Comets HELP

What is Comets HELP?
Comets HELP is a collaborative program between the UT Southwestern Geriatrics Division and students in the UT Dallas Hobson Wildenthal Honors College. Our program allows pre-health honors students to engage in weekly volunteer activities at the elderly inpatient unit of UT Southwestern's Clements Hospital. By cognitively engaging elderly adults and learning how to effectively aid them, volunteers directly care for patients. This contributes to a faster recovery time and better well-being for hospitalized elderly patients.

Our Mission
Directly improving patient care while supplementing the education of future health professionals

Goals

**Improve Geriatric Patient Care**
Volunteers interact with elderly patients by having conversations, cognitively engaging them, and brightening up their day. Volunteers will prevent patients from suffering from a type of isolation-induced confusion called delirium. Delirium is proven to extend hospital stays and increase the necessity for elderly adults to transition to dependent care facilities. Volunteers are part of an active intervention to prevent such outcomes in elderly patients.

**Educate Future Health Professionals About Geriatrics**
In the United States, there are only about 7,000 certified geriatricians. Our goal is to educate pre-health students on the intricacies of caring for the elderly, regardless of clinical specialty. Whether pre-health volunteers choose geriatrics or another health care profession in the future, they will at some point treat elderly individuals. We will prepare volunteers in order to effectively care for the elderly despite our society's overwhelming lack of doctors specialized in treating elderly patients.

**Prepare Pre-Health Students for Future Professions**
We want to provide our students with a well-organized and high-yield medical volunteer experience to guide their decision regarding a career in health care. Through this program, volunteers will be exposed to a wide range of challenging situations such as communicating with cognitively impaired patients or uncooperative patients. We want to teach volunteers proper bedside manner and how to handle these environments so that they will be able to effectively interact with and care for patients as they enter future health professions.

Contact Information
Please contact cometshelp@gmail.com for more information.