

# THE SQUIRREL SQUIRE

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

FALL 2015

## HONORS HOUSING MOVES TO UNIVERSITY HALL



Fall 2015 was the inaugural semester for the Honors Living and Learning Community in University Hall. 40 students live in suite-style housing on the 5th floor, where RA Sean Yarrows, Honors student, Computer Science major, Class of 2018, organizes social events such as gingerbread house building, and Honors Program staff meet with students for advising information sessions and pizza. The Honors LLC in University Hall offers a limited number of first-year and returning Honors Program students the opportunity to forge friendships with peers across majors and years.

# KICKING OFF THE SEMESTER ...



### The Squire Squad

#### **Student Editors and Contributors:**

Sierra Bias, Michelle Coombs, Daniel Dobek, Katie Hebert, Samantha Lee, Susan Poutre, Kelly Steele, and Lauren Stornelli.

#### **Staff Editors:**

Glen Brewster, Vanessa Diana, and Gretchen Konrad.

Interested in contributing to *The Squirrel Squire*?  
Send your story ideas and photos to  
Professor Vanessa Diana at [vdiana@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:vdiana@westfield.ma.edu).

**Get in touch with the Honors Program:**  
Visit the Honors Center in Mod Hall 103.  
Call at (413) 572-8086. Email at [honors@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:honors@westfield.ma.edu).  
LIKE US on FACEBOOK! Follow the WSU Honors  
Facebook page for updates on upcoming events!

## ... EARLY-MOVE-IN WEEKEND 2015!



A Saturday evening pizza party, ice-breaker games, and a Sunday morning brunch, along with a Sunday afternoon scavenger hunt, t-shirt tie-dyeing, and a cookout in Stanley Park were among the highlights of Early-Move-In Weekend in September 2015. Returning upper-class Honors students welcomed 60 new first-year members of the Westfield State University Honors Program to campus.



## AWARD-WINNING HONORS STUDENTS

### PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

In December, Westfield State University recognized eight students for their leadership and service with the President's Award for Excellence in Leadership. Each of this year's winners participates in a wide range of on- and off-campus activities. Emily Ellis of Northborough, Jennifer Mitchell of South Hadley, Lauren Nastari of Andover, and Sara Palis of Lancaster, all members of the Honors Program, were among the awardees.

Ellis, a senior Elementary Education and Liberal Studies dual major, is a member of Lambda Sigma National Honor Society, Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society and the Active Minds Club. She has volunteered for several community projects such as Relay



Emily Ellis receives her award from President Preston.

for Life and Rays of Hope Walk. In the Dance Company, Emily has been a junior representative and is currently Co-President, a position that has taught Emily "what it means to be a part of a leadership team

and the challenges that may arise from that." Because of the Dance Company she has gained experience in "listening to what people have to say and then making decisions to implement changes that reflect the desires of the company at large."

Mitchell, a senior Social Work major, is the Co-President of Phi Alpha, the Social Work Honor Society. A past vice president of Lambda Sigma, she says, "I quickly learned that a great leader is someone who can actively engage the other members to work collaboratively. As a



Jennifer Mitchell receives her award from President Preston.

Social Work major my passion to help others in need translated well to Lambda Sigma's mission to foster leadership through community service. As a group, we donated to several charities, ran fundraising events, and volunteered at walks." As the President of the Social Wellbeing Advocacy Group (SWAG), Jennifer spearheaded a fund raiser to purchase duffel bags for chil-

dren in the Department of Children and Families system. Jennifer also volunteers at the Westfield Soup Kitchen and has been involved at the Wingate's Healthcare for Social Service.

Nastari, a senior English major, is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Persona* Literary Journal, is Vice President of the Student Honors Advisory Council, a member of Sigma Tau Delta



Lauren Nastari receives her award from President Preston.

and Kappa Delta Pi honor societies, an Orientation Leader, and a member of the Positive Inclusion of Everyone Creates Academic Success (PIECES) Club. Lauren also volunteers at the Westfield Soup Kitchen, serves as a peer mentor for Westfield State's Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Partnership Program, and is a Secondary Education Representative for the Student National Education Association (SNEA). Lauren says, "my experience of leading will translate well when I am teaching in my own classroom. These skills will help me to help my students."

Palis, a senior Criminal Justice and Psychology dual major, is Class Officer and Historian for the 2016 Council and a member of the Student Conduct Board. She also serves as



Sara Palis receives her award from President Preston.

a University Ambassador and an Orientation Leader. Sara joined the Student Government Association (SGA) during her first year at Westfield State. She was nervous in her role which required public speaking, but nevertheless she became a member of the Rules and Regulations Committee and later Parliamentarian. Sara says, "speaking at the podium is now second nature." Sara volunteers at the Westfield Samaritan Inn and has been a peer mentor at a local elementary school as well as with the ICE Program. Sara explains, "because of SGA I've learned to develop leadership skills, to get business done, to make tough decisions, not with an iron fist but rather through a cooperative collaboration with clubs."

