Cover Page

Kendall Horton

Healthcare Community Service

ARUBAH Medical Clinic

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**Background Information**

I am Kendall Horton and my community service organization, that I am currently participating in and will continue, is Arubah Clinic. My project for this past semester was volunteering as a medical technician and pharmacy technician at this free clinic on Thursdays. The person who is in charge of the clinic volunteers is Susan Scott and she can be reached at Susan@arubahclinic.com. The physical address of the clinic is 1021 W Main, Collinsville, OK 74021. The Arubah clinic is based on volunteers from all points in the medical field including: X-ray technicians, pharmacy technicians, physicians, nurses, and dentists. The clinic is open every Monday and Thursday first come-first serve. The volunteers start the night off in prayer and start triaging the patients to get them in rooms where the doctors can see them. I like volunteering at Arubah because since it is a free clinic, students are allowed to have direct patient contact. We are capable of taking blood pressure, weight, height, pulse ox, and temperature before sending them to the physician rooms. The purpose of Arubah is to provide medical care for those who would not otherwise have access to it. The patients must not have insurance to be seen at the clinic. Basic medical labs and x-rays are very expensive when a patient is without insurance, so Arubah provides these services for no cost. All the supplies and equipment have been donated. The goal and vision of Arubah volunteers is to restore physical, emotional, and spiritual health of all patients. They ultimately want to have the resources to provide healthcare for all those in need in Northeast Oklahoma.

**Evidence of Needs**

Arubah is located in Collinsville, but serves all of NE Oklahoma with free medical care and medications. The need for a free clinic in Northeast Oklahoma is prominent. From the years 1995-2010 Oklahoma has had a 226.7% increase in diagnosed diabetics. This happens to be the largest increase out of any state in the U.S. This survey from the CDC was only factoring patients who were over the age of 18, so logically the numbers would be even greater if we included children. As I have shadowed and volunteered at various free clinics one thing is consistent, diabetes. American Indians have the highest percentage of diabetics per ethnicity, which is 16.1% in 2009. Northeast Oklahoma is well-known Indian Territory. With the high number of Indian population, there is an increase in diabetics in NE Oklahoma. Of the 20 patients we normally see each night; it is common for 6-7 of them to have diabetic conditions. They are in need of insulin or the most popular medication we give out, Metformin, which regulates blood sugar levels.

**Objectives**

I spent the semester volunteering at the clinic in Collinsville. Each time I volunteered it lasted from 5:30-8:30 at least depending on the number of patients seen. I served over 24 hours throughout the semester every Thursday which does not include the drive time it takes to get to the location. If I volunteer all 16 weeks of school, at three hours a week, by the end of the semester I would have volunteered 48 hours total. My objective was to serve at least every other week during the semester. This volunteering was not something I am only doing to fill my requirements for this scholarship. It has helped me learn how to interact with patients and I believe has helped me become a better future physician. I expected the outcome of volunteering to make some connections with physicians that I could later shadow personally and I achieved this expectation. I met many different physicians and Nurse Practitioners that had different styles of being a doctor. I like comparing the styles and seeing what I like best about each so I can implement them into my own personal style. I also hoped to love volunteering so much that I would continue to volunteer through the next year and come back as a physician when I get through medical school. I truly did fall in love with the atmosphere of the clinic. It is laid back but is very effective and well run. I will definitely be volunteering here as a physician when I have time.

**Academic Background and Experience**

I am a senior in the medical/molecular biology major and I am fixing to start my last semester. I have recently applied to medical school and received an interview, so I have had lots of experience shadowing and volunteering before this year. At the free clinic in Pryor, I worked closely with the doctors to figure out reasoning for the symptoms, this experience taught me how to think like a doctor. The Arubah clinic helps me get the basics down and humbles me to the job that technicians do daily. The coursework in the pre-med program is detailed and doesn’t apply much to the technician jobs. Our courses prepare you to know the molecular level of what is happening in a body when a patient comes in with certain symptoms. My physiology course did help prepare me for the technician role I play at the clinic. We learned how to manually take blood pressure, which comes in handy when the machine breaks. This project will help me extend on the extensive book knowledge I have about the body systems and put them into practice on actual cases.

