COMMUNITY STARS

August 13, 2021

Thank you for completing your 2021 Community Star Individual Nominee Questionnaire!

Overview

Here is a copy of your answers for your records. All nominations will be reviewed and evaluated by members of NOSORH's Community Star Selection Committee. One Community Star will be selected per state. If you are selected as your state's Community Star, I will work with you to schedule an interview so that we can develop your outstanding story to share in our annual book of Community Stars released on Thursday, November 18, 2021.

If you have any questions, please reach out to NRHD Community Star Project Coordinator, Brea Corsaro at bcorsaro@powerofrural.org.

Your Information

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Organization or Project Website

https://ahec.hawaii.edu

Please describe in as much detail as possible, your role within your organization and the nature of your work in rural health?

I serve as the Area Health Education Center Director at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, and a consultant for Hawaii State Rural Health Association. I work to make sure everyone in Hawaii has access to the healthcare they need, where then need it, when they need it. In an island state with low reimbursement rates, that is a true challenge, especially in the rural areas. I have worked to help recruit, train and retain healthcare workers across Hawaii and the Pacific areas through all methods and partnerships available.

What inspired you to choose your career?

When I was 12, I saw my brother being born. He was scary ugly by our mom said, "He's beautiful". As I reflected on what I thought what a crazy statement, I realized that I wanted to spend my life facilitating relationships like that. After going to medical school and practicing for 10 years in Family Medicine I realized that I could help one patient at a time, or work to make changes in communities. That's when I went back to school and got my PhD in Clinical Research to try to make population level changes.

What is the impact of your work in your community or the rural populations you serve?

Programs implemented include: Hawaii State Loan Repayment program for 54 healthcare providers to date; Hawaii Physician Workforce Assessment to

determine the shortage (as high as 1,000 physicians, most in rural areas); Recruitment to Health careers programs for thousands of students a year, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds; Hawaiiutelehealth.org a FREE telecounseling program for anyone in Hawaii; continuing education for thousands of rural providers a year through Project ECHO and annual meetings; rural interdisciplinary training opportunties for healthcare students; and more.

Have you accessed, benefited from, or worked directly with your State Office of Rural Health? If yes, please describe.

Every day! We couldn't do the work we do without the help of our SORH who helps develop ideas, write grants and fund programs!

Are you or your organization a HRSA, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Grantee? If yes, which grant program? If yes, which one?

No