We come together today to celebrate the good work being done across the states of Iowa and Minnesota and to consider ways of building on that work for greater impact.
This award recognizes an individual student or a student organization that models a deep commitment to civic responsibility and leadership, evidenced by initiative, innovative and collaborative+ approaches to addressing public issues, effective community building, and integration of civic engagement into the college experience.

**Alex Hernandez-Olivera**, Augsburg University

Alex Hernandez-Olivera has worked with Campus Kitchen at Augsburg University while pursuing a Bachelor’s of Science in Clinical Psychology and minors in Sociology and Mathematics. Alex has shown dedication to food justice through his leadership in our on-campus food shelf and cooking workshops. He leads with compassion, initiative and a can-do attitude. We are grateful for his leadership and dedication to food justice on Augsburg’s campus!

**Max Lopez**, Bethel University

Max Lopez is Bethel University’s candidate for the Presidents’ Student Leadership Award. Max spent two summers doing environmental justice work with the Urban Farm & Garden Alliance helping to enrich Frogtown, Rondo, and Summit-University neighborhood gardens. He honors Indigenous Peoples through his work with Kaipulli Yaocenoxtli, a traditional Mexica-Nahuatl (Aztec) dance group. He helped organize a Bethel event centered on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. He protested against oil companies digging on Indigenous land without consent. He is committed to advancing housing equity for underserved populations. Max’s exceptional poetry and photography acknowledge the human dignity of diverse communities.

**Northfield Community Education Center Food Shelf Team**, Carleton College

We celebrate the team of Carleton students who take responsibility for operating this food shelf satellite operation in partnership with Action Center, starting in 2022. Fondly known as the “tiny shelf” for its petite size, this resource means groceries are now closer to where many lower-income and immigrant families live in Northfield. The students’ consistent commitment to and care for this program can’t be overstated.

**Janessa Marshall**, Coe College

Janessa has emerged as an exceptional campus leader, showcasing her versatility through a myriad of roles. Transitioning from her position as Public Relations Manager to President of the Black Self Educated Organization, she has displayed unwavering dedication and adeptness in leadership. Nessa’s commitment to supporting first-year students as a Cohort Mentor and her current role as a student worker with the Office of Student Life underscores her deep-rooted commitment to fostering the well-being and success of her peers. Also, her participation in Coe’s Board Orientation and Leadership Development program reflects her proactive pursuit of knowledge and skills essential for effecting change at the community level.

**Ella Martin**, College of St. Benedict

Ella’s public service and leadership has grown each year as she engages as a member of our Bonner Leader program and in her role at Outdoor University as a Student Naturalist. Ella created an internship through the Northwoods Battered Women’s Shelter program in 2022 at the Northwoods Battered Women’s Shelter in Bemidji, MN. The internship provided her an opportunity to be at the center of client care and see what public service looks like in a city with challenging economic and employment shortages. Ella dove deeper into equitable health care in rural MN during Summer 2023 with a 2nd internship. Ella’s superpower is her ability to listen, gather more information, and ask insightful, respectful questions.

**Emma Johnson**, College of St. Scholastica

Emma has been a Student Coordinator of Campus Ministry’s Loaves & Fishes student group. This group volunteers weekly at the Duluth Catholic Worker community. Emma also has served in a leadership position with the student club Students For Life where she coordinated a student volunteer initiative with 40 Days for Life. In addition, Emma regularly steps in to volunteer to support the Catholic community on campus.

**Concordia Student Nurses Association**, Concordia College

Student Nurses Association is a dedicated student organization that motivates and inspires students to promote and enrich the knowledge of health and wellness through an active role on campus and in the community. Student leaders organize regular community service impact projects ranging from hosting blood drives on campus, to serving with Meals on Wheels, and bringing groups of volunteers to the local food bank and Ronald McDonald House. They also raise awareness of the National Marrow Donor Program through an annual Be the Match campaign, encouraging students to sign up as donors. Their acts of service are reflective of the service that the nursing profession provides to others and the community.

