



health brigade

# Inside Scoop

August 2024 | Issue #128

WELCOMING • TRUSTED • INCLUSIVE • INTEGRATED • IMPACTFUL • RESPONSIVE

Health Brigade provides exceptional health services to those least served in a caring and non-judgmental environment.

## HB on a National Stage

On **August 21**, **Dziko Singleton**, HB Comprehensive Harm Reduction Program Co-coordinator and HepNET Leading with Lived Experience consultant, and **Darius Pryor**, HB HIV Testing and Prevention Program Manager, cohosted a national webinar. Dziko and Darius provided an overview of the HIV/HCV testing and outreach programs at Health Brigade, including patient outcomes, challenges and successes.



## Andrew's Room Complete



On **August 24**, Health Brigade welcomed the Ainsworth family back to the agency to see the final renovations of the **Andrew Ainsworth Reinvention Room**, lobby and restroom. See page 4 for more photos by Patience Salgado and a special memorial to Andrew's brother Jason Combest who tragically passed away two days after the reception.

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## Welcoming New Medical Clinic Volunteer Provider

### How did you learn about Health Brigade?

*I heard about Health Brigade from a local Infectious Diseases colleague of mine who is from Argentina. He especially recommended Health Brigade as most of its patients are Spanish speaking, thus their need to have a volunteers like me who speak Spanish.*

### What is your medical specialty?

*I am double board certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases. I am originally from Lima, Peru and came to the US in 1999 right after medical school to do my Internal Medicine residency.*

### How often will you be volunteering at the clinic?

*I will be at the clinic 4 days a week.*

### Why do you feel free/charitable clinics are important?

*These type of clinics are tremendously important for the community as they ensure that the underserved population from Richmond, inherently at high risk for poor clinical outcomes, receives medical care. This medical care impacts not only the patients, but their families, their jobs, and ultimately uplifts their community.*

### What stands out to you about Health Brigade so far?

*I am impressed by how much the staff and volunteers at the clinic are mission driven and committed to help the patients as much as possible. All the patients I have treated at Health Brigade so far are tremendously grateful to receive medical care, affordable medicines, and help coordinating difficult appointments elsewhere.*



**Silvia Muñoz-Price, MD, PhD**

## Hitting the Airwaves



From **July 23-26**, Comprehensive Harm Reduction Co-Coordinator **Dziko Singleton** attended the annual National Association of County and City Health Officials NAACHO360 conference in Detroit, Michigan.

Dziko was interviewed for a Hispanic community-focused podcast on her role as a Black female harm reductionist.

## Training Future Mental Health Practitioners

Hi! My name is **Abigail Hopkins** (she/her) and I am so excited to be joining the Health Brigade team as a Mental Health Intern! I am a graduate student in the Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling M.S. program at VCU, expected to graduate August of 2025.

I find passion in helping people become the best version of themselves and cultivating strong relationships with others. My goal as a counselor is to

create a therapeutic space where individuals feel safe, accepted, and empowered to embrace their authentic selves.

In my free time I enjoy painting, cooking, spending time with friends, listening to music by Chappell Roan and Harry Styles, and exploring the city of Richmond!



**Abigail Hopkins**

My name is **Mindy Schuler** and I am currently studying to get my masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Oklahoma. I am very excited to be completing my internship experience here at Health Brigade. I completed my undergraduate degree in Spanish and creative writing at Roanoke College, and I attended the film/screenwriting program at Chapman University in Orange, California. I have had many different jobs over the years, including working as a teacher, volunteering with the Peace Corps in Honduras, and

several years in the culinary field as a research chef. For the past two years I have worked for the University of Virginia with kids in public schools on reading projects. I believe all these different experiences will help me on my way to becoming an empathetic, caring counselor, and I am happy to be getting my internship hours at an organization that offers so much to our community here in Richmond. In my free time I enjoy reading, listening to music, baking, and spending time with my husband, our son, and 2 dogs, Waylon and Jolene.



**Mindy Schuler**

Andrew's Room Complete, Continued from front page / All photos by Patience Salgado



L to R: Board Chair Dr. Nakeina Douglas-Glenn, Karen Legato, former chair Dominic Madigan



Far right: HB executive director Karen Legato tells the story of Andrew's Room.



Far right: HB staff Dziko Singleton explains how the CHR program often uses the remodeled space.



Far right: HB staff Julie Sulik reflects on how meaningful the project was to coordinate.



L to R: HB staff who helped with remodeling Merary Gutierrez, Julie Sulik, Pete Legato, Polly Foster



Ainsworth family reflects on Andrew's life.



Ainsworth family enjoy the remodeled lobby space during their visit.

### In Memoriam of Jason Combest



Jason Combest, 44, was Andrew Ainsworth's older brother.

Tragically, two days after he attended the reception for Andrew's Room, Jason passed away in his sleep.

The Health Brigade family was devastated to hear this news and extends its deepest condolences to his family.

A GoFundMe page was started by his family to assist Jason's 3 children.

<https://gofund.me/930269f3>

### The Andrew Ainsworth Reinvention Room

On July 15, 2023, the extended family and a circle of friends gathered at Health Brigade to honor the memory of Andrew Thomas Ainsworth. With laughter, tears and poignant memories, Andrew's spirit was definitely felt as all remembered the tragic loss to overdose of the 30 year-old, exactly one year ago to that date.

