Alberta Doctors' Digest

M2WHA team

Clerkship evaluation processes, B-cells in mice, and the personality traits of various organs are just some of the topics of conversation around the pop-up studios created by the Medicine 2 Write Home About (M2WHA) team. Cam, Amy and Erika have built these bubbles of humanity, typically on Friday afternoons in busy areas, to provide a bit of solace amidst the Cumming School of Medicine's fast-paced undergraduate medical education program.

They start with the premise of sending a postcard of something you learned – postage provided – to a friend or a loved one. Additionally this is an opportunity to have a chat while your hands swap a suture needle for a pencil crayon.

"It's a given that you learn things when you can pause and reflect, and if you share that pause with your impromptu studio neighbors, you can learn something about them, too. The postcards offer a deeper look – beyond clinical pearls or exam blueprints – into what excites and inspires medical learners" - Medicine 2 Write Home About.

The Medicine 2 Write Home About project creates a wonderful, informal opportunity for connection. L to R: Erika Friebe, Amy Rudkoski, Cam Matamoros, Max Lazar. (Photo credit: Emily Cooley)

When you talk with Cam Matamoros, founder of M2WHA and member of the class of 2020, you can see the desire to provision an effective space for this reflection, and to create a model that can continue: "M2WHA started as a whim to have more fun with what we were learning. It worked, and it's also become a place to build and sustain relationships with friends back home, fellow students, support staff and faculty mentors, too. We meet passersby who are visiting patients or conducting research. It's at this level where intersection of many types of people who inhabit the world of medicine are

brought together by curiosity and a desire to connect. The fact that we have a solid group of regulars and attract new people each time tells me that this simple activity means something to those who participate. I’m excited that it will continue to grow."

So, after nearly a year of these events, the team attracted Max Lazar-Kurz from the class of 2021 to take up the task of continuing these pop-ups as Cam, Erika and Amy move on to clerkship. Max talked about what excited him about the project: "M2WHA capitalizes on what I find interesting and meaningful as I progress through med school. Every couple of weeks, we create space to be excited about what we learn. It’s a great opportunity for a change of pace when our accelerated curriculum often feels like a mad dash to residency. Whether collaging a toxidrome, painting a disease where some of our best treatments are trying to avoid the cold, or drawing a portrait of someone making a postcard, everyone is having a good time. I love the sense of community when M2WHA sets up shop. Med students, faculty and passersby all come together to share this transformative and creative space to share in the joy of lifelong learning."

This project creates a wonderful, informal opportunity for connection, an opportunity that doesn’t readily exist in our accelerated three-year program.