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Newsletter: Community Connections

Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

7-2023

Community Connections, July 2023

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FCLC July 2023 Newsletter

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University of Dayton

Fitz Center for Leadership
in Community

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spotlight On Our Newest Graduate Assistants

**Alexandra Cline****Urban Research Initiative**

My name is Alexandra Cline and I am currently pursuing a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Dayton. Following my graduation this December, I am going into the Master of Public Administration Program at UD. During my time as a graduate student, I will be working as the Urban Research Initiative Graduate Assistant with the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. I am so excited to join the FCLC team and to continue my passion for helping the Dayton community.

**Gift Olalusi****Health Equity Fellows**

My name is Gift Olalusi, I am an international student from Nigeria. I will be joining the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community in the fall, and I will be working as the Graduate Assistant for the Health Equity Fellows Program. I will be studying for a Master's degree in Communication, with a concentration in Health Communication, and I will be graduating in May 2025. I am very passionate about health equity, thus, I want to explore research in communication to address the problems of health inequities. At my leisure, I enjoy learning new things and connecting with people.

**Jada Wasmley****Education Equity Programs**

My name is Jada Wamsley and I am from Huber Heights, Ohio! I will be at the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community as the Education Equity Programs Graduate Assistant! I am studying for my Masters in Public Administration with a certificate in Nonprofit and Community Leadership. I am planning to graduate in May 2025! I am Filipino so a lot of time is spent with my family and friends! In my free time I love to go to the gym, explore new places, and spend time with my loved ones!

Spotlight On Our Newest Directors



Samantha Kennedy Dayton Civic Scholars

Samantha Kennedy is currently the Director of Grants and Assessment for Community Engaged Programs in the Fitz Center for Leadership and Community at the University of Dayton. She is a triple alum of the University of Dayton with her BA, MA, MPA and certificate in Nonprofit and Community Leadership.

She has worked at UD since 2016, originally working in the Center for Social Concern running student programming as the Coordinator of Community Engagement. She ran programs including REAL Dayton and SERVICE Saturdays, and worked with Service and Social Action student organizations. In this role she was able to form student leaders and connect students with local nonprofits and neighborhoods.

She has been in the Fitz Center for 1 year and leads the University of Dayton's Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification process. She designs and implements assessment of community engagement programs, and supports faculty, staff, and community partners.

She is excited to add to her role the Director of the Dayton Civic Scholars Program. She has worked with many student leaders over the past 7 years who have been involved with the program and is excited to take on the work. She loves getting to work with UD students connecting them to the assets in the City of Dayton/our region. This is a long-standing, flagship program that has been formational and foundational for so many. She is glad to work with Kateri Dillon in supporting this program and continuing the foundation previous DCS Director, TyAnn Stewart, and all former directors have built.



Moses Mbeseha Health Equity Fellows

From State College, PA by way of Buea, Cameroon, Moses is a community organizer with a passion for social policy, political economics, justice, public health, business, and sports. Moses enjoys working with other community organizers to find solutions to ongoing problems as well as volunteering at different service areas in the community. In his free time, Moses is often involved in recreational sports or working with local political leaders to advance social outcomes for underrepresented and marginalized groups. He currently serves as a Board of Director for the Dayton Metro Library and also serves on the Wittenberg Alumni Board for his undergraduate alma mater.

Moses is the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of The Conscious Connect Community Development Corporation which he founded in 2015 with a vision to spark a world-class cultural renaissance and neighborhood revitalization movement — that establishes the world's most comprehensive children's equity zones.

As the new Director of Health Equity Fellows Program, Moses is excited to work with community organizations, build long-term collaborative partnerships and advance the University of Dayton's marianist mission for student engagement and development. To advance health equity in our community, Moses looks forward to advancing DEI practices through culturally-informed programs that are mutually beneficial to the student experience and the needs of the greater community. Most importantly, Moses is excited about developing servant leaders who will make a difference in public health across the Dayton community and beyond.

