USU Earns Prestigious Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recognized Utah State University with the esteemed Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, the highest level of recognition for Community Engagement in higher education. USU is one of 359 institutions that currently hold the classification.

Since 2016, the USU Center for Community Engagement and the Provost’s Office have been actively preparing the institution for the Carnegie classification. “This rigorous application process enabled USU to define and create a culture of meaningful and pervasive community engagement across all campuses,” said USU Provost Francis Galey.

As a land-grant institution, community engagement is central to USU’s mission to serve the public through learning, discovery, and engagement. USU upholds its mission by responding specifically and concretely to community-identified needs throughout the state, both on its main Logan campus and on the 32 other campuses across the state. All 33 of USU’s campuses are deeply rooted in their local communities and responsive to the needs of those communities, offering an unprecedented opportunity for community engagement.

As part of the university’s mission to develop citizen scholars, USU students enjoy opportunities to integrate meaningful community engagement into their classroom learning. Last year, 8,547 students across 31 departments participated in Community-Engaged Learning courses.

“The classification is a valuable tool for faculty and student recruitment, sending an important signal that USU values community engagement and takes seriously its land-grant mission. Likewise, the designation signals to community partners that we’re invested in high quality partnerships that result in collective impact,” said Dr. Jessica Lucero, Co-Chair of Carnegie Writing Team.

Kate Stephens
Associate Director, Center for Community Engagement and Co-Chair, Carnegie Writing Team
This year, the Center for Community Engagement was one of only seven universities nationwide selected by the Corporation for National and Community Service for a new partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA designed to encourage participation in national service opportunities.

"Just like college, a year of service can be a life-changing experience," said Desiree Tucker-Sorini, director of AmeriCorps VISTA. "With this new pilot program, we’ll be able to explore the combined power of higher education and national service. I’m thrilled to welcome USU to our national service family."

USU was selected along with seven other schools through a national competitive application process. The other schools chosen for this pilot project include the Rochester Institute of Technology, Tufts University, University of Hawaii, University of Montana, University of Rochester, University of Virginia, and Wake Forest University.

Participation in this AmeriCorps VISTA partnership will provide an opportunity for colleges to strengthen the civic engagement of college students and promote the transformative experience of national service, all while addressing poverty in the surrounding community.

Since 1965, VISTA has been on the frontlines of the war on poverty, placing passionate Americans where the need is greatest to serve as catalysts for change, living and working alongside the communities in which they serve. As one of AmeriCorps’ three signature programs, AmeriCorps VISTA engages approximately 8,000 Americans in service each year to help build the capacity of nonprofits across the country: helping organizations do more, for more people.

Terra Pace, Utah State University’s campus VISTA recruiter attended career fairs, hosted information sessions, and spoke in classes to promote national service. Amidst unprecedented times due to COVID-19, students were able to learn about AmeriCorps VISTA service and how to get involved in their communities via online presentations that Pace created.
Mission: Developing active citizens through community engagement and scholarship.

Vision: Furthering USU’s land-grant mission, CCE empowers students to explore civic identity, develop leadership skills, and address community-identified needs, locally and around the world.

We Value:
- Mutually beneficial partnerships that inform community-driven change
- The public purpose of higher education
- The strong tradition of national service and conservation in American society
- Active and informed citizenship
- The inclusion of diverse and underrepresented populations
- Critical and reflective thinking

Impact on Students:

- 85% of students said their CCE program taught them to work with the community to solve problems and take action.
- 90% of students understand how to work with community partners to identify community assets, opportunities, and challenges, after working with a CCE program.
- 85% of students agreed involvement in CCE programs prepared them to listen to people from different backgrounds who hold different perspectives in an effort to understand and collaborate.
- 90% of students agreed that involvement in CCE programs helped them understand how their academic discipline can be applied to the greater good.
- 91% of students understand the root causes of the societal or environmental issues that CCE programs address.
- 94% of students felt working with CCE programs gave them information and resources to become a more engaged community member.
Community Engagement Awards

First Annual Ivory Prize for Excellence Awarded

The Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation has established the Ivory Prize for Excellence to recognize extraordinary, influential USU student accomplishments and leadership in community engagement. USU students receive a $2,000 scholarship and an additional $10,000 to be invested into their community engagement project.

