

With HONORS

A Magazine of the Youngstown State University Honors College



*Women in
Honors*

**LEADING THE WAY, SERVING
THEIR COMMUNITIES**



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International honors student Ha Hoang gives a Fireside Chat about her native culture to her peers.

This issue's cover photo features five of our outstanding women in honors, including, from left, Hannah Hiscox, Lauren Genco, Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, Noor Khalayleh, and Marta Hergenrother, at the 25th Anniversary Honors Formal last spring at Stambaugh Auditorium. These ladies are among the female leaders at the helm of exciting student initiatives within the college.

With Honors is a yearly publication of the Youngstown State University Honors College for alumni, students, faculty and staff, parents, and friends.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the YSU Honors College is to provide academically talented students with a community of excellence to develop their full intellectual and cultural potential. Through a combination of extraordinary learning experiences in small classes and experiential seminars; living-learning communities; unique and flexible resources for commuter students; leadership and innovative engagement activities; service-learning and volunteer initiatives; interdisciplinary projects; research opportunities; and local, regional, and global perspectives, we fulfill this mission. As a direct outgrowth of, and articulated in, the YSU Mission Statement, the Honors College “places students at its center”—the center of an energized and inclusive community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni who share in the pursuit of life-long excellence in learning and civic engagement.

IMPACTING CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY



Honors College Senior Director Amy Cossentino, bottom right, with YSU honors students, alumni, and faculty presenters at the 2018 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Boston, Mass.

- Alicia Herman, senior economics major, was awarded the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study at Universite Lumiere Lyon 2 in France.
- Ernie Barkett and Caroline Smith were elected as Student Government Association president and vice-president.
- Moataz Abdelrasoul, senior pre-law student, provides input through his membership on the Strategic Planning Organizational Team.

Faculty engagement in the honors experience is also at an all-time high with 691 honors contracts completed during the 2017-18 academic year. These contracts provide the added benefit to extend student learning in a general course. Examples of some of the research, creative works, and service-learning contracts include research on how 3D printing is advancing the medicine in biology courses, the creation of a service-learning opportunity to research the history of the Ursuline Sister HIV/AIDS Ministry's Nun Run, and the completion of advanced keyboard and dictated chord progression exercises with composition of modulating melodies incorporating advanced chromaticism that fit the dictated harmonies.

On the other branch of honors curriculum, our honors courses and seminars let students learn alongside their honors peers. This year, faculty liaisons were implemented to serve as the bridge between the Honors College and each academic department by providing more opportunities for collaboration.

As the Honors College continues to develop its connections and experiences for students, there remains a need to create scholarships, resources, and the opportunities for sharing expertise from alumni and community partners. We are grateful for all of the contributions of time, talent, and treasure to enrich the experience of YSU honors students; through continuous collaboration our students will continue to benefit.

Go Penguins,

Amy Cossentino
Senior Director

In August the Honors College ushered in its 26th class—300 new members representing 17 states and 19 countries.

These fall members entered the college in the middle of a year of major accomplishments. Over the last year, honors students were recognized on both national and international levels, while others continued the tradition of leadership and service outside of the classroom:

- Lexi Rager, senior mathematics and psychology double major, was one of five students nationally to receive the top honor for her research presentation advised by YSU Mathematics associate professor Alicia Prieto Langarica.
- Ryan Slavic, a recent graduate with a major in computer science and information systems, was among only a dozen individuals nationwide accepted to participate in the Cyber Fire Summer Program in cyber security at Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, N.M.



"We're excited about the impact the Honors College has on our campus. It's amazing having all of these great students very active here and in the community and to see how that permeates the rest of campus. It has changed, really, who we are."

