



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 1 | FALL 2018



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

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SUMMER SEMINAR

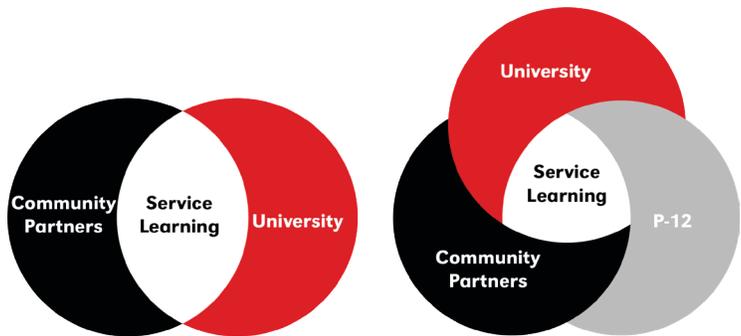
July 8-12, 2019

Don't forget to register for the Service Learning Seminar. During seminar, participants have a front row experience to learn all about service learning.

The 4.5 day professional development opportunity for P-12 and after school teachers, administrators, and UNO instructors to understand the fundamentals of service learning and develop a service learning project. Register at sla.unomaha.edu to reserve your spot. Visit page 13 for more information.

SLA APPROACHES

What is the difference between the types of projects? The traditional service learning projects focus on a collaboration between community partners and a UNO class. The P-16 Initiative focuses on the collaboration between a UNO class, a P-12 class, and a community partner. Throughout the newsletter, projects will be identified with Traditional or P-16 based on their project structure.



TRADITIONAL MODEL

P-16 MODEL

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Not only do service learning projects provide connections to curriculum for UNO and P-12 educators, but many also align directly with six areas that encompass the community engagement work at UNO and in the Omaha community. Throughout this newsletter, these indicators will show a project's connection to one of these six issue areas.



**EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT**



**SOCIAL
JUSTICE**



**ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP**



**HEALTH AND
WELLNESS**



**INTERNATIONAL
SERVICE**



**ECONOMIC
SUFFICIENCY**

LETTER FROM THE PAUL SATHER DISTINGUISHED DIRECTOR



Dear partners,

Every semester I reflect on the service learning work that has brought learning to life and increased partner capacity in Omaha before writing my letter to you all. This year I am inspired by the many stories in this issue that connect the assets between partners in service learning collaborations. These assets come in many forms: student learning, neighborhood expertise, faculty and student research and technological advancements. All service learning partners—students, faculty, community organizations—bring their assets to the collaboration to make truly awesome things happen. You will read about the many ways these assets have contributed to positive outcomes, such as when students used their strengths to create a Sensory Festival with students of different abilities or conducted research to affect environmental policy.

Using an asset-based approach to service learning partnerships is a core value of the UNO Service Learning Academy. We know all partners and communities have significant assets, and when we share assets, we can truly effect change. These assets are the investment every partner makes in the service learning collaboration. The return on that investment is multiplied exponentially through these service learning collaborations and result in increased capacity, student learning and authentic partnerships.

Thank you to all of the partners that share their assets to create these dynamic impacts. Each student, faculty member, administrator and community partner collaborating in this work should be proud of the assets they bring to create the significant learning and capacity growth you will read about in the following pages.

We look forward to learning and serving with you all in the New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Dierberger". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Julie Dierberger

Paul Sather Distinguished Director

SCULPTING SPEECH

By: Kyle McGlade



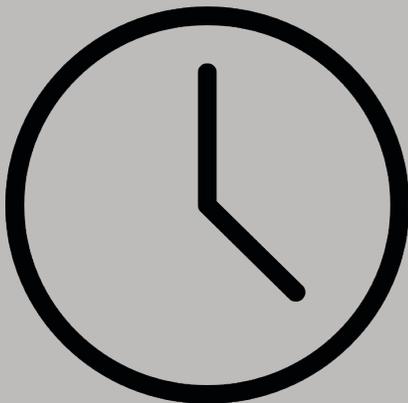
Marian and UNO students listen to Velma 'Suzan' Mackey discuss the origins of her pie business, Suzan's Sweet Potato Pies.