## AWARD-WINNING HONORS STUDENTS

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL - DICKENS SCHOLARSHIP FOR LITERATURE AWARD WINNING ESSAY

DANIEL DOBEK

First-year Honors student Daniel Dobek won the 3rd annual Dickens Scholarship, a \$750 award that includes an annotated edition of *A Christmas Carol*, signed by Gerald Charles Dickens, the great-grandson of Charles Dickens, author of the classic tale. Dan was presented with the award at a December ceremony in the English Department at Westfield State.

Scholarship applicants were asked to write an essay reflecting on how themes in *A Christmas Carol* are relevant to their lives, particularly with regard to their own challenges or experiences. Below is Dan's award winning essay.

"Of the various underlying themes found in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, family is one of the most relevant to my own life. Dickens presents family as a crucial role in human development and elevates its power far beyond physical objects that provide false understanding of value. As the recollection of Ebenezer Scrooge's life unfolds, the reader becomes aware of his rough family history. Scrooge recalls the pain of seeing his fellow school-mates happily going home for Christmas, while he had nowhere to go. Experiencing rejection from his own father induced a downward spiral of loneliness



Celebrating with Dan Dobek are (l to r) Lisa McMahon, Assistant Director of the Westfield State Foundation; English professor Dr. Elizabeth Starr; Bob Plasse, Foundation Advancement Officer and Chair of Westfield Dickens Days, dressed as the Ghost of Christmas Present from *A Christmas Carol*; scholarship recipient Dan Dobek; Michael Knapik, Foundation Executive Director and Professor Emily Todd, Chair of the English Department.

and longing. Once an optimistic child, the isolation and neglect associated with a poor upbringing took precedence. Scrooge became a wretched soul that sought satisfaction and worth in money above all else.

Unlike Scrooge, I can personally say that I am blessed to have grown up in a household with two loving parents. While I cannot empathize with Scrooge's broken childhood, I can relate to the Cratchit family presented in the novel. The Cratchits are a working-class family that have very little as far as physical possessions, but cherish family and are therefore satisfied. Their contentedness remained steady even

through the adversity of a sick child. The Cratchits found solace in the presence of loved ones - proving the power of strong family bonds. I can personally attest to the value of a family-oriented upbringing. My parents worked extremely hard to make financial ends meet as I was growing up. I have memories of late snowy nights waiting for my dad, as he was out plowing snow. He had taken on the extra work in addition to his full-time job to help provide for the family. Growing up, we did not have the latest technology or brand name items, but my brothers and I were able to realize the greater importance of family. My parents' dedication and

sacrifice for our family taught us to value relationships before possessions. The Cratchits and my family alike contrast Scrooge and who he has become as a result of his upbringing.

The underlying theme of family's role in upbringing is quite relevant to me personally; however, the overall theme of the novel remains timeless and relevant to all. Dickens uses the role of family to portray how one's upbringing will deal a particular set of cards. The moral of *A Christmas Carol* is that one does not need to simply accept the cards that have been dealt as a fate securely sealed. Upon the recollection and revelation provided that Christmas Eve night, Scrooge realized that he held his future in his hands. If he chose to remain bitter, he would continue to live an empty life and die unhappy. The beauty of this novel is the hope it can spark in all readers. One is not defined by their past. At any moment, even the curse of a poor upbringing can be overcome by simply choosing love over hate, right over wrong, and good over evil."

*Daniel is a first-year Biology major from Agawam, MA.*

The Dicken's Scholarship is administered by the English Department each fall. For information about scholarships available to Westfield State University students, visit the following Westfield State University websites:  
[www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/scholarship-applications](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/scholarship-applications)  
[www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/outside-scholarship-information](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/outside-scholarship-information)

## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

### GENDER AND THE ENVIRONMENT - MUCH MORE THAN MOTHER NATURE

KELLY STEELE AND MICHELLE COOMBS



Professor Morin and students in her Gender and the Environment course engage in a class discussion on the green.

An “upper-level Honors seminar” can sound like a daunting prospect for a young Honors student, but don’t let the name scare you. Upper-level seminars are built around a unique interdisciplinary topic that students may not have the opportunity to study otherwise. The small class size allows each student to participate in a meaningful way through class-wide discussion and individual research.

In Dr. Erica Morin’s Gender and the Environment course, we explored masculine and feminine relationships with the natural environment over the course of U.S. History. We covered many topics including

Native American women, early female mountain climbers, Progressive Era “municipal housekeepers,” and activist women fighting against pollution and contamination in their communities in recent years.

