RIVER STEWARDS ENERGIZE DAYTON ART INSTITUTE’S FLOOD COMMEMORATION

BY RACHEL BACHMANN, RIVER STEWARD ’15

This spring the River Stewards, with the RiverMobile in tow, visited the Dayton Art Institute to participate in the exhibit Storm, Watershed and Riverbank, a display dedicated to remembering the flood of 1913.

By attending the exhibit, the River Stewards discovered how Dayton has evolved since the flood and gained a deeper connection to their mission and responsibilities as River Stewards.

In the first section of the exhibit, “Storm,” artist April Gornik displayed her work. Her lifelike paintings of storms portrayed a powerful image of the force of nature, as well as the importance of water and Earth’s natural cycles. In the “Watershed” part of the exhibit, the River Stewards were challenged to engage in comparative thinking by observing pictures taken by local photographer Andy Snow, which compared the old and new environments of Dayton.

In the last part of the exhibit, “Riverbank,” the River Stewards saw historic concept plans of the city of Dayton, such as dam designs, and current development designs of Dayton’s bike and walking trails, kayaking concepts and public transportation routes. From this, the River Stewards were able to understand the importance of the flood control system now in place in Dayton.

Throughout the exhibit, the River Stewards were reminded to focus on the future of Dayton as well as their own futures as River Stewards. Just like Dayton’s evolution from 1913 to today, students within the River Steward program individually change and evolve, too.
Cindy Currell new SOS coordinator

BY JADA NEAL, SEMESTER OF SERVICE INTERNSHIP

Semester of Service is thrilled to welcome Cindy Currell as leader of its program. As the newly appointed Semester of Service coordinator, Cindy’s role in the Fitz Center allows her to utilize her experiences and connections in the Dayton area to provide students with a life-changing experience.

Having first joined the Fitz Center in 2002 as a research associate, Cindy has continued to forge strong relationships within the Dayton community and to use her expertise to benefit various Fitz Center research projects for Catholic Social Services and Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers. In addition, she has also been involved in numerous outreach projects with the School of Education and Allied Professions.

As a 1980 University of Dayton graduate, Cindy has strong roots in the community. During her years at UD, she was involved in the Appalachia and Peace Studies programs where her passion for social justice and helping others developed. With her master’s degree in social work, Cindy has continued to share her passion for social justice as an instructor for UD’s department of sociology, anthropology, and social work. Currently, she teaches a child abuse course and continues to practice part time at the Dayton Children’s Medical Center.

Her knowledge and passion benefit every student she meets. She adds enthusiasm to each student’s journey and enables students to make a greater impact in society. Cindy makes it clear that she chooses to live by one of her favorite quotes attributed to Brother Ray Fitz, “Let us use our gifts to build a community that is concerned about the good of all.”

SOS SUMMER, FALL RECRUITMENT

BY CINDY CURRELL, COORDINATOR, SEMESTER OF SERVICE

Nineteen talented and committed UD students applied to Semester of Service for the summer and fall of 2013.

Many students felt called to explore vocation, contribute and make a difference in the Dayton community, devote themselves to a more serious service experience, and be a part of a group of like-minded students with shared values and mission. It was a humbling and inspiring experience to meet these amazing young adults.

Semester of Service is open to all majors and levels of experience. Applicants represent a range of life experiences, personal talents, and service experiences including international travel and volunteering, local involvement in the Dayton Civic Scholars and River Steward programs, and Campus Ministry breakouts.

In beginning the Semester of Service application process, applicants visit service sites and schedule interviews. Sites include Adventure Central, an afterschool outdoor science and environmental education program; the Dakota Center, an afterschool homework assistance, computer, art, and recreation center; Daybreak, a program that concentrates on developing life skills, job readiness, and support for 18- to 21-year-olds transitioning to independent living; East End Community Services, a youth support program that concentrates on community-based education, art, and interactive experiences; and Life Essentials, which offers personal support, outreach, and guardianship services to adults with mental health challenges.

