

The Center for Community Engagement & Leadership Development Monthly

# Newsletter

August & September 2024

2024  
FIRST  
EDITION

2025-26 WSS  
Application is  
NOW OPEN

Welcome  
Class of  
2028

*Mathew H.*

"My favorite memory is  
when I made all the new  
friendships at the WSS  
Orientation trip in  
Helvetia, WV."

10 STUDENT  
WRITTEN  
STORIES INSIDE





# Class of 2028



# WSS ORIENTATION

**By: Trey Greer | Criminal Justice & Political Science | Class of 2028**

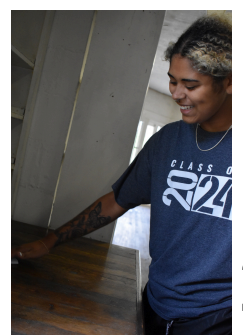
BUCKHANNON W.Va. (CCE) - Every freshman Service Scholar at West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC) kicks off their college experience just the same; a three day trip to Helvetia, West Virginia. 23 Service Scholars embarked on this short adventure this year, leading to nothing short of career-long connections throughout the group.

Service Scholars have become an integral part of the community of Buckhannon and in some cases, even beyond. The foundations for the skills needed to assist our various service sites are laid into place within the various single-day job sites at Helvetia. These jobs include landscaping and maintenance of gardens as well as a greenhouse, assisting locals in polishing up their local businesses, and even projects that help improve the local elementary school.

This year's collection of Service Scholars was beyond enthused to be able to create such a simple, yet powerful impact before their academic year at WVWC had even begun. For many, it acted as a sneak peak to the future impacts they would inflict later in the year. One of our new Service Scholars, Grant Bare,

expressed that he "met people who will be his friends for the rest of college" and stated he "will always fondly remember the trip when looking back on his college experience."

The trend of Service Scholars entering Helvetia as strangers and leaving as family continued this year and this statement is a testament to that. The Helvetia trip was once again managed by Jessica Vincent, Julia Manley, and a team of veteran Service Scholars. Together they work to create a fun and friendly environment, induce inspiration amongst the new scholars, and cook incredible food. The Service Scholars involved in this year's trip are now scattered throughout Buckhannon making the city better, one site at a time.







# WE LEAD ORIENTATION

**By: Katie Morgan | Psychology | Class of 2025**

**BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (WE LEAD) - WE LEAD Fall 2024 Orientation: A Time for Building Trust and Planning for the Future**

The Fall 2024 WE LEAD Orientation occurred on August 23rd - 24th, 2024. It was held at the WVU Outdoor Adventure course in Kingwood, West Virginia. After their evening arrival, the students gathered as a group to do a workshop on conflict resolution and media biases. This activity was a necessary reminder to be critical of themselves, their biases, and where they get information. Next, they gathered around a campfire for some more casual team bonding. This time together was crucial for building trust, because it gave them a space to be casual, letting them have authentic conversations with other WE LEADers.

The next morning began with several outdoor activities organized by staff from the Adventure Course. These games consisted of races, games of tag, and eventually, challenges on the low ropes course. All of these activities necessitated them to rely on one another, trusting their teammates to finish strong. By the end of these games and challenges, they had all been given the experience of helping and being helped by others. That afternoon, during the final part of

orientation, they gathered in individual WE LEAD teams to plan for their upcoming semester. This was a very productive part of orientation, with the groundwork for several events being laid. However, what really made this semester's planning so effective were the activities of the previous two days.

Having so many opportunities to bond and build trust in their teammates helped to lay a strong foundation for team relationships to come. Ashlyn Smith, the new member of WE LEAD Human Rights, said this about orientation: "WE LEAD orientation helped me get closer to my new team as we navigated obstacles together. We all got to bond and it was an eye-opening experience to see how teamwork is the key to accomplishing a goal. Overall, it was an amazing experience and I benefited a lot from it."







# WE LEAD INVISIBLE ILLNESS SUICIDE PREVENTION WALK

By: Kiara Woods | Exercise Science | Class of 2026

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (Invisible Illness) - On September 7, the WE LEAD Invisible Illness team was joined by WVWC and members from the Buckhannon community alike to participate in the annual Suicide Prevention Walk, which had over 150 participants. The event began in the afternoon before the walk with several breakout sessions.

