

# 2014 Spirit of Service-Learning Award

**Co-sponsored by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida,  
The Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year Coalition, and  
The Armando Alejandro Memorial Foundation.**

**Purpose: Encourage and celebrate K-12 and college/university educators who integrate service into the curriculum to improve learning, address community needs, and foster civic responsibility and lifelong civic engagement.**

## Meet the 2014 winners and finalists!

### **K-12: Co-Winners**

#### **Sandra Bryant and Nicole Valiente**

##### **Fourth Grade Class, Redland Elementary School**

Humane Education "values the interdependence of all living things." With that as their focus, Mrs. Sandra Bryant, Miss Nicole Valiente and their fourth grade students at Redland Elementary School in Homestead, Florida planned a service learning project to help a local animal rescue group. They infused their instruction with curriculum materials related to this topic: Kind News Magazine, a Humane Society Publication of the United States, Maggie's Second Chance: A Gentle Dog's Rescue by Nancy Furstinger, Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival by Kirby Larson, and Cooking for Canines, a Highlights Magazine article written by Sara Matson. Shiloh, by Patricia Reynolds Naylor was also an instrumental learning tool to this service learning. The two classes of students made their own dog biscuits to donate to This is the Dog rescue group and also sold snacks to their schoolmates that were packaged by the two classes. Collaboration was a key component of this experience of learning about animals' needs. Research shows the importance of knowing that the relationship students have with animals and the natural world is "important in shaping their overall attitudes and beliefs." Students were taught in all of their subject areas using multiple resources, including a visiting speaker and her rescue dog Goldie. Ultimately, the children garnered compassion for each other AND stray animals.

#### **Joshua Stone**

##### **English Elective Course, Ransom Everglades School**

The project emerged out of the teaching of a new English elective course, "Voices from the Inside," at Ransom Everglades School. The intent of the course is to explore literature written in or about prison, and what that

literature can teach students about themselves. In collaboration with Kathie Klarreich, a writing facilitator with ArtSpring, the project entailed a series of writing exchanges over the course of the semester between Ransom Everglades students and inmates enrolled in a writing program at the Homestead Correctional Institution. The students in both the "Voices" class and the ArtSpring class were given a number of writing prompts from which to respond, sometimes general prompts and sometimes based on reading assignments. They decided what they wanted to write about on the first composition of each three-composition rotation. After completing their first essay, students from each of the classes responded to work exchanged with students in the other class. These were not editorial responses, but personal reactions that helped establish powerful connections between writers. The final installment of each round had each student writing a response to the reflection piece he/she received on their original writing. In short, each student wrote an essay, received a reflection on the essay, and wrote a response. Students prepared for the writing exchanges largely through discussions based on the texts in the syllabus for the course. These include classic texts by Kafka, Dostoevsky, Mailer, Cleaver, Foucault, and more recent scholarship like Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. The challenge for Ransom Everglades students was moving beyond what they had grown accustomed to, specifically with respect to writing. Trained and conditioned to write primarily as academics, they now had to discover what it meant to write from the heart rather than solely from the head. As they developed in this area the exchanges became more meaningful, transformative, and profound. Each submission became deeper than the previous. Many of the Ransom Everglades students had a number of their assumptions exploded (specifically in regards to who and what they thought the incarcerated are). They found humanity in a population traditionally dehumanized. They became more empathetic and sophisticated, and their counterparts underwent a lot of self-development as well, realizing that they were having an impact and others, even from the confines of their cells.

## **Higher Education: Co-Winners**

### **Jonathan Glover**

#### **American Literature Class, Indian River State College**

Dr. Jon Glover's American Literature (AML2010) students benefitted from a tactile, hands-on project that truly connected their academic analysis of American literature to the local community. Titled "Literature, Literacy, and Civic Engagement: An Academic Service Learning Project for American Literature," this project was made possible through partnership with The Learning Alliance, a non-profit organization devoted to achieving "90% Literacy by Third Grade." To complete this service learning project, students became literacy tutors for kindergarten students at Highlands Elementary. Utilizing The Learning Alliance's "Foundations" method, each IRSC literacy tutor was assigned to his or her own classroom and would report once a week to help struggling students work through the most basic and fundamental stages of literacy. For their final papers, students had to synthesize the practical (literacy tutoring) and intellectual (literary analysis) components of the class. Students were encouraged to explore how literacy and literature connect, such as recurrent themes in abolitionist, transcendentalist, and women's rights literature that emphasize education and awareness—i.e., literacy—as keys to knowing the self and engaging with society.

# **Marni Lennon**

## **Hope Fellows Program, University of Miami School of Law**

Marni Lennon, Assistant Dean for Public Interest and Pro Bono and Lecturer in Law, is the founder of the HOPE Public Fellows Program. The HOPE Fellows Program allows public interest minded students to create summer dream jobs and work across the globe to effectuate change. The HOPE Public Interest Resource Center provides stipends to law students who work in uncompensated public interest jobs during the summer. HOPE Fellows work with local, national, and international public interest agencies and non-governmental organizations of their choosing to provide legal advocacy, policy development and implementation and to devise systems to enhance the delivery of legal services. HOPE Fellows have an ongoing reporting and feedback commitment throughout the duration of their placement; they must submit weekly journals reflecting on their experience and must participate in a weekly review and online discussion of scholarly and topically relevant articles. Upon their return to Miami Law, HOPE Fellows design and implement initiatives to educate and engage law students in advocacy related to their area of concentration. Over the years, the program has grown from just two fellows, placed in local agencies, to include up to twenty fellows, each summer, across the globe.

