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## SLA P-16 Initiative, Volume 3, Issue 2, Spring 2013

University of Nebraska Omaha, Service Learning Academy

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# P-16 INITIATIVE

A BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES PARTNER

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2

Service Learning is an experiential, collaborative method of teaching using projects that promote academic learning and are tightly linked to course content while meeting the need of the community.

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## Joslyn Art: Building Curriculum

By Sara Green-Blodgett

UNO students in Dr. Amy Morris' *Survey of Western Art History* class and Mrs. Ann Pratt's *Intro to Education* class from Central High School worked together with the guidance of Laura Huntimer, Assistant Curator of Education at the Joslyn Art Museum, to develop lesson plans focusing on Greek and Roman art.

Each group of Central High School students was paired with a student from UNO who conducted research on a topic chosen by the high school students. Topics included: the first Olympics, architecture, and everyday life in ancient Greece and Rome. UNO and CHS students worked together, through email correspondence, to learn about their topics and to construct a lesson plan for a hands-on project that

teachers could use in their classrooms. Students created a pop-up book, ceramic tiles, a model of the face of an ancient building, various "Olympic Games", along with quizzes and outlines of their lessons. These resources are now available for classrooms in the community to check out from educational trunks at the Joslyn Art Museum.

The student teams presented their curriculum to teachers attending Joslyn Art Museum's *Thursdays for Teachers* on April 18. At this ongoing program, open to all Omaha Metro area and western Iowa schools, teachers regularly engage in special training and receive teaching posters as well as materials to interpret art across the disciplines.



# First Lady of Nebraska Honors Service Learning Projects with Outstanding Community Service Awards

By Katie D'Agosto



On Friday, April 12, Serve Nebraska hosted the 2013 First Lady of Nebraska Outstanding Community Service Awards Luncheon in Kearney, Nebraska.

Two P-16 service learning projects were honored with Outstanding Community Service Awards: RedBird 108 was honored with the *Outstanding School Volunteer Program Award*; Sacred Circle was honored with the *Outstanding Service-Learning Program Award*.

This is the third consecutive year that P-16 Service Learning projects have been recognized by First Lady Sally Ganem for their work within the community.

**RedBird 108**  
Claudia Escandon, Completely KIDS Youth Attendance Navigator (YAN) for Norris Middle School, and Norris Middle School Principal, Ruben Cano, accepted the award on behalf of the RedBird 108 project. Norris Middle School students transformed

a classroom into their own space for completing homework, meeting with mentors and providing family resources, such as clothing. Students have worked nearly 600 hours of community service and continue to inspire school-wide participation.

**Sacred Circle**  
Dr. Eduardo Zendejas and Cindy Krafka, both of UNO, Michaela Smith, of South High School and Monica Zendejas, a community member, accepted the award on behalf of Sacred Circle.

Sacred Circle brings together students from Dr. Zendejas’ Native Studies course and South High Native American students. Each Tuesday for the past three years, UNO and South High students share a meal and conversation, serve the community and participate in structured activities to foster pride in the Native American culture. These weekly meetings have shaped significant and lasting mentoring relationships between the UNO and South High students.

Moreover, this spring, five Sacred Circle participants will graduate from South High and have applied to college.

## A Walk in Your Shoes

By Marcia Ghali Bergren



Fourth grade students at Washington Elementary learned the difference between a “need” and a “want”, explored the tents issued to individuals at refugee camps around the world and reached out to the

community during their year-long service learning project. Under the leadership of Mrs. Jennifer Magnuson-Stessman, the Washington students interviewed individuals from the Omaha community who came to the United States as refugees.

Following the interviews, the students further researched the facts about the experiences of a refugee and partnered with Mary Umberger at local nonprofit organization Hike to Help Refugees to present a series of learning stations, called *A Walk in Your Shoes*, to community members and the other students at Washington Elementary.

In conjunction with the UNO student organizers of Global Youth Service Day, the Washington students brought their displays and presentations to the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The elementary students skillfully educated several groups of UNO college students through their learning stations. Additionally, the event on UNO’s campus attracted recruits to participate in Global Youth Service Day.

