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CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD IS IN OUR DNA
The Common Thread

2012
At Education Management Corporation (EDMC), the uniqueness of each of our schools is a hallmark of the individuality that exists in each of the communities we serve. After all, it’s the singular abilities, perspectives and passions of our faculty, staff and students that set us apart, yet make us one in the spirit of giving. No matter how different we may be, how varied our talents and interests, there is one universal tie that binds us together: our desire to connect with the world around us by reaching out to those in need, sharing our time and our resources, and touching lives in ways that make a difference.

For 50 years, we have served communities across North America, providing a quality education to hundreds of thousands of students. Every year, we commit to doing what we can to help build “community” — devoting energy and compassion to help others in need.

At our more than 100 schools, giving back is the common thread that creates the fabric of who we are, what we stand for and what we will be — as individuals, as a higher education provider and as a community. It’s in our DNA.

*Our school systems include: The Art Institutes, Argosy University, Brown Mackie College and South University. We provide rigorous academic programs offered in supportive environments with measured practical outcomes that enhance our students’ lives.*
ARGOSY UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA
PROFESSOR DEDICATED TO THE CARE OF PATIENTS WITH, AND CURE OF, LUPUS

Argosy University, Atlanta Associate Professor Dr. Adair White-Johnson has suffered from lupus for more than 20 years. Each year, she joins the cause against lupus by participating in Atlanta’s Walk for Lupus Now. Taking place for the sixth year in 2012, the Atlanta walk is the largest in the nation with more than 5,000 participants raising essential funds for the Georgia Chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America.

White-Johnson, who was named one of the 2012 Faces of Hope for the sixth annual Walk for Lupus Now, led a team of family and friends walking at the event, and she was featured in the collateral for the 2012 event.

“We are so honored and inspired by Adair’s courage and determination. Adair is the mother of five children and gives so much to so many,” said Maria Myler, president and CEO of The Lupus Foundation of America, Georgia Chapter, Inc.

The Lupus Foundation of America (LFA) is the nation’s leading nonprofit voluntary health organization dedicated to finding the causes of and cure for lupus and providing support and services to all people affected by lupus. It is the oldest and largest national nonprofit voluntary health organization focused on improving the quality of life for people with lupus. Their unique dual mission serves the ongoing needs of people affected by lupus today while leading efforts to find a cure — from care to cure.

Ninety percent of every dollar donated for the event stays in Georgia to ensure the local chapter continues to provide and expand valuable free educational programs and advocacy and awareness efforts, including nine symposiums and programs and new support groups in new communities across Georgia. The group also supports the national research efforts funding and advocating for investment in lupus, and aims to continue to be a lifeline for patients and a voice increasing lupus awareness with billboards on our highways, public service announcements and a growing number of events.

“Ten years ago, no one spoke of lupus; there was little awareness and understanding of the signs and symptoms and very little investment in research. No one and no organ is safe. Lupus affects men, women and children and is a significant, life-diminishing and life-threatening disease that can cause significant damage to the body, including the heart, lungs, kidneys and brain, as well as skin and joints, at any time,” said Myler.
Sept. 11, 2011, marked the anniversary of the terrorist attacks that brought down the Twin Towers in New York City. On that day, 343 firefighters and other first responders lost their lives as a result of those attacks and, 10 years later, the city of Chicago set out to pay tribute to the fallen and raise funds for their families. Argosy University, Chicago was there to help with volunteers for the event.

A 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb was organized at the Aon building in downtown Chicago, where firefighters from all over the Midwest, together with other emergency personnel and their families, would climb the 80 floors in honor of their fallen brethren. This included a group of firefighters who biked from Missouri to Chicago. Each participant in the climb wore a bib marked with the name, photograph and engine number of each of the first responders who died. The climb began at 9:11 a.m.

Registration costs and individual pledges were donated to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, which helps the families of those who have fallen in the line of duty.

Led by the campus Student Government Association, a group of Argosy University, Chicago students and employees served as volunteers at the event. “It was wonderful to see a group of people that don’t usually have a lot of interaction at such a large campus come together and rally around the cause,” said Student Government Association President and Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology student Jessica Plonka. Students and staff shared the pain and the pride of first responders from all over the country who climbed in honor of the fallen by cheering on the climbers at the event, providing water and snacks, and assisting with other event duties.

“This gave us the opportunity to reflect together about how the events of 9/11 impacted our lives. So much of our time is spent inside our own heads, in our studies and in our own worlds,” said Plonka. “This was a humbling reminder about how much larger life and the world are and can be.”
More than 5,600 lives of fragile infants and their families have been impacted by Argosy University, Dallas alumna Dr. Elizabeth Heyne through the nonprofit organization the Low Birth Weight Development Center (LBWDC). A 2010 graduate of the Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology program at the campus, Heyne, PA-C, PsyD, IMHE (IV) and her husband, Dr. Roy Heyne, both specialists in the field of low birth weight pediatrics, founded the agency in 1992. The mission of the Low Birth Weight Development Center is to respond to the needs of families having or who are at risk of having a low birth weight infant by providing family-centered, community-oriented support services such as Early Head Start, Teen Parenting Assistance, and Infant Mental Health and Research. LBWDC is a unique, multifaceted, comprehensive program designed to meet the complex needs of high-risk, low birth weight infants, from birth to age 3, and their young, low-income parents. LBWDC is the only agency of its kind in the United States. In Texas, more than 5,000 very low birth weight babies are born each year. Most of these babies can spend three months or more in a neonatal intensive care unit prior to being discharged, and they need additional care to ensure they thrive once they go home. The infants served at the Low Birth Weight Development Center are born as early as 24 weeks gestational age (full-term infants are 40 weeks) and with very low birth weight (less than 1500 grams or approximately 3.5 lbs).

