2016
Report to the Community
Lawrence’s Volunteer and Community Service Center created the Service Shuttle after a survey of students revealed transportation was a major barrier to student volunteerism. Groups of two or more students can request transportation to any Fox Cities nonprofit organization on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Monday–Thursday from 3 to 8 p.m.

WHERE IS THE SERVICE SHUTTLE? HERE’S A SAMPLING OF THE LOCATIONS IT VISITED DURING THE 2015–16 ACADEMIC YEAR.

1 Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley
2 Roosevelt Middle School
3 Riverview Gardens
4 Saving Paws Animal Rescue
5 Brewster Village
6 COTS
7 Harbor House
Dear Friends,

This summer, Lawrence was privileged to host a group of almost 90 Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian pre-college students representing 42 tribes from across the country for the College Horizons scholars program. They spent a week on campus preparing for the college search and application process while getting inspired to pursue higher levels of academic achievement.

We were pleased to host this program again, as part of our founding mission was to increase college access and attainment among historically underserved groups of students. College access is still a top priority today. Over the last few years, Lawrence has been working to make sure any talented and hard-working students who deserve to be here can afford to come.

Many factors that influence college readiness, however, are outside a student’s control and start long before they apply. Many studies over the past couple of decades show early childhood education—typically from ages 3 to 5—has a lot more influence on academic, and even life, trajectory than once thought. Research shows children who receive early education tend to achieve better test scores and are less likely to be held back a grade, placed in special education programs, or drop out of high school. Early childhood education also contributes to reduced crime rates, less dependence on public assistance programs, and higher annual incomes overall. Investing in early childhood education has a real individual and public benefit.

Perhaps no one knows this better than this year’s Collaboration in Action award winner, the Childhood Early Learning Center (CELC). Launched in 2014, the CELC is a multi-agency center that was formed to ensure all children under the age of 5 in the Fox Cities have the opportunity to reach their full potential. A core aspect of the CELC’s mission has been to improve school readiness—especially for children who are at risk due to experiences of poverty or other systemic stresses—through collaborative, evidence-based programs for teachers, children, and families. The CELC has welcomed extensive Lawrence faculty, staff, and student involvement in this effort. This collaborative investment in early childhood education keeps our community on the cutting edge of education research and best practices.

In youth, we see our hopes and dreams for the future. There is still much work to be done in these uncertain times, but when I see individuals and organizations like the CELC, College Horizons and the many Lawrentians in this report coming together to make a difference in the world, I believe the future is bright.

Sincerely,

Mark Burstein
President
TOP: Alison Kleppin ’16. BOTTOM LEFT: Back row (left to right): UW–Fox Valley Associate Professor of Psychology Kathy Phillippi-Immel, Brittni Adekoya ’16, Associate Professor of Psychology Beth Haines, Liana Raberg ’16, Katie Taber ’16; front row: Araceli Mena ’16, Alison Kleppin ’16. BOTTOM MIDDLE: Liana Raberg ’16. BOTTOM RIGHT: Brittni Adekoya ’16.
Before 2014, parents needing a variety of developmental, educational and child care services were required to navigate among unconnected agencies, creating challenges for families with little knowledge of each organization or reliable transportation to trek across the Fox Cities. Today, all parents need to do to investigate these services is walk down a hall.

The Community Early Learning Center (CELC) gathers five nonprofit and public organizations under one roof: Bridges Child Enrichment Center (formerly Project Bridges), Appleton Area School District Birth-5 Programs, Even Start Family Literacy, Outagamie County Early Intervention and the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh Head Start program. Organizations that once operated separately now share space, data and resources to serve children from birth to age 5, focusing on different aspects of early childhood development and intervention to ensure that all children—especially those from low-income backgrounds—have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

However, financial barriers and the lack of a viable space prevented organizations from coming together. When Catholic Central Elementary School in Appleton announced plans to close by 2014, community leaders saw an opportunity to finally bring the CELC to life.

Lawrence faculty and staff have been involved from day one. Associate Professor of Psychology Beth Haines and David Burrows, provost and dean of the faculty, served on the planning and implementation team during the CELC’s early stages. Haines, who chairs the center’s research committee, led efforts to create an ongoing assessment plan. She and Assistant Professor of Statistics Adam Loy, along with UW–Fox Valley Associate Professor of Psychology Kathy Philippi-Immel, also helped develop a shared database for the five agencies.

Supported and maintained by Lawrence, the database centralizes data about children and families, facilitating needs assessment analyses and enabling CELC organizations to track children’s progress over time. This is particularly beneficial for catching developmental delays and implementing early treatment.

Under Haines’ guidance, Lawrence students have conducted screenings and data analysis each summer since the CELC opened. They have also gained real-world experience by working in CELC classrooms. “It’s really nice for them to be able to not just read about why these programs are in place, but to actually help out,” says Haines. “When they do fieldwork, they volunteer. They’re not just observing.”

