As graduates, faculty, students and Fitz Center alumni, we are called to educate ourselves, be pioneers for change and help those in need build on assets.

To help foster the ability to become community leaders and agents of social change, a new graduate certificate program was developed in 2013 for undergraduates, graduates and certificate-only students entitled Nonprofit and Community Leadership. With a focus on the Catholic and Marianist traditions and values, courses are offered to help strengthen students’ abilities to become future leaders, those who can help improve the health, safety and well-being of their communities.

After students in the Master of Public Administration program expressed interest in having a concentration that focused on the nonprofit sector, Steven Neiheisel, Ph.D., took the opportunity to cultivate a new program that corresponded with the students’ request.

Before initiating the program, Neiheisel spoke to CEOs of local nonprofits to find out how valuable this certificate would be. The feedback was highly encouraging. “The certificate really does make a difference,” commented Neiheisel. “Numerous CEOs claimed they would want to hire someone who had this type of certificate because it shows that they would be well oriented in the field.” To date, 42 students have enrolled.

The Nonprofit and Community Leadership Certificate is a 12-semester-hour program that encompasses six credit hours of required courses, including MPA 561 Nonprofit and Community Organizations and MPA 562 Strategic Planning and Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations. Six credit hours of elective courses must be taken as well, such as MPA 526 Leadership in Building Communities and MPA 566 Non-Profit and Community Relations.

For more information on how to apply for the program, contact certificate program director Steve Neiheisel at sneiheisel1@udayton.edu.

The Nonprofit and Community Organizations class attracts students from a variety of majors and educational backgrounds. The program currently has 42 students: 19 undergraduates, 15 graduates and eight certificate-only students.
NEW SENIOR RIVER STEWARD PROJECT PLANNING UNDER WAY

BY MEGAN GUY, RIVER STEWARD ’15

Environmentalist David Brower once said, “There are many ways to salvation; one of them is to follow a river.”

I think it’s safe to say that our cohort has absolutely fallen in love with the River Stewards program. After completing the first semester of our mini-course, our cohort has become more knowledgeable about rivers, leadership and building community. Now we are presented with the opportunity to develop a project that translates our collective passion for and knowledge of Dayton’s great watershed into a medium accessible for other community members.

During orientation, we watched a TED talk, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action,” presented by Simon Sinek. His talk articulated a three-step approach for developing solutions: why, how and what. According to Sinek, all effective projects start with “Why?” This past semester, our cohort spent a considerable amount of time answering this fundamental question. As we initially started thinking about our project, we collectively came up with goals we would like to reach and criteria relative to each of them.

Our cohort was able to form preliminary goals by brainstorming answers to the question, “How do we know when we’re done?” We came up with the ideas that we must:

1. Create an event for students and city of Dayton residents.
2. Have a plan that will be sustainable for the future.
3. Illustrate the big picture.
4. Have a strong emphasis on the environment.

Based upon these goals, our cohort developed criteria that answer the question, “How do we know we’ve done a great job?” We believe our project will be complete when it:

1. Promotes the rivers/environment.
2. Is a sustainable, onetime event.
3. Builds community.
4. Involves high-quality community partners.
5. Provides a simple message that is easy for an audience to grasp.
6. Creates a project with feasibility in mind.

At this point, we have begun brainstorming and researching potential projects that complement our goals and criteria. While we are still attempting to solidify our “Why?”, our cohort has initiated conversations with community partners about projects they are working on and how we might be able to develop mutually beneficial relationships. So far, the areas of interest are: composting, producing vibrant signage and the use of rain barrels. Our cohort looks forward to expanding our research, establishing deeper relationships with our community partners and creating an action plan for a meaningful project.

The 2015 cohort of River Stewards had the whole world in their hands while they visited Xylem/Yellow Springs Instruments (YSI) during a Friday mini-course. Xylem/YSI is based in Yellow Springs and manufactures and sells water-quality monitoring instruments around the world.
As I looked out at the University of Dayton freshman Class of 2017, I was overwhelmed by the memory of sitting in their place four short years ago, entirely unaware of what awaited me at UD. Four years ago, I could never have imagined that I would be speaking to the incoming future of UD about my experience researching in West Africa. With these memories and reflections present in my mind, I imparted on the new students one of my biggest takeaways from my experience so far at UD: Don’t limit yourself. Explore the possibilities, find your interests, develop a passion, dedicate yourself and always remember that UD will support you every step of the way.

When I entered UD, my parents reminded me that “college is what you make it” and that each student has the power to shape his or her own college experience. For me, that meant diving headlong into academic research as an outlet for my humanitarian passion. This would lead to becoming a McGrath Human Rights Research Student Fellow assisting professors with their research of all-female peacekeeping units deployed within the United Nations’ peacekeeping missions.

