

CACSL CONFERENCE

Community Service
Learning
Student Vignettes

A Commitment To
Community Engagement
And Collaboration



2016

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Dr. Glenn Ruhl and I developed this publication of CSL vignettes to provide insight into the Canadian experience from the student's perspective. We sought to provide an opportunity for the student voice to illustrate not only the impact of their community projects, but also the rich variety of experiences and partnerships from across the country. While faculty, CSL administrators, and community organizations structure the learning opportunities and assessment methodologies, we do not always obtain a fulsome picture of the impact of the experience upon students. We hope this edition provides insight into student perceptions of their learning experience.

I would like to express my appreciation to Glenn and his hard working student assistants, Michelle Vaniersel, Jamie Anderson and Jaclyn Brown, for the many hours they dedicated to this project. Thank you. Finally, sincere appreciation and gratitude is extended to Dr. David Docherty and Mount Royal University for their ongoing support for the CSL conference and the funding of this publication.

I hope attendees at the CACSL conference Impact for Sustainability, hosted by Mount Royal University in May 2016 enjoy their copy of the vignettes. The publication will also be posted in digital format on the conference website, and the CACSL website.

Victoria Calvert
Chair, Impact for Sustainability conference
Professor, Business
Mount Royal University

The vignettes in this volume allow students to share their Community Service Learning (CSL) experiences. We hope that this publication inspires faculty, community partners, and students by providing insight into the wide range of projects and types of engagements that are practiced across the disciplines.

Mount Royal University (MRU) hosted the 2016 national conference for Community Service Learning (CSL) and Community Engagement (CE). Partners for the conference included: The Canadian Alliance for Community Service Learning (CACSL), the Volunteer Centre Network, The Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the Institute for Environmental Studies, and the Institute for Community Prosperity. This conference, held every two years, serves as a national connection reaching all the constituents involved in CSL and CE. As part of the conference, MRU has made this publication available digitally through the Canadian CACSL website as well as through the CACSL 2016 Conference website.

The vignettes represent CSL projects from Canadian colleges and universities that address real-world challenges and opportunities. Each student project entails a description of their project, a statement of what they learned, and how the project impacted them personally. The projects illustrate the rich and varied nature provided by the CSL experience. All of the vignettes capture the students' enthusiasm and demonstrate how Community Service Learning is an integral part of post-secondary education in Canada.

This spring, I participated in the CRJS field school to Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. It was the first of its kind for the Criminal Justice Degree Program at Mount Royal. The field school was a 3-credit Community Service Learning designated course. Associate Professor of the Department of Economics, Justice, and Policy Studies, Dr. Scharie Tavcer, supervised the field school. Four students, including myself, participated in the course.

For four weeks leading up to our visit to Rankin Inlet, Dr. Tavcer held classes directed at bettering our understanding of the Canadian Criminal Justice System and how it operates in the Canadian South. The goal of our classroom learning was to form a basis for comparison for what we would observe in the Canadian North, especially with regards to the treatment of the Inuit, who are the majority demographic of the North. The second goal of our trip to Rankin Inlet was to volunteer. We spent a lot of time brainstorming ideas in the classroom on how we could make a positive contribution to the people of Rankin Inlet during our two week stay.

My experience in Rankin Inlet was truly awe-inspiring. We met with an array of justice service agencies such as the RCMP, the Pulaarvik Friendship Centre, Probation Services, the Rankin Inlet Healing Facility, Kivalliq Legal Society, and attended circuit court. We also participated in community service activities. We volunteered our time at Deacon's Cupboard food bank and clothing closet and spent a lot of time with the Rankin Rock girls' under 18-hockey team. Through games and other sports related activities, we focused on goal setting, building self-esteem, and developing a positive self-image. We focused on what it means to take pride in oneself and take pride in having goals such as finishing school or going to university.

Contextualizing my classroom learning with real world situations was truly a fascinating experience for me. Having the opportunity to fully devote my time, energy, and emotions within a community was an unforgettable and humbling experience. I learned so much about myself

and about the world in general from my two weeks in Rankin Inlet. I learned that there is an immense amount of value in the concept of “love your neighbor.” The emotional and spiritual connection that fosters cohesiveness among the Inuit of Rankin Inlet is something that will stay with me forever; and I will always strive to incorporate it into my own life.

Speaking to the Inuit of Rankin Inlet and hearing stories and ideas from such a different perspective was powerful. We spoke with Elders who were stolen from their families by the government and placed in the Residential School at Chesterfield, where they were physically and emotionally abused for years. They spoke on how those terrifying experiences have had long-lasting effects on the Inuit and other Indigenous peoples; effects that are still being felt today. They reminisced about their childhood and told us stories about how life was much simpler when they lived out on ‘The Land.’ We spoke with Helen who is an Elder who told us one of the things she dislikes about the way things are today is clocks. She reminisced about her life on ‘The Land’ when nothing mattered other than family. There was no need for clocks or schedules. She, and many others like her, have been forced to make irreversible adjustments in their way of life, but still desperately cling to the history of their people. The Elders try to teach the new generation about the foundations of their culture, such as hunting and fishing, and how that culture can be incorporated into their life in contemporary Canadian society.

An important lesson I learned was that in the North is that the justice system does not always operate in a rigid manner. I learned that applying Canadian law in the North in the same way that it’s applied in the South would be dangerously unwise and counter-productive, as the culture and way of life of the two are so drastically different. While observing court, I witnessed the judge give a young adult Inuit man his sentence. His sentence was house arrest, including a curfew and a list of people he wasn’t permitted to socialize with. Part of his sentence, however, included permission for him to accompany his family on weekend hunting trips out on ‘The Land’ with the approval of his probation officer beforehand. The judge recognized the emotional and spiritual connection the Inuit have to their land and adjusted the young

man’s sentence to foster a more rehabilitative approach. That level of care, understanding, and commitment to restorative justice is not seen as vividly in the South.

My visit to Rankin Inlet played a pivotal role in my life. It instilled in me the willingness to have compassion and understanding. I learned that no matter where I begin my career, and in no matter what facet of the system I find employment in, I will need to approach every situation and individual I encounter with compassion and understanding. No two situations or individuals will be the same, which means that I must have the ability to alter the manner in which I conduct myself with every situation I encounter. I cannot be rigid in my approach. My visit to Rankin Inlet also fueled a desire to give back and volunteer my time, energy, and emotions within whatever community I reside. Altruism is such an important concept for young people to learn and it’s crucial for us to get out of our comfort zone and experience different aspects of society in order to fully absorb that lesson. It’s important to discover the many ways we can all learn from and help each other. Seeing the level of care that each member of the Rankin Inlet community has for one another is something that sustains its resilience. I intend to promote that same level of community cohesiveness in whatever way I can while working in the justice system.



Photo of me and my fellow students with Inuit Elder, Helen Iguptuk



Standing under the Rankin Inlet Inukshuk

I will offer some critical insights into international CSL trips, offer an international student's perspective and give some constructive criticism on decolonizing CSL and alternative ways of showing solidarity with the global south. My first experience with CSL came in the form of a co-curricular 'Alternative Spring Break' trip to Uaxactun, Guatemala, run by the Student Experience Office at Carleton University in partnership with SOS: Students Offering Support. This experience abroad gave me some critical insights into the limitations of CSL, and some ideas about how to restructure North/South CSL programs in more equitable ways.

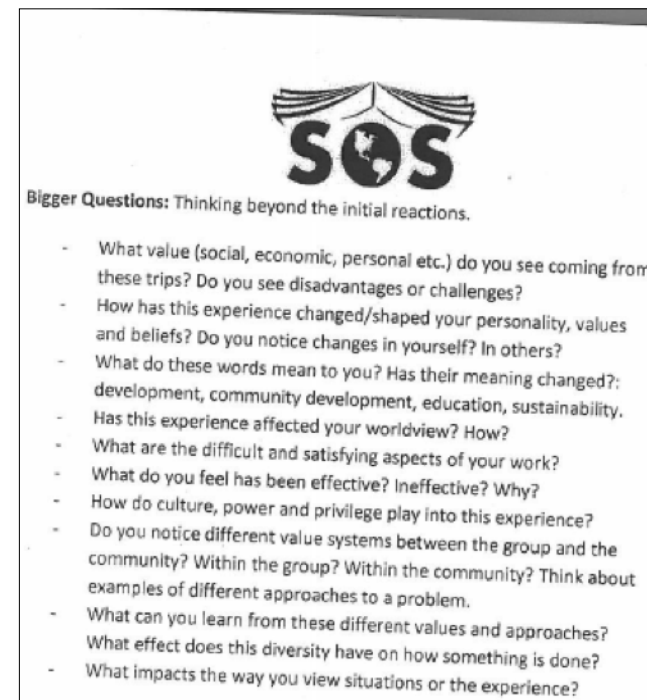


Figure 1

The Alternative Spring Break program at Carleton is approximately 6 months in length, starting in October and ending in March. The main attraction for students is the week in February, during which we engage in a service learning trip in cooperation with a certain community and a partner organization such as SOS. SOS is a student-led charitable organization. It has chapters across the Americas and, according to Students Offering Support (2011), 1 "SOS has tutored over 25,000 different students and raised over \$1,400,000 for various sustainable development projects in countries such as Nicaragua, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Costa Rica, and El Salvador". Prior to the travel date in February, students engage in a series of orientations, team bonding activities, and "Days of Service" during which we would

go out to local organizations for 3-4 hours and assist with special events or day-to-day operations such as going to the Ottawa Food Bank to assist in sorting food.

During and after the trip, students are encouraged to reflect and connect this co-curricular activity with academic learnings. On my trip there were 14 students from different programs and backgrounds which meant that whenever we had group reflections there was an interdisciplinary approach. We were provided with a notebook that had several questions (see figure 1) to encourage self-reflections. Our team was led by two leaders and two advisors. The team leaders are students who had previously participated in an Alternative Spring Break trip. The role of the student leaders was to encourage our personal growth, reflection, and team bonding. The team advisors are Carleton Staff that take care of logistical support, and act as role models during the trip. The service themes for the project were sustainability and poverty.

Before the trip, I was told that the community in Uaxactun needed and requested assistance with implementing "Creative Recycling" which would help them achieve their goal of making the Town of Uaxactun more sustainable, while providing employment opportunities for local workers. To give context, Uaxactun is a town of approximately 1,000 people and within very close proximity to ancient Mayan Ruins in a Mayan Biosphere Reserve. The community leaders want to keep their ecological footprint on the biosphere to a minimum. The first part of our trip thus focused on environmental education. We worked with local children on the first day (and for a few hours each subsequent day) picking up all the trash from the village and separating them into plastic, paper, metal and trash. This was a fairly simple task. We were told that the recyclable materials were going to be used for creative recycling such as handbags and toys for children. In between all the welcome activities and the very generous activities that the people of Uaxactun have put on for us, we'd either play sports with the children or partake in tours of the Mayan biosphere put on by a local resident. The second day, we spent the day painting and labeling different recycling bins that the local carpenters had built prior to us arriving. During the third day, we spent the day at the school with the children teaching them about recycling as

a concept in general, and the recycling program at Carleton University. We were teaching elementary and upper year students the English alphabet as well as some English words that are related to recycling and healthy living. In our final day in Uaxactun, it was time to set up and put together the recycling bins (see figure 2) that we painted. To actually build and put together the bins correctly one needs carpentry skills. This was something our team did not have at all.

I have mixed feelings about this CSL trip. I was under the impression that we would be mostly working with and for the community during our time in Uaxactun. In fact, we only worked for a few hours each day performing very simple tasks that I believe the community is very much capable of doing. The work we did could have been a great community engagement project by the community for the community. We were constantly told that the community leaders have reached out to SOS and requested students to come help with this project, which is still puzzling

me to this day. There could be some monetary gain for the community but as participants, the information was not disclosed to us.

