

Poster information

Soup for Seniors

Our group learned how the unique variation of stakeholders' personal experience can affect an organization's ability to progress towards an overall goal of expansion. An organization cannot maintain efficient development or provide proficient service if the members of the organization are not working together towards a common goal. Our group intervened in a community organization hoping to expand their services, but the organization was not unified in their goals to meet the needs of a grander community. A wider demographic in need of a service provided nearby is now receiving assistance that would have never been accessible otherwise.

Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center

We are working with the Montgomery County Museum of Art and History to apply practical methods we have learned in our community systems thinking class. We learned how to actively communicate and work with community partners, apply community systems thinking on a local level, and formulate a method to best identify needs our community partner would most benefit from having fulfilled. More specifically, we are working with our partner to help make the museum relevant to broader audience and expand usability of museum resources.

AmeriCorps: Engaging the NRV through Smart Beginnings & Volunteerism

During the 2016-2017 school year, AmeriCorps members have partnered closely with Smart Beginnings New River Valley (NRV) to provide and promote early childhood literacy through a program called Reading Hour. Reading Hour allows AmeriCorps members to spend thirty minutes to one hour each week visiting students in childcare centers across the NRV to pair students with community volunteers in order to promote literacy.

Community Systems Thinking: The Campus Kitchens Project

From the project, we learned how to analyze a community system and problems within it in order to develop an implementable strategy that would not only improve the system, but holistically address the situation. We are optimistic that Campus Kitchen will be able to consider, and eventually implement, our plan to its associated dining halls and community partners when transferring leftover, but usable, dining hall food from Campus Kitchens to the community partners.

Team members

- Abby England, freshman, Geography
- Savannah Nelson, freshman, National Security & Foreign Affairs
- Catherine Carroll, freshman, Human Development
- Paige Dinneny, freshman, Biochemistry
- Jacob Benjamin, freshman, Computer Science

- Carolyn Kerr, freshman, Architecture
- Sydney Delbridge, freshman, Interior Design
- Matthew Schmidheiser, freshman, Physics
- Christian McCann, freshman, Engineering

- Kayla Schroeder, senior, History
- Maya Reyes, sophomore, Psychology
- Erica Hess, senior, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise

- Michael Lyons, freshman, General Engineering
- Lauren Haacke, freshman, Neuroscience
- Delaney Edwards, freshman, Real Estate and Hospitality & Tourism Management
- Kartik Rustagi, freshman, Theater and Hospitality & Tourism Management

Healthy Kids Day - Engaging Active Minds and Bodies

Healthy Kids Day is the Y's national initiative to improve the health and well-being of kids! HKD is a summer kick-off event comprised of free fitness games, healthy snacks, and educational activities for families. We will also be promoting local summer programs/activities for children so that they can remain active throughout their summer months. According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) children and adolescents aged 2-19 years are categorized as obese, almost tripling since 1980. True to our mission of advocating youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, the YMCA at Virginia Tech is committed to improving the health and well-being of families through active play and educational activities.

Community Engagement: Envisioning a Revitalized Future for Dante, Virginia, a southwest Virginia Company Coal Town

The Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture Program held the first Richard G. Gibbons Public Landscapes Planning and Design Vertical Charrette at the beginning of the spring semester 2017. The charrette addressed public landscape issues and opportunities in Dante, Virginia, a historic coal town located in far southwest Virginia. Students and faculty travelled to the historic coal and rail town to meet with Dante and Dickenson County representatives to learn about the town and its rich social, cultural, economic, and environmental heritage as well as its current challenges and opportunities. Student groups were tasked with identifying and investigating options for community revitalization using public open space.

Vacant to Value

For my senior thesis, I am doing my project on recreating vacant lots. I am working with a neighborhood in Harlem Park, Baltimore. In the 1960s they decided to remove inner-block houses and put parks there instead. However, these parks were not suitable for the population due to these parks being concrete with metal playgrounds. Over the years, these parks were unmaintained as the homes surrounding it began to go into disrepair. For my project, I am designing a series of three parks for the community. During this project, I have learned how to revitalize a community through the use of public engagement. Throughout this project, I have had interactions with various community leaders to talk about what they wanted to see in the parks and have been working with the Parks and People foundation in Baltimore, Maryland.

