Greetings ACE Alumni and Friends,

The past year saw great growth in the number of ACE agencies, when we moved from 20 to 28 agencies. In the coming year, we will welcome 12 freshmen to bring our total up to 37 ACEs, helping to facilitate service-learning in our agencies.

We closed out the spring semester of 2014 choosing a new group of Advocates for Community Engagement (ACEs), based on their interest in social issues, nonprofit work, experience with project and event planning, as well as grades and accomplishments. We had an exceptional pool of candidates, and it was a pleasure meeting them and hearing about their lives and interests. Interviewing new ACEs is a great reminder to us about the kinds of things these students have accomplished before they have even arrived on campus.

This will be the fourth year that the ACE Program has been connected to the Cox Scholars Program, and the first year we will have seniors. Nine of our incoming ACEs will be placed with senior ACE mentors in their agencies; the rest will be connected with a mentor from the remaining pool of ACEs who works at an agency with a similar setup when it comes to facilitating service-learning. Incoming ACEs often have a steep learning curve, but we usually see signs of connection and acclimation by the beginning of the 2nd semester, and a true sense of excitement and ownership in their understanding of the work of the agency by the end of the freshman year. We hope that our new system of mentoring, combined with our longstanding approach of ACE collaboration will hasten the transition. This takes much of the pressure off the agencies, as the bulk of the training of the new ACEs can be accomplished by the experienced ACEs.

The Service-Learning Program welcomed Michael Valliant, the new Community Engagement Coordinator, to the team in November. He spent the year getting to know the ACEs and community partners, which is a big task. His background in nonprofit work, university programs, and UITS have been ideal for this position, and he has quickly adjusted to the demands of the job and brought his talents to help the program run more smoothly.

Once again, I find myself, at the end of the school year, feeling grateful for the opportunity to work with such a talented and accomplished group of students. These are kids who really care about their jobs, their community, and each other. While I don’t want the next year to move too quickly, I do look forward to seeing what our seniors will accomplish out in the real world once they finish their degrees. After three years in the program, we have gotten to know them very well, and couldn’t be more proud to work alongside them.

~Una Winterman, ACE Coordinator
Junior Brandy Warriner has worked as an ACE at Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard (the Hub) for three years. The Hub addresses food insecurity faced by many families in Bloomington. Resources provided by Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard stretch far beyond provision of food. According to Brandy, “Other issues we address are sustainable living, nutrition education, and building self-reliance. All of these issues and more are closely connected. We have the pantry for emergency supplemental food services but we also have our community gardens and youth garden programs as well as our nutrition education classes and resources to offer patrons to help them better their lives even after they no longer need our services.”

Brandy’s interest, understanding, and work experience with food security issues predates her work as an ACE at The Hub. She remembers, “When I was in high school, I helped organize food drives for our local food pantry. Food is a basic human necessity and I know from growing up with my mom raising me on her own while working a factory job how hard it is for people to provide for their family despite how hard they are working. However, I did not understand much about the politics of food inequality until I became the ACE for MHC. Now I have become a vocal advocate for food justice with my family, friends, and members of my community.”

During Brandy’s time there, the Hub has experienced a major increase in patronage. According to Director of Development Mary Beth Harris, there has been a 42% increase in clients over the past year. Roughly 3000 people per week came through, facilitated by an expansion of their hours afforded by a recent move to a larger space. At times, this increase can result in a lack of food on the shelves at a given time. Brandy stated, “Due to the fluctuating nature of supplemental food programs and the fact that we rely on Hoosier Hills Food Bank for 99% of our food means we have little control over how much food we have at any given time, but we try to provide as much healthy, nutritious food as possible for our patrons.”

Brandy’s passion has also had an impact on her fellow ACEs. Danielle Bolling, ACE at Banneker at the View, has drawn great inspiration from her contact with Brandy over the last few years. “I’ve seen her dedicate so much of her personal time to working at Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard by going way beyond her ACE responsibilities. Brandy is a fellow ACE, mentor, and friend, and I look up to her in so many ways. She advocates for what she believes in and embodies the true meaning of what the ACE program stands for in terms of community engagement. Although I will be heart-broken when she graduates next year, I know that she’s left her mark at Indiana University and will be successful in whatever she chooses to pursue in the future.”
The ACE program at Batchelor Middle School has been a joy to experience with our ACE, Katie Mathis, as we work with students throughout the school year. We are a seventh and eighth grade school comprised of approximately 530-600 students. Katie first came to us three years ago as a freshman and will begin her last year here in the fall as she trains our new ACE to take over.

Batchelor was eager to acquire an ACE as service-learning was already a huge part of the culture in our school with many teachers seeking out partnerships on their own. Katie has worked tirelessly with three different assistant principals for each of her three years here matching up our needs for our students with Indiana University students and community partners.

Among her numerous responsibilities, Katie identifies courses at IU that match our need, contacts the professors, sets up and conducts the orientation for those students, checks attendance and levels of interaction going on within/outside our building and maintains a cheerful and fantastic attitude while doing so! In addition to that, this year she has also attended early morning administrative PLC’s (professional learning communities) with our administrative team to better understand and meet the needs of students; she set up and taught her own class during advisory time once a week; coordinated a disc golf course design; coordinated an IU/Batchelor girls club field trip (3rd year in a row); and is always willing to pitch in around the office and school for whatever we ask.