These infants are at high risk for long-term health problems, including cerebral palsy, respiratory distress, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing problems, as well as learning disabilities and developmental delays.

“The first three years in follow-up care is crucial for these babies,” said Heyne. “Intervention and support in these early years can improve their long-term outcomes and reduce the risks for lifelong disabilities. The Low Birth Weight Development Center assists 350 families annually through onsite services, home visits and outreach at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Parkland Memorial Hospital.”

Heyne is a longtime community advocate and volunteer, having set up the first infant car seat loan program at Children’s Medical Center Dallas and having worked with the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Dallas to recruit Missionary Sisters of Charity with Mother Teresa of Calcutta to set up homes for needy mothers. She has received numerous commendations for her work, including letters of commendation from Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and the T. Berry Brazelton Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award.
Argosy University, Denver Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology student Stephanie Ignatavicius has dedicated her time and professional pursuits to helping meet the mental health needs of the transgender community. Ignatavicius volunteers her time and talents to meet the needs of clients at the Gender Identity Center of Colorado. She has been involved with the organization since 2010.

The Gender Identity Center provides support to those who are, or think they may be, transgender and to the significant others (wives/husbands, boy/girlfriends, family members, etc.) of transgender individuals.

A variety of resources are available at the Gender Identity Center, including reading materials, free computer access, free WiFi, beverages, snacks, low-cost counseling services, hormone referral letters, resource referrals, support groups, open hours, social events, speaker’s bureau and volunteer opportunities for everyone.

Low-cost counseling services and helping meet the mental health needs of clients is where Ignatavicius feels most impactful with the group. In addition to conducting volunteer clinical work at the center, she has assisted in building the foundation for the clinical program for the agency and its clients. “I am responsible for creating the program, making forms, doing needed outreach, seeing clients and training others to do clinical work at the site,” she said.

“The services we provide are really transition-related services,” said Ignatavicius. “Those who wish to undergo a sex change operation must undergo assessment and/or therapy and have a letter of support from a mental health practitioner before they can begin hormone therapy. This is a community that is oftentimes financially challenged and who must pay out of pocket for all of the medical needs associated with a sex change operation, so services like ours, offered on a sliding scale, are critical to helping them realize their dreams.”

“The transgender community has been historically mistreated by mental health professionals,” said Ignatavicius. “Until the 1980s, homosexuality was treated as a mental disorder. Today, many still incorrectly treat transgender individuals as having a disorder, and so, for them, finding the right professional to meet their needs can be incredibly challenging.”

“It is an honor and a privilege to work with this community,” she said. “The staff and clients at the Gender Identity Center let me into their world and have accepted me as part of their group. Given that many in this population are at high risk for verbal, physical and sexual assault and that many of those who suffer this type of trauma do so without any support, it is an accomplishment to be considered one of the group.”

Dr. Karen Scarpella, program director for the Gender Identity Center of Colorado, said “As the program director, I have been very grateful for the level of competent support to our agency and programming by Stephanie Ignatavicius. It is her investment of time and talent that forwarded our mission, at an exponential pace, ahead of expected progress. As a director, it has been incredibly helpful to have such a responsible volunteer to rely on so that I can focus on many other duties in growing our programming. Ms. Ignatavicius is reliable, unassuming and gracious in her work at our agency. No task is too small, nor any project too big for her to do. She often sees what needs to be done and simply takes it on. A volunteer with this level of commitment, attention to detail and autonomy is every director’s dream! Her mark and legacy have been left on our agency and its mission.”
Argosy University, Hawaii joined the fight against AIDS this past year with participation in the 20th anniversary Honolulu AIDS Walk. The AIDS Walk, held each year at Kapi’olani Park, is organized and executed by the Life Foundation as a means of generating revenue to support its HIV-related programs. In all, 20 members of the Honolulu campus walked to raise funds to support the organization.

Life Foundation was established in 1983 as the first response to AIDS in Hawaii and the Pacific. Nearly 30 years later, it remains the largest provider of HIV-related care and prevention services in the islands, serving the island of Oahu, the location of Honolulu and three-quarters of the state’s people.

Currently, about 60 percent of all HIV-positive men, women and children receiving case management assistance in Hawaii are helped by the Life Foundation’s client services program. The more than 700 current clients represent just about every racial and ethnic group in the nation’s most diverse state.

