

# WCU

## WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

### Office of Service-Learning & Volunteer Programs ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



# WHAT'S NEW IN ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING?

In the 2017-18 academic year, the General Education Reform process created important opportunities to expand service-learning at WCU. The SLVP staff including Director Jodi-Roth Saks and Faculty Associate Dr. Ashlie Delshad worked closely with members of the Service-Learning Faculty Work Group, the university's Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC), and the General Education Reform committee. The most notable additions are: 1) the creation of a 12 credit Pathway Certificate in Community Engagement, which will recognize students who obtain service-learning experiences across a range of general education courses, and 2) incorporation of service-learning within First Year Experience (FYE) courses pilot in Fall 2018.

## Faculty Book Club

Additionally, SLVP co-sponsored the Fall Book Club organized by the Committee for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) that focused on Barbara Jacoby's *Service-Learning Essentials*. Eighteen faculty from across the university participated in the book club, which met three times during the Fall 2017 semester. Dr. Delshad and Jodi Roth-Saks co-facilitated the book club with a member of the CELT Committee. This was a valuable opportunity to expose faculty to best practices and develop relationships with faculty interested in integrating the pedagogy into their teaching. As a result of the book club, two new service-learning courses were developed.

## FACTS & FIGURES

<b>668,190</b>	<b>Hours of Service-Learning</b>
<b>6,824</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>169</b>	<b>Faculty</b>
<b>89</b>	<b>Unique Courses</b>
<b>505</b>	<b>Course Sections</b>

Faculty were asked through a survey which topics within service-learning they would most like to learn more about. Reflection assignments scored high on the list of requests. As a result, SLVP hosted a workshop on how to incorporate high quality reflection into a service-learning course. Eight faculty attended the workshop, which included a presentation by Dr. Mary Beth Gilboy from the Nutrition Department.

The Community Engagement (CE) Scholars Program plays an important role in assisting faculty with bringing community engagement projects to fruition. Faculty have the option of partnering with student leaders and community partners to create a new service-learning project, support a community-based research project, or assist a department with creating new partnerships for field placements, internships, or applied learning experiences. This year, 10 Community Engagement Scholars partnered with 12 faculty and a wide range of community organizations, including West Chester Area Senior Center, the Black Women in Sports Foundation, and Home of the Sparrow. Four CE Scholars supported international service-learning trips to Guatemala, Uganda, Honduras, and the Bahamas. The following faculty were supported by the CE Scholar program:

- **Dr. Beatrice Adera (Special Education)**
- **Dr. Tina Chiarelli-Helminiak (Graduate Social Work)**
- **Dr. Joanna Christaldi (Nutrition)**
- **Dr. Dara Dirhan (Nutrition)**
- **Dr. Monica Lepore (Kinesiology)**
- **Dr. Elizabeth Munz (Communication Studies)**
- **Dr. Ronke Oke (Philosophy)**
- **Dr. Margaret Ottley (Kinesiology)**
- **Dr. Dawn Patterson (Special Education)**
- **Dr. Tom Short (Mathematics)**
- **Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago (Health)**
- **Dr. Claire Verden (Special Education)**

One faculty recipient, Dr. Margaret Ottely, Professor of Kinesiology worked with her CE Scholar to organize an exercise science education program for youth from Philadelphia designed to spark an interest in science through a focus on exercise and physiology. The program culminated in a day long workshop at WCU for middle school students from underserved communities in Philadelphia.

# CO-CURRICULAR SERVICE-LEARNING

## MLK DAY OF SERVICE

On Thursday, January 25, 2018, SLVP engaged 400 volunteers in meaningful service in honor of Dr. King by making 100 “no-sew” fleece blankets. Through partnerships with three non-profit organizations, children and families received a warm, comforting blanket during their most challenging life experiences. Fleece for Keeps provides the fleece blankets to children in foster care systems in PA, MD, and NJ. Children receiving medical care at Nemours A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children and patients in the NICU at Chester County Hospital were given fleece blankets to provide comfort while undergoing treatment. During the event, volunteers watched an educational video about Dr. King’s legacy of service and representatives from each non-profit organization shared with volunteers the true impact these blankets have on our community.