In short, I cannot imagine losing Katie or the ACE program at Batchelor and cannot wait to meet our new ACE this fall!
ACE Alumni
by AnnarRemenschneider,
former ACE at Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana

ACEs are uniquely positioned to facilitate among their peers a critical dialogue on social justice and responsibility, and to help charter the course from intention to action. To be appointed so meaningful a charge at a relatively young age can feel empowering, but also overwhelming. When I first began my work as an ACE for Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) during the spring semester of my sophomore year, my knowledge of their goals and mission was limited. Furthermore, I was unfamiliar with the non-profit network in Bloomington and the population it served. Who was I, then, to represent this organization and their work to my peers on campus? Luckily, I found supportive mentors and colleagues among the BBBS staff, and together we lay the groundwork for a collaboration that would expand service-learning opportunities. With their guidance, I gained invaluable insight into the power of mutual action and partnership in building and sustaining inclusive and interconnected communities. These skill-sets have continued to serve me well in my ongoing educational and professional pursuits.

I began a M.A. program in Educational Leadership, Politics and Advocacy at New York University in 2011. My first semester, I enrolled in a course called Participatory Action Research (PAR). Through course readings and discussion, I discovered that many of the principles framing the praxis of PAR were similar to those of service-learning. This course led to an internship with my professor’s organization, the Participatory Action Research Center for Education Organizing (PARCEO). Similar to the process of service-learning, our advocacy and organizing work was rooted in and strengthened by community knowledge, common cause, and collective action.

My internship with PARCEO inspired me to pursue further policy work. I wanted to understand better the whole policy process from research to implementation, and discover where disconnects occurred between policy-makers and policy recipients. I now work as a consultant for the New York City Department of Education on the new teacher evaluation system – a policy that has generated a firestorm of contentious debate nationwide. My initial unease with this role was soon lessened by the nature of my responsibilities. I conducted research and responded to questions on every aspect of the policy, eventually learning it inside and out. I met weekly with our office’s executive leadership to discuss major issues arising from my case loads and present recommendations based on feedback from the field.

In 1968, French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre put forth the idea of “the right to the city”. Social theorist, David Harvey, articulates this concept as “a right to change [the city] after our heart’s desire (...) the right to remake ourselves by creating a qualitatively different kind of urban sociality (...).” He further posits, “We individually and collectively make the city through our daily actions and our political, intellectual and economic engagements. But, in return, the city makes us.” As an ACE, I discovered that communities work best when smart and thoughtful people engaged at all levels of civic participation and leadership make a collective claim on the places they inhabit. As an ACE alumni, it is my intention to remain committed to that initial charge to which all ACEs are appointed: to facilitate meaningful discourse on social justice and responsibility and to actively contribute to processes that foster collaboration and community wherever I go. Thanks to a remarkable ACE cohort, wonderful teachers through the Service-Learning Program, and an overall transformative experience, I know I am well equipped to do so.
ACE PERSPECTIVE
WHAT BEING AN ACE MEANS TO ME

Celia Daniels
IU Office of Sustainability
“Being an ACE means that I can connect with people I never would have met without the program, and that I can help those people achieve the goals they have set for themselves. Working within the ACE program has allowed me to develop a whole new sense of responsibility and has shown me how so many people are trying to do beneficial things for their community.”

Danielle Bolling
Banneker at the View
“Being an ACE means immersing yourself into the Bloomington community and actively taking a role in the social issues that affect each of our agencies. It has changed my outlook on life in terms of wanting to serve in my community and being more appreciative of the resources available to us.”

Alexea Candreva
Crestmont Boys & Girls Club
“Being an ACE has helped me grow as a professional, a communicator, and most importantly, a more informed, passionate, and open-minded individual. No experience as been more valuable in my life.”

Destiny Hibbs
Ellettsville Boys & Girls Club
“For me, entering college as an ACE has meant having an awesome support-system in an otherwise totally unfamiliar place. The various types of insight I have gained from my fellow ACEs and the program’s directors has been absolutely invaluable to my experience at IU and my own personal growth.”

Holli Dobay
Harmony School
“Although my time as an ACE has been relatively short, I’ve already seen myself become more responsible, organized, and open-minded; this is an opportunity I will forever be indebted to.”

Alexis Baber
Girls Inc.
“Being an ACE means making a difference – making a difference in your community, your agency, the clients you serve, the service-learners you instruct, and most evidently and undeniably, yourself.”
NEW ACEs

Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard
Anna Burse, Indianapolis, IN

Fair Trade Bloomington
Melinda Cochran
New Albany, IN

Area10 Agency on Aging
Brett Detmar
Saint John, IN

The Academy of Science & Entrepreneurship
Ethan Hamilton, Bloomington, IN

Boys & Girls Club Crestmont
Brett Hoffman, Mooresville, IN

WonderLab Museum of Science, Health & Technology
Kesha Kandoi, Dyer, IN

Middle Way House, The Rise
Justin Krieg, Chesterfield, IN

Boys & Girls Club (Main Club)
Michelle Long, Zionsville, IN

Batchelor Middle School & Jackson Creek Middle School
Mackenzie Mendel, Jasper, IN

Banneker at the View
Eric Roberts, Westfield, IN

Shalom Community Center
Katie Thien, Indianapolis, IN

New Leaf New Life
Justyce Weeden, Indianapolis, IN
The ACE Award for Exceptional Facilitation of Service-Learning 2014

After receiving a request from Dr. Rasul Mowatt, Associate Professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies to honor the contributions of ACE Danielle Bolling’s facilitation of his History of Leisure class, the Service-Learning Program took the opportunity to create a new award: The ACE Award for Exceptional Facilitation of Service-Learning.

“She truly embodies pushing the limits of achievement with the intention of transforming communities with the influence of the principles of social justice, social equity, and social responsibility.”

-Dr. Rasul Mowatt,
Associate Professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies

Thank you for Service on the Service-Learning Advisory Board

Replacing Wanda Krieger, Service-Learning Advisory Board Member 2012-13, was Collin Hickey, ACE for The Project School, as the ACE Representative for 2013-14.