

SERVICE LEARNING

2019 - 2019 Newsletter

Issue 21 August 2019



My 2019 Service Learning Experience

This reading week I was fortunate enough to go on a service learning trip to Germany and Poland. Eight students in total travelled, including our faculty advisor Dr. Semple. The focus of the service learning experience was to gain more insight on the holocaust and to further understand the long term effects of the tragedy.

Throughout our service learning trip we encountered stories of injustice and also stories of hope. In Germany, we explored Berlin and learned about the beginning of World War II. We had the opportunity to see various political buildings, the Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

In Poland, we had the honor of meeting a holocaust and concentration camp survivor. Hearing her story filled us all with great sorrow, but also hope for the future. We also visited key sites in Krakow such as the Jewish quarter and the Krakow ghetto.

For me, the most impactful days spent on the service learning experience was the days spent touring the concentration camp, Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau. There is no words that can describe the feelings instilled when visiting a historical site such as Auschwitz. Seeing the artifacts, the buildings and hearing the stories where they happened was unlike any experience I have encountered before.

Our experience in Germany and Poland can only be described as life changing. Each day was a learning experience and each site brought up more questions and new emotions. Returning to Canada, we had more questions about the holocaust than we had left with. I am honoured to have been a part of this experience and privileged to be able to share our experience.

Emma Dwyer

SERVICE LEARNING AWARD WINNERS



Sarah Comandante

Community Engaged Scholar Award, Spring Convocation 2019

This prize recognizes a student who has completed one or more Service Learning experiences and has demonstrated a personal commitment to community development.

This year's recipients of the Excellence as Community Engaged Scholar prize are **Sarah Comandante** and **Kelsey Ellis**.

Sarah has been engaged in the community throughout her time at StFX.

Sarah did placements with various community agencies including, Kids First, Antigonish Family Resource Centre, Children' Place Daycare, Antigonish Therapeutic Riding Association, MAX Program, Fit 4 Tots/Fit 4 Life and L'Arche Antigonish Community Homes.

Sarah has also contributed countless hours to numerous organization and activities on and off campus: House President of O'Regan Hall, Swim Team Coach for Coady International Students, and assisted with Bring in the Bystander training session.

Sarah also participated in an Immersion Service Learning experience in Belize.

SARAH HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE LEARNING

"The process of applying theory into practice has allowed me to grow tremendously in my personal capabilities but also to be able to recognize the lived experiences of the people and medical conditions that I learn about. My experience working with a wide variety of populations has contributed to a truly well-rounded academic experience and will serve me greatly in my future.

At the end of my third year of study, I was fortunate enough to go to Belize on an Immersion Service Learning Trip. One of the greatest highlights from this trip was the group of students and professor that I was with. We had the opportunity to serve less fortunate communities and learn value lessons about global issues that what we may not have been exposed to on our own campus. The ability to be completely immersed in a culture gives an authentic experience to how our community partners in other parts of the world live. On an individual level, this allowed me to develop cultural sensitivity skills to successfully navigate the culture I was interacting with.

Interacting with groups in the community has exposed me to the needs of our community members and I have found it difficult to leave placements and positions because I always feel like I can do more for them. This has led me to seek a volunteer position at a non-profit Down Syndrome Association in Calgary, AB with a StFX Alumni so that I can continue serving our extended community. Although I will be leaving Antigonish following graduation, I believe that it is because of the community here."



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stfxservicelearning/>

SERVICE LEARNING AWARD WINNERS



Kelsey Ellis

Community Engaged Scholar Award, Spring Convocation 2019

Kelsey has also been engaged in the community throughout her time at StFX.

Kelsey did her placements with community agencies such as, **Children' Place Daycare & Learning Centre, Antigonish Safe Walking Club, L'Arche Antigonish and Fit 4 Life**

Kelsey also contributed her time to numerous organization and activities on and off campus: **Obesity Canada Network, St. Martha's Hospital, Special Olympics Summer Games, MAX Program, Antigonish Celtics, Best Buddies and CACL.**

KELSEY HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICE LEARNING

“Throughout my time at StFX, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with many different community programs and diverse populations. I have been a **Best Buddies** volunteer for the past three years providing social mentoring an individual with an intellectual disability while improving their quality of life and level of inclusion in the community. I have been a volunteer at the **St. Martha Center “Art Therapy”** program which helps provide a supportive environment for geriatric inpatients to participate in therapeutic art activities. Through these programs, I was able to form meaningful, personal connections with patients and people from the community. I also have been volunteering with **L'Arche, CACL and Motor activities at X (MAX)** working to provide individual and group physical activity inside the local group homes. The experiences I have had working in the co mmunity, allowed me to see first-hand how increasing physical activity provision can improve individuals' quality of life. I have had the opportunity to do meaningful and rewarding work in my community. StFX has given me a well-rounded academic, athletic and community experience. I have learned how to use my knowledge, gained through my degree, to give back to the community to the best of my abilities. I have experienced so much personal growth, and I am not the same person nor the student I was when I began my first year at StFX. My experiences will influence me for the rest of my life. I will continue to foster the Xaverian spirit of being an engaged and active community member to honour the Xaverian family that has given me so much over the past few years and that I am so proud to be a part of.”