Sculpting Speech is a combination of UNO Instructor Marlina Davidson's *Public Speaking Fundamentals* course and Marian High School teacher Lindsay Cisco's Sculpting and Ceramics class. This project involved students working together to create tangible benefits using art and speech for the Omaha organization No More Empty Pots. Students from Marian and UNO interviewed affiliates of the non-profit including members of the Board of Directors, individuals who volunteer, and those preparing kitchen spaces to start their own businesses as culinary entrepreneurs.

Marian students and the interviewees visited UNO's Community Engagement Center to conduct these interviews and build relationships with the UNO students. The interviews were used as a primary source

of information for both the UNO students and Marian students to use in their final projects. Together at the Creative Production Lab on UNO's campus, the students constructed public service announcements (PSA) for No More Empty Pots. Along with assisting in the PSA's, the Marian students created sculptures based on the interviewee's life, passions and interests.

This project expanded on skills developed in the classroom. Students used those skills to directly benefit a local community organization while learning about community issues. By enhancing the resources available to the organization, UNO and Marian's partnership created measurable benefits to the overall message, mission, and purpose of No More Empty Pots. The final sculptures will be on display at No More Empty Pots.



OVER 8,172 HOURS WERE DEDICATED
TO SERVICE LEARNING BY BOTH UNO
AND P-12 STUDENTS.

SEE. TOUCH. SMELL. HEAR.

By: Kayla Zebrowski



Left: JP Lord student enjoys the craft station with her para. Right: UNO student explores the fiber optic lights in the JP Lord sensory room.

See. Touch. Smell. Hear. These four senses played an important role in helping JP Lord students explore the world around them.

Undergraduate students from UNO Instructor Jeff Knapp's *Social Work & Civic Engagement* class teamed up with gifted and talented eighth grade students from Katrina Jacobberger's Service Learning class at Norris Middle School to plan the Sensory Festival for JP Lord School in November. JP Lord School is a school designated for students ages 5-21 within the Omaha Public School system who have multiple disabilities. Classrooms include students, teachers, para professionals, occupational therapists, nurses, and physical therapists.

“This is great. If it weren't for service learning; I would not have had this experience. I did not think about students of all abilities possibly having mental health disorders like anxiety.”

Niki Rafiner, UNO Student

Before the final event, UNO students, Norris students, and JP Lord transition students met multiple times to plan for the Sensory Festival. Planning committees were created based on the senses and advocacy needs. Throughout the project, Norris students visited UNO's campus with the purpose of creating a virtual UNO tour that was later shown to the JP Lord students. In addition, UNO and Norris students toured JP Lord School. During the tour, UNO students paired up with JP Lord students and created harvest-themed crafts.

Norris students paired up with JP Lord students to become each other's lunch buddy. Since the schools are a short distance from each other, Norris students would bring their lunch to JP Lord and eat with their lunch buddies. The Norris students enjoyed the lunch buddies so much that they continued to meet up for lunch after the project had concluded.

The Sensory Festival took place at the newly constructed JP Lord School. UNO students, Norris students, and JP Lord transition students worked at stations such as face painting, story time, balloon art, sensory arts and crafts, advocacy, parent resources, and games for young siblings. The UNO students taught Norris students how to use humility, patience, and empowerment to interact with the JP Lord students. The Sensory Festival provided JP Lord students and their families with information and resources along with a unique opportunity to explore all the senses through art, music, stories and more!



P-16

UNO students prepare the Malcolm X garden for the winter while King Science students spread mulch.

