FITZ CENTER RENEWAL — A FRESH START

BY DICK FERGUSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the May issue of the Community Leader, I said a premature “goodbye.” I am still here and recommitted to leadership of the Fitz Center. The search for the next executive director has been suspended. And I am feeling very good about the coming year.

As you read elsewhere in this issue, the Fitz Center has lots happening on all fronts. Our new director of Community Engaged Learning, Kelly Bohrer, brings her experience and energy from the Center for Social Concern in Campus Ministry to the Fitz Center. Cindy Currell leaves the position of coordinator of the Semester of Service. Graduate assistant Polly Long is joined by Natalie Anderson as the support staff to Kelly. Marina LoCasto moves from intern to graduate assistant and takes over coordination of the Dayton Civic Scholars. Graduate assistants Bethany Renner and Alex Galluzzo take the RiverMobile on the road and build a dynamic Rivers Leadership Curriculum on campus in the Rivers Institute. Undergraduate interns join both teams and promise to bring fresh ideas, new energy, and competent leadership to the River Stewards and Dayton Civic Scholars.

New members of the team are reminders of how far we have come in 11 years and benchmarks of how much we still have to do on campus and in the community to make good on our promise of “educating leaders who build and sustain communities.” The concept of “democratic civic engagement” described by Kelly Bohrer on Page 6 is key to the future of the Fitz Center. We are uncommon among university centers in that we see our civic engagement in Dayton as reciprocal — we are learning alongside wonderful and gifted citizen leaders in all sectors. Our University can be a national leader in this development. We do not see community engagement as an end in itself. It must achieve a public good. It must produce results for Dayton as well as for the students, faculty and staff of UD.

Without such reciprocity, civic engagement is anything but democratic. It can, in fact, be autocratic to serve and lead as if only we had the answers and the skills to lead. The Fitz Center has made a small dent in the civic culture of UD. We want to help develop students as citizens, as leaders who know what good community is and how to help develop it in the civic communities of which they are a part and in which they will lead their professional lives. I hope you will continue the journey with us.
Why spend a summer in Dayton? The Rivers Institute summer interns are the ones to ask. This past summer a team of seven interns, Adam Bynum, Stephanie Clafford, Joe Schmidt, Stephen Crum, Brian Lewis, Megan Guy and Katelyn Rendulic, spent three months building community around our local rivers by engaging in conversations and programs with many different organizations.

Two days working for the Rivers Institute over the summer are never spent the same way. The summer team carried out a variety of tasks, projects and programs, including bringing the RiverMobile to its first school, visits at Edison and Cleveland PreK-8 schools, developing and leading a variety of paddling programs, and representing the Rivers Institute at several community events.

The Rivers Institute's summer programs typically take two forms. One is leading a general river paddle, starting at Eastwood MetroPark, either above or below Harshman Road, and ending at RiverScape. This is a great program for smaller organizations and allows people to see the city of Dayton in a manner they typically are not used to — from the river! The second type of program is more customized and involves kayaking, usually at RiverScape, Eastwood or Germantown MetroPark, and other leadership and team building activities.

The interns especially enjoyed working with Dayton youth. Some of our youth paddling program partners are Daybreak, St. Albert the Great Youth Ministry, Adventure Central and the Dayton YMCA Camps. During these programs, the interns connect the kayaking skill development to leadership and personal growth. The interns also increase participants’ awareness of the larger watershed concept and their personal responsibilities.

Two kids day camps were also part of our summer watershed education experiences. Interns attended Adventure Central and the UD RecPlex RecKids Camp for three days each. During these programs, the River Stewards fostered a sense of responsibility for Dayton’s water resources by challenging youth with team-building exercises, group art activities, making water-cycle bead bracelets, and even eating “Edible Aquifers”!

In addition to our youth programs, we have had the fortunate experience of working with several adult leadership programs. Some of the organizations we have worked with include the Adventure Central staff, a UD geology class and professors, VIPs from Veolia, the UD Dayton Alumni Chapter, Lalanne Teachers Orientation, research and developers from Xylem-YSI, and the Berry Scholars Honors Thesis Institute. As young developing leaders, we have found it rewarding to be able to work with each of these organizations. Each has its own gift and type of leadership that we get to work with, learn from, and reflect on.

