UNITING URBAN ACHIEVEMENT AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Oakland University has been pleased in recent years to help create collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with leaders of revitalization efforts in Pontiac.

With the same spirit of enthusiasm, I look forward to putting my experience here at Oakland to work in guiding future engagement efforts with the city. Over the course of my 23 years of serving Oakland, I have formed many close personal and professional relationships in the community.

Like many of the individuals I have met while taking part in our educationally focused engagement initiatives, I care deeply about young people. I know they have passions and dreams that we cannot afford to ignore. I want the programs we offer Pontiac’s K-12 students to optimally build their academic, social and other essential life skills. I want to help fully prepare these students to enter college and explore, pursue and confidently take advantage of all of the opportunities waiting for them. We need to invest in their futures because their aspirations are the underpinnings of our sustainable future.

I find it inspiring that we can also invite both current and future OU students to engage in our community engagement initiatives. Their involvement will expand and significantly enhance the quality of their learning experiences, as well as help Pontiac students and community members create new avenues of growth and progress for the city. The various efforts in our six focus areas will provide well-rounded opportunities for our faculty, staff and students to work with our community partners.

I know that with the collective determination, expertise, planning and work ethic we bring to bear, there is no challenge standing before us that we cannot overcome. Working together, we can make an impact in the revitalization of the City of Pontiac.

Glenn McIntosh
Vice President for Student Affairs and Diversity
Oakland University

Community engagement is an important element of our mission at Oakland University. We rely on partnerships with community businesses, educational institutions, local governments, and corporate entities to build mutually beneficial relationships. These partnerships allow opportunities for our students and faculty to engage in meaningful service learning experiences ranging from research projects that promote healthy living to expanding educational opportunities for citizens from all backgrounds and economic means. As a public research university committed to serving our region, we provide access to faculty knowledge in areas that include STEM disciplines, health professions, and medicine. Oakland University also serves as a destination for arts and culture, and through our commitment to outreach, we collaborate with our partners to share expertise and talent with surrounding communities.

Partnerships and collaborations at Oakland University include those with automotive companies, the defense industry, medical and health centers, and philanthropic organizations. These partnerships have led to the creation of entities that include the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, The Michigan Cyber Range at the Macomb-OU Incubator Velocity Center, and the OU Autism Center. The mission of the Oakland University-Pontiac Partnership calls for an effort that unites urban achievement with academic excellence, advancing the vitality of Pontiac while enhancing experiential learning opportunities for Oakland students. The initiative supports faculty research and promotes civic engagement in the community.

By working with our community partners, OU advances its mission to create meaningful and impactful learning experiences, while fulfilling its role as a research university to serve the public good.

James P. Lentini
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Oakland University

The initiatives of our remarkable partnership have been determined by the goals of the city’s strategic vision as outlined in the Economic Recovery Plan: Pontiac Moving Forward. Three years of a mutual willingness to work together on a shared vision have produced many accomplishments, which have benefitted every sector of the Pontiac community.

I salute OU’s new president, Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D., and am impressed that she embraces the tenets of community outreach that are the hallmarks of our partnership. From our brief encounters, as well as the indirect communications through the OU partner representatives, I am assured that she will continue to endow this relationship with the infrastructure support it will need to have sustainability. As mayor, I pledge to do the same.

Let’s all commend CORE team leaders of both institutions, the steering committee members and all those many other participants whose efforts and belief in the vision have contributed to making this partnership grow and thrive.

Deirdre Waterman
Mayor
Pontiac, Michigan

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Year in Review 2016 –17

EDUCATION

Expanded Partnership Between Pontiac Schools and School of Education and Human Services (SEHS)

SEHS has engaged with and looks forward to continuing to engage as collaborative partners in research and learning with the Pontiac School District (PSD) through its administrations, teachers, staff and students. SEHS looks to identify needs and seek solutions to further the success of Pontiac students. SEHS will marshal resources available toward supporting initiatives that will advance district goals and learning by Oakland University (OU) students and faculty. SEHS will look to broaden the knowledge base of district personnel and stakeholders, as well as explore key opportunities that may bring funding for collaborative projects. In each of these, our goal continues to be the advancement of mutual learning and success. The goals of the Whitman Human Resource Center (WHRC) Collaborative meetings are seeking to align resources with needs, explore opportunities to connect, coordinate schedules to maximize access, address collaborative barriers, promote faculty research opportunities and encourage feedback from stakeholders.