Moses has pursued studies in Political Science and Africana Studies at Wittenberg University, where he graduated with his Bachelors in 2013. Moses earned his Masters in Business Administration from the University of Dayton in 2020. He is currently completing his Masters in Public Health from the University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill, from where he will obtain his degree at the end of the summer.



Zachary Piso Rivers Institute

Originally from outside of Pittsburgh, PA, Zachary Piso majored in environmental studies and philosophy at Allegheny College before receiving his doctorate in Philosophy from Michigan State University in 2017. He wanted to mention Allegheny because one of his favorite jobs ever was the three years spent as a "creeker" working for the college's watershed outreach and education program, Creek Connections. MSU was a hub for environmental philosophy and a space where philosophers were doing a lot of inter- and transdisciplinary research, which shapes his ongoing work as a faculty member in UD's philosophy department and director of research facilitation at the Hanley Sustainability Institute.

In the first two years of his three-year appointment with HSI, he's made it a priority to support community-partnered sustainability research. One of the highlights was working with The Fitz Center's Executive Director, Nancy McHugh, and others on campus to host environmental nonprofits and municipal offices and think through the ways that UD could support transdisciplinary collaborations. He was lucky to already know a lot of these partners through teaching the sustainability capstone course, where students engage in community-based participatory research in partnership with different organizations in the area—he's always appreciated having a handful of River Stewards in the course to model best practices in these collaborations.

Outside of work, he spends his time tending to a lot of pets (you might have noticed a fish tank already relocated to his office) and out in the woods looking for critters or foraging for mushrooms. Hikes are usually accompanied by his wife Lindsay, three-year-old Adrian, and pug Asiago. He gardens poorly but cooks decently well. His greatest talents are probably on the whiffle ball diamond, where a group of grown adults play weekly.

Want to Connect With More Community Engagement Opportunities? Check Out GivePulse...



University of Dayton
Fitz Center for
Leadership in
Community

GivePulse

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON



ABOUT GIVE PULSE

"GivePulse is a unique platform that helps connect UD students and faculty with neighboring organizations in order to benefit the community in its entirety. GivePulse offers many opportunities to experience community-engaged learning while helping students develop skills and take steps toward their future and career after graduation."

RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

As many opportunities for students, faculty, and staff collaborations move online, GivePulse is a tool we can all use to ensure opportunities for service and partnership are transparent and fluid. With GivePulse, we can better respond and track your needs and the ways the University is working with you.

"GOOD STEWARDS OF DATA"

Users are able to manage memberships, collect metrics and data on goals, curate, and list any event or opportunity, reporting, and insights, check volunteers digitally with mobile, and a communication and messaging platform. Through collective and organized data the University of Dayton will be able to measure, report, and reflect our overall impact within the community.



www.udayton.givepulse.com

LIVING OUT DAYTON'S VISION AND MISSION

The mission of GivePulse is to enable everyone in the world to participate and engage in lifting their community to new heights. They do so by providing a platform to list, find, organize and measure the impact of service-learning, community engagement, philanthropy and volunteerism in the community.

BEST SERVICE

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

GivePulse provides community engagement opportunities to UD students and faculty that will build and strengthen relationships with community organizations.

MEANINGFUL & IMPACTFUL SERVICE

Give Pulse's ability to track the number of people or hours and store data will create more opportunities for all whether it be in the classroom or a future internship or involvement with an organization.

CONNECTION

This portal management tool capitalizes on the present virtual options we already have. Students are able to login with their UD credentials to access their individual page and search for virtual community engagement and volunteer opportunities. This platform is unlike others as it is a great tool to connect and organize classes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Urban Research Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Workshops

July 13th

This free **GRANT WRITING** training is available on July 13th, 2023 from 1pm-4pm. It will be held at The Fitz Center at 1401 S. Main Street, Suite 130 Dayton, OH 45409.