**Indian Student Association**, Concordia University, St. Paul

India Student Association has played a large role in helping students from India adjust to life in the United States. On a regular basis, they troubleshoot challenges, act as a mediator, host cultural events, and connect students to families, communities, and volunteer opportunities in the metro area.

**Lara Rahman**, Drake University

Lara Rahman is a first-generation college student and senior at Drake University. She exemplifies bringing innovative and collaborative approaches to addressing public issues and effective community building. She currently works for S-3 Group in Washington, D.C. as a Government Relations Intern. She served as a legal & research intern with ACT in Washington, D.C., supporting the domestic & global policy team. She is an intern with the Entrepreneurship Department at Drake, helping local businesses thrive and become successful by supporting and mentoring them. Lara is a Peer Mentor for the Donald V. Adams Leadership Institute and is majoring in International Relations and Minoring in Rhetoric, Media and Social Change.
Emma Shumaker, Gustavus Adolphus College
Emma, senior Psychological Sciences and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies major, has been a coordinator for Big Partner/Little Partner and MOMENTS (Moments of Mindful Engagement Nourished Through Socialization). For BPLP, she is serving as the Parent Coordinator ensuring that parents have the correct information and that their concerns are heard and addressed. For MOMENTS, she and another student brought that program back after COVID had shut it down for three years. This was a huge achievement as most of the community partners had left and most of the students that had been involved had graduated. Without Emma’s leadership, this program would not have gotten back off the ground.

Brandy Sanchez-Dominguez, Hamline University
Brandy has brought her leadership skills and positive energy to many parts of Hamline’s campus. She’s been an integral part of the Hedgeman Center and actively participated in the search for the new Director. She is involved in the McVay Youth Partnership as a Senior Fellow and was a Program Assistant. She’s also been active in the Hamline Unidos student organization.

Loras College Du-Buddies, Loras College
Loras College student organization, Du-Buddies leaders Nicole Bendig and Tyler Krotchki are deserving of this recognition. The level of commitment from these student leaders has been impressive. Through their leadership, Nicole and Tyler have shown a high level of collaboration, community building and initiative, by bringing together students and Buddies from the community of Dubuque to celebrate long-time friendships, reciprocal relationships over time and the difference that taking the time to get to know one another, celebrating our differences and similarities and making time for one another can make in the lives of all human beings.

Ma’Kahsa Lane, Macalester College
Although COVID impacted community engagement throughout her time at Macalester, Ma’Kahsa Lane, ‘24 maintained a deep commitment to Bonner Community Scholars. Throughout her college career, Ma’Kahsa supported many peers to become involved and deepen their connections within the Bonner community and beyond. Serving as Bonner Program Associate since her sophomore year, Ma’Kahsa has provided exceptional peer leadership for many initiatives including first year outreach & community building, hosting gatherings to extend the reach of Bonner beyond core participants, and creating meaningful opportunities for large group engagement off campus.

Nicole Palmer, Metropolitan State University
Nicole Palmer demonstrates community engagement leadership as a disability advocate with particular attention to people with complex health conditions. She volunteers at The Marfan Foundation (as counselor, board member, and representative) and serves as camp counselor and role model to children with heart disease at Camp Odayin. Nicole’s civic commitments are shown by her undertaking training in support of community leaders through Bridging Brown County’s Leadership Training Program. Also, as a master’s student in Metro State’s Department of Public and Nonprofit Leadership, Nicole is creating a Universal Design toolkit to help community leaders through Bridging Brown County’s Leadership Training Program. Also, as a master’s student in Metro State’s Department of Public and Nonprofit Leadership, Nicole is creating a Universal Design toolkit to help non-profit organizations meet goals of equity and inclusion.