The River Steward summer intern team is grateful for such an engaging, exciting and educational summer in the city.
WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLARS

BY ALEXANDRA ROBINSON, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLARS

Coordinating the Dayton Civic Scholars program for the past two years has been a tremendous blessing, and I’m so thankful to have had the opportunity. As I move on to a new — much younger — population of students (as a second-grade teacher), I thought it might be useful to reflect on what I’ve learned through working with the Dayton Civic Scholars. Here are few of the big ideas I’ll be taking with me.

Ownership is key to strengthening and sustaining a student program. The Dayton Civic Scholars program and the Fitz Center more generally are predicated on the idea that students come to the table not just to learn but with tremendous talents to share. Working with such a gifted group of undergraduates has really brought this principle home. I learned that the more I expected of students and the more I opened up the program to their ideas and leadership, the more engaged the students and the stronger the program became.

Forging a widely shared vision doesn’t necessarily mean everyone agrees. Observing three cohorts of Dayton Civic Scholars work through creating and implementing their Senior Capstone Projects has been very instructive on the sometimes challenging group dynamics of decision making. A few observations:

1. Forging a widely shared vision takes time.
2. It rarely means that everyone agrees, but almost always involves plenty of compromise.
3. Shared doesn’t mean that everyone in the group comes to hold the same views, but that they’ve listened to and allowed themselves to be changed by the different views and experiences in the group enough to create some common ground for action.

Leaders and leadership come in many varieties — and all are necessary to build community. In addition to recognizing students who demonstrate the conventional assertive leadership style, I’ve found it is often the students who lead in more subtle ways that keep the project on track. In my own work with the program, I’ve discovered that the ability to lead by listening is one of the most effective and influential leadership skills.

As I think about working in early childhood education, it is clear to me that these insights will be valuable and relevant across a wide range of educational and professional settings. And for that, I’ll be forever indebted to the Fitz Center.

Although it’s with mixed emotions that I leave the Fitz Center, I know I am leaving the Dayton Civic Scholars in very capable hands. I’m thrilled that Marina LoCasto, a former Dayton Civic Scholar herself, will be the new graduate assistant coordinating DCS. The Dayton Civic Scholars have a bright future ahead of them, and I’m looking forward to learning about all of the exciting work to come.

Alexandra Robinson (left) and Marina LoCasto (right) have been crucial assets to enriching the Dayton Civic Scholars program by devising cohort teams with common interests, a drive to succeed, and an interest in making lasting friendships with one another and the community.
A summer of service is an experience you will take with you for the rest of your life. While learning to care for others, understanding how to combat social injustices and building community with one another, Semester of Service students are taught one very important thing — the importance of building and sustaining relationships.

This summer, UD students Nina Lokar, Maggie Reuter, Shaughn Phillips, Kate Gallup, Kathleen Murphy, Amy Keckler, Danielle Pohlman, Rachel Phillips, Jim Sylvester and myself devoted our summers to serving nine different nonprofit agencies throughout the city of Dayton. They included We Care Arts, a program Nina served that is dedicated to working with mentally, physically and emotionally disabled adults; East End Community Services, a program Maggie served that is dedicated to helping the residents of the Twin Towers community become more prosperous and develop a more unified vision; Dayton Christian Center, a program Kate served that works with infant, toddler and preschool-aged youth; the Dakota Center, an organization Kathleen served that works with at-risk youth; Homefull, an organization Amy served that is devoted to helping homeless individuals become self-sufficient; DECA Preparatory Academy, an organization Danielle served that helps prepare first-generation college students on an academic and personal basis; Life Essentials, an organization Rachel served that works with elderly mentally disabled individuals in need of companionship or guardianship; Daybreak, an organization Shaughn served that is dedicated to helping young adolescents in Dayton by offering employment, housing and outreach opportunities; and Adventure Central, a 4H program and partner of The Ohio State University and the Five Rivers MetroParks that Jim and I served dedicated to helping Dayton’s youth develop a love for science and explore nature.

