



Still Connected

FOR THE ALUMNI
OF THE STUDENT
LEADER FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAM

VOLUME 25

ALUMNI & FRIENDS

Hello SLFP Alumni and Friends!

We hope you enjoy reading the updates on the program and it's alumni. We want to thank everyone who contributed to this latest edition of Still Connected. Please keep the updates coming. If you have not sent your updates, there's no time like the present. While we usually put out a call for updates during the summer, please know you can send updates anytime by simply emailing us at slfp@nmu.edu. We love to hear from you!

Updates from the program

At this time, our 2nd year students, Dream Blocks, are completing their community service internships (CSIs) with a variety of organizations. A few of our current internships include: reading clubs at the Peter White Public Library, trail maintenance and education with the Noquemanon Trail Network, the NMU Food Pantry, raising funds and awareness of Families Against Narcotics, and numerous projects with Bay Cliff Health Camp. There is simply not enough space to highlight all of the great things our Dream Blocks are doing.

Our 1st year student, Sage Blocks, have completed their first semester in the program. The UN250 classes chose great causes for their academic service learning projects. One class focused on food insecurity and did fundraising for the NMU Food Pantry including our first ever Dome Walk. The class raised over \$450 dollars for the food pantry. The other class did a winter clothes and supplies drive. They donated over 20 blankets and dozens of coats, hats, gloves and scarfs to local non-profit organizations.

We are currently in the process of recruiting new student fellows and have been busy with tabling around campus, classroom presentations and presenting to student organizations. We are very proud of our current fellows and are confident that we will continue the strong traditions of the Student Leader Fellowship Program.

Program Stats:

2022 Program States (cumulative since 1991)

Number of SLFP Graduates: 1,317

Number of Community Mentors: 815

Community Service Internship Hours: +138,000

Number of Community Services Internship Sites: +570

Staffing Updates:

This past fall saw some additional changes to the Student Leader Fellowship Program office. Erik Maillard was hired to be the new Assistant Director in the Center for Student Enrichment and Director of the SLFP. While Erik is not a graduate of the SLFP, he served as the Graduate Assistant from 2010-2012 and returned to NMU from Michigan State University where he worked in the Department of Student Life for the past 5 years. Nichole Sandoval continues her role as the Coordinator for the office and Melina Walenga serves as the Principal Secretary. Chris Black (Sun Block) graduated with his MBA in December 2022. Mandy Bonesteel (Dream Block) became the new graduate assistant while she completes her MPA. Dana Rinkel (Dream Block) and Bailey Gomes (Beach Blocks) are our Leadership Program Coordinators until they graduate with their undergraduate degrees in May 2023.

**Thank you all for staying connected
with the SLFP, and we wish you a
happy and healthy 2023!**

P.s. If you are ever in Marquette, don't forget to stop by and say 'hi'.

Follow us on Social Media: Facebook: @nmuslfp | Instagram: nmu_slfp

REDBLOCK

Michelle Halley recently had lunch with her mentor, proof that this program creates lifelong friendships, which she hopes her daughter, Morgan, will also gain. Morgan is in her first year (Sage Block) of the SLFP! (This photo is from a trip they took to Wabakimi Provincial Wilderness last summer.).





BLUEBLOCK

Barbara Gooch has three Wildcats this year! Their oldest, Ryan (22), will finish his final year of secondary education-English with a minor in history. Their older daughter, Emilee (20, Sage Block), will be in her third year, double majoring in environmental science and fisheries & wildlife management (concentration in wildlife), also minoring in outdoor recreation. Her younger son, Alex (18), will be starting his time at NMU and majoring in secondary education-biology. Her husband, Andrew, is also at NMU, working as a facilities department carpenter. Their youngest, Jessica (16), will be a junior at Marquette Senior High School.

"I think back fondly to my two years in the SLFP, and all it provided me as an NMU student. I am thrilled that our daughter, Emilee, has started this fall as a Sage Block!! I know she'll love it as much as I did. I can't wait to hear all about her fall retreats, class, mentor, etc." ~ Barbara



Damien Barrett has just completed his first anniversary at Corning, Inc., the giant glass and ceramics company in the Southern Tier of New York State. He is working to bring platform-agnostic IT to the company, increase worker productivity and happiness, and make it more competitive. Damien says that it is a very interesting and rewarding place to work. He and his family relocated to Painted Post, New York, and have bought a big house. His kids are in 8th & 9th grade this year and are excelling in academics, sports, and community leadership.