In addition to the level of case management required by their individual situations, Life Foundation clients also benefit from a meals program, emergency groceries, hands-on services of volunteer home assistance “buddies,” and financial assistance to help with housing, utilities and health-related costs. In recent years, a substantial portion of these assistance funds (more than $250,000) has been used to pay for critical dental care.

The Life Foundation also provides an HIV clinical nurse and a treatment advocate to help its clients understand and manage the many challenging side effects of the highly toxic but lifesaving AIDS medications.

Life Foundation’s HIV prevention program is entirely peer-to-peer based and works exclusively on an outreach basis to the people who are most at risk for HIV infection. These include young gay men (especially native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders), transgendered people and women who are involved in the sex industry or in abusive relationships with IV-drug-using men. Life Foundation offers free HIV testing with results in 15 minutes.

“We are honored to join the fight against AIDS in Hawaii,” said Kristy Watters, vice president of the Student Government Association and current student in the Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology program, who organized Argosy University, Hawaii’s participation in the event. “It was the opportunity to bring our campus community together to rally around a cause that has a significant impact on society.”
Argosy University, Inland Empire students banded together under the academic leadership in 2011 to help form Counselors on Wheels, a student organization dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of the Inland Empire community where its students live, work and attend school.

Argosy University, Inland Empire Program Chair Dr. Akin Merino had the vision to start a counseling organization for students at the campus. With the assistance of the campus director of clinical training, Dr. Brenda Navarrete, Counselor on Wheels was created. The initial Counselors on Wheels project, “Open Clinic,” offered free counseling sessions to the residents of Yucaipa, Calif., by the group’s 20 practicum student members.

The group is open to all counseling students on the campus and is currently dedicated to the task of combating child exploitation in San Bernardino County.

“As students who have opted to pursue helping professions, we have a high level of dedication to our field and to the communities around us,” said Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology student Alyssa Ogden. “In areas like San Bernardino County, there is a lack of access to mental health services for lower income populations. Our goal is to give our time and professional expertise to help meet the mental health needs of these groups.”

The group is pursuing training that would allow them to go out into the community to do presentations to raise awareness about the issue of child exploitation, something for which every child can be at risk, according to Ogden.

Per the San Bernardino Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation, the average age of entry into the commercial sex industry in the United States is 12 years old. According to the group, one in three teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 to 72 hours of running away from home and becoming homeless.

“This is a major issue for minors in San Bernardino County,” said Ogden. “We want to help teach families how to communicate with their child about this topic, how to create a safe and comfortable environment for them to be honest, what the warning signs are for trafficking and how to spot them in your child.”
Argosy University, Los Angeles Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology students Carlos Alvarez and Daisy Gomez take their education to the streets daily as they work to help turn around the lives of at-risk youth in South and Southeast Los Angeles. The pair, who grew up in the area, know firsthand the impact that gangs and violence can have on the lives of their community and are working to change it, one person at a time.

Alvarez and Gomez work as pro bono advocates and interventionists for youths ages 16 to 23 who are part of the Los Angeles court and prison system and have connections to gangs and gang violence. “We canvas the streets of Los Angeles and walk the areas most impacted by gang violence,” said Alvarez. According to Gomez, “Our clients are word-of-mouth referrals. Our goal is to develop a relationship with the community and the people in it — to develop accountability to the community and to the client.” Referrals also come from the Los Angeles Unified School District, from the Los Angeles County Probation Office and from other local agencies.

Alvarez, now an accomplished bodybuilder and Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology student at Argosy University, Los Angeles, grew up in a gang. “Domestic violence was the norm in my house growing up and that mental and emotional trauma helped drive me toward gang life. That all changed with one person, Mrs. Carroll, a teacher in school who served as my mentor and the driving force to guide me to turn my life around. By age 19, I turned my love of fighting in the gang to a love of body building and opened my own nutritional store. That’s the kind of change we are looking to make with our clients.”

“In addition to forensic case management, we mentor our clients and help them navigate the judicial system. We become that individual’s go-to person, working to combat those issues that can lead them back to jail, conducting risk assessments in the home and helping steer the individual and their family toward the resources that can help them combat those stressors. The mission is to steer them to exit both gang and criminal life,” said Alvarez.

Gomez, who grew up in South Central Los Angeles, draws her inspiration to change others from her background, as well. Gomez also grew up with gangs as a central part of life. “It was the norm,” she said. At age 15, gang violence hit home when her sister was killed by her gang member boyfriend. “I always wanted to know whether something could have been done with him to prevent this,” said Gomez. “Through education, I found that violent life and gangs were not the norm and did not have to be reality. Carlos and I work to serve those who are not being served and to show that gang life is not the only life these young people can lead. If we prevent at least one innocent person from being stuck in the crossfire, our work is worth it.”

The two collaborate with organizations such as A Better LA and the Chuco’s Justice Center to help meet the needs of at-risk populations in the community. “We know these young people are wired for struggle,” commented Alvarez. Gomez said, “Our job is to demonstrate that advocacy, knowledge of the system and knowledge of the human psyche can make a difference in the community and in the lives of these young people.”
Argosy University alumnus Paul Berkes is making a difference for youth in his community with the nonprofit organization A Hope and a Future. Berkes, a 2009 graduate of the Master of Arts in Professional Counseling program at the Nashville campus, founded the group, which seeks to “give wings to weary hearts and minds” through a program called Flight School.