While I worked as a fellow and proposed to extend my research to write an honors thesis, the idea of conducting fieldwork in a nation where all-female units were stationed first emerged. A few short months later, after seemingly endless nights of planning, cups of coffee, and frantic emails to my thesis advisor, I stepped off the plane in Monrovia, Liberia, with my heart pounding. The four weeks that I spent in Liberia were undeniably the most challenging, but also the most rewarding of my life. I spent most days conducting interviews with various members of the community in Monrovia, including government officials, UN personnel and local civil leaders. When I returned to UD following this adventure, I came back with hours upon hours of recorded interviews, lots of bug bites, and an entirely new understanding of both my academic ventures and my general perspective.

This life-changing experience would not have been possible without the support and guidance I received from UD staff and faculty. It definitively proved UD’s commitment to its students, which opened up the gateway to an incredible experience for me. If there is anything you are truly passionate about and entirely committed to, you can find the support necessary at UD to bring your passion or desire to fruition.

Laura Huber (left, and top row, far right above) was able to experience the culture and befriend individuals of West Africa while conducting her research. She has been a member of the Dayton Civic Scholars program since her sophomore year at UD. We are proud to have such an amazing woman from our program represent the University.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

BY POLLY LONG, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

In 2011, an overwhelming number of office referrals and suspensions left members of the Ruskin PreK-8 community questioning their school’s discipline policy. By 2012, administration responded to the community’s concerns by implementing a restorative justice philosophy through restorative discipline.

Restorative discipline welcomes conflict, as it is unavoidable and serves as an opportunity for teaching resolution skills and personal resilience that can be used in different life experiences. In its student handbook, Ruskin school states, “Students who violate a school rule have violated a relationship; either with a teacher, peer, school or neighborhood. We seek to help each student come full circle with behavioral choices and repair the relationships that have been harmed.”

This reparation takes place in a quiet room termed In School Restoration (ISR). In ISR, students pair up with a trained adult who can actively work with them to recognize the thoughts and feelings that led to disruptive behavior. Through reflection, students are challenged to change their perceptions of personal power and responsibility.

In the fall of 2013, Julie McGlaun, restorative discipline coordinator at Ruskin PreK-8, began to voice a need for more trained adults in ISR. At the same time, sophomores in the University of Dayton’s Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) voiced a need for experience in an urban setting. With the help of the Fitz Center, Julie and the UTA initiated a reciprocal partnership that allowed for the training and weekly engagement of UTA students in ISR.

The partnership between Ruskin and the UTA is an exemplary instance of community engaged learning. Ruskin has been able to meet one of its needs in a manner that not only engages University of Dayton volunteers but also educates them. Maurea McKenna, a sophomore education major in the UTA, explained, “The students and teachers of Ruskin have stories and strengths unlike my own. The lives these children have are far from anything I have ever known or experienced. I could not imagine my sophomore UTA experience being anywhere else but at Ruskin, for it has changed my life and helped me grow.”

After Ruskin adopted restorative discipline in 2012, office referrals and suspensions decreased more than 40 percent. As Ruskin pursues implementation of restorative discipline, these numbers continue to drop while opportunities for community engaged learning, such as the one described above, continue to grow.

Below: Elyn Medas, an Urban Teacher Academy student, brought The Girls on Run Program to Ruskin PK-8 last fall. Programs like these encourage student performance and help provide incentives for positive behavior among students.
A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE
BY CONCETTA REDA, SEMESTER OF SERVICE ’13

Right from the beginning, my participation in the Semester of Service program promised eye-opening experiences, challenging adjustments and supportive relationships. I entered the program excited but scared. Being placed at Daybreak subjected me to comments from friends and family doubting my readiness. My answer was always a nervous laugh followed by, “You think it’s really going to be that bad?” Although I was most nervous about tactfully connecting with people whose backgrounds were different, and likely to be much more difficult, than my own, I was ready for a fresh perspective on life. I was ready for Daybreak.

Daybreak eased me into my position, making sure I knew the ins and outs of protocol before I ever worked with clients. During the day, while clients are at their jobs or at home, I am involved with apartment inspections throughout Dayton, phone calls, meetings and errand running. In order to get to know my clients more personally, I started taking groups on nature walks and began running a cooking group where clients meet every other week to make a meal together.

Through my experiences, I have come to realize that there is a life of injustice and disempowerment dwelling in the past of every client I have had the privilege of working with. It bothers me to see them hurt and it brings me joy to see them succeed. I have come to appreciate that despite our pasts we are not very different from one another. We face the same challenges of learning to budget, acting professionally and staying physically and mentally healthy. In the short time I have worked at Daybreak, I have grown to love and respect my clients; they are some of the best survivors and kindest people I know.