-Jim Tressel, YSU President

PLANNING TO SERVE

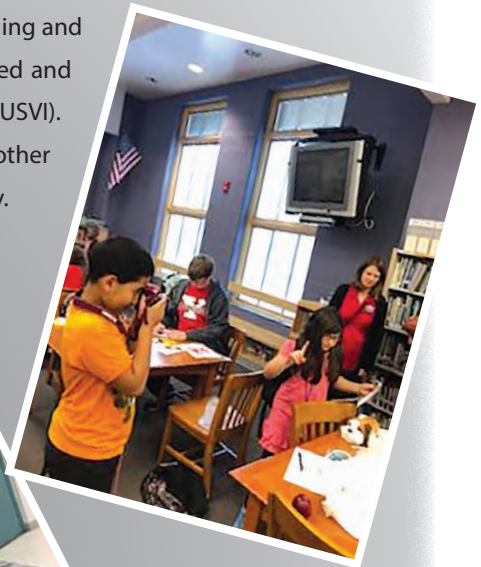
NEW HONORS SEMINAR ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT GIVING BACK

Honors College students had a chance to learn about event planning and serving others through the Planning to Serve seminar developed and taught by Honors College alumna Mollie (McGovern) Hartup (USVI). The purpose of the course was to allow students to creatively engage with each other and experience the process of planning an event and engage with the community.

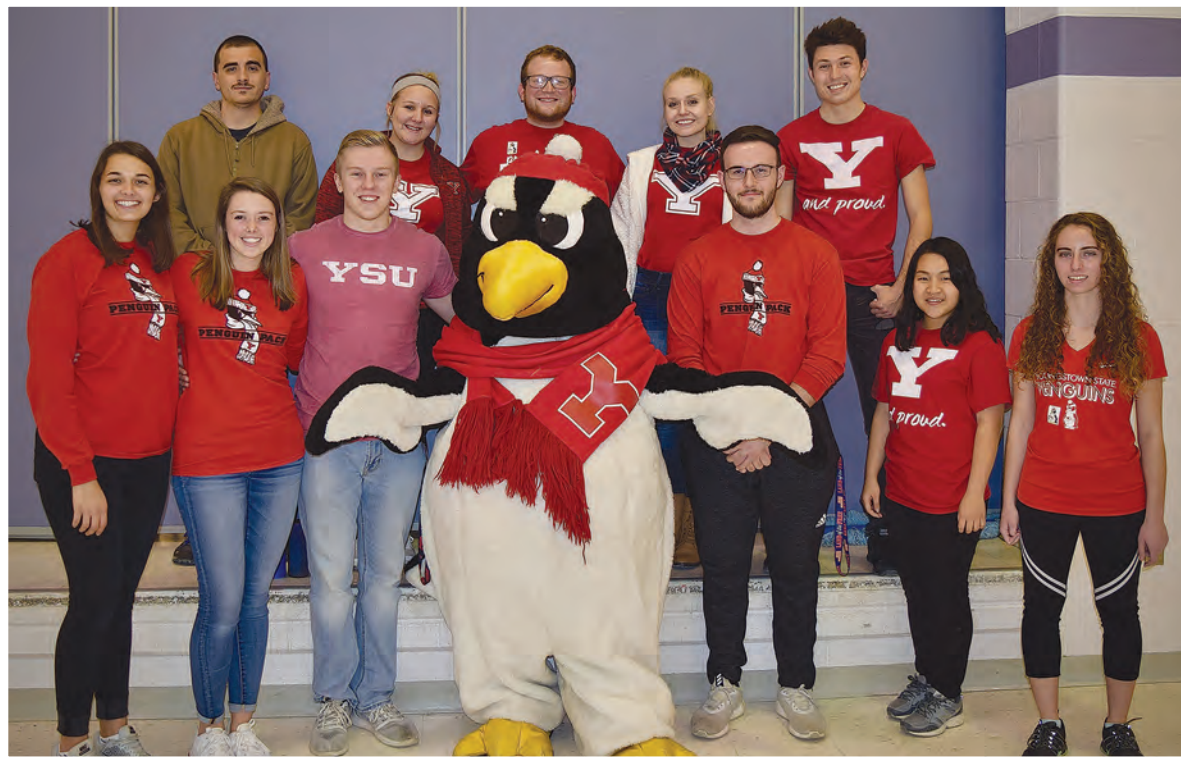
The one-credit Planning to Serve seminar first took place during fall 2018. The class met several times on weekends in September and October to learn about events and to plan one of their own. The final class took place at a local elementary school where Honors College students executed an event to benefit children enrolled in the United Way Success After 6 program.

“My favorite thing about honors seminars is that they are the perfect ways to try something new. They aren’t traditional classes, where you could be loaded with heavy coursework and a huge time commitment to learn something outside of your major,” said Melody DeMatteis, a junior majoring in biology (pre-dentistry).

