

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SIENA COLLEGE



2021-22
Annual Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Director	1
ACE Center-Wide Initiatives	2
Bonner Service Leaders	3
NExT Services	5
AmeriCorps VISTA	7
Siena Project Incubator (SPIn) & Summer Service Fellows (SFF)	9



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I am so excited to share with you the amazing work that our students, AmeriCorps VISTA Associates, and community engaged faculty and administrators have accomplished during the 2021-2022 academic year.

While we were still managing covid tests, quarantines, masking, and boosters, 2021-2022 offered ACE members many opportunities to return to engaging with community in meaningful ways. Our service shuttle is full of Bonner Service leaders heading into Albany and Troy; the VISTA team is fully in person; the NExT fellows haven't missed a beat; and our summer community engagement programs have grown to over 50 students working all over the Capital Region!

Our members who were with us during the early days of the pandemic have been particularly excited to dive into their community work. As you read through this annual report, I am sure that you will be inspired and (possibly) called to action in this or your own community.

I continue to be challenged, impressed, and motivated by the innovative and extensive engagement work that ACE members are participating in throughout the Capital Region. I look forward to what the new year will bring.

Peace,
Allison

ACE Center-Wide Goals

- **Fight for racial justice**
- **Deepen our campus and community partnerships**
- **Increase our public presence**



Over the past year we have worked intentionally toward meeting these center-wide goals. Many of us participated in a four-day workshop on intergroup relations with experts from the University of Michigan's Program for Intergroup Relations which helped us think about our own lived experiences, the biases that we hold, and how to engage with others with a growth mindset and a sense of wonder. Some will continue with the second-level training in January 2023. As well, we learned and practiced our mediation skills with help from the experts at Mediation Matters. These training sessions taught us that we need to practice and reflect these skills—and repeat and practice to build our confidence in this work. We are committed to doing just this.

During this past year we focused on building partnerships using the framework of long-term, educational, and developmental relationships (LED). We are building reciprocal and sustainable relationships to maximize our impact in the community—and to this end have launched a new partnership application and onboarding process to enhance our work with our community partners.

We have also updated and refreshed our web pages to highlight opportunities to engage for all or our stakeholders, celebrate the work we do, and provide resources to get involved. Please navigate to siena.edu/ace for an indepth update on all that we have been up to this year.

Certificate in Community Development

ACE's Certificate in Community Development offers an academic pathway to explore community building. Students can build their credentials to align with their academic and professional aspirations.

During the 2021-22 Academic Year, 38 students were enrolled in the certificate. Student research completed as part of the certificate included:

- The Meaning of Community to Urban Farmers in Albany, NY
- Literacy
- Addressing the Root Causes of Emigration out of Guatemala
- Democratizing Secondary School Writing Instruction: Re-Engaging Student Voice and Choice



BONNER SERVICE LEADERS

WHAT DO BONNERS DO?

- **Build capacity** through transformative service to create sustainable change in the local community, serving 8 hours/week throughout their four years in the program.
- Develop proficiency in **community development best practices and civic engagement pedagogy** through pre-semester training, weekly seminars, and the Certificate in Community Development which culminates with a community engaged capstone.
- Cultivate a lifelong passion for **purposeful community engagement** through summer service, travel courses, and international experiences.

Bonner Service Leader Facilitated Classes

We encourage our students to contribute to the Bonner curriculum by identifying they want to learn about and asking them to facilitate classes based on their own interests. This has been a great way for students to share their social justice passions with each other. This year, Bonner Service Leaders facilitated classes have included discussions on Gentrification/Redlining, Fetishization in the Black and Asian Communities, and the history of the fight for LGBTQ+ rights in America. Student facilitated classes is an opportunity for Bonners to share their passions, develop their leadership skills, and grow their knowledge.

BY THE NUMBERS

- ◆ **32 Students**
- ◆ **56% Work-Study Eligible**
- ◆ **17 Community Partners**
- ◆ **66 Trainings**
- ◆ **4388 Hours Served**



Appalachia in Loudonville



Our rising sophomore and junior Bonners spent a week on campus exploring many aspects of Appalachian culture. The remaking of the first year trip to West Virginia included academics, understanding identity and and positionality, team and cohort building, reflection, and a lot of fun! Despite not leaving New York, our immersion into Appalachian culture was a huge success.

“At Camp Appalachia I learned a lot from my peers and also I learned a lot about myself. I enjoyed exploring Appalachian culture and their sense of identify and home in ways that connect and contrast with my own definitions of home and identity.”

Brianna Rodriguez '25

We are excited to return to West Virginia in Summer 2023 but will take with us lessons learned from our time spent on campus.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2022!