We also used up a lot of the community's already scarce resources. The people of Uaxactun put so much effort and energy into making us feel comfortable and welcome, that ultimately, it was us that came out benefiting the most from this trip. For example, we were fed better than the average



Figure 2. One of five recycling bins in Uaxactun

Guatemalan. Then there is the question of water. This community solely relies on rain water for washing and cleaning. When they have to, they drive approximately 20km to buy water. The drinking water that was provided to us was bottled water, which was definitely a privilege. In sum, we were living in better conditions than the locals. All of this made me

feel very comfortable and at home, however I do not think that comfort should be the goal of the trip. I felt as if I was a burden to the community rather than a helping hand. CSL trips are branded as mutually beneficial and a win-win situation for everyone involved. The community did of course benefit from having recycling bins but why do Canadian students have to travel all this way to do that, and does it reconcile in the end with the amount of resources that they gave to us? This experience also had a very colonial aspect to it. The children saw the Westerners as the ones with the knowledge and skill. Many times they watched their community leaders and elders thank us for our efforts.

This, combined with providing us with scarce commodities, must have psychological effects on the children. In my view, this will either reinforce feelings of hostility towards Westerners since Westerners are showing them how to live their life better; or the children will see Westerners, rather than their own leaders, as positive role models. The latter reinforces dependency on northern aid rather than demonstrating a collaborative and sustainable relationship.

In conclusion, my CSL trip to Guatemala was certainly fun, engaging, and gave me an opportunity to visit a country which I had not visited before. I was able to see how underprivileged communities manage to deal with harsh living conditions, while meeting new people from my university and from Guatemala. I also found this trip eye opening to me when looking at issues in international development and specifically power relations between the global North and the global South. It offered me an opportunity to critically reflect on the role of CSL and has made it clear to me that service learning needs to be decolonized and radically restructured – otherwise this form of learning mostly benefits the already privileged tourists through “feel good tourism.” I believe that in order to have a long lasting and sustainable impact on a community such as Uaxactun, students should commit to working with the community from their homeland by having fundraisers to assist with the community’s needs with building infrastructure, for example. This would be much more beneficial to the community as they would be able to specifically outline the developmental barriers in their community. In this manner, power imbalances would still be present; however it gives an opportunity

for communities hosting CSL students to freely communicate and set the terms and conditions for the collaboration.

Omar is an international student from Cairo, Egypt, studying Environmental Studies with a minor in Sociology at Carleton University. He is also a research assistant for the ‘Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement’ (CFICE) research project. Omar’s involvement with CSL, CFICE, and other community organizations, has helped Omar develop critical thinking skills. In the future, Omar hopes to use his skills to empower communities and challenge injustices locally and globally.

DANIELLE FERMIN MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Never had I imagined in my life that I would embark on a journey and travel halfway across the world to learn about my own sense of self, my strength in leadership, and have the privilege to be unconditionally accepted and loved. This all changed when I went on my field school trip to visit a family situated in an ashram in Haridwar, India. On November 1st, 2011 I had just completed my submission for a field school opportunity, based on how traveling to India would help shape the dimensions of my own social, cultural and personal development. I established in my essay application that great things would happen if we invested our efforts in an activity where Mount Royal University (MRU)



Handprints of children, youth and adults of SRA are in various colours. MRU staff and students handprints are in blue. Photo credit: Danielle Fermin

students would work together with the children living at the ashram and create a symbolic mural. This mural activity would emphasize hope and act as a vessel where children and MRU students would together leave a tangible mark on this

world. Little did I know that my idea would transpire into spearheading my first community development project; an opportunity to begin my journey of learning and unlearning the many truths of what has shaped my own ideals of the world; and, challenging cultural myths which have spiraled from discrimination, hate, and injustice.

Several months prior to our departure to India, myself and 24 other Mount Royal University students from the Faculty of Communication Studies and the Faculty of Health and Community Studies (in the Social Work and Child and Youth Care Counsellor diploma programs) were gearing up to venture into the first field school opportunity our university had coordinated to India. With guidance from both Terry Field (Associate Professor and Journalism Chair) and Yasmin Dean (Social Work Associate

Professor) we were able to explore multiple facets of preparing and familiarizing ourselves with all the steps of becoming a global citizen. We started with gaining an understanding as to what vaccinations were essential in strengthening our immune systems; where the best deals were to purchase cotton t-shirts and pants to help us acclimatize to the hot, humid weather we were



Nearing the end of the field school trip where children and students swam in a pool together on a hot sunny day. Photo credit: Rashmi ColeFermin

soon to be engulfed by; all the way to researching grants which would help offset some of the costs of our tuition and flights. Most importantly, regular monthly meetings allowed us time to build a connection with our community development group members and to solidify details on our projects which were to be based on the underlying question, "What is home?"

Specifically focusing on the mural project, our relationship with the Director of Sri Ram Ashram (SRA), Rashmi Cole, was crucial in "meeting the clients where they are" – a fundamental practice in social work and community development. Since our first Skype call with her, Rashmi invited us all to immediately step into their day-to-day activities to gain a better understanding of the culture at the ashram amongst the children, youth, and adults who calls the ashram their home. Leaning in became a common practice for all of us to slowly immerse ourselves into the aura of India. Having the fortune of participating in a program emphasized on intercultural communication and international community development allowed myself, a recent graduate of the Social Work Diploma program, to collaborate with students who represented Child and Youth studies, Public Relations, Information Design and Journalism. This was the epitome of interdisciplinary collaboration. With the amazing support from my fellow colleagues, Keisha Kipling (Social Work) and Giselle Dino (Communications), we deemed ourselves as the "Muralators." Together,

we spearheaded the mural project at the ashram. Our collective efforts pulled together during the execution of the mural project at the ashram. Painting and planning the mural together had become part of our daily activities. Wake up, pray, exercise, eat, paint the mural, go to school, eat, siesta, tea time, paint the mural in the shade, homework, eat, pray, sleep and repeat again the next day. The end of our stay at the ashram was quickly coming to an end. Yet the contrast of what was once a blank white canvas that casted the two pools in the yard, was lively! Now, the mural was decorated with children standing side by side, representing various cultures from all over the world. Handprints of all the family members residing at the ashram, as well as, the 2012 field school students of MRU adorned the walls of the pools. A rainbow was placed on the highest part of the pool with a sun embedded with the sacred Om symbol. Tying the vision together, the following quote was scribed into the smaller pool, "Home is where our hearts will forever stay." This short and meaningful message emphasized the importance of belonging, purpose, and unconditional love that blossomed amongst the children, youth, and adults of SRA and MRU early that May.

The mural project has since become an ongoing legacy gift where MRU students and the SRA family add new memories onto each field



The SRA logo surrounded with handprints.

school visit. Each new addition to the mural embraces the significance of making connections, and further illustrates each field school group's understanding of hope, identity, and love in partnership with the ashram family. The once stark

canvas now encompasses stories, beliefs, and values of two diverse groups unified by the virtue of belonging. Three years have passed since my peers and I rode up the mountains of Haridwar on a school bus; three years since we passed the blue and green gates with the words

"Sri Ram Ashram" melted into the bars; and three years since the day I peered through the windows of the school bus and laid my eyes on the most enchanting new beginning. I was mesmerized and my body was in shock. Reality had sunk in the gravity of my mural project. It has been three years since I sat in front of the freshly primed pools assessing the curvature of the canvas underneath the hot sun; and there the canvas stared back at me, patiently awaiting the etch each curve my pencil would make, and the stroke of paint from my brush.

Shortly after, I was scooped up and guided through the serene acres of the ashram. I was starting a new adventure in my life, all at the same time, in the privilege of clasping hands with my brothers and sisters of the ashram. That moment commemorates when I truly began to understand how crucial it is to go to where the people are and to start with where they are. Despite facing adversity so early in their lives, these children only revered importance on the simplicities of life. Despite very little adversity in my own life, I was shown the power of leaning in and being vulnerable to new truths, new perspectives, and living whole heartedly. The mural continues to be a symbol of the overarching community that Sri Ram Ashram and Mount Royal University established in 2012. The mural affirms that we are never alone; we have a tangible impact on our world; we belong amongst the cast of colourful friendships forged that spring.

Since my field school experience, I have continued on with my education and have completed my undergrad with the University of Calgary's Bachelor of Social Work program. As a Registered Social Worker, I have recently acquired a new position with the City of Chestermere as the Family and Community Services Coordinator offering preventative, social, and community development programming for individuals and families within Chestermere and South East Rocky View. Challenging my own biases, leaning in with vulnerability, and exploring opportunities alongside community stakeholders heavily influences each decision I make.

**JENICA GUNHOLD, DAINA J. LOHR, DEVON MCLELLAN,
CAROLINE PEPLINSKI, TAYLOR PHILLIPS, KATHRYN ROTZINGER,
AMY SHACKLETON, KAILE VON VEGESAK, AMANDA WESTLUND**
MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

Nine second-year Mount Royal University (MRU) students participated in the 2015 Dominican Republic field school that partially fulfilled the professional practice requirements of the community health course at the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Professor Underwood facilitated the integration of this global field school through her involvement with the Partners In Deed Society of Alberta. Partners in Deed has a long-term community development partnership in place with the TEARS organization in La Vega, Dominican Republic (DR). The TEARS service model is built on living within a marginalized community and working with community members to provide education, clean water and developmental opportunities to the most vulnerable.

Our pre-field school group work included learning about appreciative, culturally sensitive approaches utilized in global service learning. The community had already identified nutritional education for children and parents as the primary goal for this partnership. Building on the work of previous MRU field schools, we incorporated their findings along with epidemiological, strategic and statistical research to address the nutritional needs of the children most at risk. Once we arrived in the DR, we used the expertise of our cultural broker and the TEARS School principal to refine these objectives and finalize culturally appropriate content. During our orientation to the community we had the opportunity to see first-hand the benefits of a women's workshop, a girls-at-risk program, and a water purification program. Flexibility and cultural attunement became more real to us when we were asked to provide nutrition education at two additional schools. The next week was spent in the classrooms as we worked with children, teachers and parents from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds.

Our key partnership goal was to provide an age appropriate, culturally sensitive, and evidence based nutrition lesson for children ages 4-15 living in a very low-income context. Capacity building was important

to both partners and so resources were developed that provided teachers and parents with the ability to continue to build on the work we accomplished together.

Community development work is a notoriously challenging undertaking. Language barriers and cultural differences further complicated our attempt at western-style goal setting in the DR. For us, the greatest learning came from the realization that our initial objectives required a shift in perspective towards a more reciprocal relationship in communication, planning and goal setting. Instead of the relationship serving our goals, we realized that our goals had to serve the relationship. We learned that community development strategies take time, that listening to community members was essential, and that they are the experts in understanding their own community. When we pulled back and created space, our partner showed us how we could meet our mutual goals.

Our partners in the Dominican Republic included teachers, students, and parents. By working at the ground level with the children, we were able to show that we cared about the community and its future. For many of the stakeholders we spoke to, it was this caring that they found most powerful. By showing that we valued the community, we facilitated a receptive environment for delivering our health promotion message. The results of this joint health promotion initiative deepened campus-community relationships, broadened both partners' knowledge, and provided school teaching resources related to nutrition.

Feedback from teachers at the school indicated that our work was a "really important partnership because it works with the basics of hygiene and health. Students have changed [hand-hygiene] behaviour" (the focus of 2014 community health field school). Other feedback that resonated with us came from one of our translators: "What makes the partnership is that it is a joint effort going towards the same place and goal."

Impact statements from the authors of this article:

Jenica Gunhold

“The most powerful forces that shape an individual’s health are about context. Rather than focus on individual choice, we need to create spaces of trust and education where health is a natural outcome. It’s slow, but it’s how we can make permanent change.”

Amy Shackleton

“I now understand the value of collaborating with vulnerable populations to support them to identify their own needs. In the end it was about what our partner wanted to change and we were there to support that.”

