

COMMUNITY LEADER

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LOOK INSIDE

- 2 • RiverMobile fosters partnerships
- 3 • To be a Dayton Civic Scholar
- 4 • Five students; 2,400 service hours
- 6 • Giving thanks to our donors
- 8 • Beta Theta Pi in service to schools
- 10 • Equal opportunity for all
- 12 • Alumna Jessica Saunders '02

YMCA SCORES VICTORY FOR HEALTHY KIDS

BY JOANNE TROHA, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

The Dayton YMCA is serious about its war on childhood obesity, but that doesn't mean its new afterschool soccer program isn't packed with fun. Sixteen UD students were part of a small army of coaches and volunteers who helped the Y launch its *Soccer for Success* program in the fall. UD junior **Patrick Manning** described his weekly service: "It's a nice change from the college routine. It lets me get out to see more important issues."

Soccer, research shows, is one of the most effective sports in preventing childhood obesity, pre-diabetes, and hypertension. The Dayton YMCA was one of only 13 groups selected nationally by the U.S. Soccer Foundation to bring soccer, nutrition education, and mentoring to at-risk neighborhoods. The program will be offered to students for the next two years, throughout the fall and spring, for free. In addition, part of the grant will monitor the program's

effect on children's health by conducting both pre and post testing for body mass index, blood pressure, and aerobic capacity.

Last fall, 800 children participated at 16 sites throughout Montgomery County and Greene County, including four of Dayton's Neighborhood School Centers. At Kiser PreK-8, the program is especially popular; more than 100 children are registered. **Teresa Wendell**, Neighborhood School Center site coordinator, attributes the interest to people's familiarity with soccer among various nationalities.

UD students **Michaela Herrick**, **Jake Motto**, **Patrick Manning**, and **Lukus Krueger** also chose soccer duties at Kiser to fulfill a service-learning requirement for **Dr. Theo Majka's** urban sociology course. Michaela Herrick said, "My experiences have taught me that no individual has to give all of their time. But by giving some, we can make an impact." 



Mark Hawk, junior UD student, takes a break from playing soccer with Cleveland PK-8 students to pose for a picture with Cleveland site coordinator Mary Case.



RIVERMOBILE FOSTERS PARTNERSHIPS, LEARNING

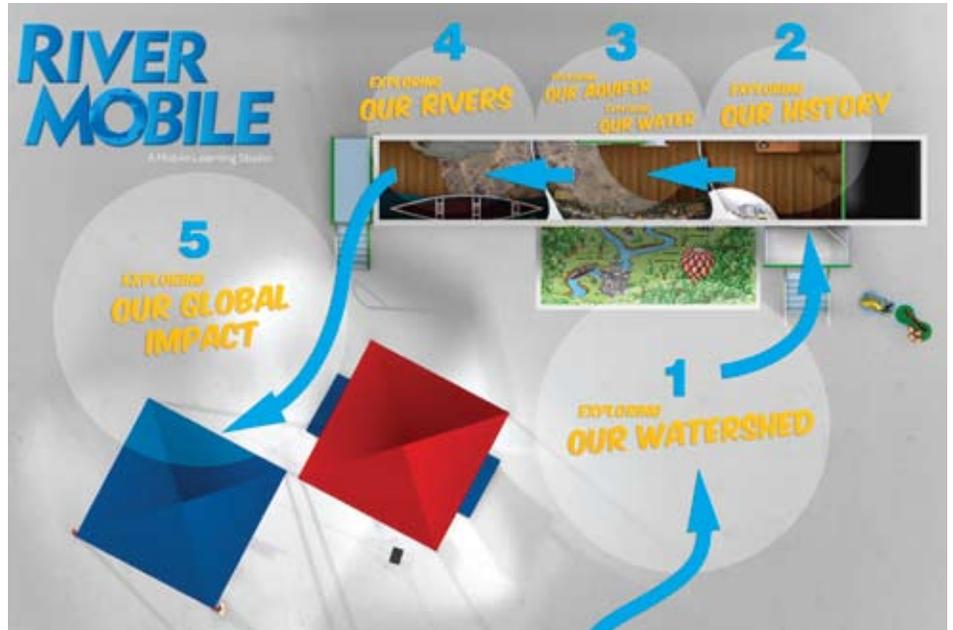
BY BETHANY RENNER, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, RIVERS INSTITUTE