“I had the opportunity to interact with different age groups, which made this project even more impactful because I was not just entering data from some screening tool, but I was also getting the chance to interact with students on a daily basis,” says Araceli Mena ’16, who majored in psychology and Spanish. “After getting to know the students, I realized the importance of using these types of screening tools.”

By integrating applied research with collaborative program planning, Lawrence enables the CELC to make the most of limited staff time and money. In turn, the CELC has been able to maximize the benefits to young children and families in the Fox Cities.

“Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of quality early care and education in improving social and emotional development and school readiness, helping reduce the costs of remediation and increasing the benefits of a productive citizenry,” says CELC Board President Jon Stellmacher. “As we elevate attention to the importance of the early years and their long-term impact on school and life success, we add one more excellent reason why this is a wonderful community in which to live and work.”
We waste an abundance of food, while many families in our own community go hungry or do not have access to a reliable supply of nutritious foods.

—Rachel Gregory '17
Feeding the Fox Cities

Lawrence students are helping provide healthy meals and education for Appleton-area families in need.

Food for Fox, the brainchild of Shang Li ’16, Rachel Gregory ’17 and Malcolm Lunn-Craft ’17 and a product of Lawrence’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program, and the Lawrence Food Recovery Network have teamed up to reduce food waste and help clients of two local nonprofits: Harbor House Domestic Abuse Shelter and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley.

Beyond simple nutrition, Food for Fox’s goal is to support education through these donated meals.

“Food is a very powerful thing,” says Li, who helped establish a campus chapter of the Food Recovery Network in 2014. “We want to partner with local organizations to provide educational sessions for the children and their families on the importance of establishing healthy eating habits, especially at a young age.”

Various student groups of volunteers help collect unused food from Andrew Commons in the Warch Campus Center for regular deliveries to the nonprofits. The donations support a monthly meal for children and families at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley.

“The biggest benefit of this program is being able to open the meal up to our members’ families,” says Holly Purgett, Healthy Habits Food Program coordinator at the Boys & Girls Clubs. “Socially speaking, this event encourages families to have a meal together and spend quality time with one another on a Friday night. Our kids are proud to bring their parents, siblings and grandparents to the club and show them where they spend much of their time.”

Gregory, an environmental studies major, was drawn to Food for Fox in part because of her interests in sustainability.

“We waste an abundance of food, while many families in our own community go hungry or do not have access to a reliable supply of nutritious foods,” she says. “We are melding two problems together to create a solution.”

In its first year of operation (May 2014 to June 2015), the Food Recovery Network collected more than 5,000 pounds of leftovers. Li proposed the Food for Fox idea last fall to the Food Recovery Network’s new leadership team, Sarah Diamond ’17 and Lindsay Holsen ’18. Harbor House and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley became the new beneficiaries.

The students involved see the two programs growing and expanding their reach in the years ahead, including operating during summer and winter breaks.

“I hope over the next five to 10 years, the program increases awareness to food-related issues,” says Gregory. “We want to introduce the kids to delicious, healthy foods they might not have tried before, which will give way to healthy lifelong eating habits. Economically, Food for Fox could even increase economic efficiency among our donors as they begin to take note of which foods are often left over. In our work this term, we tried to build a simple, logical model that can be applied to many different locations so that the program expands throughout the Fox Valley, Wisconsin and the Midwest.”
Community service and engagement have always been pillars of the Lawrence student experience, but one campus organization has elevated the volunteering experience in the past few years in partnership with key Fox Valley organizations.

The Rotaract Club of Lawrence University, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Appleton, is a service, leadership and community service organization for young adults. “Rotaract” stands for “Rotary in Action”; Bimalsen Rajbhandari ’17 founded the LU chapter in 2014.

In its first year alone, Rotaract recruited more than 70 active members and served a total of more than 500 hours in the community. “Rotaractors,” as they call themselves, partnered with local organizations like Riverview Gardens, Friends of Appleton Schools and World Relief Fox Valley on community projects.

Throughout each academic year, the club hosts campus cleanups, park cleanups and talks on pressing global issues, such as world hunger. Each week, the club leads service outings to Loaves & Fishes in Appleton and St. Joseph’s Food Pantry in Menasha. Rotaract even collaborated with Greenfire, the Fox Valley Sierra Club and other community partners to organize an Earth Day hike.

Rotaract’s impact extends beyond the Fox Cities and even the United States. The club is working with KidsGive, the Rotary Club of Appleton and others to improve the quality of water in eastern Freetown, Sierra Leone, by funding and building a solar-powered well. The club also held a Nepal relief concert featuring performances from local groups such as the Appleton Boychoir and raised $3,200 to build a clinic in Nepal in the aftermath of the country’s devastating earthquake last year.