## CO-CURRICULAR SERVICE HOURS

<b>44,489</b>	Hours
<b>\$139,338</b>	Funds raised
<b>112</b>	Student Organizations
<b>215</b>	Community Partners Benefited



## SOAR: NEW STUDENT LEADERSHIP RETREAT

In collaboration with various departments in the Division of Student Affairs, SLVP engaged 70 SOAR participants in service projects at the Friends Association, The Hickman, the ARC of Chester County, the Chester County Food Bank, and Everhart Park. Students participated in a community partner led orientation, which included both the mission and history of the organization as well as the benefits of the service project. Through a partnership with the Higher Education Counseling/Student Affairs graduate program, 10 graduate students served as reflection facilitators to guide the participants through activities at the conclusion of the day. Students explored the impact of their service and how it contributes to their leadership development.



## VOLUNTEER FAIR

Once a semester, SLVP hosts over 55 community partners at the Volunteer Fair to network, recruit student volunteers, and educate students about community needs. This is an excellent opportunity for students to discover new service opportunities that align with their academic, personal, and professional interests. Organizations who participated included: Safe Harbor, West Chester Senior Center and Girls on the Run.

## PLAY4KAY PHILANTHROPIC EVENT

In February WCU Women’s Basketball teamed up with SLVP to host Play4Kay to benefit the Kay Yow Cancer Fund. This year, 153 student volunteers from 21 different organizations contributed 182 hours of service to make this annual fundraiser possible.

# AMERICA READS YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

The America Reads Youth Mentoring Program at West Chester University began in 2012, growing over the years to the educational needs of children while impacting the college students who serve as mentors. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the America Reads Youth Mentoring Program partnered with seven different nonprofit organizations who each serve a diverse population of low-income, at-risk youth with a united goal of improving the academic success of youth grades pre-K-12 by engaging in mentoring relationships with students from West Chester University.

This year, 41 WCU students served as mentors to over 500 youth across Chester County. Not only did these mentors dedicate 6-10 hours each week to mentoring youth at their respective sites, they also participated in monthly professional development workshops on campus, covering various topics including behavioral management, LGBTQA 101 training, and resume and interview preparation. When reflecting on this experience, one mentor shared:

*"By getting involved in the community this way, I have impacted each student, their success, and their motivation to go to school. By helping each one of these students with their homework, personal lives, and other issues, I am able to help these children cope, work through these problems, and succeed in their environment." - WCU Mentor*

100% of mentors who completed the end of the year survey (n=20) agreed that they are more aware of social problems in the community as a result of participation in this program. One mentor explained, "Many students that I work with do not have male role models...By being aware of these social problems, I am able to better support the students in the classroom." The mentors are having such positive experiences in the community that 90% of mentors surveyed would recommend participating in the America Reads Youth Mentoring Program to their friends and peers.

This program significantly benefits our community partners in addition to the WCU students and children. Brad Steese, the program coordinator of the Melton Center's New Directions Program shared, "I wish we could explain in words how grateful we are for the support that you all have given us this year." It is clear that the incredible student mentors in this program have demonstrated servant leadership, impacting the lives of youth throughout Chester County this year.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Coatesville Kids to College
- The Melton Center: New Directions Program
- Henderson High School's Academic Intervention Program (AIP)
- St. Agnes Day Room
- West Chester Area Day Care Center
- YMCA: Believe and Achieve
- YMCA: Childcare Early Learning Center

*"I have grown to be a strong and positive mentor through the America Reads Program. It has taught me that being there for a student and helping them can make a huge impact on their lives." - WCU Mentor*



# ALTERNATIVE BREAK PROGRAM

The Alternative Break Program engages students in meaningful service in communities across the globe during University break periods. Each trip addresses a prevalent social issue that impacts that specific community by engaging in direct service alongside members of the community to understand and meet the needs of the population. What makes this program unique is that it spans the entire academic year, engaging students in pre-trip and post-trip education and service opportunities within the local West Chester community. This year, the program engaged 90+ participants in 8 Alternative Break trips within the U.S. and across the globe.