One UNO student commented: “The fourth graders had interesting discussion with us about the difference between a want and a need. If you can survive without it, then it’s a want. That means a toothbrush and modern plumbing are actually wants, not needs!”

## Lewis & Clark Prairie

By Olga Zeisler

UNO students from Dr. Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo’s *Applying Reading and Writing in Content Areas* course and Mrs. Barbara Brimmerman’s Lewis & Clark Middle School ESL students worked together to raise awareness about Nebraska’s Prairies through their service learning project “Tallgrasses and Wild Flowers of Nebraska”.

Their 12-week collaborative research explored a variety of prairie topics that were

“I always wanted to go to UNO but was only able to see how it looks like on the Internet. With this project, I was able to visit the UNO library, STEM and IDEAS rooms, and now I surely want to study at UNO.”  
ESL student,  
Lewis & Clark Middle School

showcased in presentations on April 10th at Lewis & Clark Middle School with parents and peers.

During this event, Kymi Johnson Rutledge, a UNO student remarked: “The way the project was designed allowed for free communication, laughing, and observing the learning process. I hope this project will expand in the future, improving every time.”

In the final stage, this service learning project was enriched by the students’ visit to Glacier Creek Preserve, formerly Allwine Prairie, offering the community meaningful resources and help in prairie analysis and care.



## Community and Identity

By Tiffany Kelly

Over the course of the spring semester, Dr. Todd Richardson’s *Perspectives on American Culture* Goodrich students and Mrs. Ferial Pearson’s Ralston High School Avenue Scholars have been exploring the concept of identity at both the community and individual levels.

“I like this idea of focusing our attention on how our communities shape us in both positive and negative ways—doing so will allow us to discuss society in both its enabling and oppressive moments,” says Dr. Richardson.

The students conducted interviews with lifelong Ralston residents and submitted news articles based on these interviews for publication in the Ralston Recorder. The students also used these interviews and personal reflection activities to produce

creative representations of their individual identities through various artistic mediums.

At the final celebration, the students presented their performances and other creative works at the Ralston Arena to key members of the Ralston community, as well as the surrounding Omaha area.



## Global Voices

By Sandra Espinosa



Maytha, from the Middle Eastern country of Oman, studies engineering at UNO. However, upon arrival in Omaha she spent several months improving her English in UNO’s Intensive English Program (ILUNO).

Maytha is one of more than 110 international students, under the direction of UNO’s Kelli Westphal, who participated in a year-long partnership between *ILUNO* and Melissa Kandido’s eighth-grade Beveridge Magnet Middle School International Studies students to explore culture, geography, and language in the context of ongoing conversations and collaborative service. El Museo Latino and The Union for Contemporary Arts provided opportunities for conversation and service along with an understanding of Omaha’s rich cultural heritage.

Throughout the year, the students worked together in creating personal maps, PSA’s promoting cross-cultural education, a 15-foot banner featuring a global skyline, a 10’x15’ quilt displaying states/countries sewn by artist Shea Wilkinson of the Union, a Venn diagram triptych, and videos focused on cultural issues.

Not only did ILUNO students experience an American Middle School at Beveridge, but Beveridge eighth graders also celebrated Café Internationale and Brazil Day at UNO. Additionally, UNO’s CultureFest event showcased the products of the year-long project.

Maytha’s English improved, but she also built relationships, bonded with the Omaha community, and gained relational skills. Likewise, Beveridge students were enriched by their new relationships with students from Brazil, China, Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Japan and Burkino Faso.

As Beveridge eighth grader Grant said, “...it’s important to keep learning because if we’re going to solve the world’s problems, we have to be able to sit down and talk to one another.”

