talked with Julie, the pharmacist. She explained that the clinic does not distribute any narcotics except gabapentin, which might become a controlled substance soon. The clinic is proud that they don’t carry narcotics, so that they can help limit drug abuse within their community in some way. Julie said they dispense mostly diabetes meds. Patients have no co-pay for meds since it’s all covered by IHS.

**Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

The Bois Forte Reservation is separated into three separate sectors: Nett Lake, Vermillion, and Deer Creek. Today we shadowed at the clinic located in the Vermillion sector. This clinic is newer than Nett Lake and much closer to the Fortune Bay Casino. The Vermillion clinic was built in 2003 with tribal funds and grant money. We did hear that they are considering allowing non-Native members to access the clinic in the future.

In the morning, Matt joined a community health worker for some home visits while Sage and Briana shadowed in the clinic. Sage shadowed Dr. Shanna Vidor, a native physician who is a Bois Forte band member, while Briana shadowed Crystal Lobe, a non-native nurse practitioner.

After morning shadowing, we met with four employees from SUD—the substance abuse disorder group that handles drug and alcohol abuse in the band. We learned a lot from this meeting including hearing a first-hand account about the stigma experience in the community surrounding drug use as well as how the Rule 25 assessments work. It was interesting to hear about how policy changes done at the state level change the way these assessments are implemented, often without any input from the tribal communities doing the groundwork to tackle these serious public health problems. The experiences and stories we heard in this meeting were
powerful and emotional. This SUD group does such important and meaningful work, work that is stressful and draining, but also extremely essential for the community. We were also humbled and honored that the group gifted each of us with Nett Lake wild rice, books, and a board game that is used to teach about the Ojibwe way of life.

In the afternoon, we did more provider shadowing and switched around the provider that each of us was with. It was especially interesting seeing the differences between the approach to patient engagement of the Native and non-Native providers. Briana was with Dr. Vidor, Matt was with nurse Crystal Lobe, and Sage went on one home health visit.

In the evening, we had dinner at the Vermillion Club with our advisor Shawn O’Leary and Dean Matthew Duncan. Some of Shawn’s friends and family also joined us for the dinner. We thoroughly enjoyed hearing the stories told by Shawn’s family about fishing, canoeing, and life in Northern Minnesota. The food at the Vermillion club was great- Matt got to try walleye, a Northern Minnesota staple (fish). We also had a bamboozler pizza as our group appetizer, which is a XXXXL pizza!

**Wednesday, March 13, 2019**

Today was another day of shadowing for us in the Nett Lake Clinic. Fortunately, the clinic was busier than usual, and we were all happy to report having seen a multitude of patients with a variety of case presentations. Sage was paired with nurse Wendy Long, Matt was with Dr. Shanna Vidor, and Briana was shadowed Dr. Charles Helleloid, a veteran of the clinic.

The social determinants component of care became evident immediately. Many patients no-showed because their transportation was unreliable. They struggled with depression, anxiety, and alcohol and drug abuse due to lack of employment opportunities, historical trauma and a multitude of other issues out of their control. Diabetes and obesity were rampant diagnoses due to the lack of economic opportunity, education around nutrition and eating, and also inaccessibility to quality produce and nutritious foods. The nearest supermarket (45 mins away in Cook, MN) had recently burned down. Now, the closest grocery store is over an hour away - an unthinkable journey when the time, gas costs and other externalities are factored in. It was devastating to see, though the attentive and patient care the providers demonstrated inspired us all. Because their patient queues were limited relative to large urban primary care settings, they had time to sit with patients for 30 mins to 1 hour to discuss the many facets of their health - from the care they received directly at the clinic to the upstream factors they experienced everyday (e.g. smoking, substance abuse, transportation, family situation, grocery shopping, employment, etc.).
We headed out of the clinic a little earlier than initially scheduled to ensure we could visit to the Heritage Center, the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa’s cultural and historical museum. The museum chronicled the complete narrative of the Ojibwe/Anishinaabe people from their creation story to the tragic boarding school era to present day resilience and issues. We would highly recommend this museum to future student groups!

Thursday, March 14, 2019
It’s so hard to say, but today was our last day on the Bois Forte reservation. We spent the morning at an all-clinic staff meeting at the council office, and then shadowing Drs. Vidor and Helleloid at the Nett Lake Clinic, visiting the Nett Lake School, sitting in on an HHS (stands for Health and Human Services) meeting, and sitting down with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa tribal council members, Shane, Travis, Pete (aka Chief) and Dave. Their chairwoman, Cheryl, was out of town on official business and unable to attend. After sharing asema - the traditional tobacco offering provided before receiving information from elders - with them, they regaled us with stories of growing up on the Nett Lake reservation, hardships they’ve faced, and the issues they’re prioritizing for the tribe moving forward. It was a treasure to speak with them and we are grateful for how candidly they opened up their hearts and minds to sharing with us.

The Nett Lake School visit was surely the day’s highlight. After meeting Principal Jim Varichak for a tour of the facilities, we met with every class (K-6) to discuss the ills of consuming added sugar as well as nutrition, fitness, diabetes, and obesity. To pique the interest of the kids, we made an activity out of our discussion. After dividing the students into small teams, we asked teams to guess how many spoonsful of sugar were in commonplace food items - healthy and junk alike. After they guessed (by physically spooning sugar into a bowl), we unveiled the amount of sugar in these items. Lots of jaws dropped, heads scratched and puzzling looks; our desired effect! We also had a great time teaching the kids how to get a quick and fun workout in using nothing but a deck of playing cards.

Acknowledgements
We would like to thank Shawn O’Leary and the student leaders of the IHST 2019 for planning this trip. We would also like to thank clinic manager Mrs. Sue Larson, as well as all the
healthcare professionals and tribal members we interacted with during our time at Bois Forte. We are thankful for the dedication of all the groups we met with in Minneapolis as well. Finally, we would like to thank all the sponsors of this trip.