These included:

- NARCAN Training
- Green Bandana Project
- Benefits of Self-Care
- Suicide Prevention Training by NAMI

Before the walk, speaker Jen Randall-Reyes, Ph.D., ALPS, LPC Program Director, Counseling Masters at WVWC gave a powerful testament to the importance of mental health and suicide prevention. Randall-Reyes was able to help talk about how important it is to understand mental health ideation, especially within the rural community.

As the walk began, participants were given pipe cleaners to assemble bracelets from various beads that represent different aspects of loss and grief caused by suicide.

*10-24 is the age where suicide is the second leading cause of death. Don't be afraid to ask your friends for help.*

*You matter.*

*In 2020, there was an estimated 1.20 million suicide attempts.*

*Suicide is the 2nd highest cause of death in West Virginia.*

*Over 80% of LGBTQIA+ youth have been assaulted or threatened, and every instance of victimization in an LGBTQIA+ person's life more than doubles the likelihood of self-harming.*

Overall, this important event provided education on prevention training and how to help those in need, as well as a time to reflect on those whom we have lost.

The WE LEAD Team couldn't do this without their sponsors NAMI, Upshur County Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Argo Books, Par Mar Store, Prism, Moonflower, Stigma-Free WV & Wheeling of Hope WV.

STATION 1: LOSS OF A CHILD

STATION 2: LOSS OF A SPOUSE OR PARTNER

STATION 3: LOSS OF A PARENT

STATION 4: LOSS OF A SIBLING

STATION 5: LOSS OF A RELATIVE OR FRIEND

STATION 6: LOSS OF A FIRST RESPONDER/MILITARY

STATION 7: PERSONAL STRUGGLE OR ATTEMPT

STATION 8: SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO HAS ATTEMPTED

STATION 9: SUPPORT SUICIDE PREVENTION

STATION 10: HONORING THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY



# A VISION OF SERVICE FOR THE FUTURE

By: Jessica Vincent'12 | Director of Community Engagement

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (CCE) - Transitioning to college is a hurdle for many students. The academic rigor may be different, the culture of a community may be different, friends and family may be miles away, and a student may miss activities foundational to their values. Wesleyan helps ease this transition through a First-Year Experience (FYEX) course that guides them through the layers of acclimating to campus and the greater community.

Service has been a traditional part of the FYEX program and the First Year Seminar program before that. All Wesleyan students deserve to have opportunities to continue their value of service throughout their college experience. For others who wouldn't consider service part of their background, the exposure they receive through this component allows them to mingle with service and live out a longstanding tradition and legacy that connects them to Wesleyan values of the past, present, and future.

Over the past few years, it has been obvious that some students were more comfortable and prepared to walk into community events or service projects than others. Some may have not yet understood the potential impact they could make. Others were anxious about meeting a community partner for the first time and quickly adapting to their instructions for the day. Some students, especially from different regions of the country and beyond, may see a new community challenge for the first time. These experiences can be both surprising and defeating.

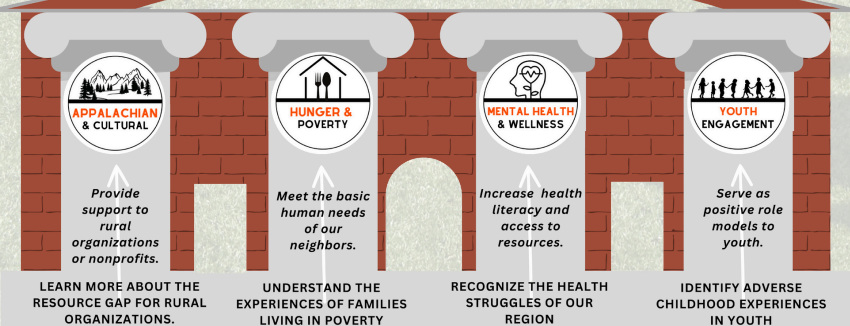
Over the summer, the CCE staff took action to develop a plan to better prepare students for volunteering. It started with analyzing data from all the events that Wesleyan students have been asked to support over the past two years. It was quickly clear that there were themes in the data. Opportunities to serve youth in the community were undeniable. Events focusing on the alleviation of hunger and supporting our neighbors living in poverty shone through. Then, there were many mental health and overall wellness events that honed in on President Moore's vision to "serve the needs of our region."

Finally, there was an assortment of wildly different events that challenged us. Trying to piece together any commonalities was like mixing together the pieces of multiple 500-piece puzzles. They couldn't make a picture together, but they all had the same goal - to build a picture of resiliency despite not having enough money, enough hands, or enough time. These organizations exist because of volunteers and share a sense of Appalachian and cultural values that keep us all moving forward. Just like that, we had four categories that could encompass any event or project.

