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SOS MENTORS & FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS:

- Djihane Abdelkebir
- Cristen Comtois
- Marie Ewing
- Joy Grzyboski
- Elise Hamblett
- Karen Landry
- Hanna Shailer
- Sybil Sinclair
- Megan Skinner
- Jacquelyn Vokey
- Aja Williams
# Welcome Letter from Brewer Staff

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Greetings Friends,

I am currently serving as an AmeriCorps*VISTA for Campus Compact for Southern New England (CCSNE) at Mount Wachusett Community College, and would like to share a few words about my experience, as the Brewer Center has been a vital part of my college education and professional development. I first became involved with the Brewer Center about three and a half years ago as a mentor in the Students Serving Our Students (SOS) program, which supports students who are facing issues like food insecurity and homelessness. This program gave me and other student mentors the opportunity to gain experience we would have never gotten in the classroom. Supporting other students at MWCC helped me discover my passion for volunteer work; it taught me about social justice issues, and the importance of giving back to my community.

The student mentor position was my first volunteer experience—and I got hooked. To gain more experience and take on a leadership role, I became a Student Leader in Civic Engagement (SLiCE). Being a student leader was a great step to gain professional experience, but the most exciting aspect of the work was being able to support fellow students and help them discover the passion for community work that had I found. Throughout my time as student leader, the Brewer Center became a second home. It is the reason I will always feel connected to MWCC and why I am so proud to be an alumna of this college. It wasn't until I hit my first rough patch that I realized how important it is to feel that kind of connection to your school. It was this connection that kept me from dropping everything when I had a hard time in my classes, or when life in general became overwhelming, and I will be forever grateful for my experience.

For the past two years, I served as an AmeriCorps*VISTA at MWCC. I remember being very intimidated by this new role, as I had seen the amazing work AmeriCorps*VISTA's before me had done, and I didn't believe I was creative enough or experienced enough to be successful. However, I wanted to challenge myself, and thanks to the Brewer Center staff who had always pushed me to live up to my potential, I felt safe and prepared enough to take on this new challenge. My service years were heavily focused on food insecurity among college students, an issue I had observed first-hand during my time as SOS mentor. Last year, I focused heavily on researching the issue and found that 2 out of 3 community college students are experiencing food insecurity. My supervisor Shelley Nicholson and I explored different ways to support these students and help them to become more food secure to be able to focus on their classes, rather than where there next meal is going to come from. In October 2017, we were able to officially open the Food for Thought: Campus Pantry at MWCC. I am proud that MWCC is filled with faculty, staff, and students who acknowledge that in order for students to do well in the classroom, they need to have their basic needs met. More importantly, I am proud that at MWCC, we don't just acknowledge the issue, but actively support programs like the SOS and the food pantry to increase student success. I am sad to leave MWCC, but I could not be more proud of what I am leaving behind.

The Brewer Center is a place where students can explore their strengths and weaknesses in a safe environment, while learning with and about people who are different from themselves. It is a place of growth and empowerment. I am proud to have been part of this incredible team. I specifically would like to thank Julie Cronin, Shelley Nicholson, and Fagan Forhan. Thank you for challenging me, making me a better person, and for always supporting me and my fellow students.

Jana Murphy, Campus Compact for Southern New England AmeriCorps*VISTA Senator Stephen M. Brewer Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement
Supporting other students at MWCC helped me discover my passion for volunteer work; it taught me about social justice issues, and the importance of giving back to my community.

- Jana Murphy, AmeriCorps*VISTA
This year’s Service Learning and Volunteerism Celebration was the Brewer Center’s largest event yet! Over 110 students, faculty, and staff gathered to celebrate our students’ service to the community. A variety of awards were presented during the Celebration, including Presidential Service and Volunteerism Awards to students who completed over 100 hours of service at the college. Student Leaders in Civic Engagement and SOS Mentors were also recognized for their outstanding efforts and meaningful contributions in supporting our work.

A public service announcement created by two Media students with Assistant Professor, John Little, was highlighted at the event. The students worked with the Gardner Community Action Team to create a radio-ready commercial, raising awareness of drug abuse among adolescents in the community. The commercial was aired on WXLO, a Cumulus Media station reaching from Worcester to Boston.

Each year, the Brewer Center awards two service learning scholarships to students who exceed expectations of a service learning project. This year, the service learning scholarships were awarded to Terri Alden and Sybil Sinclair. The Hillary Bartlett Newsome Service Learning Scholarship was awarded to Terri Alden, an Early Childhood student who completed over 100 hours of service learning during her time at MWCC.

The second Service Learning Scholarship was awarded to Sybil Sinclair, a Nursing student, for her exceptional service with the SOS program. She was required to complete 10 hours of service learning for her Trends in Nursing course at the organization of her choice, but she ended up going above and beyond, volunteering at least three hours a week with the SOS Office—well-exceeding the required hours. Sybil also led the Student Nurses Association in their successful participation in the Hunger Games drive.

Maryann Kane, Professor Emeritus of Early Childhood Education, was awarded this year’s Faculty Civic Engagement Award. Maryann
served as a faculty member at MWCC for twenty years. In this capacity, she mentored generations of new teachers and instilled in them a commitment to service and a love of volunteering. Over the years, her students contributed thousands of hours of service to the community. Maryann leads by example, as she serves on the board of the Hillary Bartlett Newsome Foundation, and continues to provide service to her community through philanthropy and volunteerism.