Kara Bachman and Amria Farnsworth have been awarded the first annual USU Ivory Prize. These two students established the USU Gleaning Team that, in its first year, recruited over 300 volunteers who gleaned and donated almost 15,550 pounds of produce to the Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) and the Cache Community Food Pantry. The pair also collaborated with faculty in USU Extension and the Nutrition Dietetics Food Science (NDFS) department on an ongoing food preservation project to process damaged fruit to make applesauce and fruit leathers. Both students are juniors in the USU Dietetics program. The $10,000 prize will be invested into the USU Gleaning Team to create and support a full-time AmeriCorps position to run the Grow and Gather website, organize community gleaning events, collect data, organize fruit preservation sessions, maintain good relations with land owners, and communicate with advisors to ensure the project maintains a positive impact on the community.

“Through their development and expansion of the USU Gleaning Team, Amria and Kara have demonstrated their ability to develop community-based partnerships, think critically, consider the needs of underrepresented populations, and demonstrate leadership within USU and the overall community” said Dr. Mateja Savoie Roskos of NDFS. She added “These two are clearly the epitome of active and engaged citizens and their project has already demonstrated significant success over the short period of time it has been implemented.”

2020 Presidential Awards for Community Engagement

Each year, USU recognizes the work of outstanding faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners that exemplifies collaboration between USU and the greater community for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Kristin Searle, Assistant Professor of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences, received the Community-Engaged Faculty award. She was nominated for her extraordinary statewide efforts to engage underrepresented and marginalized youth in STEM.

Dave Anderson, Dave Evans, and Jake Powell, Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning Extension faculty, received the Community-Engaged Faculty award. The trio was nominated for their extraordinary efforts to serve communities across the Intermountain West through a unique blending of landscape architecture and planning studio projects that are built upon partnerships with mayors, city planners, non-profits, and individual citizens.

Jake Hogan, a Junior in Theatre Education and English, received the Community-Engaged Student award. They were nominated for their leadership and engagement both within the USU and the greater community. Their groundbreaking work within the LGBTQ+ community has served to amplify and share the lived experience of LGBTQ+ community members.

Emily Ezola, Director of the USU Youth Conservatory, received the Community-Engaged Staff award. The Youth Conservatory exemplifies the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources by simultaneously serving as a teaching lab for piano majors and an opportunity for over 100 community members to take weekly piano instruction and musicianship classes.

Samuel Rivera, USU Biology Academic Advisor Coordinator, received the Community-Engaged Alumnus award. He was nominated for his efforts to introduce local Latinx youth to STEM fields and raise scholarship funds for first generation students and DACA recipients. Having earned his PhD at USU, he hopes to give students the same opportunities to access higher education he was given.

Athletics United, a Logan-based nonprofit, received the Committed Community Partner award. The organization was nominated for its great use of running and sports to provide support to the local refugee community, and for giving USU students the opportunities to engage.

The Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation has established the Ivory Prize for Excellence to recognize extraordinary, influential USU student accomplishments and leadership in community engagement. USU students receive a $2,000 scholarship and an additional $10,000 to be invested into their community engagement project.

Kara Bachman and Amria Farnsworth have been awarded the first annual USU Ivory Prize. These two students established the USU Gleaning Team that, in its first year, recruited over 300 volunteers who gleaned and donated almost 15,550 pounds of produce to the Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) and the Cache Community Food Pantry. The pair also collaborated with faculty in USU Extension and the Nutrition Dietetics Food Science (NDFS) department on an ongoing food preservation project to process damaged fruit to make applesauce and fruit leathers. Both students are juniors in the USU Dietetics program. The $10,000 prize will be invested into the USU Gleaning Team to create and support a full-time AmeriCorps position to run the Grow and Gather website, organize community gleaning events, collect data, organize fruit preservation sessions, maintain good relations with land owners, and communicate with advisors to ensure the project maintains a positive impact on the community.

