

Bridging the Gaps



Bringing Health Equity to Promise Neighborhoods

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Academic Preceptor: Mary Ellen Miller, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, DeSales University

Community Preceptors: Hasshan Batts, DHSc, MSW; Jose Rivera AA, Pas Simpson, BA, Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley; Abby S. Letcher, MD, Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley and Lehigh Valley Health Network

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV)

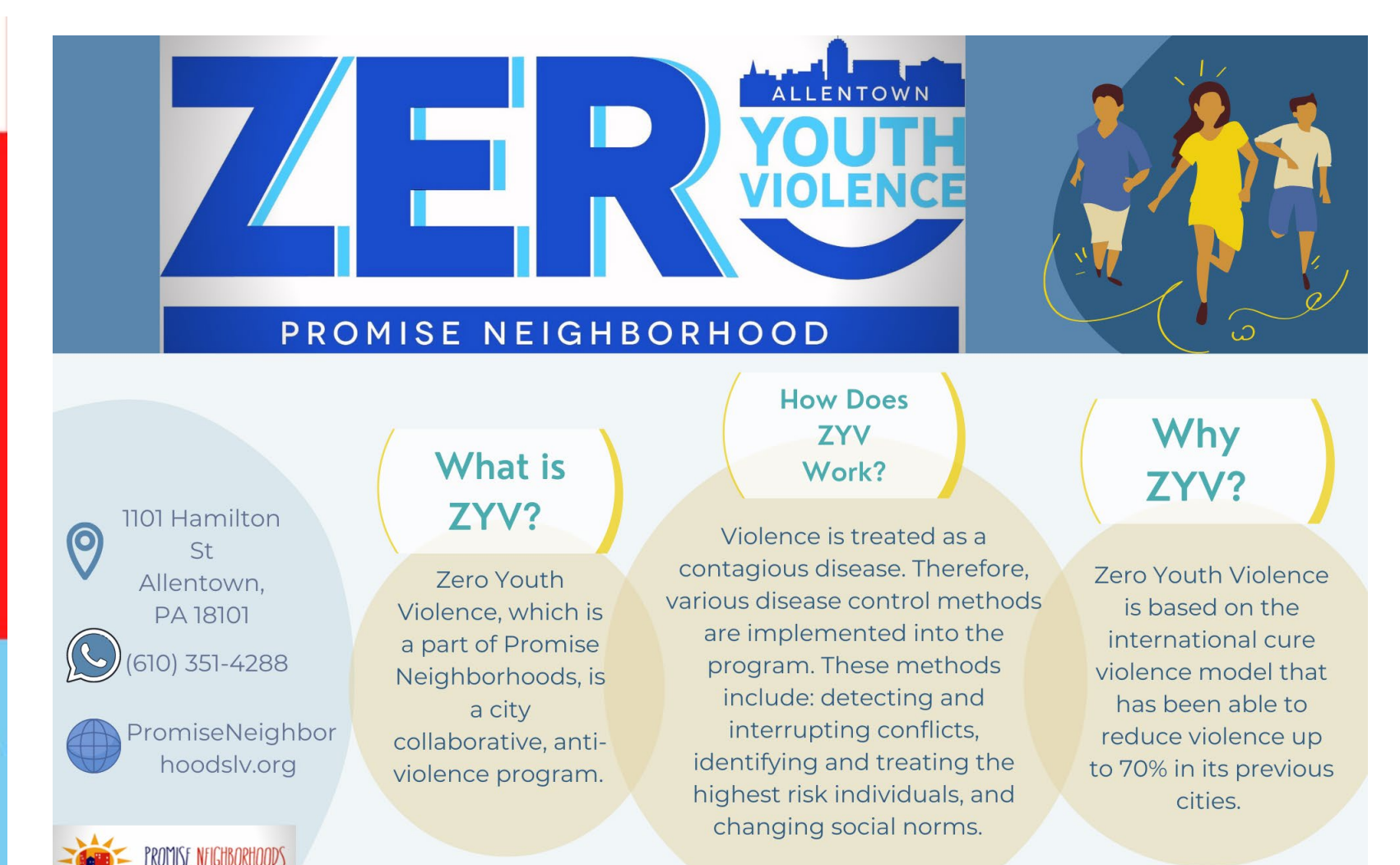
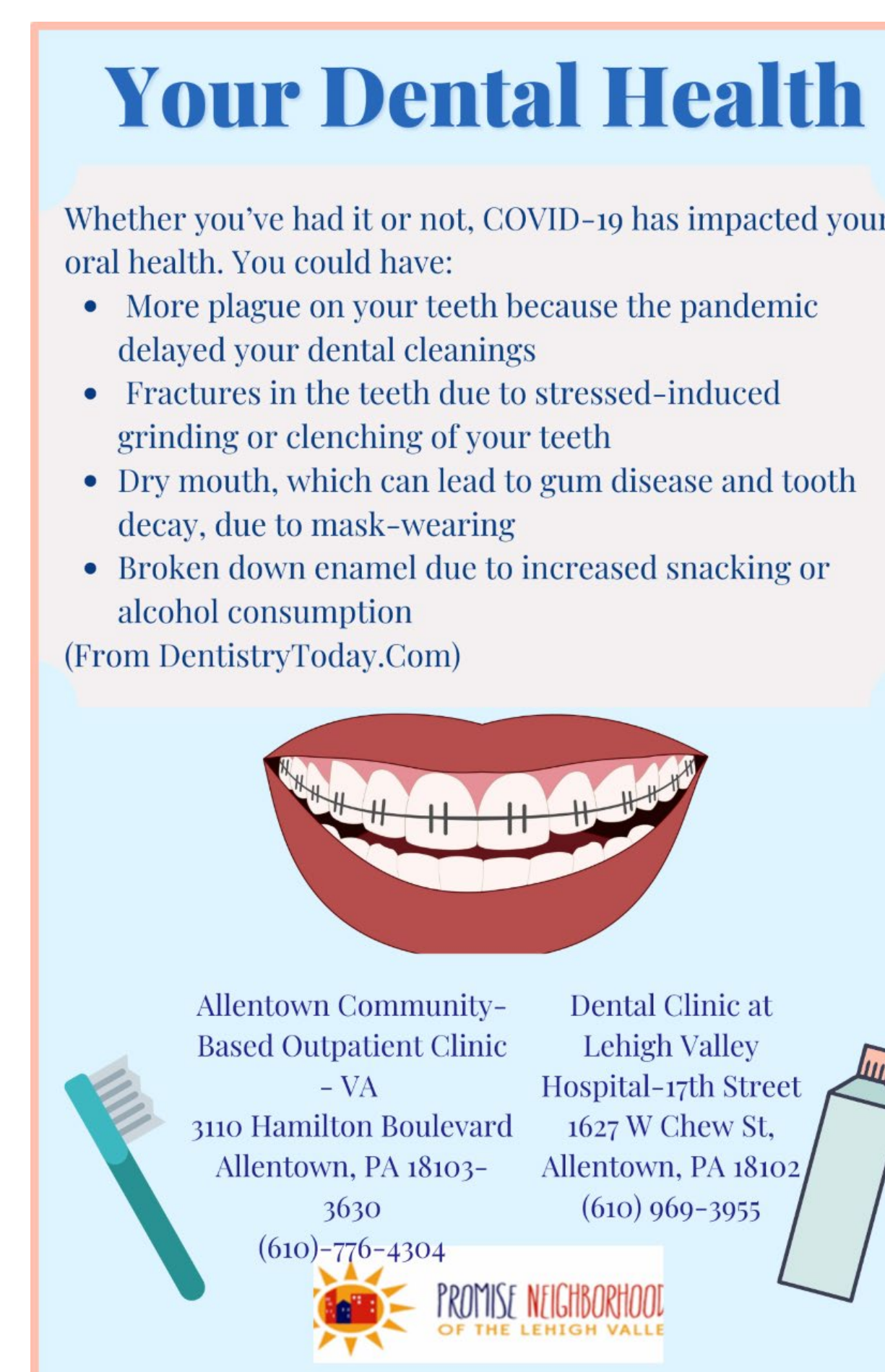
Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV) is a Black-led, anti-racist, liberation-based grassroots community organization that is led and staffed by neighborhood residents in Allentown, Pennsylvania. PNLV comprises a unique network whose role in our community is to promote consistent public health messaging, delivered by trusted community messengers. The mission of PNLV is to foster cooperation among residents within the Greater Lehigh Valley to create safe, healthy, vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods, where children succeed in school and where adults and families thrive and want to live.