We welcomed the opportunity to participate in Semester of Service for many different reasons, including wanting to discover future career opportunities, meet new people, explore the city of Dayton and develop a stronger faith. As new pioneers of service, we began with high hopes and expectations only to discover issues of social injustice were prominent and deeply rooted. Many of us dealt with issues we had never encountered personally, such as domestic violence, child abuse, elderly neglect, racism and poverty. It was difficult for us to appreciate our privilege when we began to witness how greatly others suffered.

“In a way it has been a positive experience to have experienced negativity,” remarked Shaughn. “As a religious person, I have found that participating in Semester of Service is a miraculous way of understanding the reality of humanity’s salvation. Jesus was brutally nailed to a cross so that he could save us from our sins, just as we must combat these deplorable issues in order to achieve a greater good. Although so many of the people we have encountered are suffering, I can see Christ in everyone I work with, and I know that God is present in every moment, no matter how difficult.”

In order to overcome hardship, our cohort learned to rely on one another. Having a community of like-minded individuals who understood the difficulties we were going through was extremely inspirational. Each of us encouraged one another to utilize our passions to stay determined and channel our talents into our work.

“One child I met was only 9 years old and had been in juvenile detention

Left: At Dayton Christian Center, Kate Gallup learned that love can come in all shapes and sizes.
several times,” commented Kathleen. “I decided to talk with her and made her pinky promise me to stay out of trouble, and she was able to do it. Each day she would find me and give me a hug telling me, ‘Look, Miss K. I’m here!’ It was amazing to see that just by showing I cared, I made an impact on her life.”

Throughout the summer, we began to focus less on the negatives we encountered and more on the positives. A smile from a child, an encouraging remark from a coworker, or a “thank you” from a client made us realize the relationships we had begun to forge were powerful. “The reality of our service is that each of these individuals has experienced more hardships in their life than we have witnessed in just one summer,” said Maggie. “It’s our job to do the little bit of good we can.”

From this experience, we were able to grow as leaders, innovators and students of a Marianist university. “I would do Semester of Service again in a heartbeat,” commented Rachel. “It really made me fall in love with the city and introduced me to career opportunities I didn’t even know were possible with my major. I could definitely see myself settling here.”

The gift of service is a two-way street. By giving of yourself to others, you are able to receive and your community is able to grow. Rather than wait for others to act, you must take initiative. In order to see change, we must be the change.

Above: Semester of Service students were excited to begin their summer semesters after meeting with their site supervisors for lunch in Kennedy Union. Top row (from left) Shaughn Phillips, junior history major; Kate Gallup, senior psychology major; Nina Lokar, senior psychology major; and Jim Sylvester, junior psychology major. Bottom row (from left) Maggie Reuter, senior international studies and Spanish double major; Danielle Pohlman, junior international studies and Spanish double major; Amy Keckler, senior sociology major; Kathleen Murphy, junior middle childhood education major; Jen Hodulik, senior English major; and Rachel Phillips, junior political science major.

Above: Jen Hodulik and a group of kids from Adventure Central happily pose for a picture after a long day of fun in the sun during the last day of summer day camp.
A NEW FACE, A TITLE AND TEAM!

BY KELLY BOHRER, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

I am excited to join the Fitz Center as the director of Community Engaged Learning. Previously, Joanne Troha held this position as the director of service learning. While I will be fulfilling many of the same roles, the title has changed to even better reflect our hope for building reciprocal community partnerships that foster and deepen campus engagement for meaningful academic and civic learning. The change also leads to enhanced opportunities, new conversations and further community building offered through the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) team in the Fitz Center.

As a former educator of graduate teaching assistants, a former lab instructor, a student leader formation facilitator, and a service-learning instructor, I appreciate inquiry-based exploration of unique conceptual frameworks. Therefore, I will use questions below to express the beautiful and ethical depth to the “community engaged learning” framework. I will also encourage you to share hopes and ideas for being an educational partner in creating civically engaged and socially responsible citizens and working for the common good.

What makes up “community engaged learning”?

COMMUNITY. Community rings loudly at UD because of UD’s history, a “Learn. Lead. Serve.” sensibility, and Catholic and Marianist identity. We act from the strength of community, we listen to each other, we respect each other, we work to build community. We partner with the Dayton community to highlight assets, solve problems, fill needs and nurture relationships.