“Through their development and expansion of the USU Gleaning Team, Amria and Kara have demonstrated their ability to develop community-based partnerships, think critically, consider the needs of underrepresented populations, and demonstrate leadership within USU and the overall community” said Dr. Mateja Savoie Roskos of NDFS. She added “These two are clearly the epitome of active and engaged citizens and their project has already demonstrated significant success over the short period of time it has been implemented.”

First Annual Ivory Prize for Excellence Awarded

The Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation has established the Ivory Prize for Excellence to recognize extraordinary, influential USU student accomplishments and leadership in community engagement. USU students receive a $2,000 scholarship and an additional $10,000 to be invested into their community engagement project.

Kara Bachman and Amria Farnsworth have been awarded the first annual USU Ivory Prize. These two students established the USU Gleaning Team that, in its first year, recruited over 300 volunteers who gleaned and donated almost 15,550 pounds of produce to the Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) and the Cache Community Food Pantry. The pair also collaborated with faculty in USU Extension and the Nutrition Dietetics Food Science (NDFS) department on an ongoing food preservation project to process damaged fruit to make applesauce and fruit leathers. Both students are juniors in the USU Dietetics program. The $10,000 prize will be invested into the USU Gleaning Team to create and support a full-time AmeriCorps position to run the Grow and Gather website, organize community gleaning events, collect data, organize fruit preservation sessions, maintain good relations with land owners, and communicate with advisors to ensure the project maintains a positive impact on the community.

“Through their development and expansion of the USU Gleaning Team, Amria and Kara have demonstrated their ability to develop community-based partnerships, think critically, consider the needs of underrepresented populations, and demonstrate leadership within USU and the overall community” said Dr. Mateja Savoie Roskos of NDFS. She added “These two are clearly the epitome of active and engaged citizens and their project has already demonstrated significant success over the short period of time it has been implemented.”

2020 Presidential Awards for Community Engagement

Each year, USU recognizes the work of outstanding faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners that exemplifies collaboration between USU and the greater community for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Kristin Searle, Assistant Professor of Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences, received the Community-Engaged Faculty award. She was nominated for her extraordinary statewide efforts to engage underrepresented and marginalized youth in STEM.

Dave Anderson, Dave Evans, and Jake Powell, Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning Extension faculty, received the Community-Engaged Faculty award. The trio was nominated for their extraordinary efforts to serve communities across the Intermountain West through a unique blending of landscape architecture and planning studio projects that are built upon partnerships with mayors, city planners, non-profits, and individual citizens.

Jake Hogan, a Junior in Theatre Education and English, received the Community-Engaged Student award. They were nominated for their leadership and engagement both within the USU and the greater community. Their groundbreaking work within the LGBTQ+ community has served to amplify and share the lived experience of LGBTQ+ community members.

Emily Ezola, Director of the USU Youth Conservatory, received the Community-Engaged Staff award. The Youth Conservatory exemplifies the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources by simultaneously serving as a teaching lab for piano majors and an opportunity for over 100 community members to take weekly piano instruction and musicianship classes.

Samuel Rivera, USU Biology Academic Advisor Coordinator, received the Community-Engaged Alumnus award. He was nominated for his efforts to introduce local Latinx youth to STEM fields and raise scholarship funds for first generation students and DACA recipients. Having earned his PhD at USU, he hopes to give students the same opportunities to access higher education he was given.

Athletics United, a Logan-based nonprofit, received the Committed Community Partner award. The organization was nominated for its great use of running and sports to provide support to the local refugee community, and for giving USU students the opportunities to engage.
Formerly Utah Campus Compact AmeriCorps, the Utah Higher Education AmeriCorps Network (UHEAN) is now a USU Center for Community Engagement program building safer, stronger, healthier communities across the state. For almost 10 years, UHEAN has offered AmeriCorps opportunities to up to 850 students annually at Utah colleges and universities, resulting in powerful member experiences and lifelong civic engagement. These AmeriCorps members support schools, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations that see national service as a solution to local challenges.