Parent University

Parent University is a collaboration between PSD and OU to help parents become part of their child’s education. This collaboration works to connect parents to resources and support partnerships of families, schools and communities. Parent University provides resources to the parents with teachers serving as the liaison between families and schools. During Fall 2016, primary objectives for Parent University involved: 1) recruiting instructors, 2) conducting courses with parents, and 3) obtaining feedback to better understand parents’ needs. Course content was in one of five areas: health and wellness, educational system, personal growth and development, career development and effective parenting.

Spanish Translations and After School Tutoring

Dr. Cecilia Saenz-Roby and Laura McCarthy of the Modern Languages Department worked with Pontiac Youth Assistance to translate a 14-page College 101 document, with Centro Multicultural La Familia to translate their youth Mental Health First Aid brochure and with PSD in translating parent letters. These tasks give OU students authentic translation experience and help community organizations who do not have the capacity for translation. (photo 1)

Teen Mother Assistance Program

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) community engagement grant awarded to Professor Kanako Taku will be used to develop a new educational intervention program to assist teenage parents at Pontiac High School (PHS). “This project is important because PHS has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in Michigan,” Dr. Taku said. “This grant will allow us to not only provide valuable resources to a special population desperately in need, but also to gather data regarding the efficiency of the program so that it can be continually improved to best fit the needs of the population.”

Participants must be at least 13 years old, pregnant or a teen mom, and be a student at PHS. “The program will provide resources and allow the teams to connect with each other,” Dr. Taku said. “They will also learn about the importance of social support, and highlight non-traditional means of support, such as through community programs and pets.” This project is a collaboration initiated by Shelby Seyburn with Whitney Dominick, graduate students at OU, Aundreah Waleanski, a graduate student at U of M, Leah McDermott, a graduate student at EMU, and Velinka Marton, an undergraduate student at OU.

PCT Certification Course Graduating Class

Students of PHS became the first graduating class of the Patient Care Technician (PCT) program offered through OU School of Nursing (NSON) Continuing Education. Eighteen students graduated the PCT program in December 2016 with an average GPA of 3.0 and 100 percent graduation rate. The 21 students currently enrolled graduated in November 2017. Students attend class in the morning at OU NSON Continuing Education Focus Hope location and in the afternoon at PHS. “This is a unique opportunity for students to be ready for the healthcare workforce before they graduate high school,” stated Teresa Rodgers, Executive Director. Students’ clinical rotations are offered at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland in Pontiac, Michigan. After graduation, students will have the opportunity to take certification exams in Phlebotomy, EKG, Certified Nurse Aide and Patient Care Technician and are recruited for available positions at local hospitals and facilities. (photos 2 and 3)

Pre-Algebra “Math” Program

OU received a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan in 2016-17 to continue our efforts for an ongoing pre-algebra math program, which is being spearheaded under OU’s Pre-College Programs office. The Pre-Algebra program is composed of two complementary programs: the summer residential program is a 4-day residential camp on OU’s campus for rising 8th graders. The Saturday math academy consists of five-week sessions for 7th graders to strengthen math skills and prepare for 8th grade algebra. The goal of the math program is to improve proficiency in math and readiness of Pontiac school students in the PSD.

While part of this program, students participate in workshops and activities designed to build skills related to college readiness and student growth. These workshops are designed and implemented by the Pre-College Program’s assistant director and staff and include a campus tour, college student visit, and college financial planning and admission requirements.

GEAR UP Awards $198,350 in Scholarships

OU MI GEAR UP awarded 66 students from the class of 2017 with scholarships totaling $198,350.00. These students attended Pontiac High School and International Technology Academy and have been in the MI GEAR UP program since the 7th grade. In the last six years, the students have participated in numerous academic, social, career and cultural awareness activities that have focused on preparing them for life after graduation and beyond.

Project Upward Bound (PUB) Continued Excellence

In 2016-17, the PUB College Prep Academy at OU met or exceeded its objectives which focus on grade point average improvement, math and reading proficiency, high school graduation with a rigorous curriculum and regular diploma, postsecondary entry, and postsecondary completion. PUB partnered with the Department of Industrial and System Engineering (OU-ISSE) on a $10K grant from AT&T to introduce Pontiac students to STEM. PUB earned its own grant award totaling more than $3 million over the next five years which will be used to continue to serve Pontiac students. PUB initiated the 2nd year of a Peer Coach Training Course, along with the agreement of Khan Academy (KA). With completion, PUB Scholars will earn certification as a KA Peer Coach. Subsequently, in effort to integrate Khan into Pontiac School District, PUB/KA Peer Coaches will coach their Pontiac peers in the use of KA. KA will monitor progress to consider duplicating the course nationwide.

