



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Monthly Newsletter

August/September

2021



WESLEYAN SERVICE SCHOLAR ORIENTATION | HELVETIA, WV

Each year, a new group of first-year Wesleyan Service Scholars grab their boots and work alongside members of a community the CCE holds close to its heart. Helvetia, West Virginia, with an aging population of less than 100 individuals, sees our Service Scholars visit year after year, working hard to help keep the community the beautiful, lively place we all know it to be. Helvetia may be small, but the community involvement, unique culture, and hard-working community members make a large impact on several Wesleyan students each year.

On Wednesday, August 18th, twenty-five first-year students started their Wesleyan journey by boarding vans, accompanied by seven upperclassmen orientation leaders, and beginning the annual orientation trip. With lots of rain and no cell phone service, these students created memories of a lifetime through icebreaker activities, team-building games, and a day full of dedicated service projects. In Helvetia, these students were able to learn, grow and prepare for their four years as Service Scholars by engaging in service together and witnessing the impact of working alongside an incredible community.



First-year student Ripley Cottrell looks back on her orientation trip and the close relationships she formed, saying “it was a really enlightening experience and a great way to create a close-knit friend group before stepping into a whole new world. I wasn’t nervous to begin with, but I began seeing how involved we were quickly becoming in each other’s lives. I had never gotten that personal with people before. I felt as if everyone had shown their true selves by making themselves vulnerable, which is a huge step towards friendship. I hope to continue to have these people close to me. It’s hard to find people with the same drive and determination as yourself, it’s even harder to find leaders that you can collaborate with. I think we are such a strong group of people and I can’t wait to see the positive changes we will bring to Wesleyan over the next few years.”

Ripley and her peers returned to campus on August 20th with new friends, memories and experiences along with a sense of excitement and pride in being the Wesleyan Service Scholar Class of 2025.



CCE OPEN HOUSE

On Tuesday, September 7th, the Center for Community Engagement hosted an Open House outside of the CCE to welcome the campus community into the service world, specifically WE LEAD. Members of each WE LEAD team, Human Rights, Girl Scouts, Poverty Reduction, Invisible Illness, Gender Equality, Animal Sustainability and Welfare, and Boxing it up to Give Thanks attended to represent their team. Each team provided a glance at their semester events and information on what their team is about. Interested students were able to sign-up for the team they may want to join prior to WE LEAD applications coming out in October.

WE LEAD RETREAT | JACKSON'S MILL

On Friday, August 27th, Wesleyan WE LEADers packed up clothes and sleeping bags, ate dinner together in the campus dining hall, and then piled into Wesleyan vehicles to head to an overnight retreat at WVU Jackson's Mill, a 4-H camp in Weston. The drive over to Jackson's Mill was filled with getting to know one another, as each person in the van asked a question and awaited everyone else's response. Makayla Garcia, a member of the WE LEAD Human Rights team, says, "my favorite part was getting to know everyone, including Jessica and Andrew. It has helped me be a lot more confident, not only in WE LEAD, but on campus as well." Once the group arrived at Jackson's Mill and settled in, the evening got started with an intense game of team Rock Paper Scissors. Shortly after, everyone made their way to a firepit to sit under the stars and make smores. Everyone took a turn in the "Hot Seat," meaning the group had 60 seconds to ask you any question they wanted. Some memorable questions included, "Why WE LEAD?" "Why the Center for Community Engagement?" If you could explore space or the sea, which one would you choose?"

Everyone felt closer after spending a few hours at the firepit together. Sophomore Hannah Povroznik, the coordinator of the Food Security for Tomorrow team, remarks, "it was an interactive opportunity to grow closer to everyone. One tends to get more honest and have more real responses when questions are fired and you have seconds to answer. I felt more connected and had a better understanding of each WE LEADER afterward."

The second day of the retreat was centered around each individual issue team bonding. Each WE LEADER provided every team with ideas to start this new academic year off strong. Each team then got to spend time together to discuss how these ideas fit into their plan for the year. Every team came back together with renewed energy, mostly because there was a Quantum Leap... felt by everyone. There was a determination and bond set in stone for this new year. Nate White, a member of the Animal Welfare & Sustainability team, says, "we have all become so much closer [as a team] which has made this retreat even more memorable and special." There is a new definition of service and advocacy for WE LEAD after returning to campus from Jackson's Mill, and everyone on the retreat knows it.



WE LEAD TEAMS 2021-2022

ANIMAL WELFARE & SUSTAINABILITY is committed to shedding light on the lack of transparency in pseudo-sciences, dispelling misinformation, and educating and advocating to the Wesleyan and Buckhannon community in areas concerning animal welfare and sustainability.

FOOD SECURITY FOR TOMORROW was inspired by North Central WV initiative, Boxing It Up to Give Thanks, a charity that distributes boxed Thanksgiving meals and empowers youth to be advocates for change. From our roots, our mission has since expanded to Upshur County to continue reducing food insecurity and providing a platform for leaders to unite in making tomorrow brighter.