The Student Nurses Association was presented with the Above and Beyond Club Award for their exceptional commitment to service, and willingness to volunteer for campus programs, including the Hunger Games food drive, as well as educating 740 community members on hands-only CPR.

Clear Path for Veterans New England was awarded the Community Partner of the Year Award for their commitment to our programs and students. Even as a brand new organization, Clear Path hosted many

MWCC students from diverse disciplines, including nursing, marketing, and human services, always ensuring students have a great experience.

Student remarks at the celebration were given by Jake VanHillo, former SLiCE, and current UWYV employee. He spoke to how getting involved in Brewer Center programs opened his eyes to new opportunities. He explained, “I never really saw myself finding my way into community work. I also never thought I would enjoy working with children every day, but soon I fell in love… Throughout this crazy journey I have not only made lifelong friendships, amazing connections, and made the change that I needed to put the spark back into my life, but I get to see children of all ages change the world one service project at a time.”
This year, the Brewer Center hosted SLiCE alumna, Jana Murphy, for a second year as the MWCC’s Campus Compact for Southern New England (CCSNE) AmeriCorps*VISTA. Jana was partnered with the Gardner Community Action Committee (Gardner CAC) and our own Students Serving our Students (SOS) program with a focus on hunger alleviation and education on campus and in the community. Through this work, Jana spearheaded the creation of a new food pantry on the Gardner campus, the Food for Thought: Campus Pantry in October. In addition to creating, managing, and implementing food pantry systems, Jana coordinated the Resource and Volunteer Fair. Over 200 students attended the event, with the opportunity to speak with 20 different community organizations who provided information about resources and service opportunities they provide.

Jana has served as a resource and advocate on the issue of food insecurity in the community, speaking at a variety of conferences, panels, and events, including serving on the planning committee for the Voices of Hunger on Campus: Meaningful Change Together regional conference along with Brewer Center Director, Shelley Nicholson. Jana’s tireless service has reached far beyond the scope of MWCC.

"Over these past four years, it has been an honor to work with Jana. She is a hard-worker with exceptional organizational skills, she is kind and caring, she is a strategic thinker and she is a loyal friend. Jana is an amazing mother, a wonderful role model for our students and truly one-of-a-kind. There are not enough words to describe the depth of my gratitude for all of her work in ensuring our students have every opportunity to succeed. She will be truly missed as a vital member of the Brewer Center team and I wish her the best of luck next year as she takes on a leadership role as a CCSNE AmeriCorps*VISTA Leader!"

- Shelley Nicholson, Brewer Center Director

“This year has been extremely rewarding for me. I was able to take everything I learned about food insecurity during my first year as a VISTA and implement a food pantry that has since helped over 100 students. It has been a year of personal and professional growth for me; and I was able to support and watch many student volunteers in the Students SOS Office and the Food for Thought: Campus Pantry grow into people dedicated to making a difference in their community.”

-Jana Murphy, CCSNE AmeriCorps*VISTA
The Students Serving our Students (SOS) peer-to-peer mentoring program is a student-created and student-led service offered within the Brewer Center. With the goal of helping MWCC students succeed in their education, this program offers a variety of services to help students overcome personal barriers. Mentors assist their peers by connecting them with external social and community services, as well as internal supports at the college. These referrals aid the students in overcoming a variety of issues including financial concerns, childcare challenges, transportation issues, food insecurity, and housing.

The SOS office is structured such that student mentors guide the implementation of the program, which allows for mentors and volunteers to have a truly empowering experience. SOS mentors and volunteers acquire skills in critical thinking, communication and collaboration; increase their knowledge about resources and opportunities available in the North Central region; and are afforded the opportunity to develop both civic and professional experience.

In 2017, the Wisconsin Hope Lab released data from a study on food insecurity and homelessness that included over 33,000 students at 70 community colleges in 24 states. The results from the study indicated that two out of three community college students are food insecure (Goldrick-Rab et al). Previously, SOS addressed student food insecurity by proving lunch vouchers to students in need. A food pantry is a more sustainable and cost effective tool in addressing the issue of food insecurity on college campuses. As a result, in partnership with the SOS program, the Food For Thought: Campus Pantry at MWCC was opened on the Gardner campus. Since Food For Thought opened its doors in October 2017, it has since supported over 100 students struggling with food insecurity. Between October 19th 2017 and June 30th 2018, students received 7,467 food items, school supplies, and personal hygiene items from the pantry, including 3,661 pounds of food. Of food pantry users served in the Fall 2017 semester, 84% were either retained or graduated in Spring 2018.

