

THE HONORS BEACON

Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue XI, Spring 2017



From left to right: Rudy Correa, Dr. Anne Dahlman, Nyairah Abdullah, Anjola Onadipe, Quentina Dunbar, Dolapo Oshin

Equity Ambassadors: Promoting Inclusive Excellence

by Steven Arriaza, '18 (Psychology; Isanti, Minn.) and Sara Baranczyk, '19 (Communication Arts and Literature Education & Physics Education, Saint Paul, Minn.)

Diversity promotes growth both of mind and of mindfulness. Minnesota State University, Mankato has a very diverse population, with almost one-fourth of the student population being international students. Additionally, sixteen percent of students are domestic students of color. The Honors Program at Minnesota State mirrors these statistics in the number of international students but falls behind in the number of domestic students of color enrolled in the program. The biggest strength of the Honors Program is its diversity, and all the constituents of the program respect and cherish this. However, celebrating and embracing diversity does not guarantee the fundamental principal that must underlie diversity: equity. The Honors Program is working diligently to create a more equitable environment and level the playing field for all honors students. One way the program is work-

ing to achieve this is through the Equity Ambassadors. Because of the important contributions that students of color bring to the program, the Equity Ambassadors focus on ways to ensure that there is a fair representation of one of the most underrepresented groups in the program: domestic students of color. The Equity Ambassadors serve as an advisory, support, and advocacy group within the Honors Program that is working to make the program more welcoming and inclusive.

The Equity Ambassadors program was launched in the fall of 2016 with eleven pilot students serving as Equity Ambassadors. The ten students include Nyairah Abdullah (Psychology, '19), Steven Arriaza (Psychology, '18), Yuseina Brito Lino (Elementary Education, '19), Rudy Correa (Food and Technology, '17), Quentina Dunbar (Gender and Women Studies, '17), Ana Leyva (Music Education, '19),

Muna Omar, (Biomedical Sciences, '19), Anjola Onadipe (Biomedical Sciences, '19), Dolapo Oshin (Philosophy, Politics and Economics, '17), Sean Thomez (Exercise Science, '18), and Kellie Wong (Biochemistry, '18). These students were tasked to critically look at every aspect of the program, from the smallest details to the bigger picture, and offer suggestions to make the program more inclusive, especially to domestic students of color. Dr. Anne Dahlman, the director of the Honors Program and creator of the Equity Ambassadors program, said the Equity Ambassadors are "changing the Honors Program from the inside out" in order to create a more diverse and equitable environment. "Even in the language we use," Dr. Dahlman said, "we need to be aware of privilege." This is especially important in the application to the Honors Program.

Continued on page 4

The Honors Beacon newsletter was awarded 1st place in the student print category of the National Collegiate Honors Council's newsletter contest for the 2014-2015 academic year.



A Word from the Honors Staff



by Dr. Anne Dahlman, Director of Honors

I continue to be a huge fan of the Beacon, which not only showcases the many great talents of our students, but more importantly, exhibits the collabora-

past year, we have worked hard to continue cultivating the sense of community within our program. Our Honors Program is a space where students from all corners of the world and communities within our region come together to become the best versions of themselves and to make a difference. Our student leaders and researchers bridge the borders between countries, disciplines, and cultures to address complex real-life issues and to courageously pursue creative solutions. You will see this sense of global and cultural connection in many of the articles in this issue.

What inspires me most about our students is the fact that they don't just discuss great ideas but they create positive change through hard work and practice. These real-life experiences make them future leaders who inspire others around them through leadership styles that genuinely appreciate cultural diversity. You will find several stories showcasing these experiential learning perspectives in this issues! Enjoy! 📖

tive spirit of the Beacon's all-student editorial and writer team. This team is a great example of the way students in the Honors Program tackle tasks: with creativity, tenacity, and by supporting one another. The stories in this edition are a result of numerous team discussions, interviews with individuals, critiquing and revising of drafts, as well as meaningful fellowship with peers over several months. The team has worked hard not only to create well-written articles, but also to make sure that they include a wide range of authors, topics and individuals highlighted in the pieces.

I am extremely proud of the content in this issue, which focuses on *community*. This

Editor's Note



by Sara Baranczyk '19 (Communication Arts and Literature Education & Physics Education; Saint Paul, Minn.)

Welcome to the eleventh issue of the Honors Beacon newsletter! I am very excited to introduce this extended edition newsletter with

program. The cover story especially highlights this theme with a discussion about building inclusive spaces within our program that supports honors domestic students of color.

This issue also features several spotlights of students, professors, and organizations that have impacted the honors, university, and Mankato community in positive ways.

I would like to extend a great amount of thanks to the writers who made this issue possible. They truly make the Beacon possible.

Happy reading! 📖

eight additional pages. It has been an honor to work with the dedicated writers of this issue.

The theme of this issue is community: from the learning community to the greater Mankato community, and the various ways that community appears in this

The Spring 2017 Beacon Team

Editor-in-Chief
Sara Baranczyk

Layout and Photo Copy Editors
Sara Baranczyk

Writers
Steven Arriaza
Sara Baranczyk
Alicia Utecht
Katelynn Malecha
Aaron Young
Josie Braaten
Libby Guss
Madie Hoffman
Sarah Aldrich
Kristine Dunnum
Claire Paolo

In this Issue

Equity Ambassadors	1
Notes from the Staff and Editor . . .	2
Alumna Spotlight	3
Common Read	5
Community Involvement	6
Learning Community	6
Cookies and Conversation	7
Honors in Pictures	8
Organization Spotlight	10
Professor Spotlight	11
Student Spotlights	12
Honorable Mentions	14
Infographic	15
Pedal Past Poverty	16
Alumni Mentors	17
Mentor Reflection	18
Brother Sister Program	19
Word Search	20

Alumna Spotlight

by Ina Pae, '13 (Gender and Women's Studies & International Relations; Jeonju, Korea)



When I moved to Mankato, Minnesota from Korea in 2011, I had no relatives or friends in the area. Speaking English in my daily life and adjusting to the American culture was challenging for me, but I found comfort in the staff at the Kearney International Center on campus. Initially when I transferred to Minnesota State University, Mankato, my major was Business Administration. I found an academic interest in International Relations after receiving advice from staff in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and friends who were majoring in Government and International Relations. I also developed an interest in Gender and Women's Studies after having several discussions about human rights with my peers.

I heard about the Honors Program from

my friends, who gave me a positive impression about the program. Some of my international friends from Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Serbia, and the Philippines were taking honors classes and their conversations seemed very interesting and unique. One of my American friends who was a part of Honors suggested that I talk to Dr. Chris Corley, the director of the program at the time. After he briefly introduced me to the three honors competencies of leadership, research, and global citizenship, I felt strongly that I wanted to be a part of the program and applied immediately. If I remember the moment correctly, I felt happier to get accepted into the Honors Program than when I was admitted to the university.

In 2014, right after my graduation, I completed an internship at the Korean Cultural Center at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Washington D. C. I was very excited to pass by all the international embassies during my commuting time. During my internship, I assisted several outreach programs to promote Korean cultures, such as the Embassy Adoption Program. The program aimed to visit elementary schools and teach kids about the Korean culture through K-pop dance, Taekwondo (Korean martial arts), or traditional Korean art crafting classes. While participating in several research projects, I translated materials from Korean to English and vice versa. I also organized and assisted K-series events, including K-classical, K-literature, and K-exhibition. Having pride in doing cultural diplomacy work in Washington D. C., I also volun-

teered at the King Sejong Institute as a teaching assistant. While witnessing students learn the Korean language, improving week by week, I realized that culture could be a bridge between people who might have totally different backgrounds.

For current honors students, I want to say that you are on the right path. I think college is a small version of society. Being a part of several groups, especially Honors, is very significant because you have the opportunity to mingle with people who have different values and backgrounds. The Honors Program challenges you and helps you to be a person who is ready to work in the world. Additionally, you can make lifelong friends and build academic and social skills. The Honors Program is beneficial for students' academic growth and achievements. There are so many paths after graduation, and having another academic advisor who cares about you is a bonus of being a part of the Honors Program.

The Honors Program helped me grow as a professional leader who can conduct any project and appreciates diversity. I was getting out of my comfort zone to understand the U.S. culture and people in Minnesota. The Honors Program cherished my differences and provided the opportunity to learn and grow in new ways. Joining the Honors Program gave me confidence that, as long as I have an interest, I can utilize my skills in any field in the world. And indeed, when I look back on my career, I can say that I was able to "survive" the world. 📖



Make a difference in the lives of those preparing to make a difference.

