

**Schweitzer Program Contact:** Ray Wang, (312) 372-4292 ext. 24

[rwang@hmprg.org](mailto:rwang@hmprg.org)

**Press Contact:** Magda Slowik, (312) 372-4292 ext. 30

[mslowik@hmprg.org](mailto:mslowik@hmprg.org)

## **The Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship: Improving Health, Developing Leaders, Creating Change**

### **Improving Health**

The Schweitzer Fellowship is a year-long service learning program for graduate students in health-related professions who will design and implement innovative direct-service projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of underserved Chicago area communities.

The Schweitzer program embraces the World Health Organization definition of health as a state of mental, physical, and social well-being and not merely the absence of illness or infirmity. Many Fellows' projects address the social determinants of health, such as literacy, violence prevention, mental health/stress, and healthy lifestyles.

### **Stats**

- Each Fellow provides at least 200 hours of service, separate from any existing clinical or fieldwork requirements for their respective university degree programs.
- 30 Fellows are selected annually in a highly competitive process. In 2016, over 100 students applied.
- Fellows receive an annual stipend of \$2,500, which may be used to help support their project costs and/or their tuition or personal use.
- Chicago Schweitzer Fellows conduct their project with health centers, social service agencies, schools, community organization, and nonprofits throughout Chicagoland, thereby helping the organizations expand their capacities. To date, our Fellows have partnered with over 150 agencies.
- Since the Program started in 1996, over 580 Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows have provided over 116,000 hours of direct service.

### **Developing Leaders**

Through their community projects and participation in a year-long program that includes mentoring support, monthly meetings, written reflection, and interprofessional collaboration, Schweitzer Fellows are developing the skills and confidence needed to become Leaders in Service—professionals who will remain dedicated to public service and to creating change.

After successfully completing their initial year, Fellows become members of a national **Schweitzer Fellows for Life** alumni network of over 3,000 Leaders in Service. The Chicago Fellows for Life Network provides year-round activities including networking events, a seed grants program, skills trainings, and volunteer opportunities.

The Fellows work to emulate humanitarian and Nobel laureate Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who, prior to World War I, established a hospital in Lambarene, Gabon in French Equatorial Africa, where there had been a severe lack of medical services to address malaria, leprosy and other diseases impacting the population. Dr. Schweitzer regularly encouraged audiences to “make their lives their argument” by similarly finding ways to incorporate service to others in their lives.

### **Organization**

The Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellowship program is one of 14 nationwide and is administered by Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, a local nonprofit organization that works to improve the health of all people in Illinois by promoting health equity. The Fellows' work is entirely funded through contributions from local foundations, individuals, and academic institutions.