On the day of the event, Planning to Serve students met once more to finalize the activities that would occur at the school. Elementary students were divided into two groups, grades K–2 and grades 3–4. The group working with the younger children prepared fun and educational activities, such as painting and mummy wrapping. The group working with older children organized activities such as Pete the Penguin coloring, gauging career interests, and math games.



YSU honors students interact with children from K-2. The kids participated in painting and mummy wrapping, along with other events. Students in grades 3-4 participated in activities such as coloring Pete the Penguin and addition games.



Honors students in the Fall 2018 Planning to Serve seminar. From left, front row: Elena Neal, Darcie Bush, Alex Sindledecker, Tara Baker (as Pete), Zachary Barber, My Le, and Alyssa Simms. Back row: Nicholas Ruscitti, Hannah Grimes, Tyler Poulakos, Melody DeMatteis, and Bailey Kilpatrick.

After each group's individual events, everyone met in the cafeteria for snacks that included juice boxes and Takis chips (a favorite among the elementary students!). The evening culminated in a dance party in the gymnasium with Pete the Penguin. Many of the elementary children were disappointed that they had to go home, and Pete gave out a lot of hugs.

Overall, the Honors Planning to Serve seminar was a success—the YSU students learned a lot about the process of developing and planning an event and engaging with the community for the greater good.

"I really enjoyed the course. I thought it was a great experience overall and that it benefited me," said Alex Sindledecker, a sophomore biology (pre-med) major. "For the actual event our class planned, I felt that it was a wonderful experience, as we were able to see the impact we had on the children," he added.

On a personal note, I also had the opportunity to take this class. I enjoy how seminars are less focused on grades and more focused on learning and experiences. I enjoyed seeing all of the planning that we did pay off to produce a successful event for the kids.

Story by Alyssa Simms, HC24

HOLDING STRONG

STUDENT STORIES SUPPORTING THE

PILLARS OF HONORS

In its mission to provide academically talented students with a community of intellectual and cultural excellence, the YSU Honors College incorporates five pillars of success into its approach in engaging students. The pillars encompass all aspects of a student's experience in Honors and include:

RESEARCH,

SCHOLARSHIP



LEADERSHIP,

ENGAGEMENT



VOLUNTEERISM,

SERVICE-LEARNING



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



INTERDISCIPLINARY
PERSPECTIVES

Whether presenting at national conferences, traveling the world, serving their community or leading their peers, Honors students are exemplifying the values of each and every pillar.

BESTING HONORS STUDENTS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Lexi Rager, senior mathematics and psychology double major

National Collegiate Honors Council Conference, Boston, Mass, Nov. 2018



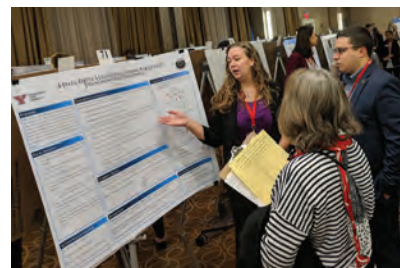
Lexi Rager, pictured holding her certificate, won first place at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference held in Boston this November. With her are other YSU students who attended and presented or moderated sessions at the conference: From left, back row, David Gessler, Jordan Zackasee, Hunter Thomas, Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, and Nick Tancabel; front row, Gianna DeToro, Alanis Chew, Lexi Rager, Noor Khalayleh and Hannah Crites. The NCHC conference brings together students, faculty, and administrators from across the world to collaborate and inspire new ideas and energy into honors education. YSU students have been attending the conference since 2008. In the past decade, YSU students have received three top awards.

I had the pleasure of attending the 2018 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Boston, Mass., this past fall with nine of my friends in the Honors College. I was selected to present my mathematics research and won first place in the Education and Pedagogy category.

My presentation, "A Data-Driven Analysis of Counseling Services at Youngstown State University," was advised by associate professor of YSU Mathematics Alicia Prieto Langarica. We looked at statistics on mental health issues in college students across the country, as well as the ratio of counselors to students at YSU vs. our peer institutions vs. other public institutions in Ohio. Using data collected from past YSU surveys, I analyzed how important students think having counselors is and how well they feel they're being supported in terms of their mental health and overall well-being. From this research we then created an algorithm that groups students together based on their survey responses to see what kind of students might be at the highest risk of mental health issues.

