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Hello!

My name is Mirela Barnhill, and I served as the Vice President of Communications for the Volunteer Action Center this year. In the past, I was the first ever Associate of Marketing from 2021-2022 and I stepped in as the GivePulse Intern during the Summer of 2022. Typically, the Historian is tasked with collecting data and creating an annual report. Our executive team did not fill the Historian position so, we divided the responsibilities up in order to keep traditions alive. With that being said, I am very excited to be a part of this task so we can document all the great work the VAC has done! Throughout this past year, I’ve had the privilege of working alongside some of the most driven and inspiring people. The 2022-2023 Annual Report shows exactly what I’m talking about.

While this is a tradition that the VAC has done for years, I wanted to make the annual report more accessible to the public. Our work impacts a huge population of Northwest Arkansas and I believe it should be recognized so we can continue to grow as an organization. This year, the 2022-2023 Annual Report is published on our website, volunteer.uark.edu, and it is promoted on GivePulse and all our social media accounts in various ways.

Also, this is the first year we’ve had both the Associate of Marketing and Associate of Digital Management positions filled. I am so thankful for all the work Ben and Angela did for this report and this year as a whole — especially when I was sick during Make A Difference Day! Spending my senior year with the best executive team and an amazing board has definitely been a highlight. The VAC has shown me a new passion and I cannot express my gratitude enough.

With all my love,

Mirela Barnhill
Vice President of Communications
VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER

MISSION: TO PARTNER WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AND THE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE INTENTIONAL IMPACTS THROUGH STUDENT-LED SERVICE.

VISION: TO PROMOTE SERVICE THROUGH CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AND THE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY, AND ENCOURAGING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO CREATE LASTING IMPACT.

CORE VALUES

SERVICE-ORIENTED
RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED
STUDENT-LED

BOARD MEMBER GUIDE

EXECUTIVE

Taylen Day
President

Cindy Mao
Vice President of Operations

Mirela Barnhill
Vice President of Communications

Lesly Cruz
Vice President of Board Development & Education

Samantha Hernandez
Vice President of Programming & Community Inclusion

ASSOCIATES

Ben Walworth
Associate of Marketing

Angela Espares
Associate of Digital Management

DREAM B.I.G.

Hannah Loethen
Chair

Grace Martin
Intern

Christina Murphy
Communications Coordinator

Dina Patel
Matching Coordinator

Annie Stribling
Curriculum Coordinator

Abby Hunter
Curriculum Coordinator

Ella Stanley
Logistics Coordinator

JANE B. GEARHART FULL CIRCLE FOOD PANTRY

Annette Quinn
Chair

Muhammad Ali
Intern

Lauren Zoghlin
Cooking Matters Intern

Jacob Holmes
Data Coordinator

Caroline Wilson
Volunteer Coordinator
BOARD MEMBER GUIDE

JANE B. GEARHART FULL CIRCLE FOOD PANTRY (CONT.)

Katelyn Helberg
Food Drives
Coordinator

Sophia Anreder
Alternative Assistance
Coordinator

Katherine Moreland
Communications
Coordinator

Emma Ferguson
Mobile Food
Coordinator

Blake Prince
Social Work Intern

PASSIONATE ABOUT LITERACY

Sarah Gawron
Chair

Paul Gramling
Intern

Linden Mountain
Development
Coordinator

Gavin Miller
Communications
Coordinator

Sakura Roberts
Volunteer
Coordinator

RAZORBACK FOOD RECOVERY

Abri Ciabattari
Chair

Judy Kamau
Intern

Jordyn Moore
Communications
Coordinator

Haris Rana
Partner
Coordinator

Ella Fei Flesher
Dining Hall
Volunteer
Coordinator

Caroline Meche
Dining Hall Volunteer
Coordinator

Wendy Hoffert
Distribution Volunteer
Coordinator

Katherine Taylor
Repackaging
Coordinator
BOARD MEMBER GUIDE

BE B.O.L.D.

William Sanders
Chair

Danny Moreno
Intern

Julio Morales
Matching Coordinator

Carson Ewing
Communications Coordinator

Max Brigance
Curriculum Coordinator

Cody Builta
Logistics Coordinator

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Gary Jackson
Chair

Karina Escobar
Intern

Kendall Miller
Outreach Coordinator

Edward Onisei
Volunteer Coordinator

Devan Mishra
FYI Coordinator

Jack Norris
GivePulse Intern
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello all!!

Welcome to the 2022-2023 Annual Report for the Volunteer Action Center! It has been an honor and absolute pleasure to serve as the President for such an impactful organization on the University of Arkansas campus. The motto of the VAC is to “be the change;” throughout my three years involved in the organization, I can confidently say that we have lived up to that mantra. Our six signature programs have worked tirelessly to provide events, resources, and opportunities to the campus community to create lasting change and impact. I could not be prouder to represent them.

To briefly share some highlights from our programs, our Vice President of Programming and Community Inclusion planned and executed a very successful “Envisioning Justice Together” conference for the third year in a row! The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry turned 12 and served a record number of clients! The Passionate About Literacy program grew to over 40 volunteers and four partners! The Be B.O.L.D. program operated successfully for its second year in a row! Our Student Engagement team coordinated an impactful Make A Difference Day with over 20 projects and hundreds of volunteers! Razorback Food Recovery started off their year with a bang and recovered 10,000 pounds of food during Walmart week! Finally, the Dream BIG program successfully coordinated a Spring Service Project at J.O. Kelly!

The VAC also had a chance to receive more funding than ever before through the Program Allocations Board. In total, I secured $210,481 in addition to our initial budget to continue funding our mission, vision, and leadership development. This money has gone towards conference participation for all our teams and new, innovative approaches to volunteering and campus access. This more than doubled our budget and has had a significant impact on the functioning of our organization.

We also had the chance to move into our new office at the beginning of the spring semester. This has been a work in progress for many years, so I am very glad it happened while I was still here to see it! We now have a dedicated meeting space for our board meetings, open spaces for team collaboration, and of course, our iconic purple wall.

Words cannot express how proud I am of this board and organization. It has been an integral part of my college experience and key to making me feel like I belong at the University of Arkansas.

My very best,

Taylen Day

Taylen Day, Volunteer Action Center President
VAC Executive Team 2022–2023
Budget Breakdown

Total Primary PAB: $41,000

Total Supplemental PAB: $77,000
- IMPACT Conference
- 3-year GivePulse subscription (51k)
- E&I Programming

Planned Projects:
- Senior Banquet
- Board Appreciation gifts
- Student Intern wages
- Mural and decals for new office space
- Camera purchase

Total Monetary Amount: $118,000
DREAM B.I.G.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To whom it may concern,

The Dream B.I.G. mission has always been “utilizing mentoring as a way to foster a community in which all women are inspired and empowered to embrace their unique qualities.” This year, to achieve this mission, we wanted to empower our women to search for ways to impact their community through career paths and community service opportunities.