Conner Allender, Mount Mercy University
Conner Allender, a junior majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology, has shown a deep commitment to leadership and civic responsibility during her time at Mount Mercy. She has served two years as a peer mentor for the Project Connect program as well as the AmeriCorps Mustang Mentor program, one of those years as a Student Leader capacity. She has also worked diligently over the last three years to start an organization on campus called Mustangs Unleashed, which works in partnership with Iowa Service Dogs and promotes education and awareness related to the training of service dogs for veterans and first responders. She balances many leadership roles on and off campus while inspiring others to live a civically engaged life.

Araceli Tapetillo, Simpson College
Araceli is currently a sophomore at Simpson College. During her first year on campus, she became very involved in the Indianaola community. After learning about the Wesley Service Scholarship program, she became involved during her second year. However, Araceli is not receiving the financial aid benefit. She simply wants to be involved in the community and reflect on her experiences with fellow students. Araceli meets weekly with students at a local elementary school for tutoring, connection, and helping students learn English. She set a goal to volunteer for 100 hours during this academic year. She continues to take new volunteer experiences, reflect with her peers, and engage in reflection activities through the Wesley Service Scholarship.

Chandler Apling, South Central College
Chandler Appling was Vice President of the Student Senate and the Civic Influencer Work Study student for Student Engagement on the Faribault Campus before graduating in Fall 2023. In this role, Chandler ensured students had the information necessary to be civically engaged. He collaborated with the Faribault Chamber to organize a Pizza and Politics event that included state, city and school officials, as well as representatives from the offices of both of Minnesota’s US and state senators. Chandler was also a member of our Phi Theta Kappa Beta Mu Eta Chapter, supporting the chapter’s efforts on campus and regionally.
Hannah Meyer, Southwest Minnesota State University
Hannah led the SMSU Ag Bowl Scholarship Invitational event for 2024. She facilitated the creation of 18 contests that brought approximately 1300 high school students from 3 different states to campus. She organized and led the group of volunteers and worked with the SMSU Foundation to secure the success of this event. Hannah is strong leader devoted to the civic responsibility of connecting campus and community. Her initiative led to the success of the 2024 SMSU Scholarship Invitational in February 2024. This is a highly collaborative event that takes the coordination of a variety of volunteers with effective community building skills.

Leena Abdulla, St. Catherine University
Leena Abdulla embodies St. Catherine University’s values of community, leadership, and social justice through her community engagement and advocacy. As an intern at East Side Freedom Library with the Community Leaders program, Leena informed residents about tenant protection efforts and shared the history of housing justice in the Twin Cities. She raises awareness of community issues on campus through social media and graphic design for the Center for Community Work and Learning, Justice Reads, and the Muslim Student Association. She has organized campus events and actions advocating for issues affecting BIPOC students. Leena seeks to nurture radical love and authenticity everywhere she goes.

Ryan Imm, St. John’s University
Ryan is a shining example of what it means to be a leader and advocate for inclusivity. As an Advisory Board member and Education Coordinator, he has played a crucial role in implementing valuable educational programming that raises awareness and advocacy for issues related to LGBTQIA+, gender, and other related matters. Ryan’s collaborative approach with various clubs and organizations has helped create a safe and welcoming space for everyone, and his efforts have not gone unnoticed. His inspiring dedication to creating a more inclusive community is a testament to his character and the impact he has made on those around him.

Alexis Slade, University of Iowa
Alexis Slade is completing her PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering, holds a Research Assistantship in IIHR—Hydroscience and Engineering, and is a member of the Office of Community Engagement’s (OCE) Graduate Engagement Corps. Alexis’s research has focused on measuring emissions of PCBs at Portland Harbor. She went to Portland, developed relationships with the community, put samplers in people’s yards and community spaces and later led discussions about her findings with the people in the community. Alexis has done an exemplary job of integrating community engagement best practices into her research as a graduate student at Iowa.

