14th Annual Minnesota Indian Health Service Trip

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Leech Lake: Hannah Adams, Heidi Edmonds, Titilayo Mabogunje, Joseph Nano, Kelsey Plona, Rich Rosato
Minneapolis: Natalie Thomas, Joanne Lee, Nsomma Alilonu, Chelsey Recendez
White Earth: Kristin Corbett, Jamie Park, Kort Zarbock
M3’s: Chenin Ryan, Torri Lee

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At a Glance:

This year, twenty Geisel and TDI students embarked on a journey to Minnesota for spring break. We spent time in Minneapolis with the urban American Indian Community and the Bois Forte, Leech Lake and White Earth Indian reservations across northern Minnesota. The trip gave us a glimpse into Indian history, culture, and health and we would love to share our stories with the larger Dartmouth community.

A Note from the Minnesota Indian Health Service Trip Leaders

Our week in Minnesota was filled with immense learning and moments of appreciation, humility, and lots of laughter. Each group immersed themselves fully into their site, and many students in their reflections described the value of relationships they built with our host communities, who they described as exceedingly “welcoming” and “gracious.” It was incredible to build these relationships and see the students take ownership of planning the work that they would be doing in each community. Perhaps what was most surprising to us, as the leaders and organizers of this trip, was how eager and enthusiastic each community was to host us. Many groups reached out to us before we even had the chance to contact them, and some had already planned what they wanted the students to do when they got there. Upon contacting White Earth, we found that they had built an entire schedule for the students and were covering most of our students’ accommodations. A resounding sentiment we have heard is that our students want to continue to learn, and that we wish we could give more to the groups who are so generously hosting and teaching us. Many students emphasized that this trip has made a
lasting impact on them, and the knowledge and understanding they gained from physically spending time at their sites and having real, in person conversations with community members was irreplaceable. For some of us this trip has confirmed career aspirations of providing healthcare in Native American communities.

One week does not feel like enough time, and we hope this program will evolve into a longitudinal experience where our trip serves as an orientation for students to continue engaging with these particular tribes as well as investing, more generally, in indigenous healthcare and rural healthcare across the remaining years of their training and into their careers. We were also grateful to be a part of a new outreach effort by Dartmouth Health to set up telehealth clinics on the reservations that will be visited by specialty providers twice a year to perform procedures; some students are returning this summer to set up a clinic at Bois Forte. We are excited to support future trips and hope to facilitate the growth of this invaluable Dartmouth experience to become more longitudinal for our students, and to demonstrate, with action, our deep gratitude to the communities that have welcomed us for the past 14 years.

Rich Rosato and Grace Palmer, MD ‘26

Trip Objectives:

• To listen, observe, and begin to understand the health care and social issues facing Native communities through direct personal interactions.

• To provide meaningful community service, developed in collaboration with community leaders.

• To share what we learn by raising awareness of these issues among our colleagues and peers at Dartmouth.
Curriculum

The curriculum included the following Pre-Trip sessions:

- October 26- Trip Orientation Session with the First Year Class
- November 7- Reservation Site-Specific Presentation
- December 8- “Cultural Awareness in Native American Communities,” by Shawn O’Leary, Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement
- December 15- Team Minnesota purchased holiday gifts for two American Indian families in need, one family from the Missisquoi Tribe in Swanton, VT and a second family from the Little Earth of United Tribes community in Minneapolis, MN.
- January 30- Lunch and Discussion with Navajo author and surgeon Lori Alvord, MD.
- February 1- Team Minneapolis presented, “Culture and Significance of Pow Wows.”
- February 7- Team Leech Lake presented, “Cultural Preservation, Political Relations, and Current Wellness in the Leech Lake Community.”
- February 14- Team Bois Forte presented, “Food: Culture, Sovereignty and More.”
- February 21- Red Willow Harvest and Kinnikinic
March 1 - Team White Earth presented, “A Brief History of Local Native American People: The Wabanaki Confederacy.”