FIND US ONLINE



[https://www2.mystfx.ca/
service-learning/](https://www2.mystfx.ca/service-learning/)

SERVICE LEARNING AWARD WINNERS

Community Based Research Award March 2019

This prize is awarded annually to the best community-engaged research project presented at Student Research Day.

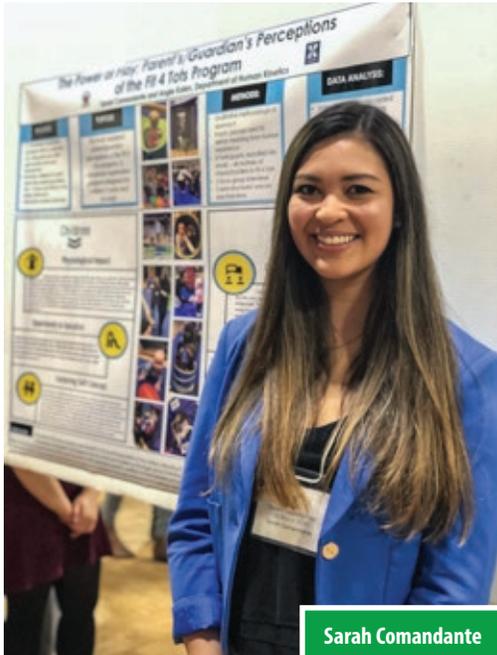
This year's recipient is **Sarah Comandante** for her research project: "The Power of Play: A Qualitative Examination of Parent's/Guardian's Perceptions of the Fit 4 Tots Program."

Abstract from Sarah Comandante Poster Presentation, Supervisor Dr. Angie Kolen

Fit 4 Tots, an exploratory movement program for children under the age of 5 is believed to benefit the participants, parents/guardians, and student-volunteers. This study determined if the perceived benefits of the program as noted by the lived experiences of the participants corresponded with those of the program creator and student-volunteers.

Using a qualitative approach, parents/guardians were recruited via email – resulting in eight participants. Focus group and one-on-one semi-structured interviews, and field notes provided the data. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach. Themes included: social interaction, parental benefits, risky play, fulfillment of community needs, accessible indoor play space, and strong program adherence. Overall experiences of the families in the program were positive and congruent with the beliefs of the student-volunteers and creator of the program.

Fit 4 Tots program is valued and fills programming needed for healthy growth and development. Mothers appreciated the socialization regarding the transition to motherhood.



Sarah Comandante

Did You Know that Service Learning has **TWO** awards?

COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLAR AWARD

This prize recognizes a student who has completed one or more Service Learning experiences and has demonstrated a personal commitment to community development. Presented at Spring Convocation 2020.

COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH AWARD MARCH 2019

This prize is awarded annually to the best community-engaged research project presented at Student Research Day, which will be Wednesday, March 27, 2019

THE IMPACT OF SERVICE LEARNING



StFX Alum reflects on Service Learning connections

The StFX Development Office is pleased to announce that Alexis MacDonald '99 has joined the team as the Senior Development Executive based out of Toronto, ON, where she is focused on meeting StFX's alumni and prospective donors across Ontario and beyond.

Alexis is a StFX alumna herself. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with first class honours in psychology from StFX, as well as a masters in public administration from Dalhousie University. As a StFX student, she was a recognized leader on campus, serving as Students' Union vice president, Plessis residence director, and a member of the X-Women rugby team.

For the past 20 years, Alexis has dedicated her professional career to philanthropy, global issues, and women's rights. She worked for several years at the Coady International Institute running their internship program, then she moved to Toronto to work with Stephen Lewis, Canada's former Ambassador to the United Nations. As the Director of External Relations, Alexis was instrumental in building one of Canada's most reputable international charities, the Stephen Lewis Foundation, where she helped raise millions of dollars to support community-based organizations in Africa responding to the HIV and AIDS crisis.

Alexis says her experience at StFX was life-changing. "StFX provided me the opportunity to learn how to become a woman leader and make the connections between what I was learning in the classroom and apply it to a global context. StFX's offerings—like Immersion Service Learning—are unparalleled across Canada," she says.

"We are thrilled to have Alexis back working for StFX. I know how special this university is to her, and she cannot wait to see and meet with alumni and friends of StFX who feel the same way," says Director of Development Wendy Langley '92.

In her new role, Alexis will seek out grads and non-grads alike, to explore meaningful ways to give back to the university and enable more students to be able to access this exceptional undergraduate experience.