He is both the assistant cubmaster and scoutmaster for the local Pack and Troop. In addition, his wife, Alise, has just started a new job as a member coordinator for the Girl Scouts of the Southern Tier. They look forward to performing some unique and exciting combined service projects with the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts troops in the area.



GREENBLOCK

Amanda Brannon Lynch loves working as a speech-language pathologist with children with emotional disabilities and recently started as an adjunct faculty member at St. Xavier University in Chicago, Illinois. She loves visiting the UP whenever she can! She loves to sit and knit, play board games with her family, or get outside for a hike during her downtime.

Some of Amanda's fondest memories in the SLFP are of her CSI with Skittin' Out of Control, an improv group that went into the schools! In addition, she truly enjoyed volunteering with fun people within the Marquette schools.

PURPLEBLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!

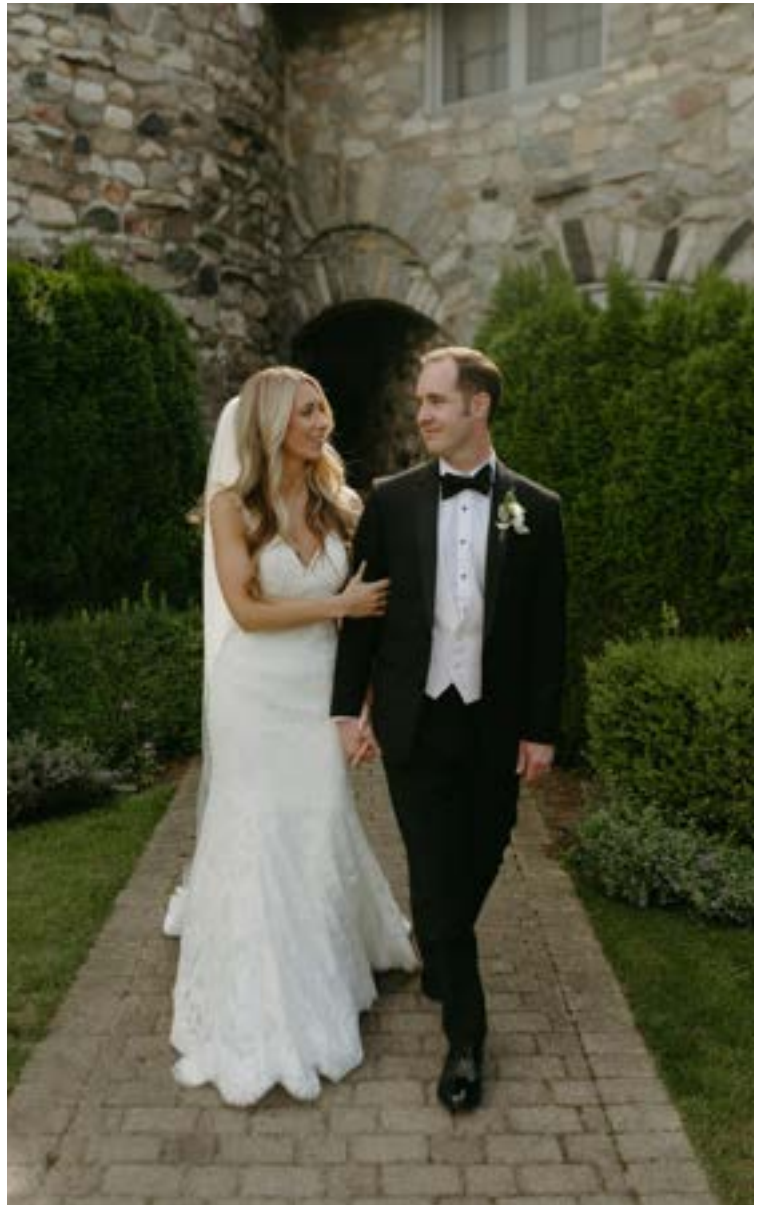


AQUABLOCK

Mark Kemner and his wife, Connie, have been married for 23 years. Connie is a high school chemistry and forensic science teacher. They have an 11-year-old daughter and a 7-year-old son going into second grade. Mark received a teaching certificate for music in 2006, where he taught full-time for a little while and then was a substitute teacher for almost ten years. This fall, he attended Wayne State University, seeking a master's degree in social work. The main thing he is looking forward to with his master's program is that he will already be working in the field. However, his internal debate is whether to seek employment in a school social work setting or become a psychotherapist with a private practice. According to Mark, only time will tell what he decides to do in the end. He is active as a treasurer and volunteers with the PTC group at his son's elementary school. He also volunteered to manage his daughter's hockey team last season. One of his favorite memories in the SLFP is working with a high school leadership class in Negaunee.