TLC TAKES OVER OMAHA

By: Stephanie Diaz and Jessica Foreman

The Thompson Learning Community (TLC) provides support to UNO students who receive the Susan T. Buffett Foundation scholarship. TLC aims to make the transition to college and the entry into a major field of study as smooth and educationally-rewarding as possible. TLC sophomores enroll in the TLC Sophomore Seminar, which focuses on exploring university and academic identity, building leadership competency, and introducing students to resources that will lead to career exploration and networking relationships at UNO and in the community. This semester, each of the sections included a service learning component and collaboration with various Omaha community organizations. Below are two examples of how the TLC sophomores collaborated with community partners and P-12 schools to the Omaha community.

One section of TLC Sophomore Seminar explored food insecurity with the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation and Nick Webster's eighth grade History class from King Science and Technology Magnet. Together they focused on learning about food justice and community organizing. This was the first semester this project took place, which resulted from connections made between Webster and TLC at the Service Learning Seminar. Because of the pressing issue of food injustice in Omaha, and its relationship to social justice, the partnership with Malcolm X Memorial Foundation was natural and fitting. Malcolm X Memorial Foundation provided the meeting space for the students, as well as much of the education on food justice, community organizing, and Malcolm X.

Students also spent time in the garden, learning about the benefits of gardening and about urban issues related to food insecurity. Through dialogue, students drew connections between food justice and other social justice topics including discrimination and segregation. As a result of their understanding of community gardening, students began to relate to the topic of community organizing by understanding how collaborations can impact food insecurity, much like historical movements have influenced social justice issues in the past. Connections were made to the nonviolent principles of MLK and Malcolm X, and to the relationship of food justice in urban communities today. Through this project, TLC students gained experience with mentorship and professionalism while participating with King Science Middle School in civic engagement activities. Together the students discussed social and personal impacts while building and strengthening their community connections.

Another section of the TLC Sophomore Seminar collaborated with Partnership 4 Kids (P4K) and Alliance for a Better Omaha. This project has been a partnership for the past five years. P4K is an after school program that is dedicated to serving children and preparing them for their futures. During the project, the P4K students exchanged journal entries they wrote discussing their questions about college with their TLC student mentors. Together they worked with the Alliance to address the needs of their clients. Over 60 P4K and UNO students came together to create fleece blankets for homeless in Omaha and created advocacy campaigns, videos and posters on the topic of their choosing. In their advocacy campaigns, they discussed food insecurity, raising money for local non-profits, hosting food drives and collecting items for children in Omaha.

This unique partnership of the TLC Sophomore Seminar, P-12 schools and Omaha community organizations, creates lasting memories for everyone involved, all while working to make Omaha the healthiest possible.

YOU'RE SPEAKING MY LANGUAGE

By: Brandon Carrillo

Language is a ubiquitous concept. For UNO Instructor Cecilia Tocaímaza-Hatch, it is a concept she hoped her students better understood throughout the project. "With [this] experience," she noted, "learners begin to see language as more than a subject in college or a means to exchange a message; they begin to perceive language as intrinsically connected with multiple areas in life and as a gateway to possibilities."

Tocaímaza-Hatch's *Introduction to Translation and Interpretation* course introduced students to the translation and interpretation field through the study of theoretical constructs and hands-on tasks, which were made possible through this service learning project. During the fall semester, the class worked and collaborated with a variety of community partners such as Lauritzen Gardens, Joslyn Art Museum, Arts for All, and Family Housing Advisory Services. The main goal of these partnerships was to help each organization build up their capacity to reach out and better serve Spanish-speakers here in Omaha.



UNO students tour the Lauritzen Gardens.

Students, imitating the steps used by translators in their professional careers, worked in small groups and provided translation services such as narrations and advertising. Additionally, students provided interpretation services during parent-teacher conferences at Field Club Elementary. All in all, these experiences, as Tocaímaza-Hatch said, helped "students deepen their understanding of the translation and interpretation professions, improve their linguistic abilities in Spanish, and provide a valuable service to the community."

HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH SERVICE LEARNING



UNO INSTRUCTOR

Participate in the summer SLA Seminar or visit a Service Learning 101 presentation offered through the year. Contact Community Liaison Kirsten Case at kcase2@unomaha.edu to get connected.



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Schedule a meeting with Community Liaison Kirsten Case at kcase2@unomaha.edu to partner with a UNO class or attend the community partner fair at the summer SLA Seminar to start a collaboration with UNO Instructors and P-12 teachers.



P-12 TEACHER

To get your P-12 class or program involved with service learning, contact P-16 Coordinator LaTrina Parker at ldparker@unomaha.edu for more information. In addition, attending the summer SLA Seminar is a great way to start a service learning project.



UNO STUDENT

Visit my.unomaha.edu to enroll in courses. Through MavLink, select "Class Search." In the Program option of Class Search, select "Service Learning" to view all the available service learning courses.



SPRING 13



FALL 14



SUMMER 15

DECADE OF SERVICE LEARNING, DECADE OF CHANGE

By: Mustapha Barry

Over the last decade, UNO's *Social Work and Civic Engagement* course has been a catalyst for unique service learning instruction. Under the direction of UNO Instructor Jeff Knapp, students are introduced into the field of social work by choosing an organization in Omaha through which to explore their interests. Throughout the years, students have been able to choose from a variety of Omaha community organizations and schools. During the fall semester, the students had the option of selecting from the following six: Alliance for a Better Omaha, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, Adams Park Community Center, Heartland Family Services, Nelson Mandela Elementary School and the Nebraska Humane Society.

While onsite, the students are exposed to the variety of skillsets a social worker needs from working in groups, to creating and implementing programs, reading with children and so much more. The uniqueness of *Social Work and Civic Engagement* lies in multiple service learning projects being rolled in to one large project. Below are some examples of

what the Social Work and Civic Engagement students experienced while working with their community partner.

The students that visited the Alliance for a Better Omaha had the opportunity to impact the community directly by preparing resources and tools for the community to use. One of those resources created was a recipe book that includes many of the Omaha community members' favorite dishes. Another group of students visited the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands. While there, the UNO students worked on various literacy skills for children with Down syndrome and connected families through education, advocacy and support.

Other experiences included students preparing and providing a meal to Adams Park Community Center seniors with Staci Iverster-Christianson's culinary class from Blackburn Alternative Program, while some students explored Heartland Family Service's substance abuse and mental health



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SPRING 16



FALL 17



FALL 18

program. These students assisted in facilitating parenting classes and utilized the evidence-based tools to create developmentally appropriate activities for children in the program. UNO students in this partnership gained firsthand experience working in a residential substance abuse and mental health setting.

A fifth group of students worked with Nelson Mandela Elementary school and supported children in their learning process. The UNO students aided the school in putting together a family resource night where parents learned how to assist their child in school. Another group of students were given the opportunity to visit the Nebraska Humane Society for a project titled "Out of the Shadows." They collaborated with Kristine Bielenberg's third grade students from Field Club Elementary and helped the third graders build their reading confidence by reading out loud to the dogs at the humane society.

The pictures above feature this project's photos throughout the years.

Spring 2013: UNO and Northwest High School students collaborated together to make Northwest a "No Place for Hate" school.

