

2018 Higher Education

Winners

Ann Graziotti - Miami Dade College, Medical Campus

Professor Graziotti's Community Health Nursing students, later joined by her Advanced Concepts Practicum students, developed a partnership with Verde Gardens in May 2013. Verde Gardens is a supportive housing community owned and operated by



Carrfour Supportive Housing. It is a 145 unit townhouse community with approximately 540 residents. Every family in the community had been homeless prior to moving into Verde Gardens, has at least one child under the age of 18, and has at least one family member with a disability. Community Health Nursing Students are assigned to work with a case manager and individual families with health needs. They assess and screen the residents via health fairs, community meetings, the on-site nursing clinic and home visits; they assist with referrals as needed. Advanced Concepts Practicum students

work to implement and evaluate strategies to restore, promote and maintain health. The students identified needs and developed programs to address them ... for example, the Hypertension Clinic, the Wednesday Wellness Group, the Afterschool Cooking Program (pictured).

Jan Sokol-Katz - University of Miami

Dr. Sokol-Katz's Juvenile Delinquency service learning course applies sociological perspectives and concepts to the investigation of juvenile delinquency while incorporating civic engagement and community based learning through a series of written and in-person interactions between the University of Miami (UM) students and juveniles in one of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) residential facilities, Miami Youth Academy (MYA). Facilitated by Exchange for Change (EFC), a nonprofit program that promotes written exchanges with correctional and court-mandated facilities, the UM and MYA students examine the phenomenon of



juvenile delinquency and the social policies developed to address such behavior, integrating various social factors that shape juvenile delinquency and its control. Together, the students address many of the difficult issues concerning juvenile delinquency, taking a critical view of the policies developed to control such behavior through a series of writing exchanges and in-person workshops, culminating in a final workshop where UM and MYA students develop strategies to best contend with the issues faced by at-risk youth, attempting to prevent and reduce delinquency and recidivism.

Joshua Schriftman - University of Miami

Dr. Schriftman's most recent service-learning project was a University of Miami course cross-listed in English and Sociology subtitled *Publishing, Justice, and the Freedom of Speech*. The course featured written and in-person cultural exchanges with silenced



South Florida communities, prominently including a prison-writing exchange (facilitated by the prison-education nonprofit Exchange for Change) and an ongoing conversation with a group of migrant farm workers in Homestead (facilitated by WeCount!). The work with these communities was a study in the importance of the freedom of expression. The students read texts that engaged with the ideas of criminal justice reform, the roles of free speech and the press in American society, and the value of giving a voice to silenced populations. The end

product was the inaugural edition of a literary journal showcasing nonfiction work produced primarily by UM students enrolled in composition and advanced composition classes and featuring work from the communities with which we engaged. We examined and assessed possible environments for the publication.

Pamela D. Hall - Barry University

This service-learning project was developed mainly as the result of a mandate from the State of Florida to refrain from expelling or suspending Head Start children. Recently, Head Start officials mandated that preschool centers provide more socio-emotional support to the children in the classroom. Many preschoolers are leaving Head Start with emotional and behavioral concerns that put them at risk for placement in special education and/or being suspended or expelled from school for behavior problems.



Further, researchers have found that expulsion rates of preschoolers are higher than that of elementary and secondary students (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Gilliam, 2014). Expelling young children diminishes their chance to learn appropriate, desired behaviors that will prepare them for their future education. Hence, the first goal of the project was to improve the social-emotional development of 9 classes of Head Start children. Each class consisted of 17–22 children aged 4–5. Each week, one or two senior psychology majors from Barry University read a book to the Head Start children in each class. Next, they implemented an activity that addressed an aspect of social-emotional development. The Barry students visited the service-learning site run by the Haitian Youth Center of Florida twice weekly for 1.5 hours. The project also involved the use of photovoice for documenting and reflecting on the service-learning experience. Students demonstrated how they, as psychology majors, used their skills to overcome challenges as they provided social and emotional support for the children served by the project.

