

Service Learning

Learn – Serve – Engage

In the last academic year, almost 700 students served over 10,000 hours, volunteering right around the corner from our campus and in locations across the globe. They served while learning in East Brisbane, Australia and in Elmhurst, Illinois. Our students learned about preservation while walking along the Camino de Santiago in Spain and by walking across the street from campus to the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie. Our students helped support families experiencing intimate partner violence, welcomed refugee families, mentored first generation students, provided shelter for abandoned pets, advocated for human rights, promoted the protection of our natural world, and much, much more.

Elm U Students Serve the National and Global Community



Elm U students find ways to be of service while studying in Spain.

Spain

While walking The Camino Ingles in the summer of 2022, a group of students led by Professor **Beatriz Gómez-Acuna** and Professor **Mick Savage** from Elmhurst University’s SPN 391: Walking the Camino de Santiago course formed an ad-hoc Service-Society to keep the Camino clean. As they walked a section of the Camino in northwestern Spain, from Betanzos to Abegondo (12 miles), the Elmhurst Pilgrims filled over twelve garbage bags with trash and refuse left by previous careless Pilgrims. The local residents and workers effusively recognized their efforts and applauded the group for keeping the Camino clean for future pilgrims.



Kellyn Kennedy, Taylor Fuchs, Dr. Mick Savage, and Claire Kelly on barbeque duty for the Elm U sponsored Yeronga Community Center cookout.

Australia

In January 2023, fourteen students and three faculty members traveled to Australia for the PSY 320T: Sports and Exercise Psychology course. The group spent several days at the Yeronga Community Center (YCC) in East Brisbane. YCC partners with local communities and the traditional landowners in placemaking. YCC works alongside other agencies and community members to be the ears of the community, and the voice of Brisbane’s Inner South.

The Elmhurst University group engaged in discussions and learning activities with the traditional owners, local citizens and the members of YCC. A community cook-out, sponsored by Elmhurst University provided opportunities for casual conversation and the exchange of ideas about social issues that are shared between Australia and America.



Ashton Estell and Valerie Derrah work with a RAM client.



Professor Sara De Paul, Ashton Estell, Valerie Derrah, Brendan Daly, and Jennie Smith-Pariola.

Tennessee

Over J-Term a small group of nursing students served with Remote Area Medical (RAM) in Tennessee. RAM is a major nonprofit provider of pop-up clinics delivering free dental, vision and medical services to underserved and uninsured individuals. **Jennie Smith-Pariola** described her service trip experience: “We were ...touched by the stories and situations of many of those who came to the clinic for help and felt privileged to have the opportunity to use our nursing skills to assist them in some tangible—if very modest—ways.”

Service Brings Authentic Learning Experiences to Elm U Courses

Elm U offers many courses that include service learning as a part of the curriculum. These service experiences provide experiential opportunities for students to use service as a means to reflect on course content in a real-world context.

SPN 302

Students in Dr. [Gomez-Acuna's](#) SPN 302 course were able to practice their conversational Spanish skills while serving with organizations like CARE, the People's Resource Center and the York Community Resource Center. Psychology Major and Spanish Minor [Ansley Hirth](#) served with the People's Resource Center and noticed that "when Spanish speaking individuals came seeking assistance, and were met with someone who could speak Spanish, they were noticeably grateful. A sense of comfort came over them ... It also helped me gain comfort in speaking Spanish in real situations outside of the classroom, specifically working on my accent."

BIO 351

Dr. [Kelly Mikenas](#) connects service to her Environmental Studies and Biology courses. In the spring, students in her BIO 351 course spent time connecting classroom content with real world service by helping to maintain the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie under the guidance of Dave and Eric from the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie Volunteer Work Group.

SOC/CJ 496

The Sociology and Criminal Justice Senior Capstone creates opportunities for students to serve the individuals, communities, and cultures they study during their time at Elm U. Last semester, Dr. [Tracy G. Crump's](#) students found big and small ways to serve individuals impacted by intimate partner violence. Students served at Sarah's Inn by cooking and serving meals to clients; they worked to organize and inventory the donation center for ease of use; some students went above and beyond and participated in 40 hours of Domestic Advocacy Training. Dr. Crump's students considered their service experiences when authoring a paper on domestic violence resources and supports throughout Illinois. [Samantha Reyes](#) hopes that the, "...article will profoundly impact the domestic violence advocacy community by offering information on domestic violence agencies and the resources they offer, hopefully promoting change for effective resources in communities."



Students in BIO 351 commit to service.



Celeste Avila and Matthew Ossmann.



Alen Salkic, Adeen Zamir, and Mark Pullen.



