



# SERVICE-LEARNING

**About Service-Learning** Service-Learning is a high-impact educational practice that engages students in organized service activities and guided reflection. The service activities benefit the community and enhance the academic curriculum of the participating students.

**Vision** To become a leader in the development of mindful and engaged citizens who contribute to a more just and humane world.

**Mission** To deepen our understanding of civic responsibility and enhance our capacity to act as locally responsive and globally aware citizens.

## Message from the Director



### Lynn Pelco, Ph.D.

Associate vice provost, Division of Community Engagement

The Division of Community Engagement's 10-year anniversary provides a wonderful moment to reflect on the impact of service-learning on VCU students, faculty and our surrounding communities. At heart, service-learning is about reciprocity; innovative, community-engaged pedagogy deepens student learning and civic engagement and leverages students' skills to address community-identified needs. Research demonstrates this: VCU undergraduates exposed to service-learning in their first two years are retained and graduate at higher rates.

Service-learning also engages faculty members in meaningful partnerships with community organizations, and the increase in faculty members who teach service-learning classes - from 35 instructors in 2008 to 132 this year - indicates the value they find in their service-learning work. Many of these partnerships develop into lasting, long-term relationships. Art Education Department faculty members, for instance, have partnered with Carver Promise for the past six years, and the School of Dentistry has maintained a service-learning partnership with the Free Clinic of Central Virginia for more than 10 years.

It's important to note what hasn't changed in 10 years: service-learning remains a high-impact educational practice that maximizes student learning and success, enhances student and faculty engagement with Richmond and the region and directly benefits our community.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**4,091** students enrolled in service-learning courses.

**251** service-learning class sections offered students engaged learning opportunities.

Service-learning students provided **81,820** hours of service.

**\$23,650** in grants supported innovative, community-engaged teaching.

**132** faculty taught designated service-learning courses.



## SERVICE-LEARNING NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

### SERVICE-LEARNING FACULTY FELLOW

Lindsay Chudzik, assistant professor in the University College Department of Focused Inquiry, was recognized as the 2017 Outstanding Faculty Member by the Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement.

### THE CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY FARM

(formerly Community Food Collaborative, CCF) was awarded a \$50,000 grant by the National Association of Conservation Districts. CCF received the Council for Community Engagement's Award for Exemplary University-Community Partnership, Student-Initiated, in 2015 and is a longtime community partner for Professor Joseph Cates' UNIV 211 "Food for Thought" service-learning course.

**THREE SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS** were supported by Service-Learning Partnership Grants in 2016-17:

- Bee Coston, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, "Improving the Lives of LGBTQ+ Young Richmonders of Color: Post Traumatic Healing and Wellness through Community-Based Participatory Research," in partnership with the Virginia Anti-Violence Project.
- Michelle Peace, Department of Forensic Science, "STEM in Out of School Time and Extracurricular Activities," in partnership with Communities in Schools-Richmond and NextUp.
- Marcia Winter, Department of Psychology, "Developing and Extending the Scope of Seymour's Living Lab at Children's Museum of Richmond," in partnership with the Children's Museum of Richmond.

### SERVICE-LEARNING STUDENT

**ENROLLMENT** in 2016-17 exceeded 4,000 – surpassing the University's 2018 strategic goal a year early. Since 2012, student enrollment has increased by 58%.

# Chelsea Ortiz Gains Skills for Medical Career through Service-Learning



**FOR CHELSEA ORTIZ**, a rising senior majoring in chemistry with a minor in psychology, the “big picture” has always been going to medical school.

But during her first year at VCU, she enrolled in a section of Focused Inquiry that was taught by Assistant Professor Jamie Fueglein. The course was a service-learning course.

“I had no clue what service-learning was or how it would impact my life,” she said. “Little did I know that service-learning would eventually teach me the skills that I will need as a doctor - empathy, passion, patience - skills I would have never developed solely in the classroom.”

Since taking the service-learning course her first year, Ortiz has continued to develop her community engagement, serving for four semesters as a Service-Learning Teaching Assistant (SLTA) for Fueglein’s service-learning courses.

**“The class works in Carver Elementary School with a program called Carver Promise, which provides mentoring so each student gets one-on-one interaction to work on math, reading, problem solving skills and to just have someone to talk to,”** Ortiz said. **“When I hear a student ask me if I can come extra days, I can’t help but smile, because I know that I am making a difference in the children’s lives and that they look forward to our time together.”**

For more information on Ortiz’s work with Carver Promise, watch the video her service-learning class created at <http://bit.ly/2urvx2t>.



A photograph showing a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a black polo shirt, drawing on a large whiteboard with a purple marker. She is facing away from the camera, towards the whiteboard. In the background, several children are visible, looking at the drawing. The drawing on the board features a green outline of a house with a chimney and a door labeled "SAF".

**VCU sociology**  
**students** collaborate  
with middle schoolers at  
the Bellemeade Community  
Center as part of Susan  
Bodnar-Deren and Molly B.  
Ransone's SOCY 391  
course: "Forging Cultures  
of Resilience."