Questions to ponder: Who is included? Who is not? Who has the power/privilege? Who does not? Who is the learner? The teacher? How are knowledge and resources shared? Is the relationship mutual? Reciprocal? Co-created? Are all benefits? Are goals and a vision shared or is one party in charge?

ENGAGED. As a Marianist university, we educate for service, justice and peace and for adaptation and change (among others). With emphasis on integrating head, heart and hands, our students engage in real world issues, in student organizations, in residence halls, in faith formation, in team spirit, in local and global communities, etc.

Questions to ponder: How do we address tension and challenges inherent in engagement work? Being engaged takes at least two people equally and willfully engaging — is this happening? Are students fully engaged and invested? Do students walk in and walk out of community, while others cannot? How do we know students are engaging and learning? Who is being impacted and how?

LEARNING. UD excels in integrated learning and scholarship. Learning happens in the classroom, in other countries, in the community, on a retreat, in a leadership opportunity.

Questions to ponder: How do students learn in, through, and for community? How do we assess learning? Are students reflecting on their learning?
I have been one of the Graduate Community Fellows from summer 2011 through summer 2013. I am graduating from the school counseling program in December of this year. As a part of the Graduate Community Fellows program, I have worked 20 hours per week in various community organizations including Life Essentials, the Salvation Army Kroc Center, Our Lady of the Rosary, El Puente and, primarily, Ruskin PreK-8.

Since I majored in psychology and Spanish as an undergraduate, I utilized my Spanish skills tutoring the English Language Learners at each of these organizations, assisted them in class, and mentored them. Working closely with students in a variety of settings informed my learning as a school counseling student and taught me a great deal about student growth, lesson planning, and how to accommodate the differing learning styles of students.

For the first year, I worked mostly with students in the third and fourth grade. This year, I worked closely with kindergarten, first grade and third grades. Some of the success stories through the years include working with children who came in directly from Mexico and spoke hardly any English and seeing them this year as honors students. One student I tutored on a daily basis won second place in the Ruskin talent show this year and had previously performed in front of thousands in Ecuador. With her indefatigable spirit and drive, I know she’ll be a great success. Another child won the Ruskin Ram Award for his class this year because, although he was just learning English, he was so conscientious and an obvious leader.

I also take great pride in the kindergarten group, who all learned to count to 100 in English and Spanish and can read an impressive variety of words. One child in particular received special education services and was only in preschool but had great determination in her work. She spoke almost no English at the beginning of the year and by the end of the year was dancing and happily running around the room pointing at the alphabet letters she’d learned and completing all her homework before anyone else. Other English Language Learners won awards at the kindergarten graduation for their progress throughout the year, having come in with a small English vocabulary, which was why I had been called to work with them, and then being able to be on target for their grade level or exceeding their peers by the end of the term. What additionally impressed me was the politeness and courteousness of the kindergartners. They always embodied the three B’s of Ruskin — Be safe. Be respectful. Be responsible — and could recite them. They demonstrated a genuine compassion and care for others at such a young age, which was both endearing and impressive.

I was proud to present my experiences as a Graduate Community Fellow at the Stander Symposium this year and share my knowledge with others at UD. The Fitz Center’s great work in the community inspired my Graduate Community Fellows journey, and it has been a joy!
Sometimes there are many different approaches to making a difference in a community. For **Kevin Hallinan**, professor of mechanical engineering, and the social entrepreneurial company 2 for 1 Energy Limited Liability Company LLC, the approach to improving the world is accomplished through the enjoyment of competition. In the year 2010, the company began to develop a web-based game called Dropoly (Dropoly.com).

Here is how it works. The user is challenged to save as much energy in his or her daily routine as possible. Users compete and see how they fare when compared to people within their city, state and country. In the upcoming months, a new dimension to the game will be installed — the ability to sign up as an organization or business and not just as an individual. For example, a high school student in Dayton will now be able to compete in support of his school against other high schools. The hope is that someday schools can compete for major prizes, like new playgrounds, for example. The objective is reducing energy use and, as a result, saving money. “My goal in life is to save energy and help the environment. It has been what drives me since I was in college,” Hallinan explains.