March 3rd - Lunch and Discussion Indigenous Arctic Researchers

Post-Trip, we had a structured group reflection, a community-wide presentation and wrote up our personal reflections and trip report. We also participated in a Climate Justice and Indigenous Health Field Trip and had lunch with The Qaujigiartiit Health Research Center team that was visiting the Dickey Center.
The Trip Begins

Sunday, March 12: Minneapolis (Large Group - The First Day)

The group set off from Dartmouth in the early hours of the morning on Sunday to make a 6:00am flight out of Boston after losing an hour to daylight savings. Everyone made it safely to the airports and connecting flights convening with Shawn, Chenin, Dr. Duncan, and Dr. Glass in Minneapolis airport at 10:00am. Everyone picked up rental cars and we proceeded to Cedar Lake Park where we had a land blessing by Dr. Angela Erdrich to officially start the trip.

From there, we went to the Erdrich home for a group lunch and to learn about the work they are doing with Native American communities around Minneapolis. Around 3:30pm, we took our group photo and everybody started heading out to their reservation sites. The drives ranged from 4-6 hours to get out to each reservation, so the travel took up the rest of the day. Everybody thankfully made it to their remote lodging safely, and most groups had an “expectations and hopes” meeting before going to bed early ahead of their busy first day!
Monday

HIPAA with Pam Parsons
Pam greeted us on a cold clear morning at the Nett Lake Clinic. Before shadowing in the clinic, we needed to complete the Nett Lake HIPAA Compliance Training. Not only did Pam walk us through the training, but she explained some history of the clinic and her role there. She was eager to share about the clinic with us. We finished with a tour of the clinic and the discovery of the propane leak.

Shadowing at Nett Lake Clinic: Pharmacy, Dental, Medical
Our group split up for the day to shadow in different departments of the clinic. There were only 2 medical and 2 dental patients in the morning, which gave us plenty of time to engage with the healthcare providers and learn more about their work. We got to see patients and help ferry supplies from the pharmacy to the patient rooms. We learned so much about the integration of Western medicine with traditional healing practices, about the most common medical issues patients struggle with in Bois Forte, and about how tribal run health care is organized and functions (and it’s interaction with IHS). Around 10am, the local maintenance crew came into the clinic to track down the propane smell. It turned out that the hot water heater was leaking. By noon, the clinic was closed because of the leak. While we didn’t get to shadow all day, we did get the opportunity to drive Pam home to Vermillion and hear more of her story.
Boys & Girls Club at Nett Lake

In the afternoon, we volunteered with the Boys & Girls Club. They serve band and non-band members and are available to the community at absolutely no cost. They run afterschool programs for kids from kindergarten up through high school. We chatted with the kids during snack time, played large group games in the gym, and played games in smaller groups. The club provides the kids with not only snacks right after school, but also dinner for those who stay later. There is a shuttle service for the kids which has helped with transportation from the program at the end of the day. At the end of our time there, we sat down with Wendy who runs the Nett Lake club and learned about how she came into her position at the club and what it has taken to keep it running as smooth as it is. We provided her with our contact information and offered to serve as mentors to any students she thought would benefit from being in touch with us, especially regarding applying to school and pursuing a medical field.

Tuesday:

Meeting with Tribal Council:

In the morning, we all had the pleasure of sitting down with some representatives from the Tribal Council at Bois Forte in their government building, beautifully designed in the shape of a
drum. We learned about the largest land buyback by a Native American tribe in the US, in which they bought back 28,000 acres of land. We learned about their efforts to revive Nett Lake, the lake that grows food upon the water, and how their newly repaired dam should help regulate the water levels and subsequent manomin harvest. We also discussed their response to COVID and how they were one of few tribes who mandated all tribal government employees to get vaccinated. We got to hear personal stories, spiritual stories, and stories about the politics in Bois Forte. It was an honor to learn from them.

**Ojibwe Heritage Museum**
We spent the afternoon at the Ojibwe heritage museum at Fortune Bay. We got a personal tour and got to learn about Ojibwe history from the Ojibwe perspective. It was wonderful to see the local artwork and to hear about the ways Ojibwe people continue to celebrate and maintain their culture. We were surprised to learn about how strong the US veteran community is amongst the Bois Forte band members.

**Dinner with Shawn & Co.**
We ended our day with a beautiful meal at Fortune Bay with Shawn and his group of students and family members. We got to eat Walleye and Manoomin harvested from right here on the lake and to learn about each other’s projects and histories.