Dream B.I.G. added a new board position this year. Our Matching Coordinator was tasked with creating and sustaining all of the program’s matches throughout the year. To compensate for an increase in program interest, we also created new matches over the Winter Break. The program ended with 22 matches, and this number is expected to increase.

The curriculum for the 2022-2023 Dream B.I.G. program was centered on career development and community service. J.O. Kelly Middle School has many students in the lower socio-economic bracket. We wanted to empower the girls in the program to invest in their futures by educating them about career options available to them. Along with this, we desired to give all the women of the program the opportunity to develop and complete a service project at the school.

Our methods for empowering the mentees to explore their career options included inviting mentors to speak about their majors and how to turn their passions into careers. We also invited guest speakers from different professions to discuss the education path for achieving those career goals. We had students discuss careers in the fashion industry, food science, and a licensed pediatric physical therapist. Each of these speakers provided the steps required to reach those goals along with alternative options that required a variety of education levels.

To accomplish our second goal, Dream B.I.G. applied for and received grant funding from the Women’s Giving Circle for a community service project. The students were given the opportunity
to brainstorm project ideas for their school and complete the project during a Brave Girl Session. We also hosted a guest speaker panel for both the mentors and the mentees. We collaborated with PeaceCorps, AmeriCorps, Fulbright Student Program, the Clinton School of Public Service, Girl Scouts, TASC NWA, and Springdale High School to provide beneficial guest speakers to discuss the importance of community service.

The Dream B.I.G. program would not have thrived the way it did without the dedication of its board members and partners. I would like to thank Ms. Farrell and Ms. Lucas for their consistent efforts in supporting the program and its members. With their support, we were able to move from Friday evenings to a partnership with Knight Times on Tuesday evenings.

We are proud to present the following document as a summary of the commitment and hard work we have invested in the Dream B.I.G. program throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. The significance of this year will lead the program into the future.

Thank you,
Hannah Loethen
Dream B.I.G. Chair
During the first semester of this school year, we revisited our matching policies to be able to take on new mentors and mentees halfway through the year. This allowed us to have the flexibility to replace mentors if there were scheduling conflicts, or if they were not meeting our mentoring standards. This also allowed us to let more mentees join the program!

We also had our first Spring Service Project, the funding for which came from the Women’s Giving Circle grant. This project was a great way to engage with the girls and let them help plan one of the Brave Girl Sessions.

We spent a while adjusting the Brave Girl Session structure to accommodate the new time restrictions that come with being at JO Kelly during Knight Times. More work needs to be done to ensure that mentors and mentees have enough time to build their relationship.

The match support position was also retooled during this year to include more data collecting during match surveys. Mentors were asked for feedback on how the sessions went and to offer advice for improving the sessions.
Throughout the first semester, we only spent about 37% of our initial budget, which was $24,000, partially due to the large amounts of PAB supplemental funding we received for our Make a Difference Day project and the National MENTOR Summit in Washington, D.C. During the second semester, we went through the remaining 63% of our budget, increasing our spending in comparison to the first semester due to the purchase of yearbooks, Spring Service Project merchandise, and graduation.

We received $5,500 from PAB for our Make a Difference Day project, which was hygiene packs for middle schoolers. This was a very successful event—we had 33 volunteers and made 100 personalized bags. We also received over $10,000 from PAB to fund our board’s trip to D.C. for the National MENTOR Summit conference. This was an excellent experience, and future boards should ensure that funding is set aside for this conference.
**DREAM B.I.G.VOLUNTEER HOURS**

- **Make a Difference Day:** 7% (133 hours)
- **Mentors:** 39% (740 hours)
- **Board:** 54% (1008 hours)

**Number of Volunteers**

- **Make a Difference Day:** 33 volunteers
- **Fall Mentors:** 18 volunteers
- **Spring Mentors:** 21 volunteers
MENTOR STATEMENT

“Being a part of Dream BIG has hands down been the highlight of my semester. Thank you so much for making this semester with Dream BIG such a fun and positive experience!” - Katelyn Moran, Fall mentor

PARTNER STATEMENT

“These girls really need positive women role models and they’re all going through the “I don’t like my mom” stage that most of us went through in middle school. Having these women show up for the girls every session is going to make such a difference in their lives!”
-Coach Nicodemus, JOKMS cheer coach

IMPACTFUL MOMENT

When we were planning the Spring Service Project, we came up with a few ideas of our own in case the mentees couldn't think of anything. We weren't sure how engaged they would be in the brainstorming process. We were overjoyed when, instead of sitting and listening and not sharing ideas, they came up with the mini food pantry all by themselves. It was so great to see them start to think of areas in their community that they could impact.
JANE B. GEARHART FULL CIRCLE FOOD PANTRY
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To whom it may concern,

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry has continued to serve the University of Arkansas community with dignity and respect, while undergoing a year full of transitions and challenges. Despite starting the year with a completely new board and several empty positions, the JBGFCFP team has served an increased number of clients compared with the prior year and has increased programs to meet the large need for food assistance. While meeting the current need, the board has also been identifying weaknesses in current programs and designing new solutions to make JBGFCFP even stronger and more prepared for coming years. Our new programs and events—including our first ever Pantry Awareness Week, the International Student Starter Pack program, our cultural foods and spices program in collaboration with Community of Practice, and more—have helped us improve how we serve our community with nutritious foods and strengthen our mission.

This year, I have been fortunate to work alongside so many talented and passionate individuals on the Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry team. Everyone has worked so hard to fulfill Full Circle’s mission of nourishing bodies, empowering minds, and building a community of compassion. The kindness, community, and dedication that I have witnessed during my time as chair has made this position one of the meaningful parts of my undergraduate career, so I thank every member of the Full Circle team for the impact that they have made in our community. Muhammad, thank you for your tireless commitment to keeping the pantry running and stocked, as well as your passion for supporting international students. Lauren, I have been incredibly impressed by the way that you have developed Cooking Matters this year, and your wide range of nutrition and food safety knowledge has been so helpful in making sure that our clients stay safe. Caroline, you have always been so organized and willing to help out with any tasks or events needed, so thank you for keeping us focused. Jacob, I am so appreciative of your ability to help the pantry keep track of data in order to make the pantry
more efficient and keep operations organized, as I could never do these tasks myself. Katelyn, Pack the Pantry and Greeks Give Back have been such successes and we would not be able to effectively serve our clients without the food drives that you have organized. Sophia, you were welcomed to the pantry team quickly, but you have grown so much in your gardening knowledge, and I have loved seeing your innovative solutions for the garden and sustainability. Katherine, you may have joined the team later than the rest, but this has only made us appreciate you even more, as you are truly talented at communications and marketing skills. Emma F., your constant enthusiasm and ability to make everyone laugh has added so much energy to the team. Blake, the research that you have done is so helpful to understand Full Circle’s impact and the directions in which we can grow. Emma W., our leader, we cannot thank you enough for all of your advice and all that you have done for our team and Full Circle. I don’t know what we would do without your guidance, so thank you. I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished at Full Circle this year and the work of every single team member. The JBGFCFP team could not serve our community without the support of the University of Arkansas and all our partners, volunteers, and donors. Full Circle is truly a community collaboration, and I am constantly inspired by generosity and compassion that I am privileged to witness as chair.

