For the past five and one-half years, Emily Klein showed by example what it means to be a leader who builds communities. Emily graduated in December with a master’s degree in public administration and completed her work as a leader of many Fitz Center initiatives. Emily made a difference in Dayton, and many in our community were surprised to learn that Emily was a student. Her contributions rival those of many experienced professionals.

Emily started her work here in her first year at UD. As a Berry Scholar and religious studies major, she knew early that she wanted to find ways to connect her studies, her faith and her desire to Learn. Lead. Serve. Emily helped to start the Rivers Institute and River Stewards and is acknowledged as one of its founders. She later helped to organize the annual Rivers Summit and to plan Ohio’s Great Corridor along the Great Miami and Mad Rivers.

As a graduate assistant in the Fitz Center, Emily took on new responsibilities, including staffer for Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers; organizer of numerous Fitz Center tours of Dayton for students, staff and faculty; teaching assistant for the Leadership in Building Communities seminar; and editor of the Community Leader newsletter. Throughout, Emily maintained an active role in lay ministry and committed to a lay Marianist community.

At her graduation reception, I announced our intent to initiate the Emily M. Klein Student Community Leadership Award to honor in April a student “who best exemplifies the passion for Dayton, commitment to strengthening UD student connections to the city, openness to learning and making a lasting impact on the urban community, and leadership excellence” as demonstrated by Emily during her tenure with the Fitz Center. Emily is the epitome of what the Fitz Center is all about — educating leaders who build communities. We all wish her well as she prepares for her wedding this summer and a move to Cleveland. She will make a difference wherever she goes.
DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLARS COMPLETE SENIOR COHORT PROJECT

By Anna Hurley, Dayton Civic Scholars coordinator

After months of planning and many long project meetings, the 2011 senior cohort of the Dayton Civic Scholars implemented its senior capstone project over the fall semester at Cleveland Elementary. Senior cohort member Sarah Hrabik has written a short piece on the conclusion of the cohort’s project.

This fall semester the senior cohort of Dayton Civic Scholars (DCS) implemented the first session of its capstone project, Operation Inspiration, at Cleveland Pre-K-8 Neighborhood School Center. The main objective of the multifaceted eight-week urban mentoring project was to provide urban children with the same exposure to higher education as their suburban counterparts. The program targeted fifth- through eighth-grade students who were divided into two groups based on gender. The girls’ group was led by DCS seniors Sarah Hrabik and Casey Aldrich and the boys’ group was led by DCS senior Nicholas Pesola. The three main parts of the program were an academic incentive plan, UD pen-pal mentors and presentations from UD students majoring in areas of interest to the Cleveland students. As an academic incentive, each participant in the program received a gift card to use at the UD Bookstore that corresponded to the amount of homework completed during the program.

Many UD students were involved as pen pals and presenters. The pen pals were volunteers from the UD honors program that were matched to Cleveland students with similar interests. The presenters included members of student organizations such as Flyer Enterprises (Joe Guy, Megan Arko and Bryan Kristy) and ETHOS (Brian Edmundson), as well as various other majors of interest including pre-medicine, mechanical engineering, sociology, education and psychology. The culminating event of Operation Inspiration was a field trip to UD to tour the campus and spend their gift cards in the bookstore. The program ended with a pizza party during which students met their UD mentors.

We are very proud of the senior cohort and would like to thank the entire group: Casey Aldrich, Jill Bucaro, Laura Getz, Amanda Hortsman, Sarah Hrabik, Nicholas Pesola and Kaitlin Stretch.

The 2012 cohort continued planning its capstone project that will focus on a youth leadership program at Meadowdale High School. The 2013 cohort finished its first semester as Civic Scholars with more than 600 hours of community service.
Dec. 6 began the final week of service with a farewell meal together, and the last class included reading of reflection papers or composite accounts from their Semester of Service experience. Here are excerpts.