Because they have the opportunity to push themselves to do more here at Minnesota State Mankato, students in the Honors Program will be ready to push for success in the real world as well.

Supporting the Honors Program has an impact on students who will become widely recognized, prominent, distinguished leaders, researchers and global citizens who are able to bring about change in the world, no matter what their chosen discipline may be.

Giving to the Honors Program is easy; simply visit mnsu.edu/giving and designate your gift to the Honors Program.

Originally, the application for the program included an essay portion where applicants described leadership positions they have held. However, this essay prompt failed to recognize the struggles for attaining such positions by students devoid of the comforts of popularity or the privilege of plentiful opportunity. Because of this, the Equity Ambassadors suggested a revision to the application, asking that applicants share their story of leadership responsibilities instead of listing their leadership positions.

Furthermore, the Equity Ambassadors pushed to change the image of the Honors Program. Ana Leyva noted the impact of having equal representation in the program's advertising has on prospective students. "I didn't see many people who looked like me" in the brochures for the program, Leyva said. She didn't feel like she could be a part of the program because there were not as many students of color represented in the Honors Program as there were white students. "I didn't feel like I fit in with the rest of the honors students," she continued. Redesigning the brochures to be more inclusive can greatly influence the diversity of the program. "If you see someone like you in the brochure, it makes you think that you can do it," Leyva said. Something as simple as a brochure can make a powerful difference. The Equity Ambassador program seeks equity at a grand level by changing the smallest aspects of the Honors Program.

The Equity Ambassador program has been quite successful in its endeavors, and has already made a noticeable impact on the program. Anjola Onadipe "decided to get involved because the Honors Program is a critical piece of [his] experience at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and [he wanted] to be a part of improving it." He said being a part of the Equity Ambassadors is a way to improve his and other honors students' experiences in the program. Another Equity Ambassador, Kellie Wong, explained, "The Honors Program has provided me with many opportunities to better myself as a student and an individual... [and] I do not want people to miss out on amazing opportunities just because they don't feel welcome." The revisions made to the Honors Program grant students of color a safe space for learning as well as the en-

couragement and support that they need to create successful futures for themselves.

The Equity Ambassadors is important not only for the Honors Program at this university, but also for other programs across the nation. At the 2017 Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference in Brookings, South Dakota, Dr. Dahlman and three of the Equity Ambassadors, Nyairah Abdullah, Quentina Dunbar, and Ana Leyva gave a presentation titled "Honors Equity Ambassadors: Creating Inclusive Learning Spaces." Dunbar commented on how isolated she felt being one of a few students of color at the conference. "You always notice how you stand out in a place," she said. "I want to see other honors programs have the same push for diversity," she continued. While she is excited to work toward making a positive change on the Mankato campus, she also recognizes that a program like the Equity Ambassadors needs to be implemented on a bigger scale. The Equity Ambassadors' presentation was awarded the Top Presentation out of the 71 presentations at the conference. This award speaks to the desire for change in honors programs everywhere.

Overall, the Equity Ambassadors find the program to be a rewarding experience. Yuseina Brito Lino said, "I see a lot of potential in students of color" and she is very thankful to have the opportunity to make a "tangible positive changes within the Honors Program." The needs of honors students of color are being addressed because of the Equity Ambassador program, and the Ambassadors feel that they are making a real difference. Ana Leyva commented, "Every thought and idea you share matters, and it has the power to shape our campus and the Honors Program for the better." The voices of honors students of color are being heard, and their suggestions are working to reimagine the Honors Program. For Kellie Wong, the Equity Ambassador pro-



Equity Ambassadors Receiving Top Presentation Award at UMRHC. From left to right: Ana Leyva, Quentina Dunbar, Dr. Anne Dahlman, and Nyairah Abdullah

gram has helped her find her voice. "I've learned that it is very important to stand up for what you believe in and advocate for a cause," she said. "People may disagree with you," she continued, but it's important to "hear what they have to say" because everyone has a "different perspective, [and] every perspective is important." Sometimes coming to a solution can be difficult, but the reward is well worth it.

In the end, the Equity Ambassadors program strives to make the Honors Program a community that celebrates diversity. Anjola Onadipe stated, "It's important to listen to other people's stories. Going to the meetings and hearing others talk about their experiences coming from diverse backgrounds has increased my cultural awareness." Kellie Wong agreed and said, "Hearing the opinions of my fellow Equity Ambassadors has opened my eyes to many different perspectives—things I would have never considered if I was not an Equity Ambassador." The Equity Ambassador program has made a considerable difference to the students involved in the program, but it is still a new program with a lot yet to accomplish. Other honors students can help the Equity Ambassadors by "keeping an open mind to change," stated Nyairah Abdullah; "sharing your ideas with [the Equity Ambassadors] about improvements that the Honors Program can make," stated Ana Leyva; and "building meaningful relationships with a variety of honors students," stated Anjola Onadipe. The Equity Ambassadors have helped the Honors Program grow into an inclusive environment for all students to expand their learning and opportunities. **H**

Keeping the Memories Alive

by Alicia Utecht, '19 (Communication Studies & Creative Writing; Rogers, Minn.)



Braden Hanafée-Major (left) interviewing Julie Otsuka (right)

Every year, Minnesota State University, Mankato selects a novel for the community-wide Common Read event. The novel must reflect at least one of five different themes—service, citizenship, cultural diversity, life transitions, and coming of age—and each year, there are many on-campus events that tie into the novel. For this year's novel, *When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka, these events included a Keynote Speaker Address by the author, a showing of the documentary film "Toyo's Camera," and a photography showcase of pictures taken at several of the Japanese-American internment camps.

When the Emperor Was Divine is a fictional story about a Japanese-American family who was sent to the internment camps during World War II. The father was arrested on December 8, 1942, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the mother, daughter, and son were evicted with the rest of the Japanese-American community several months later. The novel chronicles the family's journey to camp, their life within it, and their return home. More than that, though, it highlights the devastating things that fear can drive people to do to others. In being sent to the camp, this family is stripped of their individuality and even of their humanity. The reader never learns the main characters' names or anything about their personalities and their lives before the camp.

Otsuka acknowledges this as an intentional decision which not only allows the reader to imagine them as any Japanese-American family during the war, but also demonstrates clearly to the reader that they were no longer considered as human beings.

During her Keynote Speaker Address on October 19th, Otsuka acknowledged that the characters were in part based on members of her own family. Otsuka's grandfather was arrested the day after Pearl Harbor after being accused of being a spy. Her mother was evicted at ten years old along with her grandmother and uncle, and they were sent to an internment camp, where they spent the rest of the war. However, Otsuka does not know much about her mother's life in the camp; her mother rarely spoke about it, and when she did, it was never in detail. This reflects the attitude of many Japanese-Americans who were interned. As Otsuka stated, the internment camps were not so bad in the grand scheme of what was happening in the world at that time, and many Japanese-Americans felt like they should not draw attention to their experiences "when there [were] so many people out there suffering far worse fates than [their] own." However, Otsuka emphasized that the story of Japanese-American internment is one which is incredibly important and needs to be told, stating, "Everything I've ever written has been a way of trying to keep the memories of my mother and what we Japanese-Americans call 'camp' alive."

In addition to her Keynote Address, Otsuka took part in Good Thunder Reading Series events. Honors student Braden Hanafée-Major (Theater; '20) had the chance to interview her on October 20th on KMSU's "The Maverick" radio station. When describing the experience, Braden admitted that "interviewing Julie Otsuka was nerve-racking." As an actor, he always has the benefit of hiding behind a character when speaking publicly. For the interview, however, he "had to be [him] self, and that was terrifying." Nonetheless, he enjoyed the experience, describing it as a delight. "Mrs. Otsuka was very kind," Braden continued, "and I think we had great conversations. We talked a lot

about her writing mindset," a topic which she had also spoken about at her Keynote Speaker presentation. "Interviewing [Mrs. Otsuka] taught me about being my authentic self in a public speaking setting," an important lesson in any medium of expression. After all, authentic self-expression is part of what makes *When the Emperor Was Divine* so powerful. For Otsuka, her writing is often inspired by images, and her writing is very visual as a result. She also tends to approach writing as a process, which she works at over time, just as a painter works on a painting for a long time before completing it.

