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Westfield Engages strengthens, expands and celebrates our civic learning and engagement activities and community service opportunities for our campus community. It is a powerful way for the university to engage, transform, and foster mutually beneficial relationships with our local, regional, national, and global neighbors.



WESTFIELD STATE AMBASSADORS: In the Community to Serve

*“Whatever we can raise
to help the children
for Hope for Limpopo
would be great.”*

— Kim Morgan,
*Student Ambassadors’
Program Coordinator*

The Westfield State University Student Ambassadors are an innovative and service-minded group of students who are dedicated to not only the University, but the surrounding community as well. They are very involved in the local community, and participate in many community service projects.

Student Ambassadors represent the University, both on and off campus, and must reflect the values of Westfield State. Kim Morgan, Student Ambassadors’ Program Coordinator says, “To be selected, students must be responsible, dedicated and present themselves as student leaders willing to commit themselves to furthering the reach of the University.”

“We usually split our time equally between the campus and community projects,” says Morgan. There are quite a few examples of their service.

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

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Recently, the student ambassadors worked with Huntington's Littleville Elementary School students in a mentoring program. Ramping up their civic engagement, Morgan said, "We wanted the Littleville students to know that even though they're elementary school students, they can do something to help someone else and make a difference."

The service-learning project was to benefit the Hope for Limpopo organization in South Africa. Hope for Limpopo, incorporated in 2005, helps the impoverished women and children of South Africa. Co-founder and treasurer Jo Ann Churchill, a counselor in Westfield State's Counseling Center and her late husband, Vaughn, were Peace Corps volunteers. "When we returned from the Peace Corps, we wanted to continue to help the women and children we had been working with," said Churchill.

The student ambassadors had heard about the TOMS shoes giving program. The company donates shoes to needy children around the world. With the help of a grant from the Kiwanis of Greater Westfield, twenty pairs of shoes were purchased and brought out to the children at Littleville Elementary School who were participating in the ambassadors' mentorship program.

The shoes, painted by second-, third- and fourth-graders, are being auctioned off.

"We didn't set a goal for this fundraiser; we're just hoping people will be generous," Morgan said. "It's a worthy cause. Whatever we can raise to help the children for Hope for Limpopo would be great." The funds raised through the TOMS shoe auction benefitted the Vhutshilo Mountain School, which serves severely underprivileged orphans and children ages 2 to 8. To inquire about purchasing shoes, contact Kim Morgan at kmorgan@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5400.



Churchill said one of Hope for Limpopo's goals is to get youth involved in charitable collaborations, so this fundraiser with the Westfield State Student Ambassadors and the Littleville School students is ideal.

"We really appreciate everyone's support and obviously, their heart is also into it," Churchill said. Those interested in learning more can visit their website, hopeforlimpopo.org.

The ambassadors also mentor students at the White Oak School in Westfield, which specializes in education for students with language-based learning disabilities in grades 4–12. They are conducting workshops on bystander responsibility and preventing bullying. "We do role-playing with breakout sessions where the students get the opportunity to discuss experiences and strategies

surrounding bullying," says ambassador Sara Varghese '15.



Samaritan Inn, assisting twice a week with serving the evening snack.

The ambassadors are busy on campus, as well. Albert Fava, '16, a criminal justice major, is the one of the newest ambassadors and has been able to tap into a personal interest. "My dad is part of a company that teaches people with developmental disabilities how to function in society. It is something that I have grown up with and the other ambassadors have supported my idea of having a

"We wanted the Littleville students to know that even though they're elementary school students, they can do something to help someone else and make a difference."

— Kim Morgan



STANLEY PARK: Study and Service

*“Know a place,
love it and care
for the species
and people who
inhabit it.”*

— Dr. Brian Conz,
Geography and Regional
Planning Department

As a public institution of higher education,

Westfield State University has a special responsibility to our immediate community and beyond. Over the years, our students, faculty, staff, facilities and programming have contributed to the community. These initiatives are mutually beneficial and are expanding to engage with our local and global communities with new ideas about ways to collaborate.