Kathryn Rotzinger

“I learned to use the community’s strengths to help create empowering environments. It was a valuable learning experience on both ends of our partnership, exemplifying the principle of mutuality.”

Devon McLellan

“Inequitable access to resources and the marginalization of certain groups is a major source of vulnerability. We helped the community capitalize on their strength in order to address that disparity.”

Amanda Westlund

“Most importantly, this experience has taught me how relationships are correlated with the health of individuals and communities. It goes to show how a long-term partnership with mutual benefits can really be transformative. ”

Kaile Von Vegesak

“Originally we thought that we were going to do all teaching but in the end, we learned more than we taught.”

Caroline Peplinski

“This experience allowed me to gain insight into another culture. I learned how as nurses, we can use relationships to show families how they might change the outcomes in their community.”

Taylor Phillips

“I was distressed by the idea of discussing nutrition with a population facing low socioeconomic status and poor sanitation. Key informants in the community recognized that in general, students had minimal knowledge on this topic. Regardless of socioeconomic status, kids prefer cookies to veggies. I was able to switch my mindset to promote better habits while still remaining culturally sensitive. ”

Daina J. Lohr

“I’ve learned through working with this community that life is not just about material things. Resiliency is established upon strong relationships and passionate belief systems.”

We plan on using these insights gained through service to the global community to better advocate for justice as nurses in communities around the world.



Figure 1. Vegetable Sampling. From T.E.A.R.S. Fundacion by F. Ramirez, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/tearsdr1/photos/a.855563327_833065.1073742135.15419067970335/855563987832999/?type=3&theater. Reprinted with permission.

MELANIE ANGULO AND A. JANAY FOULKES *MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY*

Janay Foulkes and I, Melanie Angulo, began our journey on the Mount Royal University India Field School in May of 2014. The field school was led by Yasmin Dean, Associate Professor of Social Work and Terry Field, Associate Professor of Journalism. The two courses (International Community Development (INTS 3331) and Intercultural Communication (COMM 3501) spanned over the spring semester of 2014. Mount Royal University (MRU) partnered with the Sri Ram Ashram to make this field school a reality. The Sri Ram Ashram “is dedicated to providing a stable, loving family atmosphere to abandoned or neglected children in India” (Sri Rama Foundation, 2015). The Ashram was established in 1974 and continues to grow as it touches not only the lives of the children who live there, but the surrounding community and now has a special place in our hearts.



We arrived at the Sri Ram Ashram, bordering Haridwar, with a project plan in mind but we could not have anticipated how the project would unfold. Our plan was to create an outdoor mural with the children that would allow self-expression and depict each child’s role within their family. We wanted the opportunity to play and build relationships with the children. In communication with the director, Rashmi Cole, we were able to choose some symbols that would have meaning for the Ashram family as well as for us. We chose the Banyan tree, the official tree of India, as a symbol of strength, growth, survival, and longevity to represent the tight knit community of the Ashram. We also wanted a symbol to connect our culture with theirs, and we chose an Indigenous style eagle. Dion Simon from the MRU Iniskim Centre taught us the symbolic Indigenous meaning of the eagle. The left wing represents the community, the right

wing represents the individual, the body represents love which holds the community and individual together, the feet represents stability, and the tail represents the values that the community holds. Our initial plan was to talk with each child and young adult to come up with a symbol that related themselves to their family. We wanted this to be an opportunity for each child to express themselves through creativity, as well as to build community as we worked together to complete the project.

When we arrived we came to understand that factual, rather than creative thinking, is much more heavily emphasized in the Indian education system, and asking the children to create something without offering ideas may be overwhelming. We realized that we would need to utilize examples that would symbolize individual identity to support the children's understanding, without guiding their creative process and placing our own bias on their individual expression. We made a few minor adjustments to the plan, and began to use some spirit animal cards that our professor, Yasmin Dean, had brought – which included a photo and meaning associated with each animal. We sat together and bonded while we sorted through the cards to find just the right animal to represent each family member. "Their answers were thoughtful and enlightening, the cleverness of a fox, the abilities of a chameleon to adapt to all obstacles. The beauty and flight of a bird. I was very touched to see the children of Sri Ram Ashram adjust and enjoy what was a very new process for them" (Rashmi Cole, personal communication, March 26, 2015). We watched as each child began to tap into their creative thinking and the masterpiece unfolded. The rainy weather put a damper on our painting plans, but gave us an opportunity to connect with the family in different ways. When we finally were able to paint we found that it brought not only the Ashram community together, but the surrounding community as well as they observed the creativity their peers were using.

We came with the idea that individual self-expression is essential to identifying your place within a community, but we learned from the children that their relationships with each other are central to who they are. Each child uses their unique abilities to strengthen the family unit and help others to grow and persevere. In the end the project idea we went in with is what we came out with, just in a different way than we

originally planned. With the help of the animal cards, we were able to explore the creation of identity with the children and work with them to express themselves through creative art. Our ideas of self-expression expanded through this process. In the end we gained so much more than we gave. We offered a space for the children to freely create, think outside the box, and have a chance to self-reflect on what they have become within their family. We left them with a painting, but they taught us a deeper understanding of the creation of identity and the importance of family. The opportunity to learn within this community setting was invaluable and the bonds created will continue to influence our personal

and professional lives.

"After choosing their animal everyone went to the mural and chose a spot where their animal would be incorporated into the mural. The excitement was palpable and very engaging. A special bond with the mural was created. This was a very



imaginative process for the children of Sri Ram Ashram. It required them to think beyond their usual boundaries and encouraged a level of thoughtfulness that they are not used to experiencing. It was amazing to watch the children grow into and eventually embrace the mural project and the unique way Melanie and Janay involved them. Thank you for Mount Royal University and to Janay and Melanie for your creativity, patience and unique skills" (Rashmi Cole, personal communication, March 26, 2015).

Our project in India was a beautiful, life-changing experience in wrapping up our education in the Social Work diploma at MRU. The opportunity to actively and positively engage with the children and family of the Ashram, a community on the other side of the world, has encouraged us to move forward in continuing our education in the field of social work. Building upon our experiences in a culturally rich community we can continuously work to build relationships



and connections through engagement in community service learning opportunities over several years.

Melanie is currently continuing her education through the University of Victoria Bachelor of Social Work program and hopes to get involved in international social work in the future. Janay is using the knowledge and skills she developed through this field school in her current endeavours in the field of social work and plans to continue on to a bachelors in social work in the coming years, and continue her research internationally.

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KUNASHNI PARIKH UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

As an international student from Mumbai, India, I have had the privilege to not only attend The University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver as a UBC International Scholar, but also to experience the culture of the Musqueam people – an Aboriginal nation – whose traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory includes the land that the university is situated on. I was able to experience this by participating in a Community Service Learning program outside the classroom in my first-year of university. As part of a collaboration between the UBC International Scholars Awards Program and the UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning, students worked closely with one of ten community partners that ranged from the Vancouver Aquarium Ocean Wise program to a number of organizations that serve people in Vancouver’s socioeconomically disadvantaged community, the Downtown Eastside. Working with Aboriginal youth from the Musqueam community through the UBC-First Nations House of Learning Bridge through Sport-Musqueam Youth Program, is what set my project apart.

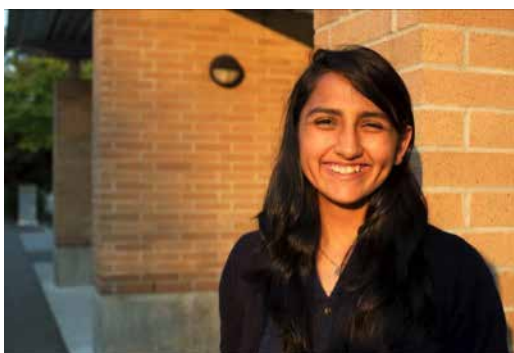


Musqueam Community Administration

The Musqueam Youth Program (MYP) aims to empower Musqueam youth with academic and life skills and encourage them to pursue post-secondary education. My role with MYP at the Musqueam Community Centre was to be a part of the weekly workshops, and design

and lead my own workshop for the youth. The activities conducted at MYP included painting, story-telling, playing soccer and basketball, participating in a hula-hoop dancing workshop and attending a hip-hop workshop by the famous Aboriginal rapper, Kasp. The workshop I designed included three activities. In the first ‘Newspaper Boat/Cross the River’ activity the youth had to come up with a strategy in teams

to cross the room without touching the floor directly and use only two sheets of newspaper to stand on and move across the floor. The second activity was a drawing/communicating activity where a student who faced away from the whiteboard had to give clear instructions to another student to draw a particular geometric figure on the board. Since they could only hear each other and not see what the other was doing, this activity relied highly on effective communication. In the final storytelling activity I shared with the youth the story about my life and how I got to where I am today. I talked about Indian culture, and my experiences with diversity and adversity. The youth opened up and shared their own stories of their culture and traditions.



Kunashni Parikh, UBC International

My entire project at Musqueam focused on the interpersonal relationships developed between the youth and myself, not only limited to empowering them with different skills, but also challenging my perspectives and seeing what I could learn from them.

During the 'Newspaper Boat/Cross the River' activity that I facilitated I was happy to see the youth huddle in their teams discussing how they would cross the floor. I heard them say 'What if we put the newspaper this way?' They tried to come up with innovative ways and strategies of completing the activity which forced them to think outside the box. Sliding the newspaper across the floor was something I hadn't seen before and it was an idea that one of the youth came up with. In the drawing/communicating activity, the figures drawn on the board were slightly different from the original figures. By the end of the game the youth realized the importance of giving coherent instructions and correctly interpreting what the other person is saying. When I spoke about India in the third activity, my stories about culture and festivities resonated with them. In my experiences, sometimes when we speak about Aboriginal people, we sort of pool them all into one, failing to recognize that even within the Aboriginal world there are many different

kinds of communities. India too, is diverse from North to South and East to West in languages, food and festivities. I hope I was able to implicitly emphasize the importance of family values and the richness of cultures where we both come from. In addition I shared my experiences of playing for the Indian Women's Under-19 National Soccer team. I told them stories about some of my injuries, including when I got stitches on my lip without anesthesia and fractured my nose during a game. The youth responded by sharing stories of their own experiences when they were injured in soccer tournaments. The common theme to the stories we shared with each other was that adverse experiences only make you stronger. An important lesson that I learned during this process was to understand that it takes time for the youth to open up. Patience was needed until we could reach that point where ideas would be expressed without hesitation. The more time I spent with the youth, the more confident they were to engage freely in conversation with me.



Musqueam Community Soccer Field
The photographs of the Musqueam Community have been obtained from the following source - <http://www.musqueam.bc.ca/gallery>

What I found intriguing while conducting my project was the lack of public transportation to get to the Musqueam community even though it is only about 5km away from the main university bus loop that has buses that go all over the City of Vancouver. To me, the physical isolation reflects the relative social isolation of the Musqueam community. While at Musqueam, I found talent in the youth, waiting to be

nurtured. During my first session at MYP, I asked one youth, 'What is your favourite thing about Musqueam?' He replied by describing the soccer field located on a hill at the top of the Musqueam community, where many tournaments had happened, and that it was his special place. I realized that this soccer field was not only a platform for the young people to display their athletic talents, but also a metaphor for all the

opportunities that can be given to the Musqueam youth. Maybe the next generation will miss out on great scholars, world leaders, musicians, and artists if young people like the ones from Musqueam are not given equal and adequate opportunities to reach their full potential.