Ben Ayotte, MD eloped with his beautiful wife, Ashley, on Mackinac Island in August 2020. He serves as an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School and works as a full-time faculty physician at University Hospital in Ann Arbor. He loves having the opportunity to teach and learn from the medical students each day and enjoys working as part of dynamic, interdisciplinary teams at Michigan Medicine.

Being new homeowners, Ben and Ashley have taken an interest in rose gardening and landscaping. They also love going to University of Michigan athletic events in all seasons. Ben's favorite part of the SLFP? "The retreat – in particular, the bonfire on the beach!"



Matt Maki – In Matt's own words: "I've been living in Kyiv, Ukraine, for over ten years now, although this year has certainly been the most challenging. In addition to my usual work teaching and directing an English language education program, which is now even more challenging with twice-daily power blackouts and frequent air-raid sirens requiring relocating to a bomb shelter, I also volunteer however I can by providing online English speaking clubs for kids who have had their education interrupted, weaving donated clothing into camouflage nets for the military, and participating in and coordinating running races (2-3 per week) to raise funds for the military or humanitarian aid. Several of my poems from the first days of Russia's full-scale invasion were recently published in *Superior Voyage*, an anthology by the Marquette Poet's Circle, a community writing group I founded a couple of years before leaving Marquette to come to Ukraine.

In the past couple of years, I've found myself reflecting on various Skill Builder! workshops I had taken as I moved into a managerial role at work and have been taking on recent volunteer projects. At the time, I often thought that the skills and scenarios in the workshops weren't for me; I wasn't a go-get-'em leader like my peers who seemed aimed at business or politics or activism, and I tried to imagine how I could tweak these big skills into the small projects of the student organizations I was involved in. But now, after all these years, I've found myself thrown into leadership positions without a support structure or precedent I could follow, and I summon up those things I learned long ago. I now wish I had taken every single Skill Builder! offered! Another thing I'm grateful for is the leadership class. I sometimes have my leadership approach challenged, with more authoritarian colleagues or superiors telling me how I should or should not lead, but I learned long ago through the SLFP what kind of leader I am and the unique gifts I have, and I can confidently apply my method to be the best kind of leader I can be."



YELLOWBLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!





BURGUNDYBLOCK



Jon Barch is an assistant professor of Psychological Science at NMU. He currently teaches a special topics class on environmental psychology. In the lab, he works with teams of undergraduate and graduate student research assistants to: 1) study the mental wellness effects of nature exposure, 2) evaluate an intervention that we designed to reduce implicit racial bias, and 3) explore the neural reward processing effects of enhanced intrinsic motivation following psychological need fulfillment. Over the past few years, his teams presented results from their research at the Association for Psychological Science, Midwestern Psychological Association, and Society for Neuroscience conferences. Jon has also presented at several nursing conferences about the unfortunate influences of implicit race and gender bias in healthcare settings.



He has been attending and supporting many high school athletics and music events lately. His twins, Leo and Fiona, are seniors in high school, and his third child James is a sophomore. He reflects on how crazy fast time goes! Jon continues to be the chairperson for the Lake Superior Leadership Academy planning committee and is chairing the leadership day activities. He is also the president of the Helen Lake Association!

Stacey Miller is the mom of Tessa (16) and Rena (13). Currently, she works as a behavior specialist with EUPISD (Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD). In addition, she is a member of the Chippewa County Suicide Prevention Committee and provides QPR training.

NAVYBLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!



ORANGEBLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!





LIMEBLOCK

Carissa & Eric Chase – Carissa (Villa) and her husband, Eric (fellow Lime Block), live in western Michigan with their three children, Brodie (14), Crosby (11), and Harper (7). Carissa is an outpatient pediatrician at Kent Pediatrics in Comstock Park, Michigan. She stays busy with their children's sports and activities as well as serves on the PTO at the elementary school.