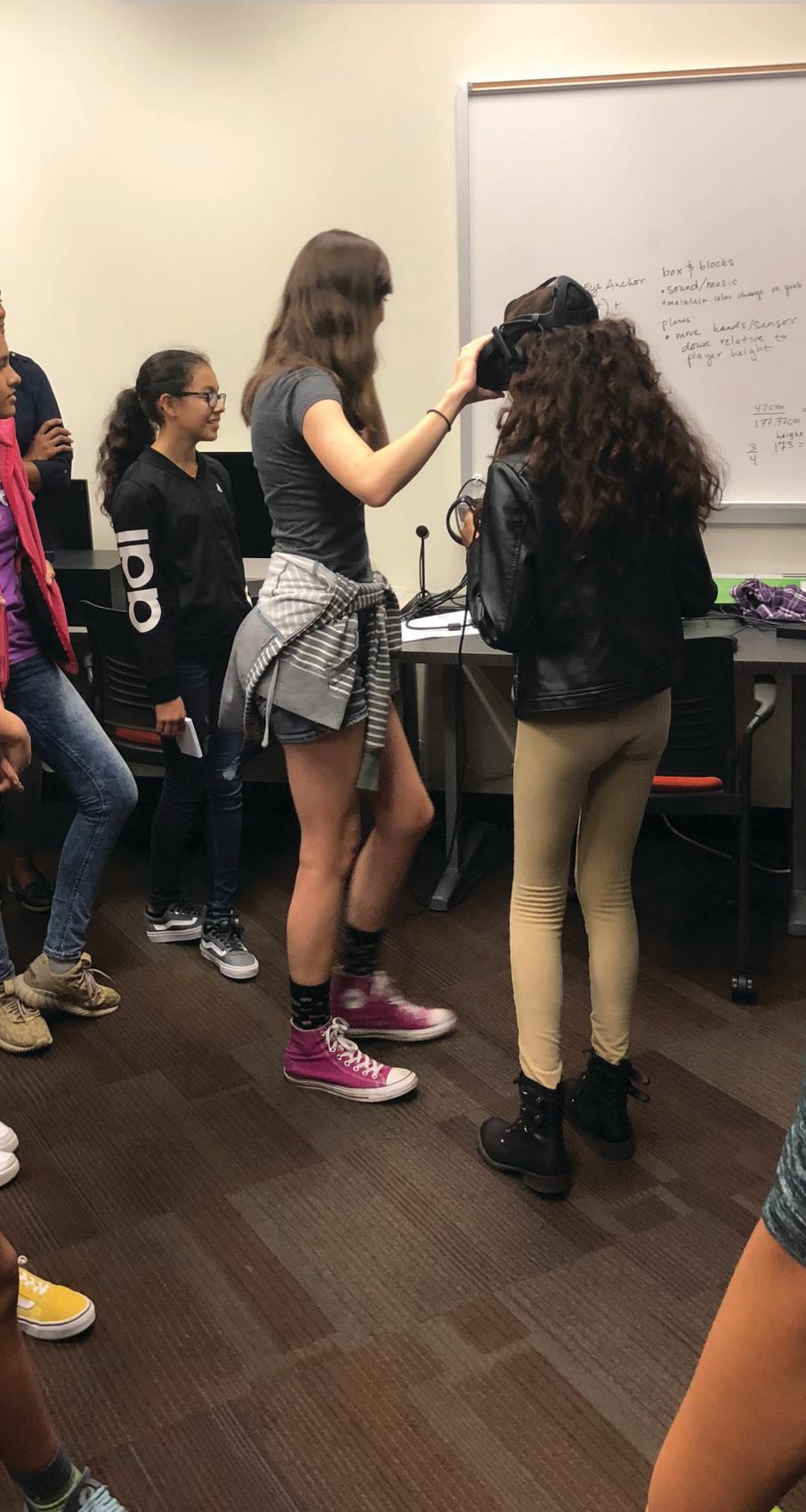
Fall 2014: A Completely Kids student and UNO student practice their campaign speech to advocate the importance of being kind to animals.

Summer 2015: A student from Westside Boys & Girls club chats with a UNO social work student about their goals and future career aspirations.

Spring 2016: SLA student worker looks for a question to ask the Omaha Street School students during the a ball pit activity aimed at getting to know each other.

Fall 2017: A Nelson Mandela Elementary school parent listens in during the family resource night.

Fall 2018: Reading buddies share a walk at the Henry Doorly Zoo.



