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Learning About Dayton and Myself Through River Stewards

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Saturday, April 16th, 2022

Learning About Dayton and Myself Through River Stewards

Lily Pestorius, 2024 cohort

As a first year student at UD I had no knowledge or connection to the City of Dayton. I did not know of any opportunities to learn and participate in service hours in the city or even where to start. In the past year, I have learned more about the City of Dayton than I have about my own hometown that I lived in for 18 years. I have more connections through River Stewards that have allowed me to learn so much more about service opportunities out in nature. I would have never learned about the Aquifer or the Great Miami Watershed if I had not joined River Stewards. I have always enjoyed nature. Being able to learn and volunteer my time for service projects has been a highlight of my time here at UD. I have always felt connected to nature and have always wanted to help the environment. As I have become more independent while attending UD, I have also been able to become more sustainable. Sustainability is such an important part of my life. So being more connected to the Dayton community and being able to learn about the sustainable efforts the city is making has been so amazing. I have been able to see that I do not need to always make a huge impact, it is just as important to make a small impact. River Steward's service hours have allowed me to find opportunities to serve outdoors. I also would have never learned about the difference between "serving" and "volunteering". Because it really is a mindset that you are not just "helping" the community, you are serving them. It is so important to understand the community you are interacting with so that you can make an impact on what the community is trying to accomplish. It has been amazing to help remove Honeysuckle and learn all about the importance of native plants. I have even helped a service group in my hometown to clear Honeysuckle. River Stewards has given me the most important lesson that I need to thrive where I live, which is how to have an active role in my community. The more involved in my community I become, the prouder I am to be a student at the University of Dayton.



Lots of River Love.