



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER

PROGRAMS IN
PHYSICAL THERAPY

JOURNEY TO CREATING “MAKING MOVES”

Making moves is a student-led program that developed out of the Student Social Justice Committee at Columbia’s DPT Program in the summer of 2020, during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement. Many students, including myself, felt compelled to do something that would create a positive impact in the communities we live in, in a sustainable way. As we brainstormed in our meetings, my colleague and friend Franceska, brought up the idea of “Making Moves”, and immediately I was sold. I loved the concept of using our current knowledge and experiences about PT and sharing it with under-represented students within inner-city schools. Several months later we held our first presentation with high schoolers interested in healthcare fields, alongside Black and LatinX Medical Student leaders (who were a great help in coordinating the event).

To get to that first presentation took a lot of work sending several emails to different schools and organizations, to figure out a time that would work for both of our schedules, as well as being on top of our own schoolwork. Despite all these obstacles, it was all very worth it once we started presenting. I realized I was once a student just like them, committed and driven, but also feeling lost as to who to ask questions about the PT field as I knew no one within my community that was studying to become a PT, knowledge about PT, or let alone was a PT that looked like me.

After our presentations, students stayed an extra hour over to ask several questions about our individual experiences in PT, and how we got here, which I found was extremely important as everyone’s journey to PT school looks different. I was fearful students would not find the presentation helpful, however I realized that even if these students do not end up pursuing PT, the most important thing was that we have established a positive mentorship with these students to where I hope they gain the confidence to strive for higher education and always feel that they can reach out to us with any questions when navigating the transition from high school to college, and maybe one day PT school!

Making Moves would not be possible without the help of my colleagues Gabby Ayoub, Alejandra Vasquez, Barry White, as well as the 3rd years that came to talk about their experiences and share their advice for our first presentation (Marla, Franceska, Cristina, and Jeffrey). My dream would be for Making Moves to be an official nationwide organization held through the APTA for PTs anywhere to access and be a part of in their state. However, I am very proud and excited to see where Making Moves will go as I see great potential for future Columbia students to continue the work for Making Moves and make the program their own!

I would also like to include a big thank you to Dr. Sliwinski and the faculty for all the mentoring, advice, and help with getting Making Moves started! I am really excited to see where the program goes in the future!

- Betty Kufлом