In a team effort, Dr. Brian Conz, of the Geography and Regional Planning department (GARP) and Dr. Vanessa Diana, of the English department are leading two stand-alone courses during the Fall 2014 semester that focus on Stanley Park—directly across from the University’s campus. Stanley Park is a privately owned 300-

acre park that was established in 1945 by the philanthropist Frank Stanley Beveridge. The park includes a number of gardens, as well as a playground, soccer fields, tennis courts, picnic area, wildlife sanctuary, colonial pond, covered bridge, and blacksmith shop. It is free and open to the public daily from May to November.

Conz is teaching Physical Geography, in which students engage in multiple lab sessions with field work performed in Stanley Park designed to make them familiar with the geographic processes, flora, and fauna. “This course manifests what we do in GARP, which is education using a local context to engender and foster a love of place,” Conz says. “That ideally translates into a sense



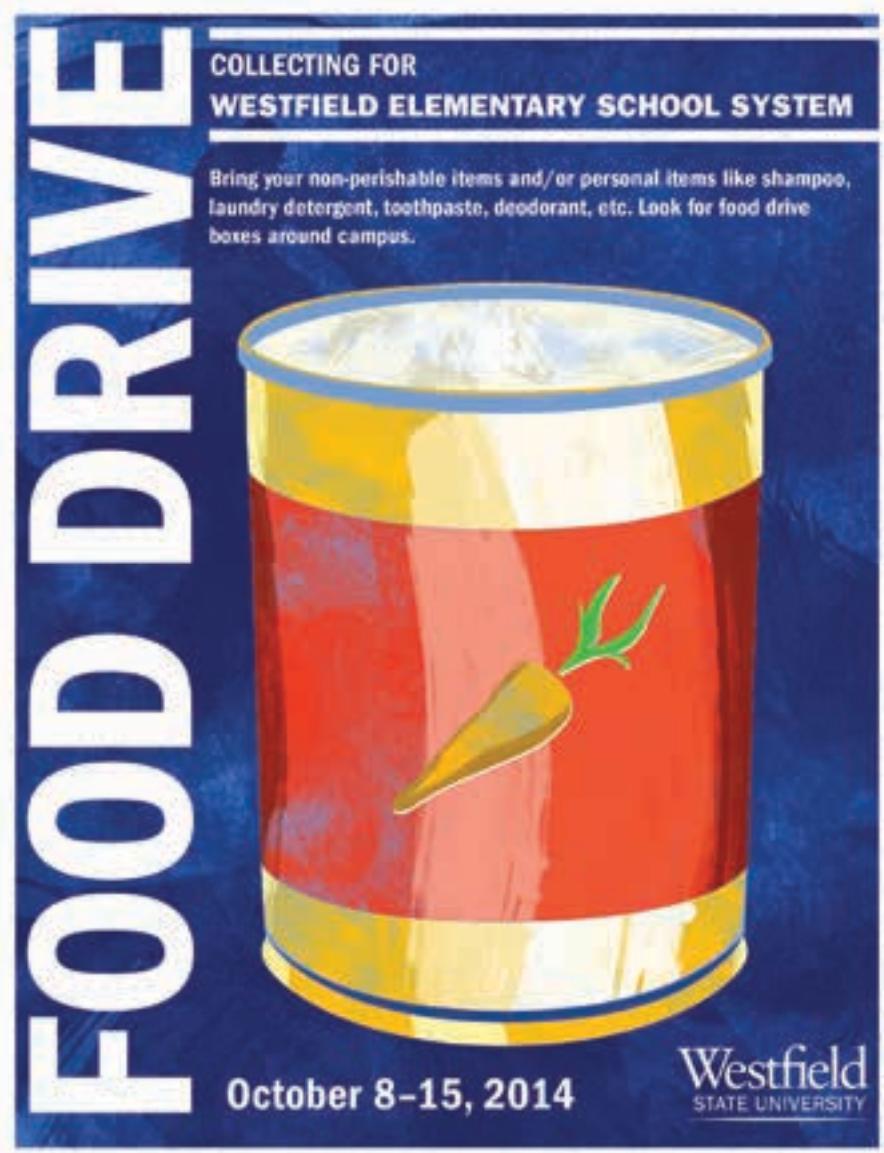
of responsibility and stewardship. In other words, know a place, love it and care for the species and people who inhabit it.”