À bientôt!
Annette Quinn
Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry Chair, 2022-2023
The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry is fortunate to have a network of supportive partners to collaborate with to improve our services and make volunteering more accessible for all groups. These partners include:

Volunteer Action Center, Razorback Food Recovery, TriCycle Farms, International Students and Scholars, Empower Program, Multicultural Center, Greek Life, Seeds that Feed, Community of Practice, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, Chartwells, Whole Foods, LeadHogs, University Housing, and many others.
WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING

2022-2023 has been a year of very high need and hunger on campus. Full Circle has been trying to adapt to these changes and meet this need, while also recognizing our own limitations and not overextending our resources. The numbers of clients being served has equaled, and sometimes surpassed, that of 2020, one of the highest years for hunger due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to our recognition of this need, we have increased our outreach efforts to raise awareness of the pantry's services, including hosting the first ever Pantry Awareness Week. Our programs for international students and immigrants are also growing, particularly through the International Student Starter Pack program and increased emphasis on cultural foods and spices, though this growth will continue into the coming year.

In the coming year, we hope to improve our abilities to direct Full Circle clients to outside resources, such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), in order to decrease reliance on the pantry, while also focusing on providing fresh produce and cultural foods and spices to clients. These programs will be supported by the creation of an additional pantry board position starting in the 2023-2024 school year. We are also working on improving our Mobile Foods program, including mini pantries, express service, and our locker system, in order to make these programs more sustainable and improve the food safety standards of the locker system. These improvements will carry on into the next year.

Clients Served Over Time
The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry has been serving a high number of clients during the 2022-2023 school year, with an average of approximately 1,200 client visits each full month that the pantry is open. The number of client visits in October 2022, in particular, is higher than October visits in other years since 2018, the first year that we have access to client visit data.
WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING

Cooking Matters
The 2022-2023 school year has been the first year since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that the Cooking Matters program has been able to host regular in-person cooking classes. The program has significantly increased its number of classes and has seen an increase in participant attendance, with an average of approximately 12 students attending each class. Overall, the Cooking Matters program has hosted over 25 classes this year, many in coordination with different partners and RSOs on campus. In the future, the program is moving towards being able to serve 20+ students per class due to access to larger classroom spaces and the improved and increased cooking supplies purchased this year with PAB funding. Increased numbers of students are now aware of Cooking Matters due to more posts about the program on Facebook, Instagram, and Hogsync, as well as outreach to different organizations.

Cooking Matters has partnered with:

First Generation Students
Full Circle Food Pantry Garden
Womens Engineering Club
Hotz Hall
Be B.O.L.D.
Recycle-Backs
Chartwells
UAMS/ UARK GRAD
VAC Board
WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING

Mobile Food Orders
We had 1,531 express orders in the fall 2022 semester. There are two sets of two volunteers that deliver the orders to their respective locations each week. In the future, we are hoping to expand this program using an additional vehicle to allow more volunteers to complete deliveries. This would provide for the increase of express orders and allow for further expansion of the program. We have locations at:

- UAMS North Street Entrance (1125 N. College Avenue)
- Arkansas Research and Technology Park (535 W. Research Center Boulevard)
- Food Science Building (2650 Young Avenue)
- Veterans Resource and Information Center (640 N. Garland Avenue)
- Graduate Student Lounge Lockers (Stairwell outside Gearhart 206; Northwest part of building)
- Holcombe Hall (550 Garland Avenue)
- University of Arkansas Global Campus (2 E. Center Street)
- Student Success Center (CORD)

We are currently partnered with several departments across campus for the Full Circle Mini Pantry program. The locations for the mini pantries include: Career Development Center, Veterans Resource Information Center, Walton Career Services Center, Holcombe and Futrall, Gearhart (Grad School), Pat Walker, AFLS, the World Language, Literature, and Culture department (Kimpel), ASG, WEI and PELS, and the Student Success Center.

Each of the locations has been supplied with hygiene items, snacks, and ready-made meals each semester, apart from the Grad School which has a monthly refill to accommodate high demand.

We filled 225 locker orders during the Fall 2022 semester with the Pantry Locker System. We are currently looking to expand the program by installing temperature-controlled or weatherproof smart lockers. Additionally, we plan to potentially use the current lockers at express locations to both expand the pantry lockers across campus and make the express system more secure.
WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING

Food Drives

Pack the Pantry Donations:
We had a total of 21,730 items donated for the two week-long food drive. Pack the Pantry Partners included: Greek Life, Alumni Association, Associated Student Government, Volunteer Action Center, International Students and Scholars, SAKE, Honors College, UREC, Vietnamese Student Association, Biomedical Engineering Students, PRSSA, Brewer Hub, First Baptist Church Fayetteville, Public Health Student Association, University Housing, Department of Exercise Science, Bumpers College, and University Management Services. Below is a graph that shows the distribution of donations, by item type:

![Pack the Pantry Food Drive Totals](image)

Greens Give Back Donations:
We had a total of 8,253 items donated by Greek Life organizations in a single day on March 14, 2023. These donations included a high number of hygiene items, which were particularly appreciated as they are normally donated significantly less often than food. The 14 Greek organizations that participated did a great job of donating items that the pantry needed and showing up to support the pantry.
**WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING**

**Volunteer Impacts**

The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry has been adding more volunteer positions this year and improving our systems in place for training volunteers. For the Spring 2023 semester, we have added several new volunteer positions, including Data Volunteers and Donation Volunteers, making the number of Full Circle volunteers around 70 for Spring 2023. These new positions have given more University of Arkansas students the opportunity to engage in service at the pantry, while also reducing the workload for board members and improving the operations of the pantry. In Fall 2022, Full Circle volunteers put in a total of 2,050.74 volunteer hours. The data on the number of volunteer hours for Spring 2023 is currently incomplete, but it is predicted to be higher than the fall due to an increased number of weekly volunteer positions. Below are graphs that showcase the growth in volunteer hours each year as well as the monetary impact of these hours, which is estimated at $29.95 per hour. This national value of a volunteer hour is drawn from the Volunteer Time report, published by Independent Sector and the Do Good Institute.