**Wednesday:**
**Nett Lake Food Shelf**
In the morning, we met Millie at the Nett Lake Food Shelf. This food shelf is open to both band and non-band members. People can come into the food shelf during operating hours to shop for whatever they needed. However, for people and families who are unable to make it in, there is a delivery program in place. The delivery program has people fill out a grocery list of what they need and then it will be packed up and brought to their home. The shelf is fully stocked with different kinds of groceries, cleaning supplies, and toiletries. We started the morning making boxes to later pack with groceries to be delivered. We then split up and organized items into the stock in the back, as well as restocked the shelves out front as needed.
Once the shelves were restocked, we took grocery lists and started collecting the items needed. When everything was found, we packaged the groceries into the boxes we made earlier and then weighed them. Around 11, the bus for the deliveries came and we helped load all the boxes into the bus to be taken to the houses.

Nett Lake Elementary School
After the food shelf, we got to stop in at the Nett Lake Elementary school for a quick and fun conversation with students. We spent our time in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade class. After introductions, we had an open conversation about where we were visiting from, what we were doing on the reservation, and what our life goals were. We showed the students on a map where we were all from and where Dartmouth was. As Medical and MPH students, we talked with them about the different paths we can pursue and taught them about the different kinds of doctors we can be. Students shared with us both fun information, like their favorite color and food, and more serious information, such as what they wanted to be when they grew up and some personal experiences they have had with their health and healthcare. Although our visit with the class was brief, we enjoyed being able to provide some insight to our experiences and answer any questions the students had. We also offered to serve as outlets to any students who had any questions regarding the application process to both college and professional school.
Shadow at Vermilion Clinic: Lab, Dental, Medical, Pharmacy
We got to see the Vermillion Clinic as well. We split up to shadow in different departments. It was interesting seeing their in-house lab, which has really helped evolve the care that they are able to provide on the spot without sending things out to other facilities. We got to speak with one of the doctors there who shared with us why he loves working in a rural place so much—he loves being hands-on in the community and enjoys the creativity involved in being the true first-line provider for his patients.

Vermilion Boys & Girls Club
Like the Nett Lake Boys and Girls Club, we volunteered in the afternoon at the Vermilion Boys and Girls Club. We split up and did different activities with the kids until we played two large group games together in the gym. After playing for a while, we helped to prepare and serve dinner to all the kids. Sitting with the kids while they ate gave us the opportunity to talk about anything they wanted to and answer any questions they had for us. After the kids had gone home, we packaged up the leftover food, cleaned up the floor, tables, and toys so the leaders could go home early.

Thursday:
Food Distribution Program
We began our day learning about the Food Distribution program with Wendy. This program is federally funded and is an alternative to food stamps. This program works for many in the area better than food stamps because it’s local, whereas, the nearest grocery store is about 30 minutes away driving. We got to learn about the history and implementation of the program and tour their facilities.

Elder Nutrition Program
Later in the morning, we helped at the Nett Lake Community Center with Millie. On both the Nett Lake and Vermilion reservations, there is an Elder Nutrition Program. It operates Monday through Friday and provides the Elders with a full-course meal. We prepared coffee and tea, a
house salad, chicken and wild rice soup, and pineapple. Not only does this program serve the Elders who come into the center to eat, but it also serves the Elders on the reservations who are unable to make it to the sites through a delivery system that brings the meals. We packaged over 40 meals to be delivered throughout the reservation. During the prepping and cooking process, Millie shared with us personal stories about her life and experiences as a band member in Bois Forte. She also taught us about the process of harvesting wild rice and how to correctly cook it.

**Miigwetch to the wonderful community in Bois Forte!**
Monday

Meet and Greet with Billie Jo Annette from the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Office
We met with Billie Annette, a career education specialist at the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. We learned about issues surrounding Native American education, such as high rates of school dropout and the low post-secondary success rate due to the lack of resources. Also, we learned the importance of teaching high school students the history of Native Americans from Native Americans’ perspectives.

Meet and Greet with Vince Rock and Gary Charwood from Leech Lake Tribal Health
We met with Vince Rock, director of nursing at Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and we learned about the Indian Health Service (IHS), which provides health services to Native Americans. Indian Health
Services struggle with healthcare staff shortages, especially Native American physicians. Increasing diversity in the healthcare workplace will build trust between healthcare providers and patients, which can lead to treatment adherence and compliance. Nurses are viewed as key members of the healthcare team and use leadership skills to coordinate and support patient care and other healthcare team members.

