

March 2010 MCC VISTA Feature

Katie Etheridge

Wayne State University



Implementing a Student Advisory Board for CommunityEngagement@Wayne

Katie Etheridge recently graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Master's degree in Public Administration as well as a Master's degree in Social Work. Originally from Hamilton, Michigan, Katie's passions for service, leadership, systems change, and social justice came forth while interning with Spectrum Health, Heart of West Michigan United Way, and Disability Advocates of Kent County. During Katie's undergraduate and graduate career, she volunteered with a variety of local nonprofits performing indirect and direct service. Katie also served as an MCC Service Learning Scholar and was involved with Grand Valley State's Campus Ministries Student Leadership teams. She is serving Wayne State University as their MCC AmeriCorps* VISTA.

Katie was involved in the strategic planning of the inaugural student Advisory Board structure, and helped to define the purpose and placement the advisory board holds within the CommunityEngagement@Wayne office. CommunityEngagement@Wayne Advisory Board assists in connecting students, faculty and community partners together through service learning and civic engagement opportunities. Katie recruited 12 students for the board and created job descriptions for each board member for the purpose of encouraging students and faculty at Wayne State to demonstrate leadership through active service in the Detroit community. The Advisory Board serves to strengthen the capacity of CommunityEngagement@Wayne while enhancing the impact of service learning pedagogy. The Advisory Board has completed a successful fundraiser, and is currently overseeing a grant proposal process for a service learning project, as well as exercising their creativity through the Dell Social Innovation project, competing for an award to carry out a service opportunity as a board.

A Note from her Supervisor, Elizabeth Barton: "We have been so fortunate to have Katie with us this year. The undergraduate students serving on the board are learning invaluable skills and are being exposed to incredible leadership opportunities. The Student Advisory Board is only one example of how Katie's fine work will have a long standing, sustainable impact on our service-learning initiatives. She has set the bar high for all future VISTAs at WSU."

Evan Finley

University of Michigan-Dearborn



Haiti Relief Fundraiser Lunch

Evan Finley is from Farmington Hills, Michigan and graduated from Alma College with a degree in Political Science. Evan served two years as President of Alma College's Student Government, was a fellow of the Center for Responsible Leadership, and a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity. He led multiple service projects during his time at Alma. Evan is currently serving The University of Michigan-Dearborn as the Michigan Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA working in the Student Activities Office. He works on major campus initiatives around community service and civic engagement.

After the devastating earthquake in Haiti, multiple students and student organizations expressed a desire for the UM-Dearborn campus to join in the relief effort. Knowing a combined university effort would be more substantial than multiple individual efforts, Evan was given the task of leading the university's response to the crisis. He brought together nearly 18 student leaders, representing multiple student organizations, to brainstorm ideas and come up with a unified approach to the Haiti relief effort. With Evan's guidance, the students decided to organize a fundraiser lunch to take place the following week. With the assistance of many campus partners, the students, and Evan, the university was able to raise nearly \$1,600 for the American Red Cross. The fundraiser luncheon drew a great deal of media attention, including local TV stations and newspapers reporting on the efforts of the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

A Note from his Supervisor, Jonathan Larson: "As a supervisor, I am very proud of MCC AmeriCorps VISTA Evan Finley for his hard work and dedication to our Haiti Relief Luncheon. Evan saw a need in our global community and was able to capture and mobilize the student's energy and passion towards making a difference in the Haiti Earthquake Disaster. His long hours, countless meetings, and endless emails were well rewarded with a successful and motivating student driven philanthropic effort."

Lizz Kelly

Grand Rapids Community College



Pass it Forward- MLK Day

Lizz Kelly is from Dayton, Ohio and graduated from Ferris State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business, majoring in Public Relations with a minor in Multi-Media Journalism. She also holds an Associate of Arts in Communications from Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. Lizz was very active in multiple student organizations in college. She continues her involvement with the international business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi, serving as a district director for chapters at Grand Valley State University and Ferris State University. Lizz is currently serving Grand Rapids Community College as an MCC AmeriCorps*VISTA in Academic Service Learning Center. She coordinates major campus service events, supervises Michigan Service Scholars and Community Service Work Study Students, and helps students connect with their community.

Students, faculty, staff, friends and family joined the Academic Service Learning Center for an ePifanyNow event Saturday January 23. Groups of 8-10 students served the Grand Rapids Center-City area by performing random acts of kindness with a mission to create a chain of positive actions in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After completing

their service students returned to GRCC for a facilitated reflection designed to help students reflect on how their service affected them personally and how it was connected to their course curriculum. A student that participated in the event shared, "One person in our group gave the coat off his back to one of these gentleman which I thought was awesome. The whole experience was unbelievable. We had an opportunity to step out of our comfort zones and we took advantage of it. The group expressed their feelings, and as we returned to the school, everyone was in a much better mood than when they arrived earlier that day. We had an awesome time." WOOD TV8 covered the event on Saturday's 6pm news, and you can hear the story that aired on TV8 here. Lizz coordinated this successful event with the help of the ASLC, Student Scholars, and Tiffany Falcon-Ewingleben, a work-study student in the ASLC. Lizz organized registration and the schedule for the day, created maps of the area for students, recruited team leaders for each group, organized a speaker to introduce the project, designed a PowerPoint with MLK quotes to inspire the day, and created certificates to recognize participants.

A Note from her Supervisor, Michael Schavey: "This was another successful event this year. As with all our events this year, this MLK Day of Service included a tremendous amount of critical thinking, multitasking, planning, and communication all while balancing quantity and quality. This event would not have been so successful without the leadership of Lizz Kelly – we are so very proud of her and to have her at Grand Rapids Community College!