While studying these topics, we read selected articles and chapters from various environmental history journals and books. We compared how gender and historical context influenced the reception of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and Edward Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire*. We had a movie night and watched *Erin Brockovich* which portrays women in the anti-toxic waste movement. We even had a class all about

women and nature in Disney movies! For the final project we were tasked with analyzing the representation of gender and the environment in a relevant primary source of our own choosing, such as movies, TV shows, novels, posters, or advertisements, to name a few.

Another way we were exposed to this content was through our field trip to the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston in October. We attended a scholarly discussion about the political influence of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, how the book’s reception has changed over time, and its revolutionary role in environ-

mental literature and politics. We were able to see first-hand how the topics we had been studying were engaged in a professional setting. This was a highly beneficial learning experience - and the post-discussion pizza and ice cream were a tasty end to a great night!

Like all Honors classes, Gender and the Environment attracted a range of students from different majors and backgrounds. Our class was made up of students majoring in history, mathematics, social work, business, environmental science, and multiple fields of education. Dr. Morin’s style

*(Gender and the Environment, continued on page 7)*

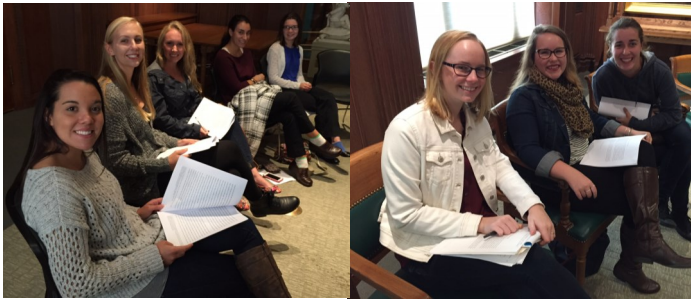


Students present their project on gender and the environment in Disney films.



Students enjoy their pizza in University Hall while viewing the film *Erin Brockovich*, which documents women’s activism in the anti-toxic waste movement.

## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR



Students review materials on *How Rachel Carson Became a Revolutionary: Environmental Politics and the Public Sphere* which were presented at the Massachusetts Historical Society's Environmental History seminar they attended in October.

*(Gender and the Environment, continued from page 6)*

of teaching and variety of classroom activities created a welcoming atmosphere in which all students could learn and thrive. The open class discussion promoted a feeling of community, which was helpful in encouraging students to contribute valuable knowledge in class.

Through our discussions, we established that women have encountered countless obsta-

cles in the fight to have their perspectives about environmental issues heard, especially when they challenge the accepted view of human's relationship with the environment. Coincidentally, our class was composed of all female students, which created a safe space for us to discuss a number of gender-based concerns that affect our lives including and beyond environmental types. By listening to and engaging with other classmates, we felt connected in a

deeper way - much more than just being a number in a large lecture class. Our class could not have felt more like a community when we held one of our discussions outside on the green - right in the middle of our campus community.

There, we enjoyed the beautiful weather and discussed the very environment we were learning about, as well as spotting a passing bald eagle overhead!

Taking an upper-level Honors seminar is an incredible opportunity to learn about a subject you might not get the

chance to take in your major field. While they serve as a Honors Program graduation requirement, they also offer valuable insight and a refreshing set of new perspectives. We gained many important skills from this class, one of the most important being how to become more active and inquisitive thinkers in our complex world.

*Kelly is a senior History major from Weymouth, MA. Michelle is a senior Environmental Science and Regional Planning dual major from Waltham, MA.*



Professor Morin (center) and several of her students visit the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston.

## AWARD-WINNING HONORS STUDENTS

### 2015 PHI KAPPA PHI FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT - JENNIFER HOLLEY



Jennifer Holley at Westfield State's 2015 Commencement ceremony.

Jennifer Holley, Westfield State University's chapter nominee, was selected to receive a \$5000 fellowship from the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. Jennifer was one of 57 students, from an applicant pool of 161, selected to receive graduate fellowships this year.

Jennifer graduated in May 2015 as a Commonwealth Honors Scholar with a 4.0 GPA and was a valedictorian. She majored in Movement Science with a concentration in Sports Medicine and a mi-

nor in Spanish. Jennifer is enrolled in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of Connecticut.

This is the fifth year in a row that a Westfield State University graduate (and Commonwealth Honors Scholar) has won one of these prestigious awards. Previous winners are Michael Brill in 2014, Rob Donoghue in 2013, Mary Cafferty in 2012, and Erin Judge in 2011.

The selection process is based on the applicants' evidence of graduate potential, undergrad-

uate academic achievement, service and leadership experience, letters of recommendation, personal statement of educational perspective and career goals, written sample, and acceptance at an approved graduate program.