Summer-only programs include Dayton Christian Center, an early-childhood program that provides care for infants, toddlers, and school-age children; DECA and DECA Prep, to provide tutoring, book clubs, and mentoring support for middle and high school age students; Homefull, an organization that builds supportive relationships with homeless families seeking stability through resources, community services, and stable housing; and We Care Arts!, which builds supportive relationships to engage adults with special needs in art activities in a community-based setting.

In the matching process, we strive to honor the choices of UD students and the community service sites. Ten students will be selected for the summer and five for the fall. Summer SOS begins with orientation the week of May 13, and fall SOS orientation begins the week of Aug. 26. Applications for the spring 2014 Semester of Service will be accepted in early September 2013.
**Educating leaders who build communities**

Mary taught Jesus, we participate in Mary’s mission of forming servant-leaders. We also work to realize Mary’s Magnificat: a total transformation of society. We seek to change, as Blessed William Joseph Chaminade said, “the very structures,” of society to “ensure a community of justice and reconciliation” like the kingdom described by Isaiah where lions and lambs are peaceful partners. Community building is an expression of the Rev. William Ferree, S.M.’s teaching that to labor for justice means organizing for the common good.

Our particular approach focuses on assets, social capital, constructive public conversations, adaptive capacity, and a widely shared vision. With St. Paul, we affirm gifts, that each person and community is given a manifestation of the Spirit. Because our God — a Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit — is relational, we highlight and value relationships. Like Mary who listened and questioned at the Annunciation, we balance inquiry and advocacy. Recalling Blessed Chaminade’s words, “New times call for new methods,” we learn together to adapt and change. And since Catholic social teaching calls us to family, community, and participation, we engage the talents of many to build a widely shared vision.

At Cana, Mary performed no miracle. She perceived a need, saw assets, and connected the servants to Jesus; and the waters blushed in His Presence. Like Mary, our impact in Dayton comes from connecting. At the Neighborhood School Centers, site coordinators have forged more than 70 partnerships that support children with tutors and activities, assist families, and unite neighbors. Soon the RiverMobile will educate and excite local children while linking them with God’s creation and their hometown. And recently at a local Catholic school I witnessed one of UD’s theologians and her graduate students joyfully dancing “Gangnam style” with kindergartners as part of a service-learning experience. Perhaps these are the kinds of partnerships present in the Kingdom of God. At the Fitz Center, our mission is rooted in our Catholic faith and Marianist charism as we form and transform, educating leaders who build communities.
There’s no age limit when it comes to building and sustaining relationships.

In fourth grade, Kiera Wheeler was introduced to the Fitz Center as a member of Adventure Central’s summer camp program, the nature and wildlife encampment where many Semester of Service students and other UD students volunteer. There, her love for nature and science began as she learned about different weather patterns and clouds, explored the Wolf Creek, visited a genetics lab, and participated in team-building activities. “There’s no place like it,” Wheeler commented. “The lessons I’ve been taught and the experiences I’ve had were life changing.”

Unable to leave one of her favorite childhood pastimes behind, Wheeler continued to stay involved at Adventure Central throughout high school by becoming a teacher’s aide. As an aide, she assisted teachers in planning lessons and designing activities for the younger students.

When the time came to begin applying and accepting offers from colleges, Wheeler was given an unprecedented surprise.

During a summer at Adventure Central, Wheeler was introduced to the River Stewards program when Bethany Renner and Alex Galluzzo, then senior River Stewards, visited and talked to students about the program. “When the River Stewards visited Adventure Central, I had my heart set on going to UD,” Wheeler said. “I loved everything Bethany and Alex had told me about the program, and I knew I would never find another one like it. Going to UD was a no-brainer because I’d be able to continue volunteering at Adventure Central and could potentially become a River Steward, which would allow me to channel my passion for science and the outdoors.”