TEAM CASS LAKE: Katherine Amano, Steffany Humala, Lisa Francomacaro, Sofia Rodriguez

The Cass Lake group was comprised of four students: Katherine Amano (first year medical student), Lisa M Francomacaro (first year medical student), Steffany Humala (public health student) and Sofia Rodriguez (group leader, first year medical student).

We stayed in an Airbnb cabin on Moose Lake in Chippewa National Forest, about 30-45 minutes away from most of our events during the week. We worked with the Cass Lake Community Monday, March 11 through Thursday, March 14, 2019.

Our Airbnb on Moose Lake in Chippewa National Forest
View from our Airbnb on Moose Lake in Chippewa National Forest

Minnesota weather: snow storm
Home Visits at Red Cedar Assisted Living

On Monday and Tuesday, we shadowed with Tribal Health’s Red Cedar Assisted Living Program, run by Vince Rock. Despite some lulls in the schedule, we had some busy days doing home visits at the Tribal Health Clinics, and even with Maternal Health. We were each matched with a provider, often a home health nurse, to shadow and assist throughout their daily activities. At one clinic, the diabetes care staff was starting a pilot program to place continuous glucose monitors, which can make it easier for some people to control their diabetes. Another nurse specialized in working with patients with poor compliance for a variety of reasons - including dementia, mistrust of the system, and fear of insulin injections. Each of us saw firsthand how many of the tribal members suffer from hypertension and diabetes - it was not uncommon for patients to have one or more amputations as a result of diabetic ulcers.
Leech Lake Tribal College

On Wednesday morning, the Cass Lake group went to the Leech Lake Tribal College. Raymond Burns, the president of the college, took the time to talk to us about the school. This fully accredited community college caters to the whole community with specific resources for tribal enrollees. Big focuses of the curriculum include cultural education and vocational training. A huge challenge they face is funding, with purposefully low tuition rates for students and below-promised funding by Congress. The funding situation highlights how limited government funding can lead to competition between different tribal programs. Still, the schools today can cooperate for the greater good, and the Leech Lake Tribal College has set many of its students up for success with much fewer resources than many other institutions.

Steffany, Lisa, Kat, and Ray Burns at Leech Lake Tribal College

Leech Lake Tribal College provides quality higher education grounded in Anishinaabe values.
Cass Lake IHS
In the afternoon, we toured the Cass Lake branch of Indian Health Service with the clinical director, Dr. Mark Becker. This was set up like a small hospital, housing an emergency department, primary care, pharmacy, dental clinic, and tribally run EMS. Dr. Becker spoke of some of the history of the IHS system, incorporated into many of the treaties made between tribes and the United States government. He explained that his initial training was in family health, but since he has spent so many years working for the historically under-staffed system, he had accumulated a variety of other responsibilities - such as overseeing the tribal EMS. Dr. Becker spoke of how he strives to stay educated and informed, so that he can offer quality care. In working with the pharmacy, we heard about how sometimes their shipments can be delayed due to poor weather conditions in the rural area - and how they have protocols in place for medication substitution and rationing in the event of such delays. We met several pharmacists who are connected to the IHS through the military.

Main Entrance of Cass Lake Indian Health Services

Leech Lake Ambulatory Services
Bug-o-nay-ge-shig School
We went to the “Bug School” on Thursday morning, hosted by Jay Malchow. After a brief tour, we split up the middle and high schoolers, and they let us use a class period to play a game of “Health Jeopardy.” The middle schoolers were very energetic and enthusiastic. The high schoolers were more varied, with some getting into the competition and some not wanting to talk. A few people were even interested in careers in health, so we were able to answer questions about different topics.

In speaking with Jay Malchow, the school guidance counselor, we were able to learn about the challenges faced by the tribal school. For instance, they offer bus routes for all students - some routes extend 2 hours in order to pickup and drop-off all students. In addition, all students
qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch every day. We were invited to join Jay for lunch in the school cafeteria, and we were impressed by the efforts to include plenty of fruits and vegetables in the meal.

Jeopardy middle-school layout

Bug-o-nay-ge-shig School Emblem

IHS HQ in Bemidji
At IHS headquarters, we met with Bill, who spoke candidly about recruitment of employees. In particular, he highlighted the loan forgiveness program that acted as one of the main drawing factors for potential providers. IHS in general, and particularly in rural areas, struggles to recruit a sufficient number of experienced providers. Quite often, they will have providers who spend only a few years in the community, learning and training, before leaving for more highly compensated employment elsewhere.
A display of flags in the Minneapolis American Indian Center.
An art piece displayed in the Native American Community Development museum in Minneapolis, an exhibit featuring violence against women, the map shows last known locations for missing native women.

*Trajectories by Avis Charley Painting dedicated to the girls and women who left their reservations for the city of hopes of creating a better life.*
TEAM FOND DU LAC: Karin Piveral, Jonathan Busam, Sadhana Puri

Monday -- March 11, 2019
For our first adventure as a group, we were invited to the UMD Medical School by Dr. Owen. Dr. Mary Owen is the director of American Indian and Minority Health at UMD Medical School. We were treated to a delicious indigenous breakfast consisting of wild rice, berries and maple syrup. We were able to share our meal with students as they took break from their finals who shared their insights and educational experiences at UM-Duluth. Additionally, we were able to talk to faculty and staff who shared their experiences and research in the Indigenous community. Lastly, we wrapped up our visit with a seminar lecture by Dr. Owen who was inspired to highlight the “positive” side of the Indigenous efforts currently being conducted around the US. Dr. Owen talked about The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) which is the largest and oldest organization serving tribal communities. NCAI serves tribal governments and ensures policy mirrors broad interests for the communities they serve. Moira Villiard also gave a brief presentation on all the efforts the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) is doing in the Duluth and surrounding area. Programs that Ms. Villard presented were domestic violence shelters, transitional housing programs, and art galleries for local artist to showcase their work.

