A Year in Review!

Community Service 100

Mission

During this past year, students enrolled in CMSV 100 contributed 12,000 hours to more than 40 organizations in the Greater Springfield community and beyond. Benefitting students and the community, the service experience allows each student to discern his or her role as a servant leader within the liberal arts tradition and to strengthen ties between the university and community. The CMSV 100 Outcome Summary reports from the fall and spring semesters showed that more than 93% of students were satisfied with the CMSV 100 experience. Students also benefited from new RAP (Reflection, Action, and Participation) sessions that asked them to think about what in their experience allowed them to attend and recognize the need of others and to explore a shared value of service across different faith traditions.

A Year in Review - Fall 2014 CMSV 100 Student, Adam Barsow ’17

After serving in the Springfield Promise Clubs, my awareness has evolved into a catalyst for action.... I have experienced a taste of what I am capable of as a single person.

A Year in Review - Spring 2015 CMSV 100 Student, Megan Rude ’17

It is critical that we are exposed to different aspects of our community, so that we can form opinions, affirm our beliefs, and improve our character by having the opportunity to help others.

New Student Service Plunge – August 2014

The New Student Service Plunge is the first service event of the year and its purpose is to welcome new students to campus and the Springfield community. At this year’s event, more than 120 participants completed a variety of projects such as tending gardens in the Springfield Promise Neighborhood, landscaping the yard of Habitat for Humanity homes and beautifying the playground at Interfaith Hospitality Network. New students were also greeted by Professor of Religion and Director of Urban Studies, Warren Copeland, who also serves as Springfield’s mayor. This event also allows new students to interact with other incoming students, helping build connections and relationships at the start of their college experience. The New Student Service Plunge is a favorite way to welcome new students to campus and give them their first taste of service in our community.

Mini-Witt – November 2014

Make a Difference Day changed from the typical day where students and children from the community enjoy Halloween fans to an event that showed kids what it truly means to Tiger-Up. More than 70 participants went to the Wittenberg library where they experienced a day in the life of a Wittenberg student. This included an art, reading, science, and sports station. At the end of the day the children participated in a graduation ceremony where the were graduation caps that they designed during the art station.

Martin Luther King Day of Service – January 2015

In celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Community Service Program facilitated a day full of activities for elementary children based on the lessons of MLK Jr. This year students from Lincoln and Peruks elementary schools partnered with Wittenberg students to learn about courage. The participants went to three different sites—First Baptist Church, Rocking Horse Center and the Gammon House. At each site the students discussed the meaning of courage and how courage was shown throughout the decades. The event ended with students receiving a stone with the word courage inscribed on it reminding them that they too can be just as courageous as the historical figures that they learned about during the day.

Service Immersion – Spring Break 2015

During the 2015 spring break, Wittenberg proudly sent 5 years of students to various service immersion sites, which included Birmingham, AL; Decatur, AL; Lexington, KY; Mount Sinai, NY; and Morgantown, WV. Students led trips give participants the opportunity to serve with local habitat for humanity affiliates in a different community, to build new relationships with fellow students, and to experience living in a new community for an entire week. Katie Andrews ’18 said this about her experience: “Now that I know how much of a difference community service really makes, how much it touches the lives of others, I see the potential to change the world. I had thought of community service before as more of a “let’s get stuff done” kind of thing, but now I see it as more of “let’s change somebody’s life today.”

Community Engagement Scholarship

During the 2014-15 academic year, 13 Community Engagement Scholars contributed more than 600 hours of service to 10 organizations in the Greater Springfield Community. For their required junior project, three scholars educated their peers on poverty, self-esteem issues faced by young girls and the water crisis. One of three junior scholars combined her passion of environmental studies and educating children by offering a workshop at the Children’s Rescue Center on the water cycle. In addition, scholars reflected throughout the year on their generation’s desire and ability to respond to call of the nation to be active citizens.

Celebrate Service – April 2015

Each year the Community Service Program ends the year with a celebration of service, and this year we especially strove to emphasize the celebration part of the event. Students participated in six different outdoor service projects, which Youth Service America and the Sodexo Foundation helped support. Eric Smith, the community coordinator for the Springfield Promise Neighborhood, describes this event by stating “In just a couple of hours, four backyard gardens were installed, several children and their families engaged at the Lincoln Elementary School garden, food pantry clients received the gifts of help and beauty, two community gardens were prepped for the season, and the Tuliver peace garden was refurbished. This was all a sign of positive change.” Following the service portion, participants returned to campus to celebrate Wittenberg’s connection to the Springfield community. Students also made stepping stones in an effort to support Wittenberg’s own community garden.

Super Service Saturdays and Sundays

Super Service Saturdays and Sundays are our bi-monthly service days that provide a refreshing day of service to break the monotony of classroom during the semester. This year began with an event called Love Pool, Hate Waste. This interfaith event inspired students to serve their community by advocating for awareness on the topic of food insecurity. The participants ended the day with a discussion on how various faiths implores the devotion of service to others. In February, participants had a hands-on experience service day where they painted at Interfaith Hospitality Network afterwards they went to a local restaurant and enjoyed burritos. The last service day had a spring theme at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery. Springfield students made Easter bags for 50 children from the Children’s Rescue Center. Each event strives to include a Springfield excursion with the hope that students will discover a new asset within their community.

2015 Service Award Winners

Each year, the Community Service Committee honors those who demonstrate a commitment to and passion for service. The three awards are the Community Service Champion Award (Allysa Hughes ’15), the Excellence in Community Service Award (Dr. John Ritter), and the Charles J. Ping Student Community Service Award (Megan White ’15). Only weeks after arriving on campus, Alyssa was engaged in service with Springfield Promise Neighborhood, and she continued this commitment for her entire four years at Wittenberg. She made Springfield her home and built meaningful relationships with people in the community who are working tirelessly every day to combat poverty and offer promise to those who need it most. As a professor of geology, Dr. Ritter has shared his gift of applied teaching with his students and has also taken a leadership role in addressing some of the most vital environmental issues facing our local environment. Megan made positive and measurable changes in the lives of girls living in the Springfield Promise Neighborhood.

Community Partner Development Series

Throughout the year we offered six development and training sessions for our community partner sites. The topics included preventing and negotiating conflict, understanding developing autonomous, an overview of the internship process, and assessing the role of the site supervisor. We ended the year with a Super Hero-themed recognition with some special entertainment provided by Wittenberg’s own improv group, Pocket Lint. The CPSF is made possible by funding from the Ruth B. and Thomas F. Mackey Charitable Gift Fund.

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