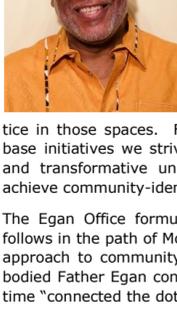


The Egan Newsletter

The Egan Office for Urban Education and Community Partnerships

Volume 1, Issue 1 April 2, 2018

From the Director



The Egan Office of Urban Education and Community Partnerships continues to provide a platform for community voices and a catalyst for change in Chicago's most disadvantaged communities.

The Egan Office has a rich history of integrating academic excellence with authentic community engagement. Our students are situated front and center on critical issues confronting our schools and grapple with the ideal of social justice in those spaces. From our veteran's project to the school-base initiatives we strive to negotiate an intentional, systematic and transformative university-community approach that would achieve community-identified outcomes.

The Egan Office formula for university-community engagement follows in the path of Monsignor John J. Egan and John McKnight's approach to community engagement. The activist role that embodied Father Egan confronted unjust systems while at the same time "connected the dots" to create impact particularly in communities of color. McKnight's asset-based approach recognizes that real community building starts from identifying the strengths and gifts that already exist in the community.

We are excited in sharing a snapshot of the Egan's recent work in Chicago communities and the voices that are involved in community building.

John W. Zeigler

John W. Zeigler, Director



Staff

- John Zeigler**
Director of the Egan Office
- Lourdes Sullivan**
Assistant Director of the Egan Office
- Walidah Bennet**
Director of Multi-Faith Veteran Support Initiative
- Jeanette Estrada**
Jumpstart Site Manager
- Sol Logsdon**
PSI Program Coordinator
- Zuleyma Gonzalez**
CSI Program Coordinator
- Mwende May**
Administrative Assistant
- Nataliya Shtym**
Graduate Assistant

Council of Elders

The Council of Elders was created in an effort to learn and share stories, wisdom, teachings and experiences from Chicago's profound activists.

Traditionally, Elders are the wisdom-keepers selected by their peoples as caretakers of the sacred teachings, experiences, stories and practices of their cultures passed down generation after generation. The Egan Office recognizes the intellectual, scholarly and cultural contributions of some of Chicago's Elders who have played an active role in politics, education, and in the environment.

The Council of Elders works closely with Egan's staff and students to share their collective wisdom and knowledge to reinforce the vision and mission statement of the Egan Office. Our past roundtables have focused on children's rights, which included guest speaker, Celine Woznica and her work surrounding Child-to-Child methodology in Central America. Our most recent guest speaker was Naomi Davis, founder of Blacks in Green, an organization that focuses on environmental issues faced by families in the Chicago area.

The Egan Office and the Council of Elders will continue their mission of community building through future projects.

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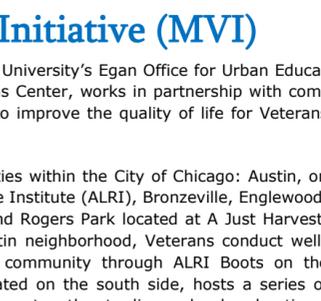
Parents as Disruptors



On September 26, 2017, the Egan and its University and community partners launched a series of events that brought together family leaders who are actively advocating for quality public education for their children in their own neighborhoods. The first event featured an inspirational presentation by Rosie Simpson, one of the parents who led the 1963 Boycott of Chicago Public Schools. A second event, held on November 13th, featured family and community leaders who took part in the 2015 hunger strike that resulted in saving Dyett High School from closure. In 2001, family and community leaders from Little Village held a hunger strike that won a new high school in Little Village—Little Village Lawndale High School. Both of these events were well-attended by DePaul faculty and students and family leaders and their community partners.

Our third event was held at Little Village Lawndale High School. Several current family leaders discussed the challenges and successes they face today around issues such as school closings, special education, early childhood education, bilingual education, sanctuary schools and budget cuts. They emphasized how strong, well-informed and well-organized they had to become in order to speak their truths and be heard as equal partners in their children's education. The feedback on these events was highly positive and inspired all of us to expand the efforts.

To learn more about Parents as Disruptors visit: <http://parentsasdisruptors.com/>



Member Spotlight

Prexy Nesbitt is an educator and activist. His career focus is on African history, foreign policy, political economy and race. Over the course of five decades he has lead extensive consulting and training on class, race and diversity. Prexy continues to speak on social justice issues relating to race and teaches African history courses at Columbia College in Chicago.

