

Volunteer of the Month – Christiane Pimentel

Christiane began her involvement in Asylum Hill in September of 2018 when she was hired by Wheeler Clinic to be the Community Health Outreach Coordinator. The idea was to have outreach workers connect with people in the neighborhoods to promote health and healthy living rather than waiting for them to come to Wheeler, often when the health problems were much more severe. Christiane set about getting to know the community and part of that process was getting to know AHNA. She regularly attended meetings and worked on many of the issues that AHNA was intent on improving.

This is where the volunteering comes in.

Aside from purely volunteer efforts at home in Waterbury such as Sunday school teaching and soup kitchen volunteering or in Manchester where she moved to, she kept an expansive definition of both “outreach” and “coordinator”. So Wednesday afternoons you could find her distributing bags of fresh fruits and vegetables to any in the neighborhood who would stop by. In the process, of course, she would ask the questions that allowed her to share the information that each person needed.

As the Community Health Outreach Coordinator, she could often be found “coordinating” by example, especially since half of her tenure was during the pandemic. “Community health” took on increased importance as peoples lives became much more difficult, and health much more challenging. From testing for COVID and spreading information without spreading a virus, to providing food and other assistance to the many whose lives were already difficult, Christiane was there, committed and engaged. Later when the vaccine became available, her focus turned to getting as many in the neighborhood to get the vaccine as possible.

Unfortunately for Asylum Hill, but fortunately for both Wheeler and Christiane, this chapter closed in mid-August, when she was promoted to Associate Director of Grants. The new position means she has moved to the Plainville campus, so we won’t be seeing as much of her. However, she wasn’t there very long before she asked for a day off so she could participate in the South Marshall Street Block Party on August 25th, which she had helped to plan. She was also on the Zoom call the following Tuesday discussing how it went and what we could improve next year. I don’t think we’ve seen the last of Christiane.