Finally we looked at future research opportunities, which include continuing to improve the algorithm, and eventually making the case that the cost of losing students due to lack of services is larger than the cost of hiring additional counselors.

It was a great experience, and I'm happy to now be guiding students this year on the process of submitting abstracts to NCHC.



Lexi Rager presenting her research at the NCHC conference.

FROM ENGLISH MAJOR TO MATHEMATICS AWARD WINNER



Anthony Dickson, fourth from right, front row, with his teammates at MAA MathFest in Denver last fall.

Anthony Dickson, senior mathematics major
MAA MathFest, Denver, Colo., Aug. 2018

This past summer, I worked on a presentation for the Annual Mathematical Association of America's MathFest, held in Denver last year. I not only had an amazing time exploring the sights and socializing with friends, but I also won an Award of Excellence in Student Exposition and Research.

It's the first time that I've won something at a national level – and it was for a subject that wasn't even my original major. I came into YSU as an English major, math minor. When I eventually transitioned my minor into a major, one of my math professors Dr. Thomas Wakefield urged me to consider going to Denver for the conference. My research topic, formally titled "The Prime Number Theorem: A Historical Look at How Mathematicians Proved It," looks at the historical development of a mathematical theorem.

When I gave my presentation at the conference, I noticed that my audience seemed to really like it. The math in my presentation wasn't as complicated as many of the others that I saw (including those of my YSU peers), but I think that the idea of doing a math presentation with an historical approach resonated with people in a unique way. I have to give credit to Dr. Wakefield because I took his History of Math class last fall and loved it! It was the primary inspiration for this project.

Avery Howard, sophomore biology major
Lauren Rager, freshman natural science major
Joseph Mrozek, freshman telecommunications major

The three of us serve as the new photographer, videographer, and content creator team for the Honors College. We strive to accurately market the academics, volunteerism, and leadership of the Honors College and the students within it.

The honors staff always encourages creativity and student leadership, and our team has the awesome ability to run with both and really make this a unique experience—one that even takes some of us out of our major to develop other talents and passions.

Be sure to check out our work on all of the Honors College social media accounts, and subscribe to our latest initiative, the new YSU Honors YouTube channel!

KNIT TOGETHER, STITCH TOGETHER....SERVE TOGETHER

Lindsey Chludzinski, sophomore biology major

Near the end of the fall semester of 2017, I ran across two new friends while spending time in the basement of Cafaro House. We quickly discovered a common passion: We all loved to knit and crochet. From our shared hobby, we decided we should start a knitting club. Sharyn Fees, an administrative assistant in the Honors College, was kind enough to be our advisor, and the start of Knit Together, Stitch Together was put into action.

The goal of the club is threefold: We do our best to teach students to knit or crochet, members create handmade products to donate to local organizations, and we provide students with an excuse to take a break from school and enjoy the company of their peers with a relaxing hobby. To sum our purpose up, we are "yarning to serve." If someone does not yet know how to knit or crochet we usually have them begin with small, three-inch squares to be assembled into a large blanket. We provide basic yarn options for whatever project they choose to make and donate to a good cause. The yarn we currently have has been provided by student government funding, donations, and regular club dues. Finished products are donated to the Rescue Mission or a similar local organization, and we hope to also give to nursing homes, children's hospitals, the military, veteran's organizations, and more in the future. We'd also like to incorporate other fun activities into the group like knit-a-thons and possibly "knitting" (rather than painting) the rock. The Honors College has been an invaluable resource to us throughout this project. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to share our hobby in a way that can benefit the community.

NEW MEDIA TEAM CRASHES THE INTERNET (OR AT LEAST THE HONORS COLLEGE)



Honors College media team. From left, Lauren Rager, photographer; Joseph Mrozek, videographer; and Avery Howard, content creator.

SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE MEDICAL FIELD

Mackenzie Goodin, freshman pre-nursing major
Zachary Howard, freshman biology major
Midlothian Free Health Clinic, Youngstown, Ohio

Our experience volunteering with the Midlothian Free Health Clinic has been nothing less than wonderful. It has taught us that there are many people in this world who are willing to help those in need and has given us invaluable real-world experience in just our first semester at YSU.

