Young Alumni Update

News about recent Antioch graduates



FRANCHESCA SMITH

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Generations of leaders, advocates, and innovators have graduated from Antioch College in the last 175 years.

From civil rights icon Coretta Scott King ‘51, to screenwriter Rod Serling ‘50, and Congresswoman Elanor Holmes Norton ‘60, some of the boldest and brightest have walked the paths of Antioch College and gone on to make a meaningful impact on the world.

Now in the year of the College’s 175th anniversary, we see the same rigor instilled in its students today. Through an interdisciplinary liberal arts education and meaningful work experiences while out on co-op, Antioch College continues to see its graduates leave their mark on the world.

Octavio Escamilla-Sanchez ‘17

He/Him

Octavio Escamilla-Sanchez, a 2017 graduate of Antioch College, is now in his final months of medical school. Upon graduating from Antioch, Escamilla-Sanchez worked in political canvassing, as an optometry technician, and in public health research in the three years before he began medical school at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, on a full tuition scholarship.

As for his time at Antioch College, he credits co-op for helping him grow and prepare for life after graduation.

“Learning how to be comfortable with discomfort during my co-ops helped me prepare the most in my journey of becoming a physician. From reaching out to

potential co-ops and advocating for myself, flying for the first time ever, finding housing, and exploring new places," he said.

In the coming days, he will learn where he will be training for his OB/GYN residency.

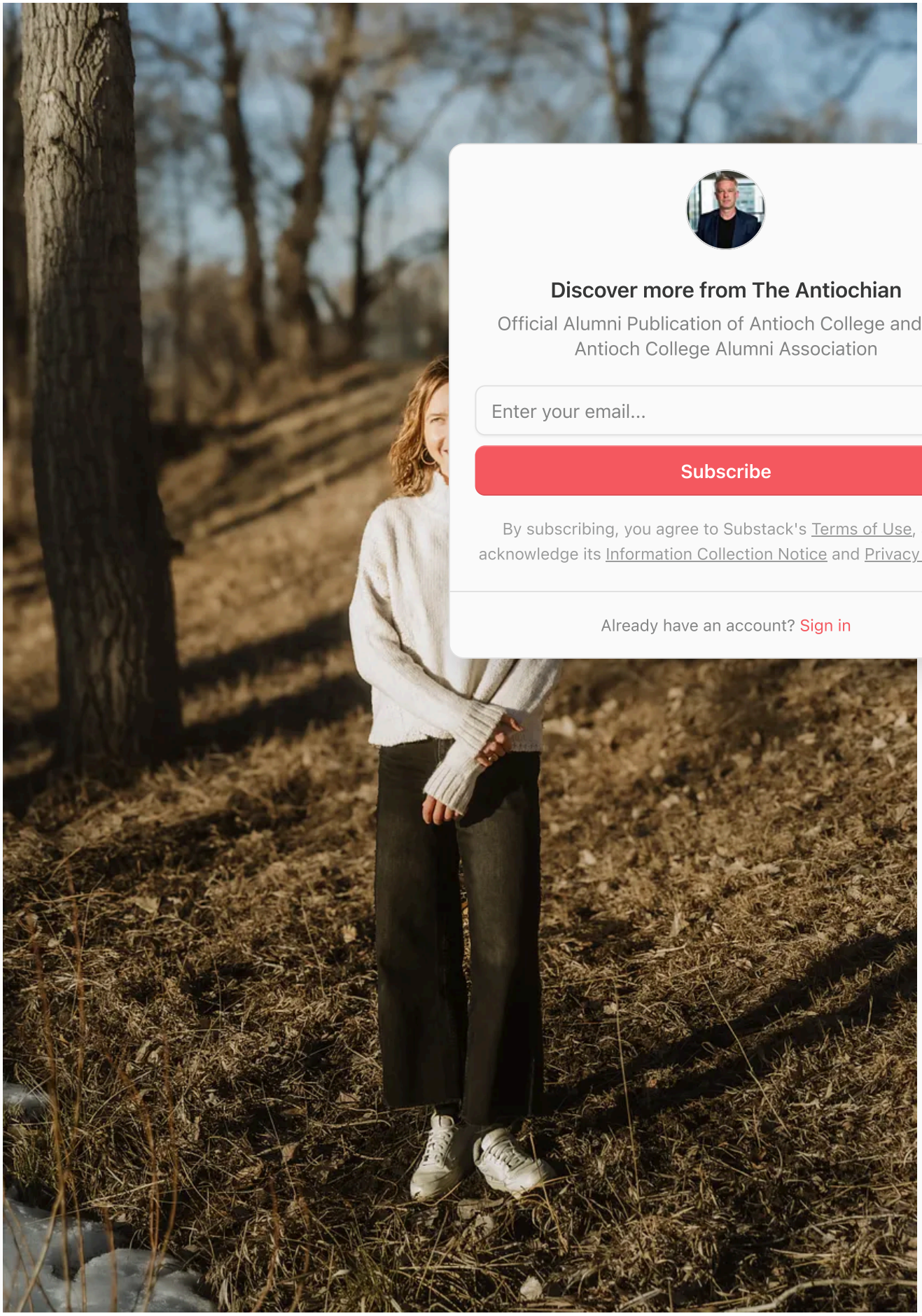
"I chose this specialty because of the opportunity to support and advocate for patients in special life events, from birth to menopause and beyond. This specialty also provides the privilege to care for patients in the clinic, hospital, and operating room."