The Bonner Class of 2022 spent more than half of their time on campus managing the unexpected and long term challenges of the pandemic. They have adapted and adjusted to unprecedented situations with courage and commitment to continue to give their best to everything they do—including virtual service, online trainings, classes, guest speakers, and figuring out their post Siena journey amidst a global pandemic.

We extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Siena College Bonner Class of 2022 and wish them all the best!



Michael Averill

Nia Colon

Samantha Gisleson

Nancy Rasmussen

Erin Spence



NExT SERVICES

Relationship. Leadership. Action.

The NExT Fellowship cultivates and supports interdisciplinary student-led teams to engage in extensive capacity building research and consulting with local community organizations. NExT Fellows practice what they learn in the classroom through their work with the community—bringing theory to practice.

During the 2021–2022 Academic Year, NExT Students worked with several different community organizations to complete projects that allowed those partners to work more efficiently and effectively. These projects included interviewing staff at a nonprofit about how to re-do the organization’s website, completing a program evaluation for a children’s preventative dentistry program, and creating a statewide coalition to advocate for Recovery Friendly Workplaces across New York.

NExT Fellow Spotlight: Ethan Hull



“Throughout my time at NExT, I gained valuable skills that I will carry with me to law school and beyond. As a new NExT Fellow, I joined a team and worked with others who were already established engaging in the South End [of Albany]. I was then able to create my own project which allowed me to develop my critical thinking skills, as well as, my time management and teamwork abilities. I am a strong advocate for experiential learning as I do not think these skills could have been taught in the traditional classroom. Through peer mentoring, I learned how to lead a consulting team, as well as, connect with people from different backgrounds. Through this work, my final semester initiative was to leave something sustainable for ACE—I focused on NExT recruitment as I want to identify and lead like minded people to the program.”

NExT Team Impact

Friends of Recovery NY, PARSE Coalition

The Siena NExT program was a catalyst to making recovery friendly workplaces a priority. The program has been a learning process for the agency staff- from Friends of Recovery- New York, the NYS Association of County Health Officials and the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training – as well as for the program administrators and NExT students. We had a general idea of a plan and a passion, but we have learned through the process. We knew we wanted to talk about the importance of connecting people in recovery to good jobs that provide financial stability and purpose, uplifting individuals and their local communities.

In Winter 2021 when our partnership began, we brought together known leaders who were passionate about the issue from around NYS and conducted weekly calls. Student interns observed meetings and by the end of the semester, conducted literature reviews on the project and presented results to agency staff. Student interns shared personal stories and learned about the recovery movement.

In Fall 2021, student interns observed us planning for a presentation at the NYS recovery conference. Following that presentation, we helped form the NYS Coalition to Prevent Addiction and Support Recovery in Employment (PARSE) in February 2022. NExT students helped compile notes, conducted a survey of coalition participants and presented results and continued to take part in internal planning calls, seeing the process of coalition building- the good, the bad and the ugly! The Coalition has continued to meet monthly. Now students are getting involved with legislation and interviewing for podcasts to continue to promote the program as well as our first ever symposium planned for June 2023 (pictured here).

All in all we are learning together. There has not been a clear roadmap forward which can be frustrating but is also a great learning experience for all involved.





AMERICORPS VISTA

Volunteers in Service to America

WHAT VISTAS DO

AmeriCorps VISTA is a poverty fighting program funded through the federal government. Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows make a year-long, full-time commitment to serve in a Capital Region nonprofit organization or public agency. They focus their efforts to build the capacity of organizations to make change in our community.

- Generate funds that build the capacity of local nonprofits
- Connect volunteers with opportunities to support the work of our partners
- Promote awareness of programs and events that benefit community residents
- Create, develop, and evaluate programs and projects that alleviate poverty

VISTA 2022 VISTA CHANGEMAKER OF THE YEAR: ROSE JASMAN

“Rose has embodied the mission of AmeriCorps VISTA by her endless passion for strengthening organizations. She brings enthusiasm, a positive attitude, and a willingness to collaborate with her cohort. She makes the Siena AmeriCorps VISTA experience really special. Congratulations to Rose for this well-deserved honor!”

Dr. Roja Ebrahimi, Former VISTA Program Director



Rose Jasman
Homeless and Travelers Aid
Society (HATAs)

Program Highlight: Team Building Days

A unique attribute of our VISTA Program is our Team Building Days which are themed around three pillars: personal leadership, professional development, and community engagement.

- The personal leadership pillar focuses on the foundational, internal skills that VISTAs need to handle adversity, advocate for themselves, and understand how to best utilize their strengths both during their service year and throughout their future careers.
- The professional development pillar focuses on skills VISTAs need to thrive in the workplace and become polished professionals. Skills such as conflict management and public speaking aid VISTAs to engage with others effectively as young professionals and helps them to develop stronger capacity building projects.
- The community engagement pillar focuses on the skills VISTAs need to become strong leaders in their community. With a focus on cultural competency, approaches to community organizing, and understanding the root causes of poverty, this pillar helps to ensure the changes VISTAs work toward are responsible and sustainable.