**Involvement**

I was involved with taking all the vitals in the triage station and consulting the doctor when a patient has a question. I also worked in the medication room and filled prescriptions when the doctors requested them. We did inventory to make sure that there was nothing being taken advantage of. I played an important role in the system they have at Arubah. I was the first medical personnel they encounter after signing their forms, so I could determine how their visit would go. I received all the important information that helped the doctor evaluate the patient before entering the room. Without the technicians getting vitals, the nurses and doctors would be overcrowded with things to do, and the patients would have to wait much longer.

I looked forward to volunteering at Arubah each week and enjoyed the time there. The smiles on the patients faces and their “Thank You’s” was worth the drive and time commitment. Each week this had become the highlight of my weeks.

Time commitment to date:

-8/20: 5:30-8:30pm

-8/27: 5:30-9:00pm

-9/10: 5:30-9:00pm

-10/1: 5:15-9:15

-10/22: 5:15-8:30

-11/12: 5:15- 9:00

-11/19: 5:30-8:30

I completed 24 hours over the course of this semester at Arubah free clinic. I was only able to attend on Thursday evenings. They have an online system that we can sign up to volunteer in advance so that they know how many people are showing up. Lately, there have almost been too many volunteers at the clinic. They could only allow room for 2-3 students to help with triage, and there had been so many volunteers that the spots have filled up quickly in the past few weeks. I report to Susan Scott when I arrive at the clinic. I have recently received my license for pharmacy technician so I could also help in the medicine room. When I would arrive at the clinic, I turned on all the machines, got the rooms set up and we let the patients start filling out paperwork. We would take water bottles to all the patients since they sometimes have been standing outside for hours. Once the patients have filled out their paperwork forms, I could triage them and send them to a room for the doctor to see. In triage, I took their blood pressure, pulse ox, temperature, weight, and height. When I was working in the medicine room, I filled prescriptions that the doctor had written. These techniques are all ones that I will have to know how to do as a physician. However, the best experiences for me were learning how to develop bonds with the patients. The only problem that I have encountered with the organization is that they have everything donated, and some of the equipment was very old. Sometimes when I was taking a patient’ blood pressure, the machine will not work properly and it caused me to take more time than what was needed. Since Arubah is a non-profit that runs solely off donations, I would suggest that they advertise for people to donate more supplies. They also don’t have enough of the fast-moving drugs to give out, so they could send letters to companies to request samples of their products which are what the free clinic in Pryor had done while I volunteered there in the past.

My anticipated outcome of my hours spent volunteering after midpoint would be that I would complete at least 24 hours and that I would help many more patients. I was a part of the process at Arubah, so even if you aren’t directly helping the patient, you could tell that they are grateful for the time we have spent. The children that come through there have often not eaten since lunchtime at school and it can be 7-8 o’clock in the evening. We fed those children that were hungry with the donated food that the volunteers got to eat. I made many connections with doctors and nurses and plan to keep those relationships so that I can use them for references in the future if need be. I improved the quality of life for people by aiding them in receiving medications and helping them with the free clinic process. If nothing else, we prayed over those patients and it helped lift their spirits.

**Accomplishments**

 Over the past semester at Arubah, I learned a lot about interaction with patients and volunteering for the underserved. I feel like I helped so many people each week. We had around 20 patients a night if there were two doctors present. I really enjoyed making connections with those who run the service and getting those contacts in the medical field. I got to take some younger volunteers under my wing at first and teach them the ropes of the clinic after I had learned how things work. That is the great thing about being a non-profit; everyone has a job even if it is only your second week. I successfully could triage a patient quickly and get them to a room to move the process along as smoothly as possible. Later in the semester I started working in the medication room and organizing the medications in order of what they are used for. I believe I helped the organization serve those in their community that needed free exams, X-rays, dental screenings, and medications.

**Conclusion**

Overall, I loved volunteering at Arubah clinic. I would encourage anyone to volunteer there regardless of their area of study or knowledge about healthcare. There really is a place for everyone to fit in. Different job areas go from cleaning rooms, bringing food for the volunteers, front desk, nurses, pharmacy, x-ray techs, and triage.