The food pantry is working closely with SOS mentors to ensure long-term food security for pantry users. Human Services Interns, Student Leaders in Civic Engagement, food pantry volunteers, and peer mentors provided services and referrals to 116 at-risk students. Of students served through the Students SOS office in Fall 2017, 85% were retained or graduated between Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. During the 2017-2018 academic year, students gave 2,015 hours of service to SOS and the food pantry. 100% of SOS mentors were either retained or graduated in the Spring 2018 semester.
DONATIONS

The food pantry operates exclusively through donations and fundraising efforts and began with a $1,000 donation from former state Senator Stephen Brewer. A huge thank you to everyone who made donations and/or participated in the fundraisers benefiting the Food For Thought: Campus Pantry at MWCC. The following people donated $50 or more to the food pantry:

Senator Stephen Brewer
Representative Kimberly Ferguson
Senator Anne Gobi
Representative Stephan Hay
Representative Natalie Higgins
James Vander Hooven, MWCC President
Representative Susannah Whipps
Jason Zelesky and Family, MWCC Dean of Students
Representative Jonathan Zlotnik

Also, a special thank you to the Hillary A. (Bartlett) Newsome Foundation for donating 15 moving boxes of food to Food for Thought. The donations, made in honor of MWCC alumna Hillary Newsome, were gathered as part of a food drive at the Samoset School in Leominster.
During the third year of the program, the Brewer Center hosted four Student Leaders in Civic Engagement (SLiCE) members. SLiCE members engage students and the community by creating and sustaining a culture of lifelong leadership development, training, and education. The SLiCE program provides paid employment opportunities for MWCC student leaders to coordinate service programming, and assist with volunteer recruitment and management. This helps provide meaningful opportunities for MWCC students to engage on campus and in our community.

This year’s SLiCE members included Tammy Goodgion, Ifra Hassan, Laryssa Truesdale, and Jake VanHillo. SLiCE members work 500 hours over the course of the year, splitting their time between the Brewer Center, the SOS Office, and their placement. This year’s placements included the Student Life Office, Department of Access and Transition, Food for Thought: Campus Pantry and United Way Youth Venture.

"The most valuable skill I gained is allowing others to take the lead. I was able to step back from projects and hear everyone’s ideas before making a decision."

- Student Leader in Civic Engagement
**Tammy Goodgion:** Tammy was a heavily involved student leader on campus, including serving as the President of Alpha Beta Gamma, an international business honors society. Tammy worked this year with the Office of Student Life to connect student clubs and organizations with more meaningful service opportunities. She brought her passion for eradicating domestic violence to her role, coordinating a multitude of events and opportunities for the campus community to engage in conversations about domestic violence with one another and with community organizations that can serve as resources for those affected.

Tammy graduated in May with degrees in Business Administration and Human Services. She is transferring to Southern New Hampshire University to study Organizational Psychology and hopes to one day open her own non-profit organization.

**Ifra Hassan:** Ifra worked in the Brewer Center, specifically with the Food for Thought: Campus Pantry helping manage day-to-day operations, student volunteers, and fundraising efforts. For one of Ifra’s service projects, she coordinated a “Trick or Treat” food drive on Halloween, where student volunteers walked door-to-door on the Gardner campus picking up donations from staff and faculty. The drive collected 317 pounds of food for Food for Thought.

Ifra is pursuing a degree in Biology, and aspires to become a doctor in the future. Ifra is a member of Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and the National Community College Aerospace Scholars.
**Laryssa Truesdale:** Laryssa was a Gateway to College student at MWCC, working to finish her high school degree while earning college credits. Laryssa worked with the Department of Access and Transition to connect dual enrollment students with more opportunities to be engaged on campus and in the community.

Laryssa’s largest project was a donation drive to benefit Food for Thought that spanned all of MWCC’s campuses, and even engaged the greater Gardner community. The drive, themed after The Hunger Games movie series, garnered great support from the college community, and provided an opportunity for dual enrollment students to volunteer sorting through the piles of donations. Due to the event’s success, the Brewer Center plans to make the Hunger Games an annual event. Laryssa graduated in May and is enrolling at Fitchburg State University in the Fall to study special education.

**Jake VanHillo:** Jake was partnered with United Way Youth Venture to help get MWCC students engaged in the program that inspires students to create lasting change in their communities through social entrepreneurship. Jake worked with two teams through their launch process at the college, including Pennies 4 Pawz, a team of students raising money to have a new turf field installed at the Gardner Animal Shelter, and the Mountain Lions Basketball Club, a group of students interested in helping at-risk youth get access to AAU basketball as a means of drug abuse prevention.

Jake graduated with his business degree, and is now working part-time with the United Way Youth Venture program at MWCC as an Outreach Specialist.
FACULTY FELLOWS

This year the Brewer Center hosted four faculty fellows in diverse disciplines to develop projects for service learning. The four fellows were Peter Olszak, Math and Physics; Maureen Provost, Early Childhood Education; Dan Soucy, Philosophy; and John Chetro-Szivos, Sociology. The fellows engaged in projects around childhood literacy, reflective thinking and occupational segregation, STEM outreach in K-12 education, and community gardening.

In two sections of Dr. John Chetro-Szivos’ Introduction of Sociology (SOC 103) course, students focused on a semester-long assignment researching the prevalence of occupational segregation locally and nation-wide. Students conducted interviews with over 30 local paraprofessional and professional women working for business associations, human service agencies, and other organizations dedicated to working with women and labor issues. Through their research, students found that while there seems to be awareness of occupational segregation nation-wide, there appears to be little concern among local leaders about the impact of the issue on the local economy.

The SOC103 courses were grounded in the praxis of reflective thinking, encouraging students to learn and think in new ways to improve their learning by thinking through a complex issue. Students completed a questionnaire known as the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire and reflected on changes in their thinking and ways of working throughout the semester. As part of the course, Dr. Chetro-Szivos held an optional two-day event to delve further into reflective thinking in the Spring semester, with over 20 students in attendance.

“

The overall goal [of the project] was to initiate both reflection with action to bring about true transformation in the students’ lives.