As Escamilla-Sanchez prepares for this exciting new journey after years of hard work, he reflects on the gift of opportunity that an education gave him.

"As an undocumented immigrant, luck, perseverance, and my mother's love helped me elude systems and structures designed to anchor my body under the sun, building homes, landscaping yards, or picking fresh fruit. I grew up in a mobile home park where migrants arrived at their healthiest only to pay interest on their bodies from demanding physical labor for the American Dream. Beer cans scattered my neighborhood yards; obesity and diabetes rates increased faster than the hopes of immigration reform or the possibility of returning home. Education has been my passport to escape this cycle. I want to thank my mom, my family, my mentors, such as Katy Kiley and Donald Schoch (c/o 1972), Jim Tetz, and Benjamin Levi (c/o 1983), Antioch College, the University of Colorado SOM, and all the alumni who invest into humanity with scholarships and co-ops that helped support my transition from wearing a construction vest to donning a white coat."

Amelia la Plante Horne '18

she/they



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Since graduating from Antioch College in 2018, Amelia la Plante Horne, says she has been on a thrilling journey that has allowed her to piece all of her passions together to find a thread that will work in the long term.

At a young age, La Plante Horne, learned the value of a supportive community.

“I was a high school drop out and found my path to sobriety at 16. It doesn't matter how low your lows are, if you are lucky enough to find community and good people the world can open up,” she said.

Since graduating, La Plante Horne has found much success in following her passions and empowering youth. She worked at a tuition free residential high school for underserved and often formerly incarcerated youth in Estes Park, Colorado, after graduation. A few years later she returned to her home state of New Mexico and completed a masters program in Social Work.

A passion for empowering youth and a love for Antarctica often drives her work.

“I have been able to engage in that work in countless settings – on farms, in classrooms, online, in group therapy, one-on-one therapy, in the wilderness, and even after the fact when students reach out to me.”

La Plante Horne is currently living in Cusco, Peru, where she is studying spanish. Later this year, she plans to return to New Mexico and resume her role as a Social Worker working as a multisystemic therapist with high school aged youth. She has also been a part of teaching a sexual health class to intellectually and developmentally disabled (IDD) people since 2020 and is excited to return to her students and co-instructors.

Keegan Smith-Nichols ‘17

He/Him



Keegan Smith-Nichols, a 2017 graduate of Antioch College and history major, is working for the University of Iowa Libraries. He also completed the three year french language program at Antioch. Smith-Nichols credits his time at Antioch College and more specifically co-op for helping him get there.

“Going on co-op helped me develop the trust in myself to know the difference between not liking something because it’s new and not liking something because it’s not a good fit,” he said.

“The job I’m at now is technically my second job out of grad school. I graduated in the pandemic, and I took the first job I was offered because the job market was so unpredictable. I moved 1,000 miles for that job, and after two days, I knew the situation wasn’t going to work for me. . . . From going on co-op, I knew how to orient myself in a new place, and it was clear to me that I wasn’t going to find what I was looking for there.”

Smith-Nichols said while he searched for a new job, he spent much of his time reflecting on a particular co-op experience he had working at a remote sled dog kennel in the upper peninsula of Michigan where he lived alone in a two-room cabin without plumbing or electricity. After several cold and lonely nights, he asked a coworker for help with starting the stove inside the cabin and a dire situation turned into a memorable and meaningful experience.

“Being cold and alone in the dark taught me how to take care of myself and challenged me to expand my idea of what I was capable of. Finding the job that I now have felt like an extended version of that night. I knew the sun had to come up eventually. There are so many moments from my co-ops that helped teach me this. I’m incredibly grateful for the guidance and support from the Co-op department, too,” he said.

Now working in Iowa after earning a master’s degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Smith-Nichols says he loves his job.

“I get to work with both print and electronic materials, so every day is a bit different. Almost every print book added to the collection crosses my desk, so I’m never without book recommendations. I love seeing all the different languages and subjects we

collect. I'd never be able to match the scale on my own. I like knowing that I'm helping make these resources available for people."

When he's not working at the library, Smith-Nichols says he helps run a neighborhood garden and spends as much time as he can outside. If any Antiochians are ever in Iowa, he says he would love to connect.

Diana Harvey '16

she/her



Diana Harvey, a 2016 graduate of Antioch College settled not far from her alma mater. Harvey works as a clinical inpatient Dietitian at Mount Carmel Hospitals and Select Specialty Hospitals in Columbus, Ohio.

After graduating from Antioch, she completed a masters in dietetics and nutrition.

“I think the most exciting and best part of starting a new career, especially in the medical field, is when you've made it through the big initial learning curve and are finally feeling comfortable in your job or role,” she said.

As part of Harvey’s work, she often provides dietary education, orders tube feeds or diagnoses malnutrition, all of which help her feel that she is truly able to help improve the course of a patient’s hospital stay.



As she has developed her professional career, Harvey has found ways to give back to Antioch College. In the summer of 2022, she designed and taught a Farm to Table

Nutrition block course at Antioch College.

“Getting to come back as an adjunct professor was a wonderful, meaningful experience for me.”

Not unlike so many other alumni, Harvey credits co-op at Antioch College for much of her professional success.

“Going on co-op was hugely beneficial, for many reasons, but partially because one of my internships led me to my current career,” she said.

“Working as a nutrition education intern for Natural Grocers showed me a path that could bridge my two loves; science and food/cooking. Before that internship I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after college.

Harvey says she’s always happy to talk with anyone interested in studying nutrition or dietetics if they want to connect.

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