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Eat Walk Sleep Discuss: Building a Multi-Dimensional Participatory Relationship

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Eat Walk Sleep Discuss: Building a Multi-Dimensional Participatory Relationship

Heather-Lyn Haley1, Suzanne Cashman1, Mick Godkin1, Meredith Walsh2,3, Nang Maung2,4, Toy Lim3, Sarah Tracy5, Clara Savage6, James Madison II6
1 UMass Medical School Dept of Family Medicine and Community Health, 2 Worcester Refugee Assistance Project, 3 UMass Graduate School of Nursing, 4 UMass Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, 5 UMass Medical School Class of 2014, 6 Common Pathways

A multi-faceted relationship has developed between UMass Worcester and the Worcester Refugee Assistance Project (WRAP). The relationship has its roots in student engagement, and has grown to include faculty, students and community members in a range of community-based participatory activities, which can be shaped in response to needs as they are identified and defined.

**Familiarity**

Students from all three schools have developed familiarity with the refugee population through both curricular experiences and learning community service projects, improving their confidence in providing culturally competent clinical care.

**Research**

Eat Walk Sleep Healthy Living Curriculum has been adapted from Khmer using community-based participatory research methods with WRAP advisory board and community members, UMass faculty and students, and Common Pathways.

**Understanding**

Common Pathways is the Community Health Network (CNHR) for Central MA, a local coalition of public, non-profit, and private sectors working together to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion. They sponsored two summer conversation series designed to strengthen communities and enhance self-efficiency. This work together led to their collaborating on an Eat Walk Sleep curricular adaptation project, where they provided crucial assistance with adaptation and the intervention process.

**Trust**

WRAP member Yaw-Yaw takes an aerobic exercise at Teen Health Night.

**Student engagement**

A PA student, premed student, and group of UMass Med students from several learning communities volunteer at Family Health Night for refugees from Burma, funded through Learn and Serve MLK Semester of Service student award.

**Community partnerships**

WRAP is the Community Health Network (CHNA8) for Central MA, a local coalition of public, non-profit, and private sectors working together to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion. They sponsored two summer conversation series designed to strengthen communities and enhance self-efficiency. This work together led to their collaborating on an Eat Walk Sleep curricular adaptation project, where they provided crucial assistance with adaptation and the intervention process.

**Student learning community sponsored volunteer service for social healthy activity events – ice skating, rock climbing, costume drive and party for Halloween.**

**Co-sponsored training on mental health care for trauma survivors**

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**Funded research on adaptation of healthy living curriculum originally developed for Cambodian community to meet needs of WRAP members.**

**Sponsored two student fellowships at WRAP**

WRAP provides mentoring and other services to those resettling in Worcester from Burma and Thailand. Started by GSN student Meredith Walsh, WRAP achieved 501c3 status this year and has been building capacity through collaboration and service.

*Eating healthy, walking, and sleeping are essential for good health.*
**Timeline: How our Relationship has Grown**

**Spring 2010**

Meredith Walsh (GSN GEP2) begins the Burma Youth Organization (BYO), a youth development project for refugees from Burma ages 15 to 24. The goal of the program is to help participants gain life skills that will help them with schoolwork, employment, higher education and other paths to successfully navigating American life with their dual identities. As a founding board member of WRAP, she also helps develop advisory committee comprised of refugees. A soccer team is also formed, meeting twice a week, bridging regional differences between refugees and proving plenty of volunteer work driving kids to games.

**Fall 2010**

Nang Maung (GSBS) uses her Schweitzer project to promote self-reliance among refugees from Burma living in Worcester by empowering them with language skills, information and confidence to access services available to them. In addition to teaching literacy and homework help classes to this refugee population, she is working to implement lesson plans and spoken English exercises focused on topics most relevant to survival and adjustment in the United States. She is also working with BYO teenagers to lead future ESL classes.

**Summer 2010**

**Corporation for National and Community Service Learn and Serve UMass**

Grant supports WRAP capacity-building, especially ability to use volunteers from UMass and other schools.

**Fall 2011**

**UMMS and GSN Curriculum**

- **Common Pathways Community Health Network Area** supports community connections.

**Summer 2011**

Common Pathways Community Health Network Area supports community connections.

**Fall 2011**

- **Supports MLK Project Family Health Night**, helping BYO plan and securing resources to give away bike helmets and toothbrushes.
- **Supports MLK Semester of Service Student award**. Nang Maung (GSBS), Sarah Tracy (MS2) and Michael Richardson (MS2) work with BYO to plan and host **Family Health Night**. More than 150 members of the Burmese refugee community come to learn about family planning, nutrition, oral health, fitness and bicycle safety. BYO teens experience leadership and volunteerism firsthand.

**Spring 2011**

- **Learn and Serve MLK Semester of Service**. Student award. Nang Maung (GSBS), Sarah Tracy (MS2) and Michael Richardson (MS2) work with BYO to plan and host **Family Health Night**. More than 150 members of the Burmese refugee community come to learn about family planning, nutrition, oral health, fitness and bicycle safety. BYO teens experience leadership and volunteerism firsthand.

**Winter 2010**

- **Working group on Community Awareness** displays info about local refugees at StART on the Street Festival.

**Summer Self-Sufficiency Workshop series** teaches refugees to map resources in relation to WRAP center and discusses housing and healthcare systems.

**Summer Community Conversation series**: three conversations for professionals re: refugee mental health needs and resources. Leads to formation of working groups on: public awareness, transportation, mental health training.

**Common Pathways**

- **Summer Self-Sufficiency Workshop series** teaches refugees to map resources in relation to WRAP center and discusses housing and healthcare systems.

**UMMS and GSN Curriculum**

**Provides opportunities for student engagement and community service**.

**Multi-cultural Pathways**: Students assigned to mentor WRAP families, joining them for home, school and clinic visits, providing help navigating other systems (housing, education), shared meal.

**Students mentor WRAP families.**

**Population Health Clerkship**: GSN students Toy Lim and Meredith Walsh began a pilot qualitative study of mental health perspectives among refugees from Burma in Worcester - daily stressors, how they define mental health wellbeing and/or adversity. With the results of this study Lim and Walsh aim to inform service providers, clinicians, and agencies to offer more targeted and appropriate services for these vulnerable populations.

**UMMS students conduct lit review on refugee mental health programs for local CHC**

**Quinsigamond House**:

- **GSN students Toy Lim and Meredith Walsh** began a pilot qualitative study of mental health perspectives among refugees from Burma in Worcester - daily stressors, how they define mental health wellbeing and/or adversity. With the results of this study Lim and Walsh aim to inform service providers, clinicians, and agencies to offer more targeted and appropriate services for these vulnerable populations.

**UMMS students conduct lit review on refugee mental health programs for local CHC**

**Quinsigamond House**

- **Sponsors Ice Skating Party**, introducing refugee community to health physical activity for the winter months.

- **Supports MLK Project Family Health Night**, helping BYO plan and securing resources to give away bike helmets and toothbrushes.

- **Collaboration on Eat Walk Sleep**; Grant: Provided administration and input for EWS adaptation process.

**Curriculum adapted by working closely with community members.**

**Meeting space and meals provided by WRAP members.**

**Prevention Research Center** encourages deeper exploration of community issues through research.

**Worcester County Prevention Research Center**

- **Student discovers community need for healthy living curriculum**.

- **Student identifies Eat Walk Sleep flipchart used with Cambodian community in CT**.

- **Eat Walk Sleep Curricular Adaptation Study funded**.

- **Curriculum piloted with men and women in focus groups- analysis in progress**.

- **Meeting space and meals provided by WRAP members.**