

The Fullness of Christ

A Report of the 2018 Philadelphia Summer Medical Institute

By Holly Favino, SMI Director

After participating for seven years in the Philadelphia Summer Medical Institute (SMI), an evangelistic community health project, one consistent observation I've made is that God uses this ministry to not only bring health education and the gospel message to residents of North Philadelphia, but to provide the Christian health care student participants with unique spiritual lessons relevant to each individual.

SMI took place June 23-July 14 and is a joint project of Medical Campus Outreach (MCO) and Esperanza Health Center, a local Christian health center. This summer 15 Christian health care students and over 40 rotating volunteer "faculty" (Christian medical professionals) provided free door-to-door health screens and medical referrals in Kensington, North Philadelphia, sharing the love of Christ through conversation and prayer with those they met. The students lived in the community and attended church there, worked with interpreters for Spanish-speaking households and referred those who were interested to four local church partners for follow-up and care.

- SMI students, faculty and interpreters knocked on 2201 doors
- A total of 523 individuals received screens
- 520 blood pressure screens were performed
- 436 blood glucose screens were performed
- 407 adult and 38 child BMI screens were performed
- 122 new positives for hypertension were indicated
- 49 new positives for diabetes were indicated
- 114 received asthma education
- 50 podiatry screens were performed
- 48 HIV tests were performed, 45 people requested HIV tests at a later time
- 454 people were prayed with and 1 prayed to receive Christ
- 56 asked to receive spiritual follow-up from a church partner
- In a research project conducted by the students during SMI, 41 people were successfully contacted who had received screenings that indicated an urgent high or "new positive" (previously undiagnosed). Of those contacted, 24% had made an appointment, 56% planned to make an appointment, and 60% of those said they did so as a result of a recommendation from the SMI students.



The medical work completed is significant, but here are a few anecdotes and quotes of the student participants and what they gained:

During SMI students were reminded through studying Ephesians, teachings on biblical foundations, and daily devotions and debriefings that we have been given a Savior, one who draws us to Him, transforms our lives, and calls us to rejoice and share the good news of salvation. "As a result of SMI I personally want to change the way I interact with my classmates...I want to be more bold in sharing my faith," said Nathan S, a dental student.

"(I learned) prayer in health care is not only for the patient, but also for the caregiver because it takes the caregiver before the Lord to give the burden of the issues to Him..." said Patience N, a nursing student. "I (also) learned/experienced that (Christian) community can push me deeper into a walk with Christ."

Four SMI participants were also invited to travel to a predominantly Muslim eastern European country for two weeks immediately after SMI Philadelphia to experience an SMI program run by a local Christian health center and Christian health care students in their city. They also partnered with a local church and saw several new people attend the church after the first week of outreach. “This experience further fanned the flames of my passion for international missions and family medicine,” said medical student Josh H.



After the Philadelphia program ended I received a thank you card from a parent of a participant, who explained that SMI brought an “awakening and revival” to her daughter’s spiritual walk, writing “SMI was the answer to my prayers!”

These quotes and stories are just *a few* of many that leave me and the MCO staff and volunteers humbled that we are able to be an audience to God’s work. Ephesians 4 refers to God’s equipping of the body of Christ to attain unity, knowledge and maturity “to the measure of the stature of the

fullness of Christ.” The “fullness of Christ” is a concept that seems marvelous and too tremendous to comprehend! However, these stories seem to provide a beautiful glimpse of God’s fullness through the Holy Spirit’s compassionate, persevering and transforming work in our lives. Thank you for praying for and supporting SMI!

For more information about MCO and SMI, visit the MCO website at mcophilly.org, or read the student blog at smiphilly.wordpress.com



“God has given me a newfound love for the streets and people of North Philadelphia.”—Simon C, recent nursing graduate and SMI 2018 participant