The clinic is able to provide free health care, check-ups with doctors, and nutritional facts for a healthier lifestyle for the people who need care most. Our duties at the clinic revolve around making sure the patients and their charts are organized throughout every step of the process, from triage to their check-up and then for final notes. The clinic can be very busy so it is very important to keep track of who sees which doctor, along with seeing who is waiting for a doctor. The Honors College has prepared us for this experience by helping with our communication and leadership skills.

Throughout our semester of volunteering there, we've seen nurses and doctors in action and have made connections that will only help us advance in our studies and passion for this field.

TRAVELING ACROSS THE WORLD FOR THE YOUNGSTOWN EXPERIENCE

Aniket K. Singh,
sophomore
computer science
major
International
student from Nepal

Coming to the U.S. was like a dream for me that seemed unattainable for a very long time. I immediately got involved with the Honors College, met

some amazing people, and learned that it's important to develop my overall skills and experiences.

Engaging with the Honors College activities and other communities on campus, I got to learn so much about diversity, leadership, sense of belonging, and many other qualities which I never had before coming to the U.S. Now I am working as a resident assistant for Cafaro House.

My experiences so far with Youngstown go beyond the books. I have not only learned a lot in my classes, but I have learned skills that will help me in the world outside of academics. Meeting people who are always inspiring and positive makes me feel the need to take the steps which would help me be more than just a regular student studying for a degree.



Aniket Singh, fourth from left, sits with his fellow student workers from YSU Housing and residence Life.

GOODYEAR GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNER

Kendall Orris,
junior mechanical
engineering major
Innovation Center of
Manufacturing, Akron,
Ohio, Oct. 2018

Last summer, I had the opportunity to work at the Goodyear Innovation Center Manufacturing plant, which is the race tire production facility for Goodyear. I gained valuable knowledge in the tire manufacturing process and designed a mechanism that can help prevent foreign material from getting into tires. As I learned about 3D printing, I was able to use this knowledge to improve my design.

In the end, it was found that my design could save Goodyear \$2,000 per year. I was able to effectively present this to plant leadership, and they chose to implement the design into their processes throughout the entire plant.

After my summer experience, I was awarded the Goodyear Global Best Practice award for my work.



Kendall Orris, right, accepts the Goodyear Global Best Practice Award for her work on a design that is now being implemented in the Akron manufacturing plant.

BUILDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH WEALTH MANAGEMENT INTERNSHIP

Nicholas Tancabel, senior mathematics major
Treloar & Heisel Wealth Management, New Castle, Pa.
Summer 2018

Treloar & Heisel is the premiere financial services provider for dental and medical professionals across the country. My experience was in the Wealth Management division of the company where I assisted in writing financial plans, observed and made client calls, and helped write the wealth management quarterly report.

The internship was mostly client-facing and demanded strong communication and quantitative skills. As a student staff member in the Honors College, I've had the opportunity to speak to large audiences at open houses, as well as one-on-one to prospective students and their parents at personal recruitment visits. I realize now that these experiences made me much more confident and prepared me to effectively interact with clients and to present reports to company executives.

SUMMER INTERNSHIP AT GOODYEAR



David Gessler,
*sophomore
mathematics and
chemical engineering
double major*

*The Goodyear Tire
& Rubber Company,
Akron, Ohio
Summer 2018*

David Gessler

I was offered an internship at Goodyear the summer after my freshman year at YSU. I went to the STEM Expo earlier that year, spotted the Goodyear kiosk and talked to them, got an interview the next day, and got hired the day of my interview. The Honors College helped me to become a leader, which in turn helped me to stand out in this process. Goodyear wanted leaders, and by getting involved so early in the Honors College, they were able to see that.

The projects I worked on while interning consisted of: cost reduction by maximizing the use of all products in tire batches, developing a recipe for a tire to see if it compares better to what it was and if it will save money, and creating an instructional manual for plant operators. Since I was a freshman, I felt nervous that I would be unprepared going into this experience, but the company knew I did not know very much and they were able to train me on things I did not know. Overall, I am glad I got to experience all of this early on in my educational career.

TEACHING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH CHESS

Michael Witt, first year engineering major

Chess Is Life is a unique organization that I volunteer for on the weekends at the Eastwood Mall in Niles. People are welcome to come play or learn how to play chess for free, all while learning important life skills through the game.