I received encouraging feedback from the MYP Staff on the workshop I led. It made me feel like my contribution to the program had a positive impact on the youth. According to the MYP Coordinator, Nigel Grenier, "Interacting with scholars from different countries opened the eyes of the youth to the world of possibilities available through education. The activities and stories that the scholars shared certainly enriched the youth's experience in MYP this year." The Musqueam Youth Program was an eye opener for me, too. I had heard about Aboriginal people in Canada and their cultures, but before working with MYP, I had never actually met an Aboriginal person, or visited an Aboriginal community. The experience of interacting with the community's youth and Elders has impacted me in several ways. This project has equipped me with the understanding, empathy and patience needed to communicate across cultures. This opportunity was definitely a great starting point for me to see what is out there, outside the bounds of campus, so that in my future endeavors I will have a better sense of direction and purpose with realistic goals to improve the various communities we live in. Being a first-year international student, I have not only set foot into a new country but have also glimpsed into the immensely rich culture of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

**ROBERT CHEN, MALLORY CIMINSKY, KATHARINE FUCHIGAMI,
MARIE HELEN HE, JOVANA SIBALIJA** UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

*Addressing the Potential Implications of Community Mailboxes for Seniors in
Canada*

The Community Service Learning (CSL) course our team was a part of was Health Sciences 4711A Gerontology in Practice, taught by Dr. Aleksandra Zecevic. The course is focused on health and aging, and students work in teams along with community partners on projects that aspire to solve problems faced by older adults in the London community. The course enables students to actively engage with older adults, providing students with a better understanding of this population and their needs. Students are encouraged to develop and apply creative solutions to improve the lives of older adults. Through this process, students give back to a population that has contributed so much throughout their lives to society at large.

In our class, there were seven different projects that ranged from performing functional assessments in an exercise class of older adults, to creating a healthy aging education program, and exploring reminiscence by interviewing older adults about their lives. Our project was research-based, and focused on the exploration of Canada Post's decision to convert from home delivery of mail to community mailbox (CMB) delivery. Our team aimed to answer the question: What are the implications of Canada Post's decision to convert home delivery of mail to community mailbox delivery for the older adult population? As Gerontology in Practice is a Health Sciences course, our project focused on examining how the change may impact fall and injury rates among older adults in the winter. We worked with two community partners. Dr. John Trevithick, 76, is a Professor Emeritus at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Western University. Dr. Trevithick was concerned that his wife, who recently underwent a kidney transplant, would be unable to walk and retrieve mail in winter because of a fear of slipping and falling. He represented the concerned citizens of his generation. Our second community partner was Geoff Bickerton, research director at the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). Geoff provided us with

valuable insight into the activities of Canada Post and the corporation and union's perspectives on the issue.

Through collaboration with our community partners, our team gained a comprehensive understanding of the issue and its potential implications for older adults. We conducted a scoping literature review and explored the potential for future research by writing a grant proposal. Findings are as follows: In December 2013, Canada Post announced they would be converting approximately five million Canadian households from door-to-door mail delivery to CMB delivery. The decision was made to address decreasing letter mail volume and operating losses experienced by the crown corporation. The CMBs will be phased in over the next five years in cities across Canada. The decision to convert to CMBs makes Canada the first country in the G8 to end home delivery of mail. As a result, no research exists on the implications of the change. This has led to concern over how the conversion will affect Canadians. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canada Post did not properly consult with municipalities or consider issues of land use planning, service delivery, and the responsibilities of local governments when the decision to convert to CMBs was made. One area requiring study is the influence of the CMBs on fall rates among seniors in the winter. Falls are common among seniors, with 20-30% of community dwelling seniors falling each year. Winter conditions increase fall risk as 16% of falls occur while walking on snow or ice. Falls are also common among postal workers while delivering mail. Some key factors in slip, trip, and fall accidents in postal workers included slippery underfoot conditions and poor slip resistant footwear. With the CMBs, seniors will take on the role of a postal worker and be exposed to similar weather conditions and environmental hazards, such as slipping on icy streets, increasing the risk of falling. Falls of seniors are expensive and use up many healthcare resources. Seniors falling costs the Canadian healthcare system \$2 billion annually, which is 3.7 times greater than the health care costs for adults aged 25-64. As well, the amount of seniors in Canada is increasing. In 2011, an estimated 5 million Canadians were 65 years or older. This number is expected to double in the next 25 years and reach 10.47 million seniors by 2036. With this projected increase, it is estimated that the number of seniors who will fall at least once will reach

3.3 million, potentially raising healthcare costs. The conversion to CMBs comes at a time when Canada's population is aging. Since many seniors will be walking to their CMBs, the risk of falling is increased, especially during the winter months. We propose a research study^[1] that should determine: (1) how the conversion to CMB will influence fall rates among seniors in the winter? and (2) What will the effects be on costs to the healthcare system? The study will be conducted in one of the affected communities and will study the change using (a) surveys of the residents of the affected area and (b) data collection on seasonal (winter) fall incidence from the local hospital.

Our team provided our community partners with a report that outlined findings from the literature review and included a grant proposal for future research. We also created a presentation and a 3 minute promotional video that outlined our findings. Both were already used to inform stakeholders and potential research collaborators. Working collectively on this project taught our team how much work and planning goes into research. We gained an immense appreciation of the value and importance of evidence-based research, as it is needed to inform decision-makers about the implications and impact of their decisions on the public. We also learned a valuable lesson about advocacy from Dr. Trevithick. He strongly believed the issues surrounding the mail conversion had to be addressed and worked extremely hard to find information and make connections with individuals who could help him. Dr. Trevithick taught us that if you strongly believe in a cause or issue, you should try your hardest to enact change and make a difference.

Due to interest in the topic and quality of our work, within weeks of the course's completion, we had numerous opportunities to disseminate our findings to large audiences. Geoff Bickerton presented our findings and our video to his colleagues at CUPW. We are currently revising a manuscript with our research findings for submission and publication in Western University's Undergraduate Research Journal. In January 2015, our team was invited to present our project to the Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, during her visit to the Western University (Figure 1). Our abstract was accepted for a poster presentation at the Ontario Gerontological Association annual meeting in April 2015



Figure 1 Our presentation to Premier Kathleen Wynne and Ontario ministers Deb Matthews and Reza Moridi

in Toronto. Members of our team participated in the “Save Door-to-Door” initiative, which involved canvassing London neighborhoods scheduled to be converted to CMBs next year and informing residents about the impacts of the conversion.

Our partners are exploring the opportunities to secure funding for two summer internships that would advance this research and collect data from communities that went through the transition to CMBs last winter.

Our team had a very rewarding and enriching experience in Gerontology in

Practice. We learned many valuable skills, which we will carry with us in our futures. As for next steps, Katharine has applied for the Health and Rehabilitation graduate program at Western University for next year, potentially looking at taking this project further as her Master’s thesis. She hopes to take the foundations of this project, and begin data collection and analysis of the impact of the transition to CMBs on the senior’s health.

Jovana will be pursuing a Master’s degree in the Health and Aging at Western University in September 2015. She is extremely grateful to have been apart of this project as it taught her that research is not as intimidating as she originally thought. She learned how to conduct a scoping literature review and how to translate the knowledge from the review into an accessible form through presentations and video created for the course.

Mallory will be attending Georgian College in the fall for therapeutic recreation. Gerontology in Practice taught her how to work effectively

and collaboratively in a team, which are essential skills for healthcare professionals. She also learned that a project focused on advocacy, such as ours, can reach many people in a short period of time and grasp their interest and support.

Marie will be going into her 4th year at Western University in the fall. Following her undergraduate degree, she hopes to pursue a Masters degree in clinical anatomy or gerontology. Working on this project taught Marie how to work efficiently and communicate effectively in a team. She believes our team was successful because of this. Our collaboration and understanding of each other’s ideas was key to our success.

Robert is going into his 4th year at Western University in the fall. He plans continuing to work on the Canada Post project through an independent study with Dr. Zecevic. This class has been an invaluable opportunity for the students to work on a project that has social impact on a national level. It speaks to the power of social change that started from a simple idea raised by a single individual.



On February 13, 2015, 25 students and two faculty members from The University of Western Ontario traveled to Jinotega, Nicaragua, to participate in a community development project organized by Western's Alternative Spring Break (ASB). Melissa Ostrowski, Western's Global Experiential Learning Coordinator, is the driving force behind ASB. Essentially, ASB provides Western students the opportunity to work alongside the residents of a local or global community with the goal of meeting the community's identified needs. Community development projects range anywhere from environmental sustainability to disaster relief to educational development. ASB is part of Western's co-curricular program, an initiative tracking students' out-of-classroom experiences. After all, one's degree only tells half of the story; the application of knowledge outside one's familiar academic setting makes all the difference.

Nicaragua is a breathtaking Central American country, bordering Honduras and Costa Rica. The aim of the 2015 Nicaragua Project was to work alongside the youth of Jinotega, a town approximately two hours from Managua, Nicaragua's capital city. Through Outreach360, our community partner, English lessons were provided to students whose ages ranged from 5-13. Outreach360 is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization whose mission is to provide youth with a life of choice through education. Outreach360's Nicaragua location provides two avenues for children to learn English. The first is through English immersion camps, running once in the morning and once in the afternoon—before and after regular school respectively. Students who advance well in the English immersion camps may be selected to

join the English Learning Centre, which offers a more comprehensive and advanced instruction of the English language. As Outreach360 volunteers, we ran the English immersion camps and Learning Centre for one week. It is in this week the importance of education became evident. Education is survival.

Education is the greatest investment in a nation's human capital. From a Social Determinants of Health perspective, education is a foundation, which determines quality of life. Education is a predictor of individual and community health; it has the power to influence socioeconomic status, poverty, and personal health behaviour. As a Health Science student, my coursework thus far has stressed the interconnected nature between education and self-actualization. It was surprising to realize that my experience in Nicaragua revealed another dimension to education, of which I was unaware. My influence as an English teacher in Jinotega transcended beyond the week's worth of English lessons provided. My presence as a female university student was perhaps one of the most influential lessons I could teach the youth of Jinotega. From my personal perspective, I noticed that Jinotega's cycle of poverty continues for reasons outside of the social and political circumstances that have shaped the country for the past few decades: firstly, due to the lack of young adults in Jinotega with completed postsecondary education to serve as role models, and secondly, due to the discrepancy between how education is received by male and female youth, leading to a disproportionately fewer number of females from Jinotega with completed postsecondary education. The absence of strong role models, especially female ones, makes it incredibly difficult for a child in Jinotega to imagine a life of opportunity and choice.

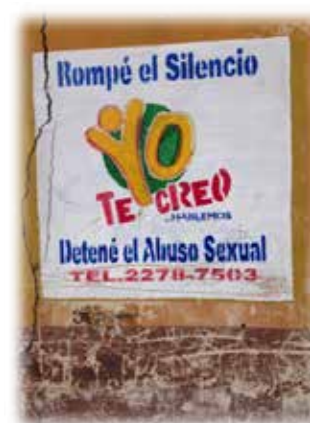
To walk along the narrow streets of Jinotega is to be surrounded by the juxtaposition of beauty and sadness. Mountains surround the town of Jinotega and frame the beautiful collectivist culture rooted in tradition. Survival is a joint community effort in Jinotega—a way of living that is foreign to the individualistic nature of North America. However, posters of a local campaign against women's sexual abuse are indicative of the sadness intertwined within Jinotega's beauty. The incidence of sexual abuse among female youth in Jinotega may be a consequence

of Nicaragua's male-centered society. Sexual abuse is a reality for many female youth; and teenage pregnancy becomes a motivation to shift focus away from females attaining a postsecondary education. Consequently, females in Jinotega face a disproportionate barrier toward attaining a postsecondary education due to the intersections between sexual abuse and the pressure to assume the role of a child's domestic caregiver, in addition to poverty and low socioeconomic status. Therefore, it is not that the female youth of Nicaragua are incapable of attaining a university degree; instead it is that the environment shaping their lives may not be conducive to education. Thus, human capital is inhibited from reaching its full potential. Ultimately, the 2015 Nicaragua Project was a reciprocal learning experience in which both Western University students and Jinotega's youth learned from each other. We were different in many ways, but alike in the most fundamental essence—the desire to learn from each other.