The Effects of Reality TV on Children

Professor Daniella Lopicci (SEHS) worked with Sylvia Sturigs at the TSA in Pontiac for her research into reality television and its effects on young people. She spent time working with focus groups as well as conducting interviews with 7th grade participants as a means to greater understand their relationship with reality television and other forms of social media. This work will inform her research regarding the need for critical media literacy in schools.

Early Childhood Collaborative

Faculty from Religious Studies, the SEHS and the William Beaumont School of Medicine have partnered with Douglas Jones of Welcome Missionary Baptist Church to further the vision of the Robert Wood Jr., for mobilizing action around early childhood education. A series of discussions have been held engaging leaders from religious, educational, and site volunteers from various backgrounds participate in community meetings. Dr. Danielle Ligocki, SEHS, and site volunteers from various backgrounds participate in community meetings. Dr. Danielle Ligocki, SEHS, and site volunteers from various backgrounds participate in community meetings.
Teacher Education Students at International Technology Academy

In March 2017, OU teacher candidates who enrolled in an Elementary Mathematics Methods course with Dr. Ji-Eun Lee had the opportunity to conduct one-on-one assessment interviews with Mrs. Kim Guarie’s 4th grade students at Alcott. While interacting with students, OU teacher candidates practiced their interviewing skills of refining and interpreting individual student thinking. Mrs. Guarie joined our debriefing session and provided helpful tips and suggestions. (photo 9)

Book Drive
Dr. Tanya Christ worked with the OU Student Michigan Education Association (SMEA) to organize a book-drive for an upcoming Pontiac Partnership Pop-Up Bookstore Event. Due to this successful drive, OU preservice teachers will get the opportunity to practice their hands at matching books with readers at the OU Pontiac Pop-Up Bookstore Event, part of the Pontiac Pop-Up Festival organized by Dr. Jennifer Lucarelli, School of Health Sciences (SHS). (photo 10)

Growing Database for Culturally Relevant Books
Culturally relevant texts improve literacy outcomes, motivation, and identity formation. However, finding culturally relevant texts for urban African-American and Latino students in the northern U.S. can be time consuming and difficult, given that the market is dominated by books portraying/written by predominantly Caucasian characters/authors. Dr. Tanya Christ and Ms. Megan Laurita (BAS) have been collecting titles of culturally relevant texts that were successfully used for instruction in Pontiac across elementary and middle school courses for the past few years in hopes of developing a resource to help Pontiac preservice and inservice teachers more easily find appropriate culturally relevant texts for use in their classrooms. Parker Simmons (now an alumna) helped to catalog these books on a new website, which we hope to fund to expand and finish across the next few years. (photo 11)

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Suicide Awareness Event
The Political Science and Religious Studies Department, as well as the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, collaborated to host an interactive panel discussion surrounding a proposed law in Michigan to make physician-assisted suicide legal. Professor Dulio from Political Science noted the bill’s introduction in 2016 and began working to set up a panel along with Professor Alan Epstein from Religious Studies. The panel included one of the bill’s sponsors, State Representative Tom Cochran, Jason B. Negri, Assistant Director of the Patients Rights Council and four OU faculty members: Charles Mabey from Christianity Studies, Jay Meehan from Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, and Amy DeBaets and Jason Wasserman from the OUWB School of Medicine. The event drew nearly 150 students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. (Individuals residing in Pontiac communities were specifically invited) to campus for a discussion of important issues in a civil, respectful, and deliberative manner. (photo 12)

Election Overview at International Technology Academy (ITA)
Over 100 students from ITA were at the 2016 Campaign Roundup, which featured an election panel that analyzed election results and how outcomes will impact public policy and government in the future. Panelists included Chuck Stokes from WXYZ Channel 7 and Berneen Pom from Lansing-based polling firm EPIC-MRA, along with OU faculty members Dr. David Dulio, Dr. Terri Towner and Dr. John Kramanski. This year marked the first time the event was held in Pontiac. “We decided to shake things up a bit and ‘take the show on the road’,” given OU’s partnership with Pontiac, there was no better place to have it than the city,” said Dr. Dulio, Political Science department chair. “We are deeply appreciative that the ITA allowed us to come in and spend some time with their students. The discussion was terrific and I was incredibly impressed with the nuanced questions the students asked.” (photo 13)

PARK Strategic Planning Session
OU’s Public Affairs Research Laboratory (PARL) hosted a strategic planning session for The Art Experience, a community art studio in Pontiac on campus in February. Board and staff members revisited the nonprofit’s mission, vision, and created a list of first steps toward a new three-year plan for moving forward.