<https://promiseneighborhoodslv.org/>

PROJECT

- Completed a community assessment to provide PNLV with demographics/resources/needs within the community
- Canvassed local neighborhoods to promote STEM and dance summer camps for the youth
- Participated in a march for fair funding of schools in Allentown
- Created health education flyers for the community and staff of PNLV
- Networked with local non-profits and institutions
- Cultivated vegetables at PNLV's farm "Promise Land"
- Constructed individual storytelling projects highlighting the experiences of several key community members
- Learned from professionals in the community about the health disparities that are present
- Interacted with a local Street Medicine team and discussed ways to reduce the number of recurring hospital visits by the patients by providing outpatient preventative care
- Developed ideas to encourage community engagement and investment
- Planned initiatives for an upcoming community health fair to improve public health and address health disparities

PROJECT RESULTS



PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

"My time at PNLV has transformed my career goals, as I have shifted from an individualistic view of healthcare to a community-based view of healthcare. I have learned that to better understand a patient, or just a person in general, one must explore the community from which they come from. The community at PNLV is grounded in like-minded goals, emotional connection and passionate advocacy. I hope to carry these qualities of PNLV throughout my career." -Julia Maruscak

"I feel that I have been exposed to a whole new part of myself by building relationships with people I would have probably only met in a clinical setting. Fully immersing myself into the community environment has helped me understand the demographic that makes up Allentown." -Christelle Joseph

"I believe that my most important experiences at PNLV occurred through organic discussions with the employees of the organization. I was humbled by these conversations as they afforded a chance to learn from people. Through community action, interactive dialogues, and didactic education, my BTG involvement became a formative experience that served to deepen my commitment towards improving population health and building better lives for people." -Roberto Rosario

"One of the simplest methods to address health disparities and avoid physician burnout is to facilitate reconnection with the community through volunteering and advocacy. This program was truly transformative for me and has inspired me to pursue opportunities for community engagement throughout my life." -Kylie Ridley