Ismael Curiel and Alexis West.

BUS 470

Sometimes service in a course means identifying a problem and creating a solution – which is exactly what students in Professor **Kortney Peagram's** Elmhurst Edge course did last fall. By partnering with Parkview Collective in Villa Park, Kortney's students were able to create and deliver engaging lessons on financial responsibility and money management to Parkview clients.

CJ 340

Dr. **Andrea Krieg's** students connected with the Women's Justice Institute by leading a toiletry drive on campus to provide items for formerly incarcerated women. They assembled and delivered backpacks to women who are re-entering their communities.

Digital Media

Students in various digital media classes began participating in a service learning partnership with The Base Chicago, a non-profit out of West Garfield Park that was recently featured in the first episode of the Disney+ series "Rennervations." Elmhurst University students had the opportunity to attend multiple events hosted by The Base, shoot and edit footage of these events, add music, and turn them into short videos shared by the Base to help inform people about their mission. Some of these videos were even re-shared or re-Tweeted

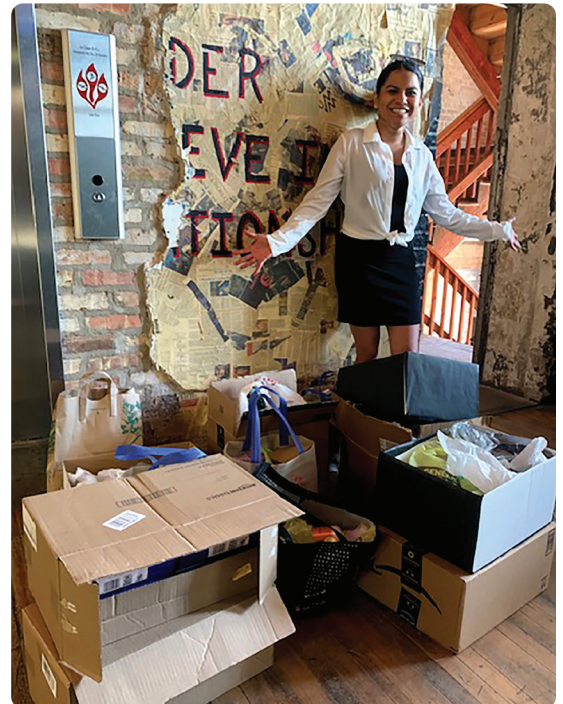
by **Jeremy Renner** himself – an actual Avenger!



Digital Media students use their skill to serve The BASE in Chicago.



Piotr Piz, Brianna Lopez, Mihaela Mihai, Andrezej Ryt, and Rosita Hepperle worked together to bring financial literacy lessons to middle school students.



Samantha Reyes delivers items to The Women's Justice Institute

Connect with Elm U Service Learning Community Partners! Serve with local organizations who accept individual volunteers.



Delta Mu Delta and Alpha Mu Gamma Give Back

Elm U honors societies and student organizations are always finding ways to serve the community.



This past spring, members of Delta Mu Delta – the international business honor society – ran a non-perishable drive on campus. Collected items were delivered to Night Ministry clients along with brown bag lunches packed by Elm U students.

And, for the third consecutive year, Alpha Mu Gamma sponsored Team Elmhurst University in a five mile “water walk” around Elmhurst to raise awareness for the Global Water Crisis. Together with International Student Association and the Greenjays, Alpha Mu Gamma raised \$761 to benefit Water1st International, a non-for-profit organization that builds water systems in underdeveloped countries.

Alexander Eddy – Newman Fellow



President VanAken and Dr. Mary Walsh present Alexander Eddy with the Newman Civic Fellowship

Alexander Eddy, a fourth-year business management and marketing major and digital media minor, is among 154 students from around the country and Mexico who make up the 2023-24 class of Newman Civic Fellows. The yearlong program recognizes students committed to creating positive change in their community and around the world. As a Newman Civic Fellow, Alex will have access to learning and networking opportunities emphasizing personal, professional and civic growth. The goal of the Fellowship is to provide the Fellow with the skills and connections to create large-scale positive change. For Alex that means expanding his leadership roles here at Elm U and in the larger community. Alex’s commitment to civic engagement propels all of his action on campus and encourages his future work.

We Want to Hear from You!

Tell us about how you are serving and learning in your community. Or find out how to get involved with one of the wonderful organizations highlighted in this issue. Our goal is to help you combine your interests and passions with community needs and opportunities. We can also help you fulfill your Integrated Curriculum Experiential Learning graduation requirement through service.

To learn more about how Elmhurst University members are serving their communities, learning about themselves and building their futures, visit elmhurst.edu/service-learning

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