She states, "I was just telling my kids about our time at Bay Cliff and all the fun working in the Student Activities office."

Brant Nesbitt was recently promoted to senior manager, user experience for a cloud-based Fintech company that services banking clients like Comerica and other third-party lenders. His mighty team of six spans two continents—the United States and India—to expedite the design and development process.

He enjoys traveling with his son, Brooks (10), and taking his daughter, Ella (6), fishing. He and Brooks made their first trip to Marquette last November and cannot wait to return!

He reflects fondly on building sand castles on the beach for the SLFP fall retreat and participating in the program's graduation with his mentor, Herb Freeborn, in attendance. He states that he is very grateful for the experience and what it has afforded him throughout his career.

Amber Baillargeon enjoys photography and is currently employed as a senior admissions advisor for a private school in Pennsylvania.

Jessica (DeBacker) Pearson has been married to her husband, David, for 15 years, and they have four wonderful children: Mary Clare (12), William (8), Jonathan (6), and Daniel (4). Three days a week, she milks cows for a local dairy farm that makes locally sourced ice cream and babysits as needed.

She has been newly appointed to her city's planning commission. Related to her CSI, she has been coordinating Totus Tuus, a summer catechesis program, volunteers with confirmation preparation, the parish retreat, and participates in a Bible study, which she has done for the past eight years. She recently completed a two-year course for their Diocese called the Benedict XVI School of Catechesis. In addition, she coordinates the pro-life committee at her parish that is expanding its Walking with Moms program to better serve mothers and children with anything they might need.

"My SLFP experience greatly enhanced my resume with all the valuable experiences it offered. This led directly to my first full-time position after college and when I met my husband. The SLFP was and continues to be a highlight of my college experience and nurtured my passions that are still my passions today." ~Jessica



SKYBLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!





JADEBLOCK

Matthew Abel has taught at Montague Schools in Muskegon, Michigan, for the past three years while finishing his Master's of Education Administration through NMU's Global Campus. He enjoys coaching youth soccer, community theater, and indoor soccer during his downtime.

One of his favorite memories of the program was the fall retreat at Big Bay.

JoeyLynn (Paquette) Selling - The University of Michigan held a comeback ceremony for 2020 graduates, and JoeyLynn was finally able to officially graduate with her Ph.D. in literacy, language, and culture.



Katie Allen is currently working for Hilton Headquarters as part of their procurement team. As a director of brand engagement, she works very closely with 18 brands on sourcing products for the company's brand programs. One of the most exciting projects she has been working on for the past two years is developing a new bedding program for several of Hilton's brands, which recently won an award for the sustainability and labor savings of the new product.

Katie recently started Costumes and Cocktails, where she cosplays and makes cocktails to match. She is still active in the kitchen, enjoys running, and is trying to find time to travel the world! Katie is in contact with her fellow Jade Blocks, and they get together to have mini-reunions! Recently, Katie met with Krissy Petersen and Amanda Dinkel for a book club trip to Seattle, Washington!





MANGOBLOCK

Lillian Shaker is a stay-at-home mom of two boys, second grader Padraig "Paddy" (7) and Porter (4), who is in pre-kindergarten.

This year marks her 15th year as a volunteer staffer for the American Model United Nations Conference as the director of convention services; she is also co-chairing two subsets/activities with the PTO and is volunteering at her son's school. She reads, crochets, and exercises six days a week in her free time.

Lillian recalls taking the leadership class with Rachel. She remembers having discussions on what leaders they found inspiring and realizing that she was surrounded by incredible people who would do amazing things as they developed during adulthood.

Nate Windy and his wife, Rachel, have 3 sons: Leo (8), Lenox (3), and Lincoln (2). They spend most of their spare time keeping up with their three boys and at the hockey rink with Leo while he plays with the Flint Jr. Firebirds 8U hockey team.

Nate decided it was time to leave the corporate world and open his own business. In August, they established the Windy Agency in Grand Blanc through Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan. He is a fully licensed, multi-line agent who handles Auto, Home, Life, Commercial, Farm, and Crop Insurance for all of Michigan.