“We believe that life works best when we live it together. A Hope and a Future addresses the importance of building relationships that soar above the negative experiences in our past,” said Berkes.

The group is dedicated to tackling the tough issues surrounding teen suicide and to giving struggling youth a purpose through music. Berkes, who at the age of 11 struggled with thoughts of suicide and family issues, found respite and hope from his involvement in a church play in which he participated. During that experience, he learned to play piano and guitar and found a group of people willing to accept him for who he was and help him realize his worth. Berkes went on to receive a bachelor’s degree in music from the University of Memphis and has paired his love of music with his passion for helping others with his advanced degree in counseling.

“The mission of Flight School is to provide a safe Christ-centered environment for adolescents who want to get help in a world of distress and decisions — a place where they can build a foundation of faith, hope and love to rise above the obstacles in their lives,” said Berkes.

The group provides a supportive and challenging environment that encourages the physical, mental and spiritual growth of adolescents in the following interdisciplinary areas: expressive arts, academic enrichment and physical education. The program focuses on life skills, academics and expressive arts for students in first grade through high school who participate. In the program, students learn to communicate better, improve interpersonal skills, develop conflict resolution strategies, get help with academic issues and pursue music.
On Jan. 8, 2011, Argosy University, Online Programs student Jenny Hileman’s life changed forever. Hileman, a student in the Master of Arts in Education in Educational Leadership program, received word that her mother, Suzi Hileman, had been shot. Mrs. Hileman, along with U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and 17 other people, was gunned down during a “Congress on Your Corner” public meeting held in a supermarket parking lot in Tucson, Ariz.

Mrs. Hileman’s companion that day, 9-year-old Christina-Taylor Green, was one of six people who did not survive the tragedy. Mrs. Hileman and her husband, Bill, both retired, met Christina and her brother, Dallas, when the Green family moved into the same Tucson neighborhood. The couple immediately took to the two children.

When Christina was elected to the student council at her elementary school, Mrs. Hileman wanted to further her interest in public service, and the two set a date for the “Congress on Your Corner” event.

Today, Ms. Hileman and her mother are honoring the bond between the Green and Hileman families with the nonprofit organization Grandparents in Residence (GRIN). GRIN was designed as an inter-generational mentoring program whose mission is to promote, support, and create opportunities for interactions between those who have time and those who have need. Ms. Hileman, who lives in Chicago, handles the organization, logistics and administrative aspects of the agency while her mother runs the day-to-day operation.

“GRIN’s mission is to bring together those with talent and those with the desire to learn,” said Ms. Hileman. “GRIN has photographers, paper crafters, storybook readers and mentors available daily and/or monthly, even annually for special events, that volunteer their talents with partnering schools. The volunteer base is growing every day.” GRIN offers training to ensure that quality interactions take place in a safe and thoughtful environment. Volunteers are certified and receive identifying credentials such as CPR and Basic First Aid classes.
Argosy University, Orange County helped make holiday wishes come true for children in need with a winter toy drive that benefitted clients of the nonprofit organization Casa de la Familia.

Casa de la Familia was established to address and serve the emotional needs of children, teens, adults and the elderly who have suffered a psychological trauma — in a compassionate, ethical and professional manner. The primary focus for the services the agency provides is to the underserved and underrepresented minority populations, with a special emphasis on providing bicultural and bilingual psychological treatment, education and outreach to the Latino community.

The majority of the agency’s professional, caring therapists are bicultural, bilingual and Spanish-speaking. The group specializes in the treatment of post-traumatic, anxiety and depressive disorders of children, adolescents, adults and elderly and human trafficking victims, providing crisis intervention and long-term individual and family therapy. The organization also provides home visits on an as-needed basis.

Casa de la Familia provides services in Los Angeles and Orange counties and works closely with city, county and state Social Service agencies, police departments, victims’ advocates and community service programs.

Senior Director of Admissions for Argosy University, Orange County Leisa Ruiz said, “Casa de la Familia has served as a meaningful practicum site for our students at Argosy University, Orange County. Hosting this toy drive to help ensure better holidays for the agency’s clients was one of the many ways we hope to partner with the agency in the future.”

“Connecting With The World Is In Our DNA.”
Argosy University, Phoenix students took their geropsychology course from the classroom to the community at St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Parish in Anthem under the direction of Argosy University, Phoenix Associate Professor Gina Touch Mercer. Through this unique partnership, Mercer arranged for students to conduct cognitive tests for a group of older parishioners who had concerns about memory loss.

Eight students participated in the course assignment/community service initiative. Prior to the project beginning, Mercer and the students offered talks at the church on memory loss and the normal signs of aging as compared to the symptoms of dementia. From there, members of the parish who were interested in participating scheduled an individual intake session with Mercer and the students.