Diana is teaching the first-year English Composition course. Her students have numerous and varied assignments about the park. For instance, they are writing about Stanley Park’s role in the community; assessing and creating websites and social media pages devoted to the park; supporting campaigns to raise awareness on campus about park issues; and inviting fellow students to engage in service activities at the park.

Diana’s students are also writing about “a sense of place,” conducting research projects based on

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— Dr. Brian Conz



NURSING STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

“The students’ enthusiasm has a tremendous positive effect on the atmosphere of the clinic.”

— Michele McKelvey,
Nursing Department

Following in the footsteps of Westfield State’s first graduating class of nurses last May, nursing students continue the legacy of devoted community service by expanding their reach and services. During the fall 2014 semester, student nurses traveled through Westfield and the surrounding communities to collect and distribute food donations, provide public health screenings and information, and conduct influenza vaccine clinics, just to name a few service activities.

Community service programs are integral to the nursing program. This year’s service began in September with a canned food drive. Donation boxes speckled the campus and our neighboring community, asking everyone to donate canned goods. By the end of October, students and faculty delivered food donations to three separate schools, and children walked home with grocery bags filled with pantry staples for their families.

In October, nursing students and faculty joined in the Health Fair at Eastfield Mall in Springfield. The students screened participants for elevated blood pressure and blood sugar. The test results were discussed with the participants to explain if they were at risk for hypertension or diabetes. “I was glad I could offer support and answer their questions about heart health,” says Bridget Everett, ’16 who felt Westfield State’s nursing students at the health fair provided “very convenient access to health information” for the people in the mall.



In addition, the students also offered state-of-the-art skin screenings to reveal how much sun damage had been done to a participant’s face. “I spent my time at the skin scanner, providing information about skin damage and describing ways to prevent it,” says Lauren Pinette, a first-year nursing student. She was surprised by how many people were hesitant to scan their face, saying, “I’m afraid of the results.” Following the scan, Lauren calmed their fears by explaining the meaning of the “orange, purple and white spots” revealed by the scan and gave them information about future protection from sun exposure.

With flu season well under way, students also have been administering flu shots at area influenza immunization clinics. At this point, Westfield State students have administered over 150 influenza vaccines to senior residents in Westfield and the surrounding communities. Third-year student,

Hillary Duda, ’16 said, “I felt like I was reaching people that might be missed,” about her participation in the flu clinic at Noble Hospital in Westfield.

At the Northampton Senior Center, nursing professor Michele McKelvey administered flu vaccines while first-year students provided administrative assistance and information to the participants.

“We are reaching out to form mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations like senior centers. The students’ enthusiasm has a tremendous positive effect on the atmosphere of the clinic,” McKelvey said.

Chair of the department, Professor Karen Manning, shares her sentiment, believing that service not only aids the community but also gives students hands-on experience in the medical field and boosts their confidence in their community services abilities.

A great example of the mutual benefit of service occurred in the fall when the American Cancer Society’s national program, “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer,” welcomed participants to Stanley Park in Westfield, and so did Westfield nursing students. The Strides program is designed as an information resource and fundraiser for people affected by breast cancer.

At their first stop, the registration table, participants were greeted by Westfield State nursing students who had helped set up the tent and were a resource for information. “I welcomed them and then cheered and clapped for the survivors as they walked through Stanley Park,” said student Meagan Pinette, ’18. She hopes to continue volunteering with community efforts to educate people, improve public

“I felt like I was reaching people that might be missed.”

— Hillary Duda, ’16

health and end deadly diseases. “This experience allowed me to practice my nursing skills, especially by being a good listener and supporter for those affected by breast cancer. The best medicine for cancer patients is support,” she said.