*Now this is international studies!*



# No Place for Hate

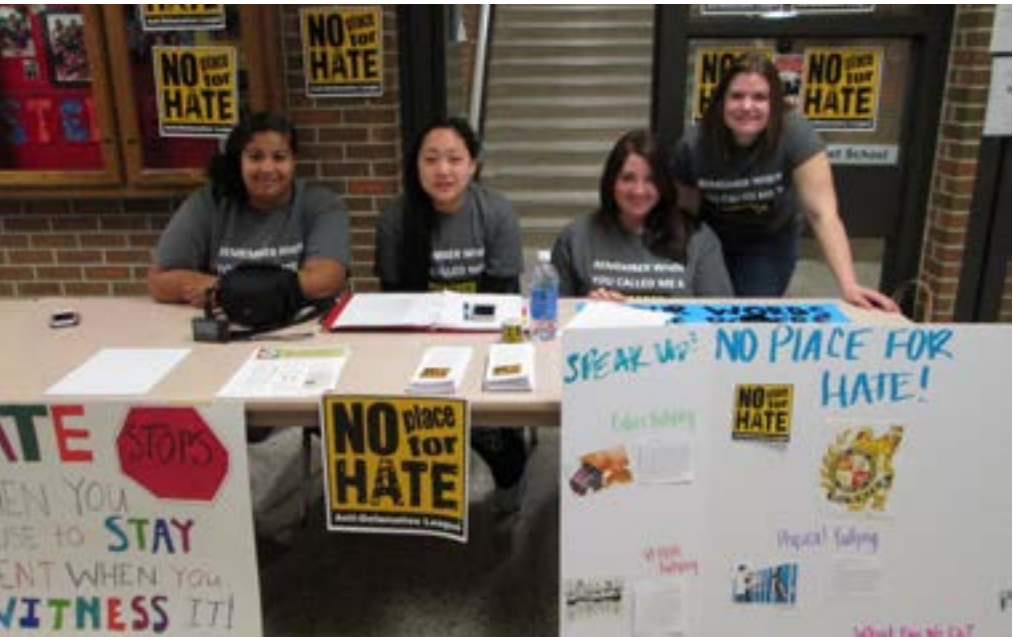
By Jasmine Perdue

Students in Professor Jaqueline Reiser’s *Social Work and Civic Engagement* class and Northwest High School Student Council members lead by John Nguyen and Alyssa Gudenkauf worked in collaboration to make Northwest High School a “No Place for Hate” school.

“No Place for Hate” is a program sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) under the direction of Jessica Gall. With the prevalence of bullying increasing among students in school, Northwest High School Students felt it was important to take a stand and become a “No Place for Hate” school.

UNO students and the Northwest student council members worked together to gain 50% of the study body’s signatures on the Resolution of Respect document. Northwest High School also completed three anti-bias school activities.

In addition, UNO students helped



Northwest by gaining parent and teacher’s perspectives on the school becoming a “No Place for Hate” school. UNO students interviewed parents during parent-teacher conferences to ask parents about their perspective on how the “No Place for Hate” campaign will impact their child.

The university students then created a video of these interviews for airing on Northwest’s television station, Husky Vision. Most importantly, Northwest High School has completed all aspects required to become a “No Place for Hate” school and was presented with a banner to hang proudly in their school.



*Introduction to Aviation* class partnered with Mr. Randal Howard’s Burke High School students to create displays for various artifacts at SASM.

The students traveled to SASM and spent the day learning about various historical aircraft and interviewing war veterans who flew some of the planes in the museum. Students successfully built displays for many artifacts, including one of the museum’s historical aircraft: the C54 airplane.

“I think hearing the veteran’s stories built a strong connection for my students.”  
Mr. Scott Vlasek, UNO Aviation

## The Strategic Air and Space Museum

By Erika Jacobson

A museum is a place where history is frozen and retold over and over again through the preservation of artifacts from the past. The Strategic Air and Space Museum (SASM) in Ashland, NE, seeks to do just that through the preservation of military and space aircrafts and related artifacts. Burke High

School Focus students and the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Aviation Department assisted SASM with its mission of preserving history by creating aircraft and artifact displays for the museum.

UNO students in Mr. Scott Vlasek’s

The students not only met together at SASM, but the Burke students also traveled to UNO to learn about what the Aviation students were doing in their class and work on their displays and research. The students unveiled each of their displays at SASM to the public. The event included members from the community as well as museum donors.

# RavelUnravel at UNO and Central High School

By Daniel Walsh

One of Mr. Gary Groff’s aims for Central High School students is to have a better appreciation and understanding of the various spiritualities that they will encounter in their lives.