In addition to speaking with the participant and family members during the intake process, each student conducted a one-hour assessment of the participant’s cognition and mood. With participants’ signed consent, students reviewed participants’ medical records and contacted their physicians and mental health professionals, when appropriate, to help with the diagnosis process. “Students looked at each client holistically to help determine the cause of their memory issues,” said Mercer.

After the assessments for each client were completed, students prepared a written report for both a final grade and for presentation to the client. This final consult with each individual lasted more than an hour and was a true intervention. “All but one participant’s memory issues were related to depression or anxiety rather than to an illness like dementia,” said Mercer. “These evaluations gave participants a sense of relief they wouldn’t otherwise have felt about their memory loss. Most of the cognitive issues students found were reversible or treatable.” Through this process, students were able to make recommendations based on their assessments and determine appropriate follow-up care for participants.

“There was a diverse approach that the parishioners who participated greatly valued,” said Mercer. “Recommendations for follow-up were made with respect to personal religious, racial and ethnic diversity.”

The process provided participants with information about the normal aging process and the effect that issues such as anxiety and depression can have on a person’s memory. “The project gave students the opportunity to be exposed to the typical types of issues and concerns they will address in working with older adults as they become practitioners,” said Mercer. “They found that many of the issues they experienced with this population were applicable to other age groups and were things they will commonly see in any type of professional setting as they move forward in their careers.”
Argosy University, Salt Lake City brought holiday cheer during the holiday season by “adopting” a family in need. The campus sponsored a local refugee family from Africa through a local organization dedicated to advancing the African-American business community in Utah.

The campus learned about the family from African-Americans Advancing in Commerce Community Education & Leadership (ACCEL), a black chamber organization new to the state of Utah. Established in the winter of 2009, the organization was founded by a part-time business owner who saw a need to build an environment where the black community could come together on a regular basis to network and exchange business ideas. The group partnered with United Africans of Utah to connect local businesses with families in critical need of their help.

As a result, Argosy University, Salt Lake City came to know their local “adopted” family, comprised of a single mother, the elderly mother whom she cares for and her own three teenage children. Argosy University, Salt Lake City placed wishes and needs from the refugee family on paper snowflakes hung from a tree on campus. Employees and students selected the items they wished to purchase from the family’s requests. Requested items included cleaning supplies, laundry and dish soap, bathroom items, winter clothes, hygiene items and bedding.

Gifts were wrapped and ready to deliver to the family on Dec. 17, just in time for the holidays. “It was an honor to be able to help, in however small a way, a family that has been through so much,” said Campus President David Tietjen. “Their ‘wish’ items were basic necessities needed for survival — things many of us can sometimes take for granted.”
Argosy University, San Diego provided supplies to the William R. Mead Training Academy in 2011. The drive was part of a partnership developed with nonprofit agency Mental Health Systems, which operates the school.

The William R. Mead Training Academy is a service of Mental Health Systems and is a school for counselors. It provides courses in addiction counseling that meets the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP) requirements for certification in drug and alcohol counseling. Those who complete the program can then pursue certification as a substance abuse counselor with most certifying agencies in California.

Mental Health Systems is a nonprofit agency founded in 1978 to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities facing substance abuse and behavioral health challenges. The organization provides affordable mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.

Argosy University, San Diego’s partnership extends beyond providing supplies for the academy. The campus has developed an articulation agreement with Mental Health Systems that allows graduates of the William R. Mead Academy to transfer credits earned in their program of study into psychology or criminal justice degree programs at Argosy University, San Diego.

“The William R. Mead Academy is dedicated to meeting the need for qualified counselors to help battle substance abuse and addiction. We are honored to work with them to help meet the goals of their students and to assist with the other services provided by Mental Health Systems,” said Campus President Deborah Markos.
Argosy University, San Francisco Bay Area employees came together to help local families in need through a volunteer day in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity’s East Bay Chapter in 2011. Led by campus Counseling Psychology Training Director and long-time Habitat for Humanity volunteer Dr. Heather Martarella, a group of employees came together for the second year in a row to work on a home for a deserving family in need.

“The home we worked on was a house Habitat for Humanity had reclaimed in East Oakland,” said Martarella. “The abandoned property had squatters living in it for a year, and our challenge was to help Habitat for Humanity remodel the house to make it a home for a local family in need.”

Habitat for Humanity East Bay is a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International that partners with hardworking families, community volunteers and donors to build affordable ownership homes in Alameda and Contra Costa counties in California. Through the Habitat for Humanity program, families working in service, manufacturing, retail and other sectors are able to live near their jobs in decent, safe and permanent homes. In 20 years, the organization helped more than 300 in the community.

Through the program, homeowners invest 500 hours of “sweat equity” to help build their own homes, as well as additional time for homeowner workshops. Houses are sold to partner families at no profit and are financed with affordable, zero-interest mortgages.

