Alternative Service Experience: Fall Break Success!  By: Alexandra Bryant-Boose

The Key Center hosted its second Alternative Service Experience (ASE) program over fall break this past October. ASE is a way for students, faculty, and staff to commit their time during break to service with an organization dedicated to specific community issues. Over 20 different people within the UNC Asheville community participated in the programs offered this fall. Through this experience, each person was able to work and experience a new and different community. This provided participants with the opportunity to gain highly affecting hands-on knowledge and experience. Ultimately through these trips, students, staff, and faculty were able to engage in transformative experiential education.

Peer Leaders Emily Lindesmith (Political Science, Economics, 2016) and Sarah Umstead (Political Science, Economics 2016) took 8 students to Alterna, a bilingual community and safe haven for Latin American immigrants located in Lagrange, Georgia. There, students gained hands-on learning experience about Latin American immigration. While at Alterna participants had the opportunity to hear incredible and inspirational stories from immigrant families and individuals about all they had endured to date. Lindesmith shared, “Our trip to Alterna was not only about service but about education and empowerment. The whole group was asked to question our life styles and convictions in the face of human rights violations.”

The other 11 students made their way to SC C.A.R.E.S. in Georgetown, SC with peer leaders Emily Kidd (International Studies, Environmental Studies, 2015) and Rachel Brelsford (Literature, 2015). At SC C.A.R.E.S., the South Carolina Coastal Animal Rescue and Educational Sanctuary, participants were educated about human activities that affect not only the environment but wildlife as well. They were also able to help clean and maintain animal facilities around the sanctuary.

Upon her return Brelsford remarked, “(the) Fall Break trip really made me feel empowered to be a good person and do good things in the world, including empowering others”.

Peer Leader Sarah remarked, “ASE programs are a great way to learn more while serving a larger purpose and I hope everyone will seriously consider participating in a trip here at UNC Asheville.”

First Annual Engagement Fair and Community Partner Luncheon  By: Jess-Mara Jordan

This past September the Key Center started a new tradition with its first annual Engagement Fair and Community Partner Luncheon. Forty-two community partners set up displays informing students about their organizations’ mission and needs. More than 60 students representing 34 campus organizations attended the Engagement Fair on the Quad looking for volunteer opportunities to engage in on their own as well as with their campus affiliations.

Following the Engagement Fair, community partners were invited to a luncheon hosted by the Key Center staff. The luncheon was led by the Director of Service-Learning and Community Citizenship, Selena Hilemon, who informed guests about how UNC Asheville and its greater community can work together to develop civically engaged students. The Key Center hopes to make this event an all-day affair next year, allowing ample time for attendees to networking and tour campus. Both the Engagement Fair and Community Partner Luncheon were coordinated by AmeriCorps VISTA, Jess-Mara Jordan.

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This spring three Alternative Service Experiences will be offered over Spring Break, March 7-14. Attending each trip will be two peer leaders, eight students, and a learning partner.

Peer leaders Larisa Karr and Eliane Coates will be traveling to Comer, Georgia to work with Jubilee Partners. Jubilee Partners is an Intentional Community that helps international refugees transition into local communities. This site is used as a safe, smooth transition where they begin to learn English and look for work opportunities. Participants on this trip will work alongside the refugees and perform tasks around the community farm.

Peer leaders Gardner Goodall and Liz Sea are going to be heading down to Birmingham, Alabama to work alongside Jones Valley Urban Farm. Jones Valley Teaching Farm aims to educate students through responsive programs that meet the needs of individual learners and entire school communities. Participants will engage with the organization to experience how community gardening and healthy lifestyles can affect communities in a positive way.

Peer leaders Rachel Collman and Emma Parrish will be traveling to Nags Head, North Carolina to work with The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy works towards helping to preserve and restore the largest intact maritime forest on the east coast. During this week participants will work on a variety of ecosystem renewal projects; from trail maintenance in the Nags Head deciduous forests to identifying and removing exotic species in surrounding wetlands.