Community Dinner at the Green Mill
The beauty of casual conversations, the irresistible aroma of freshly made pizza, and a glorious backdrop of a frozen lake made this community dinner a memorable one. We got to meet with community members (physicians, nurses, community members, and their adorable children) in a more relaxed environment and got to chat with them, not necessarily about their professions, but about their lives. It was a wonderful evening full of laughs, satiety, and a deep resonating feeling of gratitude.

Tuesday

Sanford Health Bemidji Site Visit
We met with Dr. Stephen Rith-Najarian, director of professional medical education at Sanford Bemidji Medical Center. We learned about the high prevalence of hypertension and diabetes among Native Americans. For example, Native Americans are twice as likely to have diabetes or heart disease as whites in the United States. Some factors contributing to these health disparities are educational inequalities, inadequate access to healthcare, poverty, and environmental changes.

Bemidji Public Library
We made an impromptu visit to the public library in Bemidji during the late afternoon to finish working on our presentation for the Bug school!
Why Treaties Matter Panel with Tribal Leaders
We spent the evening in Walker, MN where a panel of the tribal leaders was hosted in the local high school. Students moderated a community discussion with the tribal leaders regarding fundamental issues ranging from sovereignty, tribal governance, land management, ICWA, and more. The panel was well attended by the community and ended with dinner in the high school cafeteria. We enjoyed seeing the tribal leaders engage with the community and seek to educate and bring awareness. We were able to spend time afterwards getting to know and asking questions of the tribal leaders and community members.

Wednesday

Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School
We started out the day visiting the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, which serves more than 200 students of various tribal backgrounds. We were fortunate to work alongside the school guidance counselor Jay Malchow to deliver a presentation to 7th-12th grade students on the impact of opioid use as well as lead a few demonstrations on first aid, blood pressure monitoring, and how to listen to heart and lung sounds. Following our presentations, Jay graciously took our team on a tour of the school where we were able to see how the school has integrated indigenous history, language, and culture into the learning environment. The school was founded in 1975 to better support the students' academic and cultural needs that were not being met by local public high schools. Given our previous meeting with Billie Jo Annette regarding the State of Indian education, visiting the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School provided an incredible opportunity to see how tribes have responded to the challenges with the traditional MN education system. Our team was struck by how effectively and intentionally all aspects of the curriculum and physical learning environment were designed to ensure the transmission of Ojibwe culture, language, and identity to future generations. Lastly, our team also had the opportunity to stop by the kindergarten class where our team members, Heidi and Kelsey, led story time with Dr. Seuss’s “Horton Hears a Who!”
Thursday

While the winter storm kept us from going on home visits, we still had a great time speaking with the nurses at Diabetes and Primary Care clinics about why they chose to work in their current roles, and the joys and challenges that come with their jobs. It was inspiring to see people who had a deep desire to give back to the Native American community, even if not their specific Band or Tribe. We also heard about how life factors such as family, education, and values brought them to where they are now. We were grateful for the chance to speak extensively with the health workers there and have a glimpse into what their days may look like...including a snow day!
Monday:
Shakopee Reservation
We started the day by visiting the Shakopee Cultural Center around 9:30 am. There, Caitlyn gave a presentation about the Oceti S’akowin, or the Seven Council Fires, beginning from when they were once one collective tribe to their eventual splitting into different tribes with different cultural practices and languages. Next, we visited a museum that walked us through the history of the Oceti S’akowin, including the creation story, early hunter-gatherer practices, wars with settlers, boarding schools, and discriminatory practices throughout the mid to late 90s. Lastly, the tour ended with acknowledgement of reparation efforts being made in the modern day to atone for the damages of the past.

After visiting the museum, we met with Joanna Bryant from Tribal Public Health to discuss how the health care needs of full-time employees working on the Shakopee reservation are met by focusing on patient-centered care. The clinic emphasized relationships within the community and meeting patients where they are at. Joanna showed us the primary care clinic, the chiropractor/physical therapy center, the public safety building, and treated us to a delightful lunch from Mazopiya (highly recommend the Dakota bowls!).