“It is our campus plan to continue to volunteer each year,” said Martarella. “It is an incredible way to give back to the community and to see, physically, the impact that your service can have. Working together as a campus gives us the opportunity to get to know each other better inside and outside of the office and to build a camaraderie we don’t always otherwise have the opportunity to build.”
Argosy University, Sarasota Program Chair of Research Dr. Ann Weaver brings unique real-world experience to her statistics students as St. Petersburg’s “Dolphin Lady.” Weaver, an animal behaviorist (ethologist), studies free-ranging dolphins at sea under a federal permit with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The purpose of her intensive study is to investigate the potential impact of coastal construction as an anthropogenic threat to dolphin populations off St. Petersburg’s west coast.

Weaver is in the eighth year of the study, which lasts through 2016. Through the project, she has established an extensive and highly detailed database that allows her to test hypotheses about the potential impact of construction projects along coastlines, one of the few of its kind. As part of her research, Weaver ventures out into the waters of John’s Pass 10—12 times per month, for two to eight hours each day, to collect data on the animals and determine the impact the construction of a new waterway bridge in the area has on the creatures. In a boat piloted by Weaver’s husband, Master U.S. Coast Guard Capt. John Heidemann, she collects photos of each dolphin’s dorsal fins to determine which animals are in the area for population biology and abundance studies. She collects behavioral data on what the animals do in the location and how they are using the waterway for distribution and behavior studies. In addition, she monitors two dozen physical conditions on each animal for field veterinary studies.

The project, however, extends beyond the research and into the community, as Weaver publishes a regular column about her work in Tampa Bay Newspapers. Through this local community newspaper, Weaver provides residents with insight into the lives of the dolphins in her study. “This project is a unique opportunity to make science accessible and friendly for people. It helps people learn about wild animals and the issues that affect them.”

To date, Weaver has published 300 articles in the paper and regularly gives richly illustrated talks to local groups of all types. “It helps me to build a rapport with the local community and helps people to be more conservation-conscious long-term,” said Weaver.

Weaver’s work also has an impact in the classroom at Argosy University, Sarasota. “The project helps me bring real data and real dilemmas to the classroom,” said Weaver. “It helps to make the subject of research, which can be intimidating for some and dry for others, very real for students. It is incredibly unique to have and use data that the students are personally connected to. It makes the science much more approachable and relevant for them.”
Argosy University, Schaumburg extends its education from the classroom to the community with a partnership it has forged with a local Illinois school district.

Community Unit School District 300, located in the Fox River Valley in Chicago’s far northwest suburbs, was officially founded in 1948 with 1,631 students. Today, District 300 is the sixth largest school district in Illinois by enrollment with more than 20,300 students over its 118 square mile radius.

More than 500 of the district’s students and their families are homeless — a statistic that sent the organization on a mission to help its children in need. Argosy University, Schaumburg is there to help, offering time, resources and donations for those children and their families.

Through a strong partnership developed between the district and the university campus, volunteers at Argosy University, Schaumburg kicked off the District 300 school year by gathering and donating boxes of school supplies for District 300 children in need. Later, in the fall, the campus gathered new and gently used coats in support of a District 300 drive to ensure all of its students had basic winter necessities through the Salvation Army.

“The partnership has been a wonderful avenue to help provide students with the resources they need to be successful in school,” said retired District 300 Superintendent and Argosy University professor Dr. Kenneth Arndt. “It has also provided an avenue for the school district to get to know Argosy University better as a resource for enhancing the education of District 300 staff members and teachers.”

“The relationship between District 300 and Argosy University has developed into the university offering a cohort class for the school district. It has been a wonderful avenue for district staff to meet other interested and like-minded persons from education and all walks of life,” said Arndt. “It provides the opportunity to learn from each other and learn how many similarities each profession has and what challenges each of us face.”
Argosy University, Seattle helped those dealing with chemical dependency through its Therapists in Residence program at Sundown M Ranch. Counseling Psychology students gained on-site practical experience, along with course credit, as they joined Sundown’s multidisciplinary staff in helping the facility’s patients and families come to terms with overcoming their addiction.

During the program, students lived in-residence for a week at the ranch, the Northwest’s largest chemical dependency facility, as part of a course offered through Argosy University, Seattle. Student participants spent time in the classroom on campus, as well as at the ranch, in this educational immersion opportunity. They lived with patients and their families for a week, gaining firsthand knowledge of, and experience with, the rehab process. Immersed in therapy, the real-life patient experience and activities of the chemical dependency profession, they learned the language and culture of recovery.

Sundown M Ranch was founded in 1968 and, since that time, has led more than 114,000 adolescents, adults and families from the grip of alcohol and drug addiction to the freedom of recovery. The ranch is a retreat that provides adult, youth, family residential and outpatient chemical dependency treatment at its 30-acre facility. Located at the entrance of the Yakima River Canyon, it houses 60 youth, 96 adults and 54 of their family members residing at Sundown for family therapy weekends. The organization is nationally recognized for its quality programs and professional caregivers who follow a client-centered motto and approach.

Students who participated in this unique learning experience during the summer helped to organize and complete a continuing education program for psychologists, psychiatrists and chemical dependency professionals in Seattle, Wash.

