

November 2017
Volume 11, Issue 3

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President’s Higher
Education Community
Service Honor Roll
Member With
Distinction



Carnegie Foundation
Elective Classification in
Community Engagement



Left to Right:
Alexis Kane, Alex
Cicero, Marla
Hairston, and
Megan Edwards
pose following
their presentation
detailing their
applied learning
experiences.

Sharing the Journey: Learning by Doing

What does it mean to learn by doing? For some individuals it’s teaching a child to skip as a way of helping the child develop critical motor skills; for others its researching brainwaves to help people with PTSD.

During the October 19th sandwich seminar, four undergraduate students described ways in which learning-by-doing experiences impacted their lives.

John Suarez, director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, facilitated the seminar. He considers students such as these to be colleagues because of their civic and scholarly contributions.

Here is what each student said about her journey of applied learning:

Alexandra Cicero, a dual international studies and communications major, arrived at SUNY Cortland unsure of what she wanted to study. Enrolling in a service-learning course helped spark her love for advocacy and community participation. Soon, she began volunteering with NYPIRG, where she focused on hunger and homelessness, and on environmental

harm. The experience benefitted the community *and* Cicero, who grew as an individual. Amid helping thousands of students register to vote, and lobbying in Albany, Cicero found that her public speaking skills and confidence improved.

“What you learn after having these experiences is so much better than a PowerPoint or lecture. When you leave the classroom and get out of your seat, all of the skills set in,” Cicero said.

Megan Edwards came to SUNY Cortland as a transfer student. Edwards said she experienced culture shock when she changed her major from exercise science to biological sciences because of the differences in material, so she challenged herself to study in a more effective way, regardless of topic.

Edwards found that she thrived when she used her skills outside of the classroom.

She began volunteering in the emergency room at the Cortland Regional Medical Center, where she learned how to relate to patients. She also began conducting research with Professor Christa Chatfield on ways of

Coming Events

**November 8 & 15 —
HIV/AIDS Awareness
and Fundraising**
4-6pm
Student Life Center

December 6 – The second “I Learned by Doing” Sandwich Seminar. 12:00-1:00 p.m., Brockway Hall’s Jacobus Lounge. Free and open to the public.

Learning by Doing *continued*



Megan Edwards presented on her experience conducting research.

using one kind of bacterium to attack another bacterium that destroys farmed oysters from New York State to Maine.

Edwards said that she wishes more professors would encourage classroom participation and that they would think of innovative ways to make learning fun. She feels confident in her career path, now that she has spent time using her skills outside of the classroom.

Alexis Kane – “The first time I volunteered at [a particular agency’s after-school program] and I saw that a child wasn’t participating, I thought that something wasn’t right. We need instructors who are focusing on quality education; we need inclusion...” said Alexis Kane, a physical education major.

Through fieldwork and research, Kane has grown as a physical education professional. She explained that physical education is a core class in children’s education, and should be treated as such. Being in the Gymnasium with children helped Kane learn the importance of interacting with students and making their experiences fun; it also reinforced her professors’ lessons.

“Physical education helps prevent disease and obesity.... [so] rather than taking physical education time away [as some schools are doing], there needs to be a reverse trend. We need

people teaching quality physical education,” Kane said.

Marla Hairston is a psychology major who began doing research as a sophomore with Professor Leslie Eaton, with whom she began measuring brainwaves of individuals as they opened and closed their eyes.

Hairston said that she has received specialized training in her area of interest, an opportunity that many undergraduate students don’t have.

Hairston can remember how excited she was when she was able to identify whether someone’s eyes were open or closed, based off of their brainwaves.

“Applied learning let me see that this is what I want to do every day,” Hairston said. The research experience allowed Hairston to discover her passion for helping individuals with traumatic brain injuries.

Her research could help professionals design more effective interventions for people with stress and with PTSD.

The next “I Learned by Doing” Sandwich Seminar is scheduled for noon on Thursday, December 7.



Catherine Cullen, Special Projects Officer, School of Education; Benjamin Wilson, Assistant Professor, Economics; Alexandra Cicero, Communication & International Studies; and William Veit, Risk Management Officer, described the campus’ **Civic Action Plan** at the November 2 **Community Roundtable**. Full article to appear in the December issue.