Occasionally, photographers such as Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange were sent into the camps by the government to take pictures. Their photography was tightly controlled, though; they were not allowed to take any pictures which showcased the watchtowers or the barbed wire surrounding the camps. As a result, their photographs of the internment camp do not represent the same authentic self-expression as Toyo Miyatake's do. His photographs remain the most important photographs of the internment. In fact, his work is so meaningful that it became the focus of the documentary film "Toyo's Camera," which was shown here on campus on October 18th. Before Miyatake and his family were sent to the Manzanar internment camp, he owned a photography studio in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California, and was well-known for his photographs of many Japanese dignitaries and Japanese-American celebrities. When they were interned, Miyatake managed to smuggle along a camera lens and had a friend build a camera box so he could take photographs of the internees' lives. At first, this was done in secret, but soon after the camera was completed, the camp director called Miyatake into his office and told him that he was free to have his equipment brought in from his studio so he could take pictures. As a result, Miyatake was able to take far more pictures than he would have been able to in secret, and his photographs remain the only uncensored images of Japanese-Americans living in the internment camps.

Continued on page 11

Rake the Town

by Katelynn Malecha, '18 (Exercies Sciences & Pre-OT; Lonsdale, Minn.)




On November 12th, 2016, Honors Student Council (HSC) raked three homes in the Mankato area to help reach the VINE Faith in Action's goal of raking 300 yards. Junior Class Representative Steven Arriaza (Psychology, '18) coordinated the event and stated, "In the Honors Program, we focus on more than just academics, but also on service events to be involved in the community. The Rake the Town event is a great way to get a sense of that community involvement and global citizenship and seeing the gratitude in people. I'm just really happy how it

turned out and being able to help."

The event began on a beautiful Saturday morning when students met on campus and drove to the first house. After greeting the homeowners, the group began raking. Conversations started flowing and as the piles grew higher, anticipation to jump into them grew. At one of the yards, the pile was large enough to fit three people jumping into it!

Not only did this event help people in their backyards, but it also provided an excellent opportunity to meet other honors students. After raking, the group rejoined at a church hall for lunch. It was great to see how many other people volunteered from various organizations to groups of friends wanting to help others.

Liesel Theusch (Math Education, '19) commented, "Rake the Town was a great way to give back to the community. I got to reconnect with other Honors students and I had a lot of fun doing it! We were able to do so much in a few short hours of working together and felt immediate appreciation from the home owners. I would gladly do this again and can't wait until next year!"

Other service events that the HSC conducted this year include running a clothing drive for students, donating canned goods to Echo Food Shelf, making fleece hats for Partners for Affordable Housing and The Reach Drop-In Center, and creating and delivering Valentine's Day cards to persons in Assisted Living. These service events show that everyone can help out their community in meaningful ways. 

How to Build Community in a Learning Community

by Aaron Young, '19 (Social Studies Education; Saint Paul, Minn.)

For many students embarking on their journey at Minnesota State University, Mankato, many of them are overwhelmed by the anxieties that come along with the experiences. Whether it be the excitement of meeting their roommate(s) and making new friends, or the stress of purchasing textbooks and getting ready for classes, first years have a lot on their plates. Learning Communities are designed to help freshman have a smoother transition to college, allowing them to make connections right away with fellow students. With over ten learning communities to choose from, freshmen are given the opportunity to explore which community best suits their interests.

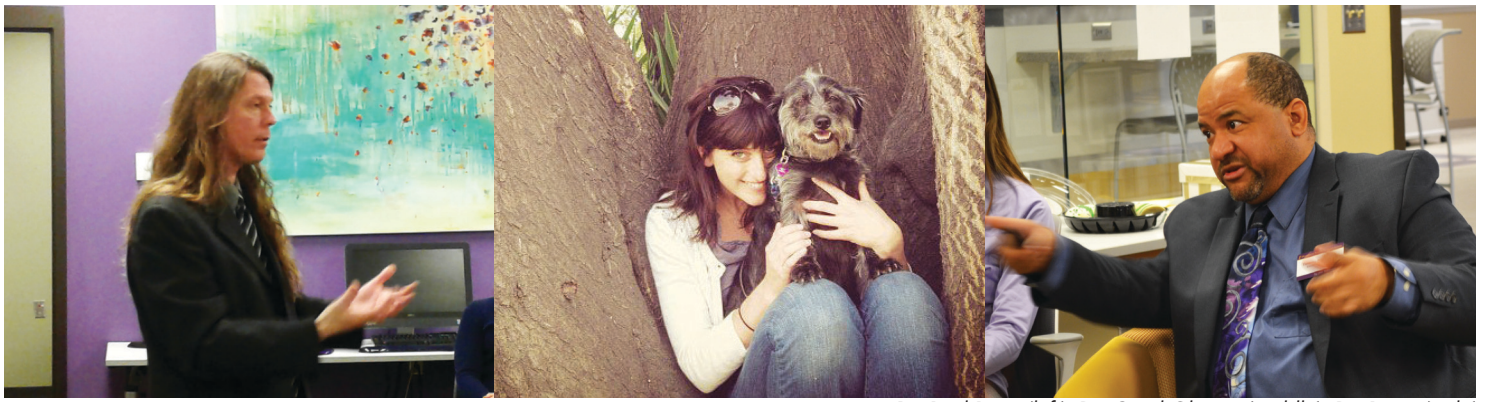
The First-Year Honors Learning Community is a little bit different than others on campus. While most learning communi-

ties are based on particular majors or areas of interest, the Honors Learning Community is comprised of students from all fields of study. In order to find common ground among the residents, this year's First-Year Honors Learning Community Coordinator (LCC) Madie Hoffman (Mass Media, '19) has put together social and academic events, including a game night and a competition between the First Year and the Leadership and Civic Engagement Upper Classmen Honors Learning Communities. All of these events focused on building community within the Honors Program. Hoffman created an environment that was both welcoming and comforting for her residents. Bethany Haus (Biochemistry, '20) states that joined the Learning Community because she felt that "it would connect [her] to more students" and create a sense of "belonging." She

also said that being part of the Learning Community gave her the chance to branch out and find others who share common interests.

One way that Haus was able to do this was at the Fall Retreat where she was able to learn more about the Honors Program while meeting and connecting with students who share the same mindset and interests as she does. With the various opportunities that Honors and Minnesota State have to offer, students are able to accomplish what they need while gaining new knowledge about the world around them. As for being a part of a learning community, there are many benefits and perks that come along with it. Each learning community is surrounded by others having similar interests and goals.

Continued on page 16



Dr. Paul Prew (left), Dr. Carol Glasser (middle), Dr. Berry (right)

Fostering Important Conversations

by Josie Braaten, '19 (Creative Writing; Glasgow, Mont.)

On Wednesday February 4th, I attended my first ever Cookies and Conversation, and it certainly won't be my last. Cookies and Conversation is a time for students to gather in the Honor's lounge, enjoy cookies, and hear speakers on a wide variety of subjects. This Cookies and Conversation was led by Dr. Carol Glasser who discussed the key principles of social justice. Other Cookies and Conversation topics included social change, a discussion led by Dr. Paul Prew, the language of power and the power of language led by Dr. Timothy Berry, Dr. Julie Carlson, and Dr. Chelsea Mead, stories and storytelling led by Dr. Julie Carlson, and a discussion on perfectionism led by the Honors Graduate Assistant Leslie Kane.

The Honors lounge was filled with students, and at exactly two o'clock pm, the speaker for the afternoon, Dr. Carol L. Glasser, was introduced. Dr. Glasser is a faculty member with the Sociology and Corrections Department, as well as, an avid activist for the Animal Rights Movement.

Dr. Glasser began the session by defining social justice as "providing different means, appropriate to people in various circumstance that allow them to all reach the same place." She emphasized the importance of knowing what social justice actually was in order to effectively enact social change. This knowledge of social justice, she said, would be crucial to setting appropriate and attainable goals for social change to reach through activism. Dr. Glasser then went on to share a few of her experiences as an activist and how having a clear idea of exactly it was that

she wanted to achieve, was integral to her success as an activist.

I was immediately struck by the relevancy of these thoughts. Because of the heightened contention in our society today, there is social change that we all want to see being made. However, without knowing exactly what social justice is, there is no way too effectively set goals in order to achieve the social change that we believe needs to happen.

Even though we all have that one issue that is closest to our hearts, Dr. Glasser stressed the importance of not viewing one social justice issue as more important than another. We can't view social justice as a "change this, then change that" system. In addition, we need to be cognizant that our methods of activism toward our desired goal do not stymie another group's progress toward their own social justice goal. An example that Dr. Glasser provided to us was how certain protests for Animal Rights tend to objectify women which obviously does not help to progress the Women's Rights Movement.