I am thankful that Semester of Service has given me the opportunity to grow in this way. The class that Semester of Service students take during their placements is truly phenomenal and has helped me make the most of my experience. I am also thankful for the leaders of Semester of Service and the four other amazing individuals in the program who have been a wonderful support system. Their weekly reflections and feedback have guided me in my personal growth and reminded me that service is not just about providing resources for those in need — it is also about creating relationships that break down barriers between individuals who are facing different challenges.
WATER IS LIFE

BY DYLAN MOORE,
DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLAR ‘15

This summer, I was privileged to having been given the opportunity to spend 10 weeks in the rural, northern region of Malawi, Africa. While I was there, I conducted research on water security and education as part of the UD Human Rights practicum. In Malawi, I observed how water security was measured and the different ways the process could be expanded and revised to represent better the country’s water security in rural regions.

My research was a great opportunity to take what I was learning in the classroom and implement it in a practical, hands-on environment. In addition to conducting research, I was able to fulfill a dream of mine. With the help of countless UD faculty, students and my father, who joined me for my final two weeks in Malawi, I helped install a water pump at a local health center in the Sangilo village, a village that had not had water for over four years. Together, alongside the local community members of the village, we dug through 3,000 feet of rock to give the Sangilian people something we in the United States take for granted.

After the installation of the water pump, when the water was turned on, ladies from inside the health center came running out and clapping their hands with joy because of a sound they hadn’t heard in years — the sound of the water tank filling up. A local pastor told us at the final passing of the keys ceremony that, “Water is life, without water we cannot live.” Those simple words put everything into perspective for me.

Above everything else, it was a three-year-old boy, Cedric, who captivated me throughout. Cedric is an AIDS orphan who lives with his grandmother and stayed by our side during the entire process. His contagious smile always made our day. Outside his grandmother’s house, a tap was connected to the water pump system. On the day of completion, we turned the spigot on to make sure it worked and Cedric came running over, grabbed a fistful of water and screamed “maji, maji, maji!” which means “water, water, water!” in Chitumbuka. This was the first time Cedric saw flowing water in his life.

Although there is still much more that needs to be accomplished in this area,

I am happy I was able to do my part to help address an issue I am so passionate about.
BUILDING COMMUNITY AROUND ART OF GARDENING
MARINA LOCASO, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLAR ’13

The senior capstone project is a collaborative effort that all Dayton Civic Scholars (DCS) must complete. It is perhaps the most important aspect of the DCS experience and certainly the most time-consuming.

The senior DCS cohort began with four ideas for a project. Through much deliberation, they fused urban art renewal and urban gardening together with a collective passion for serving the Dayton Neighborhood School Centers to create “The Art of Gardening.” Through this project, the seniors have come together with students, faculty and parents from Cleveland PK-6 and community citizens from the Walnut Hills neighborhood to create a sustainable community garden.

This past semester, the cohort focused on getting into the classrooms of Cleveland to teach students of all ages more about nutrition, gardening and healthy living. The DCS did this while incorporating art and the aesthetics of gardening into their lesson plans.

In an attempt to get the kids, their families and neighborhood citizens excited about the blossoming of the garden, the seniors threw a school-wide event on Sept. 20 called the “Harvest Party.” Despite the contentious weather conditions, the event was very well attended. There were more than 100 kids and parents who attended the event and more than 40 UD volunteers. The seniors created six stations that the kids could visit, including an obstacle course, a “veggie walk” and a rock painting station. Each attendee also had a chance to plant a seed and take the plant-to-be home.

This year’s senior DCS cohort has proven a lot since the beginning of its capstone project. Most importantly, they have shown that skills like collaboration and building relationships are crucial to success. They have been able to identify community partners, gain volunteers for their events, and continue to bring in students from UD’s campus to help plan their lessons and incorporate diverse perspectives into the classrooms. Cohort members have taken it upon themselves to assure that their senior project continues to be a success.

As the seniors’ capstone project comes to its evaluation phase, the junior cohort of DCS commences its project, “Connecting Heads, Hands, and Hearts: An African Refugee Program at Fairview PK-8 School.” Reinforcing the commitment that DCS have made to Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers, they will be spearheading an after-school program aimed at improving literacy for African refugee children at Fairview PreK-8. We look forward to the continued development of both cohorts’ projects.

Above, left: Alyssa Bovell, left, and Paige Singleton welcome students, parents and community members to their Harvest Party, showing off the finished products of the fun activities they planned.

Left: The senior cohort celebrates The Art of Gardening. Back row, from left: Mary Case, Cleveland PK-6 site coordinator, Justin Parker, Paige Singleton and Laila Sabagh. Middle row, from left: Joanne Koehler, Jessica Yeager, Maggie Reuter, Adie Lewis, Jacob Rettig, Shannon Lees, Alyssa Bovell, Kristen Deane and Sarah Kerns. Bottom row, from left: Laura Huber and Nia Holt.
FITZ CENTER DONORS 2013

Between January 1, 2013, and December 31, 2013, the Fitz Center received financial support from 118 alumni, friends and foundations totaling $250,414. Thank you, Fitz Center donors, for your continued support.