Hallinan was a major contributor to the birth of Dropoly by creating the software that accurately calculates any user’s energy consumption. Hallinan is a member of a company called 2 for 1 Energy LLC, which is constantly developing new programming for the game. When asked, “Do you want to write something that no one reads or do you want to make a difference in the world?” by the 2 for 1 CEO, Hallinan got going on this project. The company is a social entrepreneurial company grounded in progressive community work. Among its 11 employees, eight are either current UD students or UD alumni.

Dropoly enables users to see how they can personally conserve energy better and understand the power of an entire community conserving energy. One community that learned this lesson was Wilmington, Ohio, in Clinton County. In 2008, the company DHL left Clinton County and consequently took with them three-fourths of the county’s employment. A nonprofit organization called **Energize Clinton County (ECE)** was created with the motive to grow local businesses, local food economies and local energy systems.

ECE supported the adoption of Dropoly and ended up saving money, buying local and making the world a bit greener. The hope for Dropoly is growth and more success stories in cities throughout our entire nation and Canada.
Building a Greener Community

By AJ Ferguson, River Steward ’12, DRG3 Graduate Intern

Going green. Scientists tell us it’s a must. Young people are demanding it. The cool cities are already doing it. It saves us money. It protects our future. For these reasons and more, the Dayton region has begun to think more about its sustainability challenges and opportunities.

In 2007, the Montgomery County Commission assembled a diverse group of local leaders to think about how the Miami Valley could reduce its carbon footprint. By 2011, the resources and leadership were in place to create Dayton Regional Green 3 (DRG3), an organization seeking to promote greener practices in three sectors: business, government and residential. The organization’s first task was the creation of a voluntary Green Business Certification Program that would promote and reward green practices in the workplace. The program now has over 200 businesses certified, and DRG3 believes the program’s continued growth will be an exciting source of transformation and attention for the region.

The fingerprints of UD students, graduates, faculty and staff can be found all over the initiative’s young history. Michael Berning and Kevin Hallinan are co-chairs of DRG3. Michael is a 1980 UD graduate and senior principal at Heapy Engineering. In addition to offering much community and energy insight, Kevin has continually connected DRG3 with his students in UD’s Renewable and Clean Energy master’s degree program. As DRG3 interns, these students have provided free energy audits to small businesses and administered and promoted DRG3 programs and events. UD Facilities Management team members Steve Kendig and Kurt Hoffman have worked to certify four UD buildings under the DRG3 Green Business Certification Program and plan to continue adding buildings to the program in the future.

Such support is especially valuable as DRG3 continues to engage institutions in our region, large and small. DRG3 will continue to build its own reach and capacity, but equally important will be its ability to communicate the collective success of the region’s entire sustainability movement. Five Rivers MetroParks, Miami Conservancy District, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and many others have been leading work on environmental issues for decades, and nonprofits across the region have assured the preservation of rivers, forests, prairies and wildlife. DRG3 hopes to be a central source of information about all these efforts, inspiring local pride in our communities, transforming our region and drawing national attention. DRG3’s success in such a collaborative endeavor requires the kind of leadership that builds community among these organizations, the kind advanced by the Fitz Center.
Community Leader

RIVERMOBILE CULTIVATES STEWARDS ACROSS THE GREAT MIAMI RIVER WATERSHED

BY LESLIE KING, RIVERS INSTITUTE COORDINATOR

As the RiverMobile embarks on its first school year, it is important to step back and remember where exactly the idea came from and what exactly it is supposed to do. The RiverMobile concept was developed in the initial brainstorming sessions that created the Rivers Institute’s vision, mission and first five-year strategic plan. Over 30 students, community partners, staff and faculty came together over a course of several early Saturday mornings to be part of the process of developing a widely shared vision. Therefore, the RiverMobile above all represents the success of that widely shared vision and many people’s dream of connecting school children to our rivers.

The RiverMobile also represents what the River Stewards have come to call “river love.” “River love” is what happens to people when they develop a personal relationship to the river; they simply fall in love with it, and people tend to protect what they love. “River love” is what the RiverMobile aims to do, cultivate stewards of our local rivers.

