The Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program

SUMMARY

The Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program—one of The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF)’s 13 locations across the U.S.—facilitates service projects to benefit the Columbus and Athens communities, and simultaneously develops emerging professionals who have the skills to address unmet health-related needs throughout their careers.

Launched in 2010 with the help of a significant seed grant from Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation and hosted by The Ohio State University, The Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program is the first ASF program site in Ohio and one of only three in the Midwest.

ASF HISTORY AND MISSION

ASF was initially founded in 1940 to support Dr. Albert Schweitzer’s hospital in Africa. The U.S. Schweitzer Fellows Program, launched in 1991, supports and trains emerging health-focused graduate and professional students in creating and carrying out yearlong service projects that address unmet community needs.

ASF’s mission is to develop Leaders in Service: individuals who are dedicated to and skilled in addressing the social determinants of health in underserved communities, and whose example influences and inspires others. Annually, U.S. Schweitzer Fellows deliver more than 40,000 hours of community service addressing the social determinants of health.

When Fellows’ initial year ends, they carry their skills and commitment forward as members of the Schweitzer Fellows for Life alumni network, now more than 2,000 strong.

GOALS

The Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program’s goals are:

- to provide skilled and compassionate direct services that address important unmet needs of local underserved individuals and communities;
- to support and train emerging professional leaders in ways that strengthen their commitment to, and skills in, public service;
- to develop a pipeline of emerging professionals with the capacity to effect change in the social and health care systems that will reduce and ultimately eliminate disparities impacting people’s health and lives.

FELLOWSHIPS

The Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program administers and supports community service Fellowships that are conducted in Columbus and Athens from April to April. Participants are students whose fields of study and/or personal interests are relevant to the goals and mission of the program.

These interdisciplinary Schweitzer Fellows receive stipends in the amount of $3,000. They design and carry out projects that provide at least 200 hours of service in partnership with an existing community agency and under the supervision of an academic and community-based mentor.

Projects include at least 100 hours of direct client contact with an emphasis placed on activities that will have an enduring benefit to the agency. Fellows also attend an orientation retreat and monthly meetings and participate in reflective leadership development programming. No academic credit is earned for participation as a Fellow.
Being a Fellow is not just a 12-month, one-service-project deal; it is a lifelong commitment and mission. It has reminded me that school is not all about scholarships, credentials and grades, but about being agents of change.

- Tessa Yoder, Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellow

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ASF’s National Office, headquartered in Boston and governed by a National Board of Directors, provides programmatic, evaluation, financial, and development services to local operations. Local sites are led by a Program Director and supported by a local Advisory Board.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

To meet its annual expenses, the Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program seeks to expand on existing commitments from educational partners on OSU’s and other area campuses. Corporate and foundation partners and individual donors will be solicited as well.

Current Educational Partners
OSU Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry, Pharmacy, Public Health, Social Work, and Veterinary Medicine
Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine
Trinity Lutheran Seminary
Ohio State Office of Outreach & Engagement

Current Corporate Partners:
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation
Ohio Health

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, a number of Schweitzer Fellows in Columbus and/or Athens will incorporate The 5-2-1-0 Healthy Kids Countdown, an ASF initiative sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, into their Schweitzer projects.

CONTACT INFORMATION

To get involved with the Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program, contact:

Terry “Chip” Bahn, EdD, Program Director
Columbus-Athens Schweitzer Fellows Program
The Ohio State University College of Medicine
Meiling Hall 056
370 West 9th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210
ph: 614.292.2508
terry.bahn@schweitzerfellowship.org

www.schweitzerfellowship.org/columbus