EMPOWER GIRLS, EMPOWER OMAHA

By: Tracy Gilman

Left: Marris Middle School student explores the world of virtual reality with a UNO Capstone student.

A brand new service learning project was full-steam ahead in the Fall semester with UNO Instructor Sachin Pawaskar at the helm. UNO students from the *Capstone Management Information Systems* class partnered with girls from Mariana Cruz's Spanish Language Arts class at Marris Middle School and FITGirl Inc. to design a responsive mobile site for young girls. FITGirl Inc.'s mission is to empower young girls through positive physical, mental, nutritional, and relational lifestyles. UNO students designed the mobile site to be a tool for young Omaha girls to use that will provide motivation and encouragement about healthy living. Marris students met with FITGirl Inc. and UNO students three times over the course of the semester at UNO's Scott Campus and Marris.

The initial meeting was a great opportunity for introductions to all the project participants. As part of introductions, Cheri Dickmeyer, Executive Director of FITGirl Inc., spoke to the entire group about FITGirl Inc., followed by Pawaskar sharing about the mobile site. Later in the semester, UNO students along with Dickmeyer met with the Marris students to complete journals and dream boards. These activities have been paramount in assessing what might be valuable in the mobile site. In their final meeting, all participants gathered to unveil the mobile site and celebrate progress. The partnership was a rewarding experience for all involved; work will continue with a new group of UNO students in the spring to complete the project.

“The classes and meetings were thought out, extremely organized and have helped FITGirl, Inc. assess needs versus wants with regards to a new tool that can provide motivation and inspiration to young girls in the Omaha community to live out healthy, empowered lifestyles.”

Cheri Dickmeyer,
Executive Director of FITGirl Inc.

GLOBAL LEARNING IN OMAHA

By: Brandon Carrillo



UNO students video chat with students from Wroclaw University.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to work in tandem with students from across the globe, all while supporting and learning from those in the Omaha community? Over the course of the fall semester, UNO Instructor Lyn Holley's *Comparative Global Aging* class did just that. UNO students were given the unique opportunity to collaborate with students at Wroclaw University in Wroclaw, Poland, as well as civically engaged community elders here in Omaha. The result was an international service learning experience that not only shifted the dynamic forged between students and their own learning process but as Holley said, it also allowed students to "witness and experience the challenges of communication and collaboration with counterparts across barriers of culture, ethnicity, geography, and history."

Students, both UNO and Wroclaw, interviewed their community elders and wrote themed essays about their lives. In return, the students themselves were interviewed by the elders who then wrote their own essays about the lives of the younger generation. Students were also asked to explore and assess the "age-friendliness" of the frequently

visited places by the elders in each community. After, Omaha student-elder pairs worked with Polish student-elder pairs to discuss and develop comparative analyses and create a presentation that explained and supported their findings.

As an international project, the implications of such work has had profound effects on Holley's students. The students expressed big takeaways such as it expanded their global perspectives, increased global competencies, enhanced communication skills and deepened their appreciation of how historic and geographic contexts shape the culture and current issues facing societies. Holley does not forget the impact service learning projects have on herself either. "As an older adult myself," she reflected, "I am thrilled every day to be in contact with these fine students and privileged to provide opportunities for them to learn skills, information, and techniques ... that will equip them to become all that they can be and to make the best possible contributions to the human enterprise."



OVER 80 OMAHA AREA COMMUNITY PARTNERS PARTICIPATED IN
SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS IN FALL 2018.

RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

By: Socorrito Salcido

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world.” This quote encompasses the experience of Inclusive Communities, students from Millard Central Middle School taking Andrea Lo’s English Language Learning class and students from UNO Instructor Laura Alexander’s *Religion and Human Rights* course. Together they came together to explore an important topic: human rights. The UNO students taught the middle school students that even though they may feel small at times, you still have rights. UNO student Giselle Bergmeier said, “We have created a dialogue with the middle school students to understand their stories and learn together about how human rights affect each one of us every day.” Through the collaboration, the middle school students’ eyes were opened to the importance of what it means to express your human rights and identity.