2019-20 IMPACT

- **70 sites** hosted UHEAN AmeriCorps members
- **694 members** completed their UHEAN AmeriCorps terms of service
- **242,250 hrs** served by UHEAN AmeriCorps members
- **3,472** volunteers recruited and supervised by UHEAN members
- **3 NEW sites**
  - USU Equine Therapy Program
  - U of U Office of Diversity and Inclusion
  - U of U School of Architecture’s Design Build Bluff program

Josie’s Story

I am a senior dental hygiene student at Weber State University and am beginning my third term as an AmeriCorps member. I have loved participating in the AmeriCorps program throughout my time at Weber State because of the deeper meaning and reflection it has brought to my service as a dental hygienist. In addition to rigorous schoolwork, I have been able to participate in serving children in the Head Start program, veterans at the Veterans Clinic in SLC, and underserved members of the community right here in Ogden. I am excited to graduate this spring and plan to continue my involvement in the community in connection to dental health long after graduation.

- **JOSIE JASPERSON, UHEAN AmeriCorps Member**

Makenna’s Story

This month signaled the close of our first session of our Pathways to Horsemanship veterans equine assisted learning program. It was an absolute whirlwind getting this program running and learning all of the program details, but by the end of our 6-week session I felt that our team was working together so well. One of the great moments that occurred was during our final session where we do a ‘trust walk’ with our participants. Veteran mentors lead the horses while the Veterans in Progress (VIP’s) rode the horses. Our VIP’s worked for five weeks building a relationship with their horse, learning basic ground skills, and learning how to tack their horses in order to allow for the trust walk to be effective and safe.

Watching the veterans go around the arena closing their eyes (while being led) while on their horses and really being able to channel their anxieties and frustrations down to neutrality and acceptance of the moment was magical to see. The VA sent a media representative to take videos, photos, and perform interviews about the program so that it can be shared through the VA’s channels to promote equine assisted wellness. I hope that we generate interest for our future sessions, as well as encourage veterans to try something new!

- **MAKENNA OSBORNE, UHEAN AmeriCorps Member**

Marissa’s Story

My Volunteer Mobilization Project was to create “Whisper Phones.” Whisper Phones are devices that students can use during reading. They hold the device up to their ear and read into it quietly. It can help all of the students focus on reading by helping to facilitate a calmer and quieter reading environment. The phones can also help them hear and distinguish different sounds more clearly. I gathered the supplies to make the whisper phones and organized volunteers to make the phones with PVC and colored duct tape. The project has now been implemented at my service site with great success for some of our students.

- **MARISSA WAGSTAFF, UHEAN AmeriCorps Member**
The UCC Urban Community Farm (UCF) is excited to announce the hiring of our newest garden manager, Sam Fitch. “I’m super excited to be filling the role of Farm Manager at the UCC UCF for the 2020 season. To be honest I don’t have a ton of experience growing food, but over the last couple of years my interest in food security and urban farming has grown exponentially, and I’ve finally found an outlet that combines my love of earth stewardship and plants. This position gives me the opportunity to immediately apply what I’ve learned in college to a cause that aligns with my passions while serving others—what more could you ask for? I love the mission of the Urban Community Farm, and the potential it has to benefit the lives of students on campus as well as members of the Cache Valley community. Although I’m still very much a beginner level gardener and the world is in a rather tumultuous time, I feel like the luckiest person in the world to be able to put my heart and energy into a project that has such an important impact in the community. Pandemic or not, people will always need food, and I plan to continue working to increase equitable access to it for the rest of my life. I’m glad to be off to a great start at the UCC Urban Community Farm!”

-SAM FITCH, UCC Urban Farm Manager

Before I served a season with the Utah Conservation Corps, I had an appreciation for nature but hadn’t spent an extended period of time living outside. I loved hiking and sightseeing, but had slept in a tent only a handful of times. Still, I was more excited than overwhelmed by our training that covered chainsaw operation, river rafting, herbicide application, and more. I think I adapted to a new lifestyle so quickly because I knew it was something I was meant to do all along.

In addition to gaining practical skills and working to protect vulnerable environments, I met people in the corps who changed my life for the better. I served on an all women backcountry chainsaw crew that empowered me to be confident and resilient in a sector that is often male-dominated. From what I noticed, our organization seemed to have an equal number of men and women, which I hope represents the future direction of conservation work. My field bosses and office coordinators supported us corps members in our professional development while modeling a commitment to ethical resource management.

