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Albert Schweitzer Fellow Detroit 2022-2023

NUTRICO was created after 16 months working as an intern with justice-involved women in Detroit, Michigan. NUTRICO planned and conducted bi-weekly nutrition and cooking demonstrations during the past year (16 total sessions, average attendance of 6-10 individuals per class), in addition to bi-weekly one-on-one simple discussions with residents regarding food and nutrition knowledge prior to incarceration. The cooking demonstrations revolved around utilizing fresh produce to assist in our physical and mental well-being, and the discussions reinforced trust and willingness to communicate likes and dislikes during class times. The presence of NUTRICO within the facility has resulted in residents inquiring at their own will with the facility nutritional providers for additional fresh foods and produce to be offered at meal and snack times.

Program measurement utilizing quantified data analysis revealed an array of facets. The residents enjoyed getting to try different items, and 100% of residents indicated they wished the demonstrations were held more frequently. The residents enjoyed how the colors of the fresh foods made them feel in addition to learning about the important nutrients in fresh foods. By learning about fresh foods, the residents spoke about expanding the food varieties they will try when they leave the facility. Barriers outside of incarceration include a lack of transportation to purchase fresh foods in addition to the expense of fresh foods.

Sustainability has moving parts, especially within a nonprofit agency. One aspect that was considered highly was the importance of the fluidity of the program model in relation to how sustainable it can be. Once I was able to admit and to commit to keeping with vigorous research standards, I realized the fluidity of being sustained, and what that true meaning was. It is important to note, though, that at times, the thought of sustainability while so much fluidity was

going on kept me mentally exhausted. When the ownership of Heartline changed hands, my fear of sustainability set in, and that is when the real exhaustion took a toll; the boulder was present.

I never really realized that I could get so close to somebody that I didn't know. I never thought about having intentions of trying to replicate the quality of care and concern that another human being resolved to do in his own life yet that's what I found with my relationship with Albert Schweitzer. This final reflection reveals a raw side; like one of those rug burns you get as a kid when your sibling or friend pulls you on the ground during a fun tumble. I actually think that this rawness will remain inside of me for longer than I anticipated. What I first thought was only a way to create and implement meaningful, socially health focused interventions to underserved populations, the next chapter has brought with it, another component: a feeling of vulnerability and softness to keeping an open mind on the worlds changing landscape both inside of ourselves and the physical environment around us.

When I see light, now, I see it more than just an angelic way that God shows us the world around us. No, I instead see the way that our world around us can shave the people that are in it. Schweitzer was one of those people that put others before himself. Whenever I think about that moment or that thought, I think about the fellowship that has been created in his name and how those around him truly knew the importance of creating a space for academic scholars to further projects and Schweitzer's name.

My life has a different lens on it now. I think that this is the same sort of lens that many folks that are middle aged Sikh have as they become older, wiser, and have growing children. Maybe it's seeking that feeling of childhood again or seeking something out of the ordinary than the everyday norm, the Schweitzer Fellowship for me has helped me settle so many gaps of wanting to learn more about myself now that I'm in my mid-40s. It is this part of my reflection

that I feel in pertinent to the Albert Schweitzer fellowship at all. This fellowship isn't just for it "young" professionals. It is also for the young at heart professional like me.

The structure provided an initial sense of connection with my population; yet the flexibility for me to keep certain aspects fluid provided me with a sense of comfort I needed; I too had trust- for these women whom I've collaborated with during the NUTRICO duration. When there was a boulder present, I knew that the women participants felt my vulnerability, and I felt comforted in that. Initially, the program was to be implemented in September 2022. The abrupt change in ownership after 50 years spawned my own inner change -- I started seeing everything around me differently -- the plants, insects, the earth. Everything living in harmony finally made sense to me at 45 years old. The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship rekindled imagination in me- something that became somewhat cloudy over the years. Whether it was my perception on life up until this point, or simply the actually experiences themselves that made up the perception, this fellowship allowed me to connect my education and life experience.

The remediation of loneliness has been on the forefront since the start of the pandemic. During my time as NUTRICO facilitator, I have had the opportunity to incorporate how food is a vital tool to connect with oneself. This idea was not solely based off of evidenced-based information; Dr. Schweitzer spoke specifically about this in his own mantras surrounding "rekindling the connection with others." While NUTRICO had nothing to prove -- it inadvertently showed the world that people not only connect with others, but they connect with the food that they eat when given the knowledge to do so. I, too, connected with the food. Every time I purchased the ingredients, I started thinking of where they came from -- what soil, on what farm, under what hands was I fortifying my body? It became powerful and soul ratifying at the same time.

As the seasons changed during the NUTRICO program implementation, so did that boulder -- it rolled over a bit to give me some breathing room. It was during the change in seasons that I fell more deeply in love with the care that Dr. Schweitzer gave in his profession. He was a hero to the waters and those residents that drudged through seeking their own life's work and economical stature within the community in Africa. How could I ever become the hero of fruits and vegetables? Moreso a hero to the land- which is what I am actively now sowing: small ideas that make larger impacts; bursts of knowledge like trying a fruit or vegetable for the first time.

This Fellowship -- this opportunity -- changed my life in a way nothing ever has. I have gained the confidence to challenge myself and to be okay when boulders limit passage. Much like that new fruit, the feeling of being scared and excited at the same time is one that I crave. While I like to feel balanced knowing that there are no loose ends at the end of the night, I sometimes feel the darkness and loneliness of having what equals "nothing" to mend or to complete. What do I do? Work on a new project? Volunteer more time? Take classes on weaving baskets, soccer mom weekly projects, or become chair of the alumni association? Albert Schweitzer taught me to simply keep shining -- and my path will be lit. My next venture is to take this opportunity and apply the virtues I have been taught and practiced and apply them in a new way, in a new population that needs a guiding force.