*Information provided by Ricki E. Kantrowitz, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology and Fellowship Coordinator, Westfield State chapter, Phi Kappa Phi.*

## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

### MAYOR'S SYMPOSIUM - HONORS STUDENTS ENGAGE DOWNTOWN WESTFIELD

VANESSA DIANA, PH.D.



John Bonavita, owner of the Tavern Restaurant on Broad Street, treats the class to lunch.

Former Westfield Mayor Daniel Knapik challenged 15 students in Professor Vanessa Diana's Mayor's Symposium Honors seminar to imagine a future Westfield that would draw Westfield State students to be involved in downtown life and would appeal to them as a place to stay after graduation. The class spent the semester learning more about the City of Westfield--its history, present business climate and improvement projects, and its future potential--directly from city officials and community members. Class activities included a walking tour, a meeting at City Hall with the Mayor, Director of Community Development, and City Advancement Officer; visits to Westfield on Weekends, the farmer's market, and The Press Room coffee shop for a talk with *Westfield News* owner Patrick Berry; and a tour of affordable housing at Prospect Hill Apartments. Student Brian Aurelio saw "the opportunity to meet and hear from many people who make a big difference in the Westfield community" as a



Westfield State University History Professor Emeritus Robert Brown offers students a photographic history tour of Elm Street.

benefit of these trips. Andy Rosario argued, "this class has opened so many doors for Westfield State students downtown," and Emma Rodriguez explained, "I have become very comfortable with my Westfield community by going downtown and meeting people." Becky Glennie similarly reflected, "this course got me out of my comfort zone and into my community, which aided me in feeling like a part of Westfield."

Based on a history of Elm Street presented by Professor Emeritus of History Dr. Bob Brown and guided research in the Westfield Athenaeum and Westfield State University archives, students wrote Westfield history briefs on

subjects ranging from illustrious Westfield figures such as Philip Payton Jr., "The Father of Harlem," and Louis Allen, founder of the "Pure Food Movement" and victim of Westfield's only unsolved murder, to disasters such as the flood of 1955 and the 1952 Professional Building fire.

Each student then inter-

my four years attending Westfield State I was able to visit some of the establishments on Elm Street. I never felt like there was anything downtown, but I was able to discover that there were some interesting and thriving businesses in Westfield worth patronizing." One such business was the Tavern Restaurant, where David Clark interviewed owner John Bonavita. As a result, Mr. Bonavita invited the entire class to the Tavern for lunch on him, which, as Mitchell Benedetti commented, "made me feel like we were appreciated by members in our community for the hard work we have been doing." Of course, going out to lunch as a class is



On the steps of Church of the Atonement, home to the weekly farmer's market on Court Street, students set off for a walking tour of downtown.

viewed a local business owner and wrote a promotional profile to encourage fellow students to visit local restaurants, shops, and organizations; these will be published on the Westfield State website to improve students' awareness of downtown attractions. Miguel Maria found this assignment eye-opening: "For the first time in

also fun. As Tyler Hastings mentioned, downtown outings could "brighten" a busy school week.

The class then collaborated on a vision project in response to the Mayor's charge. Paul Falcone explained, "I was

*(Mayor's Symposium, continued on page 9)*



## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

*(Mayor's Symposium, continued from page 8)*

forced to dream big, and to do so I was forced to use my imagination.”

They ultimately proposed a Westfield State downtown building that could house a bookstore, café, classroom space, entertainment, and various other possible attractions



The Westfield News Group owner Patrick Berry hosts class over coffee and pastries at the Press Room on School Street.



On a walking tour of downtown Westfield, students visit Half Mile Falls Park between the Great River Bridges on Elm Street.

that would appeal to students and the larger community. The presentation had many components. As Tina Lankarge explained, “even though the final presentation was a group effort, we all got to focus on topics that were important to us, which allowed me to recommend bike lanes for Western Avenue.” In addition, students laid out a short-term action plan that focused on marketing, collaboration, and communication strategies to improve the town-gown relationship and Westfield’s image as a college town.

On December 8, 2015, the class presented their recommendations to a large audience of city and university leaders including Westfield Mayor-elect Brian Sullivan, Westfield State University President Elizabeth Preston, and members of the City Council,

Westfield State University Board of Trustees, and Westfield State University Foundation. Elizabeth Cebula observed that “members of the Westfield community were attentive during our presentation, and I felt like they cared. It felt rewarding!” Marissa

Cremin agreed: “it was nice to see that our ideas are being heard, and we really do have the power to change our community.” Indeed, beginning in Spring 2016, a number of the students’ recommendations will be enacted, including the formation of a joint committee



Bob Plasse, Westfield State Advancement and University Relations and President of Westfield on Weekends (W.O.W.), James Homan, and Frankie the dog host class at the W.O.W. headquarters at 105 Elm Street.