This fall, the RiverMobile will visit sixth- to eighth-graders at six schools. Students will go through the five interactive classrooms before being asked to become junior River Stewards by signing a pledge and vowing to do their part. The pledge, written by current River Stewards, states, “The river gives, the river lives, and on and on it goes. We all take part and use its gifts and use the fruit it grows. We row, we walk, we run, we play and recycle every day. And so we go as junior stewards to protect our rivers today.”

Just like the river, the RiverMobile connects upstream and downstream communities, while representing their past, present and future. The RiverMobile project has connected several generations of River Stewards who have all helped carry the project out along the way and left their own touch on the final product. This past summer, several River Steward interns helped advance the RiverMobile and its many moving parts. A special thanks to Adam Bynum, Megan Guy, Stephen Crum, Stephanie Clafford, Brian Lewis, Katelyn Rendulic and Joe Schmidt for their individual and collective contributions and dedication to the RiverMobile.

To schedule the RiverMobile, please fill out a request form online. The RiverMobile request form can be found on the Rivers Institute’s website at rivers.udayton.edu. Click on “education outreach” to find the link to the RiverMobile.

Alex Galluzzo, Rivers Institute graduate assistant, shows that the Wolf Creek, Stillwater River, Great Miami River and Mad River come together to make up the heart of Dayton.

5 Ways to Enjoy Our Rivers

1. Drink tap water.
2. Go creek stomping.
3. Hike, fish or paddle along our local rivers.
4. Use our bike paths.
5. Explore a MetroPark.

Alex Galluzzo, Rivers Institute graduate assistant, shows that the Wolf Creek, Stillwater River, Great Miami River and Mad River come together to make up the heart of Dayton.
When former president Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., former dean Paul Morman, former provost Fred Pestello and I began to put together the pieces of the Fitz Center in 2000, it was far from clear how the Fitz Center would grow its mission. Combining the funds of the Center for Family and Community Research and INCLUD (the former Strategies for Responsible Development) only accounted for a staff of five or six with no graduate assistants or interns. Today, the Fitz Center staff is 28 with one endowed professor, nine professional staff, six graduate assistants and numerous undergraduate interns on campus and in the community. Over $1.5 million will be spent by the Fitz Center this fiscal year. How does this happen?

Give current President Dan Curran, current Provost Joe Saliba and current College of Arts and Sciences Dean Paul Benson most of the credit for seeking and finding ways to enable the Fitz Center to grow well beyond its initial vision. These leaders have opted to build support for the Fitz Center in a very challenging university economy where program expansion has been limited. They have done so because of the impact of the Center in Dayton primarily, but they have also seen the leadership development of students who participate in River Stewards, Dayton Civic Scholars, Semester of Service and other forms of Community Engaged Learning (volunteers, service learners, interns, etc.). Performance pays.

In fiscal year 2013, just completed, the Fitz Center expended funds on each of its student leadership programs, Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers, community bus tours, and the operations and logistics of supporting the work of students and faculty in the community. To pay for this work, The Fitz Center looks to six sources of revenue: University of Dayton base budget; endowment earnings; gifts from annual support and project fundraising; grants and contracts for performance of services; fees charged for a limited number of community activities; and internal transfers from other parts of UD. Above is a breakdown of our expenses and revenues for this past fiscal year.

Your support as an alumnus/alumna, parent, friend, community partner or foundation matters a lot. Forty-two percent of the financial resources we use to do our work must be raised annually. The University’s commitment to supporting more than half of our salaries and benefits through base budget and endowment is appreciated and significant. But we cannot continue to grow our work of building community and developing leaders who can do this well without your continued support.

Thank you.
WHAT WE ARE READING WITH OUR STUDENT LEADERS

BY ALISON ARCHER, GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Here is a quick review of books that are being used in courses led by Fitz Center staff. There are more. In future editions, we will review some that are used to assist with student reflection on their engagements with the Dayton community.

BY JOHN MCKNIGHT AND PETER BLOCK

McKnight and Block remind us that relationships matter and provide practical tools for building shared visions of communities for all stakeholders. This book examines the role of citizens and governments, and offers good questions to start conversation regarding the success of families and children in your own neighborhoods.