July 28th

This free **DATA MAPPING** training is available on July 28th, 2023 from 1pm-4pm. It will be held at The Fitz Center at 1401 S. Main Street, Suite 130 Dayton, OH 45409.



INTRO TO Grant Writing

JOIN US JULY 13, 2023, 1 PM - 4 PM
FREE TRAINING AT THE FITZ CENTER. THIS IS AN MORE INFORMAL SESSION AND FOCUSES ON SMALL OR NEW PROGRAMS

LEARN HOW TO...

- Find a Funder for Your Project
- Develop partnerships
- Write a winning application
- Prepare for Implementation

AMY JOMANTAS, MS
Director of the Urban Research Institute

KAYLA LENAHA
Urban Research Summer Graduate Intern

USE QR CODE TO REGISTER

Fitz Center—1401 S. Main Street, Dayton, OH 45409 +937-229-5400 AJOMANTAS1@UDAYTON.EDU

Presented by Urban Research Initiative of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community



DATA MAPPING AND SURVEYS

Mapping and surveys can be helpful to neighborhood groups and nonprofits wanting to show assets or needs. This training will focus on how to use GIS to map strengths or problems and how to conduct a survey.

There will be a "hands on" workshop. Feel free to bring your own laptop or iPad, but we do have some loaners. We have cookies and beverages planned.

AMY JOMANTAS, MS
Director of the Urban Research Institute

KAYLA LENAHA
Urban Research Summer Graduate Intern

**JULY 28, 2023
1 PM - 4 PM**

PRESENTED BY URBAN RESEARCH INITIATIVE OF THE FITZ CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY

**LOCATION OF TRAINING IS FITZ CENTER
1401 S. MAIN ST DAYTON, OH 45409**

For more information contact 937-229-5400 or ajomantas1@udayton.edu

RECENT EVENTS



Ethics and Leadership Internship Orientation

By Christa Johnson

In its second year, the Ethics and Leadership Internship Program kicked off with a week-long Ethics Bootcamp in May. Students spent the week getting to know one another both at the Fitz Center and downtown at the Hub. Highlights included an ethics bowl case competition, a values scavenger hunt, and introductions to ethics, leadership, practiced principles, housing justice, sustainability, and cultural competency. Additionally, the interns were able to participate in the launch of a new book, *Hope!*, which was written by an Ethics and Leadership alum last summer during her internship for St. Mary Development Corporation.





Educational Equity- NSC Summer Orientation

by Abishek Eagala

The program aims to provide continued daily support to Dayton Public School's Neighborhood School Centers (NSC's) during June and July.

NSC's are supported by local nonprofit organizations and offer summer programming for K-8 students from the east and west Dayton neighborhoods who attend Dayton Public Schools. While the programs have Family Resource Coordinators and Summer Program Coordinators, they require additional support in daily activity development and execution, as well as daily operations such as serving meals, preparing students for activities, and supervision during field trips.

This year, we are providing UD students with the opportunity to gain valuable experience working with students and community leaders while supporting the NSC's and serving children and their families.



Goals

The goal of the program is to build operational capacity for NSC's and improve educational outcomes for Dayton's youth. We have placed six UD students as Impact Leaders in six different NSC's: Ruskin Elementary, Kiser Elementary, Cleveland Elementary, Fairview Elementary, Edwin Joel Brown Middle School, and Wright Brothers Middle School. These Impact Leaders will co-create and execute fun educational enrichment activities, provide supervision during weekly field trips, and offer small group instruction to enhance literacy and math skills. Each Impact Leader will be supervised by a Family Resource Coordinator or Summer Program Coordinator.

Partner Feature

Interviewed by Anita Armstead

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your role at St. Mary Development?