Due to a generous donation from his aunt, Anne Kirkland, Andrew will be remembered for years to come as meeting room Group A on the second floor is now named in his memory. A portrait of Andrew hangs in the room. A facelift of the space, the upstairs lobby and restroom were done.

## Serving the Community



On **August 16**, the three AmeriCorps Community Health Workers assigned to Health Brigade represented the agency at the 7th Annual Resource Fair at Southwood Apartment complex in Richmond's southside.

L to R: **Natalie Ramos, Julia Acham, Andrea Viñas**

## Teaching about Narcan

On **August 20**, HB Comprehensive Harm Reduction Co-coordinator **Colin King** spoke to the Midlothian Rotary Club about the benefits of the everyday person having and knowing how to use Narcan. Narcan is available as a nasal spray and is used to reverse an overdose of opioid drugs. The CHR team distributes over 2,300 boxes of Narcan a year to persons in the community.



## UR Freshmen Visit Agency



On **August 20**, for the third consecutive year, Health Brigade welcomed a group of freshmen students from the University of Richmond Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. During the visit, students rotated through three sessions: the agency's role in the greater Richmond healthcare community, volunteering and internships, and a tour of our facility. Thank you to the HB staff who helped welcome our guests: Polly Foster, Julie Lawson, Kelsea Jeter and Julie Sulik (not pictured).

## Outreach in the Community

On **August 24**, Community Health Worker AmeriCorps Members from Health Brigade visited the East End of Henrico to participate in the Bon Secours Wellness event. Our CHWs shared important information with participants regarding health, educational and social issues that impact the community.

L to R: **Natalie Ramos**, HB Social Work & Support Service Manager **Jenee Johnson**, **Andrea Viñas**



## Richmond City OAD



On **August 29**, the HB CHR Team participated in the City of Richmond's inaugural International Overdose Awareness Day program at Midway Green, formerly known as the Bon Secours Training Camp.

Mayor Levar Stoney announced that Richmond was working to become the first US inclusive recovery city and recognized Overdose Awareness Day by making a proclamation on behalf of Richmond.

CHR Co-Coordinator **Dziko Singleton** also participated in a Peer Recovery Specialist panel.

L to R standing: **Dziko Singleton**, **Joe Santiago**, **Colin King**, Peer Intern grad and CHR volunteer, **Jeff Urquhart**, **Ernest Charles** and **Deia Weatherman**. L to R seated: Peer Intern **Lauren Farber** and **Art Ware**

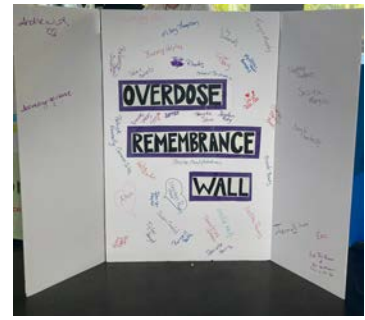


L to R: Mike Fatula, Opioid Response Coordinator for the City of Richmond, and Mayor Levar Stoney.

A colorful poster for an event. At the top, there are logos for "healthbrigade", "REVIVE! DRUGS", "SAARA of Virginia", and "CANTAS". Below the logos, the text reads "OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY COOKOUT &amp; HEALTH FAIR" in large, bold letters. Underneath, it says "AUGUST 30, 2024" and "11AM - 2PM". The location is listed as "Community Center 2807 Hull Street Richmond, VA 23224". At the bottom, there is a section titled "OFFERING:" with a list of services: "FREE Lunch", "HIV/Hepatitis C testing", "Other health services", "Peer Support Services", "Hygiene kits", "Haircuts", "Overdose Remembrance Wall". The background features a sun, colorful bunting, and icons of a tent, a grill, a person, a shopping bag, and a van.

## International Overdose Awareness Day

On **August 30**, the HB Comprehensive Harm Reduction Program hosted their annual *International Overdose Awareness Day* event in the city's Southside thanks to a generous mini-grant award from **SAARA**. It was a vendor-filled event with mental health check-ins, haircuts, peer services, free HIV/Hep C testing, REVIVE training and a delicious BBQ lunch with all the fixings. Many thanks to our community partners and to A Better Day Than Yesterday for the use of their space.



### Volunteers Recognized in August 2024

The August Bucket Brigade winner is **Valeria Sulbaran**. HB Navigation & Care Coordinator **Carolina De Paz** shared, "Valeria is always very helpful and willing when it comes to everything with Registration. Thank you for your positive attitude and bright personality!" Gracias por todo, V!

Julia Acham  
David Bui  
Victoria Bui  
Noor Chouman  
Jordan Dail  
Michelle Eglovitch

Carl Erickson  
Kerry Lim  
Konrad McKalip  
Ashley Mottley  
Dr. Silvia Munoz-Price  
Natalie Ramos-Almendarez

Dr. Kelsey Salley  
Lydia Shields  
Julia Squillante  
Valeria Sulbaran  
Jeff Urquhart  
Andrea Viñas

*The Bucket Brigade was started by our Volunteer Program Manager Kelsea Jeter in 2021 to provide a vehicle for staff to recognize outstanding volunteer service.*