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The Gosiger Foundation:
Friends of the Fitz Center

In 2001, as the Fitz Center began and Brother Ray Fitz, S.M., Ph.D., transitioned from the presidency of UD to Ferree Professor of Social Justice, the University campaigned for endowment support of Fitz Center and its role in the Dayton community. Jane Haley, then president and chief executive officer of Gosiger, Inc., had just completed nine years of service on the UD Board of Trustees and sought to recognize Brother Ray and continue his legacy of leadership in Dayton. She and the Gosiger Foundation made a significant pledge to the endowment fund of the Fitz Center.

In 2013, Jane Haley presented Brother Ray and the Fitz Center with the final payment on that pledge. The gift is the single largest ever to the Fitz Center. Portions of the gift have been supporting the Center for most of the past decade. “The support of Jane Haley and the Gosiger Foundation throughout the history of the Fitz Center is a beautiful tribute to Brother Ray and a significant endorsement of the mission of educating leaders who build communities,” says Dick Ferguson, executive director. “But it really demonstrates the philanthropic genius of Jane Haley and her sons; the endowment supports the civic engagement and experiential education of UD students who soon will lead our city and region. We are very grateful.”

In honor of the support of Jane Haley, the Gosiger Graduate Community Fellowship has been created in the Fitz Center. An outstanding graduate assistant critical to the work of the Center will be named the Gosiger Community Fellow annually.
The Fitz Center would like to thank the sponsors of the RiverMobile. This signature project of the Rivers Institute and River Stewards received gifts in 2012 and 2013.

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AND SUPPORT FROM INDIVIDUAL DONORS
In the last newsletter I introduced our new name, Community Engaged Learning (CEL), and briefly explored the intentions behind our new name. In this article is a behind-the-scenes look at our hopes in using this new terminology and an official introduction to our CEL team.

As defined by the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, “Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

By embracing the terms community engagement and community engaged learning here at UD, we are highlighting our intentionality to be in relationships that are honest, reciprocal and value-driven. Our Marianist and Catholic Identity document already calls us to this kind of relationship with our community: a relationship that includes respect for and understanding of diverse others, work for the common good, compassion, solidarity, practical wisdom and deep trust in each other. Therefore, using “community engaged learning” to replace “service learning” and using “community engagement” to describe the way we sustain and develop community partnerships stretches us in mission-driven, valuable and important ways. It also leads us into more deeply thinking about our motivations, expectations and hopes when we partner and forces us to be in honest conversation about the reciprocal nature of our partnerships.

The new terminology we are adopting is leading us to new opportunities and partnerships and the growth/enhancement of ongoing partnerships and programs. We are delighted to still be very involved with programs and partners such as the Semester of Service and Neighborhood School Centers, and are also happily venturing into exploring more options for community based internships and community engaged learning opportunities with other partners. With our “new” CEL team and commitment to community engagement, we hope to engage faculty, staff and students in sustained and reciprocal community partnerships that foster engaged learning and civic participation, share knowledge and resources, educate leaders to build communities, develop intercultural competency and practical wisdom, and create justice minded citizens who work for the common good. We hope you will join us!

Kelly Bohrer, director, joined the team in July 2013, coming from UD’s Center for Social Concern. She is a two-time UD graduate (B.S. environmental biology and M.S. biology) and began her UD career in 2001 as the biology lab coordinator. Kelly brings experience with and knowledge of best practices for implementing community engaged learning, sustaining reciprocal community partnerships, developing CEL courses and programs, and using critical reflection methods. She was on the leadership team for UD’s service learning strategic plan in 2008, UD’s Civic Engagement in the Marianist Tradition Workshop in 2012 and UD’s Experiential Learning Taskforce in 2012-13. She is currently on the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification Application Committee and is a member (and past
Char strives to achieve as administrative assistant for the Fitz Center. Char also co-chairs the annual CityLinks Neighborhood Leadership Conference, which draws about 200 participants. She is a graduate of the 2012 Neighborhood Leadership Institute and very active in her Dayton community.

**Natalie Anderson** is the graduate assistant for Semester of Service in the Fitz Center. She has been working in the CEL unit since June 2013 and is in her second year in the school psychology graduate program. She is looking forward to meeting the summer and fall cohorts of Semester of Service students.

**Polly Long** has just earned her M.S. in school psychology. She has been working as a graduate assistant in the Fitz Center since January 2013 and has greatly enjoyed her time thus far. She has worked extensively with the Neighborhood School Centers and is looking forward to bringing more UD students to the NSCs in the coming months. She is glad the CEL team is expanding and cannot wait to see what the unit can accomplish this year.

**Jada Neal** is originally from Kalamazoo, Mich., and is a senior double majoring in operations and supply chain management, as well as marketing. She is the Semester of Service student intern. She has truly enjoyed working at the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community where she has been able to combine her passion for social justice and her background in business to help the Fitz Center thrive in its mission.

**Aly Saum** is a student intern in the Fitz Center, where she has been working since her freshman year. She works with the Neighborhood School Centers and the one-time NSC events that happen throughout the semester. She is excited to see what this semester has in store.