My name is Tim Bete and I've been at St. Mary Development for 17 years, the last ten as President. Before St. Mary, I worked in UD's Advancement Division for nine years with my last position being National Marketing Manager.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I first joined St. Mary. Then, I had misconceptions of what it meant to be older and poor. In getting to know our residents, my misconceptions have turned into admiration for the wisdom, generosity and love of those whom we have served. It has become a huge blessing. Our residents are not only role models for me regarding Christian virtue, but they also teach me to see my own deficiencies more clearly. When you watch someone with few material goods share all that they have with someone else, it quickly makes you acknowledge your own selfishness and lack of gratitude for all that you've been given. Our residents have helped me grow as a person.

St. Mary's co-founders, Sr. Rose Wildenhaus and Dick McBride were both UD graduates. When they started St. Mary they had no idea we would develop more than 65 affordable apartment communities with more than 4,300 apartment units and more than half a billion dollars in development cost. Our staff works with more than a thousand older people in our Dayton-area apartments to connect them to the services and programs they need to continue to live independently as long as possible.

2. St. Mary builds accessible, affordable, safe homes for older people and families, and

**Tim Bete –
President
St. Mary Development**



provides access to in-house experts who help them navigate complex healthcare, social service, and government systems to access the care and services they need. Can you tell me about a project that you all are currently working on that you are excited about?

Once we build a new apartment community, we get the joy of watching residents move in and being part of their lives for decades and decades. On a day-to-day basis, our Service Coordinators help our residents connect to services that allow them to continue to live independently—things like healthcare, food programs, transportation, utility assistance and more. Projects that were “building projects” 20 years ago are service projects today.

One project I'm very excited about is the Senior Village at Kettering Town Center in Kettering, Ohio. The location is excellent! Many services are close-by and easily accessible along Woodman Drive (directly across from Dorothy Lane). It is within minutes of a grocery store, a health clinic, banking, restaurants, and Delco Park. The walkability combined with easy-access public and private transportation make this apartment community ideal and we expect it to quickly lease up.

3. St. Mary recently worked with UD graduate Anna Luepke on creating a book called Hope!, which captures the stories of some of your residents. What was it about this particular project that spoke to you and what do you hope will be the results of her sharing their stories?

Sr. Rose always expected God would provide what St. Mary needed. For several years when I still worked at UD, I'd felt God calling me to work with the poor, but I had difficulty discerning exactly what that call meant for me. I'd briefly met Sr. Rose many years earlier and knew a little about St. Mary's mission, so I wrote a letter to her and asked her to pray for me and help me clarify the call I felt.

Sr. Rose wrote back, saying St. Mary had an open position and, "would I come work for her?" That was the best way to discern a call, she said—to jump right in. A month later I began working at St. Mary.

I remember telling Sr. Rose that I was astounded that within four weeks, I went from asking her to pray for me to working at St. Mary. Sr. Rose wasn't astounded even a little bit. "God always sends us the people we need just when we need them," she told me.

Fast-forward 16 years to March 2022 when I received an email from Dr. Nancy McHugh, Executive Director of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community at the University of Dayton: "We have a new Ethics and Leadership Internship Program that has interns available for the summer. We are looking for internship sites for students."

When I asked about the backgrounds of the interns, Nancy said they were finding the internship sites first and then recruiting students to match their needs. I immediately asked for an intern for a project that had been on my heart for quite a while.

We need to share our residents' stories," I told Nancy. I want our partners and supporters to see the tremendous impact they have in working with St. Mary. Whether they help us develop new apartment communities or deliver needed services, our partners are part of our residents' life stories. I told Nancy I'd like to publish a book that lets others see how our residents grew up, the struggles they've faced and how they've dealt with traumatic experiences. I wanted to show their bravery, tenacity, and hope. And I wanted to share how the stability of living in a safe, affordable apartment community with service coordination has transformed their lives.

The response to the book has been tremendous. Many of our partners are using it to train their employees. Comments we've received include:

"I will not forget these stories. Many times I found myself choked up with tears in my eyes while reading."

