



# Wonder Connection

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Jisha Reji – Social Psychology Intern  
Karen M. Gil Internship Program – Fall 2020



## Mission and Service



Staff Photo

*“Our mission is to empower pediatric patients with the wonders of nature and science through multi-sensory learning experiences that promote joy and well-being.”*

Wonder Connection service is based on the social psychology research that portrays the increased positive affect in response to exposure to nature and its restorative effects including stress reduction (Jesse et al. 1986)

Due to COVID-19, there have been many adaptations to work with patients at UNC hospitals and Ronald McDonald House of Chapel Hill. These include creating and delivering science kits to clinics, making complementary instructional videos, and hosting virtual science parties.

Check out their website to learn more:

<https://www.wonderconnection.org/>

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Attended biweekly team meetings
- Attended grant writing workshops and drafted a grant proposal
- Revised outdoor learning document: create a one page document that highlights the benefits of outdoor activities specially for hospitalized patients

- Graphics, editing, writing, and other logistical help upon request (ex: segments in monthly newsletters, online photo release form etc.)
- Partner with Autism society of NC to collect information on sensory friendly modifications on science activities for kids/teens with autism (especially those who are not verbal or have limited verbal skills)
- Work alongside faculty member to create a rough template for a research study to be conducted in the future

## Research Study Design

### Literature Review:

- Previous studies that focused on the psychological role of nature
- Viewing nature shown to increase health quality of life and overall healthcare satisfaction for patients (Sherman et al., 2005)
- Positive emotions: build and broaden theory & undoing effect of negative emotions that can directly impact cardiovascular health (Frederickson, 2003)
- Physiological measures show greater recovery from stress when viewing nature (ex: pulse transmit time, spontaneous skin conductance responding etc.) (Ulrich et al., 1991)

### Proposed Methods

- Conduct pre and post wonder connection session at UNC hospitals
  - Qualitative Interview
  - Measure #1: PedsQL Present Functioning Model Visual Analogue
  - Measure #2: Perceived Restorative Scale
  - Physiological measures (based on availability at UNC hospitals)



## Professional Development

### • Professional Growth

- Importance of patient centered care and how it translates into my future career goals of becoming a physician
- Inner workings of a non-profit organization (grant writing, evaluations, advisory boards, committees etc.)

### • Communication

- Importance of communication methods and utilizing it to its maximum potential:
  - Zoom, phone calls, emails etc.

### • University Career Services & weekly classes

- Resume and cover letter workshops
- Mock interviews
- Networking (graduate students and professional careers)

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