The ever-evolving mission of the Rubicon House has a new direction. The Fitz Center has begun a partnership with updayton, and the Rubicon House will be the home to the once nomadic organization.

Updayton was founded by DaytonCREATE, a community empowerment organization that aims to connect initiatives in the region. Its mission is to attract and retain young talent in the Dayton region. “Each individual who decides to leave Dayton is a missed opportunity,” says updayton president Scott Murphy. “We want them to see Dayton as a place to begin their career.”

Updayton’s largest event is the Young Creatives Summit, held annually in April at the Dayton Convention Center. Last year’s event attracted over 200 individuals. This year, the summit was held Friday, April 16, and was once again a great success. It included breakout brainstorming sessions focused on diversity, community, nightlife and recreation, and entrepreneurship and an opportunity to share ideas at a town hall meeting. Participants also attended professional development workshops and a resource fair throughout the conference.

The goal of the summit is to create four new action projects for the upcoming year, all orchestrated by volunteers around the region. This year’s four projects are: Greater Dayton Stories, Street Buzz, Howdy Neighbor and Make Me Over, Dayton. Each project receives guidance and support from updayton, including seed money. Two successful groups emerged from the 2009 summit to beautify the Wayne Avenue Corridor and to establish an online central activities hub.

Updayton will join Rebuilding Together Dayton as a Rubicon House tenant. The project has been supported over the past year by Fitz Center graduate assistants Anna Hurley and Aaron Moores. The Fitz Center will continue to support updayton, which fits in well with the mission of Rubicon House.
Best wishes to AmeriCorps*VISTA Andy Badinghaus

By Joanne Troha

In more than two years as an AmeriCorps*VISTA assigned to the Fitz Center, Andy Badinghaus accomplished exactly what makes the program a rich community resource. AmeriCorps*VISTAs like Andy, provided through Ohio Campus Compact, focus especially on launching self-sustaining projects to involve higher education campuses in the local community.

In the last two years, the number of UD students active in Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers more than doubled, thanks in part to the rapport Andy established with the NSCs, faculty and students at UD. A 2008 UD grad himself, Andy also developed more efficient ways to promote and track service learning. In his work with Adventure Central, he helped adapt a nature-based afterschool program for Fairview School as an NSC pilot project. Thank you and good luck, Andy!

UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN LEARNING

By Joanne Troha

More than 425 UD students contributed time and talent at Ruskin, Edison, Cleveland, Fairview and Kiser Neighborhood School Centers this past year. A few examples of the many projects illustrate the wide range of opportunities for UD service learning at these elementary schools:

**Intro to the University** (Carolyn Roecker-Phelps, Ph.D.)—Sixty first-year UD students were paired with Kiser and Ruskin youth as penpals. Elementary students practiced letter-writing and learned a bit about college life.

**Child Psychology** (Keri Kirschman, Ph.D., and Melissa Layman-Guadalupe, Ph.D.)—Thirty UD students provided 10 hours of classroom assistance each at a NSC. Thirty-six students completed an observation and service requirement by assisting at a dozen special events.

**Historical Roots of Elementary Math** (Virginia Keen, Ph.D.)—For the third year, the Math Pen Pal project connected 46 future math teachers with second graders. Letter exchanges focused on math problem-solving and each child received a counting book designed by a UD student.

**Introductory Foods** (Pat Dolan, MS, RD, LD)—For the third semester, 16 UD students in dietetics brought health and nutrition lessons to Cleveland’s afterschool program.

**Principles of Marketing** (Irene Dickey, MBA)—The class of 37 students designed promotional pieces for Edison’s grand opening this August.

**Engineering Materials** (Margaret Pinnell, Ph.D.)—Ten mechanical engineering students continued a three-year tradition at Kiser of involving children in robotics design to reinforce math and science concepts.

**Biology Professional Organization** (Carl Friese, Ph.D.)—For the third year, biology majors accompanied Kiser students to the Columbus Zoo, meeting with children for several weeks beforehand to encourage research about what they would see.
STRETCHPAY LENDING: STILL GOING STRONG

By Emily Klein

Payday lending is a predatory practice. Most Ohioans are aware of its negative aspects because of recent legislation capping interest limits. StretchPay lending, a program developed in 2000 through a collaboration between the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, the School of Business Administration and local credit unions, was one of the first responses to the call to end predatory lending practices.

Recognizing the needs of families who live paycheck to paycheck to fill gaps for emergency expenses with small loans, the Fitz Center helped to devise a responsible solution to the problem. After attending a communitywide town hall meeting on the issue, Brother Victor Forlani, S.M., gathered the leaders of a dozen credit unions in the area to talk about solutions to the problem. Brother Victor engaged the students in his management capstone service-learning class to help think about solutions, too. It was the students, he says, who really sparked interest and enthusiasm in the project and put out the first draft of a business model. They even went to payday lenders to try to get loans so that they could experience the problem they were trying to solve.