Each ASE program costs $200 and includes all housing, travel, food and activities for the week. The $100 non-refundable deposit due at sign-up is applied to the overall cost. Sign-up is Monday, February 16 at 9:15 pm in the Highsmith Union room 221. Your student ID card and a copy of insurance card or proof of UNCA insurance is also needed at sign-up.

FALL SIGN-UP: Wednesday, September 3rd at 9:15pm

Student Reflection Leader Program Grows Service Learning By: Amanda Slater

A Student Reflection Leader (SRL) is a student selected by a faculty member to assist in the facilitation of the reflective portion of a service-learning designated course. SRLs who are chosen will then be paid and trained by the Key Center.

In order to qualify for this position, the applicant must have interest in service-learning and civic engagement as well as an interest in developing strategies to enhance learning through reflection. They must also have successfully completed the service-learning course, have a GPA of at least 2.50, and have the minimal standing of a sophomore.

There are a number of duties and responsibilities needed to be met in order to receive compensation, both for the Key Center and the instructor/class. Some obligations include various training classes, an orientation, and guiding critical reflection activities. For the complete list of duties and responsibilities that will be expected to be fulfilled, visit the Key Center website at http://keycenter.unca.edu/student-reflection-leader-program.
Introducing Get Connected: UNC Asheville’s Community Engagement Database  By: Alexandra Bryant-Boose

The Key Center is in the process of introducing a new database, titled Get Connected, with the goal of increasing the connections between UNC Asheville and the greater Asheville community. This system will make it easier to ensure that the ongoing needs of local charities and non-profit organizations are being met. Get Connected is an easy-to-use database that is open to students, staff, and faculty here at UNC Asheville and populated with profiles and opportunities posted directly by community agencies and organizations. The system allows for users to search the database based on their own personal interests, enabling them to connect with organizations that they genuinely care about as well as find meaningful ways to get involved and give back to the community. A few of the categories users can choose from are education, seniors’ service, and youth mentoring. Users are also able to search for opportunities based on the location, agency, date, or by the number of people who are interested in volunteering for a specific event. Donors, volunteers, and advocates will see that this system is perfect for them to find the right opportunities that fit them. Community partners are able to post events their organization are having, specific needs that they need to be fulfilled, or just volunteer activities they have on a reoccurring. For instance, if you were to go on to the database and look for a volunteer activity, you would see a short description of the task, the agency the task is for, the type of service required, the expiration of the need, any additional requirements, and the zip code of the agency.

The Key Center hopes that this database will be used by members of the UNC Asheville campus as well as community partners, which will allow for strong relationships to be built between the two. The office looks forward to implementing this exciting new tool widely and fostering greater university-community connectivity.

Key Center Faculty Fellows Growing Community Ties  By: Katie Pindell

The Key Center’s Faculty Fellows program seeks to promote a community of practice among UNC Asheville faculty dedicated to utilizing service-learning pedagogy, community-based research, and/or public scholarship to enhance student learning and develop more reciprocal campus-community partnerships. The three Key Center Faculty Fellows below were selected to receive a $2,500 grant to support their specific projects for the 2014-2015 academic year. All projects directly involve students and at least one community organization.

Dr. Trey Adcock, Assistant Professor, Education / Project Title: Critical Thinking, Slave Deeds, and the Classroom
This project seeks to examine the complexity of the past with current 6-12 Buncombe County students and pre-service teachers at UNC Asheville through a digital history project centered on the Buncombe County Slave Deeds. The project is inherently interdisciplinary and collaborative involving interested parties from Buncombe County Schools, The Center for Diversity Education, UNC Asheville’s Department of Education and local community partners.

Professor Jessica Pisano, Lecturer, Literature & Language & Dr. Amanda Wray, Assistant Professor, Literature & Language  
Project Title: LANG 120: Academic Writing and Critical Inquiry through Foodways Service-Learning
Students and faculty will work with the Society of Saint Andrew as well as the UNCA Rhodes Property and Student Environmental Center to educate ourselves about how the local community experiences hunger and how local organizations and farmers work to address such food insecurity. We will assist with the production, harvesting, and distribution of locally grown produce to local food banks... Professors Pisano and Wray plan to co-author a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning article about their experience of collaboratively teaching and integrating foodways service-learning research into first-year writing courses.