Now a sophomore biology major at UD, Wheeler is currently a first-year River Steward and intern at one of the Fitz Center’s Neighborhood School Centers, Fairview PreK-8. Through her experiences, not only has Wheeler grown but she has also acted as a liaison among the River Stewards, Adventure Central and Fairview PreK-8, providing valuable connections for the Fitz Center programs and its partners.

Through the Fitz Center, there’s no telling whose life will be changed and how futures will be impacted. The experiences offered are not only beneficial to the students who engage in them, but to the University as a whole.
This June will mark my completion of 40 years of work as a University of Dayton administrator. For the past 12 years, I have been fortunate to direct the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, including one year of organizing and staffing the Center, named for Brother Ray in April 2002. With the support of President Dan Curran and Dean Paul Benson of the College of Arts and Sciences, I have asked to spend the next four years or so writing, lecturing and connecting the work of the Fitz Center to the national conversation and scholarship on the role of universities in communities. I am not quite ready to retire.

My time with the Fitz Center has been one of learning for all of the Fitz Center team. To my knowledge, there is no other center in higher education devoted to “building and sustaining community” anywhere in the United States.

Every day, students, staff and faculty of the Fitz Center break new ground, test new ideas, and discover new methods of learning, leading and serving with the Dayton community. We are, above all else, friends of Dayton. Individuals, associations, organizations, neighborhoods, and task forces look to the University of Dayton for solidarity and support. In turn, UD looks to the Fitz Center to manage many of these relationships, create new partnerships, and sustain initiatives that produce results for the community and learning opportunities for students and faculty. We do our jobs very well.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the first decade of the Center is the success of leadership development programs for outstanding students engaged in Dayton community life. Semester of Service, Dayton Civic Scholars, River Stewards, Neighborhood School Center interns, service learners, and Graduate Community Fellows constitute a dimension of the Fitz Center we did not anticipate when the Center began. Student leaders have demonstrated that they have much to give to Dayton while learning experientially through their civic engagement. The students are now the faces and hands of the Fitz Center, and the smartest thing I can be credited with doing is letting them lead in important and public ways.

So I leave my role this summer. I will be nearby working on behalf of the Fitz Center as the model of university engagement with community that it is for higher education. Thank you for what you do to strengthen your community. Please continue to support our work. What could be more important today than educating leaders who build and sustain communities?
With the recent addition of a new Neighborhood School Centers van and the very impressive latest project of the Rivers Institute, the RiverMobile, the Fitz Center has amassed its own fleet of vehicles for connecting students with the greater Dayton community. The Fitz Center now travels in two Neighborhood School Center vans, the Fitz Center Tour Bus, and the RiverMobile mobile learning studio.

Students in the Fitz Center programs are able to use the vans to transport fellow students to different locations throughout the city for engagement projects, such as the afterschool soccer program at Ruskin PreK-8.

The tour bus has been an amazing asset as it has been used to take more than 800 students, staff and faculty members from the University on guided tours of the city of Dayton. On these tours, the participants learn about thriving businesses, organizations and nonprofits that keep Dayton moving forward. Participants are given the opportunity to meet community leaders and learn about the diverse and innovative work being done throughout the city. One of the last tours of the school year took place in mid-April and gave Intensive English Program (IEP) students the opportunity to learn not only about Dayton but also what life is like in an American city.

The RiverMobile is a new, 53-foot trailer that has been converted into a mobile learning studio complete with five classrooms detailing the region’s water resources. With the RiverMobile, River Stewards will be able to go to local schools and community groups to introduce them to Dayton’s greatest natural resource, its rivers and aquifer.

All of the Fitz Center vehicles are used to enhance the mission of the Fitz Center to form sustainable partnerships between the University and the greater Dayton community. With this impressive fleet of Fitz Center vehicles, we really are on the move!

Photos, from top: Student intern Jen Hodulik and Graduate Assistant Alex Galluzzo jump for joy that the RiverMobile has finally been brought to life.

Veronica Paulson, graduate assistant and coordinator of the Fitz Center’s bus tours, poses with the Fitz Center bus.