This reciprocal learning experience was made possible due to the collective efforts of Western's 25 student participants and two faculty team leaders. That is, Outreach360 was able to provide English immersion camps and staff the English Learning Centre in Jinotega for an additional week in 2015. The Western students who participated in this project represent a variety of faculties, including Health and Medical Sciences, Finance, and Psychology. Therefore, the University of Western Ontario is an untapped source of human capital, each student representative of a different field working in unison toward the same goal of global community development. The investment in human development through education is not a project adequately understood and tackled by one field or area of study. Instead, providing education globally should be a multidisciplinary effort fuelled by postsecondary institutions such as Western University. Ultimately, Outreach360 utilized Western's collective efforts to further advance their vision of a "transformed world in which every child is able to pursue a college degree or to be gainfully employed upon reaching adulthood, enabling them to live a life of choice" (Outreach360, 2015). Western University has established a history with Outreach 360 such that "the long term relationship with [Western] has been huge for Outreach360 and our service to underserved children in ... Nicaragua. Each individual

volunteer makes a difference, and working together Western has had a tremendous impact in enabling our students to live a life of choice!" (Tom Eklund, Founder/CEO, 2015). The beauty of Outreach 360 is that the investment in the education of this generation's youth is self-sustaining. That is, the students who attain a postsecondary education are expected to return back to the community to act as role models for future generations of Jinotega's youth. I am extremely proud and privileged to have been part of this chain reaction.

When the experience of being an Outreach360 volunteer in Jinotega came to an end, I returned to my university setting in anticipation of an anatomy midterm. In the process of being consumed by midterms and finals, my greatest fear became losing how strongly I felt about community development and forgetting the faces, smiles, and aspirations of the children I had met. As a third year Health Science student attending a postsecondary school in Canada, there is inherent privilege in having the opportunity to take an exam. If I have learned anything during my Community Service Learning project in Nicaragua, it is this: privilege is an inevitable part of human experience. Those with greater privilege are better able to realize their goals and fulfill their human potential. This no longer saddens me because I am doing something with my inherent privilege; the goals I am aiming for are driven by the lessons I learned in Nicaragua and the children I met there.





Pictured from left to right: Mary Hegan, Lisa Meyer, Rebecca Aird, Liz Lefrancois, Dr. Gerald Kutney John Karau, Norman Moyer, Michael Lait. Photo credit: Patricia Ballamingie.

The CSL project Not-for-profit Business Case Development was originally conceived as a 4th year undergraduate business course. But the community partner, the Ottawa Eco-Talent Network (OETN, <http://www.oetn.ca>), obtained a research assistant from Carleton University to carry out the project. Dr. Patricia Ballamingie (Department of Geography and Environmental Studies), co-lead of the Community Environmental Sustainability (CES) hub of the SSHRC-funded social action research project, Community-First: Impacts of Community Engagement (<https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/>) secured funding for the project.

The CSL project had the OETN use its own model on itself, to accelerate its transition from pilot-phase to full-implementation.

According to the 'Eco-Talent Network' model, volunteer 'advisors,' who not only provide expert advice but can also facilitate community-based research projects involving post-secondary students, enhance the knowledge capacities of community groups and not-for-profit organizations.

This particular project combined long-term strategic planning and not-for-profit management. Michael Lait (PhD Candidate) was mentored by an OETN advisor, Norman Moyer, former ADM and current President of Gremoy Inc., a strategic consulting firm. "Working so closely with Norman was a great opportunity," says Michael. "Norman provided a fresh perspective on the group's internal dynamics, and his recommendations were respected."

One of these recommendations was for a brainstorming session with the OETN Steering Committee. Mr. Moyer facilitated the three-hour session (that included a potluck dinner). In addition to bringing bruschetta and a vegetarian chili, Michael took notes and produced a report based on a selective transcript that identified and analyzed various organizational issues. Based on the report and further exchanges with Norman, Michael drafted and circulated the business case. It was endorsed by the Steering Committee in April 2014, and is available online.

Having successfully completed several pilot projects and the business case, the OETN proceeded with the move toward full-time operation. In the summer of 2014, the group incorporated with the province of Ontario. Further, the Steering Committee was reconstituted as a Board of Directors.

Once again, the OETN deployed its innovative model on itself. The formula used earlier was repeated: funding was obtained from CFICE and Michael was retained as the research assistant for the CSL project, Business Plan Implementation. Michael was mentored by OETN co-founders, John Karau and Rebecca Aird, in the preparation and submission of a grant application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). Although the first attempt was unsuccessful, the group persevered and, in October 2014, was awarded funds to hire an Executive Director

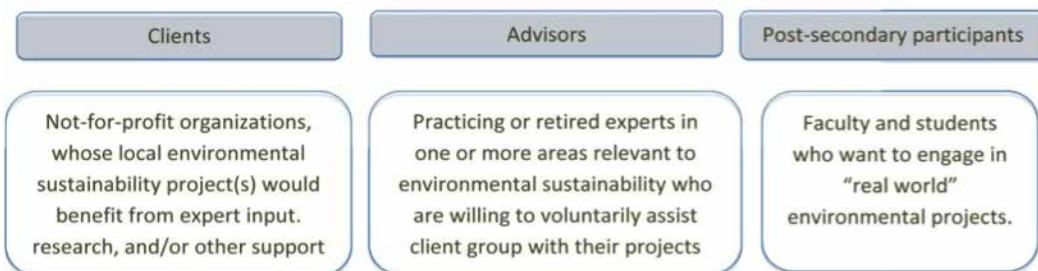
and rent-out office space (OTF application ID No.: 3102 – \$165,700 over 36 months).

While waiting for the grant application results, Michael produced the OETN website, managed the OETN email account, drafted bylaws, attended monthly meetings, and prepared the minutes. “I couldn’t wait for the next meeting,” recalls Michael. “It’s such a diverse, passionate, and inventive group of sustainability and community leaders that I’d be very surprised if Ottawa remains the only municipality with an Eco-Talent Network.”

Finally, as every OETN pilot project had a CSL component, Michael and other OETN members examined partnership opportunities with Ottawa’s universities and colleges. To this end, in November 2014, Michael submitted a 22-page report to the Board of Directors that included a literature review of campus-community partnerships, a discussion of best practices and common challenges, and a template Memorandum of Understanding.

Michael intends to continue working with the OETN as a post-secondary liaison. So, when Dr. Ballamingie appointed him to teach ENST 4000, Michael encouraged his students to pursue “special studies” involving CSL projects with OETN advisors. Two students took up the option: one is involved in doing Sustainability Education curriculum planning with local high schools, while the other is working with an OETN advisor to analyze ISO #37120, Sustainable development of communities – Indicators for city services and quality of life.

OETN model



OETN strategic vision

Vision

Mobilizing talent to achieve an environmentally sustainable Ottawa

Mission

Develop and manage a network of advisors to provide pro bono advice, research capacity, and/or other assistance to support community action on environmental sustainability

Goals

- 1) Enhance the quality and effectiveness of environmental sustainability projects undertaken by not-for-profit organizations in Ottawa
- 2) Link expertise and knowledge with client needs in a credible and timely fashion
- 3) Facilitate community learning and action aimed at fostering a sustainable Ottawa

Clients

Not-for-profit organizations based in Ottawa with projects or issues related to environmental sustainability

AMANDA BISSOON *CENTENNIAL COLLEGE*

I am currently enrolled in the Centennial College Registered Massage Therapy program and will be graduating in 2017. I participated in a program called a GCELE – Global Citizenship and Equity Learning Experience. In May of 2015, I traveled to Nicaragua, Central America with 18 other students and three professors: Carol Stefopoulos, Audrey Kenmir and Michelle Hughes. We all had the same goal, which was to work with an organization called Waves of Hope and set down a foundation of knowledge related to health and hygiene.

Waves of Hope is an organization that began operations in 2008 and is run by Earl Cahill, Jamie Collum and Ben Orton. These founders reside in Chinandega and work out of El Coco Loco, a quaint eco-resort that they developed to provide the surrounding community with jobs. By running yoga and surfing retreats, they raise money to keep this vision alive. The purpose of our GCELE team was to work with the community and share health related information, which could make a significant impact to their lives. I was involved in many of the activities we carried out within the community; however, being the only Massage Therapy student gave me a very special role during this trip. I was informed that there were four masseuses on the resort, two of which were still in training. I immediately knew I wanted to lead the massage-related activities with these women. Even before departing for Nicaragua, I had several ideas and techniques that I wanted to share. Initially, I had no way of organizing my thoughts and plans, until one of my professors suggested that we really had no idea on what to expect. After being around the masseuses, I felt like I was the one who needed to take a step back and learn from them. I exchanged routines with the two that were working. For the two that were training, I implemented my old routine along with the new techniques I had just learnt and we practiced them together. We also went through the business aspects of the trade as well as the required modifications necessary when massaging pregnant women, as these were their two main concerns.

In addition to working with the masseuses, I helped run the pregnancy and biomechanics booths in a health fair we organized



This is a picture taken from the Huffington Post of myself teaching Jessica and Jaqueline- two women from the community- a massage routine.

for the community. I also helped organize a “Master Chef Day” and had the opportunity to play with children from the community on “Girls’ Day”. During the health fair, I spoke to the community about the importance of eating balanced meals while pregnant. While in the pregnancy booth, I looked at a ten-day old caesarean incision, which was very exciting for me because I was delivered via C-section and had never seen what a recent incision looked like. In the biomechanics booth, which was more related to my scope of practice, I performed a few assessments for people and treated them on the spot. The most memorable assessment I performed was a palpatory assessment on a women’s upper arm. I had never felt anything like this but I knew exactly what it was: the area where the deltoids attach to the humerus had been under so much stress that more bone had started to grow over the attachment site, causing part of the deltoid muscle to calcify. For each of the people I assessed, I shared a few different adjustments they could make within their day-to-day lives that would slow down the progression of the problems they suffered. In order to teach healthy eating in a fun way, we organized the “Master Chef Day”. Women from the community made different dishes and after cooking, we ranked them on the healthiness of their preparation first, the taste of their dish second, and presentation last. Our GCELE team also went to see a nurse stationed there to hear her views on the healthcare system within Nicaragua. Margarita, originally from the United States of America, initially went to Nicaragua as a volunteer but stayed because she wanted to impact the country in a sustainable way. She plays a huge role in the health care of the community by training “mobile” nurses called Brigadistas. These are women who live with their families within the communities and are trained to treat illnesses that cause many preventable fatalities. They are also taught to recognize when individuals

need to be rushed to a hospital. Margarita's current goal is to help the nearby hospitals replenish their supplies and have the necessities to treat more patients within the facility.

"Girls' Day" was an unforgettable opportunity to interact with the younger girls in the community. We organized crafts, soccer games, and jump rope competitions for them. This is the day that I will forever keep close to my heart as this is the day that I learned how to be contentedly happy. All around me, everyone was having fun by either skipping rope or kicking a soccer ball. Just as I was deciding on which part of the fun I should jump into, I felt my hand being tugged. The next thing I knew was that I was jumping. It happened so quickly that when I finally had the hang of skipping, I was able to look up and see Tatiana jumping as well and smiling back at me. She was the happiest little girl I had ever met doing something as simple as a skipping rope. This brought me to

tears of joy. With the limited Spanish I learned while I was there, I found out that she was eleven years old and lived behind the resort in the community. She spoke to me further in Spanish and though I could not understand all of it, the enthusiasm and joy I saw in her eyes said it all. This little girl taught me how to enjoy the



Tatiana and I outside of her school on my last day in Nicaragua

little things in life again; she taught me that in such a complex world, the simplest things could bring out all the happiness someone needs. Since returning from Nicaragua, I keep a picture of us together on my wall and it reminds me to look for beauty in everything. I now wake up a little earlier to watch the sunrise and I spend that extra second saying

goodbye to my pets every morning, all because of what Tatiana taught me.