Doug Fecher, president and CEO of Wright-Patt Credit Union, and Bill Burke, president and CEO of Day Air Credit Union, took the lead on the project. Their leadership was crucial to the project, according to Brother Victor. “They were believers in the mission of that kind of institution, serving the client base they were founded to serve,” he says.

Together, the credit unions created a program through which members may borrow $250 or $500 to pay for emergency expenses at 18% interest and with a small annual fee. The loans are to last one month and are nonrenewable so that borrowers do not get trapped by compounding interest rates. Borrowers receive financial education and are encouraged to open savings accounts, which is aimed at preventing their need for emergency loans in the future. The lead credit unions ran a successful two-year pilot of the program model. Bill Burke says, “We wanted to fulfill a civic responsibility to serve people who have no recourse to traditional funding streams.” The group established a credit union service organization (CUSO), which made further collaboration with other credit unions possible.

The StretchPay program model is successful. Ten years later, there are 58 credit unions in eight states involved. In 2009, the credit unions made 86,000 loans totaling approximately $31 million. The group estimates that last year it saved borrowers more than $4 million in interest and fees that would have been assessed through traditional payday lending companies. Burke says, “I’m still amazed at how much money we are saving people.”

Below: Brother Victor Forlani, S.M., (left) — with Bill Burke and a Stretch Pay client — was the primary motivator of the Stretch Pay loan program almost a decade ago. Last year, the program made 86,000 loans.
RIVER LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM: GETTING OUR FEET WET

By Leslie King and Sarah Peterson

This summer, there has been significant development of the River Leadership Curriculum (RLC), funded by the McGregor Foundation. The progress has been on the design of the fall 2010 course: ASI 345 — River Leadership.

Four management teams were assembled. Each management team, made up of a student intern, faculty member and community partner, is matched with one of the four course modules: River Science, Water Civilization and the Common Good, River Cities, and Sustainability. The summer development began with an orientation for the four management teams. The orientation gave participants a chance to get to know each other and the project itself. Following the orientation, participants paddled down the Mad River together.

Interns McLean Johnson, Bethany Renner, Jason Roland and Kelly Weisenborn have been working hard on their respective modules with their team members. The interns have planned class sessions pertaining to their modules, including field experiences, guest speakers, in-class activities and hands-on projects. Next, the interns will help integrate the class sessions and create an assessment process for measuring student learning outcomes.

Intern Kristen Crum has created a database of curriculum resources. These resources have been suggested and continue to be suggested by people involved in the development of the curriculum. Kristen is managing these resources in a spreadsheet database, which will be shared with faculty and guest presenters through the use of Google Documents. This database allows the curriculum to be sustainable and can help those who will be delivering the curriculum in the future.

The interns have also tested some of the field experiences that may be used during the course this fall. They have paddled the Mad River, hiked through Clifton Gorge, visited Cox Arboretum and observed local land use and change.

The RLC Leadership Team, consisting of Steve Wilhoit, Ph.D., Don Pair, Ph.D., Don Geiger, S.M., Ph.D., Jeff Kavanaugh, Ph.D., Leslie King, Maggie Varga and Sarah Peterson, supports the interns and monitors the overall development of the curriculum. Every Wednesday, the Leadership Team and interns host a lunch that builds community, giving people the chance to hear updates and provide input. The Leadership Team meets weekly and soon will begin planning the second semester of the RLC.

We are excited about the progress and would like to thank everyone who is on board. The RLC will be offered for the first time in the fall 2010 semester.
DAYTON’S WATER RESOURCES:
SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT
By Maggie Varga

This spring the University of Dayton co-hosted the third annual River Summit as well as the first Dayton Water Conference.

Sponsored by the Rivers Institute and Miami Conservancy District, the River Summit is a regional effort to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders from communities around the Great Miami River Watershed. The half-day discussion featured speakers followed by four concurrent break-out sessions and exhibits from companies and organizations along Ohio’s Great (Miami River) Corridor. The speakers included UD Provost Joseph Saliba, Ph.D., Gene Krebs, co-director of Greater Ohio, and the first graduating cohort of River Stewards. The Summit’s four concurrent sessions focused on waterfront development, recreation and tourism, open space and farmland preservation, and the possible creation of an Ohio’s Great Corridor Association.

The senior River Stewards presented on their experience in the program, their capstone project and premiered a short documentary about their four-day trip last August when they paddled from the headwaters of the Great Miami River at Indian Lake to Dayton. The other cohorts of River Stewards had increased participation this year through staffing efforts and attending the event while sophomore River Steward AJ Ferguson worked on planning and coordinating the day’s events. Following the Summit, the Fitz Center hosted and facilitated the first meeting to brainstorm the creation of an association of the communities along Ohio’s Great Corridor.