Finalists

Aileen Ochoa - Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus

Students enrolled in Professor Ochoa's Fundamentals of Speech Communication course at Miami Dade College are required to register and volunteer at a non-profit organization of their choice for a minimum of 5 hours as part of the curriculum. By so doing, they will have an opportunity to identify and practice specific communication skills and examine where their own civic values lie. Students are essentially required to become an ambassador for the organization they choose to work for. As a capstone project at the end of the semester, each member of the class presents a 15 minute informative speech, illustrating what their organization's mission is, who they serve, how it is funded as well as why the student chose this organization for their project. Finally, students are asked to relate as a personal reflection, how volunteering at their chosen organization impacted them personally and how the cause of this institution resonates with them individually.



Carlos Gonzalez - Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus

Students complete 50 hours of service while paired with a WOW individual at the WOW Center each semester. (The WOW Center is a not-for-profit organization that offers support, guidance and encouragement to adults with developmental disabilities in order



to help them become more independent.) Throughout their service, students complete various readings, oral presentations, 3 major writing assignments, numerous journal entries, and in-class dialogues reflecting back on their experience after each day at the WOW Center. The students are also responsible for creating and delivering weekly activities that are appropriate for the WOW Center individuals and help organize campus tours where the individuals from the WOW Center visit our campus. Additionally, by the end of the semester, the students realize that the individuals at the WOW Center are, in fact, powerful and effective teachers ... ones that show them about resilience, courage, and determination. The societal definitions of worth shift, and students often notice that the culture around them is based on a divisive objectifying

judgment.

Liza Greenberg - Miami Dade College, InterAmerican Campus

As part of the Public Space Challenge Grant awarded by the Miami Foundation to Miami Dade College InterAmerican Campus, students in College Preparatory Reading and Writing and English Composition participated in a variety of community service projects which focused on Placemaking, creating UrbanaSpace – a space that includes a walking path and grassy areas around the faculty parking lot - and community activation on campus and our surrounding neighborhood of Little Havana. Students partnered with the community groups Live Healthy Little Havana and Vamonos to learn the demographics, culture, and needs of Little Havana and with Sacha Suarez, a community leader and mindfulness teacher. Students then researched, created, and implemented, in the community, a series of Healthy Eats Walks and Mindful Walks. Students produced the artifacts (maps/healthy eats tips and maps/mindful walks and tips) in both English and Spanish. In addition, students learned about the natural history, cultural history, and socioeconomic context of the primitive, unique, and highly endangered Florida Pine Rockland habitat from community expert Roger Hammer – a naturalist specializing in Florida plants and flowers, campus Earth Ethics Institute leader Mike Matthews – a leader/lecturer on Florida ecology/natural history, earth literacy, and ecospirituality, and Max Couper – a full-time ESL lecturer and native plant specialist.



One group of students created educational posters on the natural history, flora, and fauna of the Pine Rockland in order to help raise awareness within the Little Havana community. Next, students engaged in hands-on planning and creation of Florida Pine Rockland Habitat: clearing a corner of UrbanaSpace (corner of 6th and 27th Ave.), cleaning area, digging, preparing the soil, planting, watering, etc. The result is an on-going Pine Rockland habitat showcase and natural space where students and community members can learn, reflect, relax, and engage. These Placemaking Healthy Eats Walks, Mindful Walks, and the Pinerockland habitat projects are all ongoing and will engage our students, campus community, and the people of Little Havana for years to come.

Susannah Brown - Florida Atlantic University

In collaboration with VRH Consultants lead by Vera Ripp Hirschhorn, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) students and I have designed curriculum that was implemented with elementary, middle and high school students through *I'm Somebody and So Are You*, a character education program. FAU students not only provided feedback for Vera Hirschhorn during teacher training through the Special Needs Art (undergraduate) and Art in Secondary School (graduate) courses, but implemented curriculum designed in collaboration with the community partner at various school sites through Academic Service Learning (ASL) projects. A major part of the ASL projects has resulted in publication for VRH Consultants of five books. This reflects the importance of curriculum design and implementation in the educational research process involving community organizations and ASL.