- Dr. John Chetro-Szivos

“
Career Planning and Placement’s annual job fair had over 300 participants this year including employers, students and community members. The high participation rate was, in much part, attributed to increased visibility in the classrooms, a more directed marketing campaign as well as a successful Dress for Success Expo. Traditionally, the Dress for Success Expo is an opportunity to highlight to students what is considered interview-ready attire to prepare them for the job fair, but this year, Career Planning and Placement joined forces with Ann Reynolds of Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS), and three student clubs to expand the event’s reach and student participation.

Student organizations, The Parent Support Group (PSG), Women of the World (WOW), and Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) played a pivotal role in expanding and implementing the Dress for Success Expo, which was held a week prior to the Job Fair. At the event, students could purchase professional attire at a very low cost, have a free professional headshot taken for LinkedIn, and even find interview tips, thank you cards, and resources related to LGBT and non-LGBT rights of employees. This collaborative effort made for a successful expo, and raised awareness about the upcoming job fair among students and their peers, increasing student attendance and participation.
CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS

The Brewer Center co-hosted a few events this year in an attempt to bring the campus community together to discuss topics and engage individuals who may have dissenting views in deliberative dialogue.

Hidden Costs of College
In the Fall semester, Laryssa Truesdale coordinated a dialogue about the hidden costs of college, such as food, insurance, transportation, and materials that are not included in tuition. The dialogue encouraged participants to think about how higher education can better prepare students for the hidden costs of college beyond tuitions and fees, and how MWCC in particular, could help offset those costs to help students be more successful. Nearly 50 members of the college community attended to brainstorm ways that MWCC could better prepare students for all of the costs associated with a degree.

Got Privilege?
White privilege was the topic of discussion at MWCC’s Tea Time Speaker Series on October 30th. The discussion centered on whether the gathered students, faculty, staff, and community members felt white privilege exists, and how privileges affects individual's lives.

“White privilege is how we present to others,” said keynote speaker Shelley Errington Nicholson, the Brewer Center Director. “I get privilege in society. I do. I get the benefit of the doubt because my skin is white… I didn’t earn that privilege. I didn’t ask for that privilege, but I need to acknowledge it.”

“I do believe it fits squarely in our mission to bring things up to discuss at a deep level with one another so we can learn from one another, so that we can grow with one another, so that we can challenge one another, and so we can gain a better understanding of ourselves and our society and how we can take steps to improve our communities,” said MWCC President James Vander Hooven.
Jim Polito

The Brewer Center hosted conservative radio commentator, Jim Polito, for a discussion on media bias and how little acts can make a big difference on November 15th at the college’s Gardner campus.

Student veteran, and Treasurer of the Cultural Engagement and International Service Club, Cristen Comptois, asked Polito to speak at MWCC because of his conservative viewpoints on many issues. On many college campuses, she said, liberal voices are over-represented. It is important to provide a balanced discussion at the college level so students can create their perspective from a broad set of views. Students need to understand, said Comptois, that even if someone shares a different perspective they do not need to make a snap judgement about that person.

Polito addressed the everyday steps people can take to improve their communities. It does not take a group of thousands of people to make a difference in their communities, he said, but small, repeated acts can do a lot more to affect change than massive movements, like holding the door open for someone. Over fifty members of the MWCC and greater community attended the event.

We the People

At the conclusion of the semester, the Brewer Center hosted a panel event around campaign finance reform. Panelists included, Jeff Williams, a representative from We the People, a non-partisan organization dedicated to the cause of democracy, and Elmer Eubanks and Gerry Maldonado, Assistant Professors of Business. We the People advocates for a constitutional amendment to reaffirm that the Constitution protects human beings only, and to regulate campaign finances to ensure equal access to the political process. Eubanks and Maldonado both have experience with local politics and lobbying, and shared their perspectives on the use of money in local politics. Members of the campus and greater community engaged in conversation and Q and A with the presenters.

Having real conversations at college will prepare students to hear different perspectives so they can listen and understand where other people are coming from as well as make a well-articulated argument explaining what they believe and why.

- Cristen Comptois, MWCC Student
THE SHARYN A. RICE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD

The Sharyn A. Rice Civic Engagement Award is presented each year to a MWCC student in honor of past Senior Vice President Sharyn Rice, who retired in 2013 after 25 years of service to the college and the greater community. The awardee is a student of good character that demonstrates a clear commitment to the community. This year’s Sharyn A. Rice Award was presented to Jessica Decker.

Jessica is a mother, an avid singer and dancer with a love of theatre, a nursing student at MWCC, and she is a cancer survivor. In her scholarship application, she spoke of sitting at her dining room table with mountains of medical bills and feeling like she was just a number or a price tag and she wanted better for others. Her own experience with cancer led her to study nursing at MWCC. Jessica has exhibited grit as she has persevered through personal setbacks while continuing to give back to others.

In her career at MWCC, Jessica has been a member of Phi Theta Kappa and the National Society of Leadership and Success, and volunteers regularly for the National Hearing Dog Center training service dogs for veterans, at her children’s schools, and coaches youth hockey. Finally, she volunteers with elder care and hospice to provide in-home services to those in need. Despite her personal challenges and busy life, Jessica always finds time to give back to her community.
Service Recognition

This year 280 graduating students qualified to be recognized for their service to the community.