Less than a month later, May 10-12, the Dayton Water Conference was held on UD’s campus. After the success of the Water Innovations Alliance Conference in Chicago last fall, the conference was moved to Dayton to continue the conversation about developments and innovation in water technologies. The three-day conference, which opened with the Crown Solutions Water Technology Expo, addressed opportunities for growth in business, recreation, education and research centered on water. The conference featured keynote speakers and panelists from all over the country discussing the growth opportunities and advancements in water technology in a variety of fields. The topics ranged from local to global, exploring public and private sector issues with a particular focus on the Dayton region. Dayton’s abundant water resources and innovative management techniques, including wellhead protection and Dayton’s water quality credit trading program, have received international recognition, making the city a perfect host for the conference.

Planning for the second annual Dayton Water Conference is under way and the Rivers Institute and Stewards look forward to participating again in May 2011. The River Summit and Dayton Water Conference provide great opportunities for the Stewards to increase their awareness of water issues and learn more about Dayton’s unique water resources.
I cannot think of any other way to start my reflection other than to simply say that my Semester of Service has been the greatest learning experience in my life. Through this semester I have come to understand, empathize, teach, live and observe in a much simpler and more humanistic light. I have gained insight into the workings of human services, worked full time for the first period in my life, and have been introduced to the complex system that is the not-for-profit world. I have become a citizen of Dayton. I am not just a student of UD. I have grown to know the pride that comes with being a Daytonian. Our city’s problems and concerns have become my own. I am attuned to how much a single person can help direct the course of this city and also how collective indifference can hinder our dogged and persevering Dayton. I have learned that community does exist in the harshest of circumstances in one of the country’s most economically depressed areas. I have started to see people through new eyes, blind to color, age, gender and sexual orientation. I have learned that an open ear is all somebody needs sometime. I have grown in patience, realizing that I may not ever understand how a person came to their circumstances, but I have kept believing that they can rise above their situations, even if it takes time. I have discovered what I want to do with my life. I want to help people. I still don’t quite know how, but I am getting closer and closer, day by day.

To say that I served is a single part of what this semester was for me. I experienced life through new eyes. I was humbled by people who I would have previously disregarded. I was taught by those who I did not think wisdom would come from. I learned so much that I could not have ever in a classroom. But, the Semester of Service does not end with my leaving Daybreak. It does not end with my Bonner AmeriCorps scholarship. It ends when I stop becoming a voice for the voiceless and a vessel for truth, on campus and beyond. I cannot display the great significance of this message more powerfully than a quote from Elie Wiesel: “Not to transmit an experience is to betray it.”
CLEVELAND SCHOOL — ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AND ITS KIDS

By Andy Badinghaus and Kym Beasley

Many years ago, Cleveland School was a school for the arts and actively engaged its students and the surrounding neighborhoods through various art activities and programs. Now, generations of Cleveland graduates live in these neighborhoods — Linden Heights and Walnut Hills — and are invested in the school through its history. Entering its fourth year as one of Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers, Cleveland is again bustling with activity.

Because many of the neighbors already have ties to the school, site coordinator Kym Beasley said that the community jumped on board from the beginning. In the first few months of school in year one, a martial arts instructor and a Zumba instructor, both with ties to the neighborhood, began teaching classes at the school and have done so ever since. This summer, Ohmer Park Church has graciously provided space and food for the Zoot Theatre Company’s residency at Cleveland. Through this residency, students learn how to create and put on their own play, including all aspects of production.

During school, students in fifth through eighth grades are able to choose nine weeklong electives through Cleveland’s Choice Fridays program, offering classes in technology, art, sports and other topics. As a result, students are excited to come to school and learn and attendance has dramatically increased on Fridays.

One of Cleveland’s seventh and eighth grade teachers has wanted to fund a memorable trip for his students but has never found enough support. This year the YMCA, Cleveland NSC partner agency, stepped in and made two great trips possible. Seventh graders and several staff members went to a Cincinnati Reds game and sat in a reserved box with all-you-can-eat food. Many of the students had never been to a Reds game or even to Cincinnati before this opportunity.

Eighth graders and staff members went to YMCA’s Camp Kern to experience their new zip line tour. On this tour, they zipped through forests and over valleys. In the process, this group of teens came together as a group as they never had before, supporting and encouraging each other through their shared fear and excitement.

These trips were funded by the Edgerly Family Foundation. Steve Edgerly is a teacher at Cleveland.

Through great support from its neighborhood and the YMCA, Cleveland School has truly become a neighborhood school center, engaging youth and families both in the school and neighborhood in activities and programs that create a stable, safe, and exciting environment for students to learn and grow.
Each year, after finals week and before the summer break, a new cohort of Dayton Civic Scholars begins its three-year journey of civic engagement with a weeklong orientation. On Monday, May 3, 12 strangers began their orientation at Joy Outdoor Education Center in Clarksville, Ohio, for a day filled with team activities and a high ropes challenge course. With every task that day, the 12 students bonded, challenged one another and above all, became friends.

This trend of friendship carried the Civic Scholars through the week. Along with Camp Joy, the Civic Scholars also toured Dayton from north to south, attended a Dayton city commission meeting, visited with local artist Bing Davis and visited the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. Strangers no more, the Civic Scholars learned more about the city of Dayton, community building and each other. This group has an exciting three years ahead of them.