

University of Dayton

eCommons

Newsletter: Community Connections

Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

4-2022

Community Connections, April 2022

University of Dayton. Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/fitz_communityconnections

[View this email in your browser](#)



University of Dayton

**Fitz Center for Leadership
in Community**

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Fitz Center Announcements

IMAGINING SHAPING A MORE EQUITABLE DAYTON COMMUNITY

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

THIS SYMPOSIUM IS A SPACE FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO COME TOGETHER WITH THE GOAL OF EXPLORING THE HISTORY, LEGACY, AND IMPACT ON DAYTON'S RACIAL SEGREGATION, AND HOW TO MOVE TOWARD A MORE JUST, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE DAYTON

IMAGINING COMMUNITY (IC) IS LED BY

University of Dayton Roesch Chair in the Social Sciences, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, and The ETHOS Center



**THURSDAY, APRIL 7
FRIDAY, APRIL 8
2022**



**DAYTON ARCADE ROTUNDA
35 WEST 4TH STREET
DAYTON, OH 45402**

**REGISTRATION FOR
THE SYMPOSIUM
IS FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**



SCAN TO REGISTER
or visit: udayton.co/S2U/

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL
LESLIE.PICCA@UDAYTON.EDU**



Fitz Center Practice Pods

Gathering and relational work are at the foundation of the Fitz Center mission. As we continue moving toward more in-person activities, the Fitz Center will begin hosting "Practice Pods." Practice Pods are topic driven, informal groups through which professional relationships can be developed and learning, knowledge sharing, and practice are built within the group. Each Practice Pod determines where and how often it meets and what sort of practice it wants to engage in. For example, Practice Pods can be outcome and change-driven or they could focus on knowledge sharing and learning or they could combine these. In addition to their own meeting times, all Practice Pods will come together twice a year in-person at the Fitz Center to talk about the collaborations.

The Fitz Center would like to know what topics you'd be interested in for a Practice Pod. Topics should focus on themes relevant to our region and/or to collaborative, community-driven work. For example, someone could propose a Practice Pod on rivers and parks or on housing insecurity. There are many possibilities. If you'd like to

propose a Practice Pod topic, please email Nancy McHugh at nmchugh1@udayton.edu by April 15, 2022.

Accepting Applications for our Student Programs

UD Community Corps

UD Community Corps is an AmeriCorps program through ServeOhio and the University of Dayton's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. AmeriCorps members serve in Dayton Neighborhood School Centers and Dayton Metro Libraries. They provide out-of-school educational and social-emotional support for Dayton children and families. Members receive living allowances, weekly training, and are eligible for a Segal Education Award. **Email Anne Taube at taubea2@udayton.edu for more information and [apply](#) as soon as possible for this summer.**



FITZ CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A NEW GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Apply today and be part of a community outreach
organization at University of Dayton.



University of Dayton
Fitz Center for
Leadership in
Community

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS ROLLING. POSITION
BEGINS FALL OF 2022.**

All applicants must submit their resume and cover letter via email.
Scan the QR Code for more information.



Community Partners and UD Faculty & Staff...

Save The Date

Open House

**Fitz Center for
Leadership in Community**

May 20th 4pm-6pm

Featured Partner

Nina Carter



By: Ashley Wright

Nina Carter is Learn to Earn Dayton's senior vice president of place-based strategies. I had the opportunity to talk with her about Learn to Earn and the organization's guiding principles, and how she envisions their partnership with the University of Dayton. Here is our conversation below.

Can you explain *Learn to Earn*?

Learn to Earn Dayton is an educational nonprofit that focuses on ensuring success for all Montgomery County children from birth to college, or high quality credentials. Our focus is guided by the StriveTogether Network's theory of action, which is a movement aimed at ensuring all children have access to the opportunities required to reach their fullest potential. This network has over 70+ members that consistently share best practices, create collective impact with cross-sector leaders in their communities, and utilize disaggregated data to inform policies and practices. Learn to Earn Dayton serves as a local backbone organization which convenes organizations and leaders around a common set of

goals, shared visions, and strategies that are aligned for the greater good of the community. We are education-centered and promote partnerships where needed. Data drives our work, especially as we foster equity by supporting sub-populations of children and families.

