



**Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

6 Rush Students Named Schweitzer Fellows, Will Tackle Chicago's Health Disparities

(August 30, 2011) Six Rush University students are devoting a year putting their idealism into action. The 4 College of Nursing students and 2 Rush Medical College students were selected for the coveted Schweitzer Fellowship, a Program that enables students to design and implement innovative projects to help vulnerable Chicago communities. More than 111 students from the area's top health professions and social services schools had competed for 2011-12 Schweitzer Fellowships, only 31 were selected.

Named in honor of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship encourages exceptional students to "make their lives their argument" by addressing the serious health challenges faced by members of society whose important needs are not currently being met. In collaboration with existing community organizations, schools or clinics, each of the Schweitzer Fellows provides 200 hours of direct service. With the continuing economic downturn, many organizations are experiencing budget shortfalls while demand for services has increased. Therefore, in addition to providing Fellows with a chance to develop their leadership and project planning skills, the Schweitzer Fellows Program also helps nonprofits expand their capacities to serve communities at this crucial period in time.

Rush Medical College Schweitzer Fellows

Amrita Seehra is creating a garden with students at Simpson Academy for Young Women, a school for teenage mothers and pregnant teens. Her program will serve to educate the students about nutrition and the environment, as well as to empower them through ownership and community engagement. Jordan Becerril is partnering with the Center on Halsted to help high school age adolescents who are homeless and or identify as LGBT (lesbian, gay, transgender or bisexual). Jordan's program is helping the youth overcome significant barriers to completing their education and achieving their career goals.

Rush College of Nursing Schweitzer Fellows

Lacie Durand is providing educational and interventional programs for low income older adults at Central West Senior Center that focus on health promotion, fall prevention and medical compliance. Elizabeth Martin is collaborating with Gilda's Club Chicago, a free support community for individuals diagnosed with cancer, to expand their outreach programs at local hospitals. Regine Michel will initiate a mental health program for parenting and pregnant teens at the Simpson Academy for Young Women. At Fourth Presbyterian Church's Chicago Lights outreach program, Katie Tomarelli is helping homeless people through health education and by encouraging their personal growth and health.

"We can be optimistic about altruism as a dominant motivation among younger people," commented Dr. Quentin Young, chairman of the Schweitzer Program. "Over the past 15 years, more than 400 Schweitzer Fellows have completed their commitment to serve Chicago communities and we are aware that they are still 'making their lives their argument' by championing the health and well being of the underserved. They are an ever increasing force for civic good." The Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program is a partnership between The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship™, headquartered in Boston, and Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, a Chicago nonprofit that focuses on health care access of the working poor and uninsured. More information can be found on the Health & Medicine website, www.hmprg.org.

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Health & Medicine Policy Research Group is an independent, voluntary policy center with a mission focused on the health of the poor and underserved. Health & Medicine also administers projects on long-term care reform, prison health, women's health, and the health system safety net.