- **63 students**
  - 20 hours
  - Service Learning Lapel Pin
- **105 students**
  - 40 hours
  - Civic Scholars Medallion
- **102 students**
  - 75 hours
  - Civic Scholars Medallion & Outstanding Achievement Pin
- **10 students**
  - 100+ hours
  - Outstanding Achievement Pin, Medallion, and Presidential Service Learning and Volunteerism Award - 63 students
- **10 students**
  - 100+ hours
  - Eligibility for the United States President’s Volunteer Service Award - 8 students

(Eligibility for the United States President’s Volunteer Service Award within one academic year - PVSA)
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS

SLiCE, Tammy Goodgion, coordinated a domestic violence awareness event in partnership with local organization, Voices of Truth, on-campus during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. She hoped to bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence and encourage healthy relationships on campus and in our community by a showing of the film, “If I Can’t Have You,” which highlights the tragic death of college student, Tiana Notice, and how she lost her life to domestic violence. Tiana’s mother, Kathy Lewis, was in attendance at the event to answer questions and provide valuable insight for participants. Nearly 40 people from the campus community attended this event, and multiple students approached Voices of Truth to discuss potential volunteer opportunities with them in the future. Near the end of the semester, Women of the World, a student club, coordinated a day of service with Tammy to paint a room at the Voices of Truth office to create a more welcoming environment for clients.

Thanks to the momentum built through these events, Tammy assisted in coordinating a week of events “Enough is Enough” in April to continue to spread awareness and resources about domestic violence to the campus community in partnership with local organizations, Voices of Truth and Pathways for Change. In addition to another showing of “If I Can’t Have You,” Tammy coordinated a workshop about healthy relationships, as well as shared resources and volunteer opportunities with students to become more involved with the issue. Over 40 campus community members participated in the week’s events.
WOMEN IN STEM

In November, SLiCE, Ifra Hassan, coordinated an informational panel event for local high school students. Passionate about science and women empowerment, she recruited six MWCC students to discuss their experiences as a college student, and specifically, as females in STEM programs, with Gardner High School students.

MWCC students told stories of being the only woman in their higher level classes, and how they felt they needed to work even harder than their male counterparts to get recognition. Ifra explained that she felt that during this day and age it is very important to understand the concept of the gender wage gap and its connection to how women are underrepresented STEM fields. She hoped to encourage local women to pursue opportunities in STEM, whether that be at MWCC or elsewhere.

In addition to the panel, students also had the opportunity to tour the Gardner campus. Twenty-two students attended and 91% of participants reported that they could now see themselves as a college student at the conclusion of the event.
VETERAN HOMESTEAD SERVICE

During the SLiCE Winter Retreat, Jake VanHillo coordinated a service project for the group in collaboration with Clear Path for Veterans New England. Just a few days after a huge blizzard, the group was tasked with shoveling sidewalks at the Veteran Homestead in Gardner. The Homestead is open to veterans and their families to aid in their rehabilitation and community reintegration after service. SLiCE had the opportunity to meet a few of the veterans living on the property while shoveling, which added a personal connection to their service.
UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

During the annual United Way Day of Caring, the Brewer Center hosted a variety of on-campus projects for students, faculty, and staff to engage in, focused on hurricane relief, animal rights, and the environment. Projects were designed by SLiCE, and included assembling Bags of Blessing full of toiletries for hurricane victims, handmade cards for Food for Thought pantry users, homemade cat toys for the Gardner Animal Shelter, and home gardening projects for students to take home. Over 90 volunteers served over 100 hours of service.

Four student volunteers also spent the entirety of the day painting the walls of Food for Thought: Campus Pantry. Although the students were unable to finish painting the pantry during the Day of Caring, Student Leader in Civic Engagement, Jake VanHillo, coordinated volunteers to finish the painting the following week. Maureen Provost, Professor of Early Childhood Education, also hand-painted a beautiful logo over the last few weeks before the pantry opened, which helped create a bright, welcoming environment for pantry users.
Each year, the Brewer Center partners with Student Life to ensure our incoming students understand MWCC’s culture of service from the day they step onto campus through Leadership Academy. Student Life coordinates the two-day experience to introduce incoming students to faculty, staff, and other students, while giving them a taste of what college will be like. This year’s 13th Annual Leadership Academy was record-breaking, both in the number of attendees and in the number of community service projects.

Service projects included the annual backpack drive to benefit Massachusetts school children living in foster care; landscaping at the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center and MWCC’s Gardner campus; maintenance and painting benefiting Heywood Hospital’s wellness trail; vegetable harvesting at the Many Hands organic farm in Barre; and sorting and organizing household and construction supplies at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Leominster.

Through the generosity of the new students and members of the college community, the backpack drive resulted in 138 new backpacks filled with school supplies for children in need.
SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a transformative pedagogy with a long history at MWCC. According to data collected on students in 2014-2016, students who participated in a service learning course during their first year had a higher rate of semester-to-semester retention than their peers. This was particularly true for full-time students. This data suggests service learning at MWCC is a positive high impact practice to ensure student retention and success.

Building on that success, over the past few years, the Brewer Center began working with faculty to offer more project-based service learning opportunities for students. These opportunities involve working on specific projects or issues over the course of the semester with community-based partners. Students serve in a consulting capacity in alignment with the particular focus of the course such as strategic management, health and nutrition, graphic design, etc. This style of service learning encourages more mutually beneficial outcomes for students, faculty, and community partners alike. Students typically work in groups to achieve goals tied to course objectives, exercising 21st century skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, effective communication, and project management skills.