Argosy University, Seattle Associate Professor Dr. David Moore said, “The cutting edge of mental health counseling is in integrated behavioral health where the mental health counselor works in a team to deliver multidisciplinary services. The most important bridge we can build in this area is between the mental health and substance abuse professions. The Sundown-Argosy University immersion program is the best bridge we can provide for our students and the communities they serve.”
Argosy University, Tampa helps to meet the needs of local families each holiday season through the Salvation Army’s Angel Tree program.

The Salvation Army Angel Tree is an annual charity event that provides children with gifts and needed supplies. The Salvation Army, which was established in 1865, created the Angel Tree program to help meet some of the needs of the more than 30 million Americans who receive assistance, in some form, from the organization each year.

For those who are in need, the Salvation Army Angel Tree program is a resource to get families through the holiday season. The organization begins taking sign-ups at its website and through local chapters in September and October. Needy families can register to receive gifts, while those who are able can sign up to donate to children.

The program provides necessary items such as clothing, school supplies and educational materials to children and allows them to also request a wished-for item. For its fifth year of involvement with the program, Argosy University, Tampa sponsored 50 “angels” and matched them with employees and students on the campus.

“Each angel on the tree at the campus provided the first name, gender and the age of a child in need,” said Jillian Conrad, senior human resources generalist for the campus. “It contained the name of an item the child needed, as well as an item they wished for during the holiday season. Our goal was to meet all of their needs and make as many of their wishes come true as possible.”

Employee and student donors’ donations were presented to the Salvation Army in December, and campus leadership spent the morning volunteering at the agency. “We sorted toys, unloaded vans as they arrived, put together stocking stuffers for children, assembled bicycles and spread holiday cheer,” said Conrad.
Argosy University, Twin Cities is making a difference in its Eagan, Minn., community with a partnership it forged with local philanthropic organization 360 Communities.

360 Communities is a local nonprofit organization founded by a dedicated group of volunteers more than 40 years ago as the Community Action Council, focused on engaging residents in local communities to make an impact and meet the personal, economic and social needs of people where they live and work.

The organization offers more than 50 services to residents, provided primarily in the four major areas of violence prevention and awareness, emergency food assistance, community immigrant support and partnerships with area schools to help better prepare students for success. The organization believes in beginning with success through programs such as the Lewis House, Armful of Love, Partners for Success and New American Services. All services rely on a pool of trained volunteers and key partnerships with area businesses and civic leaders and organizations.

As an educational partner, Argosy University, Twin Cities has conducted a number of charity drives on campus, securing food, toiletry and even toy donations to help meet the agency’s needs at the Lewis House, a place that provides safe housing, support and advocacy to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault. Campus President Scott Tjaden serves as a member of the organization’s 360 Communities/Eagan Community Convening Leadership Group.

Employees of the campus volunteer to help meet the needs of the women and children of Lewis House and also dedicate community service hours in Partners For Success, a program in 26 schools from seven school districts in Minnesota’s Dakota and Scott Counties, that helps students and families overcome the problems that prevent a successful school experience. Partners For Success also decreases teacher time spent on non-academic issues so they can focus on what they do best: teaching.

Students have participated in awareness activities for the organization such as “Shine the Light on the Path to Prevent Sexual Violence” and in collecting unused cell phones for the organization’s use. While these cell phones may no longer be in use or connected to a phone plan, they can still contact emergency services and fill a critical need for victims of domestic violence.
Nearly 12 years after his journey as a member of the Gay Men’s Chorus of Washington, DC (GMCW) began, Argosy University, Washington DC Associate Professor Sean Robinson still revels in every performance. “Over the past 12 years, weekly for nine months out of the year, I have gathered with 200 other gay men — my chosen brothers and family — to sing, to share, to laugh, to cry, to join together in music as a community of one. Over the past 12 years, I have not simply grown as a person, I have grown as a gay man,” said Robinson.

The group, the largest of its kind in the world, was founded as a way to delight audiences and champion gay equality with robust artistry, fun and surprise. The work the Gay Men’s Chorus does goes beyond performing arts and extends to outreach and education about and for the LGBTQ community. The Gay Men’s Chorus entertains audiences through its two ensembles, Potomac Fever, an a capella close harmony group, and the Rock Creek Singers, a small chamber group.

Performances take place throughout the year at a host of venues, from community centers and theaters to high schools. “Whether we are taking an abridged concert into a school, giving panel talks to students and teachers, or bringing high school and college youth, teachers and their families to a full performance, we as a group of gay men are working to create those spaces where all LGBTQ individuals are valued, affirmed, respected and celebrated. I know that had I experienced such an opportunity in high school or college, my life may have taken a different path. Maybe not easier, but certainly different,” said Robinson.

The group is focused on political action as well, with a nationally televised performance at President Obama’s 2008 inauguration, singing before members of Congress on the day that DC’s same-sex marriage law took effect, and performing as part of the 2010 March on Washington. The group has sung in response to the AIDS crisis, to same-sex marriage discrimination, to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” in response to the impact of drug use and addiction in the gay community, and in response to hate crimes and violence against LGBTQ individuals. “Both our musical expression and our political activism, as it were, seek to revise those heteronormative conceptions of love, family, community and humanity,” said Robinson.

