

Your Volunteer Experience at Venice Family Clinic

Making the most of your time as a volunteer at VFC!

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How to make it
count!

BE PROACTIVE

- **Be proactive. Learn people's names and roles.** Learn about what they do. Consume knowledge from everything and everyone around you.
- **VFC is one of the very few places that offers you and immerses you in clinical experience.** Use it! It definitely made an impact in the type of nurse, and one day, the nurse practitioner that I will be!

FIND YOUR PATH

- **Volunteering at VFC gave me the first-hand clinical experiences** I needed to cement my desire for a medical career.
- You can have all the desire in the world to go into medical school, but if you aren't familiar with basic patient interaction and a basic encounter flow, then how do you really know that this is correct path for you?

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LISTEN & ASK QUESTIONS

- Do not go in looking for something to add to your resume. **Listen to the patients and care about why they are there.**
- You will get the most from your experience if you are **willing to learn from everybody (including patients) and ask a lot of questions.**
- **Stay with the clinic for as long as possible** because you will see new things every day.

GET INVOLVED

- My advice is to definitely **do as much as you can at VFC** when given the opportunities. Grad schools love **quality over quantity**, so if you really love volunteering at VFC like I did, I would make it one of the most important extracurricular activities you have on your application.
- **Become a LEAD CA, work at fundraisers, and be involved in non-clinical projects.** When you do this, you make great connections at VFC and you can even get a letter of recommendation if you want to enhance your application with it.
- **Volunteer over the summer** because you can generally volunteer as much as you want during those months, and get much more patient experience which will serve you well in the future.

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PERSONALIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE

- The great thing about the VFC is that **you're immersed in a clinical environment with actual responsibilities.**
- **What's most important about volunteering** and participating in student organizations **is not so much what you're doing, but what you're learning and what these experiences mean to you.**
- The Dean at a California med school told the applicants that our clinical, outreach, or volunteer experience doesn't matter too much (after reading hundreds of applications, the experiences all start to sound the same anyway). Instead, what the **admissions and interview committee focus on primarily is what these experiences mean to you, the applicant.**

REFLECT ON YOUR MOTIVATIONS

Some questions to ask yourself as you are volunteering...

- Are you going to the VFC every week to check off a box and collect volunteer hours? Or are you going to the VFC every week to **learn about needs of different patient populations, improving care, teamwork, etc.?**
- Are you volunteering at the VFC because you want to be a primary care physician? If not, or if you're unsure, **what are you learning that can help you be a better physician regardless of which specialty you choose?**

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TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

- I loved volunteering at VFC! Everyone was so **kind, helpful, and supportive**.
- Volunteering at VFC **reinforced my decision to pursue nursing**. I saw the impact the profession made, and knew it was the right choice.
- **Take advantage of your time at VFC and ask questions.** Learn as much as you can and apply your knowledge gained at VFC when you start your clinical rotations.

STRIVE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

- The amount of time and energy that you put into VFC will be how much you get out of it.
- Always be proactive and keep an open mind. **Strive for lifelong learning.**