The bus has seating for 22 people and is equipped with a sound system for presentations. It is a gift of RTA.
The Dayton Civic Scholars 2014 cohort has been developing and implementing community engagement projects.

On March 22, the Dayton Civic Scholars hosted “Eggsplosion” at Cleveland PreK-8, during which participants took pictures with the Easter Bunny, went on an egg hunt, and enjoyed an art station workshop sponsored by Kappa Pi, the UD fine arts honor society. Most importantly, Eggsplosion was the kick-off event that introduced the idea of urban gardening at Cleveland in partnership with UD student involvement.

The 2014 cohort has designed its senior project around creating a sustainable neighborhood garden at Cleveland PreK-8. The garden will work with the 515 students and the residents of the Walnut Hills neighborhood to aid in learning the importance of healthy eating habits and the value of eating locally, as well as providing knowledge of where food comes from. Cleveland PreK-8 students will be taught five pillars of character, which include caring, responsibility, trust, respect, and good citizenship.

Throughout the garden, student art projects will be exhibited for the whole community to see. “The Art of Gardening” will not only help students further engage in the Walnut Hills neighborhood but also increase parent involvement. By using recycled material within the art projects, kids will be able to stretch their creativity and see the beauty in others’ trash. Hopefully, this will bring pride and a sign of accomplishment and success to each child artist. Most importantly, this project aims to bring people together to build attachment and involvement within the community.

In the upcoming months, we plan to create an afterschool program called Creative Seeds: Planting Seeds to Grow our Youth, which will help us to kick-start the project and get students involved. In the late spring of 2013, we will begin to work on the garden with the help of two volunteers from the YMCA who are our garden resources. Parents of the Cleveland students, the local community, and our 2014 cohort will care for the garden over the summer. In the fall of 2013, we will emphasize the health benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables through nutrition presentations and provide lesson plans that teachers can use to incorporate the garden and renewable art. Our goal is to ensure a sustainable program that will promote community engagement among the neighborhood residents, Cleveland students and the University of Dayton while highlighting the benefits of urban gardening and the beauty of renewable art.

Congrats, grads

BY ALEXANDRA ROBINSON, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLARS

This May, the Fitz Center said goodbye to the 2013 cohort of Dayton Civic Scholars. Marina LoCasto graduated with a B.A. in Criminal Justice Studies and Languages; she has plans to continue at UD to pursue her Master of Public Administration degree. Kyle Grabowski graduated with a B.A. in Criminal Justice Studies and has plans to continue his military training. Kelsey Loughman graduated with a B.A. in Political Science and plans to attend law school. Amy Sullivan is earning her B.S.E. in Middle Childhood Education and would like to teach at an urban school in Cincinnati. Nicholette Smith graduated with a B.S. in Psychology and plans to attend graduate school in the near future. Having graduated early last December, Katherine Repic is now working as a program support manager at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The Fitz Center congratulates its 2013 cohort on its many accomplishments and wishes these students success in their future endeavors.
BROTHER ED’S RETIREMENT

BY CINDY CURRELL, COORDINATOR, SEMESTER OF SERVICE

When Brother Ed Zamierowski, S.M., Ph.D., joined the Marianists in 1952, he never imagined the journey of faith and service that awaited him.

As an educator and Marianist brother, Brother Ed worked with Projet Tapis Vert to develop food sources in Niger, West Africa, advocated environmental preservation through his studies and work in botany and ecology, developed gardens in conjunction with Dayton’s Edgemont Solar Garden and Grow with Your Neighbor community gardening projects, served as a key leader in the development of the Dakota Center, and mentored students to embrace unique pathways of civic engagement at the University of Dayton.

In 1994, Brother Ed became the director of Serve with Energy and Talent (SWEAT), Ohio’s first AmeriCorps program. In 2002, Brother Ed further used his talents to help develop the Semester of Service model in collaboration with the Fitz Center and the Bonner Foundation. His vision was to design a program for UD students who were willing to spend a semester serving individuals in the Dayton community full time. The Semester of Service model currently combines service with personal reflection, social justice education, and a deepened commitment of people to the Dayton community in a spirit of mutuality and collaboration.