Along with dispelling the notion of a hierarchy of Rights, Dr. Glasser reinforced the vitality of building a community of activists who are all passionate about achieving the same social justice goal. "You need to have a community to enact change" Dr. Glasser stated. Through this quote she was also referring to an overall community of all activist groups, not simply communities of activist working for the same goal. Solidarity between activist groups was key, she said, to making gains toward your goal because so many

issues are intertwined with one another. All the groups involved benefit if resources and knowledge are shared amongst each other. This information helped me to understand how activist groups actually worked toward achieving their goals. Learning more about how communities of activist work with each other has given me a greater understanding for how the process of activism works most efficiently. I thought that this was extremely important to learn for when we decide to start our own journeys of activism in the future.

Through discussing how social rights groups need to work together to most efficiently reach their goals, Dr. Glasser discussed the unique type of leadership necessary to leading a group of passionate activists. In addition to working with other activist groups, she addressed the importance of building a community within your group of activists, being flexible in how you pursue your goal, and recognizing the strengths of your group so that they can be used most effectively in the pursuit of your goal. She also stated the importance of not violating our morals in our pursuit to get results, and of being able to differentiate when we are doing something simply for ourselves instead of for the actual good of "the cause". Finally, another piece of advice which Dr. Glasser provided concerning a community's pursuit of a goal, was to not "accept gains" just to feel like we are making progress. She explained that this meant not accepting something as a victory, if it wasn't what the group was actually striving for, simply in order to feel like they making progress.

Continued on page 18

Honors in Pictures



Honors Student Council November meeting, community building activity



Students at the Pizza 'n' Profs event



Students and Staff at the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference



Making Valentine's Day Cards for persons in assisted living.



Honors Fall Retreat



Jefferson Imasuen (left) and Ali Oku (right) at Cultures of Asia Night



Sarah Aldrich (left) and Katelynn Malecha (right) presenting research at the National Collegiate Honors Conference

Honors in Pictures



Asha Khalif presenting her research at the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference



Honors Students at a Cookies and Conversation event



Honors students enjoying a night at the theater to see *The Full Monty*



Making worry dolls for children entering foster care



Kiwanis Light Festival



Okhumekho Kassim defending his portfolio



Honors Students tabling



Working Against Violence

by Libby Guss, '18 (Social Work & Spanish; Mankato, Minn.)

The Committee Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) is a non-profit organization that provides residential, financial, legal, and other advocate services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The advocates at CADA have helped the Mankato and surrounding communities for over 35 years. CADA's mission is to provide safety and support to victims of domestic and sexual violence through education, advocacy, and shelter.

The services offered by CADA extend to many people in and around the Mankato area. Kirby Hurd, the Volunteer Support Specialist at CADA, explained that "in 2015, [CADA] served 2,806 primary and 502 secondary survivors of domestic violence and 401 survivors of sexual violence through [their] outreach programs." She also said that "108 women and 172 children were provided with emergency safety shelter." CADA provides crucial services for people in serious situations, and the Mankato community is fortunate to have them as a resource.

Additionally, CADA offers valuable volunteer experiences which honors students are encouraged to take advantage of. Hurd detailed many areas of volunteering that are available including "answering crisis calls, providing childcare for children in shelter, attending court proceedings, assisting [survivors] in accessing resources, assisting with facility and property maintenance, organizing donations, leading groups, activities, awareness campaigns, and presentations, helping maintain a comfortable and clean living space in the shelter, and more." Volunteers are able to help many diverse populations in a variety of ways, and the help


volunteers give can be invaluable to the organization and those it serves. Students can also help in the outreach section of the organization, which provides services and resources to individuals who do not need or want to stay in the shelter. The CADA outreach team also provides trainings to members of the community to help prevent future incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence. Hurd stated, "176 community presentations were facilitated throughout South Central MN by CADA with 6,449 participants in attendance. Over 3000 hours of volunteering helped [them] meet [their] mission."

Because CADA provides services to individuals who are at extremely difficult points in their lives, the advocates require that volunteers attend a 40-hour training session about advocacy in relation to sexual assault. CADA covers the cost of this training for interns, volunteers, and employees. This training provides individuals with vital skills and knowledge to support a myriad of individuals in crisis. There are a number of ways honors students and members of the greater Mankato community can help CADA in their mission. Volunteering is one of the most influential ways to help CADA, but donations are always greatly appreciated as most items provided to the individuals in shelter are donated.

I have been volunteering at CADA for about a year in both the shelter and as part of the outreach team. My work at CADA goes hand in hand with my majors of Spanish and Social Work. I have been able to talk with a little boy who only knew Spanish to help him feel included and also have conversations in Spanish

with some of the employees whose first language is Spanish. I have also seen first-hand how witnessing domestic violence can affect the behaviors of a child. It is these actions and behaviors that add to the fire inside me that propels me to continue my education so that I may one day make a significant positive impact on the lives of others.

The advocates at CADA have directly or indirectly worked with a very high percentage of the community and are doing all they can to make the city a safer place for everyone. I cannot stress enough how vital their work is in the lives of so many people and how enriching it can be to volunteer at CADA. Seeing how many people are affected by domestic and/or sexual assault has opened my eyes to the world I live in, and the work I do at CADA constantly strikes down the idea of "the others," and instead builds the concept of "us."

Hurd and the other staff members welcome anyone interested in volunteering at CADA. They are "very accustomed to working with students, and [are] therefore accommodating and flexible with scheduling." Hurd added, "If you're considering an internship, it's good to plan ahead so [they] can try to make arrangements in advance; most interns begin the application process 2-6 months before the internship would begin. Volunteers and interns are required to pass a background check; it's free to applicants and takes less than 5 minutes to fill out." For more information, please email Hurd at kirbyh@cadamn.org. 

Professor Spotlight

by Madie Hoffman, '19 (Mass Media; Omaha, Neb.)



Dr. Laura Harrison, assistant professor of Gender and Women Studies and Honors faculty, published her first book *Brown Bodies, White Babies: The Politics of Cross-racial Surrogacy* in September 2016. She received her doctorate in Gender Studies from Indiana University and was part of the first cohort across the nation to receive that specific degree. "It was the first Gender Studies PhD in the nation," Dr. Harrison said. "That's where I wrote my dissertation project, which then became this book, and it's pretty common for people to take their dissertation and revise it into their first book project."

Dr. Harrison describes Gen-

der and Women's Studies as a "discovery major." She explained, "A lot of students normally don't come into college knowing they will major or minor in it. They usually take a class and find that they are interested in it." Once Dr. Harrison started to pursue that major, she had mentors and advisors who encouraged her to go to graduate school and then to get her PhD. Even with taking a year off from school after her undergraduate years, Dr. Harrison found the passion to focus on her future education and ultimately her publication.

Dr. Harrison started to study the topic of her book during her years as an undergraduate, but she didn't know that one day she would turn it into a publication. She found inspiration for her research project from a news story about surrogacy, and she started to think on about the topic of surrogacy. "I wanted to know how we can contextualize this and relate it to what I know about the complexities of gender and race," she said. "After finishing my PhD with all the

research from my dissertation I created a book proposal, which basically is a few sections or chapters of my topic, my dissertation, and the field or fields I believed it was relevant to."

Dr. Harrison's publication reaches many different fields of study, including gender and women's studies, ethnic studies, sociology, and critical race studies. "I worked with my dissertation advisor to decide where to submit my manuscript for publication," Harrison said. "My advisor knew of a specific series that my publication would fit into, so I had a lot of help from her in spreading the word on my publication. It was really important that in graduate school I was forming and making those relationships with my advisors and editors." She sent her proposal to NYU Press, and the company was interested in her publication, so it sent the proposal out to readers who then provided feedback back to Dr. Harrison. In total, the revision process took around eight years to complete, and the book was finally published in September 2016.

Dr. Harrison stressed that research is collaborative work. Researchers must get feedback from other people in order to refine what they are doing and get to the result. "It can be mentally draining, and it is hard to imagine that you are ever going to finish," Harrison said. She also stressed that writing and research especially for a dissertation can be isolating processes, and they can be the hardest part of the publication process. "Once you get to the publication process there are just hurdles you must get over, and you realize that you need to have a thick skin when you get your feedback."

Dr. Harrison suggested that if anyone plans to publish a book that going to graduate school is a great start. She emphasized not to be afraid of research and not to build it up as something impossible to do. Dr. Harrison taught an Honors course, GWS 220: Sex & Gender Worldwide this semester, and she is excited to see what future events will inspire her next publication. ■

Common Read (Continued from page 5)

Following in his footsteps recently was Dr. Gina Wenger, a professor of Art Education here at MSU Mankato. Her photographs of various internment camps were displayed at the showcase "What Remains: Photos of the Japanese American Concentration Camps" from October 3-28, 2016.