Together, the students and Inclusive Communities hosted a Table Talk on UNO’s campus about human rights. The Table Talk was filled with participants from UNO and the Omaha community who engaged in conversations facilitated by the UNO and Millard Central students. The purpose of the Table Talk was to create an environment where everyone could feel free to express themselves and share personal stories about their encounters with their own and others’ human rights.



P-16

Millard Central student listens to a community member share their experience.

LIONS, TIGERS AND BEARS! OH MY!

By: Amy Zeller



P-16

The Henry Doorly Zoo offers a tremendous opportunity for inquiry science and research to students of all ages in Omaha. Acting upon this opportunity, UNO Instructor Rosemary Strasser’s *Animal Behavior Laboratory* course collaborated with Shelley Brown’s sixth grade science students of St. James Seton Catholic School to expose students to learning outside the walls of the traditional classroom.

Led by Animal Training Coordinator Jay Pratte, the groundwork of the project first began in the hands of zookeepers. As specialized animal caretakers, zookeepers identified seven mysterious behavioral concerns associated with specific species or groups of species. The concerns were then shared with the student collaborators. The behaviors ranged from unique licking behaviors exhibited by giraffes to the seemingly detached behavior of a father lemur. Faced with a handful of puzzling research scenarios, students were tasked with observing and documenting the behaviors of their assigned species and reporting their findings back to the zookeepers.

SJS students observe the monkeys in the Lied Jungle at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

In addition to providing the Henry Doorly Zoo with valuable time-consuming research, this project trained UNO students to use sophisticated methods of scientific study and practice critical thinking. UNO Teacher Assistant Kristen Cunningham said, “Students were able to put themselves in the shoes of real researchers and mentors.” The sixth-graders conducted research on each species and were introduced to data collection procedures by assisting UNO students in their studies. Students also exemplified a greater appreciation for the role of zoos in efforts of conservation and animal enrichment. St. James Seton teacher Shelley Brown said, “Students made connections to the animals and began to care about them.” Students were energized and ready to learn throughout the project, and their contributions led to an increased awareness of animal behavior at the zoo, which benefited zookeepers in their role as knowledgeable caretakers.

LET'S STOP IDLING!

By: Megumi Makisaka

UNO students from Instructor Farrah Grant's *Introduction to Sustainability* course and Royonna Bristol's Honors Environmental Science students at Bryan High School learned about emission impacts resulting from vehicles idling through a new service learning project. Air quality continues to be an important environmental issue in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area since the Environmental Protection Agency set tougher national air quality standards in 2015. As one of the leading agencies in this endeavor, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) was chosen as the project's community partner. MAPA manages the ozone awareness and education program called "Little Steps. Big Impact," to inform the public about the ozone issue and works closely with various schools in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

MAPA assisted students in measuring ozone concentrations in the air at various locations at Bryan High School by using Aeroqual Series 500 portable ozone monitors. The students detected a higher concentration of ozone closer to the parking lots. UNO and Bryan High School students also developed communication projects, which aimed to inform campus users about maintaining air quality and an idle free zone. Broken into five groups, students presented their communication projects at the final celebration held at UNO in December.

The students presented alongside other service learning projects such as Sustainable Materials Management, Wildlife Safari and Water Quality at the first ever UNO-OPS Joint Research Symposium. UNO and Bryan High School students gained a scientific understanding of air quality and an understanding of the multitude of ways their actions and transportation choices impact human health, economic sustainability, and overall environmental quality.

“Students are realizing the importance of communicating science in an effective manner. As we worked through this project, several have commented that they did not realize ground-level ozone was an issue. Service learning develops a deeper sense of community.”

Farrah Grant, UNO Instructor

Bryan High School student and teacher Royonna Bristol use the Aeroqual Series 500 portable ozone monitors.