Nate reflects on his time in the SLFP as "Earning the nickname "Playboy" with Andrea (Jerabek) Neuman early in our SLFP time for being the class comics and possibly easily distracted."

Jane (Stieber) Amato began a one-year term as president of the Michigan Academy of Pediatric Dentistry on September 17, 2022.



CRIMSONBLOCK



Jess (Olson) McGurn – In July of 2021, she and her husband, Matt, purchased the Once Upon a Child Children's Resale Store in Brookfield, Wisconsin. They have four kids: Jack (14), Mase (12), Ysa (10), and recently adopted a baby girl that they've been fostering since birth.



FUCHSIABLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!



MINTBLOCK

David Hedberg and his beautiful wife of 13 years, Bethany, have five kids: Claire (11), Caleb (9), Cadence (7), Carolyn (2), and Connor (4 months). He enjoys leisure time by staying involved with his local church and doing various outdoor activities with his family and friends. He just wrapped up a three-year term as a school board member as he has decided to take a step back to focus more on his family with the addition of their fifth child this year.

David was recently promoted to a senior EMC test engineer position at Gentex Corporation.



Betsy Ott married Raveen Dey in 2021! She recently started working as the senior HR & operations manager for a global immunization project with COVID-19 funding. They are focusing on immunization efforts in 16 countries around the world!

In her spare time, she enjoys reading and recently hiked the Grand Canyon and Red Rocks in the spring of 2022, and she would love to get back to the UP soon.

Betsy says, "I'm glad to see that it (SLFP) is still going strong! I was one of the first cohorts and it's so nice to see that all your early efforts are paying off for future NMU grads!"





CERULEANBLOCK



Anna (Prah) Sharkey and her husband, Dan, have two children: Eve (3) and Gabe (5 months). Since she graduated from NMU, she has worked in Hawaii for a private laboratory, for the Navy as a contractor, and then for Michigan Medicine in Ann Arbor for the Michigan Medical Genetics Laboratory. As of August 2022, she is the newest faculty member in the NMU Department of Clinical Sciences, teaching Clinical Laboratory Science. She is excited to be back in Marquette and the NMU community.

Tom Rich married Dr. Ruth Boeder.





KIWIBLOCK

Andrew Kandell and Harriet recently celebrated their 7th wedding anniversary. They welcomed a son, Jayce, in 2021, and their daughter, Mia, started 1st grade this year!

In December 2021, he started a new position at the College of William & Mary in the Office of Career Development & Professional Engagement, working with university recruiters and planning engagement opportunities (career fairs, information sessions, interviews) for students!

Andrew reflects: "I'm excited to see Erik join CSE! I remember working with Erik to help plan the SLFP fall retreat and our world of dance skit during the retreat! It's hard sometimes to think of a memory, but one that never fades is the world of dance skit!"





TEALBLOCK

Sarah (Morrison) Evans – In November 2021, Sarah became the senior manager for Marketing and Audience Engagement at The Washington Times. She is also a clarinetist and president of The Alexandria Citizens Band.

Kelsey (Christianson) Feters and her husband, Bill, have a daughter named Jordyn. She is currently the controller at Lake State Railway Company.



GOLDBLOCK

Brendan Franklin – Brendan's son, Callahan, was born on November 18, 2021. In July 2022, he was promoted to the director of Nursing Operations, Throughput, & Emergency Services at Munson Medical Center. In addition, he currently serves as the NMU Alumni Association Board of Directors president

Brendan says, "The leadership opportunities that the SLFP provided me have impacted my current profession – I give much of my servant/transformational leadership style credit to the SLFP. In addition, I stay connected to many of the friends I made through the SLFP."

Brandon Frazho was recently promoted to assistant director of Academic Initiatives at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

He enjoys softball, presenting at professional conferences, and loves the opportunities Knoxville has to give back, "as we are Volunteers for a reason!"

Brandon remembers late-night chats, the Northern Lights shining during the fall retreat, the mentorship and service, and the amazing opportunities to get involved within the campus and the surrounding community. When he signed up for Superior Edge, he knew the SLFP was an opportunity he wanted to pursue, especially with Dave and Rachel at the helm. He appreciates all he learned about leadership and even the ability to fail, yet he continued to return for more!



BANANA BLOCK

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year!