One of the things I love about working at Learn to Earn is our focus on two-generation approaches and practices. We recognize the importance of serving the whole child, and the importance of making sure that the child and the adults in their lives have access to the services they need. We must support a family's vision for themselves. Often, organizations and leaders use a lot of research and data to inform our approaches, which can sometimes be void of direct community or family voice. Here, I am learning that our efforts are to deepen family and student voices in our collaborations.

Can you talk about a current project you are passionate about right now?

Yes! Learn to Earn is engaged with several community stakeholders for the Northwest Dayton Partnership. This place-based strategy is looking at creating a shared vision for equity that is going to move the needle for families and individuals who live, work, play and worship in the northwest Dayton community. We are looking to facilitate bold action, innovation, and increased investments. Ultimately, this partnership is building upon community assets and the work already underway.

Another important aspect is that the Northwest Dayton partnership has developed a collaborative steering committee inclusive of individuals that live or work in northwest Dayton. This makes the work that we are doing grounded in this idea of shifting power and ownership. It is important that deeply connected organizations, residents, and community leaders are leading the charge.

When did you know you were meant to be a community engaged leader?

I believe I was born with innate gifts and talents that are supposed to be used for the purpose of engaging the community in conversations and in action around positive change. At an early age, I could never understand why my family was poor. It just felt wrong to me in a deep way. This is what drives me! Community has always been deeply ingrained in the fabric of my being.

I also truly believe that each of us are community leaders and have the power to use our voices in ways that can lead to positive change.

How do you envision your organization's partnership with UD and other organizations?

We have worked very closely with UD over the years. I started my career as a Neighborhood School Centers Site Coordinator, which was a collaborative partnership between several entities that included The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, Dayton Public Schools, and the Dayton Urban League. I spent four years learning under the tutelage of Brother Ray Fitz and Don Vermillion, as well as other community leaders such as Willie Walker, Antoinette Adkins, Parity Inc., and several others, and really learned a lot from my engagement around the importance of creating equitable environments and practices. So, I feel like the partnership with UD is one that will be steadfast and will continue to deepen over the years.

There's this wonderful space right now in the city of Dayton and Montgomery County where leaders are thinking about how our work aligns. There is this sense of engagement and collective impact really being embedded in operations, planning, and implementation. I see the University of Dayton as this open canvas for community engaged planning. UD has so many relationships and partnerships based on its history of going into communities and being willing to listen and act as a partner.

Our organization and its partnership with UD is looking at how to bridge the gap between its students' knowledge about the Dayton community and their needs, as well as building relationships with the residents that live here. There is this opportunity to collaborate with UD in a way that students are trained in asset-based community development approaches, and understanding how to identify their own skills, talents, and gifts to support the greater Dayton community's growth.

Featured Faculty

Rochonda Nenonene



By: Ashley Wright

Dr. Rochonda Nenonene an Assistant Professor and Co-Program Director of the Urban Teacher Academy in the School of Education and Health Sciences. She has been an educator for almost 30 years, and at University of Dayton for over 20 years. I had the pleasure of discussing the Urban Teacher Academy, as well as the importance of educational equity. Here is our conversation below.

Can you explain the Urban Teacher Academy?

The Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) is a program that is a joint collaboration between Dr. Novea McIntosh and myself, and was started in 2000. It was developed by two former Dayton Public School administrators in collaboration with the Dean at the time— Dr. Tom Lasley. The impetus of the UTA was to have more of our graduates teach in urban school settings, which at the time, 1998-2000, was about 2% to 3%. So, this was a way to encourage and prepare our candidates to be effective urban educators.

The demographics of our teacher candidates reflects the national teacher profile. Primarily, our candidates are white, female, and middle class. Since we're a Catholic institution, we also have students who were in Catholic private school for their P-12 educational experience. That being said, many of the candidates

have had very little experience in urban settings outside of it being a service capacity, which if you don't explore and challenge the impacts of privilege, and the context in which people live beyond mediating what urban is outside of the realm of service, people tend to fall into the "Savior" mentality. We are here to prepare students for going beyond that mentality.