Though we are **GENDER EQUALITY**, we are not limited to gender-based differences. We wish to bring awareness of equity amongst all groups and to provide those whose voices may be limited in society a safe space as well as an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

GIRL SCOUTS empowers and builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We bring new knowledge and impactful activities from around the community to educate and inspire future leaders.

HUMAN RIGHTS is dedicated to educating, advocating, and learning about issues around the community, state, and world. The team is under such a broad umbrella that any passion can come through and be heard. Because of this, we value ourselves on a commitment to bringing awareness to issues going on in the world around us, that many may never even think about.

INVISIBLE ILLNESS advocates for those who are affected by mental and invisible illnesses. We do this so that those who suffer in silence have a voice and so the public is more educated, thus becoming more accepting of invisible illnesses. This creates an unbiased and positive environment for mental health treatment.

POVERTY REDUCTION aims to reach a larger community to help them understand the stigma around poverty and to provide some assistance to individuals that are in need while incorporating the student body and surrounding community to assist in the ways that they are able.

7
ISSUE
TEAMS



"BE THE
CHANGE"



25
WE LEAD
STUDENTS

GET TO KNOW US



HUMAN RIGHTS INFO SESSION

On September 8th, the WE LEAD Human Rights team hosted an informational event to welcome the Wesleyan community to get to know their team. The event was hosted outside the cafeteria to welcome students as they were walking to dinner. The team provided pamphlets highlighting upcoming events Human Rights anticipates having as well as successful past events. The Human Rights team aimed to reach out to students to not only encourage them to join the team, but to continue making a difference on and off-campus.

ANIMAL WELFARE & SUSTAINABILITY MEET & GREET

The Animal Welfare and Sustainability team came together on September 15th at 5:00PM to host a meet and greet with Wesleyan students! While not many students attended, the few who did had a great time! It was an intimate setting but we created a lively atmosphere by playing Cards Against Humanity and Cornhole while eating pizza and candy.

LET'S TALK PRONOUNS

The WE LEAD Gender Equality (GE) Team hosted their first event of the semester, "Let's Talk Pronouns" on September 23rd. The GE team partnered with PRISM, the Center for Restorative Justice, and the Tri Beta Gender Studies Honorary to host a circle conversation on the importance of using pronouns properly and why one should respect the way others choose to identify themselves. The event was a big success with about 40 attendees who were interested in the topic and actively engaged in the conversation. The team learned that the importance of pronouns is not commonly discussed in many households and needs to continue to be a topic of conversation in order to educate others. The Gender Equality team is thankful to everyone who attended and helped put together the event.

"Let's Talk Pronouns was a really interesting event that led to a good discussion on pronouns and their application. It was great to see many organization, students, and faculty coming together around the conversation."

- Nate White, WE LEAD and Prism Member



HR FILM

On September 22nd, the WE LEAD Human Rights team paired with the WE LEAD Invisible Illness team to host a film and discussion highlighting the mental health struggles of college students. 35 students gathered in HYMA auditorium to watch "Solo Orange", a short film produced by a college student in 2019. Following the emotional film, the two teams facilitated a short discussion about the high and low points of the film and how the film can help each of us better understand the warning signs of a mental health decline in us and those around us.

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

On September 30th, the WE LEAD Invisible Illness team hosted a Coffee & Conversation event on the topic of self-care. Aladdin catered the event by supplying coffee and various desserts, which were a huge hit. Because of how busy the semester has been for many students, the team thought this topic would be appropriate. The event included a presentation on different types of self-care as well as related questions to engage the audience. Even though the audience was rather quiet, it was a successful event with a good turnout.

NUKE IT

On the 28th of September, the WE LEAD Animal Welfare and Sustainability team set out to educate the Wesleyan community on the myths of nuclear reactors at an event called Nuke It. The event directly addressed commonly held fears related to nuclear reactors including sabotage, threat of meltdowns, catastrophic explosions, and health hazards. Through a documentary and thirty minute discussion, the event was informative and helped quell the unreasonable fear of nuclear reactors as an energy source. By reaching 20 students, Nuke It was a resounding success.



THE MISSION OF WESLEYAN ENGAGING LEADERS THROUGH EDUCATION, AWARENESS, & DEVELOPMENT (WE LEAD) IS TO PROVIDE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WESLEYAN STUDENTS TO BUILD LEADERSHIP SKILLS, ENGAGE IN SERVICE, AND BECOME CONNECTED WITH COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL PARTNERS.

FOOD MARKET AT BUCKHANNON-ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



WE LEAD Food Security for Tomorrow partnered with Mountaineer Food Bank to host a "Market" at Buckhannon Academy Elementary School, one of the largest elementary schools in our community. Our team directly saw how local organizations are benefitting food security efforts in Upshur County. Elementary school children were taught about the nutritional properties of a commonly disliked vegetable, broccoli, and were encouraged to taste test a sample cooked in chicken broth which gave it a different flavor profile. Afterward, they were invited to gather fresh fruits and vegetables, some of which local farmers donated to the market.



