

## “Game On”: Exploring an *Extreme Weather Event*

March 2019

Volume 12, Issue 6

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



Carnegie Foundation  
Elective Classification in  
Community Engagement



Lexi Pascarella and Callie Callan determine the likelihood of another major flood within a year.



Jayleen DeJesus and Julianna Santamaria share resources (blue & red cards).

The announcement startled everyone: A storm was about to flood River City.

As rain began to fall, eleven people selected resources to help them deal with possible flooding challenges.

Food Bank director Alexis Abramo (Childhood Education) chose twenty community volunteers as a resource in this Extreme Weather Event game.

Insurance company owner Julianna Santamaria (Institute for Civic Engagement *Action Team* intern) chose water filters and face masks.

Then the downpour hit, causing various challenges for the city’s neighborhoods.

The Clearwater neighborhood’s hydro-electric station was damaged, so the residents had to choose between sending limited electricity to nursing homes or to the hospital.

They powered the hospital.

Downtown residents repaired the port instead of businesses. Lakeshore opened its spillway to save the Historic district, but flooded the university’s research center. Meadowland moved inmates from the flooded jail to a local site, rather than to another city.

A lightning bolt’s electromagnetic pulse disabled the city’s electronic

communication infrastructure, so people had no cell-phone coverage.

Rather than compete for resources, the six neighborhoods’ residents shared resources so that almost every challenge was met.

That idea was picked-up in the game’s debrief session, when NYPIRG interns Jayleen DeJesus and Kerry Donnelly, and Action Team interns Callie Klasek and Julianna Santamaria pointed to the need for team-working skills in disasters.

Abramo emphasized the importance of communication across a command structure for efficient use of resources.

In the same vein, Professor Beth Klein (Childhood Education and Sustainability Coordinator) noted that snow-plow crews across Cortland-area municipalities already demonstrate those qualities: “They share resources so that roads are cleared as quickly and effectively as possible.”

Klein and Abramo are interested in this event for their Master Teachers students.

In the same vein, Assistant Professor Eric Edlund (Physics) is interested in this activity because of its topic and because of its effectiveness as a learning tool.

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“Game On” continued from page 1.



Arnold, Abramo, Santamaria, Gormley, and DeJesus determine effective use of resources.

“I already use problem-based learning; I’m curious about how I can use a game or a simulation like this to help students learn how to ‘do’ and enjoy Physics.”

With that idea in mind, Service-Learning Corps Intern Alexis Pascarella connected this role-playing game to a lesson she learned in a Psychology 101 class, saying that “role-play is one way to stimulate neurons to make new connections.”

This event grew out of the October 25th *Addressing Climate Change-Enhanced Extreme Weather Events* deliberative dialogue, conducted by Ryann Hudson, an Institute for Civic Engagement Action Team intern.

One of the community members at that dialogue, Alyssa, suggested that junior-high and high-school students would be more interested in climate change if they were involved in an actual activity, rather than lectures. Alyssa is an 8th-grader in the Homer School District.

Hudson and the other participants agreed, so Hudson encouraged Alyssa and her mentor, Kathie Arnold, to work with her on developing such an activity.

Arnold and Alyssa found the Extreme Weather Event game online. It was developed by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. Arnold and Alyssa printed and laminated all of the items for the game.

Assistant Professor Alexis Blavos (Health), Ethan Gormley (Project Coordinator, NYPIRG) and John Suarez also participated.

## The HIDDEN Project: An Update

People who are homeless in Cortland are often hidden from view.

As the February newsletter reported, however, Action Team intern Callan Klasek organized a one-week *Homelessness Items Donations Drive, Engaging Neighbors* (HIDDEN) campaign to help address needs of people who are homeless.

Students, faculty, and staff from across campus were very generous: They donated 732 new and gently-used items to the collection boxes at the Physical Education, Economics, and Philosophy Departments, and at the Institute for Civic Engagement.

Christopher Bode, visiting instructor in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies, donated good-condition rain gear and sleeping bags.

On February 21, Klasek delivered the donations to Catholic Charities. Those items included clothing, blankets, soaps, and comfort products.

Tim Lockwood, Director of Family and Community Services, said, “On behalf of the people we reach who lack the very basic necessities many of us take for granted, we thank the SUNY Cortland community. The items you donated will mean more to them than you realize.”

To follow-up on this project, four students from Assistant Professor Alexis Blavos’s Community Health (HLH 203) class are working with Klasek to develop projects that grow out of her work. They are:

- Creating a *Break the Stigma* event.
- Designing a survey that will help determine the extent of student homelessness at SUNY Cortland.



Mentor Kathie Arnold and Assistant Professor Eric Edlund strategize effective distribution of shared resources.

**Coming Events**

**Barriers to Election Success: A Panel Discussion.** *Wednesday, March 27, 4:30 to 6:00pm in Brockway Hall's Jacobus Lounge.*

Panelists Elizabeth Burns (D), Ann Homer (D), Kelly Preston (R), and Ben Reynolds (D) will describe challenges that they faced while conducting election campaigns.

An Action Team intern will moderate.

**Whistle-Blowers and Social Media: An Interview.** *Tuesday, April 9, 4:30 to 6:00 in Corey Union's Fireplace Lounge.*

Anthropologist Julia Ganson, a researcher with The *Government Accountability Project* (GAP), will describe GAP's government accountability work. An Action Team intern will interview her.

**Integrating Applied-Learning Student-Learning Outcomes.** *Thursday, April 11, 4:30-6:00pm in Corey Union's Exhibition Lounge.* Dr. Janet Nepkie, SUNY Oneonta. Register by emailing [john.suarez@cortland.edu](mailto:john.suarez@cortland.edu).

**CALP: An Applied Learning community of practice. A Sandwich Seminar.** *Wednesday, April 24, 12:30 to 1:30 in Brockway Hall's Jacobus Lounge.*

The five pioneering faculty members of SUNY Cortland's *Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners* (CALP) Program will describe their challenges, successes, and revelations as they developed or taught new applied learning courses during the spring 2019 semester.

**Action Team Interns: Self-Directed Learning.** *Thursday, April 25, noon to 1:00pm in Brockway Hall's Jacobus Lounge.*

The Institute for Civic Engagement's *Action Team* interns will describe ways in which their internship activities

**Got Your Back is Back!**

On February 21, about 200 people filled 2,000 "comfort bags" with wellness items for people seeking help after escaping physical violence.

Those 200 people participated in SUNY's *Got Your Back* event, which dramatized the extent of physical abuse in the US.

The comfort bags match the average number of people who are abused in the US every hour-and-a-half. As last month's newsletter reported, each year, 10 million people in the US suffer physical abuse by an intimate partner.

Into those bags, participants put wellness items such as soaps, lotions, a towel, a note pad and pen, a stress ball, and information on resources.



Bags are weighed as a check for completeness, then boxed for transport.

The SUNY Got Your Back (GYB) Team drove through a wintry weather mix to deliver the bags and wellness items and guide the event.

Later, they delivered 1,200 filled bags to Cortland area, bringing the 800 remaining bags to other NYS locations.

The 2,000 bags from SUNY Cortland are a major contribution to the goal of 50,000 bags for the fall and spring semesters.

Education tables at the event were staffed by representatives of the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc., Binghamton; Students Active for Ending Rape (SAFER); YWCA Cortland's *Aid to Victims of Violence* program; New York State Police Sexual Assault Victims' Unit;



The SUNY GYB Team: Xochitl Santamaria, Delsy Joya-Reyes, Philip Potter, Elizabeth Brady

SUNY Cortland's *Green Dot* program, and the Title IX Office/ SUNY Cortland *It's On Us* program.

The Marketing Supervisor of the Institute's Action Team, Julianna Santamaria, coordinated the event's social media promotional activities.

A partial list of participants includes President Bitterbaum; Nan Pasquarello, Title IX Coordinator; Chris Kuretech, Associate VP for Student Affairs; Mary Kate Morris, Associate Director of Campus Activities for Leadership; Cheryl Hines, Coordinator of Student Outreach; Donna Sickmon, Accounts Payable Supervisor; officers from the University Police Department and the City of Cortland Police Department, Family Counseling Services staff, and many SUNY Cortland



Alpha Phi Omega (APO) brothers helped set-up the Got Your Back event.

The SUNY Got Your Back Team, the SUNY Cortland's Title IX Office, the SUNY Cortland *It's On Us* Program, and Institute for Civic Engagement look forward to another successful Got Your Back event next year.

## CPN 101: Putting Database Research to Work

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By Sara Coyle.

After moving from Canada to Cortland in the fall of 2018, Writing Instructor Laura Dunbar was ready to embark on a new journey.

That journey includes research that she and her CPN 101 (Writing Studies II) students have been conducting on the dangers of lead-based paint. It has been eye-opening for her students.

The research idea began when Dunbar, relaxing on a Sunday afternoon, was jarred by the front page of the *Syracuse Post-Standard*: An article described lead-based paint poisoning in children.

The article forced her to reminisce on childhood memories of teachers warning students not to eat the lead graphite in their pencils.

Dunbar figured that, “In the intervening decades, lead was not a problem anymore. I read this article and I was floored. I just couldn’t believe it.”

After digging deeper into this problem, Dunbar was motivated to learn how this might affect Cortland. Her CPN 101 class is now the first of many of her classes to work on this project.

The research is a three-step plan. First, students practice the research process.

Second, help students understand that their research skills can be applied outside of college.

Students should recognize that their research is valid and can provide community members – and people beyond the Cortland community – with useful information.

Lastly, help students compose a college-level essay that meets course- and departmental-criteria.

For Dunbar, research into, and discussions about, the dangers of lead-based paint have just begun because this



Laura Dunbar

‘silent epidemic’ can be hurting more people than a person might think.

Anyone living in an older house should check the quality of the paint on the house to avoid symptoms of lead-poisoning.

Lead poisoning symptoms include vomiting, developmental delays, and hyperactivity.

In the second week of the spring semester, Frank Ridzi, VP for Community Investment, the Central New York Lead Safe Foundation; Lauren Stern, Information Literacy Instruction Coordinator; Ethan Gormley, NYPIRG Project Coordinator, and John Suarez, director of Civic Engagement, visited one of Dunbar’s CPN 101 sections.

Each person shared ways in which their offices can help the students in this work. Ridzi began the session with an overview of lead’s toxicity and pervasiveness.

One way in which Dunbar’s students’ work will be useful is in providing off-campus students with the resources to “recognize if there’s lead-based paint in their home, determine if it’s a problem or not, and if it is a problem, see what resources are available to them.”

The Writing Center’s staff have been an ongoing resource for Dunbar’s students throughout this semester.

During the Poster Session at the April 12 Transformations, Dunbar’s students will conduct a poster presentation on their research on the dangers of lead-based paint in and around the Cortland community. Dunbar invites faculty and students in other disciplines contact her to collaborate on this project: [laura.dunbar@cortland.edu](mailto:laura.dunbar@cortland.edu).