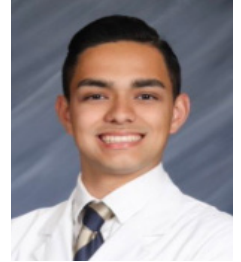


Junior Health Scholar Spotlight

The COPE Health Scholars programs were developed to impact health care workforce development by growing culturally competent and compassionate future professionals. One of our several programs that serves the pre-health community is the Junior Health Scholar (JHS) program, previously known as the Red Shirt program. The Junior Health Scholar program allows high school students between the ages of 16 - 18 to shadow a current Health Scholar. The Junior Health Scholar receives exposure to the clinical setting and observes how clinicians and administrative teams work together to deliver excellent patient care.

Albert De La Isla was a Junior Health Scholar at St. Mary Medical Center in Long Beach, CA. Albert was one of several young men in St. John Bosco High School's Biomedical Pathway to graduate from the Junior Health Scholar program. Read on to learn how the Junior Health Scholar program has shaped Albert De La Isla and his pre-health journey.



Albert De La Isla

What influenced you to join the Junior Health Scholar program?

I wanted to become a Junior Health Scholar to truly understand how each member of the patient care team interacts with one another. COPE Health Solutions' Junior Health Scholar program fulfilled that desire and also gave me a better overall understanding of patient care, as I was able to interact with patients, many of whom I shared incredible conversations with. The program also helped confirm my passion for medicine and a future career as a physician.

Why are you interested in health care?

My uncle has been a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair since he was 19. Ever since I learned his story, I knew I was meant to be a Neurosurgeon. Not only to physically heal others with brain or spinal cord injuries, but to use my words to reach their souls and heal them spiritually and emotionally. My uncle's doctors only repeated the words "You'll never walk again," and it left him broken. I want to be for others the doctor my uncle never had: one who cares for the entire human being.

Describe an instance during the program which you feel has made the most impact to your learning experience.

The event that I believe had the most impact on me was when I helped or observed a nurse clean and feed a patient who was essentially immobile. Not only did I learn from the nurse's patience and kindness, but it was at that moment I realized just how amazing health care workers are. They are responsible for people's lives and interact with them in such a vulnerable, foreign state, that it makes a world of a difference when a nurse/doctor takes the time to make sure you are comfortable and know that you are truly cared for. I may not have learned physical skills in that moment, but I learned something far more important.

How has this experience changed your perspective in providing quality health care and greater patient satisfaction in the future?

Throughout my 170 hours with COPE Health Solutions, I spoke with countless patients and nurses, all of whom provided me with stories and experiences that I took to heart. I learned that patient satisfaction is of paramount importance, not because of a desire for positive ratings, but because it transforms the patient's experience. By simply showing empathy, kindness and compassion, patients will feel safe, protected and may in fact be symptom-free sooner. As a result of the many interactions I had with patients and staff, I now see the true value of forming connections with patients, as it improves the entire dynamic of the patient care team and makes the experience easier and more enjoyable for all.

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What are your goals for a career in health care?

I hope to one day be a Neurosurgeon. I have always been fascinated with the complexities of our bodies and the human brain is as complex as it gets; it is the final frontier. My uncle, who suffers from a spinal cord injury, and my cousin, who lives with Autism and Hyperlexia, are the two people who drive me to succeed in all I do, and are the reasons I work so hard in pursuit of this dream. With my passion for Neuroscience rooted in my love for my uncle and cousin, I am confident I will reach my goal and make a difference for the thousands of people out there just like them. I hope to one day find treatments, if not cures, for their respective conditions.

As an alumni with one of our COPE Health Scholar programs, how do you feel your participation in the program has shaped or enhanced your growth and development in health care?

Having gone through COPE Health Scholars' Junior Health Scholar program, I have been transformed from a shy, hesitant individual into a more outgoing person who looks forward to meeting people and, if nothing else, being a beacon of hope and love in their lives. I learned the value of a human connection and the importance of a career in health care. I cannot thank this program enough for helping me grow as a person and as a future physician. I have been given the skills/knowledge needed to be an effective caretaker and I look forward to applying what I have learned not only in medical school and a future career, but in every aspect of my day-to-day life. I will never forget my time here as a Junior Health Scholar!

COPE Health Scholars is proud to provide educational experiences that develop future health care professionals into strong patient advocates and build trusting relationships between individuals and their local providers.

For more information about COPE Health Scholars, please contact info@copehealthsolutions.com or (213) 259-0245.