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Port Chester, NY, which I call home, faces tough inequalities. I witnessed food insecurity first-hand at a middle school food drive. By the time the line reached the end families who desperately needed food took the little that was left for their children. This experience motivated me to find a way to advocate for my community. I applied and was selected to the Youth Grantmaking Board in Rye, NY. The Youth Grantmaking Board funds nonprofit organizations serving the needs of Port Chester. As the only local on the Board, I felt the weight of my community. At Board meetings I argued that nutrition is fundamental to a child's well-being and a senior's independence and successfully shifted the Board's first priority to food insecurity.

We made grants to Meals on Wheels and Food2GrowOn, which helped support seniors and children with food and wellness checks. In total, I've had close to 50+ hours of volunteering on the board. We heard from homebound seniors how they appreciated additional wellness checks and being able to interact with volunteers. We also collaborated with the library in hosting bilingual storytelling events. It was heartwarming to hear from a grandfather who attended with his granddaughter that it was a learning and bonding experience.

Furthermore, during a trip to visit family in Peru, I was able to volunteer at the Local church to help Elderly Parishioners. I helped one elderly parishioner from Parroquia Maria Auxiliadora who is suffering from mental decline. My mom and I cooked him a small meal and the three of us spent time getting to know each other.

I saw him everyday throughout my two week visit. During our time together, I would bring in his groceries, cook, and listen to his stories. Sometimes he would speak of his childhood in Arequipa. I realized that, despite limited healthcare facilities, his deeply rooted sense of community, with its loud music, willing helpers, and shared laughter provided the care he needed most. I spent around 10 hours assisting him.

Additionally, I saw firsthand how the healthcare system treats accessibility as a luxury rather than a standard. Later that year, I began volunteering at White Plains Hospital. My job was to transport patients around the facility using a wheelchair. I saw other immigrant families facing the choice between paying a bill and getting essential care.

This gap motivated me to find a more accessible path to care. Through my research, I have seen how art therapy for people with mobility issues provides an affordable path back to normality when the traditional system fails. While moving patients from ER to a room and helping them stay positive while going to scans since I was transported. Also, through my research at OpenBio Research Institute, I was able to learn about different communities and their economic difficulties they face to be able to get therapy. My focus on Art therapy for post stroke seniors helped shine a light on accessible healthcare and therapies. In total, volunteered an estimated 42 hours for White Plains Hospital.

Lastly, Interning at the Rye Children's Museum, I spent an afternoon dissecting plush frogs with a Spanish-speaking nanny. As we navigated the anatomy in both languages, the makerspace became a laboratory for collaboration. Watching her face light up with the same curiosity as the children, I realized that hands-on learning should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their role or background. I completed 30 hours interning at the Rye Children's Museum where I had the opportunity to translate to Spanish speaking visitors.

Seeing her engage like that made me think of my own mother. Growing up, my mom often stayed on the sidelines because the language barrier felt like a wall she couldn't break through. In environments where language often acts as a barrier to STEM, I felt a responsibility to bridge that gap. I want to help build spaces where learning is accessible to everyone, not just a standard for a few.