Strong partnerships will be vital to bringing the RiverMobile to local students of all ages across our region. The 53-foot tractor-trailer converted into a mobile learning studio will travel to schools and communities throughout the Greater Miami Watershed. The RiverMobile contains five classrooms focusing on three overarching themes: develop pride in the region, provide knowledge of Dayton's river system, and develop personal responsibility for the protection of local water resources and the environment.

Community partners, such as Adventure Central, play a pivotal role in providing feedback and practice for the River Stewards. In order to understand the importance of these relationships, River Stewards recently spent a Friday mini-course visiting Adventure Central. The partnering site provided insight for the River Stewards on the history of Adventure Central's educational outreach, how to best serve Dayton's youth, and why these collaborations are so essential to the Rivers Institute.

Nate Arnett, director of Adventure Central, believes the partnership is beneficial for both the participants and the leaders of the RiverMobile experience: "The primary value of the relationship between the River Stewards and Adventure Central is having a friendly and forgiving place to test new lessons and planned activities." Adventure Central will continue to serve as a location where the River Stewards can gain confidence and practice their roles as interpretative guides.

In addition to being interpreters, the Stewards will also lead the development of the curriculum guide and volunteer programming. While taking on this project, the River Stewards will continue to deepen their understanding of our rivers and enhance their leadership skills.



PHOTOS: LARRY BURGESS

Through their experiences thus far, the River Stewards have been able to connect with one another and share their passion for being Stewards of our rivers. **Stephanie Clafford**, junior River Steward, revealed that the current cohorts are thrilled to be guides of the RiverMobile and are passionate about making sure the RiverMobile will continue to be a student led initiative.

"What began as a concept presented to us at a mini-course has become a beneficial tool to use throughout the community. We have a big job ahead of us, but I am confident that each River Steward will rise up to meet

Top: A bird's-eye view shows the RiverMobile's classrooms and lessons. Bottom left: Bethany Renner provides a tour of the RiverMobile during a Nov. 30 reception. Bottom right: River Stewards, along with faculty, staff and community partners, enjoyed a sneak peek during a reception at Exhibit Concepts.

the challenge," Clafford said. "As the RiverMobile quickly comes to life, the River Stewards' excitement is rapidly growing as well. During the RiverMobile discussion at Adventure Central, the excitement was obvious. The RiverMobile completion is only the beginning of the journey." 

MORE THAN A DIPLOMA: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLAR

BY MARINA LOCASTO, STUDENT INTERN, DAYTON CIVIC SCHOLAR

I have learned that being a Dayton Civic Scholar is an educational choice. You can choose to go to class, to do your homework, and to graduate, but you can also choose to let the people you serve be your teachers and let interning guide your professional path.

As a Dayton Civic Scholar, you are able to establish your own identity, develop your capstone project, and determine the impact your project will have. The best part of the program is that no one tells you exactly what to do; you figure it out on your own and choose how you will impact the community. Through the capstone project, individuals are brought together to create change.

The 60-hour civic engagement commitment for each semester provided me with a new understanding of service. As a Dayton Civic Scholar, I have had the opportunity to work with a wide variety of communities within Dayton,

such as tutoring at the African Christian Center for refugees, serving dinner to families at St. Vincent De Paul gateway shelter, and, my most recent service commitment, monitoring court-mandated family visitations at Erma's House, part of Catholic Social Services of Miami Valley.

Being an intern through the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community has also helped me build a better understanding of the Dayton Civic Scholars program. I have been exposed to the endless possibilities of professional networking. I open my email every day and read messages from city officials, community partners, social workers, and active citizens. Having access to these connections reminds me that I am making my mark on the greater Dayton community.

