

# 2020-21 PROGRAM REPORT

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**Service Immersion Program  
Office of Student Activities  
Temple University**

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# SIP

# Service Immersion Program 2020-21 Program Report

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Service Immersion Program (SIP), a project of the Office of Student Activities at Temple University, is designed to actively engage students in meaningful experiences that foster cultural awareness and social responsibility through service-learning. Our model is based on the work of [BreakAway](#), a leader in supporting assets-based community engagement for alternative breakers across the country. SIP is student-led and staff-supported with two Student Experience Leaders and two Staff Advisors assigned to each group of ten to twelve participants.

In years past, we have travelled to work in community with the Oglala Lakota Nation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, with organizations that support new immigrants, refugees and undocumented folks in El Paso, Texas, with indigenous communities in Guatemala and Ecuador, with organizations that support community for differently-abled folks in Mobile, Alabama, and more.

*Dear Friend,*

It is no surprise that 2020 posed quite the challenge to the Service Immersion Program. With travel restrictions and concerns about keeping safe and healthy the vulnerable populations of our community partners across the country, I shifted focus to learning and investing in our home communities in Philadelphia. We continued to work remotely with 2 of our partners in places outside of Philly and balanced the experience in partnership with local organizations.

In addition to this major programmatic shift, we made some significant adaptations to accommodate for our COVID world: the Experience Leaders adapted the twelve hour pre-departure curriculum to a remote format and I shortened the immersive component from seven days to three or four days. Shortening the immersion allowed for all 5 programs to take place during the same week in May, mitigated potential COVID exposure and acknowledged our capacity to engage in meaningful conversations over long days following a year of isolation. Additionally, I decreased the program fee substantially with regard to the new format and the difficult financial circumstances many of our students faced this year.

Pre-pandemic, I was considering ways to make a more intentional connection between the work of our community partners in domestic travel locations and the work happening here at home. Circumstances sped up the process considerably and I am incredibly proud of what the SIP team - experience leaders, staff advisors, participants and community partners - curated and facilitated during this challenging time.

In the pages to follow, you'll find specific program updates that I implemented this year, images from the five immersion experiences, data from the post-experience feedback form, testimonials from participants and profiles of selected experience leaders. I am beyond excited to highlight our successes in this first annual program report and look forward to sharing our SIP stories with you in the years to come.

All the best,  
Arielle Greenwald  
[arielle.greenwald@temple.edu](mailto:arielle.greenwald@temple.edu)

SIP

# 2020-21 PROGRAM UPDATES

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

In 2020-21 we adapted the program to continue our work with community partners across the US while leveraging new opportunities for partnerships with local community organizations in Philadelphia. Our local partners now include: Bartram's Garden, the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philly Goat Project, Mural Arts, Mazzoni Center, William Way, School District of Philadelphia's Office of School Safety, UrbEd, HIAS and Temple's Office of Sustainability along with their partners at ShareFood and the university's Computer Recycling Center. We successfully maintained our relationship with Cristo Rey Border Immersion in El Paso, Texas & the Darst Center for Justice and Peace in Chicago, Illinois.

Looking ahead to 2021-22, we will continue to invest in our portfolio of community partners towards the advancement of their missions and to the mutual benefit of their work and our student's experience in the Service Immersion Program.



## EXPERIENCE LEADERS:

Temple University's Service Immersion Program Experience Leaders are students dedicated to community engagement and making a difference in the world. Experience Leaders provide engaging educational and experiential opportunities for program participants, serve as social justice-oriented peer educators and ambassadors for SIP.

This year, we leaned into the student-centered model, co-creating experiences based on the academic interest and personal passion areas of the selected SIP Experience Leaders. We collaborated with community partners and staff advisors to craft engaging experiential educational opportunities for participants.

During the summer of 2020, we expanded upon the new pre-departure curriculum to create the inaugural 1-credit SIP Experience Leader Peer Mentor Course. The course centers key frameworks of community engagement and service-learning, facilitation & reflection techniques and group management skills to support Experience Leaders in establishing a shared understanding and language. Arielle taught the course remotely in the fall semester to a cohort of nine Experience Leaders. Through this experience, SIP Experience Leaders honed their leadership and facilitation skills while developing their understanding of what it means to be an active citizen in a global society.

# 2020-21 PROGRAM UPDATES

## STAFF ADVISORS:

Service Immersion Program Staff Advisors are members of Temple's faculty and staff dedicated to student development, community engagement, and making a difference in the world. Staff Advisors serve as a scaffold for Experience Leaders, providing support, guidance and resources throughout the planning, educational and experiential activities throughout the Service Immersion Program.

In past years, Student Activities staff, with the help of selected colleagues, served as staff advisors for the SIP groups. We received feedback from the team to limit the program's reliance on Student Activities staff in this capacity. In response, we focused on establishing and investing in relationships outside of the team and included the SIP Experience Leaders in the Staff Advisor application, recruitment and matching process. This effort paid off! In the 2020-21 program year, all staff advisors, with the exception of Arielle, were from outside of the Student Activities team. Our Staff Advisor cohort represented various colleges and departments from across the university including the Honors Program, School of Social Work, Career Services, Office of Sustainability, Student Conduct and Community Standards and CLA's Political Science department.





