All students in Community Health and Health Policy complete a comprehensive Community Assessment working in groups of 5 or 6. Students collect data from a variety of sources including public documents (e.g. Massachusetts Department of Public Health Annual Report of Vital Statistics, Town Reports, etc.), interviews with key informants, visits to appropriate agencies, as well as MassCHIP, Census.gov and other internet sites.

One significant way students learn about populations in their assigned community is through community service. All students are required to volunteer for a total of 5 hours at a Health Department, School, or Public or private setting/organization that is involved with health promotion or risk reduction in their assigned community. Through the service activity students talk with informants about their perception of the community, community assets and community needs.

### Student Comments

“I worked in the kitchen helping to serve lunch and dinner. I had a chance to communicate with the residents and staff members. I was surprised to find that some of the staff were former residents. I really enjoyed this experience”

Lowell Transitional Living Center

“Our group was in charge of serving the food and encouraging people to take pre-made lunches and healthier choices. We engaged in conversation with many of the visitors and learned a lot about their struggles. This experience was incredibly eye-opening as we were first hand witnesses to people who struggle every day just to obtain food and water”

Nashua Soup Kitchen

We volunteered with the American Cancer Society’s “Relay for Life” at Billerica’s Yankee Doodle Weekend. Being out in the community was very meaningful. We interacted with community members who shared stories and provided knowledge and information about the resources needed to help end the fight against cancer.

American Cancer Society Relay for Life Billerica MA