After UM-Duluth Medical School lecture we moved to The Great Lakes Aquarium where we were able to meet Nikki Crowe and walk through the We Are Water exhibit. For the exhibit we learned about mercury contaminated fish in the St. Louis River that affects not only the tribal nations but communities whose resource of fish comes from the river. We also learned the great efforts Tribal nations are pushing for through the Clean Water Act. In our discussion with Nikki Crowe, program coordinator at the Fond du Lac, we learned an array of topics and issues currently being addressed. Nikki shared her love for botany as well as models necessary to ensure the Indigenous community maintains their medicinal and healing practices.

Tuesday -- March 12, 2019
This was our first day out on the Fond du Lac reservation. We began our day with a trip to the Mash-ka-wisen in-patient treatment center for chemical dependency (CD). During our tour of the center, we saw the center’s culture room, inpatient housing facilities, gym, and counseling department. Mash-ka-wisen does not utilize any medication assisted treatments. Instead, the center works to incorporate culturally sensitive practices into its treatment model. For example, in the center’s culture room, the patients can use their traditional medicines such as sage, sweetgrass, or tobacco or create crafts such as drums made from cowhide. The nurses and counseling staff also work with the patients individually to help them create their own treatment plans based on their specific beliefs and values.

After our tour of the center, we met with the staff and got the chance to talk to them more about the work they do at Mash-ka-wisen. We learned that the treatment center takes in patients who are self-referred, referred by doctors, and those who are court-mandated to
receive treatment. We found it unique that the center hires graduate's of their treatment program to help treat future patients. This model helps ensure that future patients can speak with individuals who can empathize with them and guide them through the recovery process based on their past experiences.

The staff works at Mash-ka-wisen works hard to ensure that they are delivering quality care to their patients, but this is often met with resistance. We asked the members of the staff how they cope with this resistance and they told us that they have learned to “roll with it” and sometimes accept that they cannot fully get through to each and every patient. The staff members make sure to practice self-care and take care of one another regularly.

Later in the afternoon, we met with Moira Villiard for a tour of the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO). Over the years, AICHO has grown into more than just an organization that provides housing for American Indian people. It is a center in Duluth where Native arts and culture are showcased and celebrated. AICHO puts on a variety of art shows and has a gift shop designed to support local Indigenous artists. We were impressed by AICHO’s rooftop garden where residents can cultivate their own space. In addition, AICHO has a wonderful kitchen where children get the opportunity to express their creativity by experimenting with new recipes. We loved exploring this vibrant space and all the services it has to offer to the Native community in Duluth.

To round out our day, we spent our evening at the Cloquet Community Center in the FDL reservation. That evening, a group of Natives screened SEED: The Untold Story documentary as part of a course on food sovereignty. To combat diabetes and other health issues that are highly prevalent in their population, the community is working on returning to their historical diets. It was interesting to hear about how difficult it has been for them to find seed and soil that has not been contaminated with pesticides and other such products of modern western civilization. From the documentary, it seems like White Earth is leading efforts to keep various strains of traditional crops alive in the area through a seed bank and FDL is hoping to get similar efforts underway in their community.

**Wednesday -- March 13, 2019**

We started our day shadowing at the Min-no-aya-win clinic in Cloquet. At the clinic, we shadowed two family medicine physicians, Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Levar. The majority of Dr. Reynolds’ patients this morning had diabetes and cardiovascular disease, common illnesses afflicting the native population. Some of these patients were in denial about their diabetes diagnoses and Dr. Reynolds had to work with them patiently to help them realize the reality of their illnesses. This was not always possible, however, and, unfortunately, she was not always able to get through to her patients right away and had to allow them to come to accept their illness over time. Dr. Levar saw several female patients this morning, one who was a young mom whose labor may need to be induced, another who was a young IV drug user with a serious infection, and an older woman who required ultrasound for a possible abscess. It was interesting to see the issues that women in the community, both young and old, were facing. For example, we learned about the prevalence of IV drug use in the community and the risks
associated with it. We also learned about the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the community. Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Levar provided wonderful patient-centered care and we were inspired by the compassion with which they delivered their care.

Later that afternoon, we met with the Memory Keepers, a research group run out of the University of Minnesota Duluth Medical School. The Memory Keepers are working to do research on dementia in native communities. There is a large prevalence of dementia within the native population and there is limited research that has been done in this area. The Memory Keepers aim to conduct culturally sensitive research on dementia and its comorbidities such as diabetes in native communities. Their core belief is that the research that they conduct should ultimately be beneficial to the communities being studied. Some interesting research questions that the group is studying are on the role of the protein ApoE4 as a resiliency factor for North American Indians, the relationship between dementia and income level, education status, disease status, and historical trauma in native communities, and native cultural beliefs on dementia and how this awareness of these beliefs can best shape care practices. The Memory Keepers showed us a fascinating map that they created that depicts the path of dementia as viewed through a native lens. This map showed us that many native communities believe that dementia is not abnormal or a disease, but simply a part of the natural course of life.

We learned about the many challenges that are faced when doing the research that the Memory Keepers do, and we were extremely impressed by their determination to conduct research that can ultimately help improve care provided to native individuals suffering from dementia.

Later that evening, we met with Darwin to hear his life journey and incredible desire to reach out to his community through all season camps. Throughout the year, Darwin, invites Indigenous youth to participate in camps that he directs which include fishing (both warm and cold weather), berry picking, hiking and other activities. Darwin loves to be around children especially those who come from single homes in order to provide an outlet for creativity and exercise. We all enjoyed listening to Darwin and wonderful outreach programs he provides for Indigenous communities to enjoy at no cost.

**Thursday -- March 14, 2019**

On our last day in Duluth, we took a road trip up north to Gooseberry Falls State Park. The drive up was very misty, but fortunately, by the time we arrived, the clouds parted, and the sun started shining. Several of the trails were covered in ice, yet we were still able to do a brief hike to see the semi-frozen waterfalls. We enjoyed the serenity of the park, and some of us even managed to get a trail run in before heading to Betty’s Pies in Two Harbors for some brunch. Afterwards, we took the North Shore Scenic Byway back south to the FDL reservation. The geometries of the frozen ice forms we saw along the drive were breathtaking.