“This Semester of Service at the Dakota Center has increased my understanding of the urban environment and its residents. Interactions with the center’s staff and the children it serves have left a lasting impact on my life and on my worldview. My successes and failings this semester have helped me to better understand and manage my expectations and have taught me valuable lessons for future work in the community. These experiences have greatly enriched my life and have challenged me to grow as a man. This semester has intensified my desire to participate in education, mentoring and urban revitalization, and it has renewed my commitment to remain civically engaged through whatever line of work I choose to undertake.” Garrett Coleman

“My Semester of Service [at Adventure Central] has given me more than I could have ever expected. I know I read other students’ papers and letters about what they got out of the experience but, to be honest, I didn’t believe them. I knew this would be an eye-opening experience, but it has been so much more. I have had highs and lows every week (and almost every day!). All the high moments are what will stick with me and are what I will take with me as I continue on in my life. I know I was only with my group for a short amount of time, but I hope that I somehow had a positive impact on their lives. Whether or not they remember my name when they grow up, I really hope that I taught each of them something about being a better person.” Jacqueline Sammon

“I was so proud of them all; to be able to see the transformations they each made was just mind boggling. Even though they started off with the right mindset, I could still see growth in them as my time at the [Salvation Army] Booth House comes to an end. They are all positive role models for the other men that are just starting out. They are prime examples that you can turn your life around.” Katie Dever

“My fellow SOS students taught me a lot and supported me throughout the process. The [East End Community Services] Youth Center kids renewed my drive and determination to be a school counselor and work with kids just like them for the rest of my life. The staff at the East End Center taught me that the most important part of the job is the relationships I made with the kids. No child should ever be left unknown.” Kristen Hammaker
KAYAK PROGRAMS FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS, DAYTON’S RIVERS

By Maggie Varga, graduate assistant

As part of ongoing efforts to reunite Dayton and the river, the Rivers Institute continues to develop and expand educational outreach opportunities for people of all ages. The Institute has worked with a number of schools in the area to provide students with a better understanding of our river system and a chance to view our rivers as the strategic natural resource central to the vitality of the region. These experiences have also given River Stewards a chance to visit local schools, engage with students, and share the knowledge they have acquired through the program.

A unique educational outreach program the Institute hopes to foster and develop further is our water safety and kayak instruction program with Trotwood Madison High School. The program began in fall 2008 and has been offered semiannually ever since. Working with Trotwood’s swim and dive teacher, Sharyn Jackson, River Stewards spend an entire day at the school leading as many as five class sessions.

On November 11, the River Institute visited Trotwood Madison’s indoor pool with the support of River Stewards Alex Galluzzo, Sarah Peterson, Andrew Kowalski and Tara Sulzer. The Stewards introduced the high school teens to the Rivers Institute, discussed the river as an asset, stressed water safety, and taught an introduction to kayaking in the school’s indoor pool. The program provides a great opportunity for the River Stewards to share knowledge they have gained in the program and to develop leadership skills in the community, as well as brush up their own kayaking skills during the colder months.

Having never kayaked or canoed before, this can be a new and sometimes frightening experience for many of the Trotwood students. But they quickly get their balance, and the excitement of kayaking around the pool with their classmates surpasses any initial anxiety. Some of the students have the opportunity to participate in the program two and three times throughout their high school careers as they advance through the swim and dive classes. It is always great to see familiar faces and the progress individual students make as they improve their kayaking skills.

The River Stewards also work with special needs students. Providing an extra level of support and assistance can be challenging, but it is also the most rewarding part of the day. The Stewards are happy to share their knowledge, experience and passion for kayaking with others. Ms. Jackson has been a great partner with her enthusiasm and dedication to her students and the program. We look forward to working with Trotwood Madison High School again in March when we return for the second session of the school year.

To learn more about our educational and community outreach programs and the Rivers Institute vision of reuniting Dayton and its rivers, be sure to attend the annual River Summit March 31. More information is available at riversummit.udayton.edu.

Above: River Steward Alex Galluzzo (back left) encourages students as they kayak for the first time.