With the help from my colleagues and resources at the Fitz Center, I have been able to connect my academics to

the community as well. My senior thesis focuses on restorative justice programs in the city of Dayton. In the future, I hope to continue my research on how to re-integrate previous offenders into the Dayton community.

Through the Fitz Center, I have been exposed to a social network of not like-minded people, but like-valued people. These people are students, faculty, and community members who care about the same things I do. I have met some of my best friends through this program.

Having the gift of education can be taken for granted. Not taking full advantage of that is something my identity as a Dayton Civic Scholar would never allow.

Below: Senior DCS cohort presented the findings of their capstone project, Destination Dayton. From left are Katherine Repic, Marina LoCasto, Kyle Grabowski, Kelsey Loughman, Nicholette Smith and Amy Sullivan.



PASSION BREEDS STUDENT PROFESSIONALS

BY CHARLES ROBERTS, COORDINATOR, SEMESTER OF SERVICE

One semester plus five students plus five community partners equals 2,400 hours of service to the Dayton community.

During fall 2012, Semester of Service had five full-time interns. **Michael Trick**, senior finance and entrepreneurship major from Dayton, worked with Daybreak; **Olivia Farrell**, senior psychology major from Columbus, Ohio, worked with East End Community Services; **Laura Janosko**, senior psychology major from Quaker City, Ohio, worked with Adventure Central; **Thomas DeCastr**, junior operations management major from Newburgh, Ind., worked with Life Essentials; and **Brittany Sanders**, junior religious studies major from Decatur, Ind., worked with the Dakota Center.

Watching the transformation of these five students over the course of the semester has been a gratifying experience. The cohort began the semester with little knowledge of nonprofit work and urban neighborhoods, however, they were able to complete the semester as professionals with passion. One of our site supervisors was so impressed,

she remarked, “Can we have five more interns just like them?”

Semester of Service has been successful recruiting volunteers for spring 2013. Out of 14 outstanding candidates, five students have been selected for the spring semester. The cohort includes **Emily Wilhelm**, senior psychology major from Dayton, working with East End Community Services; **Karen Lehan**, junior pre-medicine and Spanish double major from DeKalb, Ill., working with Adventure Central; **Eric Gammarino**, senior psychology major from Cincinnati, working with Daybreak; **Hannah Reilly**, senior entrepreneurship and marketing double major from Kirtland, Ohio, working with the Dakota Center; and **Greg Mancini**, junior biology major from Hinckley, Ohio, working at Life Essentials. We look forward to the transformation these students will undergo over the next four months.

Semester of Service is now recruiting 10 interns for summer 2013 and five interns for fall 2013. The application deadline for both semesters is Friday, Feb. 13, 2013. Spread the word! 



New outlooks

THOMAS DECASTRA: “The most important thing I’ve learned from my experience at Life Essentials is how blessed I am. Through the program Motivate to Integrate, I worked with clients who have mental illnesses and are unable to make decisions on their own. Spending time with these individuals has helped me realize that some people go through their whole lives without recognizing how blessed they are to have a competent mind. As an aspiring business leader, I hope that one day I will be able to support the mentally ill community so they can have a renewed sense of dignity in their lives. I will forever be changed by this experience.”

BRITTANY SANDERS: “I’ve enjoyed every minute of my Semester of Service at the Dakota Center. The Dakota Center is an afterschool program where I tutored, played games with kids, and planned arts and crafts activities. My favorite days were the ones when the kids would run up to me and tell me about their day. I’m blessed to have witnessed their successes, and I loved celebrating with them after they proved to themselves they can complete their homework or maybe make a new friend. Although it’s easy for most to get distracted by their loudness, their choice of language, and their high energy levels, I’ve witnessed that these kids have a great zeal for life. Through this experience, I’ve been taught how important it is to love others and that life is too short to take anything too seriously.”