# 2020-21 BY THE NUMBERS

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5

**SERVICE IMMERSION  
PROGRAM EXPERIENCES**

8

**STAFF ADVISORS**

9

**EXPERIENCE LEADERS**

14

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

27

**PARTICIPANTS**

180+

**HOURS OF SERVICE-LEARNING**

# 2021 SIP GROUPS



**SIP: Environmental Justice** in partnership with Bartram's Garden and the Office of Sustainability at Temple and their partners at Share Food & the Computer Recycling Center led by Gracie Heim



**SIP: School to Prison Pipeline** in partnership with the Darst Center for Justice and Peace, the School District of Philadelphia, Office of School Safety & Urban Ed led by Julia Sidorsky and Abby Hong



**SIP: Climate Change** in partnership with the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education & Philly Goat Project led by Shay Ramaswamy and Nik Collins



**SIP: Mental Health in the LGBTQ+ Community** in partnership with the Mazzoni Center & William Way LGBT Community Center led by Nyeemah Wright and Anthony Gosch



**SIP: Immigration** in partnership with HIAS Pennsylvania & Cristo Rey Border Immersion led by Tajnia Hussain and Erin Knotek



# EXPERIENCE LEADERS



## **Tajnia Hussain** **Immigration**

*Class of 2022*  
*Major: Political Science*  
*Minor: Global Studies*  
*Favorite SIP memory:*  
Cooking chili together for refugee families at Annunciation House

**My time as Experience Leader** for the Immigration SIP this year was unlike any other student involvement experience I've had at Temple. There were several adjustments to our program, and from this, I learned and grew skills in facilitation, organizing, and networking. I applied these skills both virtually & in-person with the help of my lovely co-lead and staff advisors. Together, we effectively organized a meaningful virtual experience with our community partner in El Paso. SIP has great potential to expand community engagement for the Temple community and inspire young leaders & change-makers. SIP opens doors to educational opportunities and gives students the chance to meet new people, have tough conversations, be vulnerable, and learn about important social justice topics.

## **Gracie Heim** **Environmental Justice**

*Class of 2022*  
*Major: Communications*  
*Minor: Screen Studies*  
*Favorite SIP memory:*  
Learning about the history of indigenous communities in Philadelphia at Bartram's Garden.



**Through my involvement in SIP** as a participant and later as an Experience Leader, I witnessed how impactful immersive service-learning is for educating myself on issues and concepts that seem distant from my own lived experience. By engaging with community members and local organizations, SIP provided me with diverse environments that offer insights into social justice topics I am passionate about. SIP allowed me to build genuine & trusting relationships with other students and the tools to better connect with local communities that exemplify my values and further my journey as an active and engaged citizen. Through the six week pre-departure sessions and the immersive experience, SIP instilled in me how vital it is to look at the world through an intersectional lens for community development, organizing and social justice.

## **Akshaya Ramaswamy** **Climate Change**

*Class of 2021*  
*Major: Cellular & Molecular Neuroscience*  
*Minor: Clinical & Health Psychology*  
*Favorite SIP memory:*  
We were learning about edible plants along our hike when our guide whipped out a portable blender for us to make fresh garlic mustard pesto!



**SIP is a wonderful combination of passion for social justice and making an impact** through service. It's not about changing the world in the blink of an eye, but a focus on learning through meaningful experiences & reflection. In my two years with the program, I met so many new people and engaged in influential experiences, while learning first-hand about sustainability and climate change. You can't quite anticipate the impact of this program and everything it has to offer, so my friendly advice to fellow Owls: Get involved!

# 2021 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Mission statements shared from our partners' websites

## SIP: Environmental Justice

### Bartram's Garden

Bartram's Garden is a public park and 50-acre National Historic Landmark, operated by the non-profit John Bartram Association in cooperation with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. The mission of the John Bartram Association is to create equitable relationships among people and nature through immersive, community-driven experiences that activate the Bartram legacy, Garden, and House, on land and on the Schuylkill River, in Southwest Philadelphia.

### Temple's Office of Sustainability

The Office of Sustainability's mission is to lead the integration of sustainability into Temple University's curriculum, research, culture, building design and campus operations.

### Share Food Program

Share Food Program leads the fight against food insecurity in the Philadelphia region, by serving an expansive, quality partner network of community-based organizations and school districts engaged in food distribution, education and advocacy. Share Food Program delivers millions of pounds of food to more than 1,000,000 neighbors in need every month - making us the largest hunger relief organization in our region.

### Temple's Computer Recycling Center

Computer Recycling Center (CRC) is an award winning operation that gathers surplus computer and electronic equipment from around the university, refurbishes that equipment if possible, redeploys the equipment where appropriate, donates any unwanted usable equipment and, where appropriate, disposes unusable equipment in a secure manner.