**Maggie Schaller** is a student intern for the CEL unit, working with special projects. She is a freshman English major and has been working in the unit since September 2013. Maggie is excited to be a part of such a great team and cannot wait to continue to contribute more to the Dayton community.
Are you ready to move Dayton forward? Can you push hard enough to get the job done? The time is now to make choices and take chances so that we can envision changes in our neighborhood. Come network, hear awesome presenters and be enlightened by a powerful keynote speaker.

Schedule: Friday, April 11, 2014

8:30-9 a.m.  Registration  Meyer Room N 1650
9-9:10 a.m.  Welcome
9:15-10:30 a.m.  Workshops Session A
  Break
10:45 a.m.-noon Workshops Session B
  Break
12:15 p.m.  Lunch
  Community Builders Award
  Keynote Speaker

Registration

The cost of the conference is $20 per person or $10 for students. Preregistration is required. Registration deadline is Monday, March 31, 2014. Please contact Char Cook Robinson at the Fitz Center at 937-229-4641 or crobinson1@udayton.edu.

Co-Chairs
Char Cook Robinson, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community
Don Vermillion, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community
Ray Alexander, City of Dayton
John Bennett, Community Action Partnership
Patty Higgins, Community Liaison
Verletta Jackson, City of Dayton
Polly Long, Fitz Center for Leadership in Community
Judy Zimmerman, Grafton Hills Community Development Corp.

Special thanks to our financial sponsors:

DP&L  
University of Dayton
Keynote Speaker: Jeffrey C. Hoagland, President & CEO

Jeff Hoagland is the president and CEO of the Dayton Development Coalition. The coalition is the Dayton region’s economic development organization and principal public advocate. Hoagland worked in the Montgomery County Community and Economic Development office for five years. He has also worked for the city of Kettering, where he held several key positions including assistant city manager. In 2004, Hoagland joined the city of Vandalia as its city manager, a role he held until joining the Dayton Development Coalition in December 2010 as the executive vice president of operations. He assumed the role of president and CEO in June 2011. Hoagland graduated with a B.S. in political science from the University of Dayton and a Master of Public Administration from Wright State University. He is very active in the community and sits on a number of local boards.

Mattie Davis & Joe Kanak Community Builders Award

Building community is easier said than done. Dayton has been very fortunate to have a wealth of neighborhood and community leaders who have spent their lives organizing and advocating for their respective communities. Mattie Davis and Joe Kanak were two such leaders who made Dayton a better place to work and raise children. Each year, the University of Dayton presents the Mattie Davis and Joe Kanak Community Builders Award. It honors a person in the Dayton community who exemplifies vision and compassion toward neighborhood or community. The 16th annual award will be presented at the CityLinks Conference on Friday, April 11, 2014.

Mattie Davis had a major role in the organization of the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition. In 1978, she invited the University of Dayton to join in an effort that began the award-winning Edgemont Solar Garden. Her example of hard work and dedication continues to inspire volunteers throughout the community.

Joe Kanak was an inspiration to his community of Old North Dayton, where he was born and raised. For more than 20 years, Kanak was involved in virtually every initiative sponsored by the Northeast Priority Board and the Old North Dayton Development Corporation.
Learning to become a proactive leader requires guidance and hands-on experience. It is not something you can learn from simply reading a textbook.

This past fall, the students of the 19th annual Leadership in Building Communities (LBC) seminar were challenged to take on the task of learning and becoming proactive community organizers while working with the Westwood neighborhood. The seminar class, which enrolled of both undergraduate and graduate students, was led by Brother Raymond Fitz, S.M., Ph.D., Father Ferrée Professor of Social Justice, Dick Ferguson, executive director of the Fitz Center, Don Vermillion, director of public projects for the Fitz Center, and Brother Brandon Paluch, S.M., coordinator of community outreach in the Center for Social Concern.

To familiarize themselves with Westwood, students went on a tour of the neighborhood, met with and interviewed more than 30 community leaders and neighborhood residents, listened to guest speakers and held two community meetings to interact with neighborhood leaders to better understand their issues, assets and ideas. From the input generated by the neighborhood, the class helped to generate a shared vision of a desired future.

Among the most important lessons students learned were understanding their limitations and helping devise reasonable solutions. Rather than create unrealistic projects that failed to leverage the assets of this particular neighborhood, students were challenged to build change frameworks with projects that worked well with the personalities and capacities of the neighborhood.

Seminar participants worked in teams coached by the class instructors. Teams included Schools and After-School Programs, Family Support and Engagement, Safe Neighborhood and Citizen Engagement and Development. Teams developed change frameworks designed to target key desired outcomes.

“The Leadership in Building Communities seminar has been a wonderful experience that helped me learn to see problems in a new way and acquire valuable leadership skills,” said Thomas DeCastra, senior operations management major. “As a business student, the LBC seminar has been able to teach me about working with communities, and I hope to have the opportunity to use these leadership skills of working through adaptive change.”