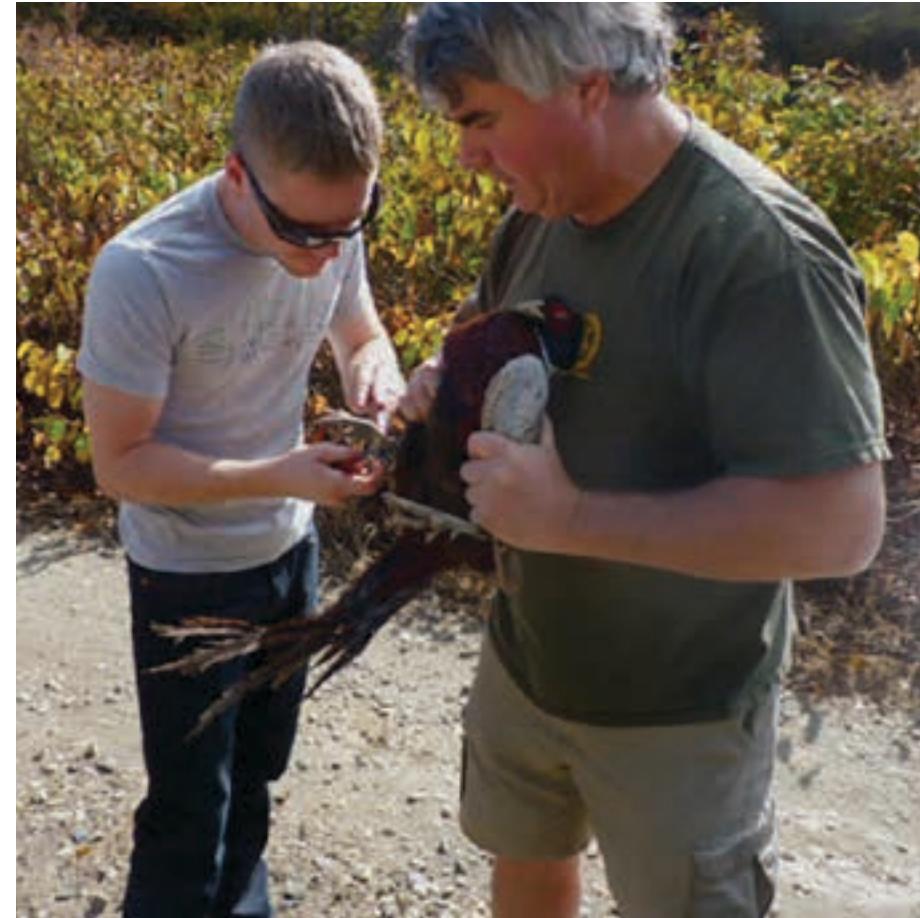
Throughout the year, nursing students participate in health fairs and visit area schools, teaching students about nursing, while encouraging the students to pursue their dreams, including joining the medical field. These programs strengthen the relationship between the community and Westfield State, while promoting a feeling of satisfaction and pride in our nursing students. ■

WESTFIELD STATE STUDENTS ‘BAND’ TOGETHER WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE WILDLIFE MANAGERS



During November, Westfield State’s environmental science program (ENVS) students participated in banding birds’ legs at the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area in Huntington, Mass. Bird banding is essential to bird conservation, as it contributes greatly to the study of birds’ habits, like migration and life span. By attaching a small metal or plastic band around a bird’s leg, researchers are able to identify individual birds by the unique number on each band. This method has been used for centuries; the first record of a metal

band attached to a bird’s leg was in 1595 when Henry IV’s banded peregrine falcon was lost in France. “The students put leg bands on just under 100 birds,” said ENVS Professor John McDonald, Ph.D., who brought students from his Wildlife and Ecology Management class to the Knightville Dam on two different days in November. “We went on a Friday, one day before hunting season’s opening day, and then again during a mid-week stocking later in the month,” said McDonald. The Westfield students partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who,



“They were able to get an understanding of why the state continues to stock pheasants and how hunters value the opportunity to pursue these birds.”

— John McDonald, Ph.D.,
Environmental Science Department

on behalf of the state, manage Knightville to protect and enhance its wildlife.

“We also cooperated with the Ashfield Rod and Gun Club, to band about 240 birds that the private club raised and released on areas open to public hunting,” said McDonald. The students’ foray into the field enabled them to physically band some of the birds, while working side-by-side with the state’s biologists and Club members. “They were able to get an understanding of why the state continues to stock pheasants and how hunters value the opportunity to pursue these birds.”

Band recovery information is widely used in wildlife ecology and management to estimate survival rates, harvest rates, and populations. “Our students were using this information in class to examine questions like which birds would have higher recovery rates— those stocked by the

state or by the Club, would returns be greater for birds stocked prior to opening day or during the season, what is the minimum proportion of stocked birds that are taken by hunters,” reported McDonald.

