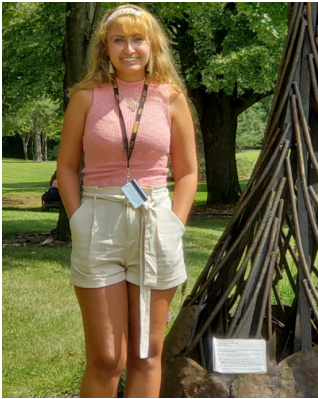


## SERVICE-LEARNING

## STUDENT PROFILE: KAYLA VASILKO



In her time at Purdue University Northwest as an undergraduate and graduate student, Kayla Vasilko has participated in a variety of service-learning projects. She currently helps oversee the daily operations of four PNW student operations, three of which she founded. Her

consistent volunteer efforts have led her to write several service-learning grants for projects related to veteran recognition, environmental sustainability, and animal rescue.

Inspired by her own grandfather's military service, Vasilko has a long history of partnering with veterans organizations near her community. During a PNW independent study course, Vasilko honored and preserved stories of Indiana veterans by conducting interviews and compiling the stories into an online archive called Dog Tags. In 2020, she wrote a service-learning grant to help the Porter County Veterans Treatment Court (PCVTC) provide recovery support materials, mentor training, and treatment incentives to veterans enrolled in the program. Both of these veterans-related efforts were featured in this year's edition of the Purdue Journal of Service-Learning and International Engagement in a reflective essay titled "Heroes at Home: Honoring Our Nation's Veterans."

In recent years, Vasilko has worked with several other organizations on various initiatives, including Laini Fluellen Charities, the Uniting for Important Paws Project, the Anita King Project, and the Precious Plastics Initiative. Vasilko is currently working on the Indiana Poetry Project, a scholarship fund created by her and Indiana's Poet Laureate, Matthew Graham. The fund supports undergraduate or graduate students attending 2-year or 4-year institutions and enrolled in programs that fall under the categories of English, literature, education, or history. Once she receives her master's degree, Vasilko plans to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology and aims to climb the ladder of higher education by becoming a professor.

## NEWSLETTER

## INSTRUCTOR TO WATCH: NANCY RASCHE



Nancy Rasche is an Assistant Professor of Practice at Purdue Polytechnic Institute in the Computer Graphics Technology Department. Through her role at Purdue, she focuses on providing students experiential learning opportunities through engagement with industry sponsors. Some of the projects allow the students to give back to the communities they live in, which fits in perfectly with service-learning.

She leads Purdue's Experience Studios, which provides students with real-world problems to solve while working for an industry client for five consecutive semesters in the User Experience Design (UXD) program.

The "Learn by Doing" approach of the Experience Studios is extremely beneficial for students in such a hands-on, technical program, and by partnering them with industry groups, she is also able to help students provide a service back to the community. This experience essentially allows students to directly experience a range of roles, from intern to employee to lead to project owner, over the course of their education. By the end of their undergraduate program at Purdue, the UXD students have at least 3.5 years of industry experience, putting them far ahead of their competition of other new grads.

Other examples of service-learning provided by Nancy and her students outside of the classroom include designing mobile apps that support the needs of children with learning disabilities, including Autism Spectrum disorders, and UX support for SpeakAll!, which helps children with severe communication delays. The opportunities Nancy provides via Experience Studios experiential learning, her engaging work with students, and her research focus on providing service to those in the community make Nancy a true asset to Purdue. We are very fortunate to consider Nancy our partner in service-learning!



## COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: OTTERBEIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



For over 15 years, Otterbein Elementary School has been the community partner for the Drug Abuse/Addiction Education (PHRM 316) course taken by first year professional Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) students each spring semester. The class, taught by professors in Pharmacy Practice and Medicinal Chemistry & Molecular Pharmacology, follows a format that blends basic science concepts, skills, and knowledge with clinical practice content. At the end of the course, students apply the knowledge and skills they gained by giving five, 45-minute drug abuse and addiction presentations to sixth graders at Otterbein Elementary.

During the three-week period the five presentations are given, the sixth-grade students are taught the basic definitions and concepts related to drug abuse and addiction, while being given specific information about depressant drugs, stimulant drugs, and mind-altering drugs. The goal of these presentations is to empower the sixth graders with knowledge and encourage them to make positive choices later in life. The PharmD students benefit as well, with many perceiving this service-learning course as a positive experience that boosts their confidence, knowledge, and perceptions of civic responsibilities.

Jane Krause, associate clinical professor of pharmacy practice and long-time instructor of this course, says service-learning is a team effort. "It is important to thank the sixth-grade teachers and students for embarking on this journey with us," said Krause. "Thanks also goes to the Purdue Office of Engagement Community Service/Service-Learning Grant Program for funding this project each year and to the Purdue Center for Instructional Excellence for encouraging courses of this nature."

## SAVE THE DATE: 2022 ENGAGEMENT SUMMIT

Save the date for the Engagement Summit, **Thursday, February 3, 2021, 1:00 - 4:30 PM** hosted by the Office of Engagement. This event brings together faculty, staff, students, and community partners to discuss best practices in engagement, highlight accomplishments, and increase collaborations.

This year's event will feature opportunities to network and expand partnerships, as well as engage in conversation with Dr. Jerome Adams on health equity in underserved communities. A showcase featuring student engagement stories will conclude the Summit. Registration is free, but required and will open January 2022.

## SPRING 2022 SERVICE-LEARNING FELLOWS

Congratulations to the newest members of our Service-Learning Fellows Program! For more information about the program, click [HERE](#).

- Melissa DeFrench, Purdue West Lafayette
- Cézanne Elias, Purdue West Lafayette
- Wanju Huang, Purdue West Lafayette
- Bethany McGowan, Purdue West Lafayette
- Matthew Perkins Coppola, Purdue Fort Wayne
- Pamela Sari, Purdue West Lafayette
- Mitchell Zischke, Purdue West Lafayette

## CALL FOR STUDENT-AUTHORED SUBMISSIONS

The Purdue Journal of Service-Learning and International Engagement is accepting abstract proposals and articles for the 2022 issue.

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until **January 15, 2022**. Completed articles are due no later than **March 1, 2022**.

For more information, contact outgoing editor Jennifer Bay at [jbay@purdue.edu](mailto:jbay@purdue.edu), incoming editor Liz Brite at [britee@purdue.edu](mailto:britee@purdue.edu), or journal coordinator Carly Rosenberger at [rosenbe4@purdue.edu](mailto:rosenbe4@purdue.edu)