The feedback from the neighborhood citizens who collaborated with the seminar brought a whole new energy to the area. Residents and community leaders were greatly impressed by the effort put forth by the LBC students. “The class’s work here will not go unnoticed,” commented Deron Bell, transition coordinator at Westwood PreK-8. “We're aware and very appreciative of their hard work.”

Westwood’s shared vision of a desired future:

- Communications and networking
- Community engagement
- Healthy neighborhood
- Supportive family growth and development
- Attractive housing and amenities
- Safe, proactive neighborhood
- Great schools
- Improved economic climate
NEW INTERNS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN DAYTON’S NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL CENTERS

BY JEN HODULIK, FITZ CENTER INTERN ’14

The Neighborhood School Centers (NSC) intern role is important in aiding the site coordinators and helping bridge the sustained connection between the University of Dayton and Dayton’s five Neighborhood School Centers: Ruskin PK-8, Fairview PK-8, Cleveland PK-6, Edison PK-8 and Kiser PK-8.

Starting this spring semester, 10 new UD student interns have been placed in the five schools. They include Maggie Quinn, a sophomore AYA language arts education major serving at Cleveland PK-6; Kristina Cerny, an undeclared first-year student serving at Edison PK-8; Kathleen Murphy, a junior middle childhood education major serving at Edison PK-8; Katharine Mahoney, a sophomore early childhood education major serving at Fairview PK-8; Jake Kocinski, a junior dietetics major serving at Fairview PK-8; Libby Harbaugh, a junior double-majoring in foreign language education and Spanish serving at Fairview PK-8; Laura Hayden, a junior psychology major serving at Kiser PK-8; Rachel Schuler, a sophomore early childhood education major serving at Kiser PK-8; Tia Clifford, a junior communication major serving at Ruskin PK-8; and Elle Seiss, a sophomore special education major serving at Ruskin PK-8.

Since the Neighborhood School Centers began, the NSC schools have dedicated themselves to improving student performance, attracting neighborhood families with school-aged children, realigning community resources to support youth achievement, improving the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood, sustaining leadership and support for the NSC initiative and developing a replicable national model. UD student interns help support this vision.

“As an intern, I am responsible for bringing UD students to Cleveland PK-6 and promoting the sense of community that surrounds our city and our school,” commented Kelley Moeller, a third-year NSC intern at Cleveland PK-6. “I work in individual classrooms, coach soccer and basketball and help prepare and execute fun events like Trunk-or-Treat, National Walk to School Day and Family Café meetings. These events not only help students, parents and faculty come together, but also provide valuable connections for me as well.”

As new interns, these 10 individuals will be challenged to understand how school systems operate, better familiarize themselves with the role of site coordinators, improve afterschool programs and obtain knowledge and experience that will enable them to become more successful leaders.

“The Neighborhood School Center internship is a valuable, rewarding experience,” commented Don Vermillion, Fitz Center director of public projects, who manages the NSC initiative. “Being an NSC intern is good preparation and training for any career path, and the Fitz Center is proud to offer these opportunities for UD students.”

We look forward to welcoming the new NSC interns to the Fitz Center family.

Pictured below from left: Laura Hayden, Kristina Cerny, Kathleen Murphy, Maggie Quinn, Rachel Schuler, Katharine Mahoney and Tia Clifford.
For almost 10 years, the River Stewards have been answering the question, “How do the river and kayaking build community?” Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers helped answer this question.

Fifteen communities and agencies along 99 miles of the Great Miami River corridor have been collaborating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on a riverfront redevelopment study through the USACE Planning Assistance to States program.

According to Stan Kegley, Ohio’s Great Corridor Association president and City of Troy project manager, “One group which has consistently been at the forefront of exploring these possibilities is the UD River Stewards.” According to Kegley, the Stewards have created a variety of programs that reach out to schools and local governments to create awareness of the vibrancy of our river. “This dedication to the river has enlightened and inspired the region’s leaders to recognize new opportunities along the waterways and ultimately assisted in bringing the USACE to our doorstep,” says Kegley.

Currently, there are many projects in various stages along Ohio’s Great Corridor, the name used for the span of the Great Miami River from Sidney to Hamilton. “This effort will help communities set priorities, define funding strategies, develop an action plan for implementing projects and clarify our vision for the corridor as a recreation destination for the region,” says Janet Bly, general manager of the Miami Conservancy District (MCD).

MCD and Montgomery County applied for the planning assistance, which required a 100 percent local match. Participating communities and agencies include the cities of Sidney, Piqua, Troy, Dayton, Riverside, West Carrollton, Miamisburg, Franklin, Middletown and Hamilton along with the Miami County Park District, Five Rivers MetroParks, MetroParks of Butler County, Montgomery County and the Miami Conservancy District.

According to Dan Foley, Montgomery County Commission president, “This is another example of our region working together to produce greater opportunity. Montgomery County and our community partners recognize the importance of a thriving river corridor, not only for its recreational value but also as an economic development driver creating jobs and other opportunities for our citizens.”