SERVICE LEARNING STUDENT EVALUATIONS

- 85% of students reported they are now able to put themselves in other people’s shoes as a means of better understanding their experience.
- 87% of students reported they feel more comfortable working with diverse groups of people to make collaborative decisions and address common problems.
- 89% of students feel they will continue to be involved in their community.
- 82% of students reported that they feel more confident to enter the workforce.
- 83% of students believe that service learning deepened their learning of a specific topic or issue.
SERVICE LEARNING: PRACTICAL NURSING

In the Fall semester, the Brewer Center collaborated with faculty teaching the course, Contemporary Nursing for the Practical Nurse (NUR106), to embed service learning projects into the course. Student were broken into groups and partnered with a nonprofit organization to complete projects around health and wellness. Practical nursing students contributed over 1,692 hours of service to the community through the following projects.

One group worked with Clear Path for Veterans New England, an organization that connects veterans to resources and support in the community, to design and create an intake form for the organization to help assess the social, emotional, and wellness needs of veterans seeking services. The second group was partnered with Catholic Charities of Worcester County, an organization that serves the basic needs of individuals and families. Students created two brochures for the organization on healthy eating and how to talk to children about substance abuse. This experience led to a year-long partnership with Catholic Charities for the 2018-2019 AmeriCorps*VISTA project. The third group worked with the Food for Thought: Campus Pantry and the Gardner CAC. The students focused on health and wellness for students who utilize the food pantry as well as better access for students to food resources on campus, including creating an app for the pantry, and compiling healthy affordable recipes. The last group worked with Crystal House Clubhouse, an organization that serves adults with mental illness. Students worked with clients to provide access to resources related to their needs including physical fitness, nutrition, mindfulness, and smoking cessation.

As a result of this project, Mount Fitness, the gym located on the Gardner campus, now has a lifetime partnership with the Crystal House Clubhouse to provide free access to clubhouse members.
SERVICE LEARNING: INTRO TO SOCIOLOGY

Students in Julie Capozzi’s Introduction to Sociology (SOC103) course engaged in a service learning project around climate change. The students showed the film “An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power,” the sequel to the original “An Inconvenient Truth” documentary. In conjunction with the film showing, students presented research findings on the changes in the status of climate change from the original film to the state of the environment today.

“...The students were very enthused, and went beyond what I expected in obtaining additional information on climate change, with posters and hand-outs to their guests. The night was a success, and participants were excited about what they learned; they realized change lies in the hands of the public...the citizens, through social action. Much change is needed in progressing with the needs of our Earth!

- Julie Capozzi, Associate Professor of Sociology
As part of Sheila Murphy’s Abnormal Psychology (PSY240) course, students launched an anti-stigma campaign at the college to raise awareness about different challenges people experience with mental health.

Students also coordinated a panel raising awareness of opioid addiction on campus, which was well-attended. Panelists included former State Senator Jennifer Flanagan; CEO of Recovery Centers of America Michael Stuart; Ramsey Clayter, MWCC student in recovery and co-founder of the Link Program; and Robert Fairbanks, a person in recovery.

Service learning students completed 237 hours of service coordinating this project.

“The goal of this panel and the entire project is to show individuals that they can make a difference and that they can help reduce stigma through awareness, education and advocacy. We want to change the perception of mental illness and that can only be accomplished through having discussions about mental health and learning about how each of us can make a difference.”

- Sheila Murphy, Professor of Psychology and Human Services
## ADDITIONAL PROJECT OUTPUTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Academy Day of Service</td>
<td>77 students completed 231 hours of service at 9 community sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat Drive</td>
<td>54 coats, 28 hats, 11 sweaters and vests, 9 scarves, 8 pairs of socks, and 4 pairs of gloves collected and distributed to students in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memorial of 9/11</td>
<td>139 cards created with 154 signatures for first-responders in Gardner, Leominster and Fitchburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phi Theta Kappa Character Breakfast</td>
<td>45 student and staff volunteers with 160 attendees, raising $1500 for hunger relief in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Day</td>
<td>Student volunteers passed out 163 water bottles to their peers with inspirational quotes</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Youth are a vibrant, yet often underutilized, source of power for creating and leading positive community change—but that is not necessarily the case in North Central Massachusetts. Young people involved in United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) through one of 23 partnering schools develop leadership skills, build confidence, provide countless services to their communities and most importantly, are given the chance to make lasting positive change in others as well as themselves.

During the UWYV process, youth learn how to identify and confront problems, and find creative solutions. A consistent presence in the region over the past 16 years, UWYV has changed the perception of how adults view youth in the communities served by the program. Youth are invited to share perspective, help make decisions, and lead change. They are a driving and inspirational force of creative, problem-solving energy, who are empowered with the skills and encouragement needed to improve their communities.

United Way Youth Venture is a three way partnership between Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture which serves as the international model for UWYV programming. Young people involved in UWYV combine their passions and skills to address a problem they see in their community through an entirely youth-led and youth-created social venture.
UWYV (continued)

PROGRAM EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

This year, UWYV hosted several events including an invigorating Fall Kick-Off event with over 350 middle and high school students in attendance, and a third annual Spring Showcase, highlighting the dreams and success of 60 Venture Teams to the larger community.

