

“Working as an Intern for the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) was the most challenging yet gratifying experience of my life.

In my family, mental illness is heavily stigmatized. My older brother has a developmental delay and learning disabilities which make him different. For most of my life I have defended him when he was bullied, teased and taken advantage of. He continues to suffer from anxiety brought on by this but refuses to seek help because of stigma.

When I found out about the opportunity to work with ODE, I was very excited to join the team in their work. I was able to work with the Parent Project®, the African American Community Initiative (AACI), Stigma Free San Mateo and directly with individuals living with serious mental illness.

ODE focuses on embracing cultural diversity and uniqueness in our community. I have always thought that cultural humility is the most important component of working with people. The cultures we all live in truly make up who we are and it is very important to respect that. ODE has a clear understanding of this dynamic and I will carry the principles I have learned to every future opportunity.

The experiences of my brother and others I have met along the way made me decide to go into social work. I hope that I am able to continue working to reduce stigma and advocating for those who have suffered because of it.”

-Sheri Broussard