The direct financial impact of outdoor recreation is substantial, both nationally and in Ohio. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, Ohio’s outdoor recreation provides 196,000 jobs, $17.4 billion in consumer spending each year and $1.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. To learn more about the potential for recreation and economic development along our river corridor, come to the seventh annual River Summit, March 14, 2014, at the University of Dayton River Campus.
Brother Donald Geiger, S.M., Ph.D., represents thoughtful reflection and dedication to continuous learning. His extensive work here in the department of biology, the Fitz Center and the Rivers Institute reveals endless learning opportunities. As a River Steward, a Marianist brother and a biologist, his personal mentoring and passion cannot even begin to do justice to his contributions.

“My interest in helping establish the Rivers Institute and my participation in its activities stemmed from my experiences with several environment-related projects,” explains Brother Don. “From 1974 to 1981, I participated in a field project in Niger, a country in sub-Saharan West Africa. In Niger, I worked to bring about integrated agricultural development in the midst of a devastating drought. I experienced the value of working with people from a wide variety of disciplines while helping to design and execute cooperative development and management of water resources.”

One of the things Brother Don learned to value most is being a living example of the knowledge and values he has derived from his experiences. As a River Steward, he has often shared his hopes for the program, stating, “We live in a world that is tempted to distract itself and avoid potentially depressing situations. My hope for the Rivers Institute and the River Stewards program is that the members continue to develop as a community and use the resulting strength to heal the societal weaknesses and the resulting degradation.”

Consistent with the mission of the Rivers Institute to build opportunities for the Dayton community to see our rivers as the strategic natural resource central to the communal, economic, aesthetic and ecological vitality of the region, Brother Don claims one of the most important contributions of the Rivers Institute is continuing to have a “can do” outlook. Brother Don is confident “This will help restore the negative effects around this area and sow seeds of hope.”

We are thankful for Brother Don’s continuous Marianist influence on the River Stewards and our projects. His natural ability to personify the Marianist values brings a strong and valuable connection to our core mission. “As a Marianist, I have learned to value community and cooperation among people with varied backgrounds and personal gifts. I strongly believe in being guided by reading the signs of the times as our Founder, Blessed Chaminade, demonstrated so well. I believe the time of the ‘Age of Rivers’ has arrived.”

Brother Don gives a tour of the restored prairie along the Mad River. He was a pivotal resource in helping re-establish the river bank as a natural area.
Every kid
Down in Dayton
Liked learning a lot...
But the boy,
Who lived just West of Dayton, Did NOT!
The boy hated school! The whole learning process!
Now, please don’t ask why. No one quite got his distress.
It could be the routine couldn’t grab his attention,
It could be bad grades always got him detention.
But I think that the most likely reason of all,
May have been that his world was too hectic, too raw.

But,
Whatever the reason,
His home or the lesson,
He sat in his desk, dreading each question,
Staring up at the teacher with a puzzled, lost mope
At the impossible query, she so calmly spoke.
For he knew every student who sat near his chair
Would know in an instant, while he thought in despair.
“And they all understand it” he said as he sighed.
“Friday is test day! I know nothing,” He cried!
Then he sat there in silence; a plan he devised.
“There must be a way to get my grades on the rise!”
For, tonight, he knew...

...All his classroom brothers
Would trudge home from school. They’d rush for their mothers!
And then! Oh, the help! Oh, the help! Help! Help! Help!
That’s one thing he wanted! Some HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP!

Then the parents, moms and dads, would sit down with their breed
And they’d read! And they’d read!
And they’d READ! READ! READ! READ!
They would open a chapter book, done in a breeze
Then they’d knock out the series, finish with ease

And THEN
They’d start, what he envied most of all!
Every family in Germantown, the big and the small.
Would eat with each other, a feast fit for dining
They’d recap their day, discussing their findings.
They’d talk! And they’d talk!
AND they’d TALK! TALK! TALK TALK!
And the more the boy thought of this family tradition
The more the boy longed, “I need someone to listen!
“Why for years I’ve been out here trekking alone!

I must seek an outlet, away from my home!
Then he got an idea!
A genius idea!
THE BOY
GOT A WONDERFUL, GENIUS IDEA!
“I know just what to do!” The boy beamed a big smile.
And he got out his folder and looked through the pile.
And he shuffled and sifted, “Aha here’s the sheet!
“With the Dakota Center, I’ll be right back on my feet
“All I need is a signature...”
The boy looked around.
But mom was still working, no adult could be found.
Did that stop the young boy...?
No! Sharp as a tack
“If mom is at work, I’ll wait till she’s back!”
So he laid in his bed. Too excited to sleep
And he heard the door slam, and he sprang with a leap.
THEN
He ran down the stairs
Asked mom for a favor
She sat there perplexed
As he held out the paper.

