Students and faculty contribute to community peacemaking initiative

Advocating for Nonviolence
Student fellow participates in meetings at the UN

The Power of Research
Community project uses data to achieve impact

Peacemaking in Film & Literature
Faculty fellow teaches stories of civil rights struggles
Building Strong Communities

Your gifts are transforming how students engage with social realities in Milwaukee

Over the past couple of months, I have had the opportunity to update alumni and friends about the tremendous growth of the Center for Peacemaking. It is gratifying to know how much interest there is in two of our most important projects: the peace studies major and our work to improve the Milwaukee’s Near West Side.

What excites me is these two projects represent the foundation of what the Center for Peacemaking does.

The first surrounds student formation and knowledge. The Center for Peacemaking is committed to preparing students to influence society. At the core is a rigorous academic preparation so students have the knowledge and courage to address challenging and difficult problems in society.

The second area concerns social reality. The Center for Peacemaking is rooted in the realization that the university should be a main player in shaping the community. This means ensuring our community is healthy for the most vulnerable members of our society.

It is because of this concern for the social reality that we are involved in addressing violence, poverty, treatment of women, and discrimination; as well as, involved in fostering civic and community engagement.

In the following pages you will read about how your generosity allows students to gain an education rooted in nonviolence and have opportunities to transform social realities. Thank you for your support and I hope you will consider the Center for Peacemaking in your year-end giving plans.

Together, we are transforming students, transforming Milwaukee, and, most importantly, changing lives.

Pat Kennelly

Director, Center for Peacemaking

“Together, we are transforming students, transforming Milwaukee, and, most importantly, changing lives.”

I hope you enjoy reading Prints of Peace. These stories are only possible because of your generosity. For more stories about the impact of your gift, please subscribe to our additional content.

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For the past three summers, I was a communications and administrative intern with Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in Minneapolis. During this time, I became immersed in the principles and philosophy upon which NP operates, drawing me deeper into the world of unarmed civilian protection and nonviolence.

Then, during my junior year, I found the Center for Peacemaking, started working at the Center, and enrolled in the Intro to Peace Studies course. It felt like finding a treasure trove of resources and opportunities.

As I learned more about nonviolence, my interest in working at the United Nations remained. Only now, instead of seeing the UN as a flashy opportunity, I saw it as a way to advocate for nonviolence and influence meaningful policy that can save civilian lives.

But I still didn’t think working at the UN would be possible—at least not until I learned about the student peacemaking fellowship program. The fellowship program only exists for students like me because of donors like you.

I then applied for and received a fellowship to spend a week of my summer at the United Nations headquarters in New York. I shared my plans with Mel Duncan, NP’s director of advocacy and outreach, and he graciously agreed to let me shadow him for a week.

Before I knew it, my dream was realized. I was in meetings at the UN with key actors involved in resolving major conflicts around the world.

One meeting that particularly stuck out to me was a workshop on the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. I got to sit at the same table as representatives of the military, academic think tanks, NGOs, and UN agencies. It struck me how this was a microcosm of what is happening at the UN every day: people are coming to the table and talking about how to prevent violence. This experience made it clear to me that it is possible to make a career out of advocating for nonviolent solutions to conflicts.

I have grown both professionally and personally from the fellowship. I am grateful for having gained the skills and knowledge at Marquette to feel prepared and confident during my time at the UN.

Thank you for making this experience possible. This fellowship was a highlight of my time at Marquette and I will carry it forward with me long after I graduate this Spring.
At this time last year, Ellie Lyne (Arts ‘19) was still trying to figure out what type of career in criminology she wanted to pursue after graduation. Now with a year of experience as a student research assistant for the PARC initiative with Dr. Darren Wheelock (Social & Cultural Sciences) and Dr. Anthony Pennington-Cross (Economics), Ellie is drawn to research as a way to affect people’s lives. The first part of their research explores the relationship between reported crime and housing prices in the Milwaukee area, as well as the relationship of evictions to crime. The second part emerged after reading Matt Desmond’s Evicted. In his book, Desmond lays out how eviction—and the broader idea of residential instability—is a place where inequality gets hidden, because it isn’t always measured or discussed. With a research framework in place, the team got to work, with Ellie cleaning the data and Dr. Wheelock running the models. “Research is strengthened when
you collaborate and work as a team,” said Dr. Wheelock.

““The amount of knowledge and hands-on application and skills that I’ve gained over the last year is hard for me to even think about. The opportunities and the doors that have been opened for me, even in terms of compiling these big data sets, is something I never expected myself to go into,” Ellie shared.

After sifting through the data for every eviction and crime report in the City of Milwaukee, Ellie felt the need to get out into the community to meet some of the people behind the data. She started to participate in resident engagement activities through the Near West Side Partners (NWSP), the Milwaukee non-profit behind the PARC initiative.

“Getting more intertwined and involved with the Near West Side, communicating with residents, hearing about their experiences, and hearing what they go through has really impacted me in a way that I didn’t expect. It’s made me a lot more grateful for the opportunities that I do have, and it drives me to continue the work that I pursue, because I see the impact it can have on communities.”

Dr. Wheelock, whose research focuses on the intersection between race, inequality, crime, and punishment, has been a mentor to Ellie. He also appreciates that their research is grounded in addressing pressing community needs. “With the PARC initiative, people are genuinely trying to improve the community and trying to be a positive force in Milwaukee, and I thought that was really cool. It has opened up these avenues for research that wouldn’t have been available otherwise.”

