Your Name: Emma Schiestl

Your PIFP Organization: Innovations in Aging Collaborative (IIAC)

Please give a brief description of what you do for your organization:
There are a lot of varied projects at IIAC that I help out with, but my main responsibilities (at the moment) include Senior Reach and communications through a blog on our website. Senior Reach is an advocacy program for seniors that trains community members to spot early signs of abnormal aging in order to give seniors the support they need before a crisis occurs. We largely focus on isolation and mental health concerns. My role is to train community members on how to recognize these signs and symptoms. Using the blog on our website, I attempt to find current events and news articles that are related to aging and discuss the different implications that may affect our community. I also hope to use this blog to reinvent the perception of aging so it can be seen as an opportunity rather than a setback.

What’s the most interesting thing you’ve learned in your fellowship so far?
Colorado Springs is the 9th best place to retire in the U.S.! And over half of the babies born today in America will live to be over 100 years old!

Why did you want to become a PIFP Fellow?
I know I want to go to graduate school in Psychology, relatively soon. However, because I have so many competing interests within the field, I decided it would be a smart move to take a year and learn more about the different PhDs I could go for. Because of my interest in Geriatric Psychology, when I noticed that PIFP was offering a position with IIAC, I recognized that this would be an amazing opportunity to be involved in an applied field of psychology. Additionally, I have always been interested in working in the non-profit field while simultaneously using my skills in psychology. This was a perfect match!

What activities outside of your work do you enjoy?
I love to run! Before work, I hit the trail almost every morning. This summer, I’ve made it my goal to try a new running trail every weekend. So far my favorite is the Palmer Trail in Section 16. When I’m not running, I like to experiment with new ingredients in the kitchen.

**What is something most people would be surprised to know about you?**

I’m super approachable and friendly! Freshman year, after I got to know a few people, they told me they thought I was really intimidating when they first met me because I didn’t smile that much. But I do smile! It’s just not my neutral expression.