![Volunteer Hours by Year](image)

![Monetary Impact of Volunteers by Year](image)
Communications

After several years of the pantry Instagram being inactive, JBGFCFP restarted the pantry Instagram account during Fall 2022, with approval from the Volunteer Action Center Board. This account has been instrumental in reaching our clients—particularly college students—and informing them of our services, events, and the products that we receive. With the re-launch of the Instagram account, we have seen a large increase in followers, profiles reached, and overall activity. Profile visits to the JBGFCFP Instagram have increased over 50% since the re-launch of the Instagram. Over 200 accounts have engaged with posts and followers have grown over 15%. The account now has over 700 followers.
Garden
This past fall, the pantry garden produced 28.65 pounds of produce, specifically tomatoes and red peppers. The produce was packaged and given out to clients as extras in the front fridge. When an early first freeze occurred, the surplus of green tomatoes and green peppers were pickled and also utilized in mini green tomato salsa recipe packets for clients, providing accessible, nutrient-rich foods.

The pantry has saved 16.65 pounds of food waste from going into landfills, mainly generated from Cooking Matters classes, donations, and board members’ own household scraps as of February 2023. That food waste was then composted by the pantry’s composting system to further the health and success of the pantry’s garden.

Starting in March 2023, the pantry began to give the contents of dented cans to the City of Fayetteville through a composting food materials subscription service to further reduce our food waste generated. So far, the pantry has saved 134 dented cans’ contents from breaking down in landfills and harming our environment by producing methane gas.
The Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry served about 6,778 clients in the 2022-2023 school year. This year, we have seen an increased need for food assistance across campus, due to the high inflation costs of food and the rising value of the properties in Northwest Arkansas.

Above is a graph that outlines the different spending categories from our PAB supplemental funding, at the time of writing this report in March. Our highest spending category from PAB was the Intern wages. These wages support one of the interns who manage pantry spending, co-leads the team with the chair, oversees operations, and attempts to ensure shelves are stocked. The other pantry intern is the Cooking Matters intern. The Cooking Matters intern runs their own program in which they educate students and campus employees on how to cook delicious meals while on a budget. This year, the Cooking Matters program expanded after several years of reduced classes due to COVID-19, leading to an increase in intern wages paid to the Cooking Matters intern due to more hours worked. We requested a large amount of funding from PAB this year to update our locker system to food-safe smart lockers.
BOARD MEMBER STATEMENT

Lauren, Cooking Matters intern shared: “The pantry has allowed me to learn more about my community and the people on this campus. I get to work with tons of students and teach them life-long skills about cooking and nutrition in the Cooking Matters program that will enable them to make smart decisions about what they eat. The pantry is so important for fighting food insecurity on campus and making sure that people are fed.”

CLIENT STATEMENT

This poem was given to the Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry volunteers by a client that regularly visits the pantry. This client has given several poems to the pantry to show their appreciation.

“Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry”
You feed the hungry.
You do it without pay.
Thank you Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry.
Thanks for helping people along the way.

You greet people with a smile.
You do the best you can.
You feed people for a little while.
You’re there to help your fellow man.

You bring a little sunshine to the day.
You’re there with a helping hand.
You turn no one away.
In an ocean of people, you blessed land.
Thank you.
Meaningful moments occur every day at Full Circle, but one particularly memorable moment was the day that we received a large donation of eggs from Whole Foods in collaboration with TriCycle Farms. As the price of eggs has risen dramatically this year, many of our clients had stopped purchasing eggs themselves and were overjoyed to find that they could get eggs at the pantry on that particular day. Clients celebrated and talked with each other about how they had missed having eggs at home and how nice it was to get them for free at Full Circle. The joy that clients experienced due to something as simple as eggs was a meaningful reminder of how significant food is for not only our health, but also for comfort and happiness. The Full Circle team is so grateful to be able to help provide this nutrition and joy to our community every day.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello Volunteer Action Center!

It has been yet another wild and eventful year with the Passionate About Literacy program. Leading this team has been the highlight of my year and I could not be prouder of our growth and development. Our program was able to transition from a virtual model to an in-person model at Jones Elementary and the Yvonne Richardson Community Center, and we were able to expand to Knapp Elementary and the Fayetteville Public Library, spreading our reach and serving as much of the Northwest Arkansas community as possible.

In the 2022-2023 school year, the P.A.L. program has grown to support over 40 matches across our four locations. Our program currently facilitates 41 matches. Our Development Coordinator, Linden Mountain, has been an integral player in establishing and supporting these matches, providing volunteer and mentee support periodically throughout the semester. Our mentor-mentee pairings meet once a week at their respective locations for 30-45 minutes and participate in various activities, like creating their own book, planned by our two Volunteer Coordinators, Sakura Roberts and Ethan Brown.

As P.A.L. Chair, it has been a priority of mine to maintain and build healthy relationships with our community partners. To ensure our partners feel supported and that no board member was spread too thin, our Intern, Paul Gramling, and I shared the responsibility of partner communication between our Springdale and Fayetteville locations. As we have established ourselves throughout the Northwest Arkansas community through the hard work of our entire team, our program has become a favorite among our partners and the kiddos we serve.

Our team continues to examine the landscape of the communities we serve, constantly looking for and pursuing the most positive avenues for our partners, our board, and most importantly, our mentors and mentees.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Through our six board positions, our team has a well-established model with room for even more growth in the future and I feel confident in the abilities of our current board to leave a positive legacy for future boards to follow.

This program has absolutely stolen my heart and it has been my privilege to serve as the P.A.L. Chair this past year and as the Outreach Coordinator the previous year. Watching our program grow from one location to four, and from eight matches to over forty is an experience I will not soon forget. I am proud to pass the baton to our next chair, Gavin Miller, and I know that he is the best possible choice for the position and will serve our next board well. I am excited to remain involved in the P.A.L. program as next year’s intern, and I cannot wait to see what new heights our program reaches in the coming school year.

Sincerely,
Sarah Gawron
Passionate About Literacy Chair
PARTNERS

Jones Elementary
  • Suzanne Cartwright

Knapp Elementary
  • Mendi Hayter

Yvonne Richardson Community Center
  • Josh Lainfiesta and Jeff Poole

Fayetteville Public Library
  • Emily Jones
WHERE WE'RE AT

This year’s board entered the year with an intentional and guided approach towards our program operations. We crafted new mission and vision statements that continue to define our program:

**Mission:** To foster a passion for reading and promote personal and intellectual growth for elementary students through meaningful mentor relationships with college students.

**Vision:** We hope to encourage growth in literacy among students through facilitated reading activities led by mentors who empower a love of reading for future generations.