Following the discovery and adoption of the categories, the challenge became even greater. The communication and marketing aspects of this vision needed to be developed and shared. In true Wesleyan fashion, everything ties back to John Wesley's words to 'Do all the good you can,' and nothing on campus represents John Wesley more than the Wesley Chapel. We believe service work is foundational to our college, so adding the pillars seemed like a great way to add depth to our four categories. At that point, the vision was actualized into something tangible that could be shared.

The images and words themselves would not be enough to make a difference among the volunteers. Students needed understanding and connection. After several weeks of sharing the vision and applying critical feedback, the second layer of the plan was born. In a pitch to Molly Clever, who leads the FYEX program, it was clear that the vision made sense and would be an important new development to engaging students in both a meaningful and impactful way that opened up choice and passion for the volunteer.

## SERVING THE NEEDS of our REGION



FROM THE FOUNDATION, UP.

Before volunteering in the community, students would select their preferred category. They would attend an on-campus "Foundations" session that would expose them to statistics, stories, and an inside look at the impact students can have by volunteering. This would unlock an understanding and answer the question of WHY their service was needed. In addition, each Foundations session would involve a panel of community partners. It would also create a connection through first-hand stories, echo the challenges they see at their partner sites daily, and provide a personal invitation to serve alongside them.

As the plan launches this fall, we are humbled by the many students who have been advocates for our community and inspired by those who have been brave enough to share their insecurities. The excitement to bridge the gap for Wesleyan students and make service opportunities more accessible for students with various service backgrounds is building. Watch for stories throughout the year that reveal how students responded.



# Editorial **HELVETIA FAIR**

**By: Matthew Hatfield | Pre-Nursing | Class of 2028**

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (CCE) - If there's one thing about me it's that I love traditions. I have always been someone who believes in keeping the tradition alive. I have never been to Helvetia, but two times.

Each year the incoming first-year class of Wesleyan Service Scholars travel to Helvetia, WV for two days to help prepare for the upcoming annual Helvetia Fair. Seeing all the community come out and help prepare for the fair is astonishing. Interacting with the community and seeing how passionate they are about their heritage is very touching.

I was very excited to return to Helvetia and volunteer at the fair. When I arrived, I was just about blown away at how many people were there. I was told they like to keep traditions going, but I have never seen a community so sought out about keeping the heritage alive. Seeing all the people dressed up in their outfits really showed how determined they were to keep the tradition going.

I hope the people of Helvetia never lose their love for their roots. I think what the community does is absolutely amazing. I have been to many traditional festivals, however, Helvetia has to be the most alive.

*Smiling  
face of the  
students  
that helped*



## **CCE OPEN HOUSE**

**By: Kiran Nandigama | Biochemistry | Class of 2026**

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (WE LEAD) - On September 10, the CCE hosted an Open House, with Zul's Frozen Lemonade, at the Campus Plaza.

Members from all WE LEAD teams, Wesleyan Service Scholars, Jessica Vincent, and Julia Manley all helped run a table to introduce the CCE and upcoming service opportunities within the community to those interested.

The Open House provided new students and returning ones a chance to explore service and volunteer opportunities throughout the community, facilitated by the CCE, as well as a way to learn about the various WE LEAD teams that tackle different issues within the community, namely;

### **WE LEAD:**

- Animal Welfare
- High Tunnel
- Human Rights
- Invisible Illness
- Poverty Reduction

The Open House drew in multiple students interested in the variety of leadership and service opportunities funneled through the CCE, many of whom provided contact information in order to receive updates about CCE engagement opportunities and events.



*Sign to  
welcome  
interested  
students in  
WE LEAD*



# O PIONEER

CCE SPONSORED

## *O Pioneer* Film Screening

By: Ian Wycoff | History | Class of 2028

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (WE LEAD) - On the night of Thursday, September 26, the Center for Community Engagement & Leadership Development (CCE) hosted a screening of the documentary “O Pioneer” at the Performing Arts Center.

A Q&A with the audience was held after the screening with one of the directors Jonathan Lacoque and James Morle, who was featured in the documentary.

*O Pioneer* captured the audience with breathtaking cinematography and thoughtful storytelling. The Q&A after the film was a great opportunity for the audience to learn more about the filmmaking process, including the documentary's inspiration. The film was made entirely in West Virginia by a West Virginia film production company based in Helvetia, WV.

