Student proves that volunteering is contagious

October 16, 2017 4:45 PM
Samantha Gaynor newwave@tulane.edu

Inspired by the Tulane Arts in Medicine Program, Sami Lapayowker envisioned and executed an idea that would help funnel more volunteers to the program.

Inspired by the Tulane Arts in Medicine Program, which provides arts-related workshops, activities and performances for patients and staff at Tulane-Lakeside Hospital for Women and Children, Sami Lapayowker envisioned an idea that would help funnel more volunteers to the program.

With the help of Tulane Hillel and members of the Teen Jewish Leaders club, Lapayowker, a Tulane junior double majoring in dance and neuroscience, began organizing students to volunteer. Eventually, the number of people interested in volunteering grew from a full list to the need for a standby list.

“It started getting bigger and bigger and there were more people who wanted to do it,” Lapayowker said. “I would have a waiting list for people who wanted to come.”

To keep up with the demand to volunteer and the limited amount of seats available through Arts in Medicine, Lapayowker organized a series of volunteer fairs to introduce more students to the program and encourage them to participate. These fairs were well-received, with many students expressing interest in volunteering and expressing a desire to make a positive impact on the hospital community.

Lapayowker’s efforts have not gone unnoticed. The Tulane Arts in Medicine Program has recognized her contributions and praised her dedication to the cause. She has also received praise from her peers and colleagues, who have appreciated her hard work and commitment to the program.

Lapayowker’s success is a testament to the power of volunteering, and how one person can make a significant difference. Her efforts have not only helped to increase the number of volunteers at the hospital, but have also inspired others to get involved and contribute to the program.

For more information about the Tulane Arts in Medicine Program and how to get involved, visit their website at artsinmedicine.tulane.edu.
Medicine, Lapayowker created her own program — Tulane Hillel Art Therapy (THAT), which organizes volunteers to do arts and crafts with patients at Tulane-Lakeside Hospital.

The only difference between her program and the one offered through the hospital is that her program is specifically geared toward the hospital’s pediatric patients and is conducted only once-per-month on Saturdays.

“It’s incredible to see students wake up early on the weekends and do something so positive for the community,” said D.J. Handelman, an adviser for the Teen Jewish Leadership club. “Sami uses her passion to create opportunities for others to give.”

The next date for volunteering is Oct. 28 and Lapayowker expects a large turnout. Volunteers will do autumn-themed arts and crafts during the October visit.

On occasion, Lapayowker and other THAT volunteers visit with kids in isolation units where special robes and masks are required to protect the patients from exposure to germs.

“The outfits tend to make the patients uncomfortable, which also makes us have to work harder to get the kids to open up,” Lapayowker said. “There’s a mask covering your face so you have to appear friendly through the mask.”