Allison Koos, University of Minnesota, Morris
Allison is deeply committed to addressing food insecurity in the Morris area community. Her work has included research, leadership, and direct service. Allison contributed research to food systems assessments to determine the best next steps in supporting people in need. They took the initiative to ensure that the campus and community food shelves had a clear connection by doing a weekly community food shelf shift for three years and stocking the campus food shelf. They coordinated a food rescue program that provided leftover food from campus dining to people in need. They have mentored peers to ensure that their work will continue after they graduate.

Fyzeen Ahmad, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Fyzeen founded Project Blue Star in 2021 which seeks to increase connection between students and seniors. Project Blue Star, partnering with the University of Minnesota’s Center for Health Aging and Innovation and the MIT AgeLab, emphasizes meaningful conversation between students and seniors, a simple activity shown to alleviate feelings of loneliness. Project Blue Star also supports research into the solutions and underpinnings that inhibit social connection in our communities. The nonprofit, currently managed by Fyzeen, has grown to include student volunteers from various schools throughout Minnesota.

Panther Pantry, University of Northern Iowa
In the spring of 2018, a food insecurities task force was created to determine the need of UNI students and the extent of insecurity on the UNI campus for food and necessary items. Based on the task force’s findings that 16% of surveyed students had low food insecurity, a recommendation was made to establish a food and necessity pantry on campus. The Panther Pantry looks to increase awareness of college student food and personal hygiene insecurities. The Panther Pantry is a student organization operated by a student executive board. Its operation is run out of the Office of Student Involvement in Maucker Union.

Bethany Christians, Wartburg College
Bethany is actively serving the campus and surrounding communities. She is a double major in Social Work/Business Administration. Since January 2023 she has served as the student representative for the Waverly–Shell Rock United Way Board of Directors. She holds an executive team member role in the Student Organization, Knights Who Serve, provides training for a Retreiving Freedom Service Dog, and is the Service Chair for Phi Eta Sigma. She is a Baldwin Leadership Fellow and lives in The Residence Service-Learning Suites. Her plans after graduation include working for a fast-paced non-profit organization that will allow her to utilize her business and management background as well as connect with and assist clients.

Public Health Club, Winona State University
The Public Health Club excels at developing long-term relationships in the community. They responded to a school counselor’s concerns by assessing their needs and organizing a 6-week after-school club called Kids in Motion. They organized the joint pack team for the 2024 Feed My Starving Children MobilePack event sponsored by Winona Rotary to pack meals for hungry children in developing countries. They have also organized other activities including Cookies for the Community, benefitting residents at a low-income housing development, homeless shelter, and women’s shelter; Volunteer team to serve the Winona Warming Center; Valentine’s Day card donation for people living in long-term care facilities.
Presidents’ Civic Engagement Leadership Awardees

This award recognizes a member of the faculty, administration, or staff or for a group (e.g., advisory committee, task force, project team) that has significantly advanced their campus’ distinctive civic mission by forming strong partnerships, supporting others’ civic and community engagement, and working to institutionalize a culture and practice of engagement.

Dr. Vanessa Bester, Ed.D, PA–C, Augsburg University
Dr. Vanessa Bester, Director of the Physician Assistant Program, exemplifies the mission of Augsburg University through her commitment to creating community-centered, engaged learning experiences for students. She relentlessly gives personalized care to marginalized communities. Dr. Bester plays a leadership role with the Health Commons (health-focused drop-in centers), expanding locations across the Twin Cities through academic–community partnerships. She is dedicated to addressing racism in healthcare, charting a more just and inclusive future and leading change to address health inequities in new ways.

Dr. Debbie Solomon & Professor Dave Muhovich, Bethel University
Dr. Debra Solomon and Professor Dave Muhovich partnered with Vietnamese Social Services (VSS) to place 56 nursing students at VSS in the 2023–2024 school year. These students participated in community engaged learning activities with VSS including assisting Adult Basic Education teachers, creating public health education materials, and providing support for vaccine clinics and a coat drive. These students provided over 1,000 hours of service to VSS under their professors’ leadership. Because of Professor Muhovich's and Dr. Solomon’s groundwork in engaging at VSS, meeting with VSS staff, and providing reflection and accountability for their students, students experienced transformational learning at VSS and provided excellent service.