EMERALD BLOCK



Kara (Jacoboni) Henehan married her amazing husband, Casey, on September 5, 2021, in Marquette. They are excitedly expecting their first future Wildcat on January 10, 2023! Kara spends most of her time helping her friends plan their weddings, bachelorette parties, and bridal/baby showers.

She spends most of her weekends at Houghton Lake in her family's cottage. She is currently a client partner for FranklinCovey Education, working with educators and administrators to help them implement Leader in Me, a whole-school student development process based on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

Kara says, "The community built within the SLFP is hard to come by! But, we are lucky to be surrounded by many motivated and inspired young minds."



Troy Morris and his fellow SLFP alum have been awarded contracts with the United States Space Force this year. In addition, their start-up was selected to run a hardware demonstration on the International Space Station next year.

He is married to Jenna Allen and still serves with the National Ski Patrol; in addition to being a winter medical first responder, he is also serving as chair of the board for the local patrol.

Troy says, "I've been fortunate to stay connected with some of the Emerald Blocks; we attend each other's weddings and continue exchanging Christmas cards. It's a far cry from the awkward first interactions we all had at the first meeting at NMU and on our way to Big Bay!"

Amber (Froberg) Wilson and her husband have two children: Theo (2.5) and Lyla (1) (shown right). They recently joined the Brown County Democrats and have been actively participating in community events. She is currently an RN in the cardiac Cath lab at Bellin Hospital in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Vince Mottes, his wife Kelsey, and stepson Mason are expecting baby Crue in January 2023. Vince is the assistant director of Sports Medicine and wellness coordinator at Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists. He enjoys fishing, working on the remodeling of a new house, and spending time with his family on the lake. In addition, he reflects on spending time with his mentor Dave Bonsall.



ONYXBLOCK

Lizzy (Owens) Arnquist is now in her third year as the special education teacher at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind. She is actively involved as a Colorado Education Association Ambassador Fellow and SheJumps Volunteer.

ICEBLOCK



Jamie (Alberta) Benjamin recently joined Red Wing Shoes Co. as the marketing specialist for Red Wing Heritage.

Ben Harris married Maddie on July 25, 2021, and they are the proud parents of two dogs. He started working remotely in 2020 and continues to do so.

His main project is a "nerdy" computer club that Ben runs online. In addition, he and Maddie enjoy playing a lot of pinball in town.

Ben says, "The fall retreat was a blast, and my internship was incredible."

Lindsey Lieck is now in her fourth year of teaching. This year she is teaching high school US government, personal finance, and freshmen seminar, which includes many leadership activities.

Lindsey says, "I miss the late-night stargazing and making big plans at SLFP fall retreats! It was such a nice way to connect and relax before the craziness of the school year fully kicked in."





***FIRE*BLOCK**

Meghan Hohenstein is currently in grad school to become a certified nurse-midwife and women's health practitioner. In her spare time, she participates in a co-rec sand volleyball league with friends during the summer. In addition, she serves as a volunteer bereavement photographer for the angel babies at the hospital where she works.

Elizabeth Bertucci (Beth) is currently a school counselor and teaches Spanish at Jeffers High School in the Houghton area. She loves her job and says that seeing so many wonderful humans learn and grow is fulfilling! Elizabeth is also studying at Grand Valley State University to attain her Master's in Education: School Counseling and should graduate in 2024!

She completed her first marathon this year and is training for her second (Grandma's Marathon: Duluth, Minnesota) that she will run in June 2023!

Beth says, "I enjoyed my SLFP experience so much—I connected with many of my friends who I met through the SLFP at my sister Emily's (Ice Block) wedding over the summer! It was so good to see everybody!"



SUPERIOR BLUE BLOCK

Ryan Watling is entering his third year as the middle school coordinator of a college readiness program called NEW Scholars. He has the opportunity to teach and support modest-income students in the Green Bay Area Public School District who want to be the first in their families to attend college. It's a rigorous and successful program, and he is grateful to encourage such passionate students and their families.

He recently returned to the Dominican Republic, where he previously served as a youth development Peace Corps volunteer. It was his first time back since they were evacuated at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. He visited the staff, host families, his projects, and the incomparable and marvelous beaches near where he lived.