Staff also facilitated a Champion Training and Roundtable to educate and support our partnering school staff. UWYV hosted a fourth annual Administrators Breakfast for school superintendents and principals which was a meeting to convene leaders of K-12 and higher education, elected representatives, employers, and community organizers for a lively panel conversation and group dialogue on preparing students for successful careers.

UWYV and Venture Teams had the opportunity to present the program at the Three Chamber Business After Hours Sponsored by Johnson Controls, and UWYV continued its official leadership role in managing and training new and existing UWYV programs in operation around the U.S., also sponsored by Johnson Controls.

Finally, UWYV facilitated a Changemaker Education Framework Pilot in partnership with leaders from Ashoka, which aimed to explore ways of adopting a Changemaker mindset and culture individually, in the classroom, institutionally, and within the community. Innovators in education from Fitchburg Public Schools, Leominster Public Schools and Mount Wachusett Community College elected to take part in the 2017/2018 academic year.
**UNITED WAY YOUTH VENTURE BY THE NUMBERS**

- **23** elementary, middle & high schools
  - Also, MWCC & Girl Scout Troop 61150
- **over 9,000** youth actively engaged in workshops, team development or volunteering
- **53** new Venture teams
  - launched in FY18 across **23 schools** with an additional **88 teams** in the pipeline well on their way to becoming a launched Venture
- **UWYV staff delivered** **151** workshops to Venturers helping develop their understanding of 21st century entrepreneurship skills and deeper social & emotional learning
- **more than** **12,500** area youth reached
- **708 students** leading Venture Team efforts with **465 newly engaged this year**
- **$25,495** in seed funding awarded in FY18 to launch Venture efforts
- **over 300** adults engaged in supporting Venture teams by undertaking the role of panelist, ally, and/or volunteer

The Senator Stephen M. Brewer Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement | 2018 Annual Report
For a young person, the experience of stepping outside their comfort zone, taking on a leadership role, advocating for a cause important to them, having adults listen to their ideas, and feeling the pride of accomplishment in helping their community, can change the trajectory for the rest of their life. Though a student may initially be lacking in confidence and support at home or struggling at school, he or she can become reinvolved in their education and community because they are able to see that a different future is possible. This is the experience of Venturers, and the results are evident in reduced school absences and disciplinary action, and increased test scores, graduation rates, and college acceptance rates.

One example of a Venture Team that embodies this spirit of civic engagement is Fitchburg High School’s Current Events Club. Launched as a new Venture in Fall 2017, this enterprising group of students understands the importance of doing community service, particularly for youth. Unlike many adult-driven service efforts, the Current Events Club wanted to ensure that they and their peers could connect to service they are passionate about. The resulting action plan helps FHS students to earn community service hours for causes they truly care about while learning about issues affecting the community—often straight from news headlines. Over the course of the school year, they have contributed support via student awareness and fundraising for a wide variety of challenges including teenage homelessness, Hurricane Maria disaster relief for Puerto Rico, cancer research, Special Olympics, local facility repairs to Crocker Field and Crocker Elementary, and more. This examination and discussion about cause and effect of social issues and community needs aims to help their peers understand the responsibility they have to participate in leading change.
VALENTINES FOR VETS

SLiCE member, Laryssa Truesdale, coordinated Valentines for Veterans, a campus-wide event to create valentines for veterans in our community to ensure they knew that they are appreciated for their service. Laryssa recruited and coordinated twelve student volunteers to work the event to encourage participation from other students, faculty, and staff.

135 cards with 256 signatures were donated to a variety of local veteran-serving organizations including MWCC’s Veterans Center, the Veteran Homestead, and Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center.
HUNGER GAMES FOOD DRIVE

SLiCE member, Laryssa Truesdale, coordinated a campus-wide food drive competition to benefit Food for Thought based on the movie, The Hunger Games. Campus departments acted as “districts” and competed against one another to collect the most pounds of donations for the pantry.

Twenty MWCC “districts” participated in the food drive, and overall, 745.6 pounds of food, 107.9 pounds of other pantry items, and $1,042.61 was collected for the food pantry. The Student Nurses Association alone collected 307.6 pounds of food and other pantry items, as well as over $740. On April 20th, Laryssa coordinated groups of students from our dual enrollment programs to inventory the donations. Twenty-two volunteers completed nearly 50 hours of service checking expiration dates and sorting donations, leaving the pantry fully stocked for the Fall 2018 semester.

745.6 pounds of food
107.9 pounds of other items
$1,042.61 raised
NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

The Newman Civic Fellowship is awarded each year through *Campus Compact* to a community-committed student, who has demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for challenges facing communities. This year, Cristen Comptois was named MWCC’s Newman Civic Fellow.

Cristen graduated in May 2018 with a degree in Criminal Justice and is transferring to Portland State University to complete her Bachelor’s degree in Social Work. During her time at MWCC, she maintained a 3.7 GPA and was chosen as the student representative for a college-wide vice presidential search committee. Cristen served in a leadership role for the Cultural Engagement and International Service Club, and over the past two years, travelled on two international service trips to Costa Rica and Peru with the club. Cristen was also a work-study student in the Veterans Office on campus, where she helped connect veteran students and their families with resources on campus and in the community to aid in their success. She plans to take the skills she has gained to become a police officer. Long term, she hopes to earn a master’s degree in social work in order to become a child forensic interviewer, bringing justice to children who have been abused.