Club member Tamanna Akram ’18 says “the diversity of the Rotaract board and the mentorship from local Rotarians who are also committed to doing good” are unique aspects of the LU club.

One of those mentors is Gary Vaughan, coordinator of Lawrence’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program and a member of the Rotary Club of Appleton. Vaughan emphasized Rotaractors “can be part of Rotary in Appleton as well as their home state or country. They have that connection, so they can be a part of something here and continue it after they leave.”

Indeed, when asked about her favorite part of Rotaract, club president Ali Fuller ’17 says “all the wonderful people I’ve connected with, because the whole Rotary organization is an amazing community that knows no geographic bounds.”
Through a collaboration with the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, United Way Fox Cities and Oshkosh Area United Way, Lawrence is proud to be a Funding Information Network (FIN) location, providing free public access to a collection of grant funding resources in the college’s Seeley G. Mudd Library.

As one of only seven FIN partners in Wisconsin, Lawrence provides local grant seekers free access to the Foundation Center’s extensive searchable database on grant makers any time the library is open, as well as guidance on how to find and apply for grants through a series of workshops. For more information or to check for upcoming classes, go to guides.lib.lawrence.edu/funding.

FIN workshops at Lawrence

BY THE NUMBERS

• More than 250 grants class attendees from more than 100 different community organizations (from faith-based to municipalities, nonprofits to schools, local youth services to international aid, museums to public health)

• More than 6,200 total searches since Lawrence’s Funding Information Network (FIN) location opened in spring 2015
In Our Own Backyard

Richard Amankwah ’06
Physician, Thedacare

Where does your Lawrence education show up in your life?
As a physician, I have to make critical decisions every day. The ability to critically analyze medical information and data and make medical decisions that affect patients’ health is a skill I believe I have, in part, due to the rigorous and broad educational experience I received at Lawrence.

What’s your favorite part of your job?
That I get to take care of people from all walks of life with different life experiences. I get to help people, especially the very sick and dying. Also, the knowledge and wisdom I get from my interactions with different patients are immense.

Where do you volunteer?
I mentor younger students who are considering medicine as a career. I have had some of them come shadow me in the hospital.

What’s the best part about living in the Fox Cities?
Everyone is so nice and family-oriented. It’s a great place to raise a family.
Many Lawrentians choose to make the Fox Cities their home after graduation and invest their time and talents in our communities.

Jarrad Bittner ’10
Executive director, The Building for Kids

Where does your Lawrence education show up in your life?
I went to Lawrence with the intention of becoming a professional tuba player. Lawrence gave me plenty of opportunities to pursue that career path, while also encouraging me to explore the other side of the arts—concert production, arts administration and entrepreneurship. The combination of the two sides of the arts—performing and administration—helped to define who I am as a leader today.

What’s your favorite part of your job?
This is always a tough question to answer; there are many great things. I get to work for an organization that has a huge impact on our community and I have a lot of variety in my responsibilities. But ultimately, it comes down to the people I get to work with.

Where do you volunteer?
I am an active member of the Optimist Club and the Kiwanis Club. I am also a board member for Kiwanis and Vento Winds, a local professional wind ensemble, and have volunteered for the Fox Valley Symphony.

How can we as a community make the Fox Cities a better place?
The Fox Cities has made great strides in becoming more accepting of individuals and families of different lifestyles and cultures, but there is still room to grow. I applaud the diversity awareness initiatives that both the Fox Cities and Lawrence are taking up—they are so important to the growth and future of our community.

Jaclyn Kottman ’12
Choral teacher, Classical School, Einstein Middle School
Voice instructor and conductor, Lawrence Academy of Music

What’s your favorite part of your job?
I love seeing middle schoolers embrace the arts, specifically singing, as an enriching part of their lives and a vehicle for self-expression and connecting with others. Middle schoolers are fun to work with because there’s constant change and self-discovery happening for them on all levels—they can seem like new people every time they come into the classroom.

Where do you volunteer?
I volunteer through my spiritual community in Appleton, Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and also with a variety of school-related projects.

What’s the best part about living in the Fox Cities?
It is small enough to feel like a connected, safe community but large enough to be teeming with activities and events! This area offers so many personal and professional opportunities to play and grow, especially with the arts, which I feel are uniquely accessible in this region at a high level.

How can we as a community make the Fox Cities a better place?
I think the Fox Cities has a lot of hidden diversity that should be more actively celebrated and uplifted. We can be more aware of how we can work as a community to be more intentionally inclusive and supportive of one another, not only on a surface level with our community members of color, disability awareness and accommodation, our growing population of immigrants and refugees, etc., but also the somewhat “hidden” diversity of perspective and experience.
ABOVE: Lawrence faculty and staff members and Appleton community leaders with activist Angela Davis (third from left) during her visit for the community’s 25th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration last January.

BELOW: Each summer the Lawrence Academy of Music hosts band camps for middle and high school wind and percussion students.