When we got back to the FDL reservation, we met up with our colleagues from White Earth at the Ojibway school. We then visited Ariel Johnson’s English class. Her high school students were very curious about the paths we took after high school. Through large and small group sessions,
we got to know each other better by sharing our stories. It was wonderful to hear about all the things that motivate these students and what they’re passionate about. Some colleagues in the White Earth group brought along their reflex hammers and stethoscopes. The students found it amusing trying to elicit various reflexes amongst each other, and we were able to teach them anatomy and biomechanics in the process. We incorporated the stethoscopes to talk about heart health and the importance of physical activity to combat diabetes and similar diseases.

After the school visit, we went to the Tribal Center museum between the Community Center we visited earlier and the school. One of the students at the school mentioned he helped build a canoe on display here and another in the Smithsonian. It was very cool to have Jeff Savage, the museum director, explain to us more about the artwork and artifacts located here. It was great to see so much cultural history preserved in one central place.

Soon after the museum tour, more of our colleagues began arriving in Duluth. We helped them unload their luggage at Grampie’s house and then headed to Sammy’s Pizza for dinner. Hearing about everyone’s diverse set of experiences on their reservations was eye-opening and incredibly informative.
Jeff Savage talking about the FDL Code Talkers

FDL and White Earth Ojibwe School Visit

AICHO Mural
We Are Water Exhibit and discussion with Nikki Crowe
Dr. Henderson proudly wearing the Dartmouth lone pine hat
Team Fond du Lac walking across Lake Superior

Darwin talking to us about his life journey

TEAM RED LAKE NATION: Cindy Li, Jennie Murillo, Eric Lu, Linda Kenge

Sunday March 10th
4:00 pm – 8:30 pm: Drive to Red Lake
After leaving Angie’s house, we made the 4-and-a-half-hour drive to red lake. We decided to stop in Bemidji to do some grocery shopping. Note: the hotel does not have a kitchen, but each room does have a microwave. There’s a Target, a Wal-Mart and a grocery store in Bemidji.

9:30 pm Arrive at the Seven Clan’s Casino and checked in.

**Monday March 11th**

8:00 am-9:30 am: Meet with Dr. Borromeo/quick tour of the hospital.
Dr. Borromeo met us in the hospital lobby and after getting our badges, he gave us a quick tour of the hospital. We visited the urgent care clinic, the ER and met a lot of the hospital staff members including social workers, nurses, receptionists, and mental health workers.

9:30 am-10:00 am: Conversation with Dr. Borromeo
Dr. Borromeo gave us an overview of our schedule for the week and gave us a quick introduction of the IHS health system. He also shared the story of how he and some of his co-workers came to work at the hospital.

10:30 am-11:30 am: Meeting with Oran
Oran is the director of the hospital and spends a lot of time handling the hospital’s finances. He gave us an overview of how the hospital was funded and some of the financial challenges the hospital faced. He also talked about some of the community health initiatives the hospital is involved in.

11:30 am-12:30 am: Lunch
We went back to the hotel for lunch.

1:15 pm – 4:00 pm: Shadowing and home visits
In the afternoon, Cindy and I (medical students) shadowed while Jennie and Anel (MPH students) went on home visits with a community health worker. Cindy shadowed Dr. Tinsley (pediatrician) while I shadowed Dr. Foloshade (ER). I saw two cases that afternoon, one was an SI case and the other was a person coming in for complications related to diabetes. I got to see a few procedures, which was really interesting. The ER was not too busy that particular day, so I got to have a lot of extended conversations with the doctors there.
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm: Dinner with Cass Lake
That evening, we met up with the Cass Lake group for dinner in Bemidji. Each group invited some of their main contacts at the hospital. Unfortunately, this dinner coincided with the Red Lake vs. Cass Lake boy’s basketball game, so many of our contacts were not able to make it. An interesting idea for next year (from Anel): Instead of the dinner, the Red Lake and Cass Lake groups could go to the game together to support our respective teams. The dinner itself was really nice. Dr. Borromeo, and both Dr. Tinsley’s came.

Tuesday March 12th
8:00 am – 12:30 pm: Tour of Red Lake
One of the community health workers, Deanna, took us on a tour of Red Lake. Our tour route took us through Redby and eventually up to Ponemah, a small town about 45 minutes north west of Red Lake. We did some sight-seeing along the way. The lake was completely frozen at the time, and we saw a few groups of people ice-fishing. We visited a small community hospital in Ponemah as well as a place called “the point,” where the shores of both parts of Red Lake was visible.

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm: Lunch
We had lunch with Deanna at the Red Lake Tribal College. Lunch consisted of typical American Diner food (Burgers, fries, patty melts, chicken tenders, mozzarella sticks). They were showing a movie in the cafeteria at the time (Aquaman), so we watched for a bit as we talked to Deanna.

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm: Shadowing/WIC
Cindy and I shadowed while Jennie and Anel met with people from the WIC program. Cindy shadowed Dr. Ulu (ER) while I shadowed Dr. Lotsu (Internal medicine). All of the cases I saw that afternoon involved people coming in due to complications with their diabetes; some had neurological problems, some had seizures, and some had renal failure. All of the doctors at the hospital are amazing teachers and were very willing to let us talk to and examine their patients (with the patient’s permission of course). Dr. Borromeo pulled me away a few times when a very interesting patient arrived and used those as valuable teaching moments.
4:15 pm – 5:30 pm: We got lost
We were supposed to go to the boys and girls club in Red Lake, but we accidently drove to the one in Ponemah.