This was the first health-related GCELE trip that has worked with Waves of Hope. I feel that our team has implemented a very stable foundation for future GCELE teams to build on. The Waves of Hope Foundation strives to create a healthy community where hospitals will eventually be more accessible and where preventable fatalities are diminished. I hope that the techniques and routines I shared with the resort's masseuses have helped their business thrive, and I hope that I have changed Tatiana's life just as she changed mine. After returning to Canada, I realized that I want to volunteer for many other trips of this nature. I learned more from those ten days than I have during my whole life and would like to further increase my knowledge of the world. I truly believe that my life has been impacted in such a way that I now feel my calling is outside of my home country of Canada.

NICOLE HAMBLEY *MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY*

In November of 2014, I had the privilege of incorporating the Hawaiian concepts of Ohana (Family), Pono (Harmony, truth & righteousness) and Aloha (love) into the class Nursing 3124- Professional Practice in Child's Health. In collaboration with Dr. Andrea Kennedy of Mount Royal University and seven other nursing students in my cohort, we traveled to Honolulu, Hawaii to enhance our learning of children's health from an international perspective by spending time with elementary school children in a vulnerable community.

During this period, we used the Community Service Learning Five Step process to identify community strengths and weaknesses, build relationships with partners and stakeholders, intervene by promoting health, reflect with each other, and demonstrate our work through scholarly presentations and published articles. In addition, we engaged in learning from Hawaiian Elder Francine Dudoit-Tagupa, known to us as Aunty Fran, to further our interpretation of holistic health and incorporate this teaching into our practice in Calgary. This experience broadened our group's understanding of community health as well as a greater appreciation of the importance of health promotion to an at-risk area. Collaborating with community partners in Hawaii provided an experience that allowed us to grow as students, nurses, and individuals with a clearer knowledge of ourselves.

While working in Honolulu, we partnered with two main stakeholders in the community. First, Prince Jonah Kuhio Elementary School generously hosted us in their classrooms to build resiliency and promote health with the young students. Each nursing student was placed in a different classroom where we focused on building relationships with the children, allowing us to share our knowledge with them in order to promote their health. Additionally, as a group we hosted a "Teddy Bears Health Picnic" where the children could learn about health in a non-threatening and enjoyable way. Both the students and the teachers gave very positive feedback on the experiences they had with our group.

The second community partnership created was with the Waikiki

Health Centre, or, more specifically, the sector of Traditional Hawaiian Healing directed by Aunty Fran. Aunty Fran is not only knowledgeable on the importance of using the Aina (land) as healing and holds the title of Hawaiian healer, but also has a background as a registered nurse. At this clinic we were taught Lomi Lomi, a Hawaiian spiritual healing massage, as well as the concepts behind Hawaiian culture, traditions, and health practices. Further adding to our educational experience, we collaborated with the University of Hawaii Windward Campus Nursing Faculty to learn about their program and work in their garden for a day, where we harvested fresh fruits and vegetables. These were later made into a healthy meal. As well, herbs and plants were harvested and combined to create numerous healing ailments.

Lastly, us as a group visited the Kokua Kalihi Valley. Situated in the dense Hawaiian forest, this area has been created as a community garden, meeting place, and second home for many Hawaiians. We were warmly welcomed with an Aloha Circle and were able to spend time with wonderful people who taught us so much about the Hawaiian landscape, and the social history of their culture. There were many things we as students discovered while on the island. We learned about another indigenous culture, their health practices, the risks that come with being a vulnerable population, and child health from an international level. In addition, we learned about ourselves, as well as our strengths as we work both together and as individuals. During our time with the children, we were made aware of the various struggles that a vulnerable indigenous community can face in Hawaii. Many of these children came from low-income families. However, we also found that these children demonstrated a level of resiliency and positive outlook that was transfixing. These were very happy children with nothing but smiles for us every day. Although I feel I had some impact on changing these children's futures, I found that what they were teaching me about perseverance was equally as valuable and worth my efforts to adapt what I have learned to my nursing practice. The information we gathered about traditional holistic healing can be brought at some level into Canadian nursing practice, to further enhance

the quality of service we can provide as nurses. The practices shown to us during our visit added another level of education to my experience of the nursing program at Mount Royal. The experience I had in Hawaii has provided me with a lifetime of inspiration to guide my nursing practice and has influenced the way I live my day-to-day life. Not only was I given an opportunity to glean information I never would have had access to in my own community, but I was given the opportunity to build relationships with other students, my professor, and international partners. I will remember this experience for the rest of my life. I experienced personal fulfillment and whole-hearted participation in the activities we engaged in on the island. I plan on bringing back the healing techniques I learned from Aunty Fran to friends, family, and my future patients. The field school focused itself on the concept of Ohana (family) and I cannot think of a better description of the entire field school experience, preparation, and reflection this trip allowed. Experiential community learning changed my university experience from one of relative normalcy to one filled with excitement and adventure. Reflecting on the experience pushes me to work harder every day, and to incorporate some level of holistic healing into both my scholarly and personal work. At the start of nursing school, I was a scared high school student entering an unknown world of post secondary education with little idea of how I could thrive with the opportunities given to me. As a graduating fourth year student, I now plan to continue sharing my experiences in Hawaii as I progress through my career. It is because of this field school that I aspire to be a pediatric nurse and change the lives of children and their families with whole-hearted, holistic healing.



The Children of PJK elementary school with the 7 nursing students from Mount Royal University. Nicole Hambley is second from the right.

**CHELSEY CRELLER, MALLORY KROEKER, CARLEE KNIGHT,
KATIE BYERS, SAMANTHA CARDINAL, AMANDA FALCONE,
RACHAEL JONES** *MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY*

Overview of our Undergraduate Course and Purpose

As third-year student nurses enrolled in the Mount Royal Baccalaureate Nursing (MRBN) program, we applied, interviewed, and were selected for the 2015 NURS 3124 Professional Practice in Child Health → Global Indigenous Child Health Field School in Honolulu, Hawaii. Our professor, Dr. Andrea Kennedy, has been collaborating for years with our indigenous communities and agencies in both Calgary and Honolulu. We were required to learn about our local Canadian indigenous context in preparation for our global indigenous child health experience. In preparation, we explored indigenous population health strengths and challenges, including colonization and reconciliation, as our foundation to develop culturally safe nursing practices. In this 144 hour practicum course, we integrated primary health care and population health strategies for holistic health promotion with a variety of groups, including indigenous Hawaiian and Micronesian children and families. We followed our practice standards to provide safe, evidence-based, ethical, family-centered nursing care in the role as volunteers in collaboration with community partners. From a strength-based approach, we applied key competencies including growth and development, family-centered care, safety, and communication. We integrated these key concepts to support our resiliency-focused work, as we collaborate with children, families, and community agencies to identify their own strengths as a foundation to explore priorities and strategies for health as partners in care. Additionally, practicing from a strength based perspective will foster “the [individual’s] ability to function with healthy responses, even with significant stress and adversity” (Henderson, Bernard, & Sharp-Light as cited in Ball, Bindler & Cowen, p. 120, 2014).

Our Community Partners

We are fortunate to collaborate with two agencies that offer

exceptional service to our community of high risk, low income indigenous and migrant children and families. We have a global shared vision for healthy children, youth, families, schools and communities. Together, we promote determinants of health that are prioritized by our community partners. Our key partnership is with Waikiki Health Center, whose mission is to “provide quality medical and social services that are accessible and affordable for everyone, regardless of ability to pay” (Waikiki Health Center, 2015a). Our Elder Aunty Francine Dudoit (Director, Traditional Hawaiian Healing) welcomed us with much aloha, and fully supported our learning by following Hawaiian indigenous protocol. Aunty Fran supported our placement with the Youth Outreach (YO) program that provides a “safe haven for homeless youths, offering medical care, social services and non-judgmental support” (Waikiki Health Center, 2015b). The community surrounding the youth outreach program has a lower socioeconomic need than the average district in the state of Hawaii; however, income inequality for this same district is comparably high to that of counties across all of the United States (Hawaii Health Matters, 2015a, 2015b). We also worked with Prince Jonah Kuhio (PJK) Elementary School, whose mission is to “empower our students with social, intellectual, and emotional skills to become productive citizens who contribute positively to society” (Prince Jonah Kuhio Elementary School, n.d.). The NURS 3124 course offers a community placement in the public school setting in both local (Calgary) and global (Honolulu) settings given the healthcare trend for wellness, outpatient care, and short hospital stays, respecting the large number of children with complex health needs in the community. Children do not live in the hospital; rather, they live in their communities and spend most of their time at school. PJK is located in a densely populated area of Honolulu with many high-rise apartments, housing families from a variety of ethnic and socioeconomic groups. When categorizing districts by “socioeconomic need...correlated with poor health outcomes” PJK elementary lies in a community that requires moderate socioeconomic need when compared to the state of Hawaii as a whole (Hawaii Health Matters, 2015a).

Priority Actions with our Community Partners

This field school has been designed in order to achieve all requirements of the NURS 3124 curriculum; however, by virtue of our location, we have been able to approach said benchmarks from a culturally integrated global lens. Our priority actions for both organizations were rooted with the intention to promote resiliency. Although our goals for both YO and PJK were parallel, our context with each organization guided our different approaches. We were the first group of clinical students from Mount Royal University to partner with YO. This meant that in order to promote resilience and health, we first had to work toward establishing a trusting and therapeutic relationship with both the staff and youth. In working with PJK, two groups from Mount Royal University have preceded our own, which means that the foundational communication and trust-building was established prior to our arrival. Our priority actions were enacted through multiple interventions within the four weeks we worked with the school. The key interventions implemented included Healthy Start parent workshops, a Teddy Bear's Health Picnic, and consistent support for the teachers in executing the Hawaii Health Standards curriculum. In addition to the specified interventions, our presence at the school fostered an environment that enhanced and reinforced the strengths of the individual, family, and community to promote resiliency and overall health.

Our Key Learnings as Student Nurses

The theory learned regarding child health is foundational; however, having a clinical placement in a location of such cultural and social diversity has taught us that we must adapt how we apply said theory based on the specific population at hand. Having the opportunity to work with Elder Aunty Francine and living together as ohana (family) has provided us with insight regarding Hawaiian protocol, as well as the interconnectedness of the aina (land) and the native Hawaiian people. It was essential to our experience that we learned about the history and culture of Oahu and its people prior to entering our community placements. Working with the diverse populations at YO and PJK provided us with a new lens that allowed us to promote health in a way that was culturally safe and responsive to individual backgrounds.

This field school, along with our community partners, expanded our perspective on global indigenous child health and encouraged us to conduct our nursing care from a strength-based approach.

Collaborative Community Implementation and Response

The two groups that preceded ours used an evaluative survey with a 5-point likert scale to assess how the teachers perceived their presence at PJK. The positive response received by the 2014 field schools justified Mount Royal University's decision to support our group in returning to the school. We will complete the same evaluation upon completion of our four week clinical in order to maintain consistency and to ensure our collaboration remains beneficial to both parties. Questionnaires are to be provided to the parents upon attending the Healthy Start workshops in order to gain understanding of the impact of our intervention. Evaluation has also occurred informally each day at the school through observation and interaction with students, teachers, and parents when available. Positive behaviours that reflected our health promotion interventions included enhanced self-concept, active living, healthy eating, and positive self-talk. The students' increasing ability to recognize and identify internal and external strengths is a way we evaluated the degree to which resiliency was promoted and embraced.

<http://blogs.mtroial.ca/hawaiifieldschool2015/> Link to our 2015 Global Indigenous Child Health Blog



Our ohana with elder Aunty Francine Dudoit at our home.



Our student nurse-directed Healthy Start Parent Workshop



Aloha Circle Introductions

As a part of our cultural and indigenous learning our Ohana begins each day and each gathering with an Aloha circle, in which we share who we are, an ancestor we would like to bring into our day, and what we are feeling. To introduce our Ohana in this vignette I will follow a similar format.