Immediately following our visit with Joanna, we met with Richard Wright at 4:00 pm. He gave us insight into how his success in working with people who have a substance use disorder stems from helping them recover through their personal spirituality. As health isn’t merely a state of body but a state of mind, he encourages people to use their traditional practices along with Western medical practices to achieve healing. He also emphasized the need to take care of
oneself by taking breaks and celebrating the end of each week, which he often did with his co-workers with a meeting and the occasional group hug.

Tuesday

**Little Earth of United Tribes Elder Foot Care Clinic**

Today was all about serving the community! First, we went to see the elders of Little Earth and give them some relaxing self-care time by volunteering at the foot clinic. There, we learned a lot about their histories, their pass times, their relationships, and how to paint their nails really well (Joanne is truly the master nail painter). We served about 15 elders all together, washing, massaging, lotioning, and painting their feet if requested, from 10 - 2 PM.

**Migizi Youth Outreach**

At 4 PM we went to Migizi to talk to some middle schoolers and high schoolers (ages 14 - 19) about their career interests after we gave brief explanations about how we chose what we wanted to study. Afterwards, we demonstrated how to do some physical exams and even let interested students try using a reflex hammer (she got it on her second try 😊). Finally, we answered any questions and played a game with them to wrap things up around 6 PM. While
we were there, we learned a lot about Migizi. It really encourages students to explore their passions while understanding health disparities and giving back to their community. For example, one project that’s planned for later in the year is to teach students how to build air quality sensors for their neighborhoods.

Wednesday

Be the Match Marrow Donor Program
Our day began at Be the Match headquarters in downtown Minneapolis. Be the Match is operated by the National Marrow Donor Program - the nonprofit organization manages a diverse bone marrow registry of donors to provide transplants to patients with blood cancers. Delilah Robb, who formerly worked at the Indian Health Board and recently started her position at Be the Match, kindly hosted during our visit. We were introduced to Cecilia, who leads diversity and inclusion within the organization, in addition to managing outreach to diverse communities nationwide. We helped her pack swab kits to be sent off to potential donors to add to the registry. Following this, we were given a tour of the Be the Match headquarters - a beautiful and specially designed space for the employees. After the tour, Delilah and Amber gave us a wonderful presentation about the organization’s mission and focus to make transplant accessible and equitable. Specifically, Be the Match aimed to make cell therapy accessible to everyone with equal outcomes.

American Indian Cancer Foundation
After our morning at Be the Match, we had a zoom meeting with Wyatt Pickner, the research manager at the American Indian Cancer Foundation. Wyatt gave us an overview about the foundation’s work, in addition to the historical contexts related to the oppression of native peoples’ health. We also learned about the importance and healing powers of tobacco in native
medicine, and Wyatt led a great discussion about how tobacco has been exploited and misused through commercialization of this special plant.

**Little Earth of United Tribes Boys and Girls Club**
We then headed back to Little Earth where we volunteered with the boys and girls’ youth club. The program was very well-organized and occurs every day after the kids get out of school. The kids had outdoor playtime, reading time, tablet time, and dinner with lots of dancing! After dinner, we cleaned up and walked the kids back home.

**Thursday**

**Native American Community Clinic**
We had the pleasure to begin our day meeting Dr. Antony Stately, the CEO of the Native American Community Clinic (NCAA). The NCAA offers a range of healthcare services such as Medical, Behavioral Health, Dental and Substance Abuse programs. Dr. Stately had a candid conversation with us regarding his personal and academic background and how all those experiences led him to fill and succeed within the position he currently holds at the NCAA. For example, due to his academic background, he was able to grow the Behavioral/Mental programs at the NCAA and able to keep the clinic running during hard times. He was able to elaborate that he holds tight relationships with community members and his influence within the community to work on policy and health initiatives. A striking example that he shared was his experience learning about and trying to improve a huge strip a few blocks down that had an abundant amount of homeless individuals. He discussed that as he walked through the strip he came across relatives and several individuals that were dying due to the conditions. Due to his shock from this walk, he talked with the Mayor immediately afterward and thus started his efforts toward improving the situation. Overall, from that talk we were inspired by his work and care for his community.
**Native American Community Development Institute**

Afterward, at 11 am, we were able to meet with members of the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI). There we saw an ongoing art initiative to bring in native muralists to further share indigenous culture and engagement through art within the community. The practice mural that had been displayed on the wall of the room was a beautiful tree with the background of the sky. We further talked about the impactful work that the organization does such as encouraging voting within the younger population.