“There is a consumer way and a citizen way to lead our lives in communities, say these respected organizers and commentators. The consumer way leads to dissatisfaction and the outsourcing of care to professionals and specialists. The citizen way recognizes our communal giftedness and creates the opportunity for lives of abundance, interdependence and communal competence. For almost 20 years, we have used the insights and experiences described in this book in our seminar Leadership in Building Communities. John McKnight taught us to focus on assets rather than needs. Peter Block, of nearby Cincinnati, is helping us develop students who are not just consumers of services but citizens capable of making change without professional assistance in their own lives and the lives of their communities.” —Dick Ferguson, Executive Director

THE METROPOLITAN REVOLUTION: HOW CITIES AND METROS ARE FIXING OUR BROKEN POLITICS AND FRAGILE ECONOMY (2013)
BY BRUCE KATZ AND JENNIFER BRADLEY

A revolution is rising throughout U.S. cities and metropolitan areas; gone are the days that cities’ fates are at the mercy hierarchical governments. This text showcases cities that realized the only way to grow into the vibrant, sustainable, attractive home desired is to roll up their sleeves and get to work — attracting business and entrepreneurs, revitalizing downtowns, and changing policy.

“In the time when we see Washington and many state capitals enmeshed in ‘gridlock,’ Katz and Bradley document the pragmatic coalition that is coming for our cities and regions of the country to address the problems of poverty and the economy and get things done. The first part of the book provides some strong examples from New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Miami, Los Angeles and Portland as ways to demonstrate their argument. In the second part of the book, they develop some principles and strategies that can guide regions in addressing the complex of problems that they face. The book is not an easy read, but it points the way to important strategies for community building on the regional level.” —Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., Ferree Professor of Social Justice
CONSENSUS ORGANIZING: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF MUTUAL SELF-INTEREST (2007)
BY MIKE EICHLER

In an easy and practical approach, Consensus Organizing outlines the process of community building in a new way — emphasizing the self-interest of the community, political, economic and social power involved to achieve shared goal and create change.

“Consensus Organizing is a very important book for students in a time period when reaching consensus in our national government has become a lost art. At the local level, listening to the community, finding the right partners, and developing mutual self-interest are important techniques covered in the book. And it’s fascinating to know that Karen DeMasi, who is known for her community organizing work in Dayton, has worked with Eichler in the past.” —Don Vermillion, Director of Public Projects

LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: SAVING OUR CHILDREN FROM NATURE-DEFICIT DISORDER (2005)
BY RICHARD LOUV

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder brings together a new and growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults. Richard Louv offers practical solutions and simple ways to heal the broken bond — and many are right in our own backyard. Last Child in the Woods has spurred a national dialogue among educators, health professionals, parents, developers and conservationists.

“The essence of the Rivers Institute’s education outreach in the Great Miami River Watershed is inspired by Richard Louv’s book, Last Child in the Woods, and the national movement to ‘leave no child inside.’ As the River Stewards developed a love for our rivers, they naturally wanted to share it and build opportunities for others to develop that same connection. While working with local youth, they realized children are not playing in their backyard creeks and woods anymore and, more often than not, those areas are looked at as unsafe, off-limits and dirty. The River Stewards began taking groups of kids to the river and, six years later, they are now bringing the river to them via the RiverMobile, an interactive, mobile educational trailer which highlights our local rivers and water resources.” —Leslie King, Rivers Institute Coordinator
Adam Grant boils down his years of research on leadership, success and networking into a thesis that we become most successful when we are willing give to, and work for, the success of others. Grant is an award-winning researcher and teacher at The Wharton School, which is why people are paying attention to him.

“Most of those with whom we work through the Fitz Center could be easily categorized as good people and ‘givers.’ Many might challenge the likelihood of them succeeding in the competitive and driven world of ‘takers’ that we largely identify with those who have succeeded in the marketplace. Grant uses lots of data and dozens of success stories from business and elsewhere to argue that leaders who give without expectation of return are, in fact, generally successful in all walks of life. He distinguishes three approaches to leaders’ interactions with others: givers, takers and matchers. This is a revolutionary approach to work and productivity. Like the Fitz Center, Grant argues that results are sustained by relationships. Relationships matter!” —Dick Ferguson, Executive Director

At its core, this book is a practitioner’s guide to understanding leadership through distinct lenses: adaptation with and without authority. Leadership Without Easy Answers challenges the reader to learn new ways of thinking regarding service, citizenship and leadership. Leadership for change is largely about learning together.