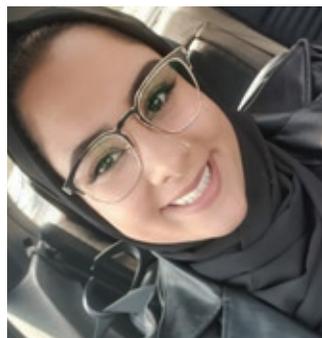
"Giving to StFX makes a tangible impact. Whether you want to consider establishing a bursary or scholarship in your name, or in honour of someone, or learn how you could support a specific initiative that is close to your heart, I would love to have that conversation with you."

STUDENT LEADERS



Noah Barrett is from beautiful Tatamagouche, NS, and has extensive leadership experience through the Boys' leadership program and student council at his former high school.

During the 2017-18 academic year, Noah completed his first-year as a liberal arts student in the Social Justice Colloquium. Noah also participated in the Xaverian Leaders' program through the McKenna Centre for Leadership, and completed Course-Based Service Learning with X-Project.



Alaa Salih

I am an honours student majoring in Psychology. I was born in Cairo, Egypt, but I lived in the United States and Alberta, Canada.

I enjoy cooking, reading, and travelling.

I volunteered in hospitals and nursing homes throughout my high school years.

At StFX, I completed my Service Learning placement at **Heatherton Group Home** and I really enjoyed being part of such a wonderful organization.



Meghan Miles is from Winnipeg, Manitoba and began her St.FX career in the Social Justice Colloquium.

She is now entering her third year of university pursuing a joint major in Development Studies and Economics. Within the St.FX community, Meghan has been a Resident Assistant and Community Advisor in McKinnon Hall and Mount Saint Bernard respectively. She partnered with the **Red Apple Children Centre** and the **StFX Student Experience** through the Service Learning Department.

She currently holds a position with St.FX X-patrol and is involved with Big Brother Big Sister within the Antigonish Community.

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN SERVICE LEARNING IN 2018-2019?

- **76** Community Partners
- **1223** Student Experiences

- **31%** 1st year
- **10%** 2nd year
- **23%** 3rd year
- **36%** 4th year

- **15%** BBA
- **25%** BASC Health
- **31%** BA
- **24%** BSc
- **5%** Dip Eng

- **60** Courses
- **56** Sections

- **16** Disciples
- **36** Faculty

- **28%** Optional
- **72%** Mandatory

- **55%** Group Experiences
- **45%** Individual Experiences



We've Moved! Coady Building, 3rd Floor.



THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

4-H, Antigonish	Eastern Strait Regional Enterprise Network	Sisters of St. Martha
ACE Co-op	Engage Nova Scotia	SPCA, Antigonish
Adult Friendship Corner	Engineering Project	St. James United Church
Antigonish Badminton Club	Fit 4 Life/Tots	St. Martha's Hospital Foundation
Antigonish Community Food Bank	Green Meadows Community Residence	StFX Aboriginal Student Advising Office
Antigonish Community Transit Society	Heatherton Activity Centre	StFX African Descent Student Affairs Office
Antigonish County Adult Learning	Heatherton Group Home	StFX Consult X
Antigonish County Recreation	Highland Crest Home	StFX Development Studies
Antigonish Culture Alive	International Institute for Child Rights and Development	StFX Enactus Society
Antigonish Education Centre	Keep Well Antigonish	StFX Gender and Sexual Diversity Office
Antigonish Farmers Market Association	Kid's First Family Resource Centre	StFX Health & Counselling Centre
Antigonish International Film Festival	L'Arche Antigonish	StFX Human Rights and Equity Advisor
Antigonish Minor Basketball Association	MAX Program	StFX Knowledge Translation Centre
Antigonish Parkinson's Support Group	Naomi Society for Victims of Violence	StFX Manager of Student Experience
Antigonish Regional Library	New Hope Foundation in Guatemala	StFX Recreation Department
Antigonish Senior Safety Program	Nova Scotia Health Authority	StFX Schwartz Women in Business
Antigonish Therapeutic Riding Association	Paq'tnkek First Nation	StFX Student Experience
Antigonish Visitor Information Centre	Parkland Antigonish	StFX Student Food Resource Centre
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre	Positive Action for Keppoch	StFX X-Pride
Art Health Antigonish	Red Apple Children's Centre	StFX X-Project
Black Educators Association	Responsible Energy Action	Tearmann House
Breaking the Silence	Royal Canadian Legion, Antigonish	Tearmann Society for Abused Women
Canadian Association for Community Living	RK Mac Donald Nursing Home	Ten Thousand Village
CFXU Radio	Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program	VON Antigonish
Children's Place Daycare/Learning Centre		World University Service of Canada

CONTACT US

Mary Oxner
Faculty Coordinator
902-867- 5373
mmoxner@stfx.ca

Megan Turner
Service Learning
Program Manager
902-867-2563
mpturner@stfx.ca

Arlyne McGrath
Community Support
Coordinator
902-867-3757
amcgrath@stfx.ca

Jodi Van Dompsele
Immersion Program
Assistant
902-867-2583
jvandomp@stfx.ca

Michelle Hirschfeld
Course Based
Program Assistant
902-867-5049
mhirschf@stfx.ca

**Service Learning
Student Leaders**
902-867-5049