Student Profile

Motivation to Keep Learning

Jessie Espinet is a senior therapeutic recreation major who has dedicated herself to helping individuals with functional differences through recreation.

During her time at SUNY Cortland, Espinet has volunteered with after-school programs and with the JM Murray Center. She has helped children with functional differences learn to play baseball, understand homework, and interact with the world around them.

She said that these experiences have not only enhanced her education, but have inspired her career path and everyday life.

“I am so much more aware of my language and how important it is – especially working with people who have functional differences... Right there is an example: By not using the word ‘disability,’ I reinforce the idea that those who have disabilities are not ‘dis-abled,’ rather they just have some differences from other people,” Espinet said.

She fondly recalls a little girl with functional differences with whom she formed a close relationship. The girl did not often connect with people, but

“My experiences have given me the confidence to move forward in the field of therapeutic recreation.

..They’ve fueled my motivation to keep learning”

- Jessie Espinet



Jessie Espinet

the relationship that the two fostered through playing baseball was special.

“Also, since having these opportunities, I have been a huge advocate for implementing *person-first* language into my everyday conversations.

My experiences have given me confidence to move forward in the field of therapeutic recreation, and they’ve given me a taste of what it’s like to be a recreation therapist. They’ve fueled my motivation to keep learning,” she said.

Espinet is looking forward to graduating at the end of this semester, and to beginning her career in the community.

Prepared to Respond Cortland’s EDPRT Team

EDPRT – Emotionally Disturbed Persons Response Team, is a valuable resource to the Cortland community and to the SUNY Cortland Campus. Local police officers, the SUNY Cortland police, and other emergency response personnel are trained to diffuse high-stress situations and to manage people suffering from mental illness or emotional distress, while at the same time preserving people’s dignity and ensuring their safety.

Lieutenant Guerra of the Cortland Police Department presented information at a recent “Food for Thought” forum about the team who attend an initial 16-hour training and attend monthly meetings.



Lt. Guerra with Cortland Police Department

EDPRT team members typically respond to 200-250 calls a month, averting suicides, de-escalating crisis situations, making referrals, and building trust in the community. Guerra said that there has been a significant reduction in violent incidents or the need to use force since the inception of the program in 2009.

More than 75% of local law enforcement personnel are trained.

Securing Food for All 2017 Crop Walk Supports New Campus Food Pantry

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Every year, SUNY Cortland students take pride in giving back to the community during the annual CROP Walk. The walk, which was held at Grace and Holy Spirit Church on October 22, raised \$8,168 to help end hunger locally.

SUNY Cortland softball contributed \$1,230, and Women's lacrosse, \$1,157.

Sponsored through Cortland County Council of Churches, Crop Walk is directed by SUNY Staff and committee members Professor Jim Miller and Susan Wilson, by Walk Coordinator Jeannie Rose (treasurer), and was supported this year by Rachel Ditch, Minister of the Campus Interfaith Center. Theta Chi fraternity helped with registration.

You can donate online to Crop Walk until November 15th!

Simply click this link:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/cortlandny/Donate>

You can make a general donation, a walker donation, or a team donation.

According to sign-in sheets at the event, over 93 percent of walkers were affiliated with SUNY Cortland through clubs, varsity sports teams, residence halls, and Greek organizations.

Twenty-five percent of the total collected will be given back to the local community, split between four organizations, including the new campus food pantry.

The food pantry opened its doors at the basement of the Interfaith Center, 7 Calvert St., on November 6. During the first two weeks of operation, students can access the pantry Monday through Friday from noon to 1 p.m.



Information on further hours of the pantry's operation will be forthcoming.

Health Educator Lauren Herman conducted a needs assessment on SUNY Cortland students' food insecurity. She said, "We know from many studies that many people face food insecurity. Our initial local data show the food insecurity that students face: Out of 301 students that took the survey, 38% have gone to bed hungry while attending college because of a lack of finances to buy and /or make food."



Paul Nojaim loads food on the pantry's shelves.

Donations have come from faculty, students, alumni, and from Paul Nojaim (Nojaim Brothers Supermarket, Syracuse, NY). Generous financial support has come from alumni and from President Bitterbaum and his Cabinet.

People who helped create the pantry include students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Alexandra Cicero is the pantry's Student Coordinator.