

Esha Hansoti – Martin Luther King Scholarship Finalist

I spent many months of my childhood in India with my grandmother sitting on the patio of her house, watching people walk by. I remember my grandmother asking me why the life of the man in the expensive suit was different from that of the woman selling vegetables to make ends meet. I did not know. She explained some people are born into privilege while others are not. She explained I was born into privilege too, and could use my privilege to be an ally to others.

I always came back to this conversation in college as I majored in sociology, worked with underserved communities, and applied to medical school. During my first year as a medical student, I helped found the first student-run transgender clinic at UTSW. This inspired me to apply for the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship and create a transgender linkage coordination program at the Resource Center. I spent nearly two years developing and growing my program to connect transgender individuals to medical, legal, and social resources in the community. I also joined the DFW transgender task force to address needs across the DFW metroplex and worked on creating a unified transgender-friendly resource guide for the city. Through the program, we developed gender-affirming care education and training of medical students. This accumulated into hosting the first Transgender Remembrance Day at UT Southwestern to honor the individuals who had been killed by acts of violence.

Furthermore, I wanted to address gender inequality at the medical school level as well. This led me to apply and be accepted as the medical student representative on an interdisciplinary committee to address gender-based inequality in science and medical disciplines called [Women in Science and Medicine](#) (WISMAC). Through my role as a WISMAC representative I assisted with their established [STARS](#) program to expose high school students to STEM fields and poster sessions for women in science. I also developed my own initiatives, such as the first sexual assault awareness month at UTSW with a session training students on trauma-informed care. Finally, I have been working with WISMAC to increase accessibility of menstrual hygiene products on campus.

Finally, during the summer of my first year of medical school, I went abroad to Dharampur, India, for research and community service. During high school and for one year after college, I had worked with a nonprofit called ARCH to develop a reproductive health education program for 500 adolescents in rural tribal communities. When I revisited during medical school, I would travel to distant villages and teach classes in Gujarati. At the end of the three months, I helped further expand the program's reach and content.

Early in my life I was taught that in order to see change I cannot be complacent. Addressing social, racial, and cultural inequality is what drives me in my career and life. As a medical

student and future physician, I have a platform of privilege. And it would be an injustice to myself, my community, and others if I did not use it.