Due to the proximity of our meeting with NACDI we were also able to visit the Pow Wow Coffee shop. There, which we were able to further see the following day, was how close knit the community was from the conversations and comradery between the owners and customers of the coffee shop.

**Minneapolis Indian Health Board**

In the afternoon from 1 to 4 pm, we continued our journey at the Indian Health Board (IHB). Upon our arrival, we were welcomed by Cassie and Nell who introduced us to the director of the IHB, health providers, dietician, community workers, and more of the IHB. Something that personally stood out was being able to listen to the experiences of the director and hear that an obstacle that she must overcome is not being able to do enough for the community. After our wonderful discussions with these members, we moved on to packing SNÁG bags (bags to encourage safe sexual practices), first aid packets, and had candid conversations with Nell. From our talk with Nell we were able to learn more about her work as a community health worker and personal background. It was incredibly interesting to learn what her life is like at her home reservation and had an opportunity to ask questions about indigenous culture such as the two-spirit identity and pow wows.
TEAM WHITE EARTH
Kristin Corbett, Jamie Park, Kort Zarbock

Monday
Morning - Deb Killian introduced us to the team at White Earth Tribal Health. We first met with Deb and Cyndy Rastedt who introduced us to the services the Tribal Health program offers before we spoke with Rachel LaFrinier, RN, who gave us an overview of the harm reduction program that she manages as nursing director. Rachel successfully advocated for White Earth nurses to be protected under Steve’s Law – a Good Samaritan law that protects bystanders when using naloxone but doesn’t provide protection for nurses that don’t have naloxone administration in their scope of practice. She is now working to allow Steve’s Law to apply to nurses statewide! After speaking with Rachel, we spoke with a doctor who spoke about the importance of incorporating Native medicine into his MD degree, who was insightful and provided details on how we can incorporate patient values and beliefs on health into treatment plans.

Afternoon - Visited the newly built Indian Health Services building, where we met with the clinical director, Dr. Lynelle Noisyhawk. Here, we took a tour of the facilities and met with a variety of specialists, dentists, laboratory technicians, who spoke about their responsibilities and challenges in healthcare delivery. Specifically, Dr. Noisyhawk spoke to us about how she
navigated staffing issues by contracting working group physicians and telehealth services, and how they had to purchase new gurneys that accommodate for the narrow doorways that didn’t fit standard gurney sizes. After IHS, we took a quick tour of the Tribal Health building before heading back to Tribal health for more meetings with a holistic healer and local artist. Rachel, a holistic healer came by and we made a calendula salve together, spoke about the medicinal properties of the herbs she uses, and how her recent grant completely funds her business and allows all people on the reservation to access her healing salves and teas at no cost. The local artist, Wendy LeRoy, taught us how to create a dreamcatcher, and taught us that the origin of the dreamcatcher is Ojibwe; they were invented as baby mobiles to entertain babies laid up on a cradle board when mothers were working nearby. Although she focuses on beadwork professionally, she was knowledgeable on many artistic forms and we gained a lot of valuable context in terms of Ojibwe art and culture that helped us better understand what these traditional art forms meant to her and her family.

Evening – We had dinner with Merlin Deegan, the Cultural Advisor for the White Earth tribe, and the program leaders we met during the day. We spoke with Merlin about the historical and present discrimination of Native people that have led to current healthcare disparities.

Tuesday
Morning and afternoon - Kristin, Jamie, and Kort split up to visit the on-site locations of the syringe exchange programs and the home health program, each of us working with a separate nurse / program before switching with each other in order to visit both programs. Primarily, the home health program was focused on preventative care for chronic health conditions like diabetes and heart issues. The home visits were about an hour long and focused on maintaining a relationship with the patient and assisting them in medication management and any other goals they had for their health. For the syringe exchange program, the services offered centered around injection drug use but they also offered food, shirts, advice, and the fire department’s EMS team for vitals and relationship building. They have been incorporating their local EMS team into harm reduction to ease anxieties surrounding criminalization when calling EMS for overdoses. This has also encouraged information exchange between clients and the fire department’s medical director; when an illicit drug phenomenon, like wooden chest syndrome, is reported at the street level, the medical director finds the clinically relevant research and holds training sessions for providers to disseminate the information to other syringe exchange clients.