One particularly striking photograph, "Nails Revealed in the Clay," was taken at the Topaz internment camp in Utah. From a distance, the black-and-white image looks simply like one of the ground filled with cracks, but upon closer inspection, they were indeed dozens of nails. What seemed like a harmless image at first became one of the nails being scattered about while people were living in the camps for them to step on at any given moment. However, this is a poignant showcase of a common perspective on the internment camps as a whole. From a distance, they seem mild—not comfortable, but not hor-

rible compared to the other things going on in the world at the time. Once you take a closer look, though, you recognize that they were no more justifiable just because they were not as violent as the other sufferings going on in the world at the time.

Each of the Common Read events tied back to the theme that the internment of Japanese-Americans cannot and should not be forgotten. For obvious reasons, it is not a proud moment in American history. However, as stated by George Santayana, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." *When the Emperor Was Divine* and the Common Read events surrounding it provided several opportunities for participants to continue to educate themselves about a topic which is often overlooked in American history. It is essential to be aware of events such as this to ensure that they do not happen again. ■

Award Spotlight: Sydney Geisness

by Kristine Dunnum, '18 (Human Resource Management; La Crescent, Minn.)



In June of 2016, Sydney Geisness (Accounting, '17) received an email informing her that she was named "Accounting Student of the Year." This is a very high honor in the College of Business because there is only one senior who is awarded this achievement every year. When notified of this accomplishment, Sydney ad-


mitted that she was unaware of how big of a deal it was to be selected. She had not applied for it and was curious to know how and why she, out of hundreds of potential students, was awarded this title. Geisness, out of all the senior accounting majors, was elected by a panel of people who reviewed students' profiles including their involvement in campus activities, clubs, and extracurriculars in addition to their academic performance. After reviewing the student profiles, the panel named Geisness as the most deserving student of this year's award. She is involved not only as a student athlete but also as captain of the volleyball team. In addition, Sydney was also a member of the Accounting Club and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee

(SAAC). She fit their standards perfectly.

She received the award during the College of Business's Fall Banquet in 2016, and gave a speech to winners of other various accounting awards. As part of her acceptance speech, she talked about how much gratitude and appreciation she had for her outstanding accounting professors and her fellow students. She noted that her classmates made class more enjoyable and pushed her to perform well in class. Since she is an athlete with a competitive edge, fellow students challenged her to do better which in turn led to higher grades.

While reflecting on this achievement, Sydney believed that it mirrors her ability to be a leader. From various past ex-

periences, she knew she had the qualities of a good leader. However, this accomplishment gave her a confidence boost going into her senior year. It felt good to be reassured by faculty that her work these last four years had paid off.

Looking forward to graduation in May, Sydney will work with KPMG, a public accounting firm, as a tax associate after acquiring her CPA over the summer. This offer was extended to her after landing an internship with them last summer. Her advice to underclassmen, specifically Honors students, is to embrace the college experience and "make it your own." Geisness is just one example of how hard work and dedication will pay off in the end so long as one keeps an open mind to challenges along the way. 

Student Spotlight

by Alicia Utecht, '19 (Communication Studies & Creative Writing; Rogers, Minn.)




Rudy Correa (Food and Technology, '17) has had plenty of opportunities to get involved and grow during his time at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and in the Honors Program. After graduating, he intends to obtain his Master's degree in order to help him reach his goal of creating nutritional resources that he

hopes will be able to eliminate preventable health conditions within health deficient communities.

When asked about his greatest accomplishment, Correa cited a time when he was able to put on his own fundraiser. He had previously programmed other campus events, and through those experiences, he learned how to create a project representing his personal philosophies. By the time his fundraiser finished, he had successfully raised one thousand dollars, all of which was donated to a community project in the Philippines. Correa described this as his greatest accomplishment because he was able to contribute to something that he truly cared about on a whole new level.

Correa also described how Honors has helped him reach his goals. "The Honors Program has been an incredible resource throughout my undergraduate [career] ... The support from the faculty and staff has been outstanding," Correa said, adding that they have "encouraged me to pursue my goals, helped me achieve projects, and reflect on my identity and experiences." Honors courses not only helped to push him academically, but also helped to prepare him to work in teams as a professional. "I have held manager positions in organizations and offices that continuously work on inclusiveness and diversity, academic programming, and mentoring," he said regarding leadership. As a researcher, he has partic-

ipated in a long-term study in the microbiology department, which is now in its final stages of preparation to be presented with his team. In order to become a better global citizen, he has travelled both within the United States to Seattle and Hawaii and internationally to Israel in order to participate in summer-long volunteer programs.

He advised other Honors students to "make the most out of the resources, faculty, courses, and funding to maximize your experience as an undergraduate." Taking full advantage of every opportunity that the program has to offer has brought him closer to achieving his long-term goals. 

Research Spotlight: Prathibha Mangedarage

by Madie Hoffman, '19 (Mass Media; Omaha, Neb.)



Prathibha Mangedarage (Biomedical Sciences, '17) has been working on a research project with Dr. Michael Bentley from the Department of Biological Sciences on the cause of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of blindness. It is caused by a buildup of pressure in the anterior chamber of the eye due

to obstructed outflow of aqueous humor, which gives the eyes a cloudy look.

Mangedarage and Dr. Bentley looked at the eyes of mice under a scanning electron microscope, focusing on the anatomy of the Schlemm's canal in the eyes. By looking at this structure, they can find how the mice develop glaucoma. This scan can help them understand how to stop glaucoma before it happens. "We were looking at the aqueous outflow and structures in the eyes of mice under the Scanning Electron Microscope to see if we can stop Glaucoma from happening."


Mangedarage became interested in this research project because she had some classes with Dr. Bentley and heard about his research. This year

she decided take individual study credits with him to develop her research project about Glaucoma. She plans to present her research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) and the National Council of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in April 2017.

She looked forward to presenting her research because she wanted to add some experience to her presentation skills. One of the most rewarding experiences Mangedarage had during her research project was writing a grant proposal for the first time. "It was a rewarding experience to learn about a process like writing a grant proposal," Mangedarage said. "It was something that I was always so nervous about and it feels good to have done it at least

once."

The most challenging aspect was familiarizing herself with all the research that Dr. Bentley had already done in this area. After working with him, the work became more manageable. Mangedarage encouraged that students think about approaching professors about research starting freshman year. Completing an undergraduate research project early in their college career can benefit them in the future.

This research project helped Mangedarage get accustomed to working in a lab with other scientists. She plans to work for a research lab after she graduates and "in the future apply for a MD/PhD program." She plans to use the research skills she learned in her future career. 

Leadership Spotlight: Mikyla Denney

by Sarah Aldrich, '18 (Spanish Education; Jordan, Minn.)



Mikyla Denney (Archeology & Spanish, '17) had the opportunity to attend the Henry Clay Center for Statesmanship Student Congress in June, 2016. The Community Engagement Office and the Fellowships Office recommended her for the award. According to Denney, the Henry Clay organization emphasizes the importance of


compromise. Henry Clay himself was noted as the "Great Compromiser." This student congress is so beneficial because "it brings students together from all over the country in an effort to teach about and create policy using the art of compromise." Throughout the week, Denney worked on developing her leadership skills.

Denney described her experience as a busy week, stating, "Many speakers talked to us about policy-making and compromise. We visited important government buildings as well as some popular attractions such as the Kentucky Horse Park. The most important thing we did was create policy." In order to create policy, students were broken up into groups to

talk about controversial topics such as immigration, economic growth, global warming and higher education. Groups created policies within those distinct areas. The week long process let Denney see the importance of compromise, especially when the groups talked with the "opposing" teams who challenged their policies and worked to compromise by seeing the other side of the argument. On Friday, all groups presented their newly created policies; Denney's group that created policy on immigration was the one that stood out. These experiences allowed her to grow in leadership areas like "compromising, working together, and solving problems."

Denney's advice to other stu-

dents looking for ways to develop their leadership skills is to "[not] think you have to start right away with some major leadership position like a club president or student government. If you're not sure how to start, or if you're nervous about it, start small, such as a club secretary or a tutor, and then work your way up to higher positions." Something else she encourages is to find "something that interests you so that the experience is enjoyable."

Students who are interested in policy-making, international relations, or working in the government should consider this opportunity. Denney would be more than happy to share about her experience with other students! 

Congratulations Megan!

Megan Sandberg (Environmental Science '17) has been awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Program English Teaching Assistantship in Ecuador for the 2017-2018 academic year from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.