Shown from left are Brittany Saunders, Michael Trick, Olivia Farrell, Laura Janosko, and Thomas DeCastr.

RECOGNITION AND FAREWELL WISHES

BY BROTHER ED ZAMIEROWSKI, SENIOR ADVISOR, SEMESTER OF SERVICE,
AND JOANNE TROHA, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

As the fall 2012 semester came to a close, the Fitz Center staff said farewell to three valued team members: Charles Roberts, Kristin Whalen, and Colin Gerker.

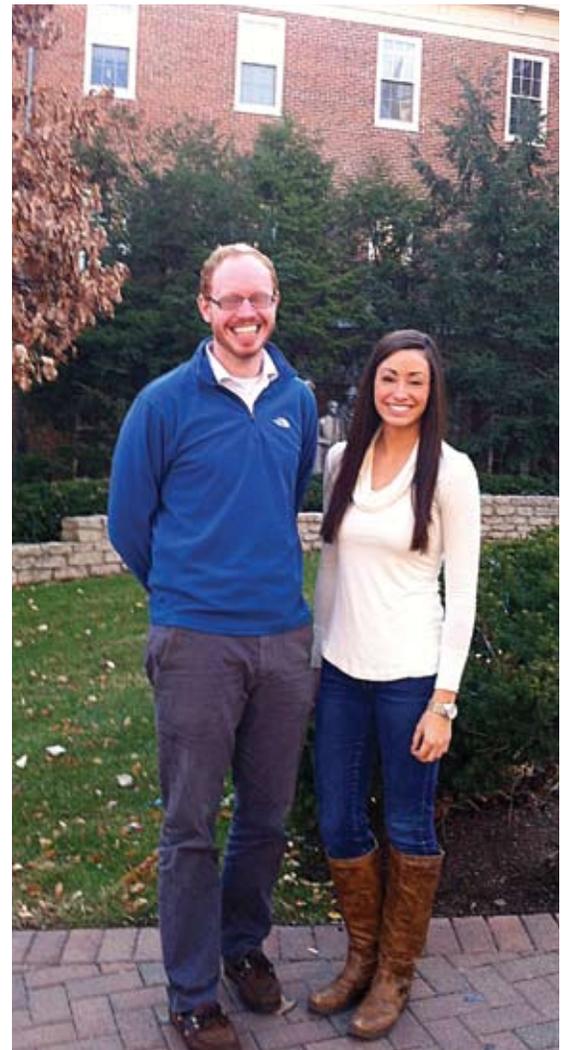
Charles Roberts (below, back row, with fall Semester of Service cohort) left the Fitz Center in December 2012 after serving five semesters as coordinator of Semester of Service. Currently, Charles is completing field requirements as an intern therapist at New Creation Counseling Center and will graduate in August 2013 with an M.S.Ed in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. As a father of four home-schooled children, he has developed an endearing capacity for caring for others. In addition, his service in the Air Force has provided him with useful organizational skills that will serve him well as a counselor. A student from the 2012 Semester of Service summer cohort said it best in her final evaluation, “Charles is a great support system! He really listens to any concerns voiced and focuses on helping you in every way he can.” We wish him well in his future endeavors.

Kristin Whalen (right) was a timely addition to the Fitz Center service-learn-

ing team. Three years ago, she came on board as a sophomore accounting major and, in four-and-a-half years, she earned both a bachelor’s degree and an MBA. The team benefited greatly as Kristin’s creative problem-solving kept pace with the number of UD students it tracks. Last year, more than 800 UD students were involved in service at the Neighborhood School Centers. Kristin quickly saw the need to create an efficient and practical way to manage and track those placements. According to Kristin, “The School of Business Administration encourages us to bring a business perspective to any situation we encounter and to identify which problems call for business skills.” Kristin is now working at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Chicago, and we offer her our best wishes and deepest thanks.

