

# Service Learning

Learn - Serve - Engage

Each year, over 500 Elmhurst University students contribute more than 10,000 hours serving their local, national or global communities. Each semester, students welcome refugee families, mentor first-generation students, provide shelter for abandoned pets, advocate for human rights, promote the protection of our natural world, help to address the challenges posed by COVID-19, and much, much more.

## Elmhurst Pride Collective Paints the Town with Help from ElmU Artists

Did you get a chance to check out the Pride Windows in downtown Elmhurst this summer? In celebration of Pride Month, Service Learning community partner, The Elmhurst Pride Collective, solicited artists to paint the windows of local businesses. University artists [LaTori Ayers](#) and [Karen Sugay](#) responded to the call and were chosen to help spread positivity and pride with their window murals. Karen said of her experience, "It is one thing to earn a living by your gifts; it is quite another when you do it without monetary gain. There is a sense of joy that comes from giving without gain." Check out LaTori and Karen's joyful expressions of Pride and community!

If you'd like to learn more about the Elmhurst Pride Collective, a local non-profit organization that works to show support for the LGBTQ+ community, and about building a larger network of community allies committed to making Elmhurst safe and inclusive, email the Service Learning program.



LaTori Ayers and Karen Sugay



LaTori Ayers' mural at Maxine.



Karen Sugay's mural at Pure Barre.

## Allison Skiple '23 Awarded Phi Kappa Phi Literacy Grant



Each semester, Elmhurst students majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders and Spanish join together to mentor and tutor students at York Community Resource Center. This is part of the ongoing 'Literacy Project' organized through the Service Learning Program.

**Allison Skiple** leads other ElmU students in developing the literacy skills of the York Community Resource Center elementary students, many of whom are bilingual. Allison, in cooperation with the service learning program, applied for a \$2,500 grant from Phi Kappa Phi to provide resources to support this York Literacy Project and, excitingly, she won the grant!

Thanks to Allison, YCRC students will have access to Playaway audio readers, age-appropriate books in Spanish and English, and storytelling tools to enhance comprehension. See [elmhurst.edu/skiple](http://elmhurst.edu/skiple) for more information about this award.



Bluejays volunteer their time to serve with students in the York Literacy Project's after school program.

## Making a Difference with HOPE Fair Housing

Want to be a catalyst for social justice? Consider serving with HOPE Fair Housing – a Service Learning community partner committed to creating greater housing opportunities for all by ensuring that everyone has the chance to live in the community/home/apartment of their choice free from discrimination.

Recent Elmhurst alumnus **Juan Sandoval** spent his final semester serving with HOPE Fair Housing by gathering data and authoring a report on appraisal discrimination in the Chicagoland area. In this report, Juan documented the history and ongoing practices in house valuation which continue to discriminate against historically disadvantaged people. HOPE has many versatile service opportunities for students from all disciplines.



Juan Sandoval

# CREO DuPage Brings New Bluejays to ElmU

**Venessa Sevilla, Amanda Burke** and **Javier Gloria** are three Elmhurst students who recently mentored first-generation Latinx high school students through the non-profit community organization CREO DuPage. CREO DuPage offers pre-college programming focused on helping motivated Hispanic/Latino/Latinx students “attain the future they yearn for – making possible what may seem impossible.” Each academic year, CREO DuPage hosts Elmhurst students who mentor Latinx and Hispanic high school students working to become the first college students in their families. Indeed, one of these CREO high school students ultimately received the American Dream Fellowship offered by Elmhurst University! To see her winning video, visit [elmhurst.edu/AmericanDream](http://elmhurst.edu/AmericanDream).



Cynthia Diaz and Amanda Burke

Bluejay students help these high schoolers study for their exams, fill out FAFSA forms and apply to college – all under the supervision of CREO Bilingual Program Coordinator and Elmhurst alumna **Cynthia Diaz**. Cynthia connected with CREO during her senior capstone class when she served as a volunteer. Diaz says, “being a Latina first-generation student myself, I felt a connection to volunteer at CREO, and I am glad that I followed my heart since that opened the door to so many opportunities!”



Javier Gloria gets to meet his CREO buddy in person after months of virtual mentoring.

# Elmhurst Students Serve Chicagoans Experiencing Homelessness

Under the guidance of psychology professor **Dr. Kathy Sexton-Radek**, Elmhurst students reinvigorated the Night Ministry program, which had been suspended as a result of COVID-19. Night Ministry provides meals and support for Chicagoans experiencing homelessness. Some students serve here on campus by preparing toiletry bags and meals, while other students travel with Dr. Sexton-Radek into the city to distribute items, meals and health care services via the Night Ministry bus.



Dr. Kathy Sexton-Radek, Delilah Lewerenz (Nursing) and Abigail Mathew (Nursing)



Students helped make 200+ sandwiches to be distributed by the Night Ministry bus.

## Hailey Nicholas – Newman Fellow

**Hailey Nicholas**, a third-year honors student, is among 173 students from around the country and Mexico who make up the 2022-23 class of Newman Civic Fellows. The yearlong program recognizes students committed to creating positive change in their communities and around the world. As a Newman Civic Fellow, Hailey will have access to learning and networking opportunities emphasizing personal, professional, and civic growth. The goal of the Fellowship is to provide Fellows with the skills and connections to create large-scale positive change. For Hailey, that means environmental justice and sustainable urban planning. She already has put her passion to work as vice president of the GreenJays student environmental group, planning service events with local non-profit organizations. She's also executive chair of the Honors Program. After graduation, she plans to pursue a master's in urban and environmental planning with the goal of becoming an urban planner. "I want to help work toward the sustainable transition that our country will need to undergo in the near future," says Nicholas.



President VanAken presents Hailey Nicholas with the Newman Civic Fellowship award.

## Documenting History with the Bronzeville Historical Society

Service isn't just for students looking to satisfy their experiential learning graduation requirement. Many students serve under the guidance of their professors in courses that incorporate service. English and Honors Program Professor **Erika McCombs** led her students on a service project with Sherry Williams of the Bronzeville Historical Society. Dr. McComb's students worked to digitally archive the alphabetized indexes from the Jackson Funeral Home, circa 1960s-70s, as a way to help the Bronzeville Historical Society memorialize the lives of Chicagoans whose stories often go untold. In doing so, they learned more about the Great Migration and discrimination. As recent Elmhurst graduate, **Lillian Aremtrout** notes, "there is a profound influence that our family and community history play in our sense of belonging and understanding of the world around us" and by memorializing and archiving these stories, the fabric of communities grows stronger.

## We Want to Hear from You!

Tell us about how you are serving and learning in your community. Or find out how to get involved with one of the wonderful organizations highlighted in this issue. Our goal is to help you combine your interests and passions with community needs and opportunities. We can also help you fulfill your Integrated Curriculum Experiential Learning graduation requirement through service. Contact us for more information.

To learn more about how Elmhurst University members are serving their communities, learning about themselves and building their futures, visit [elmhurst.edu/service-learning](http://elmhurst.edu/service-learning)

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