## SPRING BREAK TRIPS

### Serving the LGBTQ+ Community Impacted by HIV/AIDS

Eight students, one Graduate Assistant, and one staff member engaged in creating educational materials and community advocacy for safer sex and services for the LGBTQ+ community impacted by HIV/AIDS in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The team volunteered with Pittsburgh's Allies for Health + Wellbeing and the Pittsburgh Equality Center.



### Advocating for Women's Rights through Political Engagement

Eight students, one Graduate Assistant, and one staff member volunteered with non-profit organizations such as Planned Parenthood, American Association of University Women (AAUW), NARAL: Pro-Choice Maryland, United for Reproductive Gender Equity (URGE), and others that advocate for women's rights in Washington, DC. They engaged with figureheads and advocates and discussed policy surrounding reproductive justice.



### Empowering Youth through Financial Literacy Education

Eleven students and one staff member volunteered with Junior Achievement to teach children grades K-12 financial literacy in New York City, New York. Participants engaged youth with academic enrichment activities to develop financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills through interactive games and teamwork activities.



### Addressing Issues of Affordable Housing

Eight students, one Graduate Assistant, and one staff member volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in Alamance County, NC to help provide affordable housing for those affected by rural poverty. Students assisted with painting the walls and constructing the roof for a single mother and her family's home during their week of service.



### Transforming the Environment through Sustainability and Outdoor Education

Ten students, one Graduate Assistant, and one faculty member volunteered with Woodland Harvest Mountain Farm in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina to maintain sustainable food and energy systems at an off-the-grid permaculture farm.



### Understanding Public Health Services in Kabale, Uganda

Nine students, one faculty member, and one staff member traveled to Kabale, Uganda to serve with Kigezi Healthcare Foundation (KIHEFO) in providing healthcare provision in low-resource settings alongside doctors and nurses working at a general clinic, an HIV clinic, a maternity clinic, and a malnutrition center. Students observed and assisted with cervical cancer screenings, HIV testing, family planning counseling, dental screenings, among other health services.



# ALTERNATIVE BREAK PROGRAM

## SUMMER BREAK TRIPS

### Creating Sustainable Food Resources in Urban Communities

Nine students and one faculty member volunteered with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Harvest Program in Philadelphia to plant seedlings, weed community gardens, and harvest fresh produce to be distributed throughout the city. Through these activities, participants learned how community gardens address food insecurity in urban settings.



### Cultivating a Cross-Educational Experience in Guatemala

Ten students and two faculty members traveled to indigenous villages surrounding Lago de Atitlan in Guatemala to partner with local schools and agencies to actively engage with children and community members with varying cognitive, physical, and developmental disabilities.



*"The experience allowed me to see firsthand how to find out what affects my community and how to effectively help them. I want to take the lessons I've learned and use it to continue doing service throughout my life." - AB participant*



*"The organization we assisted made sure we understood what was the root of the issue the community was facing and why we're fighting it. It's important to listen to the community and understand the issue at hand in order for us to help them effectively." - AB participant*



*"Our reflections were very meaningful. It connected our lives to the service and community we were serving. This experience was important to me because I got to serve a community that I do not get to serve much but care about deeply." - AB participant*



*"Overall, I grew as a person and learned more about the issue as well as myself. [The Alternative Break Program] gave me information and knowledge I have used in and out of the classroom as well as the desire to do more.." - AB participant*



## INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING

SLVP also supported two international service-learning courses:

- SWG 590: Human Rights Exploration Abroad taught by Dr. Tina Chiarelli-Helminiak
- NTD 455: Nutrition Assessment, Education and Service in Honduras taught by Dr. Joanna Christaldi. Thirteen students served alongside the organization, Healthy Ninos. The program offered students hands-on clinical nutrition experience and international cultural awareness.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT *Samantha Eden*



Each year, we engage over 100 amazing students in our programs, providing opportunities to explore their role as active citizens on campus and in the surrounding community. Samantha (Sam) Eden is just one incredible example of a student who found a sense of belonging through her engagement in SLVP and truly embodies the characteristics of active citizenship.