Another valuable member of the Fitz Center team also graduated in December. **Colin Gerker** (right) earned a Master’s in Human Services Administration and finished a busy, but fulfilling, year-and-a-half as a graduate assistant supporting UD service learning in the Neighborhood School Centers. Colin’s trademark could easily be: “How can I be of help?” Everyone Colin worked

with — on and off campus — came to appreciate his organizational skills and readiness to pitch in. Service learning is built on relationships, and Colin set an example of never skipping an opportunity to strengthen rapport and understanding by giving people his undivided attention. In the process, he secured some long-term commitments from UD groups, such as Beta Theta Pi (see Page 12). Colin also coordinated UD volunteers for the schools’ one-time events. As a prime example, Colin scheduled 280 UD helpers from 32 student organizations for Trunk or Treat events last October. Congratulations and thank you, Colin! 



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Between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2012, the Fitz Center received financial support from 233 alumni, friends, and foundations totaling \$252,007. *Thank you, Fitz Center donors, for your continued support.*

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BETA THETA PI MAKES 10-YEAR SERVICE-LEARNING COMMITMENT TO NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL CENTERS

BY COLIN GERKER, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

In providing high-quality contributions to Dayton's Neighborhood School Centers, the Fitz Center's service-learning team continues to help partnerships to grow among UD faculty, living-learning communities, and student organizations. These relationships are carefully constructed, asset-based, and sustained by a shared vision.

In January 2012, the leadership of the Beta Theta Pi social fraternity (pictured below) inquired about committing to service learning within the Neighborhood School Centers. In collaboration with the Fitz Center, a plan was developed to engage at least 50 percent of Beta Theta Pi members in weekly commitments for the next 10 years. **Mark Hawk**, junior and former Beta Theta Pi president, stated, "Going to the Neighborhood School Centers and prioritizing one's schedule to fit the needs of the schools is very important, especially in regard to establishing long-lasting relationships. Kids need service learners

who are conscientious and will never let them down."

Jeremy Garcia Vinluan, Beta Theta Pi member and 2012 UD graduate, connected his time spent in the Neighborhood School Centers to UD's three-word challenge for students and alumni. He stated, "Living out UD's Learn, Lead, and Serve ethic was the logical thing to do. Helping young students learn how to read and write each week was a great experience and is something I will never forget."

Examples like Beta Theta Pi provide the service-learning team with a clearer vision for the future of organized partnerships. As the service-learning work progresses in association with the Neighborhood School Centers, the Fitz Center continues to welcome organizations and individuals that have a passion to lead and serve. Involvement is encouraged even if it's for just one event, one week, or one semester.

New relationships continue to develop among faculty, including **Brother Tom Farnsworth, S.M., Simanti Dasgupta, Ph.D., Joel Schickel, Ph.D., Jennifer Dalton, Lori Phillips-Young, Kara Getrost, Ph.D., and Margaret Strain, Ph.D.**

Continuing this year are **Monalisa Mullins, Ph.D., Jeanne Holcomb, Ph.D., Theo Majka, Ph.D., Danielle Poe, Ph.D., Nick Cardilino, Janis Krugh, Ph.D., Virginia Keen, Ph.D., Melissa Layman-Guadalupe, Ph.D., Cindy Currell, Irene Dickey, Dental Interest Group, Dance Team, Men's Club Rugby, Rivers Institute, Dayton Civic Scholars, Gamma Epsilon Lambda service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, Appalachia Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Epsilon Delta Upsilon education fraternity, Association for Young Children, Collegiate to Adolescence to Young Adult Education Group, Council for Exceptional Children, and the Collegiate Middle Level Association.** 



STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE AS COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

BY VERONICA PAULSON, GRADUATE ASSISTANT, FITZ CENTER

For the past 18 years, **Dick Ferguson**, **Don Vermillion**, and **Brother Ray Fitz, S.M.**, have taught the Leadership in Building Communities seminar. This class is based on the Fitz Center's five key principles of building community: assets, social capital, adaptive capacity, a widely shared vision, and constructive conversation that balances inquiry and advocacy.