Multi-Faith Veteran Initiative (MVI)

The Multi-Faith Veteran Initiative, housed at DePaul University's Egan Office for Urban Education & Community Partnerships (UECP) at the Steans Center, works in partnership with communities to develop an extended reach of support to improve the quality of life for Veterans and Veteran Families.

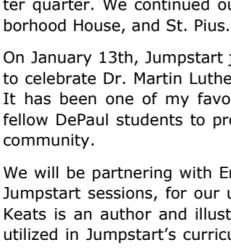
MVI works collaboratively in the following communities within the City of Chicago: Austin, on the Westside located at the Arthur Lockhart Resource Institute (ALRI), Bronzeville, Englewood, Washington Park through the Mid-South Network and Rogers Park located at A Just Harvest. The Arthur Lockhart Resource Institute, in the Austin neighborhood, Veterans conduct wellness checks on other veterans within the Austin community through ALRI Boots on the Ground program. The Mid-South Collaborative, located on the south side, hosts a series of forums where veterans and veteran organizations come together to discuss local and national policies impacting the veteran community and that will disproportionately affect veterans and veteran family members. The Mid-South Collaborative also sponsors Veterans Read, a program that allows veterans to read to and mentor children attending Henderson Academy in Englewood. A Just Harvest, located in Rogers Park connects veterans with Circle and Ciphers, a restorative justice organization that uses art and hip-hop to connect with youth impacted by violence and brings together veterans within the Rodgers Park community monthly to connect with community resource providers and provide peer-to-peer support through a Coffee Collaborative.



Recently, MVI partnered with Volunteers of America to host a Moral Injury Forum where attendees had the opportunity to discuss moral injury, its effects on Veterans, and the work being done by organizations across communities to support veterans and their families. Representatives from the State of Illinois, City of Chicago Veterans Administration and McCormick Foundation also were in attendance, highlighting the critical importance of the Moral Injury as an issue within the veteran community but also the work of MVI.

"The Multi-Faith Veteran Initiative, works in partnership with communities to develop an extended reach of support to improve the quality of life for Veterans and Veteran Families."

Jumpstart



Jumpstart's mission is "Children first." Using an asset-based approach, DePaul's Jumpstart program with the Egan Office (UECP) asks their Corps members to look for ways to build on the community, family, and children strengths. Jumpstart provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities and promotes quality early learning for all.

Recent event and/or projects:

The 2017-2018 Jumpstart team began their first sessions in Lawndale Community Academy (LCA) in the winter quarter. We continued our partnership with Gads Hill, Erie Neighborhood House, and St. Pius.

On January 13th, Jumpstart joined DePaul Law for their Donate-A-Day to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with PBCSI and Marillac House. It has been one of my favorite events of the year- we worked with fellow DePaul students to provide a day of fun for the children of our community.

We will be partnering with Erie Neighborhood House, one of the preschools that take part in Jumpstart sessions, for our upcoming Literacy Event highlighting Ezra Jack Keats. Ezra Jack Keats is an author and illustrator of many children's books, including some of the favorites utilized in Jumpstart's curriculum. It's going to be magic for the children to have the stories come to life through crafts and other activities and a fun way to engage with their parents and let them see firsthand how Jumpstart is dedicated to their children.

If you are interested in volunteering consider joining here: **'Volunteering Newsletter Signup Form'** <http://eeurl.com/dkclxl>



Role: Volunteer Coordinator for Jumpstart at DePaul
Education: Sophomore, Public Relations and Advertising major I am studying to do advertising for non-profits.
Projects/Events/Interesting Fact: I've been with Jumpstart since January 2017.

"Jumpstart provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities and promotes quality early learning for all."

Public School Internship (PSI) & Catholic School Internship (CSI)

The Public School Internship (PSI) and Catholic School Internship (CSI) programs are community service work-study programs that allow DePaul University students to serve in Chicago's most under-resourced schools providing classroom assistance, tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental enrichment activities.

In the tradition of Monsignor Egan, Egan student employees also learn about issues that impact communities and engage directly in action research, planning and programming aimed at addressing critical urban problems, alleviating poverty, and promoting social justice.

Students in the PSI and CSI programs also work on special projects in the schools and the communities they work in. These projects concentrate on developing and strengthening relationships with the students, schools



"Egan student employees learn about issues that impact communities and engage directly in action research."

Community Garden at Leif Ericson Elementary

Jan Gaetjens (PSI)

The community garden hosted at Leif Ericson Elementary is the product of strategic partnership between the school and Gardeners, a non-profit organization that strives to provide outdoor experiential learning opportunities around the topics of sustainable agriculture, food justice, and nutrition/wellness.