- Hannah Bates, senior, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise and Science of Food, Nutrition & Exercise
- Bailey Hahn, junior, Human Development
- Molly Anadale, senior, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise and Science of Food, Nutrition & Exercise
- Tara Lackey, sophomore, Human Development and Psychology
- Ashley Dorst, junior, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise and Dietetics
- Liz McAuliff, junior, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise and Science of Food, Nutrition & Exercise

- Amelia Hulshult, Landscape Architecture
- Kayleigh McKenzie, Landscape Architecture
- Mike Stelfox, Landscape Architecture

- Tara Allentuck, fifth year, Landscape Architecture

Building Brigades: Muslim Arts, Culture, and Identity

This project was very important because of the immediate need to understand and explore Muslim societies in their diverse political, social, religious, historical, and cultural contexts; cultivate civility; and celebrate the cultural traditions practiced in Muslim societies. In this multi-day series of performances, lectures, and workshops, community members were able to learn, explore, connect and interact with numerous scholars, artists, and student groups representing a diverse culture within the Hokie community. This project took over a year of biweekly meeting to design this week of building bridge experiences.

The impact of Reading Hour throughout the NRV

We've learned how many children in the NRV struggle with literacy skills and school readiness. We have learned about various organizations and community sources that focus on these children. We have learned different techniques/intervention styles to help these kids and various prevention strategies. The children we reach have gained in their literacy skills, grown a love for reading, and gained confidence and school readiness

Higher Education & VT Engage: Through the Lens of Practicum Students

Two practicum students in the VT Engage office supported two programs during spring semester: the student leadership team in the development and success of their service trips & assist in the creation of an informal curriculum consisting of learning outcomes for pre-trip education and reflection questions for post-trip facilitated discussions; and the development of co-curricular structures of the SERVE learning community & assist in the creation of a strategic plan for each committee consisting of outlined roles, goals and future events.

4-H Team Camp Online Training

The purpose of our project is to improve and enhance the current 4-H teen volunteer online training modules. To increase retention of training material needed, to create safer spaces for summer camp participants. To increase motivation to use the online modules as an alternative to in-person training, so that volunteers can meet the training hour requirement. We aim to increase the quality of camp programming and safety through well trained teen leaders, and implementation of new technology and educational methods. Our team spent five to six weeks during the fall of 2016 working on this project and implementation is ongoing. We met with 4-H representatives, from Virginia Cooperative Extension, and surveyed youth participants to determine their needs.

- Turki Alzahrani, graduate student, Instructional Design & Technology
- Katelynn Cioffi, junior, Human Development
- Sarah Clark, sophomore, Public Relations and Music
- Taylor Schiller, first year master's students in Higher Education
- Matt Cheatham, first year master's students in Higher Education
- Monica Fikes, senior, Agricultural Leadership & Community Education
- Meghan Garrity, junior, Agricultural Leadership & Community Education

Exposing K-12 Students to Environmental Education via Hands-On Activities utilizing Cutting Edge Technologies

The Learning Enhanced Watershed Assessment System (LEWAS) is a unique environmental monitoring system at Virginia Tech (VT) that has brought high-frequency live data to more than 11,000 students for research and education. The LEWAS has also been used in for several outreach activities. In March 2017, the LEWAS team collaborated with VT's student organization College Mentors for Kids to implement an outreach event for approximately 80 first through fifth grade students from local elementary schools. The focus of this outreach event was to educate students about human impacts on their local watershed and the importance of monitoring water quality for ecological health.

Peaceful Activism

Our organization, Students for Non-Violence, has been working diligently to educate the community on the power of peaceful activism. In the process, we've learned how important it is to work with all community members when voicing a concern, these members include police officers, professors, store owners, and those who hold a leadership position. This is so important, especially today, because when you look to the media, you're typically shown protesters who seem violent and enraged, which accomplishes nothing. So we wanted to show how effective it is when you're peaceful about your concerns. So far, our impact has reached many students and professors, we've done film screenings and a field trip with three more events coming up that include a forum with several professors, police officers and student leaders discussing how they work.

Empowering youth through premier leadership, personal growth, and career success!

The community engagement efforts is based off being an Agricultural Education Teacher/FFA Advisor during my three year tenure at Creswell High School in Creswell, NC. The students took part in rebuilding an agricultural education program through classes and FFA participation and community service. The revitalization of the Greenhouse at Creswell High School during the 2014-2015 school year led to the program receiving a \$10,000 grant from the Monsanto Fund: America Grow's Rural Education. The Greenhouse was renamed to the Tiger Town Greenhouse in which the students were able to grow plants and sell plants year round the Creswell, NC and Washington County Community. The grant has helped supply and donate plants to residents of the community

- Katherine Olson, senior, Environmental Science & Biochemistry
- Debarati Basu, PhD candidate, Engineering Education
- Michael Jeska, sophomore, Civil Engineering
- Thomas G. Westfall, masters student, Environmental Engineering
- Nick Falls, senior, Electrical Engineering
- Christopher Osterhout, senior, Civil Engineering
- Dr. Daniel S. Brogan, Post-Doctoral Associate, ICTAS
- Dr. Vinod K. Lohani, professor, Engineering Education

- Brooke Bradley, senior, Sociology
- Andrea Ashburn, senior, Sociology & Criminology
- Bonnie Woodward, senior, Psychology, Sociology, & Criminology
- Harley Huffman, junior, History, Sociology, & Africana Studies
- Asmar Eltayb, junior, Psychology

- Courtney Lawrence, graduate student, Agricultural Leadership Community Education

Micah's Caring Initiative

In this project, our job is to help orchestrate a plan to help equalize the number of volunteers in all of the programs (Micah's Backpack, Micah's Closet, Micah's Garden, and Soup for Seniors). The community partner expressed their concern that Micah's backpack had a plethora of volunteers (specifically young adults looking for service hours), while the other programs had little help or volunteers. In our time working on the project, we learned the importance of listening to the needs of our community partner and valuing the opinions of the stakeholders involved in the project.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Citizen Scientists: Flint Water Educational Outreach

We recently participated in an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trip to Flint, Michigan with the VT Flint Water Study research team to teach K-12 students about the science behind the city's water crisis. The Flint Water Study Outreach team consisted of 10+ VT undergraduate and graduate students, a couple of Flint community partners, and University of Michigan graduate students all led by Dr. Marc Edwards. In preparation for the ASB trip, we spent a few weeks on training, organization, and formulation of outreach materials. Over the course of the week, the outreach team visited 12 schools and education programs and interacted with 1000+ students ranging from 4th-12th grade

Eating Lunch With Worms: Cultivating Community Through Vermiculture at the YMCA

Vermiculture is the cultivation of earthworms to convert organic waste into compost, a process targeting ecological stewardship through the decrease in landfill waste. The purpose of this project was to educate people throughout the Blacksburg community and beyond about the benefits of vermiculture through the production of an informational brochure, and speaking with people about vermiculture. Additionally, there was an effort to improve the system in place at the YMCA by controlling the worm population, harvesting ready compost within in the bins, and earning a profit from these products.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program & Virginia Farmers Markets

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the program formerly known as food stamps. SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase food at grocery stores, convenience stores, and some farmers markets. SNAP is a federal entitlement program, which means anyone who is eligible will receive benefits.

A Review of Operations for the Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech

The Campus Kitchen is a national program supported at 60 colleges and universities as a way for students to combat hunger by reclaiming surplus food from the university and distributing it in their community. As the national arm of the DC Central Kitchen, all Campus Kitchens have the mission to: strengthen bodies, empower minds, and build

- Allison Monroe, freshman, Architecture
- Ashlyn Kefauver, freshman, Human Nutrition Foods & Exercise
- Megha Jassal, freshman, Business Information Technology
- Toni Volpi, freshman, Math

- Jeannie Purchase, first-year PhD, Civil Engineering
- Kathryn Little, first-year master's student, Environmental Engineering

- Micah Smalley, senior, Environmental Horticulture

- Kasey Owen, VT Engage AmeriCorps VISTA for the Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech

- Lester Schonberger, Graduate Assistant for the Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech and first year master's student, Food Science & Technology

communities. Since launching in September 2015, The Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech (CKVT) has engaged over 1,400 students in service and diverted over 33,000 pounds of surplus food from composting and other waste streams.

Dominican Republic Service Immersion Trip 2017

An overview of the preparation for a one week service immersion trip to the Dominican Republic, including pre-trip planning and group meetings, in-country reflection, and post-trip meetings.

Community-Based Participatory Research Project: The Predictors of Place Attachment that Engage Urban Appalachian Communities in Community Gardens

The level of involvement and civic engagement are still critical issues that affect the permanency and acceptance of community gardens in cities. One of the major factors that influence people's involvement and support is the sense of community garden place and the reasons for people's attachment to it. This study has investigated the predictors of place attachment in community gardens and developed a place attachment measurement framework. A content analysis was performed on 40 peer-reviewed articles, eight thesis/dissertations, and three technical reports. This analysis identified five major categories of the framework including visual landscape preference, the symbolic meaning of the place, functional opportunities in the place, natural bonds, and cultural connections.

Mobile Greenhouse Project Rolls into Dining Services Garden

- Samantha DiBiaso, senior, public relations & religion and culture
- Brooke Souders, sophomore, human development major
- Sinan Kordon, graduate student, Landscape Architecture
- Evan O'Neill, Agricultural Sciences