This seminar is truly a unique experience for the undergraduate and graduate students who are eligible to enroll. Each fall, a new group of students participates in the seminar and work with a neighborhood in the city of Dayton. Students are able to build relationships with community members they may never have met and truly learn what it means to work toward a widely shared vision.

This year, the Leadership in Building Communities seminar worked with the Walnut Hills neighborhood. Students were first introduced to the Walnut Hills community on a tour in September that included insight from leaders of the Neighborhood School Center, Cleveland Pre K-8, and the Walnut Hills Neighborhood Association. In October, students invited citizens from the Walnut Hills community to a meeting focused on analyzing issues within the community and developed an approach to properly address their interests and needs.

After collecting ideas from the community, students met in small groups that focused on housing, schools and students, leadership, and neighborhood families. In order to determine which issues needed to be focused on most, students reflected on the progress of the neighborhood over the last five years and wrote a report. Students then developed change frameworks that focused on the current circumstances of the neighborhood and the community's future expectations.

Right: Walnut Hills neighborhood, this year's Leadership in Building Communities seminar partner, has a beautiful park overlooking the city. Below: Seminar students Paige Singleton, Alyssa Bovell, and Alisa Vidulich listen to ideas of neighborhood leaders. In class, Brother Ray Fitz helps students focus their analyses.



These frameworks allowed students to identify gaps and pinpoint projects they thought would best fit the bill for what the neighborhood was looking to accomplish. Once the frameworks were complete, students met with the community a second time in November to ask for their input on the potential projects.

The final meeting with the Walnut Hills neighborhood was held Dec. 5. Students presented their full report to the community that summarized issues that have occurred over the past five years as well as a plan of action that could be used to improve their neighborhood over the course of the next five years. 

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

BY JEN HODULIK, STUDENT INTERN, FITZ CENTER

The Welcome Dayton initiative has drawn much attention to the city of Dayton and its residents. According to Kiser Neighborhood School Center site coordinator **Teresa Wendell**, Dayton is the “Plymouth Rock” for immigrants. She said, “When immigrants settle in this area, they come to Old North Dayton first. They feel most comfortable here.”

Over the past several decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of Turkish, Latino and African immigrants to the Dayton area. In order to better serve these individuals, the city of Dayton implemented the Welcome Dayton initiative in April 2011 with goals to establish relationships among immigrant individuals and the community, offer more educational opportunities for adults, promote cross-cultural programming, and involve youth in community building projects.

Determined to make a profound impact on their community and support the initiative’s mission in promoting cohesiveness, Dayton’s Neighborhood School

Centers have worked hard to better serve the needs of their immigrant populations.

KISER PREK- 8

Teresa Wendell worked for the city of Dayton for 19 years and is currently the site coordinator at Kiser PreK-8, a position she has held for three years. Through her experiences as the Salvation Army site coordinator, Wendell has witnessed a major increase in the school’s Turkish population.

In order to encourage student interaction with Turkish students, afterschool programs are held, including the school’s soccer program. Guest presenters, anti-bullying programs, and Turkish cultural events are offered for parents and students in order to generate awareness of different cultures and encourage others to be more accepting of diversity. “Kiser is considered to be a Welcome Center and is designated as such by the Welcome Dayton initiative. Although we’re in the beginning phase of this process, we’re striving to bring the community together through what we are as a school. We’ve

made a conscious effort to nurture the people,” Wendell shared.

One of the most successful programs Kiser has had is its Fast Forward program. Students are able to learn English by completing reading, interpreting, and spelling exercises on the computer. When a right or wrong answer is made, sounds alert students that their answer is correct or incorrect. After students complete their work, responses are graded right away. Teachers are able to immediately assess what areas students struggle in and how to better target their learning.

FAIRVIEW PREK- 8

At Fairview PreK-8, the student body has grown to include individuals from multiple African countries including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal, Sudan, and Ethiopia. To help ease the transition of becoming a part of the Dayton community, African Family Nights are held and community members collect uniform donations and host book-bag auctions for immigrant students. An ESL teacher and volunteers work with immigrant students to enrich their learning process. In the future, Fairview plans to offer Swahili lessons for teachers.