“I feel that the more we know about something, the less we fear it. This project was intended to give the students an opportunity to put a face with a faith and thus personalize the religious diversity of our community,” Mr. Groff said.

This spring, students from Mr. Groff’s social studies classes at Central High School contributed video interviews to Project Interfaith’s RavelUnravel program, a multimedia exploration of the tapestry of spiritual and religious identities that make up our communities and world. Two UNO Religious Studies courses partnered with the project: Dr. Paul Williams’: *Senior Seminar in Religion*, and Dr. Curtis Hutt’s:

*Special Topic in Religion-Jerusalem* course. Throughout the semester, Central students and Dr. William’s students collected over 35 interviews of both UNO and Central students. The videos are a contribution to RavelUnravel’s website, which now serves the Omaha community with over 840 videos that foster education about topics often considered taboo in our society: identity, religion, spirituality and stereotypes.

As a final reflection event, Dr. Hutt’s students participated in mock RavelUnravel interviews at Central, answering as Jerusalemites from different religious and ethnic identities.

“Ravel/Unravel provided me with the chance to further my knowledge about the diverse religious communities in the Metro area.”  
Sam M. - CHS student



## Girls Inc. & Science After School

By Anastasia Ott

*Girls Inc. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) students* and Dr. Karen Murch-Schafer’s UNO biology students spent the semester diving into science. With women underrepresented in STEM careers, the service learning project exposed the young Girls Inc. participants to the world of science and biology, in hopes of igniting their interest and inquiry in the field.

The students examined and applied biological principles in a variety of real world settings. Together, they used their new learning to collaborate with Heron Haven Sanctuary, a local wetlands preservation site.

As a part of their scientific discovery, the Girls Inc. and UNO students took a

variety of field trips. They traveled to the Henry Doorly Zoo, looking at the different components that constitute living systems. The students examined and tested different elements that make up the food humans eat and observed the diets of the different zoo animals. The students also took a behind the scenes tour of the aquarium.

The Girls Inc. students spent a day on the UNO campus, specifically in the biology laboratories, learning about cells, the basic structural and functional unit of all known living organisms.

In service to Heron Haven, the Girls Inc. and UNO students drilled holes into logs to plant mushroom spores and planted flowers around the perservation site.



“They (UNO students) were really nice and they taught us new things. We got to learn about cells!”  
Autumn, age 9



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## The Service Learning Academy P-16 Initiative

This edition of the Service Learning Academy P-16 Initiative newsletter showcases the most recent of three academic years of UNO and P-12 students learning and serving together with nonprofit community partners. Reflection is an essential practice to connect learning and experience, so I will take this opportunity to reflect on the past three years:

- Over 9,000 students from K-12 schools and UNO have engaged in service learning together
- 191 P-12 educators, after school program facilitators, and UNO faculty members have completed Seminar training
- The first Service Learning Seminar Alumni Showcase was held in February 2013
- Three P-16 Service Learning projects have won ServeNebraska Outstanding Community Service Awards
- P-16 teams have showcased their service learning collaborations at professional conferences across the globe



As we look into the next three years, the P-16 Initiative in the Service Learning Academy continues to assess and refine the Seminars and provide the best possible foundation on which P-16 teams can build their curriculum. We are hiring and training graduate assistants to provide the best support for projects. We are working hard to tell your story of how Omaha instructors are engaging students in their communities, one classroom at a time. The collective impact of service learning on student learning and community needs is being explored through quantitative and qualitative measures. November 6-8, 2013, UNO will host the International Association for Research in Service Learning and Community Engagement Conference ([www.researchslce.org](http://www.researchslce.org)). Presenters from across the globe will share their research in service learning and community engagement. We are pleased to be able to showcase the

community values articulated through engaged teaching, research and scholarship in Omaha.

Throughout the past three years one thing remains true: Service Learning Seminars provide an engaging opportunity for faculty members to learn about quality service learning. Our next Service Learning Seminar will be held July 15-19, 2013. Participants receive a \$400 stipend for participation as well as graduate assistant support for project implementation. Please encourage faculty members to participate as a way to meet standards and course objectives while engaging students in their learning and community. We are excited to learn and serve with you in the next academic year!

Julie Dierberger, P-16 Coordinator  
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