Prior to enrolling at Mount Wachusett Community College, Cristen served for eight years in the United States Army as a military police officer and investigator in Hawaii and Alaska. Cristen was also deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, where she worked with local police and foreign nationals to ensure safety in the community. During her service, Cristen consistently sought out extensive trainings to promote the safety of her peers and local community members, inclusive of suicide prevention, as well as child abuse and domestic violence prevention and intervention. Her superiors ranked her “among the best,” as a leader who consistently challenged herself, fostered the potential of her peers, and put service above all else. Cristen was released from duty with over twenty citations from domestic and international organizations for outstanding service.

Through her work as a military police officer, Cristen recognized injustices in the system regarding protective and legal services handling of domestic violence cases. She felt victims were put through unnecessary, painful processes to investigate, document, and ultimately relive their experiences. As a result, in Alaska, she initiated the creation of a domestic violence working group, bringing together local doctors, law enforcement, community organizations, and social workers to institute new policies that would streamline processes for domestic violence victims in order to better support them, reduce trauma, and protect their privacy and safety. Her actions have undoubtedly impacted countless individuals and families in the region, and demonstrates her drive to find solutions for issues in her community.
Cristen truly embraces the intent of service. Helping others is sincerely part of her life’s goals and comes from her heart. Like everything Cristen undertakes, she puts in 110% into each service project she is engaged in. Cristen is truly an outstanding example of a Newman Civic Fellow.

- Greg Clement, Associate Dean of Students
SERVICE LEARNING STUDENT REFLECTIONS

“I love my internship site because it gives me a different point of view about drug and alcohol abuse by learning the past experiences of those who suffered from an overdose or abuse to better understand why they have done it.”
-Criminal Justice Intern

“I would give this experience 10 stars, if that was an option! It was great to see people working together to help each other and sincerely make a difference!”
-Human Services Intern

“The most valuable aspect of this experience for me was learning that people from different walks of life can come together in the same community and make an impact on the lives of others.”
-Human Services Intern

“I really enjoyed working with the clients at my site and gained more confidence in my ability to communicate with other cultures despite language barriers.”
-Human Services Intern
SERVICE LEARNING STUDENT REFLECTIONS

“I feel that this experience was very good and helped me gain greater confidence for the real world job market”
-Marketing Service Learning Student

“I was able to work with this one child who before would just pace up and down the hallway and not talk to anyone. After talking to her and taking the time with her, she is now talking in full sentences and always wants to interact with the other children. They have accepted her as well and for me this was so rewarding.”
-Human Services Intern

“I feel this project/service learning gave me a lot more confidence when working with the community and left me eager to give back more!”
-Nursing Service Learning Student

“I enjoyed participating in the health fair and learned how to better communicate with a personally challenging age bracket.”
-Nursing Service Learning Student
REFLECTIONS ON THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DAY OF SERVICE

“You can help your community in different ways you have never even thought of”

“I will continue to volunteer when I can because I think small things can go a long way in the future”

“I will continue to volunteer. It is a good experience. I have never done this before, but it feels good to get involved in activities and interact with others.”

“I learned that helping others and being involved is a big step in making a difference”

“A little bit of time, elbow grease, and conversation can enrich the feeling of community”
CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE TRIP: PERU

May 18-27th, eight students and three staff chaperones visited Peru for an international service experience and cultural exchange. The group volunteered at two local public elementary schools. At the first school, they were greeted by the schoolchildren who sang songs and engaged them in a game of soccer and a game of duck-duck-goose. After recess, MWCC students and staff painted the bathrooms and ceilings around the courtyard. At the second school, MWCC volunteers painted the outside of the school, while art major, Camilo Almarales, designed and painted a mural in the school’s courtyard. The children were so intrigued by the students’ work that they grabbed brushes and rollers and helped paint! The group also had the opportunity to do a service project making compost and planting trees. The group was told that the compost created would be used to cultivate organic crops within the local community and schools.

While in Peru, participants hiked Inkan ruins at Ollantaytambo, Pisac, Aquas Calientes, and Machu Picchu where the group learned about ancient farming practices, religious ceremonies and other aspects of the Inkan culture. Students and staff visited a market place, attended a cultural lecture on the history of the Inkan people and their religion, climbed a waterfall, visited the city of Cusco, participated in a Despacho (welcome) ceremony, and practiced yoga and meditation. This one-week experience was described by students as life-changing.
Peru was the most welcoming place I have ever been. The children were so excited and intrigued to meet, socialize, and connect with us! The feeling of being in the school with the children and seeing them smile was extraordinary. Not only did we make a positive impact on the children’s lives, but they undoubtedly made an exceptional impact on our lives. This was a once in a lifetime experience that I had the pleasure to be a part of and I am beyond grateful for it.

- Adrienne Bourque, Liberal Arts and Sciences Student
An incredible adventure of mind, body and spirit!

-Erin McKenzie, Nursing Student
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<th>ENGAGEMENT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF HOURS</th>
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<td>Volunteer</td>
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<td>5,333</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>8,769</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer &amp; Service Learning</td>
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<td>14,102</td>
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<td>Learning Combined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intern/Extern/Co-Op</td>
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<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Intern/Extern/Co-Op</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>84,844</td>
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</table>
Total Number of Hours of Service to the Community: 106,726

Economic Impact: $3,326,634