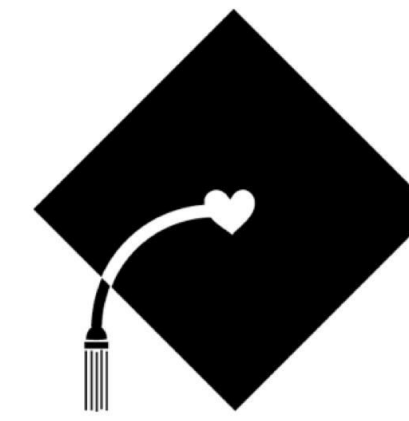


# AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY CHARLESTON HOPE LODGE

## BROOKE HORTON

### BONNER LEADER PROGRAM



COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON  
BONNER LEADER PROGRAM

## Introduction

For my senior capstone, I chose to tie in my experience of working at the American Cancer Society Charleston Hope Lodge with our focus in the Bonner Leader Program-Social Justice.

During my freshman and sophomore years at the College of Charleston, I had the opportunity to volunteer at the American Cancer Society Charleston Hope Lodge.

Established in 1970, Charleston Hope Lodge was the first of its kind in the country. Founded by Margot Freudenberg, a holocaust survivor and leader within the Charleston medical and business communities.

During this time at Hope Lodge I was able to gain a variety of professional development skills, I was able to gain confidence when it came to my ability to interact with the patients, and I was able to plan and organize events to support the patients and caregivers at the lodge. The premise of my capstone is to critically analyze a variety of social factors determine how effective our access to healthcare is.



## Focus of Service



During the first two years of my service, I was a long-term volunteer. My role within this site was to work the front desk which included checking patients in and out and completing daily tasks. I assisted with the maintenance of Hope Lodge; cleaned the kitchen, common areas, rooms, etc. I also helped with dinner preparation and clean up which was provided each night for the guests. I also worked on various special projects such as planning various events for the patients at the Hope Lodge including game nights, and volunteer appreciation events.

During my junior year, I had the opportunity to be a Weekend Manager at the Hope Lodge. My duties as a Weekend Manager included maintaining the safety and comfort of guests, volunteers, and other visitors as my primary focus. I provided assistance and support as needed to ensure a safe, supportive environment is maintained and that issues that arose were handled immediately and effectively. I completed guest admissions, orientations and check-outs as needed. I also oversaw volunteers that were scheduled during my shift. Overall I maintained a collaborative work relationship with the American Cancer Society staff and community volunteers.

## The Patients

This experience was undoubtedly one of the most rewarding yet emotionally and mentally exhausting experiences of my life. That being said, some of my greatest accomplishments came from getting to interact with the patients at Hope Lodge. The group of individuals that I had the opportunity to encounter during my time there were unlike any that I had ever met. Every patient had an overwhelming resilience for life.

These individuals gave me a completely new expectation of what it means to be a "good" human being. They showed me the true power and strength of the human character by giving me a completely new standard of what it means to love unconditionally. They showed me the importance of giving courage, showing kindness, and being strong. Being able to be small part of their journeys was undeniably one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.



## Conclusions



Without the Bonner Leader Program, I would not have gained the professional and interpersonal skills that I am equipped with today. Having the opportunity to work at the American Cancer Society Charleston Hope Lodge allowed me to grow more than I ever thought possible. Being a Public Health major and having this experience, I was able to acknowledge a variety of social justice issues, such as lack of access to care, systemic racism within our healthcare system and how it affects how access to care, and the white privilege that is exceedingly present within our healthcare system.

It was an interesting growth experience to be a volunteer within this community. From a volunteer's perspective I saw various systems at play. Interacting with patients and caregivers for three years I was granted the opportunity to see individuals from various walks of life. Each of these individual's backgrounds influenced or changed my perspective of the world. Ultimately, I would not be the person that I am today without this experience and without the Bonner Leader Program.

## Bibliography

1. "American+cancer+society+hope+lodge." *Google Search*. Google, n.d. Web 18 Apr. 2017