



Service Learning

Learn. Serve. Engage.

Service Guides Academic Pursuits, Career Goals and Personal Connections for ElmU Students

Each year, hundreds of Elmhurst University students contribute thousands of 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 and much, much more. With every service learning experience, our students become an even better, well-rounded version of themselves.

Southwest Creative Studio and Abigail Martinez

Abigail Martinez created a service opportunity where one did not previously exist when she offered to curate an art exhibition at Southwest Creative Studio, a studio whose mission involves serving youth and building community through art. Abigail, an ElmU art student, gathered 26 local artists and organized, marketed, implemented, and curated the entire public exhibition at Southwest Creative Studio. The exhibition was so successful that the studio, who originally imagined this as a one-day experience, extended the run time to a full month. In addition to curating her first exhibition and making art accessible to the public, Abigail organized public workshops with some featured artists.



Top: Abigail Martinez checks to be sure every aspect of her exhibition is good to go. Bottom: Martinez addresses opening night attendees



Art Student Lilly Oleksy creates a pride mural on a local business window in Downtown Elmhurst

Art as Service

Elmhurst Pride Collective and Lily Oleksy

Lily Oleksy partnered with the Elmhurst Pride Collective to help paint the town for Gay Pride Month. Lily reflected on her service with EPC and its connection to her future, ‘This is an opportunity I valued because it was one of my first professional experiences with a “client.” Besides that, it was art-based service which is something I’ve been passionate about my whole life. I love being able to use art to better the community and this is one of those instances . . . I’m an art student here at Elmhurst, more specifically a digital art student as my major is graphic design and my minor is digital media. Painting isn’t something I’ll always get to partake in after college, but working

hands on with a client and following the design process is. A lot of planning and preliminary work goes into any art piece, especially one like this that is going on a business. I was able to implement some more design-esque elements in this experience as well, things that I’ve done in my graphic design classes, like using adobe products to create templates for myself as well as using my iPad to create digital renderings of my ideas to present to the business owner. All of that makes this experience something that will be very enriching for my future.



Commitment to Service Informs a Capstone Project



Mikayla Tomaszewski gets hands on experience at the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie that she informed her senior capstone project.

When **Mikayla Tomaszewski** first began serving with the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie Volunteer Group, she couldn’t have imagined that her experience would be the topic of her Environmental Studies Senior Capstone. Her service started with an opportunity to help to preserve native plants and remove invasive plant species. Mikayla recalls, “I found the time I spent volunteering at the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie to be extremely valuable and special” and she returned to the prairie to continue her service. She connected with likeminded individuals who shared a passion for preservation. Mikayla began to piece together ideas for her environmental studies senior capstone project and was able to work closely with prairie experts as she considered ways to add to their preservation efforts. In the end, Mikayla’s capstone project will help to train prairie docents who educate young visitors to the prairie - teaching about the importance of preservation and highlighting the prairie jewel right here in town. Mikayla says service on the prairie “has continued to make a lasting impact on my life and was the focus of my senior capstone project because I became so passionate about this special place. I am excited to see where this experience will take me next!”

A Summer of Service with Furry Friends

Biology Major and Honors student **Catherine Kaczowka** planned to work with animals during her summer break, so she decided to enroll in EXP-250-05: Service Learning as a way to have her service with Border Tails Rescue satisfy her experiential learning graduation requirement and also have her service experience appear on her official transcript. Catherine said, "Volunteering at the animal shelter confirmed my goal of pursuing a career in veterinary medicine." Other ElmU students who have served with Animal Care service partners have reported a decrease in stress levels and anxiety and an increased sense of joy and accomplishment when helping pair a pet with their forever home. If you're interested in connecting with animal care service partner options, check out the Service Learning Community Partners page. Scan the QR code below.



Catherine Kaczowka snuggles pups while serving with Border Tails Rescue

James Johnson and Feed My Starving Children



There are many ways to connect classroom learning with experiential learning. **James Johnson** did just that when he connected what he was learning in Dr. Hazen's Intro to World Politics class and his service with Feed My Starving Children. In class,

James learned how colonization contributes to economic instability in the Global South, and how economic instability leads to food insecurity for many of these countries. While serving with FMSC, James packed meals to be sent overseas to individuals suffering from food insecurity and starvation. James noted, "Sixty-two out of 63 countries [FMSC] serve are in what's considered the Global South, of these countries, most at one point had some sort of colonial past whether it was French, British, American, Spanish, or former Warsaw Pact countries. This shows that countries that used to be a colony are still suffering today, and they are the ones who need help feeding their populations." Packing meals allowed James to "better understand world politics and communication across international boundaries."



Use the Bluejay Bike Rental Program to Get to Your Local Service Site

Nataly Funez knew that her Religious Studies course required service, but without a car, she wasn't sure how she'd be able to get to the site of her choice. Nataly filled out a bike rental request form on Etrieve and by the end of the week was outfitted with a bike to use for the semester – and at no cost because she was referred to the Bluejay Bike Rental program through Service Learning. Nataly said, "Since I live on campus finding a fast way to get to the place I was doing my service was a little bit challenging, but because I thankfully was introduced to this program I was able to complete my hours in no time!" Learn more about the Bike Rental Program by scanning the QR code.



Bluejay Bike Rental program helps students like Nataly get off campus and explore service beyond campus

Alpha Mu Gamma Serves Elm U and Beyond

Alpha Mu Gamma, the Foreign Language National Honor Society, once again found ways to serve ElmU and the surrounding community. In the fall, AMG brought awareness to cultural diversity on campus through the celebration of El Dia De Los Muertos by creating and displaying two ofrendas on campus. Then AMG hosted 80 second graders from Bensenville School District #202. AMG students served as teachers and role models for their young guests by leading the students in storytelling activities, crafts, and explaining the significance of the ofrendas. If you'd like to learn more about Alpha Mu Gamma, please contact Dr. [Beatriz Gomez-Acuna](#). If you'd like to learn more about serving with Bensenville School District #202 through CARE: Cultivating Academic Readiness and Excellence tutoring program, please contact Service Learning



Alpha Mu Gamma welcomes children to ElmU to learn about El Dia De Los Muertos.

Are You Registered to Vote in the Primary Elections?



Librarians Jennifer Paliatka and Elaine Page, with Service Learning Coordinator Michelle Reidy, complete their training to become ElmU Deputy Registrars

Stop by the A.C. Buehler Library to be registered to vote! Members of the Service Learning Program partnered with the ElmU A.C. Buehler Library to complete training as Deputy Registrars. Deputy Registrars can register Illinois residents to vote in local, state, and national elections. Deputy Registrars can also help direct non-Illinois residents to voting resources. Look for upcoming voter registration tabling events throughout the semester.

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. We can also help you fulfill your Integrated Curriculum Experiential Learning graduation requirement through service. Our goal is to help you combine your interests and passions with community needs and opportunities, ensuring that have continual success in your life and career.

To learn more about how Elmhurst University members are serving their communities, learning about themselves and building their futures, visit elmhurst.edu/Service-Learning

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