🔥 Honorable Mentions 🔥

- Congratulations to our honors graduates from this academic year: Kate Anderson, Nana Asong-Morfaw, Anh Cong, Rudy Correa, Mikyla Denney, Taylor Glover, Hailey Gorman, Uyi Jefferson Imasuen, Okhumekho Kassim, Bethany Koshak, Allison Maleska, Prathibha Mangedarage, Natalie Moses, Ali Oku, Dolapo Oshin, Claire Palo, Kaylin Peterson, Amanda Roche, Megan Sandberg, Michala Schramm, Alexa Turgeon, Trisha Walker, and Ebony Wilson-Sinkfield.
- The following students presented research at the National Collegiate Honors Conference 2017: Katelynn Malecha and Sarah Aldrich. Other attendees of the conference included the Honors Learning Community coordinator, Madie Hoffman, UMRHC state representative Jon Smith, and the administrative assistant for Honors, URC, and Fellowships, Sadie Anderson.
- The following students presented their research at the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference: Nyairah Abdullah, Sarah Aldrich, Kate Anderson, Sara Baranczyk, Andreea Bogdan, Quentina Dunbar, Brooke Ferede, Asha Khalif, Ana Leyva, Katelynn Malecha, and Ayoola Okuribido.
- The following students were accepted to present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at Minnesota State, Mankato in 2017: Asha Khalif, Courtney Sill, Alexa Turgeon, Prathibha Bamunu, Anh Cong, Rudy Correa, Uyi Imasuen, Brooke Jones, Okhumekho Kassim, Natalie Moses, Rachel Newinski, Natosha McClain, and Kayla Smith.
- The following students presented at the National Council for Undergraduate Research Conference in 2017: Brooke Jones, Natalie Moses, Sarah Aldrich, Katelynn Malecha, and Hailey Gorman.
- The following students received emerging leadership scholarships to attend the YWCA's Women's Leadership Conference: Nana Asong-Morfaw, Nyairah Abdullah, Quentina Dunbar, Omoleso Ogunnowo, Muna Omar, and Dolapo Oshin.
- Quentina Dunbar received the Commitment to Cultural Responsiveness Student Leadership Award at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- Katelynn Malecha Received the Minnesota State University, Mankato Outstanding Collegian Student Leadership Award at Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Courtney Sill received the Maverick Spirits Student Leadership Award at Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Anjola Onadipe was awarded the Frankel Summer Fellowship at the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center
- Madie Hoffman was recognized as the Outstanding Sophomore in the Department of Mass Media and was awarded the Sky and Mark Kunerth Scholarship
- Mara Soupir was recently awarded a position in the Henry Clay Center for Statesmanship Student Congress.
- Brooke Jones was recently awarded a position with the Amgen Scholars Program at Washington University in St. Louis

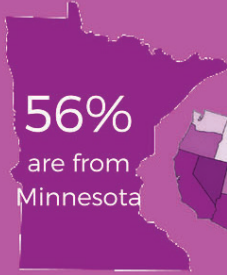
Honors Senior Class of 2017

85% of this year's graduating honors students are female

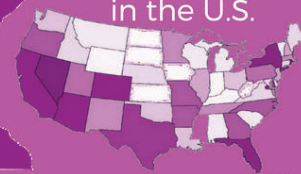
while 15% are male



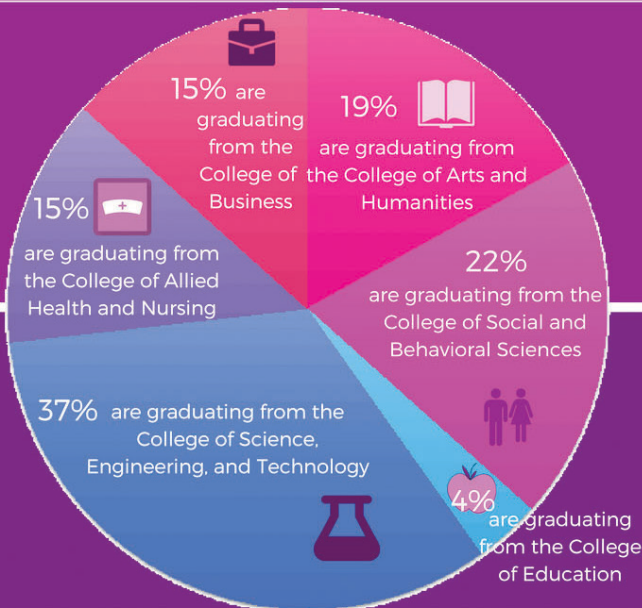
56% are from Minnesota



22% are from other states in the U.S.



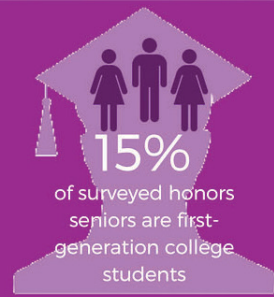
22% are international students



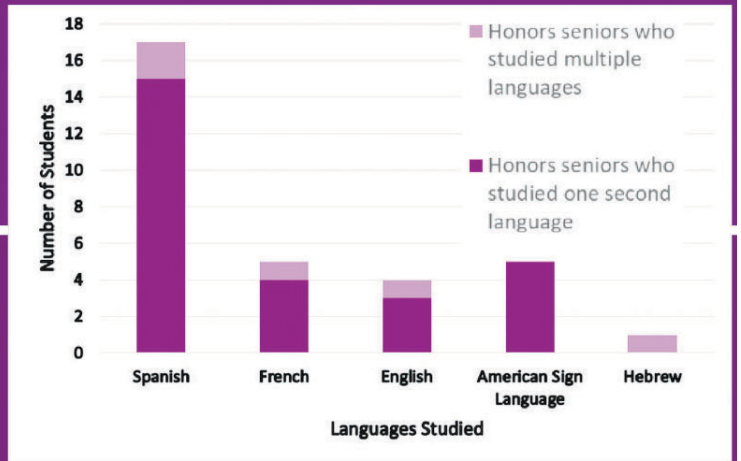
5 honors seniors double-majored



56% are planning to continue their studies in grad school



Distribution of Second Languages Studied



63% have studied abroad

41% received fellowships, scholarships, and other awards during their undergraduate career



33% are pursuing careers in a medical field

Infographic by Sara Baranczyk, '19 (Communication Arts and Literature Education & Physics Education; Saint Paul, Minn.)

This data represents the whole of the honors senior class unless otherwise indicated. The total number of graduating honors seniors is 27. Any information regarding surveyed honors seniors is not representative of the whole honors senior population. 20 honors seniors participated in the survey. For more information, please visit our website at www.mnsu.edu/honors



Pedal Past Poverty

by Libby Guss, '18 (Social Work & Spanish; Mankato, Minn.)

According to the Partners for Affordable Housing's website, children and youth ages 21 and under make up half of the homeless population in Minnesota. Additionally the website states that in Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties, there are 14,000 individuals who live at or below the poverty level and these counties also rank as the worst in the state for cost burdened renters. Partners for Affordable Housing also stated that in Mankato last year, 1,015 individuals sought out emergency shelter. These statistics point to the growing issue of homelessness and the need for affordable housing.


To combat this issue, Partners for Affordable Housing runs two homeless shelters in Mankato: Welcome Inn and the Theresa House. For the past five years, Partners for Affordable Housing have been putting on an event called "Pedal Past Poverty" to raise funds for the shelters. Pedal Past Poverty is an event in which roughly 60 teams of 10 individuals ride stationary bikes and compete for prizes based on

how much money they raised and how many miles their team biked.

This year's race was held on Saturday, February 25th at the Mankato YMCA. The teams were formed by individuals representing many different groups, companies, organizations, clubs, and churches from around the community. There were several different clubs from Minnesota State University, Mankato represented, such as the MSU Social Work Club and the Minnesota State Student Association (MSSA). At the end of this year's race, over \$92,000 were raised to support Welcome Inn and the Theresa House.

Liz Zaruba is a staff member at Partners for Affordable Housing and also one of the main event planners. She says that "spending months planning this type of event and being able to see all the participation, the energy, [and] the money raised on one day is just absolutely amazing. It's very rewarding to see all


that hard work [and]... the community come together [to] raise money for those in need." Zaruba also explained that Pedal Past Poverty is one of the only fundraisers for Partners for Affordable Housing so their goal is "to always have a successful event so that [they] can keep providing [their] programs and services to those that need them." For those who want to get involved, Zaruba says there are many different opportunities to participate and that "you don't have to be a serious [cyclist] to participate in the event."