Outside City Hall after their presentation, students and Professor Diana pose for a photo with City and University leaders including Mayor-elect Brian Sullivan, Westfield State President Elizabeth Preston, and Westfield State Board of Trustees member and Westfield Bank President, James Hagan.

on town-gown initiatives made up of city and university representatives. The students also contributed to two of the local organizations they learned about, spending a Portz Grant awarded by the National Collegiate Honors Council on charitable donations to Westfield on Weekends and Westfield Museum Inc. As José Reyes commented, “It was satisfying to be viewed as student leaders and contributors to the initiation of a town-gown joint committee.” Connor Jackson similarly noted, “not many classes truly give you the power to make a difference. This one did.” That power to make a difference

was a take-away important to Chelsea Cox, who concluded, “this class informed us about the importance of our role in the community we live in and go to school in. Most of all we were encouraged to speak up and change something we did not like within our community. We are the future movers and shakers.”

*Vanessa Diana, Ph.D., is Assistant Director of the Honors Program and Professor of English.*

## HONORS STUDENTS GO GLOBAL

### STUDYING IN COSTA RICA - "PURA VIDA"

SUSAN POUTRE



Susan Poutre stands at the base of Volcan Masaya in Granada, Nicaragua, which she and companions summited.

I have always dreamed of studying abroad during my college career, so I was determined to do whatever I needed to do to make this dream a reality. During my junior year at Westfield, I decided that I would spend the first semester of my senior year in Costa Rica. I spent countless hours researching study abroad pro-

grams, comparing prices and reading student reviews. I decided on CIS Abroad, based out of Northampton, MA. I couldn't be any happier with my decision.

When I began to tell people about my decision to study abroad, I was most often asked, "Why Costa Rica?" This question made sense. After all, I didn't know ANY Spanish. I chose Costa Rica because it is a country with a lot of culture and natural beauty. Costa Rica is famous for its unofficial motto, "Pura Vida," which perfectly conveys the simplicity and tranquility with which Ticos (the colloquial term for natives of Costa Rica) regard life.

I accomplished so much in the three short months that I have been here. I can't imagine having had so many adventures

anywhere else in the world! I watched the sun rise over the Caribbean Sea and set over the Pacific Ocean; I ziplined through the rainforest, jumped off of waterfalls, gazed into the depths of a volcano, cheered on the Costa Rica national fútbol team among thousands of other Ticos, watched a sea turtle lay her eggs under the moonlight, danced in the streets of San Jose for their



Susan Poutre and friends cheer on the Costa Rica national fútbol team.

Independence Day celebrations, swam under the stars, and ate more rice and beans than I could have imagined possible in one lifetime. I have loved every moment of my experience here.

My advice: take advantage of studying abroad while you can! Money is most often the biggest deterrent, but if you do your research and plan ahead, the overall experience can be more affordable than you imagine. Be open-minded. Don't be afraid to make some sacrifices. And leave your comfort zone. Nothing is more rewarding than accomplishing something you didn't think was possible. Every step that I took to get here was absolutely worth it!

Susan is a senior Biology major from Oxford, MA.

## HONORS STUDENTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### AN INTERNSHIP AT FRANKLIN PARK ZOO

KATIE HEBERT

In May 2015, I began a new adventure, an internship that encompassed my two passions - biology and education. Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, offered me an opportunity that I could not pass up, an opportunity that made me surer of my future goals. As an education department intern, I taught classes, interpreted exhibits, and gave backstage tours to the camp groups. This internship was a perfect fit for me; I have always wanted to



Katie Hebert educates students about animals at Franklin Park Zoo.

work at a zoo and I plan to be a biology teacher. The internship allowed me to broaden my horizons; I was able to work at a wonderful non-profit establishment while furthering my skills in communication and education.

My main and most favorite job at the zoo was to interpret exhibits. My fellow interns and I picked whichever animal exhibit we wanted and spoke to guests about that animal. We brought along biofacts,

which included skulls, feathers, or some other education tool related to that species. We each had our favorite animals. Mine included the giant anteater named Jockamo, the thirteen-foot green anaconda named Tom Riddle, the Masai giraffes Bou and Jana, and the spotted hyenas named Kai and Thika. For the anteater, leopard, and hyena exhibits, I