There are many things that Chess Is Life teaches to all who come. One of the most notable is not to focus on the win but rather the quality of your play. Other skills taught are critical thinking, problem solving, and never giving up.

Chess Is Life is a super friendly environment that is casual for anyone looking to play and learn, while the coaches are professional and kind. Chess Is Life has formed my character via different lessons since 2010, and I credit a lot of my values and personality traits to the organization.



Josh Bodnar

SPRING BREAKERS TAKE ON HABITAT FOR HUMANITY COLLEGIATE CHALLENGE

Josh Bodnar, Honors coordinator and alum, USXII
*Jacksonville Beach, Florida
Spring 2019*

A group of seven participants was selected from the Honors College to travel to Jacksonville Beach Florida to build homes with Beaches Habitat for Humanity during spring break week this semester. The YSU group is part of a nation-wide program called Collegiate Challenge that is sponsored by Habitat for Humanity International.

Though this is the first time in over five years that an official group from YSU is a part of the program, YSU groups had participated consistently in the early 2000s through 2012. I attended the trips in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 as a student, and I have some fantastic memories of those weeks spent building houses with Habitat for Humanity. It really is a powerful experience to spend a week deeply engaged in service and helping those less fortunate, especially with an organization like Habitat for Humanity where you get to work along side the home owners as they put in their "sweat equity" - which is a required component for all homeowners. I'm excited to help make this opportunity available again to our students.



Josh Bodnar, center, with fellow peers on a Habitat for Humanity trip, late 2000s.

Women Leaders in Honors

MAKING STRIDES IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, SERVICE PROJECTS, AND ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Over the past year, the female members of the Honors College have been student leaders in several honors organizations. In fact, this past fall semester found female members in all top leadership positions for the college's student groups, including: Honors Trustees, Poverty Awareness in Youngstown (PAYO), MALAINA diversity group, Rotaract, Women in Honors Organization (WHO), and the Emperor academic journal editorial team.

This issue of With Honors profiles the efforts of seven of these outstanding women who are making a difference in the Honors College today.



From left, Hannah Crites, Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, and Noor Khalayleh visit Boston during their trip to present at the 2018 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference.

HANNAH CRITES AND MACKENZIE GOODIN, CO-COORDINATORS, PENGUIN PEN PALS SERVICE PROJECT

The Penguin Pen Pals program started in 2012 as a partnership between YSU Honors and Harding Elementary School in Youngstown. The goal is the same today as it was seven years ago: To connect honors students with elementary students through writing in the hopes of building literacy skills and positive outlooks for the younger pen pals.

Growing from 100 students to nearly 700 today at five different area schools, Pen Pals has been a success since Day 1, and its two current organizers are the reason for its recent expansion. Hannah Crites, senior exercise science major, and Mackenzie Goodin, freshman pre-nursing major, are at the helm of Pen Pal operations this year – from recruiting honors pen pals, to working with partner schools, to figuring out the logistics of transporting and storing 500+ journals every week. It's a job that requires patience, organization skills, and most of all, a strong leader to keep everything running smoothly on both ends. Crites and



Hannah Crites organizes pen pal journals at Fok Hall.

Goodin check all the boxes.

"When I was approached by Dr. Cossentino to be a co-coordinator for the program, I saw first-hand what it did for just one school; it made me want to impact more students across the community and expand," said Crites, who was able to reach out to add four more school partners last year. "Dr. Cossentino encouraged me and supported me in my work to grow the program, which made it so much more meaningful to me personally in wanting to help these kids."

"Most kids at these schools may not have the best home lives or social lives so we like to provide this opportunity so they have something to look forward to," added Goodin, who was brought on as a co-coordinator this year. "And leading this has provided with me great insight on how to organize something this large, and it enables me to oversee all the people that are positively impacted by this experience."



Mackenzie Goodin, right, with Crites.

SARAH ELISABETH A. ODIDIKA, MARTA HERGENROTHER, AND NOOR KHALAYLEH, CO-CHAIRS, POVERTY AWARENESS IN YOUNGSTOWN (PAYO)

POVERTY Awareness in Youngstown (PAYO) is an organization that focuses on educating honors students and the YSU community about the local underserved population.