Pedal Past Poverty and similar events provide students with the opportunity to connect with and support individuals from all reaches of the Mankato community. It is important to be an active member of the city that helps to support our academic community at Minnesota State and, charity events such as Pedal Past Poverty are a great way to do so. For more information about Pedal Past Poverty and Partners for Affordable Housing, please visit www.partnersforhousing.org 

Learning Community (continued from page 6)

Being a part of the Honors Learning Community is an easy way for all students to connect and spark up a friendship that blossoms into a community.

For those who are still on the fence about joining a Learning Community, Haus recommended that everyone should give it a shot: "Just join it. You'll learn something from it. Either that you don't feel like you fit in there or that it's a perfect fit." Either way, there is a great chance you will take away something from your experience of being in it.

Starting in the fall of 2017, Alicia Utecht (Communication Studies & Creative Writing, '20) will be First-Year Honors Learning Community Coordinator and Hallie Ulrich (Anthropology, '18) will be the Leadership and Civic Engagement Upperclassmen Learning Community Coordinator. Both students are dedicated to building communities within Honors and this university. 

Learning and Growing Together

by Claire Palo, '17 (English; Biwabik, Minn.)



In Cynthia Bemis Abrams' Honors 401 course, *Growing the Leader in You*, students created a project that the Honors Program could implement to benefit current honors students as well as engage the alumni community. For the project, students discussed how the Honors Program could be improved and what students felt was needed in the program. The class decided that a program that helped prepare students for their future after college would be beneficial to students. The Honors Alumni Mentor Program was inspired by this class project and is currently in the pilot phase of its implementation.

The idea of the Alumni Mentor Program is to prepare students for the future by allowing them to gain insight from former students. Paired with a mentor in their specific field, students will have the opportunity to learn from someone who knows what it is like to work in the real world. Anna Ibberson, a student who was in the Honors 401 course, says that students will have the opportunity to start networking, begin internships, and get career exposure. The Honors Program established that students will find mentors and connect with them through LinkedIn. Using LinkedIn allows students to showcase their specific interests and the specific mentor that student is looking for, whether it be someone who can help them with their specific career field, transitioning out of college to work, or graduate school. The student LinkedIn account is then given to the alumni program so that they can contact alumni who might be interested in mentoring students.

I interviewed Anna Ibberson (Biomedical Sciences & Spanish, '17), who was in charge of the research for the group project. During her research, she was directed her to the College of Business which previously had a successful alumni mentor program. The College of Business had established their alumni mentor

program to be for all levels of students: freshmen to senior. By having the program be available to freshmen, it allowed them to focus on a specific area of business that they wanted to pursue. The students in the Honors 401 class thought that although this worked for the College of Business, it was not practical for the Honors Program as honors students are all in different area of studies and often freshmen have not declared a major yet. Instead, the students thought that honors freshmen should be introduced to the idea of the program, but not get involved until sophomore year. When I talked to Ginny Walters about the implementation of the program, she said that for the pilot of the program they had only included juniors; this decision resulted from the idea that juniors are beginning to think about their future after college and will still be involved with the program next year so that the results of the program can be seen.

In the pilot phase, the program has three students involved. The students created LinkedIn accounts, and are currently waiting to be paired with alumni mentors. Courtney Sill says she became involved with the program because she wanted to learn from alumni experiences. She says, "I was hoping it would help guide me in building my goals, both in my academics and future career." Katelynn Malecha wanted to be involved with the program so that she can learn more about her career field—occupational therapy. She hopes that her mentor will be in her related career, but also looks forward to learning a

variety of things from her mentor, such as leadership skills. The Honors 401 class established that communication is imperative in forming relationships between mentors and mentees. Malecha is looking forward to being about to count on her mentor and in turn they could count on her: she says, "I believe that it should be a give and take relationship."

"The biggest problem facing the implementation of the alumni mentor program," says Walters, "is resources." Right now for the program to work at its optimal level, the Honors Program would like to have someone to train mentors, organize kickoffs, and conduct events so that mentors and mentees to get to know each other better. Ibberson says that she anticipated that through the program, "students could build strong relationships with mentors," so that students would be comfortable asking their mentors questions like "What do I wear to an interview?" The class hoped that events like resume building could also be established in the program; this would involve alumni coming to campus and talking about how to build a good resume. Walters says, "The more defined the program is, the better." Currently, Walters hopes to get the program up and running smoothly as soon as possible.

When asked why students should want to get involved with the alumni mentor program, Walters answered, "Why wouldn't students want to be a part of it?" Students always need mentors and the more mentors the better, whether they are a professional or personal mentor. Malecha also encourages other students to become involved in the alumni mentor program: "I would advise other students to definitely sign up as all you have to do is create a LinkedIn account. There is nothing to lose, only gain." The alumni mentor program will prepare students for their future, as it will allow students to build a network of connections. By the time a student has entered their junior year, they know how to navigate life as a student, but the alumni mentor program will help students prepare for navigating life outside of school.

■

Friendships with First-Years

by Kristine Dunnum, '18 (Human Resource Management, La Crescent, Minn.)

To graduate from the Honors Program Minnesota State University, Mankato, there is a list of certain classes that honors students are required to take. This list is broken up into smaller groups. One of the essential groups is six credits of upper-level seminar classes. These classes include a service learning class, a practicum class, or an independent study. This semester, I enrolled in a 455 Honors practicum class which allows students to earn credits using their experiences as a basis for learning.

This class is a one-credit course that focuses on linking theory (learning) to practice (service or internship). This class focused on service. The class met only a few times throughout the semester, but we still had due dates for various discussions, assignments, and papers. For our service project this semester my classmates and I focused on mentoring first-year honors students. At the beginning of the semester we each filled out an "About Us" sheet to highlight our major, hobbies, and groups that we are involved in on campus. With this information, our instructor, a Graduate Assistant in the Honors Program Leslie Kane, paired us with first year students who answered similarly. Throughout the semester, we were required to meet with our mentees and be available as a resource to them. Our mentees were encouraged to contact us with questions about MSU or the Honors Program. At the end of the semester, we were expected to reflect on this mentoring experience in a final presentation describing our own personal mentor philosophy, which we had cultivated throughout the semester. Discovering our mentor philosophy began with a discussion with one of our own mentors. I met with my friend Katie Torgeson. Through this meeting with her, I could learn from someone who I have looked up to and attempt to provide a similar relationship to my mentees

Following this assignment, I met with my mentee to introduce myself, explain why we were paired up together, describe that the goal of this relationship was to help them to feel comfortable, and let them know that I was a resource to them. When talking with a few of my classmates, we agreed that we do not view this relationship solely as a class assignment. It is a friendship in which the mentors in this class are building relationships with first-year honors students at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

My mentee, Samantha King (Food Science Technology, '20)



lives in the First-Year Honors Learning Community (LC) with other honors students. Being involved in the learning community was a great way for her to transition into the Honors Program. Reflecting on her decision to join the LC, she thought that it was a very cool concept of living with other honors students with whom she would be taking classes. She also liked the idea of having an immediate friend group from the start of the semester knowing that they would have similar goals and priorities for college. She was also able to form a strong relationship with an upperclassman because of her involvement in the LC.

King enjoyed having a mentor because she felt that I was a great resource to her, and she knew that she could come to me with any questions or concerns that she had. Looking forward to her journey through the Honors Program, if she had the chance to, she would love to be a mentor to underclassmen. King feels, "It would be really rewarding to help a freshman understand what the Honors Program is." Since she had the experience of having a mentor, she knows what a first-year student wants out of the mentor relationship.

The Honors Practicum Course is a class that I believe everyone should take at some point during their four years. I have reflected on my own way and style of mentoring and have been introduced to new approaches that I will use in the future. I learned that each relationship and experience with a mentee is different. No one is born a mentor because it takes practice to find out what works best. Being a mentor means being open to meeting new individuals, being available to meet up with them, and simply being a resource to them. As I continue to nurture my relationships with my mentees, I see not only growth in my mentees, but growth in myself as well [H](#)

Cookies and Conversation (continued from page 7)

I thought that these reminders were so relevant to any type of leadership, not just leadership in activism. The reminder of the importance of solidarity between community also reinforced in my mind that if our communities are able to work together from the smallest local scale, all the way to the international level, our world's system of problem solving will be much more efficient and intuitive because all groups, not just one with one opinion of how things should be, are working together to solve the issue.

This session of Cookies and Conversation with Dr. Glasser was fascinating. I walked away with a better understanding of social justice and its role in the pursuit of social change through

activism. It also reinforced in my mind the necessity of having a tight-knit community and of forming strong working bonds between communities in order pursue the desired goal. She also made some exceptionally poignant reminders about not getting so caught up and carried away in the pursuit of our goals that we surrender our morals or lose sight of our originally intended goal. These points went beyond activism and social change and spoke to the bigger picture of leadership and inter-community relations in all facets of life. [H](#)

Brother Sister Program


by Claire Palo, '17 (English; Biwakik, Minn.)