I am so grateful that I chose to join the Utah Conservation Corps. It is important to me to do my part to protect resources that face threats from many angles. Our work made a tangible impact on a threatened river environment and contributed to the preservation of spaces and species. I was able to improve myself in many ways while being a positive presence on the land I was lucky enough to call home.

-MADELINE (MAD) ROBINSON, UCC Crew Leader
NEW CAMPUS KITCHEN PROGRAM
MADE OVER 4,000 MEALS FOR STUDENTS

Jenna Stoker is an old friend of the Service Center. Despite being a busy Dietetics major, she always makes hours in her day for community engagement and volunteerism. Jenna was elected by the student body to be the 2018-19 USUSA Service Vice President. With a dedicated team, she launched Aggiethon, USU’s chapter of the national Dance Marathon that raises money for the Children’s Miracle Network and a local children’s hospital (in our case, Primary Children’s Hospital). The 12-hour dance marathon generated a lot of student support, enthusiasm for the rising generation, and brought in over $15,000.

Jenna’s efforts in 2019 to make the second annual Aggiethon even better paid off in big ways. Participation increased, and at the end of the day, the 2019 Aggiethon raised $35,468 and created many memories. Participant Becka Denney said, “Aggiethon is such an incredible movement! Being involved in Aggiethon has taught me a lot about myself and has opened my eyes to the impact each of us can have on children’s health. It is amazing how you can experience so much unity and have a ton of fun while being a part of something bigger than yourself.”

- JENNA STOKER, Former Service Center Director & Community-Engaged Scholar

The Utah Higher Education Food Summit brings together people working on campus food pantries and farmers’ markets, food recovery, gardening, food reclamation and redistribution, gleaning, composting, nutrition, food assistance, and a host of other topics connected to food insecurity. In September 2019, the food security programs of the Center for Community Engagement hosted around 100 guests from across the state.

This year’s summit featured an Idea Expo instead of traditional PowerPoint presentations. Booths and posters were set up with small circles of chairs to encourage conversations, troubleshooting, and networking. One attendee commented, “As a student, I liked the opportunity to collaborate with faculty and fellow students from both USU and other universities during the Idea Expo. It was really valuable to have access to those kinds of conversations in a defined setting.”

USU’s food security programs are housed within various programs of the Center for Community Engagement: The Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC), the Food Recovery Network, and the Campus Kitchen are student-directed programs within the Val R. Christensen Service Center.
The Student Sustainability Club saw tremendous growth in membership and involvement this year due to the amazing leadership team that focused on getting student input and ideas. The club organized multiple sustainable living workshops such as yogurt making, bees wrap sustainable food storage, clothing repair, sewing nights, and more.

Sage Sutcliffe, club leader shared, “I credit the Student Sustainability Club for sparking my involvement with sustainability and community engagement efforts. Functioning through the Student Sustainability Office, our club captures students’ interest in environmental consciousness and provides them an outlet to learn and share about thrifting, energy conservation, composting, upcycling, and more. The club has gained better traction this school year, in part due to more expansive advertising and outreach. Our leadership team’s volunteer hours are spent pulling off a variety of successful meetings and events. We’ve found workshops to be most successful. The workshops allowed us to share ideas, recipes, and sustainable living tips. We learned how to make beeswax wraps and heard from a panel of professors about how they incorporate sustainability into their various fields of expertise.”

**Bryce’s Story**

Bryce Johnston is the Student Sustainability Office (SSO) Engagement Coordinator. He is majoring in Conservation and Restoration Ecology with a minor in folklore. Bryce made it his goal this year to increase multidisciplinary collaboration across USU colleges and campuses. Bryce personally met with each college senator to talk about sustainability and promote the SSO among all colleges. Bryce also prioritized the need to raise awareness of the current climate crisis. He created an event called “Aggies Care about Climate” in which USU professors Dr. Robert Davies and Dr. Patrick Belmont spoke on the importance of acting now, highlighting how USU is currently addressing the issue.