"When we think of poverty, many people like to think of far-away places; such as third-world countries," said Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, junior biology major and co-chair of PAYO. "However, poverty is around us in everywhere we go and it is our duty as students to understand the Youngstown community and be active citizens within it."

PAYO hosts two main events during the academic year. National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (NHHAW) takes place in the fall, while a carnival for local children happens in spring. Odidika and fellow co-chairs Marta Hergenrother and Noor Khalayleh are responsible for contacting local non-profits to see if they would welcome honors students to volunteer during NHHAW. They kick

off the week-long's worth of events with a canned food drive across campus. Last year, the drive alone raised 3,927 pounds of canned food that estimated to 3,700 meals to Second Harvest Food Bank. PAYO leaders have also collected more than 5,000 books and 2,000 dental hygiene products over the past two years to give out to Youngstown area children at the spring carnival event.



Noor Khalayleh presents at the Emperor academic journal's second volume release party in November.



From left, Noor Khalayleh, Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, and Marta Hergenrother stand with nearly 4,000 pounds of food that they collected in fall 2018 to donate to Second Harvest Food Bank as part of a PAYO service project.

"The committee of women I have worked with over the last three years could not be more passionate and dedicated to the mission of PAYO", Hergenrother, junior psychology major, said. "Leading the group has taught me to be more aware of the community around me. Through reaching out to organizations, volunteering at shelters, and speaking with students, I have become attuned to the needs and struggles of others. To hear shelters tell us how much they appreciate our volunteerism, children saying the carnival is the best day of their life, and students recalling their eye opening experiences, PAYO truly offers a volunteer experience like no other."

Khalayleh, junior psychology major who is also the co-editor-in-chief of another honors initiative, The Emperor academic journal, agrees. "My involvement in the organization has not only taught me the skills necessary to be a leader and a professional but has also given me the opportunity to apply these skills and harness them. These skills involve learning how to manage and organize time, delegate responsibilities, work with others, and networking and creating professional relationships with other student organizations, faculty, staff, and other prominent leaders and organizations in the area. With these skills I have been able to apply them to different areas of my life," she said. "More specifically, the leadership experiences I have had in these organizations will serve me in three folds: personal growth, academic growth, and professional growth. My experience within the Honors College has been one of autonomy, where it has taught me to be responsible, active, engaging, and motivated to strive after what I want and believe in."

LEXI RAGER, PRESIDENT, HONORS TRUSTEES

In between sitting as a student trustee on the YSU Board of Trustees, serving as vice-president of the prestigious Phi Kappa Phi honor society, and traveling across the country to present her research with mathematics faculty, at various conferences, Lexi Rager holds the top leadership position in the oldest Honors College student organization; she is a two-term president of Honors Trustees.

YSU Honors Trustees facilitates and organizes many of the events for Honors college members. Completely student driven, it is comprised of committees to run various activities, such as workshops, lectures, a spring formal, Scholar Wars games, Weekend Waddles, and more. Rager, a senior mathematics and psychology double major, must not only oversee all committees and fundraising efforts of the group, but also serve as a connection between the Trustees, Honors College administration, and the rest of the 1,100+ honors student population.

"When I was in high school, I thought being the leader meant being the boss; I thought it meant creating an idea and then directing others to accomplish it through a series of tasks," admits Rager. "Through YSU Honors Trustees, I learned being a leader is quite the opposite. A leader is more like a support system for a team. I learned that if I am the only one talking, I will never learn anything new. I see a good leader as someone who builds trust with their team, allows them to be creative and share their ideas, and then does whatever it takes to make the dreams of their team come true. I learned that being a leader is not 'Can you do this for me?' but is rather 'What can I do for you?' Together we can accomplish so much more than I ever could have imagined as one single individual.

"I am so proud of every event we have held," she added, "but I am even more grateful that I have had the opportunity to learn and grow among so many amazing honors students. Trustees is no longer my team; they are my family."



Lexi Rager at a Halloween party held at Fok Hall this past fall and organized by the Honors Trustees.

JASMINE SMYLES, PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER, MALAINA

MALAINA is a student group seeking to unify and empower students of diverse backgrounds within the Honors College.

