

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, my professional role was Immunization Program Manager at Legacy Health and the Immunization Coalition Program Manager for Oregon Health Authority. Being within the Employee Health department, I was recruited to support the initial COVID-19 Emergency Response to aid with healthcare safety protocols and training. During this time, I was able to be part of a unique team of health professionals overcoming the consistently changing needs of healthcare workers and the community. A team dedicated to providing care to our community and finding solutions to equity issues was reflected throughout the time in the emergency response team and when the vaccinations were available, serving the community when strain on the healthcare system was at its highest that resulted in limited time and resources available. With themes of Immunity, this course has allowed me to reflect back on how the community came together through an incredibly stressful time to support physical, mental and emotional needs.

The art piece that truly reflected how I experienced the pandemic was the Tree of Life by Keith Haring, who I took inspiration from to create my artwork. With the sunseting COVID-19 virus, the community and essential workers have linked arms around the centralized community needs. In order to remain protected, the community must work together to support the varying physical and emotional needs. This course has shown me how art can reflect a unique period of time and the experiences we have through it. Although history can retell the events that occurred, they miss the nuances that make us human, such as the people we relied heavily on to keep us safe and showing support through banging pans at 7 p.m. every night, or connecting with others over music played from balcony windows and the simple joy of laughing about Tiger King streaming on Netflix. The tragedies we shared around George Floyd and many others that led to a national push for social justice were a driving force to bring the community together and show that our differences don't define us. The experiences we have are portrayed through art to showcase the hope, resilience, and interconnectedness. I hope to utilize art more in my future professions to support the need to tell the story of our community through visual and spoken media.

Pictured: As the COVID-19 virus is on the horizon, essential workers and the community hold hands encircling the tree of life, filled with themes that connected us during the challenges: Mask On, 6 feet social distancing, mRNA vaccines, COVID-19 testing, grocery deliveries, cancelled flights, Postponed events (Tokyo Olympics), Oregon Eviction Moratorium, hand sanitizer, temperature checks, Flatten the Curve, Virtual Meetings, Banging Pots for Healthcare Professionals, Social Justice, quarantine hobbies such as baking bread, Tiger King, Toilet Paper Shortage (symbolic of multiple resource shortages).