"Reading her stories broke my heart for what people have gone through, but I am so glad they have found St. Mary Development apartments."

"I started reading it here at work and couldn't put it down. Wow. You are a big part of something incredible!"

"That's an amazing book. It really renewed my faith in our work and God's guidance in our ministries, even when day to day it's difficult to see."

4. Partnership is crucial to the continued fruition of St. Mary's mission, especially as the need for more sufficient housing and supportive services continues to increase. How do you envision future collaborations with the University of Dayton?

We've always partnered with UD in different ways. I've given talks to social justice classes. UD physical therapy students and physician assistant students have volunteered in our buildings. Many years ago, members of the UD Men's Basketball program volunteered to make Christmas treats for our residents. UD shows its service leadership in many ways and St. Mary and its residents have benefited greatly from it.

My dream is to build an affordable apartment community right on the UD campus, so older residents can enjoy all the campus has to offer, especially getting to know the students. Many people don't realize that the median retirement savings in the United States for people age 55 to 64 is only \$90,000. That means most people, if they live long enough, will be living solely off Social Security and qualify to live in our affordable apartments. That includes many UD graduates. I'd love to see UD graduates age-in-place on the campus they loved so much when they were younger.

To get a free e-book copy of Hope! visit:
<https://www.stmarydevelopment.org/book>

Student Highlight

Interviewed by Anita Armstead

Anna Luepke
Class of 2023



1. You are a recent graduate from the University of Dayton. Congratulations! Can you tell me about yourself and your experience here at UD?

UD has been such a big part of building my interest in community development and housing justice. In my freshman year, I joined Dayton Civic Scholars (DCS) at the Fitz Center, and that experience was incredibly impactful throughout my time in college. What I loved about DCS is that it allowed me to engage with and learn from the community outside "the UD bubble." I had the opportunity to meet with countless community leaders and local government officials who have taught me just how powerful change can be on a small scale. Before my time at DCS, I often thought of political change as something that occurred nationally. However, working with local communities in Dayton has made me realize that the greatest change occurs at the hands of local neighborhood leaders.

My junior year I joined the Moral Courage Project, which was actually a big part of the reason I chose to come to UD. The Moral Courage Project is a human rights storytelling project that tells the stories of activists who exhibit moral courage in the face of crisis all over the country. This past year, our team focused on the housing crisis in Oakland, California, and we traveled to Oakland for two weeks to interview activists and residents who were coming up with new innovative solutions to ensure housing as a human right. This project is what really got me interested in housing and the way it lies at the center of a multitude of social issues. I'm really lucky to be able to take part in such an incredible project because it's something that I haven't really seen anywhere else.

2. You are also the author of Hope! A book that covers several of St. Mary's residents' experiences with grief, addiction, and homelessness, but most of all: hope. What inspired you to capture these stories and what did you learn?

I worked on Hope! through my Ethics and Leadership Internship with the Fitz Center, and when I saw that this project was one of the placements for the internship, I knew it was exactly what I wanted to do. Luckily I was chosen to work with them, and I truly had the most impactful and awe-inspiring experience of my life. I interviewed 15 residents in total at St. Mary, and some of these interviews lasted up to four hours long. The most important lesson I learned from these interviews is that nobody knows how to give more than the people who have gone without. Each story came with deep pain, yet a sense of selflessness that I had never seen anywhere else. When I asked residents what gave them hope, they often replied with what they had done for others. Ultimately, that is what got them through: the knowledge that they could still be there for the people they loved the most.

Thomas Matthews helped start a food pantry when he was homeless himself. Ruth Matthews cooked a big Mother's Day dinner every year for all the mothers at the Biltmore. Clifford Stumpf used his amateur radio skills to help locate the loved ones of other residents during life-threatening storms. Each and every resident shared a story just like this. Despite all the pain, sharing all the things they had done for others always put a smile on their face.