5:30 pm – 6:15 pm: Boys and Girls Club
We visited the Boys and Girls Club right next to the high school. Kids and teens usually come over right after school to hand out and do homework. Jennie’s cousin works there, and he gave us a quick tour of the place. There is a cafeteria, a teen lounge, a gym and a computer area. We hung out with the kids in the teen lounge for a bit and played some basketball with them.

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm: Dinner with the Doctors
Dr. Borromeo invited us to dinner. Both Dr. Tinsley’s were present as well. We went to a restaurant in Bemidji called Bar 209. It was really nice to have the opportunity to get to know our hosts in more relaxed setting.

Wednesday March 13th
Wednesday was a fairly light day since the tribe declared a tribal holiday in celebration of the girls’ basketball team making it to state.

9:30 am – 10:30 am: Kinnikinnick making
We attended a session of making Kinnikinnick at the hospital. The session started with a presentation on the significance of kinnikinnick and then we all got to make our own and take them home in little pouches.

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Home visits
All of us went on home visits with a community health worker named John. We saw two patients, both of whom required insulin shots. We watched as John interacted with the patients, helping them refill their insulin syringes, checking their blood glucose monitors, and talking to them about the importance of regular insulin shots.

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Cindy and I went to the local grocery store to participate in a hepatitis C outreach event. There was a pharmacy resident there who was leading the event. He is interested in studying whether outreach events like this one were effective in increasing people’s knowledge about hepatitis C, the risks, and prevention strategies. We stood outside the grocery store and gave a brief educational spiel about Hep C to anybody who wanted to listen. I really enjoyed this because 1. We just covered Hep C in class, and 2. It was a great opportunity to interact with community members in a non-healthcare setting.

**Thursday, March 14th**

Time flew. Thursday’s theme was saying goodbye. Before we even noticed, it was the last day we would spend in Red Lake site. We were impressed by how much we already knew, and started to care, about this land and people on it.

9:00 am – 10:00 am: Naloxone training
Eric and I had a pharmacist to give us a different perspective of substance abuse issue in the tribe. It took time for the IHS to promote and educate people to carry and use naloxone. Now ambulances have them, as well as many concerned people. It shocked me that the recorded average dose to reverse a person from opioid use increased almost three-fold over the past a few years. Jennie and Anael did not participate in this activity because they did not feel well.

10:00 am – 12:00 pm: Shadowing
Eric shadowed in pediatrics and I shadowed in internal medicine. Like the previous days, many patients presented with comorbidity with diabetes. The doctors were very patient and enthusiastic about teaching. I was able to practice the physical exam skills and anatomy knowledge in learned in school with patients.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Saying goodbye
We said farewell to the doctors and gave them some Dartmouth hats as little tokens. Dr. Borromeo also gave us gifts. We decided to stay in Red Lake for another night because of the upcoming storm.
Friday, March 15th
Friday was a fun day with some traveling, a service activity and Powwow.

9am - 2:30pm: Driving from Red Lake to Minneapolis

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm: Elder foot care clinic
We regrouped with the rest of the team. The foot clinic was a meaningful and rewarding experience. Although at first not many people showed up for a free pedicure, we ended up with a good number of “customers.” It was nice to talk with the community members and do something for them.

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm: Powwow
After the foot clinic, we went to help out at the Powwow. We took turns to set the tables and chairs, worked at sign-in stations, and directed people around. The Powwow was not a very large one. Nonetheless, it was very exciting to see people from different tribes playing drum, dancing and competing with one another. The most touching moment was when the host called all Dartmouth students to come up. Everyone came to us and shook our hands, saying thank you. We danced together. I didn’t think what we did was anything hard or unusual, but the gratitude they showed us was magnificent. I would always remember this night. It was so fun to see with our own eyes, to feel, and to participate in such a cultural event.

Saturday, March 16th
On Saturday we had two speakers sharing their stories and experience. We also had another service activity in the afternoon.

10:00 am – 11:00 am: Meeting with Deatrick LaPointe
Deatrick worked in the behavioral health area for a long time. He shared his work experiences, the challenges he overcame and the accomplishments he achieved.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm: Meeting with Dorene Day
Dorene is a local midwife. She worked to promote home birth, a passion deeply rooted in her culture and upbringing. Her story really touched me with the intimate connection she had with her tribe and her cultural values.

12:00 pm-1:00 pm: Lunch

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm: First Nations Kitchen
After lunch we went to First Nations Kitchen. We learned more about the community garden and how they helped with local food insecurity. Then all students were divided into two groups. Eric and I went to Gandhi Mahal, an Indian restaurant. Jenny and Anael stayed at the kitchen to help out. At Gandhi Mahal, we learned about the community and saw the community garden downstairs. We helped to pick rite peppers.

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm: Dinner at Angie’s house

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm: Beauty and Beast at Southwest High School
At night we went for a high school musical play, Beauty and Beast. Belle was played by Angie’s daughter (by the way, I didn’t recognize her at first. I was too immersed in her beautiful voice and the interesting plot.)

**Sunday, March 17th**
Sunday was a light day with no arranged activities.

9:00 am – 4:00 pm
The wonderful trip came to an end. We didn’t have any activities scheduled for today, so Eric and I took the time to enjoy ourselves in Minneapolis and explore the city. We went to Gandhi Mahal for brunch and I had my second Indian meal in my life! The souvenir shops were mostly closed, but luckily we found a bookstore that had some for sale. Before departing for the airport, we went to regroup with Anael and Jennie.
**TEAM WHITE EARTH:** Sarah Baranes, Sarah Kovan, Mackenzie Haberman, Anirudh Udutha, Kyla Rodgers