During the Fall, Spring, and Summer, Gardeners engages Ericson's lower school students through weekly lessons in the garden space. In Spring of 2018, this program will expand to include a third day of upper division engagement, as well as after school opportunities for students and families. The garden's Spring season kicks off in just a few short weeks with two scheduled workdays, during which the space will be cleaned and prepped for the upcoming growing season.

Consistent with the ABCD model of strengths-based development and authentic ownership, the garden is jointly governed by Gardeners and a Garden Advisory Committee, composed of diverse stakeholders including parents and community partner representatives.

As the garden continues to grow as a physical space, expanding the service population to include non-school affiliated community members is chief among development priorities. Additional plots have been allocated for community gardening, and plans have begun to be developed for signage welcoming the Garfield Park community at large to use the garden for activities ranging from barbecues to yoga sessions to growing produce.



SCO Jan dressed up as a panda for Ericson's Fall fest held in the Community Garden

Ghana Project at Henderson Elementary

Deja Lyles (PSI)

The Ghana Project was created to give African-American students not only a comprehensive study and experience of West African culture, but to allow them to re-connect with a culture lost through colonialism and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In the program students learn authentic Ghanaian and West African history from native Ghanaians and Ghanaian Americans while participating in traditional West African dance, story-telling, and drumming while learning its significance related to their ancient history and culture.

The program encompasses both a social and academic component, but more importantly—this program is designed to promote and increase community and identity. During the course of the program students underwent a naming ceremony where they received authentic Ghanaian names as well as learned traditional Ghanaian phrases with which they must call and greet one another. The purpose of the naming ceremony and the learning of traditional Ghanaian phrases and words is to create a community within a community. Too often African-American students are exposed to mediums that promote self-hatred, disunity, and violence and these messages often produce a warped sense of self and community—one that echoes the trauma and societal oppression faced by African-Americans since their arrival in North America, a trauma which has deprived Black people, especially Black youth, the privilege to partake in the values and cultures of their ancestors. The Ghana Project offers students a space where they can celebrate their history, their culture, and most importantly themselves and one-another.

The program formally began March 6th, 2018, and the participants range from ages 9 to 12.



Students eagerly sat in their desks at Ghana School Community Organizers Deja Lyles and Rose Akusoa who the students affectionately refer to as "Mama Akosua" and "Mama Rose" set up the projector which read in bold letters "My Beloved Country Ghana" as a beautiful array of Kente Cloth with enchanting colors was laid on the table. Mama Rose began speaking, they listened, they asked questions, they grazed the cloth. They received their names and learned they were brothers and sisters. They came as James', Cameroon's, Alena's, and Destiny's and they left as Kofi's, Kwaku's, Yaa's, and Abena's—an intertwining of present and the past. A more complete picture of who they are, African and American.



Role: School Community Organizer (SCO) at Henderson
Education: MA English, Writing and Publishing
Current Projects: Leads After-School Girls Poetry Corner & currently creating a book of poetry and collages created by poems written by students at Henderson
Interesting Fact: At age 12, I was almost "Nala" in the Broadway version of The Lion King

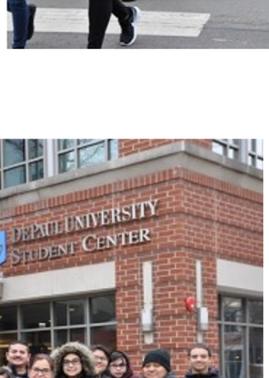
San Miguel Parents College Visit

Sam Mayers-White (CSI)

Parents from San Miguel were recently able to come to the DePaul Lincoln Park campus for a college visit. With support from the Egan office and other DePaul organizations, SCO Sam, was able to organize this college visit which focused on enhancing the parent's understanding of college life and the incoming process. During their visit, parents got to tour the campus, speak to current students and admissions counselors. They were able to learn and ask questions about DePaul, the student's college experience and financial aid.

This college visit was different than most offered in that it focused on helping parents understands the entire college application process. This visit was also in Spanish to make things easier for parents that are often left behind in the traditional college visits. Having this tailored visit allows the parents to feel more prepared when it comes time to help their children apply for college. San Miguel's parents visit was the first of its kind but the Egan office hopes to reproduce this type of college visit in the future with other school partners.

The next parents college visit will be in May with parents from Nixon elementary.



Questions or comments? Call us at (773)325-7097

Egan Office of UECP | Student Center 306 | 2250 N. Sheffield Ave. Chicago, IL 60614

Newsletter Team: Angela Godoy, Nataliya Shtym & Sol Logsdon

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for Urban Education and Community Partnerships at the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning