Students Who Serve: A Study of Undergraduate Students’ Experiences in Community Service

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Exploratory Questions
1) What meaning do college students ascribe to their service experiences?
2) What are college students’ experiences and goals as they engage in sustained community involvement?
3) What are students’ perceptions of leadership as they engage in service?

Methods
- Qualitative research study
- Interviewers: Ph.D. in Educational Leadership students
- Informants: 14 University of Dayton undergraduate students
- 30 to 45 minute open-ended interviews
- Structured coding to determine themes

Neighborhood Community Schools
- Dayton’s Neighborhood School Centers are public schools that are centers of their neighborhoods, serving as healthy places of learning for children and families. Each school works with the Fitz Center to place volunteers on a weekly or on a one-time basis.

Fitz Center for Leadership in Community
- Mission Statement
  The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community initiates and sustains partnerships within urban neighborhoods and larger communities that both support comprehensive community building and provide a context for broadly connected learning and scholarship.

Dayton Civic Scholars
- Semester of Service
  - Semester of Service is a program that expands the students’ worldview and empowers them to continue. "The people I hang out with generally do service." "The people I hang out with generally do service.” ~ Miranda
  - "Overall, the experience is one that filled me with so much joy. And it’s not joy for myself, but I think it’s joy for the community around me.” ~ Miranda
  - "Community does not exist beyond the borders of campus.” ~ Miranda
  - "Service has helped cement me to the City of Dayton in ways I never would have thought possible.” ~ Miranda
  - "When I was a sophomore I was a member of service and because of the opportunities I have had in service, I think I have found my niche in the world where I can give my all.” ~ Miranda
  - "In high school I did volunteer service learning class to train volunteers.” "I’ve always kind of been a background, and then at UD I wanted to somehow...” ~ The people I hang out with generally do service.

Student Voices
- If you have a social justice...mindset, that’s where it starts because you can’t make any structural change if you come in with the door already open...you have to [first] open conversations with people...because sometimes people have closed doors and they don’t want to talk..." ~ Miranda

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- Prior Service
- Prior Collaboration
- Prior Faith
- Engagement
- Time Management
- Busting “UD Bubble”
- Professional Development
- Various Roles
- Relationships
- Growth
- Service
- Justice
- Life’s Work
- Dayton

Resulting Themes
- BACKGROUND
- MEANING