Establishing a culture of evaluation was important for us as a board. This process began with developing and finalizing our expected outcomes:

- Students demonstrate a newfound passion for reading
- Students demonstrate improved confidence in their reading abilities
- Students demonstrate personal and intellectual growth through:
  - Guided self-reflection
  - Social and emotional wellness development
  - Improved literacy skills
- Students form a meaningful relationship with a college-aged mentor

With these in mind, we have been able to tailor our curriculum to continually reinforce these outcomes and design relevant surveys to collect meaningful data we can report on.

We also added two new positions this year, a development coordinator and a second volunteer coordinator. Our development coordinator works to match our mentors and mentees, facilitates match support, and oversees survey management and data collection. Previously, this work was handled by our old partner, Big Brothers Big Sisters. Now this work is conducted in-house by our development coordinator with support from the rest of the team.
WHERE WE'RE AT

Adding a second volunteer coordinator has allowed us to better manage and support our volunteers as a program. We felt the need to add a second volunteer coordinator because we projected significant program growth heading into this year, and we were correct. Not only did we grow from 15 volunteers last year to over 40 this year, but we added two new partner sites: Knapp Elementary and the Fayetteville Public Library. Having a second volunteer coordinator position allows us to effectively manage our volunteers and improve volunteer engagement and buy-in.

Fall of 2022 was our first semester of fully in-person programming at all 4 partner sites. And in this Spring semester, we currently have 40 matches across our various sites. Our volunteer coordinators and our development coordinator have worked to develop an engaging curriculum that is currently being implemented by these mentors. Whereas in years past, P.A.L’s curriculum has been book-centric, this year’s is focused more on activities that work to complement intentional reading time. For that reading time, the mentees choose the books they want to read. We anticipate that by giving agency to the mentees, they will be more excited about what they are reading, ultimately leading to a greater passion for reading.

A program Blackboard page, intentional check-ins with our volunteers, family engagement nights, and monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish have all been new components to our program this year as well.
WHERE WE'RE GOING

We hope that with a strong foundation, next year’s P.A.L. board will be able to build upon this year’s growth. Our matching and match support processes will continue to be refined; Qualtrics forms and phone calls will be utilized. With this, any feedback and data we receive will prompt us to reevaluate our current operations, ensuring our program is responsive to the needs of our mentors and mentees.

We are also looking at the possibility of partnering with the Springdale Public Library to host a similar program to the one we have with the Fayetteville Public Library. The libraries are wonderful hubs for intentional reading time, with lots of great resources in place to facilitate our P.A.L. meetings. Additionally, library programs allow us to engage with our mentees’ families, an opportunity for us to promote literacy in the NWA community.
BUDGET

The Passionate About Literacy Program began the year with a budget of $22,000. However, after two rounds of applying for supplemental PAB funding, the budget grew to $38,065. This additional $16,065 went to three main categories: our curriculum, board development, and merchandise. We requested an additional $1,660 to purchase book kits that were used by mentors and mentees to design a book together. We sent the completed book kits to be printed as hardcover copies for both mentors and mentees to receive. $3,095 of the PAB request went to purchasing additional merchandise. This merchandise served two purposes: marketing and volunteer appreciation. The remaining $11,310 of the PAB request was for the 6-person board and our staff advisor to attend the MENTOR conference in Washington D.C. At the conference, our board attend a variety of sessions relating to best practices in mentoring, strategies for program evaluation, and effective team leadership.

Last year the P.A.L Program spent $16,738, significantly less than this year. It was a goal of this year's P.A.L board to get creative with our budget and find ways to spend more money, specifically ways that would enrich our program in new and innovate ways. We held more events, including a family engagement night at the Fayetteville Public Library along with more recruitment initiatives. Attending the MENTOR conference was a main contributor to our increase in spending, as last year's board was unable to attend the conference. Special projects also became an important component of our work. We built and founded an official Free Little Library outside of the food pantry on campus and established a similar library specifically for VAC board member education on relevant DEI topics. This fiscal year was extremely foundational for the P.A.L Program, and we are confident that next year's board will be just as financially successful and creative with their spending, if not more.

SUMMARY
BOARD DEVELOPMENT
MENTOR Conference in Washington D.C.

OPERATIONAL COSTS
Student Wages, Supplies, Background Checks, Special Projects

CURRICULUM
Activities that are implemented by mentors to work towards program outcomes

MERCHANDISE
Used for marketing to the University of Arkansas campus, as well as volunteer appreciation.

EVENTS
Family engagement nights, volunteer trainings & appreciation, Make a Difference Day, recruitment

2022-2023
P.A.L. PROGRAM
Volunteer Action Center

Board Development
30%

$38,065

Curriculum
10%

Merchandise
16%

Events
12%

Operational Costs
32%
This year, P.A.L significantly increased our impact, as we were able to engage more volunteers and more kids at our partner sites than in previous years. Each volunteer, on average, logged approximately 10 hours each semester between volunteer trainings and meetings with their mentees. Each board member averaged 172 hours logged throughout the year. The P.A.L Program would not have been able to succeed without this time and the dedication of the board.

Additionally, we calculated the estimated economic impact that the board and our volunteers had on the Northwest Arkansas region. We used the most recently calculated dollar value corresponding to one volunteer hour - $23.79 for Arkansas (https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Value-of-Volunteer-Time-by-State-2001-2021.pdf). As a program, P.A.L’s total estimated economic impact for the 2022-2023 year was $46,794.93. We are thrilled to be able to serve such diverse and vibrant communities in the Northwest Arkansas region and anticipate an even bigger economic impact next year.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To whom it may concern,

Serving as RFR’s chair in my senior year has truly been the best experience of my college career, and I cannot thank our board members enough for their passion, dedication, and flexibility in helping run the program this year. I have learned so much through serving on the board these past semesters, enlightened by the inspiring words, ideas, and conduct displayed by fellow board members. This year, board bonding among all VAC members was prioritized, and it certainly underscores how strong the relationships one forms through service truly are.

Our leadership team’s primary initiatives this year focused much of our resources on both investing in board development and reassessing the needs in our community (on campus and beyond) and deciding where we may adjust our operations in order to fit that need. Our program within the VAC has proven to be resilient against all challenges and adaptive to needed changes. We have expanded volunteer opportunities, refocused some of our programs, and have developed as well as strengthened many new partnerships. We have large ideas for the future, as we add back the Data Coordinator position and bring on a new role serving as Greek House Recovery Special Projects Coordinator, as well as increase grocery recovery operations.