SMART Transportation Study
As her capstone project, Master of Public Administration (MPA) student Stacey Smirnov (BBA) conducted an accessibility study of public transportation options for the city during Fall 2016. She analyzed SMART data to identify specific transportation needs along various routes, and access real-time data, issuing a series of short-, intermediate- and long-term recommendations for improving mobility. The following semester, MPA student Anna Markiewicz worked with SMART toward redeveloping Pontiac’s Community Partnership Program, creating a strategy for engaging residents and key stakeholders in order to understand citizen needs.
“(This project) was an application of adult work clothing resources and youth programs. Businesses to connect with the center, conducted landscape JobLink and created partnerships with and pathways for local and adults, research and program design for a proposal to application of employability skills training curriculum for youth for employability workshops and program services, of marketing materials, implementation of evaluation systems Pontiac Michigan Works in a variety of ways including design with Pontiac residents. The AmeriCorps VISTA built capacity at Pontiac Downtown Business Association (PBDA) Main Street Program, which expands her reach for business, economic development and workforce training opportunities and helps increase awareness of OU programs. Additionally, PBDA’s Main Street Program accreditation requires a designer from education and as a board member, she is able to fit that requirement.

Business Support for Pontiac
The School of Business Administration (SBA) is providing business support in Pontiac in a variety of ways. It created a Social Entrepreneurship course, taught by Marcus Harris, part-time faculty, open to Pontiac residents. SBA utilized the growing Pontiac community network to encourage students to enroll in the SBA summer camps and offered scholarships. Dean Mazzone consulted with the Pontiac Regional Chamber, the Pontiac Downtown Business Association Main Street Pontiac, Flagstar Bank, the Oakland County Economic Development office and the Oakland County One Stop Shop Business Center and the OU/Pontiac Initiative Workforce Development Committee.

Lori Crose, Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) director, serves as a board member of the Pontiac Downtown Business Association (PBDA) Main Street Program, which expands her reach for business, economic development and workforce training opportunities and helps increase awareness of OU programs. Additionally, PBDA’s Main Street Program accreditation requires a designer from education and as a board member, she is able to fit that requirement.

Health Care and Wellness
Healthy Pontiac, We Can’t Improvements
Healthy Pontiac, We Can’t (HPWC), is a coalition facilitated by Oakland County Health Division working to make Pontiac healthier by increasing free opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating for adults and youth. OU facilitates many HPWC initiatives through a 4-year, $2.4 million dollar Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Social and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health grant received by Dr. Jennifer Lucarelli, Associate Professor in the School of Health Sciences and HPWC Chairperson. Recent REACH initiatives include:

- Aiding the opening of Pontiac produce markets, such as Sprout Fresh Food Store and four mobile markets, serving 15,000 lbs last year.
- Launching healthier corner stores to ensure accessible healthier food options.
- Launched a Healthy Bites program at Huron Foods and St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital’s cafeteria. Mindful Choices on the Go, to make choosing healthier foods easier for patrons.
- Developed a non-motorized transportation plan to make Pontiac more walkable and bikeable.
- Ongoing Sidewalk Audits assessing the walkability of more than 60 miles of Pontiac sidewalks to help prioritize city-wide sidewalk improvements.
- Held a “Take Back the Sidewalks” event on September 24th, 2016 and with the help of volunteers from the neighborhood surrounding Webster Elementary on Huron Street as well as Mican 6 Community, Oakland County Health Division, and OU, a whole city block was cleared.

- Installed 38 new bike racks in 25 different locations around the city in collaboration with the GM Careens program.

- 4,904 total students in Pontiac are now experiencing enhanced physical activity through Coordinated Approach to Student Health program (CASP)-informed lessons, enhanced recess ideas, and new physical education equipment in physical education classes.