As the team continues with their project, they will begin to more fully understand the social impact of crime and evictions. Ultimately, their research has the potential to lead to recommendations for policy changes that could improve the quality of life in communities. ■

New Businesses Create Economic Opportunities for Residents

Xavier Jenkins

“This is what I have chosen: a neighborhood I grew up in, I played in, and now I work in.”

For part of his childhood, Xavier Jenkins (Arts ’18) lived in Milwaukee’s Near West Side. His family decided to move away when they noticed a declining population, vacant storefronts, and safety concerns within the neighborhood.

Now a student at Marquette, Xavier has studied how business recruitment initiatives can create economic opportunities and improve the overall health and safety of a neighborhood.

When an opportunity arose to apply for an internship with the Near West Side Partners, a local nonprofit focused on strengthening Milwaukee neighborhoods, he felt this job was made for him.

With the position secured, Xavier immediately got to work...
researching and contacting businesses about opening a location in the Near West Side. Over the past year, he has assisted in identifying and recruiting eight new businesses to open their doors in the area.

Reflecting on his internship efforts, Xavier said, “I’m back, helping to promote the investment that these neighborhoods need. We have definitely made progress but it is a long-term project. We can’t change things overnight. This is what I have chosen: a neighborhood I grew up in, I played in, and now I work in. It’s important to see a neighborhood growing stronger.”

By applying knowledge from his coursework to his internship, Xavier has seen first-hand how new businesses bring increased activity and investment to the community, while also increasing safety and creating new economic opportunities for residents. ■

Fostering Civic and Community Engagement

Dr. Amber Wichowsky and the Marquette Democracy Lab

“This project has taken students into the community where they learn from residents and see the important connections among public health, housing, safety and public policy.”

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Dr. Amber Wichowsky (Political Science) leads the Marquette Democracy Lab (MDL), a research initiative that tests the effectiveness of community improvement efforts.

“Through our partnership with the Center for Peacemaking and the PARC Initiative, Marquette Democracy Lab students have gained valuable research skills, from analyzing public opinion and geospatial data to conducting impact studies of community development efforts,” Dr. Wichowsky said.

The goal of the MDL isn’t to just study the community, but to have a positive impact on the community as well. This is done through two main projects: increasing resident participation and gathering community opinions through neighborhood surveys.

One measure of participation they track closely is attendance at monthly neighborhood meetings. This provides insight to the political landscape of the area.

Additionally, the MDL designs and analyzes surveys to understand the community’s needs. These results also inform new Near West Side Partners (NWSP) initiatives.

Each year of the project, students have knocked on every door throughout the Near West Side to collect survey responses. The responses in 2016 indicated that residents wanted more and better lighting at night to decrease both perceived and real crime. When that report was sent to the NWSP, it spurred the creation of the current lighting initiative.

Hannah Thiry, a senior in the College of Business Administration, is part of the survey team. “Surveying this semester has been a truly rewarding experience as it has allowed me to feel more connected to my Milwaukee neighborhood,” she said. “It allowed me to engage with residents and begin conversations to better understand what residents of the Near West Side value and appreciate in their community.”

The survey feedback from residents ensures that the project’s goals and initiatives always align with the community’s needs. ■
Dr. Cedric Burrows (English) studies composition and rhetoric, African-American rhetoric, cultural rhetoric, and social activism. Last summer, he received a Rynne Faculty Research Fellowship from the Center for Peacemaking to continue examining the construction of black rhetorical presence in popular movies about the Civil Rights Movement such as Malcolm X (1992) and Selma (2014).

His research examines how movies that tell stories from the Civil Rights Movement differ based on the racial identity of the writers and producers of the film. Specifically, he examines rhetorical strategies (description, exposition, narration, and persuasion) to classify differences in story construction.

He discovered a phenomenon that he calls “whitescaping”. Burrows explains that civil rights movies with black writers and producers have a tendency to connect the Civil Rights Movement to current historical events, while movies with white writers and producers tend to present the lead white characters as benevolent figures willing to give up their racism.

Burrows concludes that the differences are largely due to the social location of the writers and producers. One’s social location is shaped by their own understanding of historical and current time periods.

Throughout this semester, Burrows has integrated his summer research findings into his curriculum. Students learn that history isn’t just a lot of dates or events locked in the past. Instead, history is a lot of narratives, and each of these narratives impact how people interact with the world today. In this way, history is a living thing.

Burrows also understands the power of using media in the classroom. Instead of exclusively studying literature, he also teaches with video recordings from the Civil Rights Movement. He explained that the videos help students get a feel for the lived experience of authors during this time. They provide additional context before jumping into the literature. Reading something isn’t just picking up the book and reading it. It means reading an entire world that a person entered when they wrote it.

Reflecting on the semester, Burrows said that students have embraced this approach. “A lot of them make connections now without me having to push them.”

Because of your support for faculty members like Dr. Burrows, students are developing the skills to analyze historical nonviolence movements. They are also growing in their understanding of their own personal history and social location. This allows students to more fully and effectively study and engage in contemporary struggles for civil rights.
Marquette students with a Center for Peacemaking supporter at a vigil for migrants as part of the SOA-Watch Border Encuentro.

Your support makes it possible for students to participate in transformational experiences that inspire them to study and work for peace.