While the resilience through hardship that every resident possessed was truly inspiring, it could also be disheartening at times to know what they had to endure in the first place. It is true that I learned that nobody knows how to give more than the people who have gone without. But the truth is, they shouldn't have to. One of the most powerful moments of this summer came after our interview with Ruth Maxwell. At the end of the interview, we gifted Ruth a \$20 giftcard to Kroger to thank her for sharing her story. After Ruth received her giftcard, she burst into tears, and told us it was exactly what she had been praying for. That one gift card would ensure that she was fed for one more week. I'm glad we were able to help Ruth, but this moment came with deep pain. Ruth spent most of her life as a sharecropper. She grew up in a cold, unwelcoming home and spent the entirety of her childhood picking cotton. She endured more difficult work than any of us will ever know, yet she was never paid a cent for it. I am grateful that Ruth has now found a home with St. Mary, but I believe that anyone who has worked their entire lives should not have to worry where their next meal is coming from. So while I was deeply inspired by these stories, it also made me more passionate about doing this work in the first place. I am in awe of the hope and resilience that each one of these residents holds, but it is my hope that someday we have a system where these obstacles don't happen in the first place. Each and every one of these residents deserved better.

3. In what ways do you see yourself continuing to contribute to the work being done to strengthen and support our community?

I want to continue to advocate for affordable housing because I believe a stable home can be such a powerful factor for so many people. This summer, I am starting my position at Development Strategies in St. Louis, which is an organization that strives to create cities that serve the people who live in them through community and economic development. I will conduct market analysis and demographic research for affordable housing projects all across the country, and I look forward to doing work that I believe can really make a huge impact on each community.

Faculty Feature

Interviewed by Anita Armstead

1. Tell me a little about yourself and your work at UD, in Dayton and beyond.

I've lived in Dayton for twelve years after moving here from Denver to work at UD. My wife, Heather Atkinson, and I live in the Historic South Park neighborhood with our two children, Wyatt and Daisy, and two dogs, Teddy Bear and Francis. Heather works in the labor movement and our kids attend Dayton Public Schools. At UD, I work in the Political Science department and teach primarily for the Human Rights Studies program. As well, I serve as Director of Applied Research and Learning at the Human Rights Center where I coordinate the Moral Courage Project and steer the Action Research and Rights Collective. Outside of UD, I organize for alternatives to incarceration with the Montgomery County Jail Coalition.

2. How did you become involved in human rights work and what inspires you to continue working for social change?

I've been involved in different forms of human rights activism since at least high school, when I became involved with Amnesty International, and later attended mass protests against corporate globalization in college. More personally, though, I am Jewish and I grew up around survivors of the Holocaust who included my own grandparents. I was always taught that we have a collective obligation to transform the world and pursue justice.

3. During your committed work to human rights research, education and advocacy, what do you feel are the most pressing issues facing our communities?

**Joel Pruce –
Associate Professor of Human
Rights Studies in Political Science;
Director of Applied Research and
Learning
Human Rights Center**



I believe our most pressing issue is that we don't know our own power. We give it away too freely and fail to spend time nurturing and cultivating the bonds that make people powerful together.

4. Can you tell me about a current project that you are working on that you are excited about?

My ongoing research agenda looks at the ways in which local, grassroots movements utilize international venues for their activism. In particular, I am curious about a process called "shadow reporting," in which civil society actors document abuse and submit a report to the United Nations to challenge their own governments' action on the world stage.

5. What is the most important takeaway you want your students to understand before completing their educational program at UD?

We live in deeply troubled times and it would be a mistake to understate that fact. And while the future is bleak, it is unwritten. If we want a just and secure future, we must be the authors.

**Do you know a community partner,
faculty or staff member, or student that
should be recognized for their
community engagement in our next
newsletter?**

**Please submit your
recommendations to:
*aarmstead1@udayton.edu***

**Don't forget to follow
The Fitz Center
on Instagram, LinkedIn, and
like and follow us on Facebook!**

(See links below)



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