# **Terry Morrow and Sandee Dunbar**

## **An Interdisciplinary Program, Nova Southeastern University College of Health Care Sciences**

With the introduction of the Affordable Care Act and the complexity of health care in the United States, interprofessional education is becoming increasingly important in the health care profession. In August 2012, Dr. Morrow saw an opportunity to leverage the health care knowledge and human capacity of our academic programs, students and faculty to address the diabetes epidemic in Broward County. She recruited faculty members from each academic program that were passionate about diabetes awareness and understood the connection between their profession and diabetes, and she created the Interprofessional Diabetes Education and Awareness (IDEA) Initiative. The goal is to create interprofessional teams of students and faculty that could collaboratively discuss and apply the information they were learning in the classroom to a real world issue in our community. Our student outcomes are:

- a. Students will gain experience working within an interprofessional team to address an important local and national community health care need.
- b. Students will develop the leadership skills required to develop and facilitate an interprofessional community education program.
- c. Students will increase their knowledge regarding diabetes as it relates to their profession.
- d. Students will develop the presentation skills required to promote engaged learning for diverse audiences.

# **Adam Vellone**

## **Introduction to Communication Course, Miami Dade College, Homestead Campus**

The service learning project students performed in my Introduction to Communication course, is an interactive project that involves each student researching and teaching others within their class about a variety of organizations that have a great deal to offer the community. Students learn about issues the organizations face and how they can help. Along with their research and presentation, students are required to develop an advertisement that is to be posted on YouTube for the world to see. The goal is to help bring more attention to valuable organizations and hopefully bring in more donations and support.

# **Anthony Vinciguerra**

## **St. Thomas University Global Solidarity Partnership**

**The St. Thomas University Global Solidarity Partnership** (STU GSP) leverages the university's research and teaching resources into three long-term collaborative development projects in Miami's sister-diocese of Port-de-Paix, Haiti. Port-de-Paix is also known as the Northwest Department of Haiti, and is the poorest and most isolated region of the country. Through a mutually beneficial process of faculty research, curriculum development, and student engagement the STU GSP engages students, faculty and staff in supporting the needs of three long-term economic development projects: The Café Cocano fair/direct trade coffee project ([www.cafecocano.com](http://www.cafecocano.com)); the Atelye Thevenet fair-trade artisan collaboration ([www.haitiartisancrafts.com](http://www.haitiartisancrafts.com)); and the STU/PdP Solar Energy Initiative. These initiatives enhance faculty teaching and student learning, while supporting the economic infrastructure needed to aid rural Haiti's long-term development.

## **Higher Education: Finalists**

# **Brooke Bovee**

## **English Composition II, Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus**

Professor Bovee's English Composition II students designed, organized, promoted, and hosted a one-day Letter Writing Workshop for Professor Richard Tapia's American Federal Government students. The English Composition students selected four "Spotlight Issues," researched those issues, created workshop materials such as informational and instructional handouts during the first few weeks of the semester, visited Professor Tapia's class in the weeks leading up to the workshop to teach his students about the Spotlight Issues and about how to write advocacy letters, and hosted the Workshop in late February. On Workshop day, the service learning students helped the Workshop attendees select an issue to write about, identify an elected or appointed official to contact about that issue, and write, proofread, and electronically send their advocacy letters. The English Composition students then wrote reflections about their experience, connecting their service project to the objectives of the course.

# **John Frazier**

## **Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus**

Funding for the arts is under attack, reflecting legislative priorities that have shifted arts to the periphery of our national agenda. Yet, companies around the world employ artists — graphic designers, advertisers, interior decorators, writers, and visual artists — to facilitate their success. As public funding for the arts continues to dwindle, our art students increasingly invest their own resources and accumulate personal debt for their artistic education, then face a workplace where they are asked for pro bono artistic contributions, which they hope will lead to more secure employment. Our art students need to understand the current difficult financial, public policy, educational, and aesthetic sensibilities affecting the creation and promotion of the arts. Their opportunity to do so begins with their 20-hour service learning commitment to a partner not-for-profit organization. Throughout their time, students network, complete a needs analysis of their organization, and create an artwork to support the agency's mission (e.g., design a website, create artistic promotional materials, educate children on artistic techniques, renovate organization's spaces, etc.). Most students speak of their experience with great appreciation, often calling it their most rewarding academic pursuit, and one by which they learned to truly apply class concepts to the world. As the old adage goes—see one, do one, teach one.

# **Anna Krift**

## **The Citizenship Project: Commitment to Community**

### **Lynn University**

The Citizenship Project: Commitment to Community is a component in Lynn University's first-year experience and provides students with an integrated learning environment centered on citizenship. The Citizenship Project is a collaborative effort of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Life, and provides opportunities for all Lynn students, faculty, and staff to participate. In The Citizenship Project first-year students [take courses](#) in the [Dialogues of Innovation January Term](#) that focuses on a civic issue, problem or topic and engage in experiential learning opportunities and community service work with local, community-based partners. Thematic areas for the courses include homelessness, environmental sustainability and urban renewal. The selected partner organizations include Gumbo Limbo, Habitat for Humanity, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and the United Way. These themes and partners were selected with sense of place in mind. Students address ongoing challenges facing our South Florida community which have both local and global dimensions. Within this framework, The Citizenship Project promotes further integration between first-year students' academic and co-curricular experiences. In addition, The Citizenship Project creates a common, required educational experience for all first-year students that links the thematic components of the Dialogues of Learning core curriculum—the Dialogues of Self and Society in the fall semester, the Dialogues of Innovation during the January Term, and the Dialogues of Justice and Civic Life in the spring semester. The learning paradigm is based upon the pedagogical structure successfully implemented in The Dialogues of Learning that is centered in common readings and assignments among multiple sections and different subject areas.