"MALAINA stands for Middle-Eastern, African-American or Black, Latino or Latina, Asian or Pacific Islander, International, and Native American," explains Jasmine Smyles, senior exercise science major and president and co-founder of the newest honors student group. "The idea is to move toward using the term MALAINA instead of the term 'minority.' We want to build a sense of community and a safe environment to express who you are as a MALAINA student. In addition to building this unity, we would like to build a support structure for all and any activities you do on campus; whether it's a dance performance you're in or competing in a sport, we want to be there for all students."

The group is open to all who are interested in joining. Under Smyles' vision, the group has been taken to new heights this year to release a video series that shows members addressing key MALAINA issues: cultural traditions, stereotypes, the media, and social concerns. Group members hope to bring awareness to the group and YSU community in a more profound, far-reaching way through this special series.

Jasmine Smyles behind the scenes of a video project that MALAINA released this semester, which shows the faces of diversity.



ON THEIR SIDE

Peer Assistants Give Freshmen a Helping Hand in Intro



Francine Hazy, bottom left, sits with fellow 2018 Honors College peer assistants and honors students.

The Intro to Honors seminar has opened the door to the honors experience for freshmen for 26 years. The one-credit, discussion-based seminar introduces new honors members to the program, each other, and the Youngstown community through volunteerism and leadership course assignments.

While the fundamental core of the seminar has never changed, this year the staffing has. In fall 2018 the addition of a peer assistant to each class debuted with outstanding results for both freshmen and mentors. Peer assistants are upperclass honors students who must go through an application and interview process to be hired to serve as not only an assistant to the instructor of each Intro class, but also as a peer leader and guide for the freshmen in the class.

"I was excited about this new opportunity to connect with first-year honors students and help them make the most out of their time here at YSU," said senior Francine Hazy, who served as a peer assistant during the fall semester. "My role as the peer assistant included attending the Introduction to Honors course each week, holding an office hour, emailing students each week, and answering any of their questions.

"Adjusting to college, finding volunteer opportunities, balancing studies and work, and joining student organizations are all things that can be challenging for many first-year honors students. The Honors College has provided me with a support system throughout those challenges, so I was able to share that support system with the students."

Intro instructors also find a benefit in utilizing the students in their classes. "My peer assistants were able to communicate with my classes in a way that I couldn't – as one peer to another," said Andrea Tharp, Honors College coordinator and Intro instructor.

"I'm glad that I now have a new group of people to look for while walking on campus," said Hazy. "My experience as a peer assistant has helped me gain confidence, both personally and professionally. It has shown me that working in higher education would be a rewarding career field for me to go into. At the beginning of the semester, I was feeling really lost about my career plans, but now, I feel much more comfortable with (and excited about!) my next steps."

Along with Hazy, the following students served as the first peer assistants for the fall 2018 semester:

- Alanis Chew
- Elena Merhaut
- Lauren Pavlansky
- Julie Phillis
- Presley Bowser
- Abigail Kremm
- David Gessler
- Hannah Crites
- Avery Howard
- Jacob Harrah
- Nicholas Tancabel
- Sarah Elisabeth Odidika



Peer assistant Avery Howard, right, works with a group of students in an Intro to Honors seminar.

With A Little Help From Our Friends

THANKING OUR HONORS SUPPORTERS

- ✎ The second annual “Y are You Running?” 5K, created and organized by honors students, raised \$3,600 for the Midlothian Free Health Clinic this October.
- ✎ The Honors College Golf Outings raised a total of \$15,000 to support honors student experiences.
- ✎ The Penguin Pen Pal Project, coordinated by honors students, grew to include more than 650 children at six schools thanks to our committed partners.
- ✎ Ten honors students were able to travel to Boston, Mass., this fall to present their research at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference.
- ✎ The Guinathon dance marathon, led by honors students, raised over \$57,000 in 2019 for Akron Children’s Hospital.
- ✎ Honors students completed more than 60,000 hours of volunteerism and service-learning with an economic impact on the community of more than \$1.3 million.



WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE HONORS COLLEGE?

- Host a fireside chat.
- Conduct a workshop.
- Connect with current students pursuing your field.
- Partner with us for student service-learning opportunities.
- Follow us on social media.
- Help to support student travel and research initiatives.

INTERESTED? EMAIL US AT [HONORS@YSU.EDU](mailto:honors@ysu.edu) AND SHOOT US YOUR IDEA!





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