Since 1994, Brother Ed has been a role model and mentor to more than 400 young adults and college students. After decades of caring for and assisting in the development of others with gentle strength and deep conviction, Brother Ed has decided to retire.

Being around Brother Ed is a gift. He’s willing to share his personal experiences and inspires others with his vocation to social justice and commitment to service; he believes in the power of relationships, creativity, and cultivating the ability to live with ambivalence.

As Brother Ed begins to imagine time for relaxation and rest, new inspiration and reflection, music practice and playing the saxophone with UD’s New Horizons Band, and perhaps discovering new opportunities for service, we are thankful for all he has shared and been involved with. Brother Ed’s humility, love, and model of service with others will guide us long into the future of Semester of Service.

Below: Brother Ed Zamierowski, S.M., pictured center, back row, poses with some of his colleagues at the Fitz Center. From left to right: Cindy Currell, Brenda Donnelly, Suzette Pico, Bob Stoughton, Judy Keyes, Brother Ed, Leslie King, Dick Ferguson, Joanne Troha, Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., and Char Cook-Robinson. Not shown: Don Vermillion.
With a mission of “preparing civic professionals and citizen leaders,” the Dayton Civic Scholars’ partnership with the city of Dayton is a natural one. Dayton Civic Scholars have enjoyed an enriching relationship with their city’s local government since the program’s inception. In fact, the program owes its start in large part to City Commissioner Dean Lovelace, the program’s first director from 2004 to 2009.

Students start their three-year journey as Dayton Civic Scholars with a trip to City Hall. As a part of its orientation this past summer, the 2015 cohort met with Assistant City Manager Stanley Early, Director of Planning and Community Development Aaron Sorrell, and Mayor Gary Leitzell.

Later in the semester, the Scholars spoke with Commissioner Nan Whaley during their weekly cohort meeting about ways Dayton is becoming more bike- and pedestrian-friendly. Perhaps most significantly, the city provides many Civic Scholars with hands-on experience in public engagement and problem-solving through internships within the various city offices and departments.

Sarah Kerns, a member of the 2014 cohort, explains how her internship with the city has affected her both professionally and personally: “Working at City Hall has given me the chance to learn a great deal about working within the public sector. Not only has my time there helped to determine my future career path, but it has also provided me with the chance to discover and explore areas of the city I had never known.”

The River Stewards have also found the partnership with the city of Dayton to be highly beneficial. For each incoming River Steward cohort, the sophomore River Stewards are taken on a tour of the wastewater and drinking plants of Dayton. There, they are introduced to how the process runs and operates and how it makes the city of Dayton water distinctive.

“Felicia Graham of the Department of Water is a huge asset to our program,” stated Alex Galluzo, graduate assistant for the River Steward program. “She’s been extremely involved in the development of the Rivers Institute and continues to provide us with valuable feedback and guidance.”

In addition, each year the River Stewards present at the Children’s Water Festival hosted by the Dayton Water Department. They teach safety lessons, assist children with hands-on experiments and this year, for the first time, will introduce them to the RiverMobile. For more information regarding the Children’s Water Festival, visit water.cityofdayton.org/water/festival.asp.

The Fitz Center said farewell to the 2013 graduating cohort of River Stewards. They include Ellen Comes, an environmental biology major and geology minor from Toledo, Ohio; Nicole Goettemoeller, a biology major from Maria Stein, Ohio; Sabine Hahn, an art education major from Lexington, Ohio; Kaityn Kenny, an English and AYA education double major from Hudson, Ohio; Andrew Kowalski, an interdisciplinary studies and international studies double major from Wheaton, Ill.; Taylor Pair, a chemistry and political science double major from Englewood, Ohio; Jill Pajka, a fine arts and English double major from Lima, Ohio; Milena Pisani, a civil engineering major and sustainability, energy, and environment minor from New Berlin, Ill.; Amy Price, an AYA integrated science education and biology double major from Bellefontaine, Ohio; Emily Striebich, a marketing and economics double major from Dayton; Aaron Sprague, a chemical engineering major from Sidney, Ohio; Tara Sulzer, a mechanical engineering major and sustainability, energy, and environment minor from Peninsula, Ohio; Ryan Tuohy, a psychology major from Columbus, Ohio; and Elizabeth Wetzel, a biology major from Union, Ohio. Congratulations. You will be missed.
Community Leader