Sam arrived at WCU as a transfer student in fall of 2016. Having strong roots participating in community service growing up and a love of helping others, Sam sought out how to continue this passion while in college. After learning about SLVP, she applied to become a Mentor in our America Reads Youth Mentoring Program, serving in the program for two consecutive years. Through her role as a Mentor, Sam spent 10 hours per week at a local after school

program, Coatesville Kids to College (CKC). CKC staff and volunteers mentor low-income and at-risk youth. Sam developed trusting relationships with several children during her time at CKC; motivating them to achieve their academic goal of pursuing higher education one day.

Shortly after joining the America Reads Youth Mentoring Program, Sam learned about the Alternative Break program, and was selected as a participant for a trip focused on advocating for the LGBTQ community impacted by HIV/AIDS. After a transformative experience, Sam decided to deepen her commitment to service by applying to become the student Trip Leader for the same trip her senior year. We eagerly accepted her to serve in this role and she truly grew as a servant leader through this experience.

Sam engaged her peers in meaningful pre-departure educational meetings and formed a cohesive team that was ready to embark on a transformational experience during spring break. During the trip, Sam led her peers through various advocacy and service projects such as building safer sex kits and canvassing neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh to raise awareness of the services the nonprofit organization Allies for Health + Wellbeing can provide to individuals with HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQ community. Sam facilitated evening reflective dialogue sessions that assisted her peers with understanding the service-learning experience, while exploring their own social identities in a safe, welcoming space.

As she approached graduation, she realized her life's calling was to engage in public service. Sam aspires to become a social worker helping adolescents who are experiencing psychological issues, which she credits to her education as a Psychology major and Youth Empowerment Studies minor in combination with her experience in the America Reads Youth Mentoring Program. Beginning this September, Sam will commit a year to public service at a nonprofit agency that provides psychological services to youth in Atlanta, Georgia as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. The SLVP Team could not be more proud of Sam and the incredible contributions she has made to our local community over the past two years. It is clear, Sam has dedicated herself to uplifting communities as a result of her leadership experiences and will continue her social responsibility as an active citizen beyond her time at WCU.

# RESOURCE PANTRY

According to a recent study performed by faculty and staff at WCU, Assessment of Food and Housing Security Among College Students at West Chester University, 31.7% of students on campus are facing food insecurity. This is similar to the national average found by the Wisconsin HOPE lab in April, which stated 36% of college students nationwide were food insecure in the last 30 days. The WCU Resource Pantry aims to decrease this number by eliminating barriers to degree completion for students facing financial hardships by providing access to resources, while empowering students to learn independent living skills and achieving long-term stability. In its first full year on campus, the pantry has grown exponentially, not only in the number of students served, but also in the number of programs offered, size of staff, and partnerships developed.



In the fall the pantry was relocated to a new location on the ground level of Commonwealth Hall with the Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs. A First Anniversary Food Drive and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, as well as Open House was held to commemorate this significant milestone. President Fiorentino and the Holveck Family, who were instrumental donors in the creation of the pantry, had the honor of cutting the ribbon and officially opening the doors to the WCU community.

With the new location came an extensive outreach plan, which included regular outreach to faculty, staff, student leaders, and community organizations. During this academic year the pantry served 300 new students, bringing the total number of students who have utilized the pantry since its inception to 365 students. That's more than a 462% increase in growth from 2016-2017. Additionally, there were 1,406 total visits to the pantry, which demonstrates students are visiting multiple times throughout the year. The pantry distributed 7,600 pounds of food to students facing food insecurity, in addition to providing basic needs such as school supplies, personal hygiene products, and professional and winter attire. The PACC AmeriCorps VISTA member increased awareness about the Resource Pantry by developing a consistent social media calendar, as well as implementing a weekly newsletter for students, faculty, staff, and donors. The VISTA member also worked with University Communications on a video project that provided a virtual tour of the pantry, which reached over 25,000 viewers.