*(An Education Internship, continued on page 11)*

## AN HONORS CONTRACT PROJECT

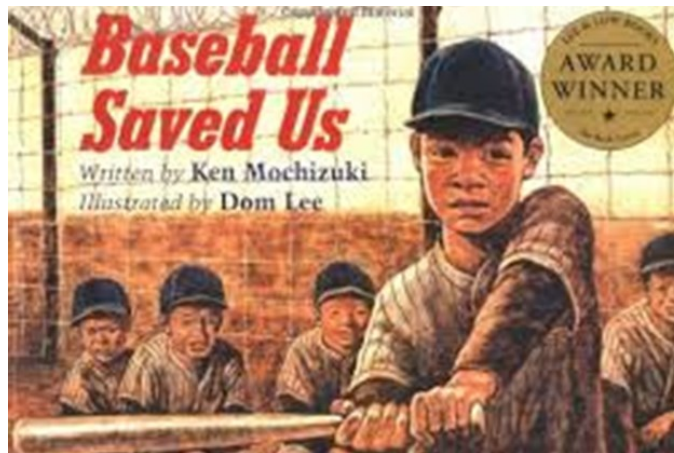
### MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

SAMANTHA LEE

I am constantly inspired by my education classes, which challenge me to ask “how will this REALLY apply in MY classroom?” Through completing an Honors Contract project this semester, I was given a chance to answer this question, looking specifically at multicultural children’s literature.

As a student in Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners, a reading-focused apprenticeship course, I was introduced to my first experience teaching English language learners. Teaching two students at Highland Elementary School in Westfield has challenged me to make content accessible and relatable to students learning a new language. I was determined to discover and apply teaching methods that would help my students reach this goal.

In a search for those methods, I explored the benefits of multicultural literature for



*Baseball Saved Us*, by Ken Mochizuki and illustrated by Dom Lee, served as a strong example of multicultural children’s literature which I analyzed in my paper. Young readers used prior knowledge to make personal connections to universal themes found in the story, such as determination and community.

elementary students. Children’s literature fascinates me, and many of my other education courses at Westfield taught me text analysis and application in lesson plans. In no class, however, was I able to approach children’s literature specifically as a tool for students. This was truly a learning experience. I began the project by creating the

topic and theme in question, collaborating with my professor, Sheila Conroy, using her knowledge and experience with English language learners to guide my work.

My research uncovered the benefits of multicultural children’s literature, which provides students with vast perspectives, addressing both universal themes and culturally-

specific values. Access to texts by various authors and from various perspectives opens students to make connections. This accessibility gives every student the opportunity to relate to and learn from literature. English language learners especially benefit from these connections, which help them activate and use their prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of the English language.

This project fine-tuned my research and writing skills; I completed my most inclusive research project to date. And it impacted my teaching. I answered the question, “how will this REALLY apply in MY classroom?” I now have resources and knowledge to use multicultural literature effectively as a tool for both my current and future students.

*Samantha is a junior Elementary Education and Liberal Studies dual major from Hopkinton, MA.*

*(An Education Internship, continued from page 10)*

brought along our skull replicas. The impressive teeth on the leopard and hyena skulls amazed kids and adults alike, and the oddly shaped skull of the anteater really intrigued the guests at the zoo. One day when I was at the hyena exhibit, a class of third graders came by who loved learning about the hyenas; later that day the teacher posted the photo of me and students from her class

(shown on page 10) on Twitter and thanked me for teaching her students. It was a wonderful moment for me to be recognized by the teacher. I was so happy knowing that I helped her class have a great educational experience at the zoo.

Another part of my job was to teach thirty minute classes to the kids attending Zoo Camp. These classes consisted of around seventy kids aged 4 to 12. We taught them about general topics in biology, like

habitats, adaptations, and predator-prey relationships. We put our animal handling training to use with these classes; we brought animals like leopard geckos, ferrets, and even our boa constrictor to have the kids look at and touch. This was a very exciting part of the job because the camp kids loved being able to interact with the animals and learn about them, and I loved being able to help them do that. We also guided the camp kids through backstage tours,

where we fed some of the animals including the kiwis, bongos, and giraffes alongside the zookeepers.

My internship at the Franklin Park Zoo was a memorable one and I will carry the skills I learned there with me in my future endeavors. I am grateful that I was able to work at Franklin Park Zoo, truly a dream come true. I can’t wait for my next adventure!

*Katie is a junior Biology major from Leominster, MA.*

## IN AND OUT OF THE HONORS CENTER

### STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

SIERRA BIAS



Jack-o-lantern artists proudly show off their creations as the smell of pumpkin guts fills the air.

The Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) has been working hard and having fun planning and putting on events for our fellow Honors students. From meetings aimed to help students prepare for the future to get-togethers that provided some well-deserved relaxation time, SHAC is excited to present what we accomplished this semester.



Honors students win big at the Big E game booths.

Among the many fun events, our first big adventure of the semester was a trip to the Big E, the Eastern States Exposition, in West Springfield. Rebecca Andersen, who had not had the pleasure of experiencing this fried-food extravaganza before, wanted to let us know that kangaroo is “actually a delicious burger.” The following week, some members of SHAC volunteered at an Honors Program’s favorite 5K, Run Stanley. Jenny Mitchell, a

senior who volunteered the two previous years as well, reported that it was a great experience and that she was glad she did not have to be in the donut costume this time. On a spookier note, we held a pumpkin carving party, complete with pizza and a Halloween movie. First-year student Christine Luongo said it was really fun getting to hang out with a bunch of other Honors students and carve pumpkins.