SPREAD THE LOVE PEANUT BUTTER DRIVE

The WE LEAD Poverty Reduction and Food Security for Tomorrow teams hosted the Spread the Love Peanut Butter Drive in support of the Parish House and the Buckhannon community. The event was held from September 20th to 26th, and collection boxes were placed in the CCE, the Library, and the Chapel for physical donations. Members of the Wesleyan community also had the option to donate money that the teams used to purchase additional peanut butter. Due to the incredible support of students, staff and faculty, a total of 219 jars of peanut butter were donated! Some professors offered students extra credit for their donations, and parents visiting campus during Family Weekend contributed greatly to the drive.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

On Sunday, September 26th, the WE LEAD Animal Welfare and Sustainability team hosted a Trail Maintenance Event in partnership with Upshur County Trails. We had 12 participants in total. The goal was to clean and widen a few short sections of the trail in order to encourage more people to spend time outdoors and visit the trails. The event was a huge success!



"We were super pleased with the help! It was a hit, and it sounds like the students had a great time." - Julia Kastner, WVWC English Professor and Upshur Trails Volunteer



MEGAN PRITT

Every year, the weekend before classes start for first-year Wesleyan Service Scholars, they take an orientation trip to Helvetia, West Virginia. During their trip, the students are introduced to one other, learn to bond as a team, and perform service for the tiny town. Megan Pritt, a first-year student from Mt. Nebo, West Virginia, talks about her trip this year.

Megan is performing weekly service in a second-grade classroom at Tennerton Elementary and believes her time as a Service Scholar at Wesleyan will help her become more involved, active, and social throughout her college experience.

Megan highlights “meeting new people and building friendships with people who were originally complete strangers,” as her favorite memory from Helvetia. The biggest lesson she learned was, “that everyone has a story and even though they may be completely different or have a different impact on our lives, it is what makes each person unique.”



KIERSTIN TAYLOR

Kierstin Taylor is a first-year Wesleyan student from Pocahontas County, WV. Her service placement is the Clothes Closet. She attended the Service Scholar orientation and her favorite memory from staying in Helvetia is, “sitting around the campfire and listening to Gray [one of the upperclassmen orientation leaders] tell ‘scary stories.’”

Kierstin reflects back on the trip and says the most important lesson she learned is to never be afraid to ask for help. She also believes that the Service Scholar program is going to help her increase her leadership skills. In terms of leadership, she believes the most important characteristic of a leader is integrity.

“The Service Scholar program is an amazing program that not only helps you better your leadership skills but also helps you learn more skills of life in general. You get to meet a lot of amazing new people and get to help the community,” says Taylor when asked to describe the program for high school students looking to attend Wesleyan.



DO YOU KNOW A HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR WHO WOULD BE A GREAT SERVICE SCHOLAR CANDIDATE? LET US KNOW AND FEEL FREE TO DIRECT THEM TO THIS LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION OR APPLY.

<https://www.wvwc.edu/campus-life/community-engagement/wesleyan-service-scholars/>

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<https://ssl.charityweb.net/wwwc/donatenow.htm>

BUCKHANNON FIRE DEPT.

We have had a formal partnership with the Buckhannon Fire Department over the last three and a half years. Over time students have supported the accreditation process, worked on recording the square footage of commercial buildings, prepared presentations, and shined up the trucks and equipment. Most students have undertaken further training to better serve the department and some have even graduated as dedicated volunteers that continue to serve as local firefighters. On October 5th, as a Main Street building called upon the good work of various fire departments, Service Scholar students were alongside these heroes from about 2 pm till 9 pm at night.

Recent Service Scholar graduate, Maggie Petitto '21, put on her gear and fought the fire on the front lines. Meanwhile, current Service Scholars, Blake Rasnake and Haley Birmingham were running trips back and forth to refill oxygen tanks and drinking water containers for the firefighters. Hunter Wilfong is another Service Scholar and active firefighter who assisted after his nursing clinicals were completed. It's days like this when the work our students do and the support they provide to our community partners goes beyond just learning and feels a lot more like being ingrained into the threads of our community.

Thank you, Chief Kimble and Bonner Scholar graduate, Joey Baxa '08, for continuing to open the doors for Service Scholars and to all the firefighters who consider our students part of your team.

In addition to photos of Maggie, Blake, and Haley, we've added a flashback photo of past Service Scholar, Courtney Jack Woody '20, who tested out some gear at the Buckhannon Fire Department after a CPR class a few years back. We are sending love to Courtney, her family, and the other businesses and residents who were impacted by the fire.

Photos by My Buckhannon
and Alyssa Godwin.