Dr. Palmar Álvarez–Blanco, Carleton College
Dr. Palmar has introduced two strategic initiatives to strengthen the community of public scholars at Carleton. She has increased the visibility of this mode of scholarship and its many expressions through the Media Library for Public Scholarship and the Day of Public Scholarship, both of which are designed to continue on beyond her fellowship. She brings an optimizer’s mindset to her work, always finding ways to help more people (faculty, staff, and students) see how they can and do contribute to public scholarship and higher education’s public purpose.

Joe Demarest, Coe College
Joe has been pivotal in forging pathways for students to actively engage in a diverse array of community and civic initiatives. He has bolstered partnerships with a range of community partners, expanding opportunities for students to complete internships, AmeriCorps projects, volunteerism, and work with various employers through the Federal Work Study program. Joe's leadership has been instrumental in elevating Coe's voter registration rate to 90%, achieved with the support of the student-led CoeVotes. Furthermore, his collaboration with the United Way has resulted in the creation of a tailored Board Orientation and Leadership Development (BOLD) program, offering college students invaluable insights into board governance.

Laura Probst, Concordia College
In 2020, Laura Probst initiated collaboration with the Moorhead School District on a program that enables Concordia students and 8th graders to learn together, with a focus on books diversifying authors. The RIDE (Readings for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity) program has become a signature community engagement activity of Concordia, with a positive impact on participants. As primary administrator of the program, Laura directs mentor recruitment and designs/oversees activities. Laura's entrepreneurial spirit, dedication to student learning, and ability to foster collaboration have enabled her to create an inspirational program that advances Concordia civic mission and demonstrates the power of college-community partnerships.

Dr. Leanne Lojovich, Concordia University, St. Paul
Concordia University honors Dr. Leanne Lojovich and her work with the Protez Foundation. Dr. Lojovich sought out an opportunity to support the Ukrainian citizens during the war and built a partnership with our DPT department to assist in the rehabilitation process of Ukrainian soldiers with prosthetic limbs. This led to an opportunity for Dr. Lojovich to travel to Ukraine to provide an educational symposium for Ukrainian physical therapists on rehabilitation techniques for injuries sustained in war. Finally, a core group of Ukrainian physical therapists recently came to Concordia University’s campus to receive more training in anatomy, gait, and other foundational knowledge to deepen their understanding of rehabilitation techniques.

Dr. Leslie Jackson, OTD, MEd, OT/L, FAOTA, Drake University
Dr. Leslie Jackson’s leadership of Drake’s Occupational Therapy program emphasizes service & social justice, commitments apparent in everything from her holistic admissions approach to her non-profit curricular partnerships. She serves as chair and program director. Her work is anchored in her own life experiences and grounded by her occupational therapy background. Dr. Jackson’s career spans more than 40 years, including academic and practice-based volunteer efforts. From 2023–24, she has served as Drake’s Slay Senior Fellow for Community Engaged Learning. Last year, she and another colleague spearheaded a professional development program for faculty interested in adding community engagement to their Drake courses.

Corrina King, Grand View University
Grand View University has a rich history of civic, educational offerings. Thanks to Corrina King’s leadership, we dramatically increased civic and educational opportunities to historic levels. This past year, GVU hosted Vice President Harris, six CNN presidential town halls and two NewsNation presidential town halls, providing engagement opportunities for students, faculty, staff and the community. Corrina also organized two GVU-hosted public forums for local elections – candidates for Des Moines Mayor and City Council Ward 2. She also organized a coffee with Iowa legislators, wherein students from area independent colleges shared their Iowa Tuition Grant experiences, while learning about key issues for the upcoming session.
Dr. Hagar Attia, Gustavus Adolphus College
Dr. Attia has significantly advanced Gustavus’ civic mission by co-directing Public Deliberation and Dialogue as well as teaching and Public Discourse. Dr. Attia is co-director of the Public Deliberation and Dialogue (PDD) co-curricular program. The program’s primary purpose is to facilitate deliberations on issues of common concern like free speech and inclusion on college campuses, climate, change, elections, and national debt among members of the Gustavus community and beyond. She trains student fellows on the theory and practice of deliberation to facilitate these discussions using three approaches to address the issue in question. PDD serves an important role in institutionalizing a culture and practice of engagement based on the numbe