- More than 4,424 school children throughout the entire Pontiac School District now have access to enhanced lunchrooms, menus, and food service staff training via a unique taste-test toolkit.

Other initiatives supported by HPWC and the Oakland University partnership facilitated by Oakland County Health Division’s Michigan Department of Health and Human Services 4x4 grants as well as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) grants, including:

- Assisting Oakland County Police Athletic League (PAL) to launch summer youth sports leagues, which served approximately 450 Pontiac youth in Summer 2017.

- Partnering with Meet Up and Eat Up to offer PAL pop-up sports at feeding locations, hosted 35 hour-long sessions per week in July and August.

- Received a grant from the US Soccer Foundation with matched funding from St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital to implement the Soccer for Success program, serving 90 children in 6 Pontiac Elementary Schools in Spring 2017.

- Organizing Walk with Leaders on Mondays at noon during the summer, offering an opportunity for residents to learn about Pontiac’s history from local leaders while enjoying a walk downtown.

- Hosting pop-up fitness classes such as Yoga in the Park and Boot Camp.

Grant Targets Transportation-Related Enhancements
Pontiac was selected as one of 50 mid-size cities to receive a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Invest Health Grant. The grant awarded to Oakland County Health Division (OCHD), is designed to accelerate improvements in neighborhoods facing barriers to better health by bringing together diverse stakeholders. Cities formed five-member teams including representatives from various community sectors. The Pontiac team includes representatives from OCHD, Oakland County Commissioner (Pontiac) David Bowman, Oakland County Economic and Community Development, Oakland University and St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital. The project strives to improve local transportation services and amenities through redevelopment and placemaking approaches along key transit routes in the city. Activities include: generating physical improvements at bus stops; improving image and safety; encouraging bicycling and walking by supporting sidewalk enhancements, bike lanes; and promoting utilization of public transit routes that lead to key destinations (parks, universities, job and health centers).

OUWB in Pontiac
OUWB hosted a healthy eating MyPlate station and First Aid Kits station at the Art Fish Fun Festival at Beaudette Park this summer, as well as a Beaumont Student Heart Check education table at the 10th Annual Healthy Heart in April. OUWB faculty and staff volunteered to serve as judges at the annual science fair at ITA in February. OUWB students, faculty, and staff volunteered on the OUWB Day of Service and Make a Difference Day at the Pontiac location of the Gleaners Community Food Bank. OUWB students have forged a relationship with the Gary Burnstein clinic to host monthly clinic hours in collaboration with Beaumont Family Medicine. Baldwin Center OUWB has served meals on a quarterly basis at the Baldwin Center for the past three years. Additionally, OUWB has taken part in special service activities including helping with GED preparation and organizing the clothing closet. Faculty and staff of the OUWB School of Medicine have received funding to develop an outreach program designed to inspire middle school age students to consider pursuing a career in medicine. This experiential learning program will begin in Fall 2017.

New SHS Service-Learning Course
OU School of Health Sciences (SHS) offered a Community Engaged Research Methods course in Summer 2017 where students gathered community data and input that will contribute to re-development of the Pontiac Parks and Recreation Master Plan in Fall 2017. This service-learning course model will be presented at the Lilly Teaching conference in Traverse City, Michigan in October 2017.
ARTS AND CULTURE

Drumming Class at Alcott Elementary
Music program director Professor Deborah VanderLinde was at Alcott Elementary in Pontiac for an assembly on Thursday, March 23. For his Honors College project, music education senior Darren Anderegg undertook a year-long program working with the Pontiac students once a week, as co-leader of VanderLinde’s sixth grade drumming group. The assembly was the culmination of that project. Dance company Take Root, co-directed by dance professors Thayer Junots and Ali Woerner also took part in the assembly. (photos 20 and 21)

“I was able to watch students in my class improve drastically in their musical skills over the short time that we had them, and it makes me wish that they could have a routine music program (at their school). So many students had great musical ideas and skills that we wish we could have spent more time exploring.” — Darren Anderegg, B.A. Music Education ’17