A fact that many students in attendance were moved by, including First-Year Trey Greer “The film screening opened my eyes to how truly diverse lives we live in Appalachia and the broad range of effects the coronavirus pandemic had on our culture and people”. Overall, the night was a great experience for all who attended.





# SETTING THE FOUNDATION

By: Jessica Vincent'12 | Director of Community Engagement

BUCKHANNON, W.Va. (CCE) - Anyone who builds an addition to their childhood home that has been passed down for generations wants it to have a strong foundation and maintain a sense of the home's longstanding history. With the wearing of time on a home, it is often easier to draw out on paper than it is to manufacture in reality.

This fall, as the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) prepared to build an addition to Wesleyan's long history of service, the moving parts of sharing the vision and enlisting our community partners in the work were timely. The reality of the situation was that we were trying to engage almost 300 students in four different Foundations sessions during a single timeslot without cloning CCE staff. Luckily, there are many experts on campus that we could lean on, and our community partners are already in tune with jumping on board to support students.

The CCE staff shared an overview of each pillar and the goals with the group of first-year students during a communal meeting during the first week on campus. Students had prepared for the Foundations session by completing an online survey where they selected their primary pillar and shared a bit about their past relationship with service. Finally, it was October 24th. 275 first-year students were spread across campus, and the plan was fully initiated. One student, Matthew Hatfield, selected Youth Engagement as his pillar of focus. After the event, he reflected by saying, "Many kids in our community come from low-income households." While he selected Youth Engagement, he realized that all the pillars interconnect and are often symptoms of other challenges that exist. Matthew is excited to "make a connection with kids and show them love" and friendship through serving as a mentor at Tennerton Elementary School.



Jessica Vincent led the Appalachian & Cultural Foundations Breakout Session, where students learned about the rural resource gap and why organizations rely so heavily on volunteers to fill in the gaps. Panelists shared stories of past volunteers and reiterated the value that volunteers play in keeping their organization's doors open. As a result of the session, students are now prepared to meet their goal of providing support to rural organizations or nonprofits. A few upcoming events that students can get involved in are a trail maintenance day, moving all the books for the Literacy Volunteers Annual Book Sale, a Ramp Dinner fundraiser in the Spring, handing out books at a Trunk-or-Treat, supporting the Special Olympics basketball tournament, and more!

- Paul Norko, Upshur County Public Library
- Jenny Higham, Literacy Volunteers of Upshur County
- Julia Kastner, Upshur County Trails
- Lori Harvey, Upshur County Family Resource Network



Kenna Whitcomb and Colby Wamsley shared information about the experiences of families living in poverty for the Hunger & Poverty Foundations Breakout Session. By understanding the far-reaching implications of poverty, students were able to see how answering the call to help meet the basic human needs of our neighbors could be a major "hand up" for a family as opposed to a "handout." Trick-or-Treat for Canned Goods, Free Meal Appalachia Saturday Meals, mobile food markets, Friday meals at the Circle of Friends, or community dinners at the Parish House are a few of the many ways students can help our neighbors.

- Isaac Casto, Upshur County Parish House
- Heather Schneider, Free Meals Appalachia
- Debra Dean Murphy, Circle of Friends (Clarksburg CRJ)
- Becky Conrad, Mountaineer Food Bank



Dr. Jen Randall Rayes jumped in to educate students on the widespread health struggles that exist in our region. Events like Narcan trainings, restorative justice conversations, the Suicide Prevention Walk, and intervening as a positive role model to youth will help to increase health literacy and access to resources. The partners listed below are key players in being on the front lines of support, and their action is a ripple effect that inspires others to be health advocates.

- Jess Scott, Circle of Friends (Clarksburg CRJ)
- Lise-Marie VanNostrand, Mountain Cap of WV Family Support Center
- Steve Wykoff, Upshur County Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Tanya Zickefoose, Upshur County Schools



Once a person becomes aware of what adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are, they are easy to identify. The hardest part of learning about ACEs is noting that it's like an unbalanced seesaw. It takes a significant positive influence in a child's life for them to overcome the odds and the playing fields to be balanced. Julia Manley shared with students how serving as positive role models to Upshur County youth helps bring balance. Stories from the panelists listed below and an investment of time at events like trunk-or-treats, Boy Scout Merit Badge College, science fairs, and more are just a few ways college students can share love with our community's most vulnerable youth.