The YMCA Brother/Sister Program is a program for kids in the Mankato area. Youth ranging from ages six to fourteen are paired with an adult mentor. The program is designed for any child who wants to be a part of it, but most of the time, a child is recommended to the program from a teacher or parent. The Brother/Sister program is great benefit to the community because it allows the kids to build stable and lasting relationships with mentors. It also allows college students to be connected with younger students and to be a positive influence in their lives. The program is in need of volunteers who are able to meet a commitment of two hours per week for at least nine months.

Although this may seem like a daunting time commitment for a typical college student, honors student Libby Guss (Social Work & Spanish, '18), who has been involved with the Brother/Sister program since her freshman year, says that it is manageable if students set a time to meet every week; that way both the mentor and the mentee have a regular schedule that they can depend on. The program is also very adaptable for busy mentors: there is the opportunity for mentors to meet with kids every two weeks, but with a longer time commitment. Of course, life happens and sometimes mentors and mentees will miss weeks because of vacations or college breaks. The Brother/Sister program is willing to be flexible as long as the mentors are committed to their mentees. Krista Brandt, an advocate in the Brother/Sister program, says that it is "all about showing up." If a mentor cannot manage the time commitment or if the mentor has trouble with consistency, then they shouldn't be a part of the program. Brandt says that a mentor can cause "more damage if they are there for three months, than if they had never met the youth."

The Brother/Sister Program is a great opportunity for Honors students. Guss says that it is a "fun way to get involved." Guss, who has lived in Mankato for her whole life, says that she got to "see a different side of the community." It is also a great way to set students apart from others: Brandt says that involvement in the program "looks really good on the resume for college students because

of the longevity [of the commitment]." Brandt believes that being a mentor for the Brother/Sister program "says something about student character." Not only does the program set students apart from their class mates, but it allows students to gain connections in the community and have resources for recommendations. Brandt also shared one of the tag lines in the Brother/Sister program office, which says "two lives are changed." The program is a rewarding experience for both the mentors and the mentees. Mentors have the opportunity to learn more about themselves and learn how difficult it is to be a child in today's society dealing with self-esteem issues and social media bullying. The program also allows mentors to learn about the diversity that exists in the Mankato community. Guss says that being involved with the program allowed her to "see her own privileges." Through the program, children gain friends they can trust and talk to about anything. Brandt says it a great opportunity for kids to "get out of the house" and have "people who care about them." The youth also learn valuable skills: they develop manners and take on more responsibilities at home; they learn things such as how to order food by themselves. Brandt says that the program "teaches kids to be confident and independent individuals."

Right now, youth on the waiting list for the Brother/Sister program have a year to wait before they get a mentor. The program is also in extreme need for male mentors: because the program pairs mentors and mentees of the same sex for safety reasons, there is a long wait for young boys who want to be a part of the program. Students—especially honors students—are encouraged to become a mentor in the Brother/Sister program because it allows students to get involved in the community and gain valuable skills like relating to people, navigating hard relationships, and time management. Guss says that her mentee has been a "steady force in [her] life too" and that it has been "fun watching [her mentee] grow up." Students involved in the program will be able to see the positive changes that their youth goes through as well as the positive changes they go through alongside their mentees. 

Courses

Fall 2017

Art as Politics

Dr. Alisa Eiman

This course focuses on the myriad ways in which art and politics intersect.

A History of Water Works

Dr. Stephen Druschel

This course is an exploration of how water quantity, quality and location contribute to or detract from the health and welfare of human populations and the ecological health of the surrounding environment. Students will project solutions to today's problems and tomorrow's issues.

Exploring Personal Leadership through Social Change

Ginny Walters

This course will introduce students to various perspectives on leadership through the lens of the social change model of leadership development. Students will explore and develop their personal understanding of leadership by engaging with a real-world issue of their choosing.

Developing Your Mentor Philosophy

This course will provide opportunities for in-depth investigation into leadership styles and methods, aiming to guide discovery and development of each student's personal mentor philosophy. Students will apply their mentor philosophies throughout the semester by collaborating with and guiding new Honors students through various mentoring opportunities.

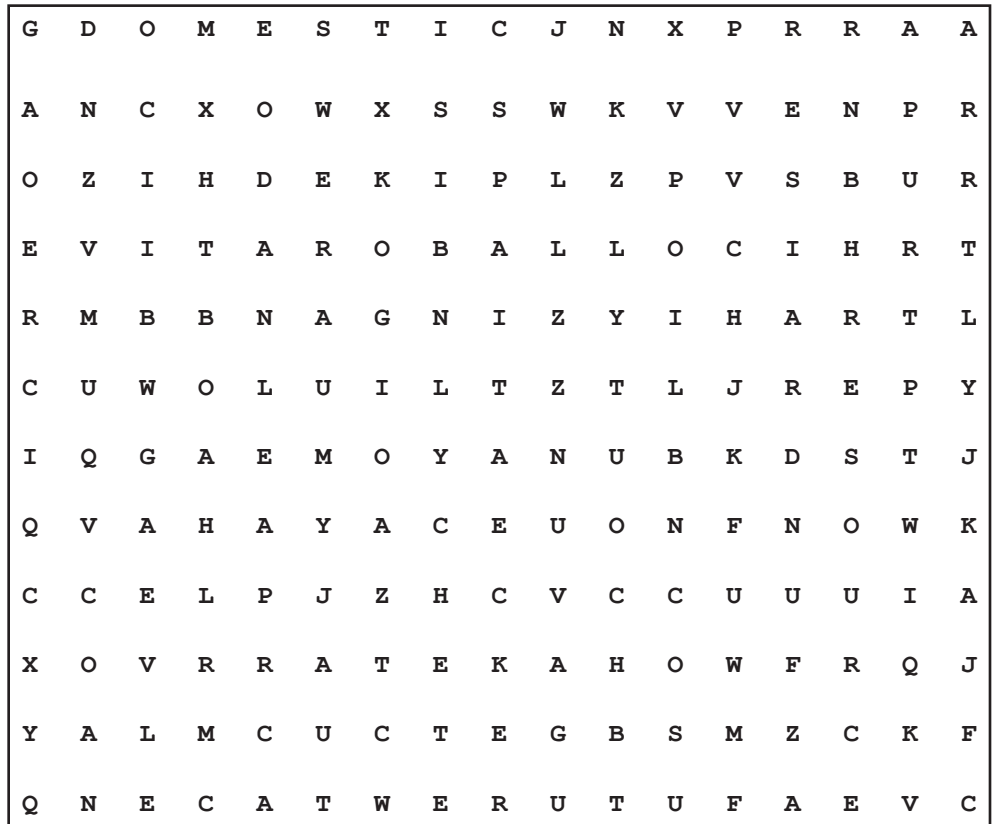
Full course descriptions can be found at: mnsu.edu/honors/current-students/courses14html.html

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

by Sara Baranczyk, '19

Clues:

- The Equity Ambassadors are working to make the Honors Program more welcoming to _____ students of color.
- Interviewing Julie Otsuka taught Braden Hanafree-Major about being his _____ self.
- Dr. Glasser is an avid _____ Rights Activist.
- Dr. Harrison described research as _____ work.
- Sydney Geisness was recognized as the _____ Student of the Year.
- Prathibha Mangedarage was researching _____ in rats with Dr. Bently.
- Rudy Correa cites putting on his own _____ as his greatest accomplishment during his undergraduate career.
- What is the Alumni Mentor Program designed to help prepare current honors students for?
- Samantha King felt like her mentor was a great _____.
- Libby Guss says that the Brother/Sister program is a _____ way to get involved in the Mankato community.



Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Transformational, Biology, Counselling, Henrique, Ducks, Architecture, Jeopardy, Cultural, Dr. Brown

 MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

Big ideas. Real-world thinking.

Stay Connected

- > Website: www.mnsu.edu/honors
- > Facebook: www.facebook.com/MNSUHonorsprogram
- > Twitter: @MNSUHonors
- > Blog: mnsuhonors.wordpress.com
- > Email: honors@mnsu.edu
- > Office Location: 265 Morris Hall
- > Phone: 507-389-5191

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University.
This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling The Honors Program at 507-389-5191 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).
HNRS26NE



 HONORS
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

 MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University. This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling the Honors Program at 507-389-5191 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY). HNRS26NE