Jason Bryant, Hamline University
Jason Bryant is a facilities staff member who goes above and beyond to extend his help to Hamline University’s Food Resource Center. He regularly volunteers his free time to help us get our order put away on delivery days. Especially when we have been understaffed in the past, he has stepped in and generously offered his help on numerous occasions. We would like to recognize and express our appreciation to Jason along with the entire facilities team for all that they have done for the Food Resource Center.

Erica Wood, Inver Hills Community College
Erica, a Geology and Climate Change Studies instructor, is actively engaged in the campus voting coalition and civic engagement team. Notably, she wrote a syllabus statement for faculty on voting, and updates it with each election cycle. She works hard to integrate civic engagement into the curriculum and culture of our campus – from teaching the new climate change studies course to leading the programming for our 2023-2024 campus-wide theme, “Exploring Climate and Social Change”.

Planning Committee for Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries Loras College Event, Loras College
A team of faculty and staff guided by a dedicated student leader brought Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, CA. to the Loras campus to inspire us to explore the power of love to transform the disunity that currently keeps us from each other. Reading groups and select classes shared Fr. Boyle's book, The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness throughout the 2023-24 academic year which challenged us to work together to advance our distinct civic mission at Loras College informed by reflecting upon Fr. Boyle’s message and his presentation to us, Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided by Times.

Dr. Kirisitina Sailiata, Macalester College
Dr. Kirisitina Sailiata has passionately demonstrated the importance and value of civic and community engagement at Macalester. She has served on the Mellon grant for Native and Indigenous Initiative (MNI) and as a project co-lead for USI. Dr. Sailiata has been pivotal to institutionalizing an Indigenous culture and practice of engagement across our campus.

Understanding and Responding to Mass Incarceration (URMI) Conference, Metropolitan State University
Every year, Metro State’s Understanding and Responding to Mass Incarceration (URMI) conference brings 300+ attendees (students and others) together in order to 1) raise awareness of mass incarceration, its antecedents and consequences; 2) explore the role of mass incarceration in perpetuating marginalization of communities of color; 3) provide opportunities to participate in networking, organizing, and activism in response to it. Attendees attest to the highly collaborative, “future forward” approach to positive change. Through Metro’s internal leadership, Dr. Raj Sathroju and Dr. Theressa Libby and colleagues, and their work with external leaders, the conference forges a true collaboration for social justice.

Crucial Conversations, Mount Mercy University
In Fall 2022, an initiative led by Sister Linda Bechen, Vice President for Mission and Ministry, brought Crucial Conversations training to Mount Mercy University. Dr. Joe Nguyen, Professor of Chemistry, has been trained as a Certified Crucial Conversations trainer, and trainings are offered each semester to faculty, staff, and students to help equip our campus community with the resources and skills needed to engage in meaningful discussion regarding crucial topics in today’s society. Over 75 participants have already completed the training, and these participants gain the skills needed to quickly, directly, and effectively speak up when it matters most and turn disagreement into dialogue.

Maria Vittone, North Hennepin Community College
Maria Vittone is a transformative leader deserving of the Campus Compact Presidents’ Civic Engagement Leadership Award for her outstanding work in developing and implementing the Be Bold Break the Mold Mentorship Program. Her leadership, along with Dr. Michelle Lange, has transformed the mentorship program. Students have reported feeling more connected to their majors, more supported/prepared in pursuing nontraditional careers.