Evening - Merlin Deegan planned a Cedar Ceremony with us, but due to various events it was canceled. Resultantly, he facilitated a cultural conversation on Ojibwe perceptions of time and expectations. He invited two of his friends, professional singers, who sang Native songs for a portion of the evening, and he offered advice freely for any question asked. We spoke at length on the integration of spirituality and medicine, and on the integration of traditional values and new beliefs that often cause generational conflict.
**Wednesday**

Morning and afternoon – We worked with the LIFE program, a home health service focused on recently or currently pregnant residents and their children, as well as with Dr. Ung, White Earth’s contracted podiatrist that provides periodic foot care for diabetic patients. Similar to the home health on Tuesday, these visits focused on relationship building and our nurses spent a large amount of time relationship building before assessing their children’s health and connecting parents with community events and resources. We also learned from Dr. Kham Ung, a podiatrist that specializes in diabetic foot care, during his foot clinic. His professional success is evident in his clinical practice. With the goal of transforming diabetic foot care from unnecessary surgical amputations to abscess draining, rehabilitation, and ultimately preventative care, he has taught this preventative model to surgeons in the area in order to improve patient quality of life outcomes. His patient care was gentle as he provided callous shavings, hangnail clippings, and advice to patients. His perspective and professional approach to tackling amputation reduction was insightful and encouraging due to his overwhelming success.

Evening - Our coordinator Deb, and Lisa Brunner, RN, took us to see the Headwaters of the Mississippi. It was a thoughtful way to experience our last evening at White Earth reservation. However, this activity stemmed from a tragic overdose that affected our initial plan to visit a tribal-led youth integration center.

![Image of people at the Headwaters of the Mississippi]

**Thursday**

Morning - We worked with the home health nurses again, visiting patients for one last time across the reservation before heading to Minneapolis.
The Groups Reunite in Minneapolis

Thursday Evening, March 16

The whole group reconvened from their sites in Minneapolis on Thursday evening. Some groups took some time to site-see places like the Mall of America or explore the city. The entire team then met at Owamni, an amazing restaurant run by “The Sioux Chef,” a collective of indigenous chefs from a multitude of tribes, who are committed to revitalizing Native American cuisine and reclaiming culinary culture. They use entirely decolonized ingredients, and each dish is like a work of art. The dinner was a joyful time of exchanging stories from the week and reflecting together. We were lucky to be joined by some of our community partners from the Minneapolis site.

Friday, March 17 (Last Day – Large Group)

Early Friday morning, the entire group got up and met for breakfast at PowWow Grounds coffee shop along the American Indian Corridor in downtown Minneapolis before setting off to one of our two service sites.

All Nations Indian Church
Half of the group went to All Nations Indian Church to help them organize their storage room, set up a new meeting space within one of the old storage rooms, and clean out their community kitchen. While there, we also received a blessing by the pastor, Mimi Goodwin, who smudged with us to start the day after an hour of storytelling. She shared her church’s
philosophy of equally valuing indigenous knowledge as well as the beliefs of the United Church of Christ and the needs of their community, like a braid where each strand is essential to the whole. And answered the questions our group had about the community she serves and the challenges she faces as a pastor. She then facilitated a great reflection time, for all of us to share what we had learned during our week.

**Gichitwaa Kateri Catholic Church**
The other half of the group went to Gichitwaa Kateri Catholic Church, where the group helped harvest red willow and sage for an upcoming ceremony at the church. As they scraped the willow, they had conversations with Pastor Shawn about religion, his church, and the native community they serve. Around noon, the All Nations group departed the church and went to the nearby George Floyd Memorial Square to pay respects. After each group got lunch, we all reconvened at the airport to return our rental cars and got together with our site groups to have a structured reflection about our experiences over the past week. We made it safely back to Boston and embarked on our drive back to Hanover for a weekend of rest before classes resumed on Monday!
Budget
We are so thankful to our external funders: The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, The Mellam Family Foundation and the Ohiyesa Fund which was established with support from Dr. Dean Seibert. Here is the breakdown of our 2023 funding:

- Byrne Foundation: $7000
- DICE office/Geisel funds: $6500
- Mellam Family Foundation $4754.32
- Ohiyesa Fund: $444.17

This funding provided an enriching experience for 20 students, 2 faculty members, and 1 staff member. The average cost per person for Geisel to fund the trip was $282.61 per person.