The Pantry was awarded a national grant by the Corporation for National and Community Service to select another AmeriCorps VISTA member for an additional year. The VISTA member serves as a full-time, professional staff member, allowing the pantry to expand hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, with evening hours until 8:00 p.m. on Thursday. To accommodate the increased traffic and expanded hours the pantry student staff has tripled in size, with the ambassador team comprised of 10 federal work-study students.

As the pantry has grown it has become increasingly important to provide a level of care that includes supporting students' holistic needs; providing regular educational workshops on financial literacy (in partnership with Financial Aid) and career readiness (in partnership with Career Development Center). Other...

# RESOURCE PANTRY

popular resources include, workshops offered by the Learning Assistance & Resource Center, as well as cooking demonstrations, where students learn how to prepare fresh produce from the south campus organic garden. Additionally, the Pantry hired a Master of Social Work Intern which expanded the Pantry's ability to serve student needs by establishing relationships with local social services & creating a referral resource binder, developing a workshop to educate students about how to apply for governmental assistance programs, and creating a case notes and referral tracking system for supporting students with deeper challenges.

Pantry staff are regularly developing partnerships and providing referrals to community organizations. The Chester County Food Bank has been instrumental in keeping the shelves stocked with non-perishable food items. Additional nonprofit partnerships include: First Presbyterian Church, who's congregants purchased a refrigerator, The Chester County Chamber of Commerce Grow Group, who purchased a freezer for the Pantry, The West Chester Food Cupboard, who worked with Pantry staff to organize trips for eligible students to access nutritional foods at their Cupboard in town, and Wings for Success, who coordinated shopping trips for female-identifying students to receive free professional attire.

This summer, the Pantry will undergo renovations which will increase storage capacity and improve the overall shopping experience. These improvements were made possible thanks to an incredibly generous gift from Pennsylvania State Employee Credit Union (PSECU) and Student Services Incorporated (SSI).

In an effort to create regular engagement opportunities for students interested in supporting the Resource Pantry, a new student organization sponsorship program was started. Organizations can coordinate a resource drive once a month, once a semester, or once a year, depending on the group's interest and capacity. During the spring, sponsorship plans were initiated with Alpha Phi Omega, Pi Kappa Alpha, and the Track and Field team.

As we look ahead to next academic year, we will welcome a new AmeriCorps VISTA member as the Resource Pantry Coordinator for the 2018-2019 academic year, as well as 6 new Pantry Ambassadors and a new Master of Social Work Intern. The Pantry will continue efforts to collaborate with organizations from the campus and local community, and identify ways to better support students facing basic needs and food insecurity.

<b>10</b> Student Ambassadors	<b>300</b> Individual Shoppers	<b>7,600</b> lbs Food Distributed
<b>38</b> Collection Drives	<b>1,406</b> Shopping Visits	<b>167</b> Individual Donors



# VOTER ENGAGEMENT



## SOCIAL MEDIA



Dub C Votes



@WCU\_Votes

#DubCVotes

At WCU our commitment to democratic engagement remains pervasive, channeled into civic discourse and voter empowerment. In the Fall of 2017, Student Campus Election Coordinators Aileen Assumma and Ellie Sullum, designed and implemented a Get Out the Vote campaign for the 2017 Municipal Election. Their strategy included best practices from the previous year, as well as new techniques to engage voters in the importance of municipal elections. Through a National Voter Registration Day event and the distribution of a graphic with polling information, these efforts turned out an estimated 600 student voters in the West Chester Borough. These numbers were calculated by Judges of Elections in each Borough precinct. Additionally, a new collaboration with Fair Districts PA, a nonpartisan gerrymandering reform movement was started. In October, Carol Kuniholm, Fair Districts PA Chair, presented on campus, which led to a working group organizing towards local and regional action items.