“Soul Food” Community Events
The Arts and Culture focus area and Pontiac Arts Commission initiated a new community event entitled Soul Food to provide encouragement through music. In January, the first Soul Food program occurred at Pontiac Creative Arts Center (PCAC), where groups shared their music, including Student Bob Schneeweis (piano), recent graduate Matt Dufresne (cello), OU alumni Rick Matle (guitar) and Sheila Landis (voice). In November, the OU African Ensemble and artist Paschal Yao Younge presented a concert at the PCAC. Pontiac families also attended events at OU’s Warner Hall, including the children’s play West Side Story. Steel drum performance by legendary Trinidadian musician Ray Holman, and a jazz concert by OU alumni and internationally renowned violinist Regina Carter. (photos 22 and 23)

“I wish I knew all Pontiac bad to offer when I was a freshman and not a graduating senior.” — OU student, class of 2017

Poetry Slam
OU Libraries collaborated with the Pontiac Public Library to host the “Pontiac Poetry Slam” on April 22, 2017. OU Libraries sponsored a poetry workshop lead by Poet Peter Markus as well as prizes for first and second place in the Slam.

Perfect the Parks Day
On Saturday, April 15th, 2017, 126 volunteers from 17 different cities rallied at four major parks in Pontiac and redesigned the meaning of public service. They rebuilt play structures, spread tons of mulch, filled dumpsters with trash and even repainted and sanitized park equipment. Oakland County unified around Pontiac Parks on this day. What an afternoon it was! Leaders of the Future (LF) is a nonprofit group started by OU alumni, Anders Engnell (class of ’17), that combines service, community engagement and academics between OU and PSD students. (photo 26, on page 12)

AkzoNobel Investing in Leaders of the Future (LF)
AkzoNobel, a multinational chemical and paint production company with a plant in Pontiac, invested $100,000 in LF for the next two years. Roughly $50,000 of this is for LF projects, and $50,000 is for scholarships for LF Members. In spring 2017, five LF members were awarded two-year, $5,000 a year scholarships for college or trade school. A few weeks later, LF and RelRoot combined efforts via a crowdfunding campaign called “The Community Backyard on Home Street” and raised $15,062 in five weeks. The funds were match by Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The money will be used to develop a pocket park that will teach residents about agriculture and sustainability while increasing the biodiversity of the region to combat climate change, all while granting the families a place to relax and play. (photos 26 and 27, on page 12)

“With the new understanding that this course exposed me to, I will be able to design relevant questionnaires and administer them to potential clients. The analyses should suggest which activities clients prefer and what success indicators should be as we carry out our mission to empower Latinos in advocating for themselves to secure a decent standard of life.” — Tamara Orza-Ramos, CEO, Instituto Capacitacion Socioeconomica (ICSE) in Pontiac which aims to empower Hispanics as they try to improve their lives, with a focus on Puerto Ricans.
Grizz Night

Grizz Night was developed to invite the students, faculty and staff of OU to visit their nearest urban community: Downtown Pontiac. Volunteers, students, business owners, faculty and staff all participated in planning the event. The plot event has evolved into a program now run through the Main Street Pontiac and OU’s Center for Student Activities Department. The program’s goals are to create a showcase of the downtown, invite individuals to explore Downtown Pontiac and engage the Main Street community businesses. Between the spring and fall of 2016 Grizz Night events, 350 individuals participated.

Social media partnership hashtags captured the memories, while an OU student received a $200 prize for winning a scavenger hunt.

Mad Cow Leather and Saginaw Street Consignments reported sales made by students. On May 14, Main Street Pontiac received the “Telling Your Story” award from Oakland County for sales made by students. On May 14, Main Street Pontiac received a $200 prize for winning a scavenger hunt. 2016 Grizz Night events, 350 individuals participated. Social program’s goals are to create a showcase of the downtown, and OU’s Center for Student Activities Department. The staff all participated in planning the event. The pilot event has Pontiac. Volunteers, students, business owners, faculty and staff of OU to visit their nearest urban community: Downtown Pontiac to showcase its talent, as residents Jeremy Medlock

Grizzlies welcomed hundreds of Pontiac residents and allowed Pontiac Day at OU Basketball Game