Alex Pinto, MPA

Academic Immersion Coordinator,
Liberty Partnerships Rising Stars
Program

Member Highlight: Alex Pinto

Alex Pinto completed his VISTA service at the Connect Center, a youth development nonprofit in Cohoes. As the Resource Development Coordinator, Alex fostered community partnerships and drafted numerous grant proposals to address the needs of Cohoes youth. Through these efforts, Alex was able to secure funding from foundations including the Troy Savings Bank Foundation, The United Way of the Capital Region, and the Bender Family Foundation for Connect Center programming.

Also central to Alex’s VISTA service was tackling food insecurity in the Capital Region. As the Connect Center’s BackPack Coordinator, Alex collaborated with the Cohoes City School District and various community organizations to deliver weekend meals to youth and expand the center’s food pantry. Under his leadership, the Connect Center distributed over 15,000 meals alongside numerous other resources like food supplies and hygiene products to families in the city.



Thank you for your service Alex!



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 16 VISTAs
- ✓ 11 Community Partners
- ✓ \$79,563 Raised for Local Nonprofits
- ✓ 141 Youth Supported
- ✓ 103 Volunteers Recruited



Siena Project Incubator (SPIn) Program and Summer Service Fellows (SSF)

WHAT are SPIn and SSF?

Siena Project Incubator (SPIn) is an intensive summer program that connects faculty, students, and community organizations in multi-year participatory action research projects. The SPIn model acknowledges that our region's most entrenched problems should be addressed through interdisciplinary and collective impact processes and that meaningful change requires a long-term approach. SPIn's three-year model allows for projects to grow over time. In year one we explore issues, develop relationships, and celebrate small wins; in year two, we develop and support student and community leadership by implementing a targeted intervention; and in year three, we work collaboratively to ensure sustainable action.

Summer Service Fellows (SSF) represent a collaboration between Siena ACE and United Way of the Greater Capital Region. Each summer, students from around the region are placed with nonprofit organizations around the region engaging in youth development, food security, and urban sustainability work. In addition to their service, Summer Service Fellows complete skills-based trainings to help them develop skills to be effective young nonprofit professionals. The partnership with the United Way started in summer 2020 in response to the exacerbated need that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and continues as together we identify and address community needs.



SPIN AND SSF BY THE NUMBERS

- ✓ • 49 Summer Associate VISTAs
- ✓ • 6 team-based SPIN projects
- ✓ • 20 community partners
- ✓ • 13 SSF Community Partners
- ✓ • 13,167 hours served
- ✓ • 41 Majors represented
- ✓ • 10 SPIn Faculty mentors and community liaisons



“ On the Summer Meals Team this summer, I spent time visiting meal sites to measure the strengths and limitations of the Summer Meals program. I interviewed staff, parents, and children to learn about the foods and activities enjoyed, disliked, and any feedback they wanted to share. I felt the biggest impact was being present in the communities and listening to their stories. The personal connections and curiosity I shared made them feel heard and supported to report their feedback on what these programs are doing well and where to improve. I continue to work with the Summer Meals Collaborative by being involved in meetings and listening to what our partners want to improve for future years.”

Samantha Monks, 2022 Summer Meals Team

Thank you to our generous donors!

**Without your support, our community work
would not be possible**

AmeriCorps

Gerri (Hutchings) '93 and Laszlo Bock
Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation

Stewart's Shops/Dake Foundation

John '80 and Mary (Ryan) Held '83

Sharon (Elser) '84 and Lawrence Sullivan

Carl E. Touhey Foundation

Willits Foundation



OUR TEAM

Allison J. Schultz, Director
Dr. Vera Eccarius-Kelly, Scholar in Residence
Dr. Ruth Kassel, Associate Director
Dr. Roja Ebrahimi, Assistant Director
Mairead Carr, Assistant Director
Tamara McCallum, Assistant Director
Sarah Toledano, Assistant Director
Cheryl Voter, Assistant Director
Angelo Catalano, VISTA Leader

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S ACE AWARD RECIPIENTS!

ACE 2022 Faculty of the Year | Donna McIntosh

ACE 2022 Community Partner of the Year | Connect Center of Cohoes

2022 Academic Achievement Award | Michael Averill and Samantha Gisleson

2022 Engaged Scholar Award | Shriya Matta

2022 Life of Service Award | Irelan Fricke

2022 Nicholas Ramundo Class of 2014 Award | Emily McGuinness

2022 Bonner Changemaker | Erin Spence

2022 NExT Changemaker | Deidre McBreen

2022 VISTA Changemaker | Rose Jasman

CONNECT WITH US:

On Our Website | www.siena.edu/ace

Via Social Media | @sienacollegeace