- Kasey Baisden, Upshur County Schools
- Lou Blake, Upshur County Schools
- Brianna Warner, Child Development Center of Central WV
- Julie McCourt, Appalachian Impact



2024 ELECTIONS

# YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.

By: Julia Manley | Leadership & Service Coordinator

BUCKHANNON W.Va. (CCE) - Students and professionals alike are given the opportunity to have access to finding out more information about Registering to Vote or Absentee Ballots, as WVWC has a lot of folks that are new voters and/or away from their homes.

These opportunities include table tents with QR codes, flyers, and even a tabling event where there were other peers there to answer any questions about the process.

It is important for not only the college to supply these types of resources to the people of this organization but it is a right that people get to vote in the United States of America.

**ABSENTEE  
BALLOT**



Away from your home-After Registration

**REGISTER TO  
VOTE**



Above the age of 18. US Citizens.

More Information: [www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org)

## UNDERCONSUMPTION: A HIDDEN CHALLENGE IN MODERN ECONOMIES

By: Sienna Chenoweth | Biology | Class of 2027

BUCKHANNON W.Va. (Poverty Reduction) - On September 25, the WE LEAD Poverty Reduction team partnered with the Center for Restorative Justice on a circle discussion relating to the social media trend of “underconsumption” and how it impacts the ideology of those who view it.

This trend originated in the aftermath of the attacks on overconsumption on social media earlier this year and focuses on altering your habits to consume as little as possible. At the discussion, participants learned more about the trend, how it can impact the mental health of those who see it, and how your background influences how you view trends related to consumption.

Fighting the urge to purchase supplies and services that eat up valuable resources isn’t an easy adjustment to make in one’s life. Participants left the circle discussion intrigued and wanting to learn more about what this trend truly entails and how they can be more conscientious.



# COMMUNITY DINNER

By: Kiylei Holloway | Computer Science | Class of 2026

BUCKHANNON W.Va. (Poverty Reduction) - On September 19, 2024, the WE LEAD Poverty Reduction team hosted its first free community dinner of the year. At this dinner, they prepared a dinner of spaghetti, meatballs, green beans, garlic bread, parmesan cheese cups, and a snack cake for dessert. In total, they supplied about 82 individuals with a meal to our neighbors.

The team got to interact directly with community members and the gracious Parish House employees; together they created a joyful and grateful environment. Our volunteers assisted in preparing all take-home materials as well as boxing the actual dinner and supporting the efficient yet intimate flow of the event.



*Kiylei and Stanley with parmesan cups.*

# THE GREEN BANDANA PROJECT

By: LouMasi Lott | Biology | Class of 2026

BUCKHANNON W.Va. (Invisible Illness) - The Green Bandanna Project, organized by the WE LEAD: Invisible Illness team, was a powerful initiative aimed at empowering students to become mental health allies.

Attendees watched an impactful video illustrating how a green bandanna displayed on a backpack signifies a willingness to listen and offer support. This event fostered a sense of community and connection, paving the way for a more supportive future.

## FLEECE & FLICKS

By: Brooklyn Farley | Biology | Class of 2025

BUCKHANNON W.Va. (Animal Welfare) - On September 25, 2024, the WE LEAD Animal Welfare team held the Fleece and Flicks event. The purpose of this event was to make a small blanket that could be donated, to help shelters with resources. Participants tied a small blanket while watching the movie “Bolt.”

LouMasi Lott, a participant said, “This event was an incredible opportunity that united people in learning more about shelters. It fostered a sense of community and friendship, all while participants created these blankets together.”



*Kaef making a blanket while movie in the background*





# CAMPUS OUTREACH



## MEC CELEBRATION - SERVICE COMPONENT

Thanks so much to the Mountain East Conference for sponsoring a service project to benefit the Buckhannon Community!

We packaged over 100 Trick-or-Treat Bags & 30 Veterans Cards!



## DR. LAWSON'S FYEX COURSE SERVICE PROJECT

Thanks to Dr. Lawson's class for helping create flyers and write 'Thank You' cards for volunteers of events that happened over the past month!





# CCE Staff



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# \$3000

annual, renewable scholarship  
(\$1500 per semester; **\$12,000 over four years**)

Early Acceptance Deadline: **Dec. 1**

Priority Deadline: **Feb. 1**

Open to  
*High School Seniors*  
with a background in

**SOCIAL JUSTICE,  
LEADERSHIP *OR*  
SERVICE**

Contact Us:  
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Buckhannon, WV 26201



Email:  
wvwcservice@wvwc.edu

**APPLICATION**  
**LIVE OUT YOUR PASSIONS**  
**ENGAGED IN THE**  
**COMMUNITY**

Social Media:  
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