

Beechwood-Franklin leaders allowed me to advocate alongside concerned parents and residents for safer routes to school as their children must walk four miles to school due to district budget cuts to the bus program.

These communities allowed me to experience the perils facing our great San Joaquin Valley, ranging from systemic issues such as health access to clean drinking water. Most importantly, they helped prepare me to work in underserved communities and allowed me to meet mentors and prove to the UC Davis post-baccalaureate program and later, the UC Davis School of Medicine admissions committee, that I deserved a spot in the San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (SJV PRIME). As part of SJV PRIME, I spent my first and second-years

at the UC Davis medical school campus. I spent my third-year doing clinical training at UCSF Fresno and I am continuing at UCSF Fresno for my fourth year. I am the medical student director of the student-run UCSF Fresno Health and Learning (Heal) Mobile Clinic.

I owe a great deal of thanks to my mentors and the SJV PRIME. My aspiration to become a doctor has never wavered because of patients like one Planada community leader I met. "Once you're a doctor, you'll be back, right?" he asked me warmly in Spanish with the undeniable aroma of developing diabetic ketoacidosis on his breath. Responding with a "yes" and a hug, I envisioned myself coming full circle to provide much needed direct health services in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

As a future Valley physi-

cian, I envision my workday going beyond the clinical and into the community. I want to continue to serve as a resource, as an advocate for patients and a medical provider. I plan to promote much needed pipeline programs, mentor youth who aspire to become doctors, as well as advocate for public and private support for UC's Programs in Medical Education, including SJV PRIME.

To address the health inequities faced by our Valley communities, we must continue to recruit, train and retain future physicians from the Valley — like me. To get there, we need support from the community and legislators.

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