Ryan says, "As I've reimagined and reimplemented the curriculum with the program I coordinate, I've significantly focused on service-learning as a college readiness tool and a lifestyle that can support your community. I've shared many memories with my coworkers of the leadership classes, mentors, CSIs, and the service-learning program I completed while studying abroad. It makes me grateful to have such rich experiences from NMU to reflect on that inform my work with my students now. My staff is jealous that their universities didn't have anything similar when they were in school!"

Andrew Olson recently accepted a new position at NMU in the Global Campus office doing marketing and recruitment. He loves getting students excited about NMU, so this is an excellent opportunity to show online students all the great things the university offers. This year Andrew is an SLFP mentor. He loves the experience and giving back to the program in a new way. After working with the program for two years as a graduate assistant in the Center for Student Enrichment, Andrew has seen many mentor/mentee relationships blossom. He enjoys being able to mirror some of those in his mentor role.

Andrew says, "My SLFP memory that I wanted to reflect on was related to my time working with the program. In my second year as a GA, in the heart of COVID, we had to split the Tuesday class into two sections because the regular classroom wasn't big enough with the new restrictions. This meant that I had a class of 10 Beach Blocks that met in the CSE Front Room (the new version of The Back Room), and Hannah Lewis had a class of 18 in the regular classroom. This was my first time teaching a class, so even though I had been working with leadership for a few years, I was still very nervous. I hope those 10 students, as well as the other 35 students from the Wednesday class that I co-taught with Hannah, had a great experience and can still think positively about the first year of the program even though a lot of things were different that year. The Fall Retreat was held ON CAMPUS, can you believe that?! I'm happy those students were at least able to experience a full-fledged retreat during their second year."





STORMBLOCK

Marissa Lindstrom – Sean Bowler and Marissa got engaged in September 2021 after meeting at NMU. They are planning a 2023 fall wedding and are excited to continue their lives together! Marissa was recently promoted to public programs coordinator at the Woodlands Nature Station in Land

Between the Lakes, Kentucky. In this position, she plans, assigns, and facilitates public programming at the nature center, manages ecotourism trips and social media platforms, and offers leadership to the fantastic staff. She is happy that she gets to do what she loves – environmental education and caring for local wildlife.

She enjoys kayaking, hiking, and keeping up with her SLFP mentor, who she says has the most adorable little girl! It's neat to see where they ended up over the last five years.

Jailin Kaiser Peterson has recently switched education goals and is starting her MLIS degree, on her way to becoming a librarian. She currently works at the Marathon County Public Library as a library specialist. In her spare time, she enjoys singing in the community choir and playing in a Dungeons and Dragons group. A fond memory Jailin shared is how amazing the chicken paninis were at the Fellowship Meetings.



Brittany (Dingels) Stevens married Benjamin Stevens on Lake Superior two years ago, surrounded by her family. However, due to Covid times, the paperwork was not filed correctly in Michigan, and they had to have a second wedding in Alaska after moving there. Her new boss and school principal performed the ceremony for her and Benjamin in the gym, with the assistant principal and head secretary as witnesses.

She teaches leadership, advanced algebra, precalculus, trigonometry, and AP calculus at Kenai Central High School in Kenai, Alaska. She is also the activities director for the school, where she helps the students plan dances, assemblies, and other fun activities.

She has two fantastic bird dogs: Bonzi (2) and Berkeley (1). In the summer, she spends most of her time backpacking around Alaska. This summer, she backpacked over 150 miles through the Brooks Mountain Range, the Chugach Mountains, and Denali. During school, she is deeply involved with the community and planning/hosting fun activities like bonfires, parades, food drives, and more.



Alexa Olgren and Emma Schroeder (Superior Blue) were engaged on December 31, 2021. They were making dinner over the fire in a cute cabin on Lake Superior, the waves were rolling in with the snow falling all around them, which set the perfect scene for Emma to propose. Their favorite season has always been winter, so it couldn't have been a more magical or memorable engagement. They are so grateful to initially have been connected by the SLFP when they met in 2018.

Alexa just accepted a new position as an accounting analyst II at Xcel Energy and is excited to begin this new adventure! Emma is teaching STEM at a middle school in Colorado.

They have been hiking in the mountains as much as possible and exploring National Parks across America! Emma's bucket list is to go to all of the US National Parks, and they are already one third of the way there after starting just a year ago with busy schedules!