We are continuing our series of graduate school information sessions, generously hosted by Dr. Brewster. Our most recent session addressed the best ways to approach the GREs. It was an informative and valuable meeting with a slight hint of humor, which I found to be oddly reassuring. Additionally, we are planning future sessions regarding more parts of

the graduate school process. These will be held during the spring semester. The graduate school prep events are open to all Westfield State students, so go ahead and spread the word around campus to anyone who is looking for some extra graduate school guidance.

Future plans include abstract writing workshops, two conferences, a possible Relay for Life team, and a butterfly museum visit. We meet every other week in the Honors Center. If you have fun ideas, are curious about the club, or just want free pizza, feel free to stop by!

*Sierra is a senior Psychology and Spanish dual major from Methuen, MA.*



Pumpkins and gourds transformed into spooky works of art.

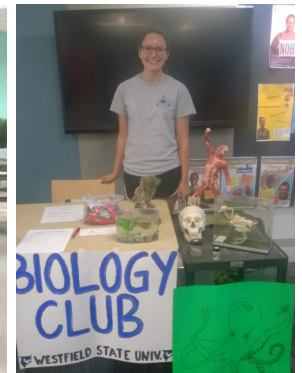
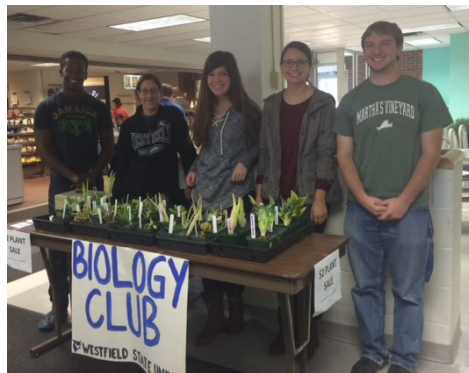


Honors students enjoy a fun-filled night at the Big E with Professor Brewster and Professor Diana.

# IN AND OUT OF THE HONORS CENTER



Come join us for food and fun!  
From summer orientation sessions for new students to our end-of-the-semester Chinese dinner, opportunities to eat and build community abound in the Honors Center.  
Below, Honors students recruit new members during Westfield State Club Fair in September.



## OUT AND ABOUT



As part of Professor David Shapleigh's Honors Civic Engagement Design Fundamentals course, students and Professor Shapleigh visited the Westfield Athenaeum archive department to view its holding of objects about baseball in Westfield. Pictured above are images of baseball gloves from the 19th century and of baseball teams from Westfield's past. Additionally, the students traveled to the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH, where they received a guided tour of *The Epic of American Civilization* mural. This extensive mural cycle, painted by Mexican artist José Clemente Orozco between 1932 and 1934, is composed of twenty-four distinct panels depicting the history of the Americas from the Aztec migration into Mexico to the industrialization of modern society. One of Orozco's finest creations and one of Dartmouth's most treasured works, it was designated a national historic landmark in 2013. These scenes cover nearly 3,200 square feet of wall space. Photos of several of the panels taken by Professor Shapleigh during the tour are shown below.



Honors Program Director Glen Brewster and Assistant Director Vanessa Diana traveled to Chicago in November 2015 for the 50th annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council, where they met with fellow Honors Program administrators and students from across the United States and beyond. Their presentation on creating a Senior Honors Project handbook was popular among those aiming to create a similar handbook at their institutions.

## CONGRATULATIONS, COMMONWEALTH HONORS SCHOLARS

### FALL 2015 SENIOR HONORS PROJECT PRESENTATIONS



**David Clark**



**Emily Ellis**



**Abigail Madden**



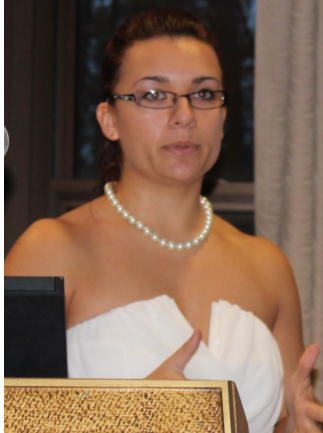
**Lauren Nastari**



**Chelsea Orifice**



**Amber Robert**



**Madison Schiltz**



**Nicholas Taliceo**

The designation of Commonwealth Honors Scholars is awarded to students who complete a minimum of four Honors courses (at least one upper-level Honors seminar) with a B or higher, maintain an overall GPA of 3.30 or higher, and complete a six-credit, individually designed Senior Honors Project (SHP). Listed below are recipients, their major(s), their SHP titles, and their Project Advisors.