Reflecting on his position with the SSO, Bryce said, “When I started my position, I immediately began looking for ways to connect more of campus to Student Sustainability Office programs and initiatives. While many people on campus had engaged with programs like the Farmers Market, Earth Day, refillable water bottle stations or Aggie Blue Bikes, they did not connect this work to our office. I met many different people across colleges and departments that helped me figure out how to collaborate and share our message. The way I see sustainability is not that someone is ‘sustainable’ or ‘not sustainable’, but each person in their own discipline, their own habits, and in their own way can help contribute to reducing our impact on the planet.”

- *BRYCE JOHNSTON, SSO Student Engagement Coordinator*
When I was hired at Aggie Blue Bikes, I thought of myself as bike-curious. I was not an active cyclist; I was just fumbling my way around bike commuting, and I wanted a challenge and a job that gave me hands-on skills. I did not realize the rest of the rewards I would gain from my tenure at Aggie Blue Bikes. The shop seems simple; we check out our fleet of cobbled together donations while teaching people about the maintenance of their own bikes. Occasionally we hold a workshop or a race. After being a member of this family for two and a half years; however, I realize that Aggie Blue Bikes has a lot more to do with education, community engagement, and changing the attitudes of people for the positive. Through our Alley Cat races, cyclists challenge themselves not only to pedal hard and fast – often through rain or snow – but also to learn the backroads of our valley and to embarrass themselves and let loose on the challenges at each stop. At our workshops, people who normally wouldn’t cycle to work decide that they’ll keep pedaling through the winter, so long as they have good gloves and tires. All of this can seem trivial at times, after all, what difference does one bike commuter make? But one bike commuter slowly convinces another and another, and they convince even more. With enough convincing, the streets of Logan, Utah could eventually look like Copenhagen. This could not only help our air quality, which sometimes looks sci-fi in nature, but also help the community connect, see each other at a human scale, and think a little bit more about their relationship to each other. Through Aggie Blue Bikes, I have been challenged not only with the intricacies and weirdness of wrenching on old bikes, but also with the challenge of showing people what a bike can do.

- CARTER MOORE, Aggie Blue Bikes AmeriCorps Member

Carter’s Story

I love bicycles. I love riding them, I love looking at them, I love working on them, but most of all, I love helping other people fall in love with them. Bicycles to me represent far more than just the joy they bring to me when I ride them. They represent freedom, exercise, and above all else, healthy, safe, sustainable transportation. To me, that is beautiful.

The bicycling world has an elitism problem though, one where if you don’t have the newest carbon fiber bike with electronic wireless shifters then you’re on the outside. My favorite thing about working at Aggie Blue Bikes is breaking down that barrier of elitism. Since our program is free of charge to students, we can provide an immense service to people that otherwise would never have climbed atop a bicycle. The most motivating thing is when we can help someone find a quality bicycle at a low price, and empower them to overhaul it through education and tools, to breathe new life into it.

To me, a 30-year-old steel framed bicycle with mechanical shifting that gets ridden to the grocery store, to school, and to work, is far more impressive than a carbon race bike that gets ridden only in sunny weather on Saturday mornings.

- BRIAN MOTT, Aggie Blue Bikes AmeriCorps Member

Brian’s Story
Sarah’s Story

The Community-Engaged Scholars program was exactly what I needed to enhance and integrate my community engagement interest and experience with my USU coursework and degree requirements. When I first came to USU, I had no idea where to start, but I knew I ultimately wanted to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.

During Fall 2018, I decided that the best route for me was to pursue a major in Communication Studies. This major was teaching me how to understand people, and I knew that in order to truly help people, I needed to understand them. When I discovered the Global Communication major, I immediately knew this was where I belonged. This major would give me the ability to not only understand people and how to communicate with them, but more specifically how to work with and understand individuals of different cultures.