Chelsey Creller is a twenty year old nursing student nurse born in Trail, British Columbia, Canada and would like to bring her grandfather, Reid Creller, into this nontraditional version of an Aloha circle. To her, building on this field school means sharing her positive experience with her peers in order to evoke interest in global health and ensure that our nursing students maintain a presence in the global health community.

Mallory Kroeker is from Calgary, Alberta, Canada and consistently brought her parents, and grandfather into the Aloha circles, as these are the ones who constantly support her. This field school has been a huge opportunity to expand her knowledge about indigenous health and spiritual care. She knows that this experience will support her throughout her career when working in the acute care setting with the elder population.

Carlee Knight is originally from St. Walburg Saskatchewan, and has asked to bring her grandparents into this Aloha circle. Carlee applied to this field school with hopes to gain a greater understanding of the impacts of culture on health and believes that this experience will help her to integrate culturally safe, strength-based perspectives in her future community and acute nursing practice.

Katie Byers moved from Saskatchewan to Calgary to attend the Bachelor of Nursing program. Throughout the field school Aloha circles,

she brought in her parents and her grandmother for support. Katie will take from this experience the importance of spirituality in health, and will incorporate a strength based approach to her nursing care.

Samantha Cardinal is from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Alberta, and she often brought her parents into our Aloha circles. She applied for the field school because international travel and integrative Indigenous learning experiences are rare in the program. According to Samantha, community service means learning from this opportunity to grow as a student, professional, and as a person. She hopes to carry what she has learned into her nursing practice and her community's development.

Amanda Falcone was born in Montreal, Quebec, but has grown up in Calgary, Alberta. Throughout this experience, she has brought in her grandparents and aunty to our Aloha circles for guidance. Amanda has expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to expand her knowledge on Canadian and Hawaiian Indigenous child health. This experience has helped her to understand the importance of spirituality and a strength-based approach in health care, especially when working with vulnerable populations.

Rachael Jones comes from Airdrie, Alberta, Canada, and she has brought into the circle her grandpa, Rudyard Jones, who has kept her grounded throughout the field school. She applied to this field school in hopes that it would help her grow as an individual and future nurse. From this experience, she hopes to carry forward what has learned by using a strength-based approach to assess individual, families, and whole communities and by sharing this knowledge with others.

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Community Justice Services (CJS) and Protection, Security and Investigation (PSI) program students at the Orillia campus of Georgian College have been working with the Orillia detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), the City of Orillia By-Law Department, and the Orillia Police Services Board to identify and record incidents of graffiti in the city. This has been an ongoing Community Service Learning (CSL) project for their Field Placement Preparation class of the CJS and PSI programs. Professor Jill Dunlop worked with each of these community partners to bring this project idea to life. On September 16, 2015, teams of students and auxiliary officers armed with cameras hit the streets to identify, photograph, and record incidents of graffiti throughout the city. This information was then brought back to the classroom and manually added to a large map of the city. Students looked for similarities amongst the graffiti, as well as similarities in the targeted areas of the vandalism. The data, which included pictures, addresses, and a description of the graffiti was given to the OPP to be added to an image database used to form focused patrol groups for those areas heavily targeted with graffiti and vandalism.

Two weeks after the initial graffiti identification, which included 177 documented areas, students then participated in a graffiti cleanup day targeting those specific areas. Wearing t-shirts bearing the slogan "If you ignore it, you allow it" and equipped with cleaning solution and hard-bristle brushes, students fanned out across the city to clean those areas. The Orillia business community was very supportive of the students' efforts. Orillia's Home Hardware donated scrub brushes and buckets and the paint company Rust-Oleum donated graffiti cleanup spray. Christina Mabee, a second-year Protection, Security and Investigation student, said it's essential that students do their part to make the city look better. "We're part of the community and we want it to look good," she said, adding it's essential for various groups to combine their efforts and resources to combat issues like graffiti. "Students, police officers and local businesses need to work together on this. Everyone benefits from this kind of collaboration," Mabee says.

The academic requirement of the project was to complete the fieldwork and write a report and reflection. As previously noted, the final report included statistics that enabled law enforcement to add the data into a larger image database to help officers create focused patrols of those vandalized areas. Students also researched and reported on the best practices created by other municipalities and cities regarding solutions to graffiti vandalism. Possibilities of collaborative projects with community agencies were also addressed. We hope that through collaboration with these community agencies, the questions of why these areas are targeted and the possibility of addressing the systemic issues underlying why graffiti is used could be answered.

As a follow up to the cleanup students will go back into the community to identify and record any new incidents of graffiti throughout the city. Finally, students will be compiling all of this information in a report for the OPP and the Police Services Board on:

- a) number of incidents of graffiti identified in the city;
- b) follow-up recommendations of next steps, such as bringing in artists to work with students, the OPP, and local community agencies around options of painting large murals in identified areas;
- c) ongoing identification for areas to be targeted and cleaned during additional Graffiti Clean Day(s).

The elevated incidents of graffiti have been identified as an ongoing challenge in the city. With the introduction of a recent Property Maintenance Graffiti Regulation by-law, there was a need within the community to raise awareness and educate individuals about the issues of graffiti as well as the new by-law. Georgian College responded by creating an in-class CSL project to identify the locations of graffiti throughout the city, photographs and data related to probable causes of this vandalism and the manpower to clean up the graffiti. As a result of the students' hard work, the OPP will be conducting focused patrols in the graffiti targeted areas. This additional patrolling by officers in

the areas most heavily targeted by vandals will likely see a decrease in the amount of graffiti in those areas. As a final stage of the project, students will be presenting to the Police Service Board with solutions to the graffiti issue. Orillia OPP Sgt. Steve Cartwright said it's important for everyone to work together. "We want community members, along with students, to take pride in their city. The goal is to create a culture in which everyone does not ignore, allow or condone graffiti. If we allow it to happen then people think it's fine," Cartwright said, pointing out that while there have been 177 incidents of graffiti identified so far this year, only one was reported to the city's bylaw department. Using the concepts of community mobilization and engagement, the OPP want the public to take pride in their community and to report all graffiti to police.



Based on the recommendations being put forward by the CJS and PSI students, additional student projects have taken shape, including a group of Child and Youth Care students who are looking at expanding the graffiti project. These students are completing a Community Projects Initiative placement working with the Orillia Museum of Art and History (OMAH); more specifically, the Youth Arts Council portion of OMAH. "The focus of their project is to compile research around public art

policies with the intentions of putting together a full report to bring to the City of Orillia Council around the development and formalization of public art policies,” says Joshua Barath, a professor in Georgian’s Human Services and Community Safety programs. “This includes recommendations on why it would be important for the city to have public art policies, how it might allow for the creation of public art pieces such as large murals as well as why it is important to have youth and the greater community involved in such activities.”

Participating in a project that helps students engage and get involved with the community has been a tremendous growth experience. Through collaboration and action, we are able to recognize the power of the individual and the collective community voice in creating change at a local level. It creates a sense of community and ownership in the health of the community, which is a cycle feeding into itself to create positive social change. While cleaning the graffiti, the community members we interacted with were very appreciative of our efforts. As community safety students, we have to find a way to prevent crime in our community and keep it safe. We should encourage the entire community to be involved in this matter by educating them, removing the graffiti, and reporting the number of incidents, which is the goal of the OPP and community mobilization.

TRISHA L. KASAWKI *MACEWAN UNIVERSITY*

As a student in International Marketing, I was chosen to be part of a research team compiled by my professor, Makarand Gulawani. We had the opportunity to work with Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels (EDMH), an organization that advances businesses by promoting Edmonton tourism. Partnering with numerous Edmonton hotels, Travel Alberta, and the City of Edmonton, EDMH’s goal is to further develop Edmonton tourism through direct investment initiatives.

EDMH has been involved with various marketing organizations in branding Edmonton and has been quite successful. However, EDMH felt that South Edmonton was lacking in its branding—specifically its tagline—and they were interested in trying something different. The focus was attracting Western Canadians to South Edmonton with a theme that would also compliment existing taglines in the city. EDMH was eager to partner with MacEwan to carry out this vision.

Our team researched all of the features, events, and amenities that were offered in South Edmonton, as well as the targeted groups. We expected negative beliefs from Western Canadians, due to previous media publications, such as “Deadmonton”, but were pleasantly surprised by the real perceptions held. However, it was still believed they had already seen everything Edmonton had to offer; Edmonton was just another city to pass through, and it lacked culture. Our research uncovered Edmonton’s extensive involvement in community, family, culture, food, festivals, and nature. We were also pleased to learn the two target groups shared many values and interests that Edmonton had to offer. Based on our findings we provided a communications plan to EDMH with our research, imagery, two taglines, and recommendations in support of branding South Edmonton effectively.

I was impressed by the relationship EDMH has with its organizations, bringing competitors together to work towards improving Edmonton tourism and community. The activities that Edmonton offers make me proud of the city I live in. Additionally, the research reminded me that it is very easy to become ethnocentric in our perceptions. It is our responsibility to understand others’ needs and desires by asking

questions, embracing change, and applying what we have learned in order to bring effective change.

EDMH is currently reviewing our recommendations for further action. I believe we have been an impactful group for EDMH, and look forward to potentially seeing our taglines all over Western Canada.

I have a passion for community—volunteering, working, and participating locally brings a sense of accomplishment and wholeness. I intend to apply the knowledge I have taken here to further assist community members in cross-cultural adaptation, something close to my heart.

Our mission

Our mission is to develop an appealing theme for South Edmonton.

The purpose of this theme is to motivate visitors from Western Canada to choose to stay in the south side over other areas of the city.

This theme should compliment the existing taglines for Downtown and the west end.



Presentation Example



EDMH and the MacEwan team

My name is Alyssa Ashton and I am a student at the University of Ottawa. I completed my Community Service Learning (CSL) placement through the Bess and Moe Greenberg Family Hillel Lodge in Ottawa, Ontario. This location is a retirement home for members of the Jewish community, housing 121 elderly residents. My responsibilities fell along a wide spectrum including executing recreation programs (guest speakers, puzzles, category games, etc.), portering residents, preparing program initiation, facilitating election booths, and running exercise classes.

Through my experience, I learned the need for these centres to create an engaging environment and encourage interaction between residents and with staff members. I spent a lot of one-on-one time with these residents, which enforced their desire to share life advice and stories. After a few weeks, one individual spoke shared his experience in World War II as a Japanese prisoner of war, and his unlikely survival when the atomic bomb landed. His story really made me sit back and reflect on how incredible it was that I was in front of him. He shared with me lessons he learned as a soldier and how his outlook on life changed after returning from the war. He, along with many other residents, had plenty of life advice for me on matters such as career, family, financial struggles, children, and marriage.

By the end of my placement, I had a very tight bond with many of the residents. I learned a lot about my attitude toward life and the way in which the average individual interacts with the elderly population. I was so influenced by my experience that now, as a graduate student, I am writing my thesis about the elderly population and their right to have a voice during potential decision making processes concerning injury or disease rehabilitation. I can see myself continuing to research or work with this population as there is a clear need, especially with our baby boomers aging.

During my CSL placement, I was capable of personal development along with a sense of accomplishment. This experience exaggerated how truly grateful I need to be even when things are challenging. Many

of these individuals experienced the great depression, World War II, or other traumatic realities. My eyes were opened to how necessary it is to take advantage of my physical abilities while I am still in good health. Often, residents spoke about how they wished they had done certain activities while they were physically fit, or that they physically conditioned their bodies in order for higher physical functioning with fewer injuries in their old age.

After this experience working in the community, I feel a strong sense of worth and accomplishment. I certainly feel as though I have touched many lives in a positive manner and they have done the same in return. On Remembrance Day, others and myself spoke to the residents explaining how this day symbolizes all that our war veterans and current soldiers do for our safety in Canada. Many residents were very thankful for the discussion and reminder of the events, yet I was the one left feeling thankful as those who were capable shared their stories and what Remembrance Day meant for them.