One of Alexa's favorite memories was during her first SLFP fall retreat as they were all enjoying being on the shores of Lake Superior; suddenly, the northern lights came out. She had seen them before a few times, but seeing the lights dance across the sky with some of her best friends was a memory she would never forget!



SUNBLOCK

Madeline Reschke works as a nonprofit auditor at CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She has earned her certified management accounting license (CMA) and is still working towards her certified public accounting license (CPA). She also took on a remote adjunct accounting instructor role at NMU this fall. It's been a very busy semester but also very rewarding! She is happy to be a Wildcat again.

She also recruits to colleges for CLA; she recently attended a Beta Alpha Psi meeting and the fall job fair. Besides that, she helps raise funds and review grant applications for the CLA Foundation. (It is a grant program entirely run by CLA family members, and they nominate the grant applicants within CLA.)

Madeline says, "I am always proud to say that I was part of the SLFP. There isn't one specific moment, but many accumulated moments shaped me as a leader."

Liz Patrykus currently teaches third grade in Green Bay, Wisconsin at a Title 1 school.

Jessie Sullivan got engaged to her Wildcat sweetheart in April 2021 and is set to be married in May of 2023.

She is starting her student teaching for a Master's of Elementary Education, set to graduate in December 2022, and she can't wait to get her very own classroom next school year. During her downtime, Jessie enjoys her life as a plant lady, gardening, hiking, and long walks, and she is interested in learning pottery and sewing courses.





SPACEBLOCK

Jakob Lippert – In Jacob's own words, "I am in my third month teaching English in Wittenberg, Germany, on a Fulbright Program grant! I work with students between 5th and 12th grade at the Luther-Melanchthon-Gymnasium (Gymnasium in German means an academic-focused high school). It has been amazing interacting with the students and sharing my experiences of living in the US; they have questions about everything from the food to the sports culture to the kind of music I listen to. My German is getting better every day, and it has been fun and challenging to build on the work I did as a teaching assistant in the history department at NMU as I presented material to a full classroom for the first time. I am working on my applications to grad school programs back in the States, and I hope to resume my study of German history as soon as I come home next summer. Working with my German students has given me a lot more confidence as an educator and prepared me well for my ultimate career goal of being a history professor.

Living in Germany is an incredible adventure; it feels like I do something I've never done before every day. Wittenberg, where I live, is where the Protestant Reformation started, so there are medieval buildings, old churches, and monuments all over the place. Martin Luther is buried in a church a few blocks from me. I spent most of my first few weeks here going to all the museums in my town, and a lot of the friends I've made are historical tour guides. I try to take a train trip almost every weekend (Germany's train system is fantastic), and I've been to some awesome places all over the country. I went to Oktoberfest in Munich, a soccer game in Berlin, and famous museums in Leipzig and Dessau.

The living history on display everywhere I look is just unbelievable to experience. At the end of October, I took a weeklong vacation to Italy, staying in Florence and also visiting Siena, Rome, and Vatican City. It was a dream to see famous buildings like St. Peter's Basilica and the Colosseum and paintings by Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael (Donatello was the only ninja turtle I missed out on). It was awesome to meet Dream Block and fellow CSE alum Abbi Stelter, for dinner in Florence; the SLFP is worldwide!

I still have great memories of my CSI, helping build a bike trail up by Big Bay with my fellow Space Block and roommate Ben Basten. I use a great bike trail here in Wittenberg almost every day, so I think about that project a lot. I often find myself missing the community and companionship that SLFP always provided, especially at events like graduation and the fall retreat, but even in day-to-day interactions around campus. Working as a leadership programs coordinator during and after my time in the program gave me an extra appreciation for what the SLFP means to so many people. I enjoyed planning the Skill Builder! Workshops and working with all the talented students, faculty, and community members who presented them. I love keeping up with Instagram and seeing what the new generation of Student Fellows is getting up to, and I still wear my Space and (honorary) Beach and Dream Block sweatshirts here in Germany!"

Erin Mortimer is pursuing a Master of Arts in Hispanic Studies and is currently training to be an expedition guide and instructor. Erin is soon to be coordinating leadership and teambuilding exercises for their team on an upcoming expedition to Reykjavik, Iceland, in December 2022. Erin is grateful for their time in the program, as it has prepared them to work as a guide and help the various interns on their team.

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