“For me, the most significant relationship I’ve developed as a part of this group is a deep bond of brotherhood,” said Robinson. “Performing in a group with these people for 12 years has been greatly rewarding. We have grown as musicians and as friends.”

Performing with Brethren: Valerie Washington, Sean Robinson, and John Forsee

“Because of my continuing involvement with the Gay Men’s Chorus, I have grown to appreciate the richness of diversity of our experiences and to relish the sense of community that truly exists. As a lifelong educator, student affairs professional, and current faculty member at Argosy University, Washington DC, these aspects of GMCW’s goals hold a deeper meaning. Because of these tenets, every time I perform as part of GMCW, I am standing up for who I am, I am standing up for those that are not able to stand up for themselves and I am telling those watching and listening that it is OK to be whoever they are. Every time I step onto the stage — usually dressed in some outrageous costume and under some fantastic lighting and set design — I come out. I come out as a proud gay man. I come out for the LGBTQ community. I come out unashamed of who I am and proud of who I am becoming. I am, because we are.”
"As a child, going to college was never even a thought," said Dr. Sherryl Moore-Ollie, who grew up on the west side of Chicago in a single-parent home with three other siblings. "It wasn’t until I met my high school counselor, Gail Williams, who exposed me to college campuses and academia, that I was inspired to want more out of life."

Today, Moore-Ollie is a principal of William Penn Elementary School, making headlines across the nation for her innovative approach to keeping gangs and violence out of the lives of her students.

"My entire career has been at William Penn Elementary School, servicing the needs of students from a community I grew up in, a community that has a special place in my heart, as do the children of William Penn Elementary," she said.

Moore-Ollie is incredibly active in the community, taking part in groups such as Grow Your Own Teachers, an organization that encourages parents and young adults to go back to school to become teachers in their own community. She is best known for her work with the initiative Boxing Out Negativity (B.O.N.), which began under her leadership at William Penn Elementary. Under the initiative, former gang leaders Derek Brown and Chevez Fitzpatrick are giving back to the community they feel they helped destroy. The two now mentor elementary-age boys to discourage them from becoming a part of a gang and to keep them away from the negative elements that they often encounter in their communities, such as drugs and alcohol. B.O.N. teaches boys not only physical discipline through boxing, but also mental discipline and strength. The program has been featured in the Chicago Tribune and on "Dateline NBC."

Moore-Ollie has been published in the Chicago Tribune and Catalyst Chicago and was selected by Congressman Danny Davis as one of the Most Outstanding Administrators in education. She received a bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana and holds Master of Education degrees in Elementary Education and Administration & Supervision from Roosevelt University. She earned her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Argosy University, Chicago in 2010.
Western State College of Law students and faculty are making a difference in Orange County, dedicating their time and talents throughout the year as volunteers with the Public Law Center.

The Public Law Center, Orange County’s pro bono law firm, is committed to providing access to justice for low-income residents. Through volunteers and staff, the Public Law Center (PLC) provides free civil legal services, including counseling, individual representation, community education, and strategic litigation and advocacy to challenge societal injustices.

Now in its 30th year of service, PLC works with nearly 1,200 volunteer lawyers, paralegals and law students from throughout the county who volunteer their time and expertise.

In 2010 alone, PLC staff and volunteers provided 47,305 hours of free legal services in handling more than 4,500 cases, serving more than 18,000 low-income children, adults and seniors in Orange County. Volunteers for the organization included partners at major Orange County law firms, sole practitioners, young lawyers, law students, college students and an array of others concerned about ensuring access to justice.

Most importantly, PLC provides Orange County attorneys with the opportunity to help make sure that access to civil justice is available to all. PLC offers many different types of pro bono work for potential volunteers, whether they are in large firms or small firms, solo practitioners, litigators or transactional lawyers, or law students. Their work includes private attorney referral, taking part in the Orange County Human Trafficking Coalition, offering community legal clinics, partnering with St. Joseph Health System through a program called Family Advocates and through its other programs, which include the Southeast Asian Legal Outreach Project, AIDS Legal Assistance Project, Community Organizations Legal Assistance Project and Impact Advocacy.

"The Public Law Center opens access to justice for those who are most vulnerable to injustice. Our collaborative relationship with them has exposed our students to the need and desire to give back to the community through the legal profession and has provided them with valuable real-world experience while helping to meet critical legal needs in the community," said Western State College of Law Dean Bill Adams.
The Art Institutes system of schools: http://www.artinstitutes.edu
Since The Art Institutes is comprised of several institutions, see aiprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success and other important info.

Argosy University: http://www.argosy.edu
See auprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success and other important info.

Brown Mackie College system of schools: http://www.brownmackie.edu
Since Brown Mackie College is comprised of several institutions, see bmcprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success and other important info.

South University: http://www.southuniversity.edu
Accreditation & Licensing: http://www.southuniversity.edu/about/accreditation.aspx
See suprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success and other important info.

Western State College of Law: http://www.wsulaw.edu
See wsuprograms.info for program duration, tuition, fees and other costs, median debt, federal salary data, alumni success and other important info.