

2025 Community Impact Challenge Winners

Brittany Burns (Central Carolina Community College)



Brittany Burns is a second-year student in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Central Carolina Community College (CCCC). She is married to a retired military veteran and is the mother of two children, living in West End, North Carolina. Brittany aims to work in pediatrics after she graduates in May 2026.

APTA North Carolina's Community Impact Challenge supported CampMED, a week-long summer camp which introduced rising 10th/11th-grade students to health science professions through interactive activities, mentorship, and hands-on learning, fostering an early interest in allied health careers. The program allowed campers to learn about different medical careers, with three days focusing on the physical therapy profession. Representatives from the CCCC PTA program emphasized the significance of physical therapy in promoting movement in daily life. Activities were organized into four classes: stretching, stress relief, aerobic/agility exercises, and exercise bingo with seniors from Chatham County Aging. The program aims to positively influence the community by highlighting the importance of physical activity.

By the end of CampMED, camp volunteers had sparked interest in physical therapy among many students. These events not only fulfilled the CCCC PTA program's mission to serve and educate the local community but also showcased the powerful role PTA students can play in outreach and advocacy. Brittany states, "I believe we have made a meaningful impact on both the students and seniors by sharing our enthusiasm for physical therapy, and I hope they will carry the knowledge they gained into their futures."

Sixela Caballero and Sadie Thompson (Elon University)



Sixela Caballero and Sadie Thompson are second-year Doctor of Physical Therapy students at Elon University Class of 2026. They are passionate about serving their community, particularly in Alamance County. Together, they have contributed more than 200 volunteer hours as board members and student clinicians at the Health Outreach Program of Elon (HOPE) Clinic—a student-managed pro bono clinic dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underserved populations.

Through volunteer work and collected needs assessment surveys, the HOPE clinic identified a growing need for food resources that reflect the cultural preferences of patients. Recognizing that food insecurity directly impacts health outcomes, they sought ways to address this challenge within the healthcare setting.

With support from the APTA North Carolina Community Impact Challenge, students launched a culturally relevant [food pantry](#) to better serve the Latine community. The grant provided funding to purchase food items from March through June 2025, including rice, beans, Maseca, PAN, eggs, pasta, vegetables, canned meats, and other staples. The goal was to create a community where every family has access to food that reflects their culture, supports their health, and fosters a sense of belonging.

The pantry emphasizes providing culturally familiar foods while empowering families to prepare meaningful, nourishing meals. Patients visiting the HOPE Clinic now have access to this on-site resource, which links rehabilitation services with essential social supports. Addressing social determinants of health—such as nutrition and access to resources—remains a priority for these students.

Today, the HOPE Clinic food pantry continues to operate successfully, with 98% of users reporting easy access to culturally familiar foods. Students would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge APTA North Carolina, Elon DPT, and especially their mentor and HOPE Clinic Director, Dr. Crystal Ramsey, for their guidance, support, and hard work in making this mission possible.