Dr. Lyndi Hewitt, Assistant Professor, Sociology & Anthropology / Project Title: Institutionalizing Community-Engaged Undergraduate Research at UNCA
The primary goal of this project is to build support for and work toward the institutionalization of an interdisciplinary, social science, community-engaged research incubator at UNCA, and entails the development of a variable credit, interdisciplinary, workshop-style course that facilitates undergraduate research geared toward social change. Key learning outcomes of the course include the cultivation of concrete methodological tools, as well as an understanding of how to apply these tools toward ethical collaboration with community partners, ranging from local to global.
Dr. Ameena Batada Receives Community Connector Award
By: Alexandra Bryant-Boose

Dr. Ameena Batada, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health and Wellness, recently received the UNC Asheville Community Connector Award for academic and civic engagement for her deep involvement with the University and the community beyond.

Ameena grew up in the suburbs of Toronto, Ontario, had a realization during a trip to South Africa in the 1990s. She realized that in order for health challenges to be overcome, a community has to come together to drive research and practice that are both sustainable. Her appreciation for this cause led to Batada to work within the Asheville community, helping many neighborhoods and non-profits. Her dedication and motivation to help with is demonstrated in her classes, which she teaches with passion. Batada pushes her students to address mainly issues concerning sustainability through various activities that focus on important aspects of health that aren’t brought to the population’s attention. She challenges her students to look at health issues from different angles and to have a strong understanding of it. Through these course she also able to promote that community-driven approaches are the best. Batada says, "I now view community-driven approaches as essential for raising awareness and social change".

Batada’s ultimate goal is to work on long-term community projects that have the requirement of forming strong relationships with community partners and local organizations. Three main organizations that she has worked with are: Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity and Achievement (ABIPA), Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services (BSDHHS), and Buncombe County Public Schools (BCPS). Her hard work has paid off in making sure UNC Asheville has a relationship with these organizations; This is proven by the fact that over 100 UNC Asheville students participate every year in community projects with not only these organizations but with others throughout the community. Students are easily able to do this through Batada’s service-learning course that is able to give students the opportunity to do service within the community that promotes health and wellness, while also teaching them about the importance of health and wellness for everyone.

Dr. Batada credits her ideas to the community driven and identified need. Over the years she has been able to gather their needs through the opportunities she has initiated with working in the community. She views community engagement as something that helps everyone on various level. It is obvious that she is a strong supporter of service-learning classes because of the community engagement aspect of the course. Whether it be the person donating their time to a good cause, the organizations that are receiving this service, society as a whole being able to recognize someone serving, or the faculty member who is able to recognize the value of hands-on experience with real-world issues, Batada recognizes that everyone gains something from community engagement.

It is evident that Dr. Batada has had a long-lasting impact in the Asheville community. She has worked hard to collaborate with community partners to make them aware of the health disparities that threaten their communities. She has built relationships with organizations in Asheville that take dedication, motivation, and drive to do. When answering the question of why she accepted the award, Batada said "Anytime there is an opportunity to highlight authentic partnerships that work – the collaboration of students and community working alongside as partners, it is important to honor them. This award celebrates this collective work and it is great that UNC Asheville values these connections!"
UNCA’s Stephanie Watkins-Cruz is a winner of the Community Impact Student Award. She and seventeen other students received this award on Saturday, November 8th at North Carolina Campus Compact’s annual student conference. The Community Impact Student Award recognizes one outstanding student from each member campus for leadership and innovative approaches to community engagement. Students are nominated by a faculty or staff member from their school.

Social Justice Coffee Hour Program Fosters Student Discussion
By: Katie Pindell

This year the Key Center rolled out a new program called Social Justice Coffee Hour, a year-long calendar of events focused on fostering student awareness and discussion. The Social Justice Coffee Hour provides an open forum for students to hear from and participate in dialogue with local guest speakers on a variety of current social justice issues. Typical events last from one to one and half hours and are meant to provide a safe space for difficult conversations.