I am so proud of our board this year in going above and beyond the expectation for regular food recovery, showing strong initiative in fulfilling important roles and always considering how we may efficiently expand so that our mission’s impact continuously affects our community. I must recognize our leadership team consisting of our intern, Judy Kamau, our advisor, Emma Weiderhoft, and I for constantly making sure our vision is enacted, board members experience professional development, and all areas of operations run smoothly. Our Partner Coordinator, Haris Rana, and Communications Coordinator, Jordyn Moore, contributed greatly to ensuring our success in working closely with partners and spreading the
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

message of R.F.R. and what we do to the wider campus community. Lastly, but certainly not least, our Volunteer Coordinators, Ella-Fei Flesher, Caroline Meche, Distribution Coordinator Wendy Hoffert, and Repackaging Coordinator Katherine Taylor, implemented important new training techniques as well as connected with each and every volunteer, allowing for shifts to run efficiently and volunteers to fully understand the impact they have made in choosing to serve with R.F.R.

I could not have asked for a better group of board members, nor a better year in leading R.F.R. during my last year on campus. I am grateful to have been a part of such a genuine, leadership-driven, and service-minded organization surrounded by the most loving people. I know the continued success of R.F.R. will be in great hands.

Abri Ciabattari
Razorback Food Recovery Chair
PARTNERS

- Chartwells
- Salvation Army
- Life Source
- Yvonne Richardson Community Center (YRCC)
- Tri Cycle farms (for grocery recovery with Whole Foods)
- Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Food Pantry (on-campus)
- Multicultural Center (on-campus)
- Holcombe (on-campus)
In describing the success of our year as a board, we must first acknowledge the immense effort put in by our Summer 2022 interns in our first year recovering throughout Walmart Week. Throughout four days of recovering food from the conference, our program was able to divert 9,480 pounds (about half the weight of a school bus) of food waste, the most amount of food recovered within one week since R.F.R.’s inception. We extend our sincere thanks to all who jumped in to help in that process, and we are so proud of the amount of community support in quickly and easily donating all food to our flexible partners.

Throughout this year, our board has made many efforts to implement changes in programming that will allow for our continued growth, while still ensuring regular recovery needs and expectations were met. We are most proud of our accomplishments in strengthening our existing partnerships as well as building new ones, one example being our relationship with the EMPOWER program here at the U of A. Last year, we began working with the program and had a couple of volunteers for one shift, which quickly proved to be an awesome partnership that we knew we should put more effort into expanding. This year, our full partnership with them launched successfully as we introduced 10 EMPOWER students to volunteer in weekly recovery shifts, and we could not be more excited about the future of R.F.R. with our programs working together.

We added the Yvonne Richardson Community Center (YRCC) back as a partner this year, reassessing our partnership with them and understanding their needs. We are now distributing our ImPACKs (roughly 35 of them) to the organization each Friday as a supplement to the meals they receive at school but are not given for the weekends. We are incredibly grateful to have this consistent partnership again and look forward to a future of continued support.

We must also acknowledge the increased passion for grocery recovery over the years, through multiple leadership teams, and how their ideas and plans have guided our operations this year. In fall of 2022 we added on an additional grocery recovery shift, led by board members, and this semester we officially launched the two volunteer shifts for morning grocery recovery at Whole Foods in partnership with TriCycle Farms. This shift creation is a solid step forward in our continued aspirations for having the capacity to grow our grocery recovery program.
WHERE WE'RE AT

We administered an end-of-semester survey for the Fall 2022 semester, and found that while volunteers were generally excited to work with us, would consider becoming even more involved, and felt their service hours were truly making a difference in the community, about 50% did report feeling they did not know enough about all that R.F.R. does and how our operations work besides the shift they were directly a part of. We have made steps to address this by reassessing our training process as a whole. As a result of many Volunteer Coordinator meetings, our board found a gap, quickly realizing there were many initiatives we could implement to provide more thorough training procedures and a more complete understanding of our program. We now have multiple master documents outlining specific details and guidelines for all operations within RFR, especially within distribution and the repackaging program. We additionally provided all board members, and all members of our repackaging program, ServSafe certification to ensure we are constantly prioritizing food safety measures. With efficient communication from our Volunteer Coordinators, paired with new one-on-one training styles, our volunteers this semester were certainly more confident than semesters prior.

We recently hosted a conference on sustainability, food waste, and food insecurity in our community titled “Contribute and Redistribute”, featuring several of our partners as well as other community voices. This was a large step in expanding our educational initiatives.

We are currently working with P.A.L. to create a booklet for their students in an effort to educate them on Earth Day, the environment, and how to implement sustainable practices in their own life, set to be passed out the week of Earth Day. We hope to continually find new avenues in the future where we may expand our efforts in sustainability and food waste education around the community.

We also attended and presented at a conference in mid-April as a R.F.R. board, showcasing the success of our repackaging program to all in attendance at the 2023 Universities Fighting World Hunger Conference (the first in-person UFWH event since the beginning of the pandemic). We are all certainly grateful for this professional development opportunity for our board which was allowed only by the increased budget for PAB funds this year, and we would like to thank our VAC President, Taylen Day, for always advocating in favor of our proposals. We are very proud of all board members who have contributed to creating an abstract, a poster, and talking points, and who will soon represent R.F.R. in front of universities across the nation.
WHERE WE'RE GOING

- Fully expand grocery recovery operations
- Re-integrate the data coordinator position; new initiatives/ideas for strategic data collection and data projects
- Expand sorority and fraternity house recovery with addition of the new Greek House special projects position
- Create "check-in" events and presentations that will serve to connect volunteers to the entire RFR mission and process
- Keep up efforts to evolve the repackaging program – more consistency in shifts, reach more partners, educate more people on the resource; overall, constantly monitor the need for imPACKs in our community/on-campus and be flexible in meeting that need
- Connect with other universities that have similar programs
- Create more collaborative partnerships with other groups on campus
- Sustainability mixers – educate the public about our impact and connect with other sustainability programs
- Increase our marketing efforts in getting the word out about applications; goals are to open applications earlier, be more present during A week, and table at more dorms and dining halls
Hello! My name is Judy Kamau, and I am the intern for the Razorback Food Recovery program this year. Below is a chart that illustrates our 2022-2023 budget, by spending category.

Overall, our operations run themselves, requiring little money besides supplies for recovery and upkeep of the van. Due to the increased budget allowance from PAB this year, as well as the fact that conferences are finally up-and-running again after a decrease in COVID-19 cases, the majority of our allocated and requested money went to professional development for our board. We are extremely grateful for this opportunity to enact professional development initiatives and to have multiple experiences networking with others in food waste and food insecurity spaces. The knowledge our board gains from these opportunities will surely serve to enhance our operations in the years ahead.
IMPACT STATEMENT

RAZORBACK FOOD RECOVERY
2022-2023 IN REVIEW

HOURS GIVEN + # OF VOLUNTEERS
992.20 HOURS
49 VOLUNTEERS

POUNDS OF FOOD + MEALS RECOVERED
7017.51 LBS
ABOUT 4678 MEALS

CO2 EQUIVALENCE
26,667 LBS

ECONOMIC IMPACT
$28,317.39

IMPACKS MADE
765

PARTNERS SERVED
5
“One of the workers at the dining hall had a conversation with me and another volunteer about how grateful he was that we host this program. I understand it can be difficult working in an environment where food waste occurs in front of you every day. The worker explained to us how meaningful it was to him to know that we could help out by recovering some of the leftovers, minimizing the waste they had to deal with while feeding members of the community. I could connect with him. It's a meaningful initiative to me, too.”