## SIP: School to Prison Pipeline

### Darst Center for Justice and Peace, Chicago, Illinois

The Br. David Darst Center provides transformative social justice retreats and immersion experiences [...]Through our programs and partnerships with local community organizations, participants gain a deeper understanding of the complex realities of injustice and obtain tools to take action.

### School District of Philadelphia, Office of School Safety

The Office of School Safety is committed to fostering safe, secure and supportive learning environments for Philadelphia public schools. We use research and data to make informed decisions that are centered on impartiality, restorative practices and student equity. Our commitment to safety supports the School District and Board of Education's mission to deliver an excellent public school education for all students.

### UrbEd

UrbEd advocates for fully-funded, safe, and healthy public schools in order to provide students with an equitable and quality education we deserve. We are an organization led by those who are and have been most affected by the issues facing urban public schools. Through political education and community organizing we are amplifying our voices--the voices of public school students--to give students the education they deserve and are owed.



# 2021 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## **SIP: Climate Change**

### Schuykill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuykill Center inspires meaningful connections between people and nature. We use our forests and fields as a living laboratory to foster appreciation, deepen understanding, and encourage stewardship of the environment.

### Philly Goat Project

The Philly Goat Project celebrates the dynamic and delightful capacities of goats by building community, while creating sustainable, engaging and educational opportunities. We are committed to engaging with friends and neighbors across generations to promote wellbeing, take care of our environment, and create unique opportunities with partners around the city.

## **SIP: Mental Health in the LGBTQ+ Community**

### Mazzoni Center

Our mission is to provide quality comprehensive health and wellness services in an LGBTQ-focused environment, while preserving the dignity and improving the quality of life of the individuals we serve. We serve the LGBTQ community through expanded services which include HIV prevention and care, primary medical care, medical case management, mental health counseling and treatment of substance use disorder, legal services, youth support in schools, LGBTQ competency training, a food bank, and the annual Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference.

### William Way LGBT Community Center

We seek to engage and support the diverse LGBTQIA+ communities in the greater Philadelphia area through arts & culture, empowerment, and community connections. We want all LGBTQIA+ people to feel safe, connected, and empowered. We strive to be a community center whose staff, management, and board reflect the vibrant and richly diverse communities we serve.

## **SIP: Immigration**

### HIAS Pennsylvania

HIAS Pennsylvania supports low-income immigrants of all backgrounds as they build new lives in our community. Through immigration legal services and an array of social services, we work to address their needs, defend their rights, and advocate for their equitable inclusion in American society. Our work across spans legal, social support, and citizenship services. We also advocate for immigrant issues and rights and educate the community about immigration.

### Cristo Rey Border Immersion, El Paso, Texas

Welcome to the border, la frontera, where a fence punctuates the land, creating two worlds. Here at the intersection of cultures, languages and nations...you will study the social issues that effect this border area—a virtual microcosm of our world reality—and build relationships with the members of Cristo Rey and various social justice organizations in the neighborhood.

# PARTICIPANTS' WORDS

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We learned about both technical and social infrastructure in Philadelphia working for and against food insecurity, land injustices, environmental and toxic hazards, illegal dumping... we were able to apply our pre-departure knowledge to think critically about what these places and organizations do in the context of environmental justice in Philadelphia. Also, we got off campus and learned about different ways we can stay involved around the city to support food and land justice while enjoying green space that we didn't know existed. My SIP was a crash course on successful community action planning and social resilience to environmental hazards that we can take with us into the future as we become planners and organizers!!

SIP WAS AMAZING. I learnt a lot, made friends and had fun.

My SIP experience was a way to experience home here at Temple. It was a lot of fun to learn more about Climate Change and see how it is affecting green-spaces here in the city. I was grateful for the chance to feel connected to nature here at school.

It was a well planned, well organized experience where you get to work in small groups and better understand your SIP focus area - and with people who have similar passions.

This was a really important experience in my life and I wish more and more students participated to understand and learn more about various issues our communities face and learn to help respond to these issues.

SIP is not just an educational opportunity to learn more about the world around you but an opportunity to form rich connections with other students, staff and the surrounding community.

SIP is a way for Temple students to get involved and gain a better understanding of what they can do to be an active member of the community. It applies intersectional thinking in a way of giving back to a community that as students we often take more from than we give.

SIP

# POST-EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

All participants were provided an opportunity to offer post-experience feedback.  
52% of participants responded.

**93%**

Strongly Agreed

**SIP HELPED THEM TO  
THINK MORE CRITICALLY  
ABOUT THEIR SIP  
FOCUS AREA**

**86%**

Strongly Agreed

**SIP GAVE THEM TOOLS  
TO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE IN THEIR  
COMMUNITY**

**100%**

Strongly Agreed & Agreed

**ENJOYED THEIR SIP  
EXPERIENCE AND  
WOULD RECOMMEND  
IT TO OTHERS**