

## Spotlight on Special Elective by Maria Garnica Albor



Nestled between the beautiful mountains of Lassen National Park to the East and Mt. Shasta to the North, lies the small city of Redding. I didn't know that my away rotation there would come with marvelous views on my daily drive to work, or some of the most incredible hiking trails I've ever seen. In all honesty, I wasn't sure what to expect. I had been drawn to [Shasta Community Health Center \(SCHC\)](#) as a way to explore a career in addiction medicine. I soon realized that their work goes far beyond addiction.

My first impression at SCHC was how approachable and welcoming everyone was. It felt like a homecoming, even though I'm not from Redding and had never been there. I expected that most of my time would be spent in clinic rooms, seeing patients, staffing with attendings—a role I'm accustomed to. And that was true for only a few days of my two weeks span. Most of the days, however, my office was a Ford F-150 and my clinic room became the four walls of a motel room, the grounds of a homeless camp, or the underside of a bridge. My attending, Dr. Patton, and I did "home visits" to the members of the community who are homeless, or in temporary housing via assistance offered by SCHC. It's part of their street medicine program aimed at reaching the most ostracized members of the community—those who standard medical models fail to serve.



Through the [Health Outreach for People Everywhere \(HOPE\) program](#), we'd go out in a mobile van to different sites in the community to provide care, including mental health and substance use care. In doing so, care is delivered at the heart of the community, eliminating transportation and financial barriers. All of these services were closely woven into a larger fabric of case managers, nurses, substance use counselors, and medication-assisted treatment programs. My time at SCHC allowed me to partake in a different kind of medicine—one that is non-judgmental, malleable, and seeks to meet the patient exactly where they're at, literally. It gave me a lot of hope during a time when we can all use more of it.