**Saturday, March 9th, 2019**

The White Earth team has officially arrived in Minnesota! The team departed Hanover at midnight on Friday and all piled into the wee Fiat that could to make our 5 am flight out of Logan. Due to some good old Midwestern storms, our connecting flight out of Nashville was canceled. We then found ourselves in The Amazing Race! With the help of our newest friend, Patrick Donovan of the Southwest help desk, we (and our BAGS) managed to make it to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. With the swath of snow threatening to halt our progress, we opted for a Megabus to cover the rest of the distance to Minneapolis. On the quick municipal bus ride between the airport and the bus terminal, Anirudh was elected bus captain and safely navigated the team to the Intermodal Bus Terminal. En route, we stumbled upon a hidden gem coffee shop, Stone Creek, that saved our wayward traveler souls with amazing caffeinated creations and artwork galore. Now recharged and satiated we climbed on the Megabus for what turned out to be an 8-hour snow-drive across Wisconsin and Minnesota. We witnessed a meteorological array of rain, hail, snow and anxiety from the safety of our bus seats! Pulling into the bus terminal in Minneapolis, we emerged as victorious marathoners from our polar trek having managed to eat every snack within the confines of the bus. Reunited with our other student brethren we settled into our hotel rooms for a much-anticipated sleep. Excited for the cultural activities to commence tomorrow morning!

![Image of team members](image1.jpg)

**Sunday, March 10th, 2019**

Team White Earth finally made our trek to White Earth! But before we made it to our home for the week, we spent a glorious morning in Minneapolis with the other 13 members of the IHST group at Angie Erdrich’s home. The morning started off with a meditation and mindfulness class with Tommy Woon. Building off the introductory work on psychosomatic reconciliation he
presented to our group at Dartmouth a few months prior, we practiced mindfulness with a brief meditation session before diving into a discussion about the importance of being present and creating space for oneself to unwind from emotionally charged experiences. All still a little bleary-eyed from finals and long hours of travel, Dr. Woon’s session provided the perfect opportunity for us to leave behind any stress and engage with what was to come.

Before indulging in a delicious meal, we were fortunate enough to have Richard Wright, a traditional healer, join us and bless our arrival and the meal. We then ate a delicious lunch and enjoyed conversations with Angie, her husband Sandeep, and their three daughters. We were also fortunate enough to be joined by Delila and Logan—community health workers in Minneapolis. After lunch Richard gave us a brief introduction to sacred herbs such as sage, sweet grass and cedar and how he integrates traditional practices into his work in addiction counseling.

After squinting in the sun to take a group photo, team White Earth hit the road headed for, you guessed it, White Earth. Approximately one grocery stop, one Target stop and 4.5 hours later, we fell into beds at the hotel and fell into 5 deep sleeps (but not before catching the last 10 minutes of the Pennsylvania axe throwing competition on TV).

Monday, March 11th, 2019

Our first day at White Earth!

After some long travel days, we had a slow morning to catch up on a little rest and work before beginning our experience at White Earth. We started our official day meeting our fearless leaders Hannah and Kim from Tribal Health who were kind enough to make sure we were everywhere we were supposed to be for the day. We may look like adults, but let’s just say their guidance was very much appreciated.

We began a short stop away from our hotel front door at the White Earth headquarters where we received a briefing from Leonard Wadena from Human Resources about the happening
happenings on White Earth. We knew there was a lot going on, but I don’t think any of us could have predicted how many programs there are for the reservation’s 20,000+ residents. There is something for everyone—from kids to elders. While calling someone an elder may have a different connotation in mainstream American culture, the Ojibwa people consider tribal members over the age of 55 elders. Being classified as an elder confers certain benefits to tribal members and demands an additional level of well-earned respect.

Sadly, for us, kids were on break the week of our visit, so we did not visit schools as other groups have in past years, but we still got to learn a few things about the school system at White Earth. Leonard explained that the Cola Charter School on the reservation integrates traditional practices in the daily schedule. For example, when the children arrive each day they can choose to participate in smudging, a traditional burning of sage to ward away evil spirits.

Leonard also introduced us to White Earth suboxone programs—medication assisted treatment for opioid addiction. There is one program on the reservation and one in Minneapolis; together they treat over 60 tribal members. The background was very much appreciated, as we had plans to work with some of Tribal Health’s harm reduction programs in the coming days.

After our briefing we were fingerprinted and photographed for our very own White Earth ID badges that were printed and delivered on the spot. We all agreed it was the most efficient badge distribution any of us had ever witnessed in healthcare. Next, Kim and Hannah guided us to Indian Health Services, where we solidified our shadowing schedules for the next three afternoons and got a glorious tour of the IHS facility. The walls of the building are covered with photographs of the Ojibwa people from up to 150 years ago. The walls were also adorned with star and woven blankets, a canoe, a headdress, and other pieces of traditional tribal artwork. We met some of the physicians we were scheduled to shadow in the coming days before saying our goodbyes and heading back to the events center at the hotel for our evening activity.

Cyndy Rastedt, our coordinator extraordinaire from Tribal Health organized a truly wonderful evening for us. The evening began with Jon, a spiritual healer, who shared the story of his
journey with our group and provided a blessing for our travels and our meal. Over dinner, we got to hear from Rachel, the harm reduction coordinator at Tribal Health. Although she was incredibly modest, with a little coaxing from Cyndy we learned that Rachel was instrumental in overturning the caveats in Steve’s Law that prohibited nurses from administering non-prescribed naloxone. Thanks to her tireless work and advocacy, nurses at White Earth can now administer naloxone (aka Narcan—a drug that reverses an opioid overdose) free of fear of penalty. Again, thanks to Cyndy’s pride in her coworkers, we learned about the wonderful work Kim had done to institute the WeCare program—an initiative that seeks to coordinate the services for members of the White Earth nation.