“Ron Heifetz’s theory of adaptive leadership is one of the key tenets of our work in building community. Heifetz indicates that leaders are confronted with two types of problems: technical problems, which are solved by expertise and good management, and ‘adaptive’ problems, such as poverty, poor education, urban violence, etc., which require innovation and learning. Heifetz’s work has helped us realize that adaptive problems in our cities are best addressed through constructive community conversation that engage citizens, first of all, in constructing a consensus on their desired future. Once that desired future is constructed, citizens can define the gap between their desired future and their current situation and identify strategies that can close the gap by using neighborhood and community assets to remove barriers to the desired future. Heifetz does not provide a ‘cookbook’ on how to guide these conversations, but offers several guidelines for the leaders of these conversations.” —Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., Ferree Professor of Social Justice
TO SERVE A LARGER PURPOSE: ENGAGEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION (2011)
EDITED BY JOHN SALTMARSH & MATTHEW HARTLEY

How do you teach civic responsibility to college students? This collection of essays sets out to answer this very question by making a bold declaration of values of democratic engagement: inclusiveness, collaboration, task sharing and community building. Sound familiar?

“This collection of essays maps a future for universities who claim to be civically engaged in their communities. At UD, many of us involved in this work have challenged ourselves to take this book seriously and move UD in the direction of what the authors have called ‘democratic civic engagement.’ Much of the conversation that led to this book happened at the Kettering Foundation in Dayton over the past few years. The many contributors question the current culture of higher education that attempts to serve communities without any recognition of the reciprocal opportunities and responsibilities to learn from them and with them. If you think the Fitz Center is different from previous forms of UD’s engagement with Dayton, you are right. This book will help you better understand why our approach to educating leaders to build and sustain communities is radical.” —Dick Ferguson, Executive Director

By David Rusk

Updated to include the 2010 Census, Cities without Suburbs explains why in the age of urban sprawl some cities are healthy and growing, and others are declining. Rusk offers ideas to “change the rules of the game” that are focused on regional growth, fair-share housing and regional tax-base-sharing policies.

“I have been using Cities without Suburbs in my classes since David Rusk published his first edition in 1993. Rusk captures the issues in our metropolitan areas that come from the ‘big box’ and ‘little box’ analysis that contrasts the positive attributes of center cities that are not hemmed in by multiple suburbs, and those center cities that have no prospect for growth. Rusk has maintained a focus on regional growth management strategies, mixed income housing designs, and regional tax base sharing as key components to assuring equity in our metropolitan areas. A great, thought-provoking book.” —Don Vermillion, Director of Public Projects

Educating leaders who build communities

Edited by John Saltmarsh & Matthew Hartley
Beth Geiger, a University of Dayton alumna and former Fitz Center graduate community fellow, has made great strides in her career in a short amount of time. She began at UD studying psychology and family development for her undergraduate degree then continued on to graduate school studying community counseling. During the Semester of Service program, Beth was introduced to the Fitz Center and later applied to be a graduate community fellow. Through her work, Beth became a contributing staff assistant with The Dayton Foundation, a foundation dedicated to improving Dayton and surrounding communities.

Beth now works full time at The Dayton Foundation, having recently been promoted to program officer. She spends most of her time helping nonprofits apply for grants and meeting with community members and other local foundations such as the Learn to Earn Foundation. Beth is obviously passionate about the growth, revitalization and education of neighborhoods in need. She has taken what she learned at the Fitz Center and applied it on a larger scale. Beth said, “Without the Fitz Center, I wouldn’t have stayed in Dayton.” The Fitz Center was her first step of many to create long-term ties with the Dayton community. Beth’s desire to improve the city of Dayton will inspire her to make a lasting difference in the area, making Beth Geiger the perfect example of what the Fitz Center is all about.