Twenty-six years strong
BY JEN HODULIK, FITZ CENTER INTERN

This year, Char Cook-Robinson will celebrate her 26th year as an administrative assistant for the Fitz Center and its predecessors.

Char began her career in August of 1987 and has continued to exemplify the dependability and hard work ethic for which the Fitz Center is known. As co-chair for the annual CityLinks conference, Char organizes keynote speakers, designs the CityLinks publications, hosts meetings of the planning committee, and devises workshops for the attendees.

Her additional responsibilities as an administrative assistant include offering support for the River Stewards, Semester of Service, and service-learning programs. Joanne Troha, director of service learning, commented, “Char is an integral part of our programming. Long after graduation, students frequently ask, ‘How’s Char’? because they remember her support and encouragement.”

Char also has a warm admiration for the mission and staff of the Fitz Center. “We’re all one big family,” she said. “I’ve really learned how to give back to the community and that it’s important to do so. The Fitz Center really strives to enrich the lives of others. It’s a wonderful department to work for.”

The Fitz Center offers special thanks and congratulations to Char for all of her hard work for 26 years.

FOSTERING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE
BY JEN HODULIK, FITZ CENTER INTERN

Although the city of Dayton is suffering due to the loss of employment opportunities and increased poverty rates, Dayton’s citizens and neighborhood partners are determined to salvage the city and grow together as a community.

For the past 28 years, the University of Dayton has brought citizens of the Dayton community and Montgomery County together to collaborate, build relationships, and develop strategies for neighborhood development at the annual CityLinks conference.

The idea originated with Dean Lovelace, who sought to provide citizens with an opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas to local leaders. “The conference is a beneficial experience for all who attend because it gives people a voice and a sense of empowerment,” said Char Cook-Robinson, CityLinks co-chair and Fitz Center administrative assistant.

Workshop topics this year were church and school partnerships, cultural inclusion, and restorative justice. In preparation for the conference each April, the CityLinks planning committee designs workshops, selects a keynote speaker, and votes on the recipient of the Mattie Davis and Joe Kanak Community Builders Award, an award given to an individual that has exemplified outstanding leadership capabilities and advocated for neighborhoods and their citizens. This year, the CityLinks planning committee included co-chairs Char Cook-Robinson and Don Vermillion, community liaison Patty Higgins, Ray Alexander and Verletta Jackson from the city of Dayton, John Bennett from Community Action Partnership, and Judy Zimmerman from Grafton Hills CDC.

In conjunction with the theme “Building Relationships: the Future of Our Neighborhoods,” Mike Foley, Ohio state representative and 1966 UD graduate, was selected as the keynote speaker. “It’s enjoyable to see people we’ve worked with in the past continue to stay involved in the neighborhood and attend these conferences,” said Don Vermillion. “CityLinks is a great opportunity to build and sustain long term relationships.”

Below: Keynote speaker Mike Foley addresses members of the CityLinks conference during their lunch hour at UD’s 1700 South Patterson Building.

Don Vermillion presents Mike Foley with an appreciation gift for presenting at the CityLinks conference. Each year, keynote speakers are presented with a teardrop trophy on a silver-plated base to show the appreciation of the planning committee.

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JOANNE TROHA RETIRES AFTER 43 YEARS OF SERVICE

BY DICK FERGUSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Joanne Troha is a person without much patience for paperwork or processes that are “silly.” She likes to get things done, acknowledge the achievement, thank the players, and move on. After four decades of serving the University and the city of Dayton, on May 31 she will retire from her Fitz Center position as director of community service learning.