Tuesday March 12th, 2019

Day 2 at White Earth got off to an early start with the crew getting up a bit before 7 am and seeing a beautiful sunrise over the snowy horizon on our way to Tribal Health offices to meet the Home Health Nurses we would be shadowing for the first part of the day. The Home Health Nurses go out every day to meet folks in their own homes to check in, collect some vitals and monitor some chronic ailments, and generally help them get the care they need. I got to tag along with Ashleigh who grew up in the area and came back a few years ago to work with Tribal Health. Despite some trouble getting our small company car over a wee snow bank, we were able to visit 4 folks and fill up their pill dispensers, and make sure they had the support to continue living independently. I even found out that one gentleman’s mother had made and donated some of the sweetgrass baskets on display at the IHS clinic (more from IHS coming up soon!) The home health nurse program that White Earth offers to all residents of the area was one of the reasons I hoped to visit White Earth and the experience was more moving than I had expected! Sitting in people’s homes and taking the time to really check in felt like the nurses were really meeting people where they were to connect them with the broader healthcare system. My brief time shadowing Ashleigh underscored her belief that such home health programs were an unfortunately rare necessity in rural areas.

After regrouping at Tribal Health Headquarters and a quick lunch on-the-go, we headed over to IHS to shadow in Pediatrics, Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy, Geriatrics, Pharmacy, and Preventative medicine (a recent addition!). I got to join the Geriatrics Nurse Practitioner, Sandy, who has also been in the area a long time, but commutes on the weekends from her house up near the Canadian border! The patients we saw, all of whom happened to be women, had a variety of medical ailments they came in for, but many seemed complicated by the patient’s social situations from having continued childcare responsibilities into older age to having physically demanding jobs on top of body pains.
At 4, all the day’s patients were seen, and it was finally time to head to a delicious spaghetti dinner with WECARE, an integrative health program run by Tribal Health that connects families with other services provided, including cultural education. For tonight, Lisa, from the tribal college, led a discussion on the use of traditional medicines, after which we helped make medicine pouches with the assembled families. After another exciting day spent all across the reservation, we headed home to rest and recharge before another early start tomorrow!

**Wednesday March 13th, 2019**

Wednesday was another meaningful and action-packed day for the White Earth Team. The day began early, with steaming cups of coffee from the beverage station at the casino and Tupperware-made oatmeal. Our first stop of the day was meeting Karen and Rachel, who kindly escorted us to our two morning sites.

Half of the group — Mack, Kyla, and Sarah— spent the first part of the morning at the Maternal Outreach and Mitigation Services (MOMs). The MOMs Program is an intensive out-patient service for pregnant and/or new mothers who are dealing with medical and emotional problems caused by addiction to opioids and heroin. Individuals within the program receive daily doses of Suboxone as a means to transition away from other drug use. Suboxone, the brand name for buprenorphine/naloxone, works as an agonist that acts at the receptor. The nurses at MOMs explained that at low doses buprenorphine limits an individual’s withdrawal symptoms but does not give the “high” experienced from other opiates. The goal of the program, they explained, is to provide a positive and safe environment where mothers can begin using and potentially taper off of Suboxone. While this treatment is a primary focus of the program, MOMs also provides an integrative system of treatment. At the facility there are tri-weekly group meetings and cultural events. They also provide daycare in order to make the treatment and meetings more accessible for the mothers. Throughout the morning, we were able to shadow the nurses during dosing and also hear individual’s stories/experiences with the program.
After leaving MOMs, and switching roles with Sarah B. and Anirudh, we drove over to Harm Reduction. The Harm Reduction program provides syringe exchange services, patient education, and linkage to care for individuals both enrolled and not enrolled with the reservation. Due to time constraints, our group had limited time with the nurses at Harm Exchange and no clients visited. That said, we had ample time to talk with Rachel about her experiences beginning the program and her efforts in changing nursing policies regarding Narcan.

At this point in the day we got word of new weather reports that were quickly approaching the White Earth Reservation. In an attempt to “beat the storm,” we decided to head back to the hotel and pack up our belongings before heading to IHS for the afternoon. Upon arriving to IHS, we quickly split up to our assigned shadowing positions for the day. Kyla and Sarah B. were placed in Pediatrics. Mack shadowed a family practice physician. Anirudh and I were placed in OT/PT. While our initial plan was to leave IHS and head to the Boys and Girls Club in the evening, the weather unfortunately halted those plans. Therefore, following our time at IHS we all packed into the car and began our rain-filled drive to Duluth. Wednesday finished with a stop for dinner at Canal Park Brewing Company and a final drive to Grampie’s house where we spent the night.

Friday March 14th, 2019

We started the day bright and early, waking up at 5 am so that we could leave Grampie’s house in Duluth and make it to our first talk in Minneapolis at 10:15 am. We swung by Angie’s house to drop off our bags, then headed to Pow Wow Grounds, a coffee shop in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. We got some amazing coffee drinks there: we highly recommend both the white mocha and turtle mocha if you are ever in town!
Next, we headed into the All My Relations Art Gallery. They were hosting an annual exhibit called “Bring Her Home: Stolen Daughters of Turtle Island”, which highlights the enormous problem of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW). The artwork was beautiful, but the story behind them is incredibly sad. I have heard about the epidemic of MMIW numerous times, and it is infuriating that it is so difficult to get the public to care about missing and murdered women of color. My personal favorite pieces were by Angela Babby; they were kiln-fired vitreous enamel on glass mosaic. One depicted a famous picture of Wounded Knee massacre, highlighting the fact that what appears to be a pile of blankets in the foreground of the picture is actually the bodies of several murdered Native women. The second depicted modern MMIW in the background with portraits of Native women who were recently elected to public positions. The thing that spoke to me the most about this pair of pieces was that they were both honest in depicting the brutality that Native women have suffered while simultaneously inspiring hope for the future.

After our tour of All My Relations Art Gallery, we walked over to the Minneapolis American Indian Center, where we got a rundown of all the programs offered there by Brian Joyce, the director of the Native Fitness and Nutrition Program (FAN). There is an array of programs available at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, including FAN, the Prevention Through Cultural Awareness Program, Indigenous Women's Life Net, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, and Two Rivers Art Gallery, all of which focus on harnessing and reclaiming culture to empower Natives living in the Twin Cities area. We got the opportunity to shop at Charlie's Woodland Indian Crafts, where we befriended the owner (the eponymous Charlie).