Below: Students line up and race to the end of the pool as they become more comfortable in the water.
THE RIVER LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM: Integrating River System Perspectives One Semester at a Time

By Sarah Peterson, graduate assistant

The Rivers Institute closed 2010 with final student project presentations from the first semester of the River Leadership Curriculum (RLC). After a year and a half of brainstorming, developing and planning, the inaugural course was a huge success.

The end of the fall semester also meant the culmination of planning the second semester. The second class, currently under way, is project-based and focused on community engagement. Students are divided into four groups that each work on designated projects proposed during the fall semester. From the proposals submitted, it was evident students had absorbed the many different disciplines and perspectives they learned throughout the course. The semester’s final project presentations impressed attendees with the variety of ideas and perspectives offered.

The curriculum development’s Leadership Team consolidated the strongest student proposals for the second semester’s group projects. Project leaders from the Leadership Team work closely with each group during class sessions. The Leadership Team also identified community partners who provide expertise in each subject area and help with overall project development.

Rivers for Life by Sandra Postel and Brian Richter will be part of this semester’s coursework. The book gives an overview of how water is managed for people and nature, enhances lessons from the group projects, and guides students through class discussions and personal reflections. Postel and Richter write about rivers and provide a leadership development component that ties in very well with the course’s student learning objectives.

Students will continue to work actively with community partners and faculty from the university to make their projects successful. Several students from the first semester are enrolled in and excited about completing the entire two-course sequence. More River Stewards are joining the class this semester as well and once again come from many backgrounds and academic majors. The diversity greatly benefits the learning experience during group work and other cooperative components.

Meanwhile, the Leadership Team continues to meet as the third year of the McGregor Foundation grant approaches. The next task is to assess the progress of the second course and to plan future semesters of the curriculum. The Leadership Team and the Rivers Institute are excited for the next steps of the River Leadership Curriculum. We look forward to sharing project results and appreciate the help of all involved in the curriculum development thus far.
EDISON NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL CENTER HOSTS MATH, SCIENCE NIGHT

By Don Vermillion, director of public projects, and Danielle Dabbs, Edison Neighborhood School Center site coordinator

On Thursday, December 9, an exciting Math and Science Night event was held at the Edison Neighborhood School Center to get students and their families excited about math and science.

Seventy-three students and 59 parents came out to learn more about science and math through fun and interactive experiments such as making slime, shooting off rockets, calculating percentages through basketball, performing a “Nifty Balloon Trick” by putting a skewer through a balloon without popping it, and many more. There were 10 science stations and five math stations. Families received a “Passport to Learning” booklet with questions they had to answer at each station. When a family completed a station, that station was stamped on the family’s passport. Families were required to complete seven stations in order to participate in the Math and Science Night dinner. Families also had the opportunity to register students for ongoing afterschool activities at Edison.

Volunteers were the backbone of the family night, operating all of the science tables and stations. There were 10 employees of GE Aviation – Dayton Operations and seven students from the University of Dayton, including six members of the Alpha Nu Omega fraternity. The volunteers came early to set up the tables and practice the experiments, and they were there to help families complete the stations and answer all of their questions. It was an amazing learning experience for all participants. Because of their backgrounds and experience, the employees from GE Aviation – Dayton Operations were able to help families understand the science involved in the various experiments. Some of the volunteers were engineers who have developed their own inventions, and they were able to share their experiences with the students and families. Everyone involved had a great time, and a lot of learning took place.

This event was also a kick-off for families to get ready for the upcoming science fair, and information was shared about the process and requirements for science fair boards. GE Aviation – Dayton Operations will be partnering with Edison to provide presentation boards for all students who need them, and their employees will also be providing mentoring for our fifth- and eighth-grade students who need help on their science projects. This is very important for these grades, as they will be tested in science on the Ohio Achievement Assessment this year.