For my Community-Engaged Scholars project, I worked with Dr. Matt Sanders, professor of Communication Studies, to create the Nonprofit Management and Social Entrepreneurship Certificate. I am now graduating having developed a certificate program that will help students with passions like mine identify and document coursework and experience to become successful nonprofit leaders. As a Community-Engaged Scholar, I not only have a degree, but experience that will propel me into my non-profit career. - SARAH PAUL, Community-Engaged Scholar

Karisa’s Story

During my time in the Community-Engaged Scholars program I have learned that we, as humans, have a large capacity to make a difference in creative ways. Acting upon our ideas can unlock endless possibilities as to how we can serve. This past year, I have had the opportunity to work with the Communication Disorders Department to expand and enhance the USU Lillywhite Library.

The Lillywhite Library was created to assist the students in the Communication Disorders and Deaf Education major with their community projects. The projects allow students to develop lesson plans to accompany a book. These lessons and books are then given to a local elementary school to be used by volunteer tutors or speech-language pathologists.

This project taught me so much about organization, planning, communication, and the importance of literacy in the alleviation of poverty. My desire to be involved in my local community unlocked more opportunities than I could have imagined. My capstone group and I were chosen to present at the statewide 2020 Engaged Faculty Retreat. It was not only an honor to present to many influential people about our project, but it was also inspiring to learn from faculty who strive to apply their work to the betterment of their communities. - KARISA BYBEE, Community-Engaged Scholar
America Reads is by far the best organization I have ever worked with. Working within my community has satisfied a sense of meaning and deep fulfillment within me. I love every unique day on-site and feel as if I have been able to create invaluable changes for the students under my care. This program has given me the opportunity to think beyond myself, understand the unique backgrounds of my students, and help them learn and improve through tailored Afterschool Club lesson plans. America Reads has been a part of my whole college experience, and from day one I fell in love with the program and community (plus it funded my schooling)! I’ve made lifelong friends and already deeply miss the children and staff. I have gained immense leadership qualities and learned skills for handling difficult and stressful situations. Overall, I am so grateful for the opportunity to assist school-age students in becoming passionate about their studies, lead my team of USU tutors, and become a more selfless individual. 

- ALICIA BAXTER, Afterschool Club Coordinator

Alicia’s Story

Some of the students we have been working with really struggled with reading. Now after reading them books that are appropriate for their level, they are able to pick up on most of the words. The second time we read the book together, they are able to read it to us. I am able to work with some kids who speak English as their second language. It is so cool see the progress in these students.”

~Kelsey Astle

“A third-grade boy was talking to a kindergartner. The kindergartner was sad because all of her friends were outside but she did not want to go out there because it was too cold. He offered to stay with her and play whatever she wanted. She was so excited to have someone to play with. After a bit of talking, the girl mentioned that one of her friends had gotten a cool, new pencil from the machine. He said that he had a quarter and she could use it to get her own cool, new pencil. She could not believe that he would do that for her and kept that pencil with her for the rest of the day, showing it off to everyone she encountered!”

~Rhya Diaz

USU Student Reflections

“This month our focus for our program was culture and Christmas. I was able to share my talent of playing the bagpipes for the kids. That got a lot of questions and some of the kids tried to play the bagpipes and realized how difficult it was. I was able to help them understand how important practice and commitment are to something that you have passion for. It was fun to see their reactions and to share a piece of my culture at this holiday season.”

~Elizabeth Broadbent

2019-20 IMPACT

America Reads

16 SCHOOLS - hosted Afterschool Programs
143 - USU students served as tutors in Cache Valley public schools
39,750 HOURS - served by AmeriCorps tutors
1,295 K-12 STUDENTS - tutored and mentored by USU students daily
4,648 K-12 STUDENTS - reached through AmeriCorps tutors
$362,623 - earned in Work-Study wages to help students with financial need pay for college
$155,682 - earned in AmeriCorps Education Awards

Artcore

102 VOLUNTEERS - worked in schools
902 HOURS - served by volunteers
794 K-6 STUDENTS - participated in art projects after school
$3,829 - raised through donations

EDUCATION OUTREACH
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
START HERE.

ADDRESS: 7205 Old Main Hill
OFFICE: Taggart Student Center 318
PHONE: 435-797-9681
EMAIL: sean.damitz@usu.edu
WEBSITE: COMMUNITYENGAGEMENT.USU.EDU