For our first event in October, Addressing the Mental Illness Stigma, we were joined by Kristen Martin, Executive Director of Thrive Clubhouse, a Hendersonville organization dedicated to obtaining employment for clients suffering from mental illness by providing opportunities to learn coping, social, independent living and vocational skills, and Dr. Caroline Mann, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Brevard College. These women shared their backgrounds and work in the mental health field as well as experience with the stigma associated with mental illness. Students really opened up and shared personal experiences, helping to foster understanding and critical thinking about ways to mitigate stigma in the future.

In November the discussion was dedicated to Poverty and Homelessness in WNC. We were joined by Amy Cantrell from the Community of the BeLoved, a downtown LGBT intentional community and shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness, members of the Just Economics V.O.I.C.E.S. coalition as well as members of the Living Wage Coalition of Transylvania County, an organization fighting poverty through living wages. After an honest look at local poverty and a budgeting exercise which truly demonstrated the struggle living on the margin poses, we screened a documentary commissioned by the Living Wage Coalition of Transylvania County. Individuals featured in the documentary were present at the event and shared their stories. Students were able to attain a greater understanding of poverty and marginalization and the impact it has on all members of society.

Social Justice Coffee Hour events will resume when students return for spring semester. Topics include: bullying of LGBT youth; making peace through music with Heartbeat, a band that unites Israeli and Palestinian youth musicians to build critical understanding; as well as issues surrounding women’s education worldwide. All viewpoints are welcome and free, hot, locally brewed coffee generously donated by Dynamite Roasting Co. in Black Mountain is always provided! (Please bring your own mug to help us reduce our carbon footprint) Join us next semester for more learning!
Congratulations to our Community Engaged Scholar December 2014 graduates! Come check out final poster presentations of their Public Service Projects at the Undergraduate Research Program Spring Symposium and Celebration of Service, Service-Learning and Internships on December 1st in the Sherrill Center Arena Concourse from 3:00-5:00 PM.

**Aimee Ruszala** – Health and Wellness Promotion
*Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program in Madison County: Using the Pink-Out Campaign to Educate a Community about the Importance of Health Screenings in a High Risk Population*

**Sam Goodson** – French
*Seniors’ Stories, Oral History in the Burton Street Community*

**Jordan Caroline Nichols** – Health and Wellness Promotion
*The heart of the matter: campaign messaging for the Healthy Heart Initiative in Buncombe County*

**Felicia Blow** – Sociology and Psychology
*Building Community, Reducing Risk: Measuring Recidivism and Effectiveness in the Women At Risk Program*

**Anna Lauren Long** – Health and Wellness Promotion
*Building the PRAISE Guidebook: Working Together to Encourage a Healthier Community within Local Churches*

**Laura Haire** – Sociology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
*Teen Tech Safety: Development and Evaluation of Social Media Safety Curriculum*

**Rebekah Baucom** – Health and Wellness Promotion
*Creating the Wellness Opportunity Workshop Resource Manual: A Model for School Wellness Teams*

**Remaining Community Engaged Scholar Fall 2014 Projects**
The following students will be presenting their Public Service Projects this year but are graduating in future academic years. Congratulations to them for all of their hard work!

**Emma Parrish & Mariah Ingram** – Health and Wellness Promotion / International Studies
*Our Semester at Steadfast Home: Providing the Childcare Every Kid Wants, and Every Mother Deserves*

**Nicholas Gold-Leighton** – Health and Wellness Promotion
*YMCA Training Manual & Online Resources*

**Ashley Heger** – Interdisciplinary Community Development
*From Cheetos to Broccoli: Teaching Burton Street Youth Wellness and Empowerment through Experiential Learning*

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**Keyed-In**

**Fall 2014 Community Engaged Scholars**

**Community Engaged Scholar Public Service Project Applications**
*Due: Friday, Feb. 6, 2015*
## Spring 2015 Approved Service-Learning Courses

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**Join us!**

**UNC Asheville Celebrates**

**Service, Service-Learning and Internship**

**December 1, 2014 3:00-5:00pm**

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN OUR LISTSERV CONTACT:

Key Center for Community Citizenship & Service Learning

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