On December 3, 2016, OU Athletics honored Pontiac and its leaders with “Pontiac Day” at a men’s basketball game. Joining forces with the OU/Pontiac Initiative, athletics offered a discounted ticket rate for only Pontiac residents. The Golden Grizzlies welcomed hundreds of Pontiac residents and allowed Pontiac to showcase its talent, as residents Jeremy Medlock performed the National Anthem and Kendall Wright and Zaire Reed sang God Bless America during the pregame. During halftime, Pontiac Mayor Deirdre Waterman and OU’s Dr. Robert Maxfield took center stage with an on-court ceremony to recognize the partnership of the OU/Pontiac Initiative and serve as “honorary targets” for the “Mitten Toss” – a winter clothing drive held annually by OU Grizzcicles. All items collected during the “Mitten Toss” were donated to the Baldwin Center of Pontiac. Two hundred free tickets were distributed to Pontiac School children and nonprofit clients due to the donations of Pontiac businesses. (photo 30)

2016-17 PROJECTS

Planting and Planning in Vacant Lots

Mushrooms, Peaches and Pears, Oh my! By the collective efforts of high school and college students and other Pontiac volunteers, a segment of Pontiac has been reclaimed, to the benefit of the environment and the community. Professor David Szlag (CHM) and Professor Scott Tiegts (BIO) work with Professor Jonathan Weyhrauch (CHM, Environmental Studies), a.k.a. “Farmer Jon,” and president of ReRoot Pontiac in a variety of ways with this project. OU students who are involved gain valuable internship hours required to gain entry level jobs in the Environmental Science field. Some are promoted to manager positions, which helps to build their resumes. (photo 29)

In addition to the leaders of the Future high school and college members, thirty-eight Pontiac students, ages 16-19, worked the site twice weekly during the summer as part of the OLSHA summer job program. In addition to planting trees, volunteers worked side by side to weed, dig wall trenches, level a patio area, excavate a shelter area, build apiaries and lay a base for garden lots and do whatever else needed to be done. They planted 1,300 fruit trees and berry bushes on 10 lots on Henderson street in Pontiac. These lots and others were previously abandoned and purposeless, but in a few years will be radiating with budding pear, peach and apple trees and fertile cherry, blackberry, and raspberry bushes as well as community gardens and mushroom lots.

Pontiac event at OU Basketball Game

On December 3, 2016, OU Athletics honored Pontiac and its leaders with “Pontiac Day” at a men’s basketball game. Joining forces with the OU/Pontiac Initiative, athletics offered a discounted ticket rate for only Pontiac residents. The Golden Grizzlies welcomed hundreds of Pontiac residents and allowed Pontiac to showcase its talent, as residents Jeremy Medlock performed the National Anthem and Kendall Wright and Zaire Reed sang God Bless America during the pregame. During halftime, Pontiac Mayor Deirdre Waterman and OU’s Dr. Robert Maxfield took center stage with an on-court ceremony to recognize the partnership of the OU/Pontiac Initiative and serve as “honorary targets” for the “Mitten Toss” – a winter clothing drive held annually by OU Grizzcicles. All items collected during the “Mitten Toss” were donated to the Baldwin Center of Pontiac. Two hundred free tickets were distributed to Pontiac School children and nonprofit clients due to the donations of Pontiac businesses. (photo 30)

Annual Pontiac Bus Tour

The annual Pontiac bus tour is a deep dive into the community, aiming to blend the city’s strong history with the challenges and opportunities as a post-industrial city on the mend. The second year trip was a success: it connected new faculty, deans and students to the Pontiac community for the purpose of research, internships and collaboration. A welcome to the mayor of the City of Pontiac at the City Hall and stops at the M1 Concourse, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland and the Strand Theater were trip highlights. The focus on medicine and healthcare at OU SAE Fondulacus vehicle display and the hands-on view of 3D printing technology at Dasi Solutions showcased entrepreneurship in Pontiac, as well as the possibility for collaboration. (photo 31, on page 14)

GM Modern Neighborhood Revitalization Projects

The revitalization of a subdivision consisting of 261 homes originally named the GM Modern Housing Corporation Addition has seen success this spring. Most of the homes are still intact and occupied but have seen some deterioration over time. Achievements to date include: Organization of the GM Modern Housing Neighborhood Association and regular monthly meetings; Major community cleanup of alley and empty lots; Identification of condemned houses for rehabilitation; Identification of seven houses for deconstruction and demolition; Stump removal and the planting of 44 trees; Initial planning for redevelopment of Oakland Park; Major Community Picnic (June 17); a grant received from the city for tree stump removal and tree planting. Dawn Thomas, Chair of the Pontiac Planning Commission and Gottfried Bieger, Professor Emeritus, Oakland University collaborated on these projects. (photo 32-34, on page 15)