Joanne’s UD career began in the office responsible for interdisciplinary and experimental courses in the 1970s. While today’s curriculum embraces such experimentation, mini courses and other options were just being introduced when she started. Next, Joanne worked on research and contracts with Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. Office of Environmental Education and local government agencies. From 1976 until 1997, she was part of Strategies for Responsible Development (SRD) and worked her way from rural development in Niger, West Africa, to neighborhood and community development in Dayton.

In 1997, SRD became the Institute for Neighborhood and Community Leadership at UD (INCLUD), and Joanne led efforts that became the basis of the Fitz Center’s work in Dayton today. Among these were service learning, leadership development, affordable housing, community reinvestment, neighborhood gardens, and the annual CityLinks conference for neighborhood leaders. During this time, INCLUD secured a federal grant for Ohio’s first AmeriCorps program, SWEAT (Serve with Energy and Talent).

Since the creation of the Fitz Center in 2002, Joanne has directed service learning through the Fitz Center to help “educate leaders who build communities.” Each year, approximately 800 UD students engage in service learning through the Fitz Center, 180 of whom regularly maintain ongoing relationships with community partners.

In addition, Joanne works to support faculty who are engaged in service learning throughout Dayton and has become a significant contributor to faculty development in this area. Joanne also advises Semester of Service, serves as a faculty mentor to Wheels for Kids, and is an instrumental team member with Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers.

Perhaps more than anyone else, I know that this summary does not do justice to Joanne Troha’s contributions to Dayton and the University. She is a leader that makes a difference by enabling the work of others, especially students and faculty, and creatively responding to new community challenges. For all that she has done, all of us are grateful. Joanne will enjoy retirement with her husband, Stan, her children and her beautiful granddaughter. I will miss my friend and colleague, but like many others, will call on her for wisdom and encouragement. I will not be the only one calling.

As Joanne Troha retires, she leaves a legacy of service-learning programs, including Wheels For Kids (below). She helped usher its transformation from a first-year engineering program to a student-organized service group. Wheels for Kids has provided bicycles and safety lessons to hundreds of Dayton-area children.
Tracey Horan is a River Steward alumna who was a member of the first graduating cohort in 2010. Throughout her time at UD, Horan was the education outreach intern for the Rivers Institute and obtained bachelor’s degrees in Spanish and middle childhood education.

Horan’s cohort created a “River Day” experience for students at Mary Queen of Peace and Gramont Campus, which later became Horan’s student teaching site. The cohort also collaborated with Holy Angels school to launch a series of integrated modules guiding middle school students through the history of the Great Miami River, similar to the concepts of the RiverMobile. “I laugh when I think about the way we lugged materials to schools for activities and experiments. We certainly did what we could with our homemade fish tank aquifers, posterboard timelines, and carefully carted macroinvertebrates,” Horan remarked. “I’m excited about the potential the RiverMobile has for spreading awareness of and appreciation for our rivers.”

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One of Horan’s fondest memories of being a River Steward was her cohort’s senior trip. Despite the sore arms, blisters, and stomachaches from laughing fits, Horan said she’d do it again in a heartbeat. “It was invigorating to feel like a pioneer rediscovering the river I had come to know and love.”

As a River Steward, Horan was able to network with local government officials, attend meetings with experienced leaders, and bond with fellow Stews of different academic majors.

“As I trace the path my life has taken over the past few years, I can easily see the footprints the River Steward program has made on my journey. I’m grateful to the Fitz Center for the faith they place in young people to envision and create constructive solutions in the Dayton community.”

After graduating in 2010, Horan developed a greater interest in creation theology and is currently in the process of becoming a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati. Horan lives in Saint Mary of the Woods where she spends her time harvesting, caring for the alpaca herd, and participating in fiber crafts on a farm run by the Sisters of Providence. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, playing guitar, and painting.