For the Spring 2018 semester, the voter engagement team designed a voter engagement strategy for the 2018 Midterm Primary Election. They formulated part of the strategic plan at the Voters Organized through Engagement Conference at Franklin & Marshall College. The Pennsylvania Primary took place on May 15, following the end of the semester. Knowing a majority of students registered to vote in West Chester would have returned to their permanent address, student leaders designed an absentee ballot campaign. The Get Out the Vote strategy involved distributing absentee and registration information throughout campus via in person tabling and meetings, and distributing information through email and social media. The graphics included polling information, election dates for PA, DE, NY, and NJ, acceptable forms of I.D. for first time PA voters and a link to VotesPA.com.

On April 20, the Dub C For Our Lives Coalition, a campus organization against gun violence held a Day of Action. The voter engagement team took this opportunity to host a voter registration and education table alongside the rally in the Academic Quad. This was followed by a Town Hall where political candidates discussed their views on gun control. A voter engagement resource table was also made available prior to the start of the event. Additionally, the voter engagement team has partnered with PennEnvironment, a nonpartisan climate advocacy organization, for their Voices For 100 Film Campaign. The campaign collected well over 100 videos of everyday citizens expressing their concerns regarding climate change. The videos will play during a meeting focused on climate change solutions at the State Capitol Building in June.

Looking ahead to the fall semester, WCU was awarded a \$4,800 grant to continue the Campus Election Engagement Project Fellows program, which will be expanded to include four student leaders.

# AWARDS & HONORS

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## **Service-Learning Teaching Excellence Award**

Dr. Monica Lepore of the Department of Kinesiology was awarded the 2017-18 Service-Learning Teaching Excellence Award in recognition of her more than 30 years of work partnering with and creating programs for children and young adults with disabilities ranging from visual impairments to Down Syndrome.

These programs include the WCU Adapted Physical Activities Program and Camp Abilities, which she created, as well as Chester County Special Olympics and Special Olympics of PA. She has successfully integrated these programs into five of the courses she teaches at WCU, providing her students in the field of exercise science a hands-on opportunity to hone their skills while meeting a genuine community need. One WCU student participant wrote, "I was involved in many Adapted Physical Education/Activity Programs on and off campus. These programs have impacted me, by shaping me into the person I am today. Going through these programs, I realized that as I grow and become a professional in the world, I want to continue serving the disability community as best as I can, advocating for them for them, and making a career out of promoting physical activity and wellness among them."



## **Chester County Volunteer Award**

West Chester University was the recipient of the 2018 Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County Volunteer Award. This award is a shining example of how WCU takes an interdisciplinary approach to meeting community needs through internships, public service and applied learning experiences. The award ceremony included citation presentations provided by Tyler Arkatin from the Office of Senator Andrew Dinniman, as well as Chester County Commissioners Michelle Kichline, Kathi Cozzone, and Terence Farrell.



## **Citizen Leader Award**

During the annual Leadership Awards celebration, Samantha Eden was honored with the Citizen Leader Award. This recognition is presented to an individual who understands and embodies the virtues of honor, character and civility, embracing diversity, empathy, team-work, and social responsibility. Samantha was recognized with this achievement for her commitment and passion for creating equitable communities and her engagement in meaningful public service.



## **Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year Award**

Caitlin Silver was also honored at the annual Leadership Awards celebration as the Outstanding Graduate Student, which recognizes a graduate student leader who has demonstrated strong leadership skills through peer mentoring, teaching, research, publishing creative work, service, employment and/or participation in professional association. Caitlin truly embodies this award. She is hard working, determined, and passionate about the field of student affairs, and specifically community engagement. Caitlin respects and celebrates differences; working diligently to support underserved populations both on and off campus.

Samantha Eden, Kate Colyer, Caitlin Silver at the Annual Leadership Awards

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs promotes community engaged learning experiences that address critical community needs by building mutually beneficial partnerships and empowering students to be active citizens in their local, national and global communities.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

 /wcuvolunteers  
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## **Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs**

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