— Valeria Fernandez, Recovery Volunteer
2023
BE B.O.L.D.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

To whom it may concern,

One word comes to mind when I think about Be B.O.L.D.’s 2022-2023 program year: grateful. Grateful for my fellow board members who worked tirelessly to ensure that this year went as smoothly as possible amidst a year full of chaos and change. Grateful for the amazing staff and friends in the VAC office that made us laugh, offered us advice, and helped guide us when there were bumps in the road. Grateful for the staff at J.O. Kelly that supported us consistently throughout our program year and were willing to adapt to our program’s changing needs. And grateful for our amazing group of mentors that always showed up ready to engage with their mentees, even when their mentees may not have been having the best day.

As the second year of my time with Be B.O.L.D. comes to an end, I have had the unique privilege of watching how this program has transformed and grown in its first two years of operation, and the change has been significant to say the least. The Be B.O.L.D. team has completely altered the way the program is structured, which I believe has been the best decision our team made this year. Through a series of meetings and discussions, many of which were spurred by our team’s trip to Washington, D.C. for the National Mentoring Summit, the curriculum of Be B.O.L.D. has been altered to move away from A and B days, instead opting for a structure that provides the mentees with a valuable life lesson or bonding experience while balancing that lesson with an equal amount of free time. Through this change, we’ve been able to provide the mentees with valuable experiences, including a personal favorite of mine, learning how to change a tire with the School Resource Officers. But most importantly, this change has allowed the voice of the youth to become a more central aspect of our program.

Be B.O.L.D. has been an integral part of my life for the better part of two years now, and while I am sad to leave this chapter of my life behind, I am extremely excited to see what Jack and Drews
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

can accomplish next year and how they will continue to build upon the groundwork laid by not only our team this year, but Be B.O.L.D’s “Founding Fathers” two years ago. I know they would be proud of how far the program has come in such a short time.

To Danny, thank you for always being your most authentic self and bringing your best to every meeting and Hangtime, but most of all, thank you for holding me accountable. I couldn’t have been Chair without you by my side as Intern.

To Max, thank you for always being adaptable and bringing great ideas to the table. Our curriculum truly took new leaps and bounds because YOU were the only one capable of making it that way.

To Cody, thank you for always being dependable and making sure we have a stacked inventory for years to come. I’ll miss cracking jokes with you in the VAC office and hearing about how bad your car smells from each Hangtime’s food.

To Carson, thank you for creating the best marketing and merchandise Be B.O.L.D. has had yet. You balanced your busy schedule with your creative work so flawlessly and it was amazing to be a small part of your creative process.

To Julio, thank you for working so diligently to make sure we had the best matches and Mentor Training Sessions we could. Your perseverance throughout this year was amazing to see and our matches’ success can be attributed directly to you.

I’m so thankful for the amazing experiences, life lessons, and people Be B.O.L.D. has given me, and I’m extremely excited to see the amazing things that it will continue to accomplish and all the lives it will continue to change!

Sincerely,
William Sanders
Be B.O.L.D. Chair, 2022-2023
Be B.O.L.D.'s primary partner is J.O. Kelly Middle School in Springdale, Arkansas.
WHERE WE'RE AT & WHERE WE'RE GOING

In its second year of operation, Be B.O.L.D. has continued its efforts to impact the youth of JO Kelly Middle School while instituting constructive change that will ensure that the program will adapt to the specific interests and needs of its mentors and mentees in the future.

Be B.O.L.D. saw 80% growth in its number of matches this year, growing from ten mentor-mentee pairs to 18 total matches with 18 mentors and 25 mentees. Be B.O.L.D. also shifted the direction of its curriculum compared to the VAC’s other mentoring programs, moving towards a more adaptive approach to its Hangtimes. Rather than the program following an alternating schedule of A (curriculum-focused) and B (free time-focused) days, the board adopted a new approach where curriculum is created in between Hangtimes. Input from the mentees has become an integral part of the program this year, and the new curriculum is primarily based on what each mentee/mentor wants to see and do at the next Hangtime.

The Be B.O.L.D team was also able to attend MENTOR’s National Mentoring Summit for the first time, an experience that proved to be key in the program’s transformation and new direction.

The future of Be B.O.L.D. is undoubtedly going to be bright, and the program has been set up for success with these new changes.
BUDGET

Our team had an initial budget of $20,000 which was used during the first semester, where we spent around 15% of the budget. However, during the first semester, we were granted an additional funding of $10,580 through a supplemental round, increasing the total to $30,580. This supplementary funding was intended for the team to attend the National Mentoring Summit conference in Washington DC. This event was a major opportunity for the team to learn from other mentors, share their own experiences, and network with other professionals in the field. We would highly recommend it to future board members.

The team also increased their "hang time" sessions with students the second semester, which required a spending increase for refreshments and supplies. They're also organizing an end-of-year celebration, using the budget for activities and logistics. With 73% of their budget spent, the team is committed to providing quality mentoring despite having only 27% of their budget remaining. They are exploring ways to optimize their budget for the rest of the year. In addition, the team believes that the shift in curriculum will also have a positive impact on the students they are mentoring, as it will enable them to better align their mentoring approach with the updated academic standards.

SUMMARY
This year, Be B.O.L.D. was able to greatly increase its impact on the youth of JO Kelly Middle School. The number of mentees increased by 150% from last year’s total, rising from 10 to 25 mentees that consistently participate in the program. Additionally, Be B.O.L.D. will be providing our mentees with valuable items that will be useful in their day-to-day lives, such as clear backpacks, socks, hats, and formal ties.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Student Engagement entered this year with a lot of uncertainty; introducing an almost entirely new framework for the team while having a leadership board composed mostly of first-time board members. Yet, our team rose to the challenge as we showed initiative and enthusiasm to compensate for a lack of experience. Having the opportunity as chair to see each individual grow into their role was a great experience and something I am immensely proud of our team members for doing. Each member showed a passion for meeting the needs that we were addressing and was excited for any opportunities to collaborate with both other team members and our outside community. A large area of growth seen by Student Engagement this year was being more receptive and intentional to listening to the voices and needs of those we serve and the students we want to reach out to.

These areas of improvement do not all come without flaws or shortcomings. There were areas where we as a team fell short, and as we entered the spring semester, conflicting schedules, time commitments, and a slew of other factors slowed down our team’s speed. We also have ways to grow in improving creativity, enthusiasm, and collaboration in event planning, partnerships, and more. I really feel that how we start the year is the precedent we set for the remainder of the year. Our goal for next year is to set the bar high and keep it there.