According to **Angela Moss**, Fairview PreK-8 site coordinator, Fairview is privileged to have a community of strong supporters consisting of parents, teachers, and police officers. Partnerships have also been made with neighborhood churches that specialize in serving the needs of African refugees.

“We’ve made a conscious effort to better identify with these individuals,” said Moss. “We’ve started asking, ‘What do you need? How can we help?’ instead of just assuming we know. It’s important that we ask questions so that we can really help these people.”





RUSKIN PREK- 8

Ruskin PreK-8 is one of the most diverse schools among the Neighborhood School Centers. In the past, there has been a strong Hispanic population, but recently the school has seen an increase in its Turkish and African populations.

Ruskin focuses on being inclusive for families and providing social justice opportunities through a site-based focus. “The principal, **Devon Berry**, strives to make the kids feel a part of the community at large,” stated **Mario**, Ruskin PK-8 site coordinator. “By establishing strong relationships with the staff, he’s enabled social justice to become a big part of the education process.”

Mario says that Ruskin students are very welcoming of one another, an achievement she largely attributes to students’ involvement in afterschool programs, such as Q the Music. Q the Music is a program based on El Sistema, a music education movement that began in Venezuela. Taught by UD music professor **Dr. Sharon Gratto**, the program focuses on advocating social change by encouraging students to work together as a musical team. Mario shared, “One day, the students were learning about instruments and one of them was an African drum. A female third-grade student from Kenya recognized the drum and began dancing; she was really able to connect with her peers by giving back in this way. Situations like these are the kind we look



for as Neighborhood School Centers, ones that help to enrich us rather than act as barriers. These experiences help us in our business of preparing future citizens.” 

Photos: 1) Volunteers supervise Kiser students getting a kick out of soccer at the end of their day at the afterschool program. 2) Kiser students participate in reading into the future through the Fast Forward program. 3) Kiser kindergarten students working together take a break from their school work. 4) Students share their excitement in the Shoes for the Shoeless Program. 5) Fairview students participate in the Aullwood Science program.



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A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

BY JEN HODULIK, STUDENT INTERN, FITZ CENTER

Fitz Center alumna **Jessica Saunders** was one of the first interns in the Fitz Center. Saunders graduated from UD in 2002 with her undergraduate degree in public relations and received her Master of Public Administration degree from UD in December 2003. Saunders currently

works as the communication relations manager at the Dayton Children's Medical Center and is responsible for the hospital's community outreach, developing outside partnerships with community groups and managing the hospital's Family Resource Center.

Fitz Center taught me the importance of building and sustaining relationships. It's important that partnerships are mutually beneficial and that they impact the community in positive ways. It's not just about having connections."



As a Fitz Center intern, Saunders was in charge of initiating the first Fitz Center newsletter and working with DECA, and she was a graduate assistant for the Leadership in Building Communities seminar. Through her time spent at the Fitz Center, Saunders learned how to be an effective leader and was able to establish fundamental networking opportunities.

"I've been able to use the connections I made as an intern in the work I do now," Saunders stated. "Being a part of the

Jessica Saunders is pictured with a photo of her daughter in the library, a recent addition to the hospital, of the Dayton Children's Medical Center.

Saunders encourages students to "push the envelope," stating, "No matter where you work, you can be a leader. The Fitz Center provides you with amazing opportunities that allow you to experience different situations hands-on. Take full advantage of every opportunity the Fitz Center has to offer."

Having fallen in love with the Dayton area, Saunders chose to settle in Dayton. She is now married and has a beautiful baby girl, pictured with Saunders (left). Aside from her job as the communication relations manager, Saunders is the president-elect of the Junior League of Dayton, a nonprofit women's organization that focuses on community outreach. 

<http://fitzcenter.udayton.edu>