Next, we headed over to the Indian Health Board, where Angie works to get Narcan training by Steffany Devich, an alcohol and drug counselor in the Twin Cities area. Her presentation was comprehensive and incredible, addressing misconceptions and truths about opiate overdose. I learned a lot and got a couple of Narcan kits to bring back home. I hope never to have to use them, but I am glad that I have them just in case! We also got to meet some of the medical team at IHB that work with Angie.
After our lunch talk at IHB, we got a quick tour of the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center with Patina Park and learned about some of their services. The group specializes in empowering Native women to live healthy and stable lives, free of violence. As we learned from the Bring Her Home exhibit earlier in the day, Native women are significantly more likely to be victims of domestic violence than women from other ethnic groups. MIWRC offers section 8 housing for women and families as well as support groups and mental health services to address historical and personal trauma.

After our talk on the MIWRC we walked over to Little Earth, a HUD-subsidized housing complex with preference for Native American residents. We hosted a foot care clinic for elders who live there. Unfortunately, we only got a few "customers", but it was a unique opportunity to hear the elders' stories. It turned out that Sarah K. was a hidden talent at foot massage!

Our final event of the night was a pow wow, which was held back in the Minneapolis American Indian Center. We volunteered to help with the logistics of the event. Some of us helped set up chairs, while others handed out surveys to collect data for the Center's funding purposes. Sarah K. and I helped make walking tacos; they're made by cutting open a Doritos bag and putting in ground beef and whatever taco toppings the attendees' hearts desired. I got a chance to talk with an elder named Wendy, who told me about some negative experiences she'd had with physicians in the IHS; while I'd read about such concerns in books, it was even more upsetting to hear about it from someone who'd been directly connected to it.

At the end of the pow wow, the emcee asked all of the Dartmouth students to come out and stand in the middle with the head man and head woman dancer while the pow wow attendees came out to shake our hands. I have never felt so undeserving of thanks, because I felt that everyone I met this week gave me so much more though their teachings than I could ever repay in one evening.
Saturday March 15th, 2019

Today is our last scheduled day of group activities in Minneapolis and the day didn’t disappoint. We started off the day meeting Deatrick LaPointe at the Ojibwe Tribal Center to hear about his research and perspective. A Lakota Sioux raised off the Rosebud reservation, he provided an interesting perspective of applying data analysis to a population that has been victimized by researchers in the past. His background in psychology lent itself well to his current work in promoting technological leadership with the University of Minnesota. The main focus of their work is to provide equal access to the internet as many of the reservations within the Americas do not have adequate internet coverage. He introduced us all to the concept of “space internet” with the mobilization of SpaceX increasing the number of global satellites internet transmission might be satellite-based in the future which would increase the scope of coverage. The access to information is another key determinant of health affecting many tribal populations.

After learning from Deatrick, we were visited by Dorene Day an Ojibwe midwife working to bring back the sacred ceremonies and practices of home birth. She is a gifted storyteller and wove a humorous and profound history of how she was drawn to the traditional birthing techniques of her people. Telling us of her parents that were both talented keepers of their culture, lived in rural Minnesota with their 17 children. Her father was a talented trapper and singer who could sing for 7 days without repeating a song. Her mother was the core of the family's strength, working incredibly hard to raise her children in the relative wilderness. Dorene told us how the Ojibwe language was lost within one family as her older brothers and sisters went to a school where they were beaten for speaking their native language, so to save the children from harm, her parents switched to speaking English at home. Dorene, the youngest of 17 children, was not raised in a household that spoke Ojibwe and had to work hard
as an adult to reclaim her language. She told us of her midwife training, her own personal birthing stories and how they were able to blend traditional practices at a hospital birth for her daughter. Within one birth story it showed both incredibly prejudice and understanding by different Physicians within the hospital towards the Ojibwe choices surrounding the birth and incorporation of birthing ceremonies within a Western setting. After learning of all the abuses suffered by Native Americans by medical professionals it was warming to hear of this modern-day marriage of practices. It was a joy and honor to listen to Dorene’s journey and lessons on traditional midwifery.

After lunch, we all migrated towards the First Nations Kitchen for our afternoon service activity based in the Native American Episcopal Church. We were introduced to Reverend Robert Twobulls who told us of the mission of the First Nations Kitchen to provide Indigenous foods to Indigenous peoples to help fight the epidemics of obesity and Diabetes that plague many tribal members. The Kitchen serves once a week and the menu is comprised of healthy alternatives and traditional diet of the Plains people. Next, we heard from Shyla who gave us a lecture on Manomin (wild rice in Ojibwe), the cultural basis and importance of traditional harvesting. Imbedded in her presentation were several videos of traditional harvesting and processing, showing the amount of labor it takes to harvest and sell this staple.

Our next speaker was Joanna Hill, who is an indigenous seed keeper and teacher who works to teach about culture through food. She told us about “the food prophecy” contained within the 7 fires prophecy and the sacred relationship with food. She shared some important insights around the “order of assimilation not being allowed to provide [their] own food.” The overarching message over the power of food within the Ojibwe culture and the use of food as a determinant of health was an often-overlooked topic within our discussion of health in general. Afterwards we broke into teams, cleaning, preparing the hall for their next meal and breaking up the ample ice deposits on the streets surrounding the church. A small group ventured to Gandhi Mahal, a local Indian restaurant, to speak to their staff about how the business serves as a platform for food justice and how they work to serve fresh vegetables with their own aquaponics system. We helped harvest some peppers and rejoined our brethren at the Church.
The whole gang got together for Jamaican take out at Angie’s house, before heading out to see her daughter Hema star as Belle within her High School production of Beauty and the Beast. All of us were rather staggered by how well the production was done. The costumes, the music and set design were really impressive and really redefined our interpretation of a high school musical. They didn't even need Zack Efron. After congratulating our leading lady, we all headed home to Angie’s house for a reflection on all we had witnessed through the day and learned through this unique experience.