A week before the end of the hunting season, hunters had reported approximately 90 bands on downed birds. “The students will use the data this semester,” says McDonald, “but this data set will also be useful in future sections of the class that deal with population estimation methods.” In addition, individual identification of birds makes it possible for researchers to study their behavior and social structure, life span and survival rate, reproductive success, and population growth.

“This kind of research with our students and faculty makes a difference for the community as a whole,” says ENVS department chair, Michael Vorwerk, Ph.D.,

adding, “I think this is a really cool example of our students and faculty making a difference – engaging with state, federal, and private agencies to do work that needed to be done and to collect data that would not otherwise have been collected.”

In the future, the various groups managing the bird populations and hunting in Massachusetts will have more information. And Westfield State students will have a long-term dataset to work with in their class, gain practical hands-on skills and experience, and establish a network of professionals in the field. ■



HOOT DAY 2014

"HOOT Day is a great opportunity for all students of Westfield State to volunteer their time and service to their new hometown of Westfield."

— Brian Farrell '15
Circle K President



Westfield State University's fifth annual HOOT Day was held on Tuesday September 2. More than 150 students volunteered for the event, organized by Circle K. Created in 2010, HOOT Day is a community service program designed to bring together Westfield State students and the City of Westfield to provide students a way to learn about their new home for the next four years.

Students volunteered at local Westfield businesses in a variety of ways including painting, cleaning, and gardening. The following businesses participated this year: Amelia Park Ice Rink, Cost Cutters, Domus, Flowers by Webster, Grandmother's Garden, The Seat Weaver, Stanley Park, The Tavern Restaurant, Westfield Athenaeum, Westfield Boys and Girls Club, Westfield Parks & Recreation,

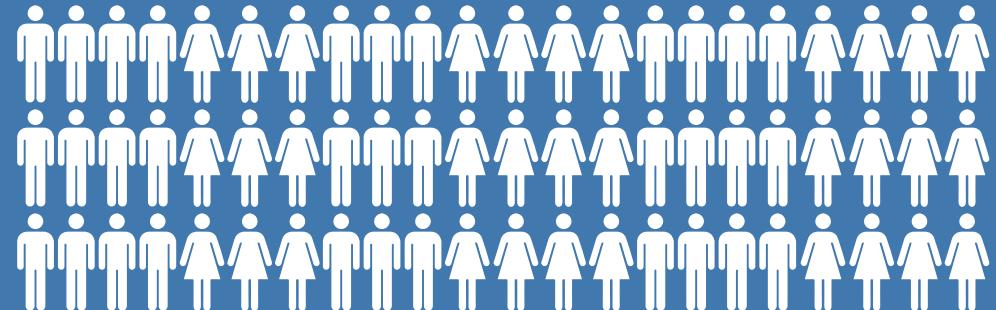
the YMCA of Greater Westfield and Fort Meadow School/Volunteers in Public Schools.

"HOOT Day is a great opportunity for all students of Westfield State to volunteer their time and service to their new hometown of Westfield," said Circle K President Brian Farrell '15. "The people and businesses we assist are always so grateful and volunteering is a satisfying, humbling experience."

HOOT Day was made possible by the hard work of many city offices including the City of Westfield Mayor's Office, the Westfield School Department, the Greater Westfield Non-Profits Association, Westfield State's offices of Residential Life, Advancement & University Relations, Office of the President, and Student Affairs. ■



HOOT DAY



150 STUDENTS



13 BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS



"Volunteering is a satisfying, humbling experience."



The Newsletter of Westfield State University's Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement

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westfield engages.
we make a difference.



**APPRECIATE THE POSITIVE ENERGIES OF VOLUNTEERISM,
AND RECOGNIZE THE POWER AND NECESSITY OF SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION AND JUSTICE.**

Submit your Westfield Engages activity today!

Visit the Westfield Engages website to learn about the activities of your classmates and colleagues. You can submit your University-sponsored civic engagement activities for inclusion on the site, just follow the link provided.

Individually, each effort is commendable, but together they are an outstanding example of positive social change.