Additional Projects

Academic Service Learning Courses

OU faculty have been engaging the Pontiac community through service-learning for years. Service-Learning is a teaching method utilized where students benefit from applied learning opportunities to develop real world situations and genuine community partner needs are addressed through structured projects, research and new thinking. Several initiatives are currently underway at OU to provide faculty and students with new opportunities to continue interacting with and serving the Pontiac community in meaningful ways. Workshops in OU’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning focus on providing faculty with resources and information on using best practices for community engagement. OU’s Experiential Learning Coordinator Travis Burton works with faculty across campus on the development of multidisciplinary service learning projects to address broader community needs while connecting with Pontiac nonprofit leaders and grassroots initiatives. The OU Facing Project will provide Pontiac residents with opportunities to tell their unique stories and allow OU to gain understanding.

EBlast Overview

The eblast is an electronic newsletter that is sent monthly to anyone who signs up for it. The 407 member roster includes OU faculty, staff and students as well as community members and leaders; 93 of whom joined in the last year. Thirteen eblasts were sent this year, with an open rate ranging between 48-55% and the click rate for links ranging between 16-44. Content is submitted by campus and community and covers a wide range of events, community notices, program summaries, and links.

We utilized this strong e-network to share information about the Birmingham Unitarian Church Goldsmith Scholarship program, a $2,000 renewable scholarship available only to Pontiac High School students and alumni, with great success. Last year, the Community Foundation for SE Michigan, the underwriter of the scholarship reported zero qualified applicants for the scholarship. However, our winter 2017 campaign resulted in two qualified applicants and three qualified renewals.

Career Services Programs and Connections

OU Career Services is offering career-directed programs and connections to employers and alumni. The department also launched a new, innovative recruiting tool called Handshake that offers specialized career-development support to students to connect them with internship and employment opportunities. More than 45 employers posted 120 jobs in Pontiac alone this past academic year. Oakland County Government posted more than 25 jobs and internships across multiple departments for a variety of disciplines and competencies to support hiring initiatives in Pontiac. Career Services works with employers in all employment sectors to recruit talent by offering Career Fairs, jobs and internship postings, employer meet and greets, and alumni participation in career-directed programs. (photo 35, on page 16)
Admissions and Grizz Visits
The Undergraduate Admissions Office at Oakland University has continued to strengthen its relationship with Pontiac. While maintaining yearly school visits, a Grizz Visit with Pontiac Academy of Excellence (PAE) was a new event for the year; the OU mascot along with current PAE students read a story aloud to elementary classrooms. Also, through increased partnership with Brittnay Mitchell, an AdviseMI counselor, we have seen more applications and more admitted students this year than in 2016 or 2015. Our hope is that communication will continue to help us educate students about college and to admit as many qualified students as possible. (photo 36)

Seasons of Service for Students
Organized by the Center for Student Activities and Leadership Development at Oakland University, more than 300 OU students volunteered at the Dream Center of Pontiac, Pontiac Habitat for Humanity ReStores, Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, Trunk or Treat in Downtown Pontiac, Pontiac Park Clean Up, Michigan Animal Rescue League (Pontiac), Grace Centers of Hope, Holiday Extravaganza (Christmas Parade and the WinterFUN Festival), Alcott Elementary School, and Gleaners Community Food Bank (Pontiac) over the 2016-2017 academic year. From January-April 2017, OU students volunteered at the Dream Center of Pontiac and Pontiac Habitat for Humanity ReStores for MLK Day of Service on January 28, 2017 and did an on-campus project for Gleaners Community Food Bank (Pontiac) for OU Day of Service on April 7, 2017 and Stress Less Day on April 18, 2017.

Admissions and Grizz Visits

CONFERENCES PRESENTATIONS RELATED TO PONTIAC PARTNERSHIP WORK

As a component of the Art and Practice of Medicine course for first year students, OUWB students teach a one-hour health lesson in Pontiac elementary schools. The outcomes of this work were presented at the 2016 Central Group on Educational Affairs annual meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges.


*Graduate student contributor


HPWC was featured in the inaugural “Healthology Symposium” hosted by the School of Health Sciences, with Jennifer Lucarelli, Kristen Wiltfang, and Shannon Brownlee as featured presenters; Wiltfang & Brownlee are both from Oakland County.

*Graduate student contributor

PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO OU/PONTIAC INITIATIVE WORK