The boy begged “Pretty please?”
While mom looked down and read
She smiled up at the boy
Gently nodding her head!
He awoke the next morning, too excited to snooze.
While his classmates were fighting the back to school blues
He got dressed in his uniform, tied up his shoes.
“He got dressed in his uniform, tied up his shoes.
“Today is the day!” The boy said with a sway
As he plopped himself down in the green RTA.

Then homeroom began, passing by like molasses.
But fun was to come! Just get through these classes!
Teach assigned homework, but he didn’t fret.
There’d be help after school, no need to sweat.
Then 2 o’clock came, and he saw his bus enter
He hopped on in a jiffy, “Time to go to the center!”

Then he walked through the entrance, a feeling so freeing.
He stood there agape at the things he was seeing
Markers! And Basketballs! Checkers! And pencils!
Art supplies! Soccer balls! Novels! And Stencils!
And then as his journey was about to begin,
Ms. Chaunte said so kindly, “Hello, please sign in!”
Then a woman walked towards him, looking quite friendly, “Hi, nice to meet you. My name’s Miss Emily!” The boy cracked a smile. He had nothing to say. Then Miss Emily asked, “So how was your day?” “Pretty good, thanks a lot” he spoke with a sound. “Great to hear,” said Miss Emily “I’ll show you around!”

She showed him computers. He saw the library. He looked in the art room. It all seemed so merry! He heard noises. What were these sounds? He could hear children playing. He looked all around. “Right there is the gym,” Miss Emily smirked. “That is for after you’re done with homework!”

“Speaking of homework, do you need any help?” “Yes,” the boy said. “I can’t do it myself.” “Well that’s what we’re here for, let’s go get you started” He started to follow her, a little fainthearted.

It was a room full of people, children and grownups, Paired up with each other, doing all sorts of stuff!

But before he was done scanning the place, A grown man appeared right next to his face. “What’s for homework, today?” the man said with a smile. “Every subject,” he said. “It may take a while.”

“No problem.” said the man. “We’re together united!” And before you knew it, the boy sat there delighted. He had finished his vocab! Did simple subtraction! He completed it all, even divided his fractions!

But one thing was stopping the boy from proceeding, He desperately wanted to spend some time reading. So he followed the man to the room full of prose, And he read and he read in a state of repose.

Then after a while, he peered into the gym. “Can I take a look?” he asked on a whim “Of course,” said the man. “Go wild, have fun!” Well there was no looking back, he was born to run.

And who would have guessed? The boy came every day. And he read, and he drew, and he talked, and he played. And he learned about things he had never before, And he learned that one’s character should not go ignored.

Then one day, weeks and weeks after The boy thought he heard abundant laughter. “That’s a noise,” grinned the boy, “That I simply must hear!” So he paused. And the boy put a hand to his ear. And he did hear a sound rising ever so slow. It started in low. Then it began to grow... And the noise wasn’t sad! Why, this noise was so merry! It shouldn’t be so! But it WAS merry! VERY! He looked around at the center! He could finally see! He seemed to be having an epiphany! All the kids in the center, the girls and the guys, Were in it together! Without family ties! Setbacks HADN’T stopped the good times from coming! THEY CAME! Somehow or other, it was just the same! And the boy, with his feet, stood on the floor, Stood puzzling and puzzling: “How could it be sure? It came without sisters! It came without brothers!” “It came without fathers. It came without mothers!” And he puzzled three hours, ’til his puzzler was sore. Then the boy thought of something he hadn’t before! “Maybe family,” he thought, “isn’t all pedigree. “Maybe family...perhaps...is community!” And what happened then...? Well...in Dayton I hear That the boy’s crummy grades Rose three letters that year! And if he was in need of a loyal ear, He’d walk up to the center, where his friends would appear.

And he came back for eons! He was always returning! And he... 
...HE HIMSELF...! The boy grew to LOVE learning!

Sarah Welling presented her poem as a reflection on her Semester of Service during fall 2013.
Anne Crecelius, Ph.D., is a University of Dayton alumna who has made a truly memorable impact on UD and the Fitz Center. After graduating from UD in 2007, she continued her education at Colorado State University studying cardiovascular physiology. During her time at UD as a Berry Scholar, Anne went on a river trip with the Fitz Center and became interested in the rivers around Dayton. Through this experience, she helped develop the idea for the Rivers Institute. Anne took the idea for the Rivers Institute and put it into action because she believed it was a good opportunity for students to be a part of something institutional and to do something to get involved and make an impact. Her dedication to the rivers helped create an institution that is still going strong today, one that preserves public resources and creates connections with the surrounding communities.

Anne's work at UD is not over yet. This past fall, she became an assistant professor at UD teaching physiology and research methods in the School of Education and Health Sciences. She took this teaching position to help students pursue their passions, aid students in the development of their personal ethics and instill in them a concern for community.

The impact Anne has made on the University and on the Fitz Center is unforgettable. She is proof that pursuing one's passion can make a lasting difference.