**David Clark:** Biology, *Diversity of Methylation Patterns in Normal and Abnormal Tissue: A Two-Pronged Approach to Develop a Baseline Approach for Cancer*

*Screening*, Dr. Robin White and Dr. Diane Genereux.

**Emily Ellis:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies, *The Intersection of Life and Children's Literature: A Look at Generalized Anxiety Disorder in the Elementary Classroom*, Dr. Stephanie Grimaldi.

**Abigail Madden:** Early Childhood Education and Liberal Studies. *An Exploration of Universal Themes in Children's Literature*, Dr. Kathleen Itterly.

**Lauren Nastari:** English, *Collapsing Binaries: The Portrayal of Characters with Autism in*

*Young Adult Literature*, Dr. Jennifer DiGrazia.

**Chelsea Orifice:** English, *Growth Mindset and Writing Centers*, Dr. Catherine Savini.

**Amber Robert:** English, *Adolescence, Young Adult Literature, and the English Language Arts Classroom*, Dr. Sophia Sariganides.

**Madison Schiltz:** Movement Science, *Post-Activation Potentiation*, Dr. Melissa Roti.

**Nicholas Taliceo:** Mathematics, *A New Landscape Metric*, Dr. Julian Fleron.

INTERESTED IN  
LEARNING MORE ABOUT  
SENIOR HONORS PROJECTS?  
CONTACT  
DR. GLEN BREWSTER,  
HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
OR  
DR. VANESSA DIANA,  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,  
OR  
STOP BY  
THE HONORS CENTER  
MOD HALL 103  
FOR  
MORE INFORMATION.

## HONORS PROGRAM INFORMATION AND EVENTS

### STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) acts as a liaison between Honors students and administration. SHAC allows Honors students to be heard in an open and constructive way. In addition to addressing student concerns, the council plans fun events throughout the year. Have ideas for programming or just want to find out more about SHAC? Contact: Sierra Bias at sbias8256@westfield.ma.edu or Connor Jackson at cjackson4857@westfield.ma.edu.

### SPRING 2016 SHAC OFFICERS

**Co-Presidents: Sierra Bias and Connor Jackson**  
**Vice-President: Lauren Nastari**  
**Secretary: Randi Lemenager**  
**Treasurer: Helena Rheault**  
**Publicist: Mikayla Fucillo**  
**Historian: Isabelle Harker**  
**Commuter Rep: Jenny Mitchell**  
**1st-year Rep: Lauren Stornelli**

## REPRESENTING WESTFIELD STATE AT THE COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING

LAUREN STORNELLI

As incoming first-year students, we were encouraged to get involved on campus, so three of us first-years, Christine Luongo, Amanda D'Aprix, and I, embraced the opportunity to join Student Honors Advisory Council co-president Connor Jackson and Professors Glen Brewster and Vanessa Diana as Westfield State University representatives at the October meeting of the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) at Fitchburg State. The Student Council of

the CHP meets during this gathering each semester while Honors Program administrators conduct their business. We four Westfield State representatives worked with students from other state universities and colleges to determine how to use the funds provided by the Commonwealth Honors Program to promote Honors education and cross-campus student networking. At our meeting, we decided that our funds should go towards student travel to

the spring Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC) Conference to be held in Cambridge, MA. This proposal would allow students who are presenting at the NRHC Conference a wonderful experience at an affordable price. With the small remainder of the budget, we proposed a lock-in at Fitchburg State during the spring semester. These events will enable students from Massachusetts public colleges and universities to bond and learn about the activ-

ities and practices at other Honors Programs across the state. Because we took this opportunity to get involved, we were able to contribute to important decisions about the use of Commonwealth Honors Program funding that will support our fellow students from across Massachusetts.

*Lauren is a first-year Psychology major from Raynham, MA.*



Westfield State Honors students (l to r) Connor Jackson, Christine Luongo, Lauren Stornelli, and Amanda D'Aprix. As Westfield state representatives at the Student Council of the Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP), they presented proposals to Honors administrators at the Fall 2015 CHP meeting at Fitchburg State.

### CAMBRIDGE - BOUND!

CONGRATULATIONS TO HONORS STUDENTS PRESENTING THEIR WORK AT THE ANNUAL NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS CONFERENCE IN APRIL 2016!

David Clark  
 Connor Jackson  
 Lauren Nastari  
 Andy Rosario  
 Dominique Wells

Michelle Coombs  
 Samantha Lee  
 Chelsea Orifice  
 Zachary Spicer

Marissa Cremin  
 Randi Lemenager  
 Jose Reyes  
 Kelly Steele

Mikayla Fucillo  
 Christine Luongo  
 Emma Rodriguez  
 Lauren Stornelli