The CSL placement allowed for a range of personal development opportunities, but I was also provided with occasions to further my professional development. I had training on my first day concerning how to work with the elderly population. And having three months to work on these skills, I believe I am well equipped to continue working with this population. This experience also improved my time management skills, as I was managing a physiotherapy assistant job, full time course load, volunteering with CHEO and the CSL placement. This experience gave me hands-on opportunities working with the community, knowledge how to interact with other professionals, and confidence in my ability to apply what I have learned through university in the real world.

The community partner was very impressed with me and the other students who provided their services. I believe I had an equal influence on the residents and staff of the Hillel Lodge as they had on my future choices. They were extremely grateful for the time I spent one-on-one with residents looking after their individual needs, versus grouping all individuals as simply residents participating in recreational activities.

In general, my experience at the Hillel Lodge was a very positive one and I would highly recommend CSL placements for future students. I learned many things about myself and community organizations, and that I have the potential to positively influence the elderly populations.

As I unfortunately never took any photos with the residents or at the lodge, I have decided instead to include a photo of Mr. John Franken. He is the man I spoke about with regards to his World War II experience. He is the only living Canadian who survived the atomic bomb explosion in Nagasaki. Mr. Franken is very open about his experience and often speaks publicly about his involvement in the war, as he was a prisoner of war in Nagasaki when the U.S. Air force detonated the atomic bomb. He was and still is a very influential individual in my life and the lives of many others, and I believe his story needs to be heard. He had recently switched jobs to work underground in mining and was protected during the bomb. He speaks about how we have not learned from our past and we continue to repeat history. These types of lessons can be extremely influential if we simply listen to a man like Mr. Franken.



KENDRA GARBUTT AND ALICE LIBOIRON MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Spatial Learning and Solutions for the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area

In the Winter semester of 2015 we were enrolled in a geography methods course called "Advanced Spatial Analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)" at Mount Royal University in Calgary, AB with Dr. Lynn Moorman. The course offers opportunities to develop spatial thinking skills, familiarity with remote sensing, and GIS experience, including spatial data collection, analysis and presentation. GIS involves modelling data about the Earth and therefore is suitable as a tool and method to solve real issues facing communities. This course has been designated as a Community Service Learning (CSL) course. The partner organization for our class was the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area (ASCCA), a conservation area immediately south of the city approximately 30 kilometres from the campus. The ASCSA is a day use area that serves recreational and educational users. Up to 5,000 school children are hosted on the 4,800-acre property each year. It is an area of rehabilitated farmland and wilderness, containing native prairie grasslands and rolling foothills. They reserve land for local wildlife such as elk, beavers, and cougars, and allow previously farmed ranch land to return to its native state.

As we found from our first meeting with the CEO on our second day of class, the ASCCA had a number of specific and general issues relating to their land management that they were willing to work on with us. After learning about the area and the management practices and challenges, we discussed possible research projects and the types of data that would be required to conduct the analyses. These discussions carried through the first five weeks of classes while background datasets were being prepared, and we learned different GIS and remote sensing techniques that could potentially help in our projects. In mid- to late- February, we took a field trip out on the ASCCA land to get a sense of the scale and gain familiarity with the landscape, all for the purpose of informing and finalizing our research ideas. The sense of scale was gained by walking

some of the lengthy trails in the area, and a new project idea was even formed when we realized how slippery the trails were, especially on the steep slopes. Mapping trail-risk to better mitigate hazards for school visits became a project directly stemming from the experience we had. We spent the third month of the class continuing to learning additional functions of the GIS and working on our projects. The research included studies on suitability of land for tree planting, hiking trail placement and planning, potential archaeological buffalo pound sites, wildlife monitoring trails, and chemical analysis of groundwater spring, all using ArcGIS 10.2 and ArcGIS Online. Our work was presented as individual research posters for the Faculty of Science and Technology Student Research Day, where we shared our work with the university community. After getting feedback from the research presentations, we had a few more weeks at the end of the term to finalize our projects and complete our posters and reports, which were submitted to the ASCCA.

Through undertaking these projects, we found several benefits and challenges to CSL relationships and classes. We discovered that the relationship between our class and the ASCCA made sense: the community partner is an organization whose primary practice is large landscape management, and GIS was suited to their issues because of the geographically large scope of work, the broad variety of issues they desired to address, and their lack of in-house services or experience. As an institution that could provide solutions to those issues and one in relatively close proximity to the ASCCA, Mount Royal University and our class in particular was an ideal candidate for partnership. The variability of backgrounds of the students in our class meant each individual approached issues at the ASCCA differently and had different interests in GIS application. The variety of projects the ASCCA could offer meant that our class was well suited to this partnership as well. Learning the functions of a GIS is considerably more effective when it can be done through hands-on experience with relatable data. Our ability to visit the land, speak with our community partners, and contribute in a real way to our own community made the lessons very effective in demonstrating the real-world application of the skills we were learning and developing to proficiency. We also found that GIS use for land analyses is both iterative and highly focused, requiring efficient data sourcing from our

community partner and available databases and swift development of our skillsets. The demands of a partnership with an external partner meant we also needed to develop our critical thinking and problem solving skills, increase our flexibility, and to broaden our scope of focus to truly produce a useful, professional deliverable in the form of a poster or report. Finally, the projects allowed us to make meaningful connections with each other, with our instructor, and with our community partner, that led to the vast improvement of working relationships between classmates and the solidification of the relationship between Mount Royal University and the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area.

We were challenged in many ways by this community partnership. There were the inevitable software and data issues that every person working with a variety of datasets. There were also challenges in developing our competence levels to match the expectations of our community partner, as the data for these projects was generated by students rather than provided by instructors. This was a major stepping-stone in developing competence in data collection and use. Finally, developing our skills to deliver a professional product to the ASCCA meant we needed to learn at an accelerated level and retain what we had absorbed. These challenges allowed us to develop career-applicable skills and imagine the possibilities of applying GIS to our own disciplines. These opportunities also led to work contracts within the institution for some students, and for presentation opportunities for others. The application of GIS to archaeological questions demonstrated for one author the feasibility of GIS applications for other archaeological questions or pursuits, which in turn led to the application of GIS in an anthropology Honours program.

For others, the experience of applying these skills was furthered into research projects presented at national and local conferences. Conceptualizing spatial problems and formulating a procedure for answering those questions quantitatively using GIS became an endeavour that was possible not just under the guidance of an instructor, but also as individuals. The research opportunities gained as a result of access to datasets provided by our community partner were invaluable not only in improving confidence in our abilities, but also in broadening the range of

applications for the skills we practiced in our term project. This included historical land use analysis of the area surrounding the ASCCA, creation of environmental context for historical songbird occupancy data, and development of citizen science-based smartphone applications. The connections facilitated by ASCCA with volunteer wildlife monitors not only emphasized the value and importance of community volunteers in citizen science, but also resulted in an award-winning project for Environmental Sustainability on the topic of finding trails appropriate for wildlife monitoring.

Experiential Education: Ambassador Volunteer Program

I am a mature student completing a B.A. (Hons) Anthropology degree at McMaster University. My focus is on Cultural Anthropology, with CBPAR (Community Based Participatory Action Research) and related types of projects being of particular interest. I am actively involved on and off campus in terms of participation and contribution, taking advantage of some of the myriad opportunities afforded McMaster students. I am also giving back to the community with my latest project which is laying the groundwork for my senior thesis and, potentially, graduate work.

My introduction to community based/service learning was with a class in Applied Anthropology in 2014, where I was designated to the City of Hamilton to perform a needs assessment. The purpose and function of the program, of which I became a part, is senior health and wellness. The CHH (City Housing Hamilton) S.M.I.L.E. Program (Seniors Managing in Life Experiences) was designed and implemented to aid in keeping seniors, who live in city housing, healthy and independent.

The S.M.I.L.E. program aims to afford free or reduced/nominal rate health-related services and programs to seniors living in Hamilton City Housing sites. To this end, the coordinator partners with various health care service providers in and around the city of Hamilton who are willing to offer those services at the CHH sites. This program is largely government funded and undergoes close scrutiny each year as to the allocation of those funds. With each year seeing a reduction in government investment, services within the S.M.I.L.E. program that require funding (not all do) suffer.

The needs assessment listed recommendations and suggested means by which to address them, ideally allowing the program to run optimally. With consideration and further collaboration with the CHH supervisor, I envisioned a way to actively pursue these solutions, and the idea for a volunteer program was born—the Ambassador Volunteer

Program.

Through opportunity permitted by an experiential education class, my role in this was the creation, implementation, and coordination of a volunteer program custom tailored to meet the needs of the S.M.I.L.E. program. The Ambassador Volunteer Program (AVP) now serves to liaise between McMaster University and community organizations such as S.M.I.L.E. and takes on the name of each partner, so this initiative was the S.M.I.L.E. Ambassador Volunteer Program.

The Ambassador Volunteer Program allows undergraduate students to use and hone their academic and practical skills in community placements. It also affords students experience in their chosen field with the potential to earn letters of reference from the City of Hamilton while assisting a very vulnerable sector of our society through a position with a unique community engagement initiative. Many positions are available as either discipline-specific placements or as special roles which may appeal to any discipline or program.

The original vision and objectives for the AVP were numerous and ambitious. These included satisfying the needs of the S.M.I.L.E. program, addressing shortfalls due to funding loss, creating professional development opportunities for the undergraduate student body, improving and expanding on volunteer positions and position descriptions already in place, to allow the program to run according to the original vision, and attempting to encourage partnership agreements between various university departments and city partners so students might earn credit for their experiential community service placements. Additionally, the hope was that program attendance numbers would increase so that funding might be re-secured in future applications.

Some of the roles created include Health Clinic Attendants, Foot Care Clinic Attendants, Blood Pressure Clinic Attendants, Cordial Companions, Compassionate Companions, Exercise Instructors, and Cultural Ambassadors among others. Of particular interest to CHH were the Cultural Ambassadors who provide translation and interpretation services and aid in inclusivity, dealing with issues surrounding social

isolation. This is just one summarized description of the many positions into which went many hours of research and consideration before approaching CHH and eventually becoming available to the student body.

One of the accomplishments during the course of this project was a conference presentation in the format of a poster session entitled "The Ambassador Volunteer Program: From Ivory Tower to Impact" which took place at the McMaster Anthropology Society Symposium in March of 2015. The poster discussed the practical and meaningful ways in which theory and class-based knowledge can be transferred into significant service, and the reciprocal impact that can be realized through Experiential Education.

Although my partnership with CHH has just recently come to an end, the S.M.I.L.E. program coordinator has informed me that she intends to use my volunteer program model moving forward. New opportunities with other community partners have been presented and it is my intention to take the AVP into other contexts and open up new avenues for program and professional growth.

I chose both this S.M.I.L.E. program and the creation of the AVP because I found that I could improve the lives of many including, but not limited to, the program coordinator, the seniors, the undergraduate students, and, ultimately, myself. The knowledge that I could offer assistance to those who truly need and deserve it became my driving force. I am compelled, inspired, and gratified.

At the onset of the experiential education class, there was a learning outcomes requirement. The specifics of this, for me, included goals of project management, program coordination, facilitation skills, report writing, outreach and partnership, and ethics clearance with the McMaster research ethics board (MREB). An advantage of service learning is that it allows students to pursue a self-created academic wish list, and I find that each of my goals have been realized to some degree.

There have been intended, unintended, and tangential successes

realized through this community service endeavour. It has afforded opportunity for practical experience for myself and other students, along with access to health care services for a vulnerable sector of our community. Most importantly, I have led by example and I have become the change I wanted to see. I have participated, in some way, in what I consider passive activism and advocacy in a process where I was able to draw attention to and then sate a need in the community.