P-16



SUMMER SEMINAR

July 8-12, 2019

Seminar is an interactive training for UNO and P-12 educators on how to use service learning as a method of teaching. Attending seminar is the first step in getting plugged in to service learning. Check out what some Seminar attendees had to say!

"I appreciated the intentional programming. As an entire experience I feel my learning was enhanced with the balance of direct instruction, discussion, partner work, networking, and individual reflection."

"Hoo boy, all sessions were relevant, exercises were fun, days went fast (in a good way!)"

"I enjoyed learning more about the process of service learning. I enjoyed the lunch and learns because I learned about a nonprofit I did not know about and it makes me excited to bring this information back to my school."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Registration can be found at www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning
Service Learning Academy | 402.554.6019 | unosla@unomaha.edu

SLA'S NEWEST STAFF MEMBER



Brandon Carrillo

Brandon Carrillo is the SLA's Weitz Fellow. Carrillo joined the Service Learning Academy in August of 2018. His position includes working closely with the SLA Community Liaison Kirsten Case to help see many traditional projects come to life. Carrillo received his B.A. in Psychology and Studio Art from Carleton College and plans on using his background in research to enhance the good work the SLA does on a day-to-day basis. During his time at the SLA, Carrillo will be co-planning one of SLA's biggest events, CultureFest!

Being passionate about learning has led Carrillo to the SLA and contributed to his hopes of being accepted into a PhD program in Cognitive Psychology after finishing his time at the SLA. Academia has been a huge component of his life and he realizes that he wants it to remain that way. Carrillo encourages students and faculty to become involved in the SLA. "The possibilities are endless when it comes to learning and gaining knowledge," said Carrillo, "but it's up to you on how engaged you are in your learning and how you use such engagement for the betterment of not just yourself, but also for the community you serve." When not at the SLA, Carrillo enjoys continuing his art practice, playing tennis and enjoying everything Omaha has to offer - including the food! The SLA is very excited to have Carrillo on board as the new 2018-19 Weitz Fellow!

CONTACT US

Julie Dierberger
Paul Sather Distinguished Director
jdierberger@unomaha.edu
402.554.3268

LaTrina Parker
P-16 Coordinator
ldparker@unomaha.edu
402.554.3713

Angie Carlton
Service Learning Associate
acarlton@unomaha.edu
402.554.2712

Kirsten Case
Community Liaison
kcase2@unomaha.edu
402.554.4043

Kaitlin Carlson
Administrative Technician
kaitlincarlson@unomaha.edu
402.554.6019

Brandon Carrillo
Weitz Fellow
bcarrillo@unomaha.edu
402.554.3055

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Sanaa Ahmed
402.554.2238

Katie Lorenzen
402.554.4469

Amanda Anderson
402.554.4461

Megumi Makisaka
402.554.4462

Mustapha Barry
402.554.4465

Socorrito Salcido
402.554.4463

Stephanie Diaz
402.554.4470

Kayla Zebrowski
402.554.4466

Jessica Foreman
402.554.4468

Amy Zeller
402.554.4464

Tracy Gilman
402.554.4467

STUDENT WORKERS

Wisdom Folly

Tracy Ingram

Jackson Hardin

McKenzie Michalek

Jen Hohenberger

Aaron Young



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
 SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY
 216 BARBARA WEITZ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER
 6001 DODGE STREET | OMAHA, NE 68182

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SERVICE LEARNING SEMINAR 2019

July 8-12, 2019

Register at: sla.unomaha.edu | 402.554.6019

SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 1 | FALL 2018



Cover Photo: Thompson Learning Community Specialist Tyler Payne teaches King Science and Technology Magnet student and TLC Sophomore the importance of preserving the garden at Malcolm X Memorial Foundation. The students pulled weeds and laid cardboard down to keep the soil fresh and protected during the winter months. Learn more about this service learning project on page seven in the newsletter.

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