In Conclusion
We are filled with gratitude for all of the individual and collective lessons we have learned throughout this experience. We are eagerly looking forward to supporting the next cohort of students in 2024 to make the planning and funding logistics easier for them. Additionally, a few students are seeking opportunities to continue involvement with the communities we visited through the dermatology outreach program as well as virtual mentorship of pre health students.

To all of our amazing community partners, to those at Geisel who have supported or provided funding, and most of all to Shawn for leading this trip for so many years: Miigwech!
MIIGWECH to our 2023 MNIHST Community Partners!!!

Team Bois Forte-
Leah Masucci, Bois Forte Clinic Administrator
Pam Parsons, Tribal Health Administrator
Millie Holmes, Elder Nutrition Program
Dr. Andrew Jones, Family Physician, Bois Forte Tribal Health
Dr. Shanna Vidor, Family Physician, Bois Forte Tribal Health
Travis Morrison, District 1 Representative, Bois Forte Tribal Council
Robert Moyer, District 2 Representative, Bois Forte Tribal Council
Shane Drift, District 3 Representative, Bois Forte Tribal Council
Wendy Drift, Nett Lake Boys and Girls Club
Jessie, Vermillion Boys and Girls Club
Jaylen Strong, Heritage Museum and Culture Center
Genie Turner, 4th – 6th Grade Teacher, Nett Lake Elementary School
Pharmacists, Doctors, Lab Techs, and Dentists at Nett Lake and Vermillion Clinics

Team Leech Lake-
Cassie Rendon, MD, Pediatrician, (Geisel ’18) Sanford Bemidji Medical Center and Student Host
Vince Rock, RN, Director of Nursing, Leech Lake Tribal Health
Gary Charwood Sr., Holistic Health Spiritual Care Coordinator, Leech Lake Tribal Health
Darla Johnson, Director, Leech Lake Tribal Health
Billie Jo Annette, Johnson O’Mally Scholarship Coordinator, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe
Jay Malchow, Guidance Counselor, Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Tribal School
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Mitch Wyffels, MD, (Geisel ’13) Sanford Bemidji Medical Center
Daniel Frye, Director, Bemidji Area Office of the Indian Health Service
Joanna Ferraro, PharmD, Acting Clinical Director, Bemidji Area Office of the Indian Health Service

Team Minneapolis-
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Cassie Holmes, Community Health Worker, Indian Health Board
Nell Barri, Community Health Educator and Cultural Navigator, Indian Health Board
Richard Wright- Ojibwe Elder-in-Residence, Indian Health Board
Joseph Miller, Director of Adult and Family Empowerment, Little Earth of United Tribes
Latisha Franks, Youth Empowerment Director, Little Earth of United Tribes
Delilah Robb, Program Manager, Strategic Partnerships, Be the Match
Amber Ruffin, Senior Health Equity Manager, Be the Match
Antony Stately, Executive Officer and President, Native American Community Clinic
Wyatt Pickner, Research Manager, American Indian Cancer Foundation
Will Crawford, Manager Dakota Language, Shakopee Tribe
Joanna Bryant, Shakopee Tribal Health Director
Jenelle Crozier, Program and Projects Coordinator, Migizi
Robert Lilligren, Chief Executive Officer, Native American Community Development Institute
Shawn Phillips, Director/Pastoral Minister, Gichitwaa Kateri Parish
Mimi Goodwin, Pastor, All Nations Indian Church

Team White Earth-
Deb Barton, Tribal Health Director
Cyndy Rastedt, RN, Public Health Coordinator
Rachel LeFrinier, RN, Harm Reduction Program
Rachel Harveland, Holistic Health Practitioner
Lisa Braun, RN, Home Health
Wendy LeRoy, Local Anishinaabe Artist
Merlin Deegan, Director of White Earth Cultural Division
Kham Ung, DPM, Podiatry
Lynelle Noisy Hawk, MD, White Earth IHS Clinical Director
Elder Nutrition and LIFE Programs
Numerous Residents and Patients