I came to ODE, hoping to apply my lived experience, interdisciplinary education, and interest in social justice to public health. Over the past 10 months, I worked on: the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Mental Health First Aid (including teaching my first class at Skyline College!); drafting a Measure A proposal to fund an initiative for school staff to be trained in MHFA, presenting ODE's anti-stigma initiatives at the Tools for Change Conference; supporting the development of a training for interpreters who work in behavioral health settings, and writing quarterly reports on the County's Language Assistance Services during the last fiscal year.

Through these projects, I developed skills in adapting to a variety of tasks, political astuteness, co-facilitation, outreach, proposal writing, and program implementation and evaluation. Additionally, through trainings, I learned about cultural humility, Indigenous mental health, gambling in the APIA community, Black psychology, logic models, needs assessments, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and suicide prevention/intervention efforts.

I valued the many learning opportunities in both the clinical and administrative realm, working for a progressive health system, ODE's emphasis on community engagement and capacity building, the integration and practice of cultural humility in its programs, and the prioritization of lived experience and consumer-led efforts.

My work at ODE and my desire to connect with my cultural identity and become more equipped to support underserved communities inspired me to apply to the Middlebury Summer Language Schools. There, I will be learning Chinese in an intensive 8-week immersion environment in rural Vermont. Upon my return to the Bay Area, I plan to enroll in continuing-ed courses and join the workforce to gain more skills and experience in my areas of interest. My time here has given me a stronger foundation from which to pursue Public Health or Public Interest Law with a focus on mental health. Thanks, ODE!