Going into this next year, we are still doing a lot of modifications to our team’s framework. We created new positions, experienced members are leaving, and current team members are taking on new roles. However, I have the utmost confidence in what our team is capable of. We concluded our last board meeting with current team members and discussed ways we plan to grow, and hearing the genuine passion and excitement for what we can improve and build on excited me. Student Engagement is being placed in the hands of individuals with big dreams and ambitions but who also have the drive to accomplish them, and I can’t wait to see what is next for our program.

Gary Jackson
WHERE WE'RE AT

During the 2022-2023 academic year the Student Engagement team tested a new team position, the “Outreach Coordinator.” This position was meant to find new, innovative ways to communicate and connect with the University of Arkansas Student body in order to further spread news about the Volunteer Action Center and related volunteering opportunities. While initially successful, the position was adapted into the current “Get Your 10 Coordinator” position in which the coordinator works to plan the Spring 2023 “Get Your 10” event alongside working to find ways to better communicate with the student body. On the same topic of the introduction of new team positions, the Student Engagement team also finished out this year with a new ambassador handling the operations of Graphic Design and Team Communication.

As for where the Student Engagement is heading in the 2023-2024 academic year, the future is bright. There are plans for a new event to take place early in the spring semester, the VAC Winter Kickoff. The VAC Winter Kickoff will be an event focused on allowing students to have a great opportunity to start the semester volunteering at one of a variety of nonprofit organizations from across Northwest Arkansas. This also works in conjunction as a time where Student Engagement can directly interact with students to introduce them to the members and mission of the Volunteer Action Center through interactive lunches alongside the initial kickoff event.

Lastly, this upcoming year the Student Engagement team anticipates planning and executing the largest interaction of “Make a Difference Day” that the Volunteer Action Center and the University of Arkansas has seen since prior to the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic. We hope to feature more non-profits organizations and bring in even more student-volunteers than the 900+ seen in this past year’s iteration of the event. Preparation for that event will begin in the Summer of 2023 with the new Student Engagement Chair and Intern.
Aside from improving upon past events, opportunities, and team structure, the Student Engagement team plans on introducing a variety of novel experiences for students on campus with the goal of creating an integrated network of students involved in each aspect presented. First, the "Get Your 10 program" will be reintroduced with a contemporary structure and format designed to incentivize students to go past "getting their 10." Various rewards will be given to students who achieve certain milestones in their volunteering experiences, and the program is designed to be repeatedly effective for future teams.

Next, the role of Freshman Service Program coordinator will be reintroduced to solely focus on targeting Freshman students and increasing their involvement with the VAC and non-profit organizations across NWA. After careful discussion as a team, we determined that the particular focus of Freshman involvement is essential to the goal of Student Engagement, as we want to cultivate a campus of students who are passionate about service. Therefore, developing the habits of getting students involved in service from the start leads to the increased likelihood they will continue to interact and engage with future volunteer events and opportunities. This position will essentially act as a “Volunteer Coordinator” specifically for Freshman, and one volunteer event will be organized and held per month.

Aside from the tangible aspects that we have planned for the 2023-2024 academic year, the main goal of the Student Engagement team for next semester is to find ways to share and express the unique culture that embodies the VAC. As a team, we feel that this love, passion, and openness is something that every student should have the opportunity to experience, and we believe that sharing this with students on campus will make service opportunities more meaningful and exciting. We plan to do this by developing collaborative efforts between our programs and the rest of the VAC board.
PAB supplementary funding was able to fund the start of the GY10 program where we purchased t-shirts, hoodies, and pins for volunteers to pick up. The budget was lower for MADD because we had less volunteers, which most likely has to do with it being the first normal year since COVID-19.
BOARD MEMBER STATEMENT

Coming into this year, one of our main goals was to host the first completely in-person MADD since before COVID-19; it was an opportunity that meant a lot to more than just us, as many nonprofit organizations were also looking to return to normalcy as their programs were rebooting post-COVID. I loved seeing all the work put in by our team, but more importantly, by fellow students and our community in making this event come to life. We took large steps this year, and I look forward to building upon our success in continuing to make MADD more impactful on our community at-large. - Gary Jackson

CLIENT STATEMENT

We want to thank the Volunteer Action Center Student Engagement Team for their many years of supporting The City of Fayetteville’s stewardship initiatives. Both the Find Your Impact presentation and cleanup were also enjoyable and a great success; again, allowing reach to a new audience of engaged students, and enabling us the ability to clean up an enormous amount of trash along trails in student housing areas in south Fayetteville, and around Lot #99 on campus, while inspiring these young adults to future action.

Without the relationship that we have with the VAC Student Engagement Team we would have a difficult time maintaining the quality of the outdoor spaces that our community has come to expect, and that our environment depends upon.

Sincerely,
Kristina G. Jones
Volunteer & Community Programs Coordinator
Fayetteville Public Works
“One of the most meaningful moments for me this year was during the collection of the 7Hills residence hall donation drive. While I was picking up boxes, one of the front desk workers pulled me aside and took me to a room in the back of the hall. There, she showed me an entire wagon of donations that she had bought with her sons. It was amazing to see how she was teaching service to her children at a young age. It was touching to see the amount of work that she had put in for total strangers. I felt that she embodied the spirit of service, not to do something because of how others viewed our actions, but simply to help.”

- Edward Onisei, Volunteer Coordinator
FAREWELL FROM EXEC

"I'm very grateful and proud of being able to create and host events that promoted the education of cultural competency around campus. Being able to do this has allowed to give back to the community and foster an environment of inclusiveness safety." Lesly Cruz

"As Vice President of Programming and Community Inclusion, I have felt extremely fortunate to bring the work of the VAC to the surrounding area and Northwest Arkansas community. It was a great joy to plan the annual Justice Conference and highlight specific groups who are important community members. Focusing on civic engagement, sense of place, refugee systems, and empathy, I was honored to showcase these topics throughout the year to students. My favorite part was seeing all the creativity and passions students in the VAC have when initiating conversations and getting involved through service." Samantha Hernandez

"The Volunteer Action Center is the place to be! It has been an incredible year working alongside the Executive Team and watching all the work and progress that all the teams and volunteers have made. It has been a joy to meet the incredible group of board members and volunteers that make up the VAC." Cindy Mao

"It has been an honor serving as the President of the Volunteer Action Center this year! It has brought me so much joy to see all the work this board has done, and the true impact it has had on the campus and Northwest Arkansas community. I will always treasure the time I spent with the VAC!" Taylen Day

"There is no bigger joy than watching the VAC flourish due to the entire board's hard work. I love the VAC with my whole heart and I cannot wait to see what the next communications team has up their sleeves!" Mirella Barnhill