UTA is a certificate program that our teacher education majors can add to their licensure program. They have coursework that they take as early as sophomore year geared towards understanding the context of urban schools, communities and families. Once they chose UTA, their field experiences and student teaching placements are all in the urban school setting. Additionally, we hold seminars open to UTA students, in fact all teacher education students, and their cooperating teachers. For the seminars, we bring in speakers to talk about best practices for urban education. They talk frequently about culture and community. Lately, we have been having conversations surrounding antiracist teaching and social emotional learning, which are all very important right now. We had a panel discussion of local educators, superintendents, administrators, teachers, and even UTA grads who are teaching locally in the area.

I am happy to say that several of our UTA grads are professionals in local Dayton Area public schools such as Dayton Early College Academy (DECA), Trotwood and West Carrollton. There are even UTA grads who are principals in Dayton Public Schools and DECA, which serves our goal of grads seeing urban education as a desirable career path. I think it is wonderful that they choose to go to urban schools to teach and lead.

How does the Urban Teacher Academy advance educational equity?

Urban schools are such a big part of the mission of the UTA. We want our candidates to have a full understanding of the context of students and families, and for them to be culturally responsive or culturally sustaining educators. Recognizing that for many students who are in high need areas or in poverty, education is a way out of poverty. What we need in urban schools are compassionate, knowledgeable educators who understand the importance of equity and access. The consistent use of equity conscious practices ultimately lead to higher academic achievement for students, which gives them a platform to excel. We want our graduates to create their learning environments with this in mind.

What is your stance on educational equity, and can you talk about the importance of engaging the community through education?

We do talk a lot about educational equity in terms of access and opportunity for all students. The diversity that exists within urban school districts is beyond black and white. We also have diverse representation in terms of gender identity,

immigration status, and people who are multilingual. The question then becomes: How do you promote equitable, anti racist, inclusive, inclusive classrooms? How do you support those students and families? How do you support people living in poverty? In the classroom, the goal is always academic achievement, but we can only get students there by being culturally responsive.

I believe that educational equity means embracing what we really want as the ultimate outcome, which is academic success for students of color and underserved populations in urban settings. But also for girls, immigrants, and all the students who are in urban school settings. This means talking about the intentionality of how an educator sets up their classroom—the texts that are used to reflect the students and the community in which they live. We talk about the instructional strategies grounded in collectivist principles such as group work that promotes supporting one another through active engagement in the classroom.

Equity is also advanced by connecting with community resources. For example, UTA students who have been Neighborhood School Center interns for the past years really got to understand the importance of nonprofit agencies like Catholic Social Services, as well as places like the Job Center that supports students and their families. Another example for programming would be Girls On the Run. We must acknowledge that schools cannot do it all on their own. These organizations really help with meeting the needs of the whole child, in tandem with your academics.

What is the most important takeaway you want your students to understand before completing the education program at UD?

It's really important that the students understand how critical education is to the growth of the community and the students. Education is an equalizer for students and families. I'm a product of urban schools. My mother put me in Headstart and I never left school. I understand the value of having teachers who value you, and see you as someone with full potential. There's a value when the teacher has high expectations, and maintains the rigor, but also sees where your needs are and helps you fill those gaps.

While teaching ultimately is about academic achievement, teaching is also about relationships and supporting the students. So, it's important that we have teachers who are compassionate, and knowledgeable, but also display care and concern for the students and families that they serve. This means understanding cultures and identities—it means helping that child see themselves reflected in the community. We have a concept that we talk about quite a bit in our program, and that is the need to be “warm demander”. As educators, we’re going to push for excellence, but we're also going to be supporting while we push.

Ultimately, I think we need candidates who are willing to work with all people, and understand children who don't look like them. It is important that they understand the amount of influence that a teacher has in a child's life. You can set a child on the path to success or, in fact, your actions can do quite the opposite. UTA grads leave UD knowing the impact they can have and they take this responsibility seriously. I am proud to say that our program is contributing to the progress that is happening in urban schools. Dr. McIntosh and I are committed to continuing this important work.



University of Dayton
**Fitz Center for
Leadership in
Community**

Copyright (C) 2022 University of Dayton Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