With the excitement that this event created, we hope that Edison students’ interest in science and math grows and that activities like this help students to excel academically.
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT SERVICE AN ENCOURAGING SIGN

By Joanne Troha, director of community service learning

Thanks to key faculty support at UD, some first-year students wasted no time last fall in becoming active residents of their new “home” town. The Fitz Center’s service-learning staff was happy to introduce these new students to their younger counterparts at Dayton Public Schools. Two projects in particular captured faculty interest.

With her PHL 103 class in mind, Dr. Monalisa Mullins made a commitment to cover a request from Ruskin School regarding their afterschool program for sixth- through eighth-graders. “Streetpeace” meets four times a week and UD students were invited to help prepare and lead Tuesday discussions about media literacy. It was a formidable challenge, but a small group of Dr. Mullins’ students chose this for their 10-hour service requirement. They learned why Streetpeace is so important to youngsters who too frequently see their neighborhood hurt by violence and poverty. Each UD student was asked to prepare and lead three to four lessons to help pre-teens identify underlying negative values and messages in music, film, commercials, TV, and print. Ms. Julie Mcglaun, the teacher in charge, was extremely grateful for the help, noting her students readily bonded with the UD undergraduates.

First-year student Matt Derrico saw a clear connection to the allegory of Plato’s Cave, an assigned reading for PHL 103. “Being with the students for four weeks in a row became a way for all of us to see a different perspective on life. I consider my life ‘normal,’ as do they. I learned about their lives and they learned about mine. It was an eye-opening experience for me to learn about the poverty so close to campus.”

Coincidentally, Matt was also in the ASI 150 class for first-year social science students which featured a very different service-learning component. Dr. Melissa Layman Guadalupe (psychology) asked the Fitz Center to link her students to local grade schools. They created a pen pal project involving 68 first-year students at UD, 17 eighth-grade girls at Edison School and two fourth-grade classes at Cleveland School. The “service” was to give the children both a real-life reason to practice writing skills and offer a peek at college life.

Lois Adkins, a Cleveland teacher, described how excited her students were to receive letters from UD. “I used the pen pal letters as a tool to teach the parts of a friendly letter.” All teachers agreed: “Our students wouldn’t stop writing!” The same could be said for the UD students who generously wrote long descriptions of their hometowns, first impressions of college life and encouraging words about the importance of doing homework and having goals.
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Of the Fitz Center operating budget, 11% comes from endowment earnings.
Each Dayton Neighborhood School Center is supported by a site coordinator, three student interns and dozens of UD student volunteers.
148 students have completed a Semester of Service to date.
Educating leaders who build communities

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Each Dayton Civic Scholar commits to 60 hours of community service each semester for three years.
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River Stewards led 10 kayak trips for community groups in summer 2010.

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Fitz Center service-learning staff helped direct and prepare 309 students in the fall 2010 semester.
LEADERSHIP SEMINAR TURNS SWEET SIXTEEN
By Dick Ferguson, executive director

In December, 22 undergraduate and graduate students completed the Leadership in Building Communities seminar offered by Fitz Center staff. They presented a final summary of their work with the Old North Dayton and McCook Field neighborhoods in the forms of an 82-page report and a presentation at the Rev. Raymond A. Roesch Symposium featuring social science research of UD students.

Students and instructors Brother Ray Fitz, Don Vermillion, Emily Klein and Dick Ferguson learned how two neighborhoods are working together for a bright future, overcoming significant challenges and leveraging local assets. The students assisted in the formulation of a strategic vision shared by both neighborhoods and action steps to realize that vision in the next five years. In the past 16 years, 26 Dayton neighborhoods have participated in the seminar. This year, 26 citizens and citizen leaders, professionals and business owners assisted in the formulation of the shared vision.

If you would like to read the report, it is available at http://www.udayton.edu/artssciences/fitzcenter/leadership_in_building_communities_seminar.php.

Left: Jerry Bowling, president of McCook Field Neighborhood Association, discusses the neighborhood with LBC participants.
Above right: Neighborhood resident Jim Perry provides a brief oral history of Old North Dayton during a fall 2010 tour.