Aswati Subramanian & John Pauley, Simpson College
The community-driven goal of the project was to fill in the gap between academia and the community by using Simpson College’s knowledge and resources for the greater common good. By creating an avenue through an interdisciplinary mindset, Professors Subramanian & Pauley wanted to work alongside Indianaola community members to address water problems faced by the immediate and broader community around Simpson. They imbedded Simpson College students and members of the City of Indianaola Community, Warren Count Community, and the state of Iowa Community into the project. They conducted research, field trips, attended meetings, and presented this work to the City of Indianaola’s sustainability committee and the City Council of Indianaola.
Kelcey Woods-Nord, South Central College
South Central College Vice President of Strategic Partnerships Kelcey Woods-Nord has been advancing public/private partnerships regionally, including work-based programs and economic development partnerships. She has led the initiative to overhaul Advisory Committees using the BiT model to ensure more employer input so students graduate with the skills they need to be successful today and into the future. Kelcey also oversees grants, including working on Pipeline grants directly with area employers, in which SCC has been a leader. Her success was instrumental in SCC being awarded a Federal earmark grant to grow the Mechatronics, Agriculture, and apprenticeship programs.

Amanda Sieling, Southwest Minnesota State University
Amanda Sieling is an individual champion of community engagement and brings these engagements into the classroom to greatly enhance civic engagement and experiential learning opportunities for students. Her work locally and statewide engaging in restorative justice has provided insight into how civic engagement opportunities can mesh with curriculum to provide excellent experiences for students and helping them reimagine a world where rehabilitation replaces incarceration when deemed appropriate.

Dr. Meghan Mason, St. Catherine University
Meghan Mason, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor, Public Health has supported collaborative research projects with the National Network to End Family Homelessness, and Mile in My Shoes, an organization for which she also volunteers. She involves St. Kate’s students in community-organized research through the Assistantship Mentoring and Summer Scholars programs, and has also helped Honors students design capstone projects with community organizations. For many years, Meghan has taught community-engaged learning courses in Public Health and the Core. As program director for the undergraduate Public Health program, she mentors instructors to support community-engaged learning across the curriculum.

Jess Petok, St. Olaf College
Associate Professor of Psychology Jessica Petok has been leading a multi-year collaboration with FiftyNorth through her research and "Frontiers in Aging" academic civic engagement course. By bridging older adults and St. Olaf students through joint class sessions, participants reconsider conventional attitudes toward aging. Petok believes that rapid global aging is an important area to explore and plans to continue exploring this topic through her work. By teaching about the ethics of and policies of aging as well as calling attention to rapid, global aging, Petok paves the way for better understanding of healthy, independent living through multidisciplinary strategies

Dr. Peter Gerlach, University of Iowa
Peter Gerlach is a lecturer in International Studies and executive director of the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council. Dr. Gerlach is a member of the Office of Community Engagement’s (OCE) Faculty Engagement Corps and teaches "Community Engaged Learning with Refugees and Immigrants in Iowa", a class that carries the Community Engaged Course designation. Dr. Gerlach utilizes the Community Engaged Learning model as the basis for his course exploring the lives of immigrants and refugees in Iowa. He has served as a panelist for OCE trainings and has been a guest speaker in the OCE’s First Year Seminar on community engagement.

Heather Peters, University of Minnesota, Morris
Heather has dedicated her career to community-engaged research that involves deep and sustained partnerships with Dakota elders and people. Her work is framed by a cultural humility and a deep understanding of her role as a true partner and not a university expert providing her expertise to a community organization. She allows research to evolve over time based on the assets people with whom she works bring to the table and the challenges they name and wish to address. She brings concrete resources to her community work—her time, her many undergraduate students’ time, and grant and university dollars.

Čhaŋtémaza Neil McKay, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Čhaŋtémaza is the senior Dakȟáta language instructor in the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota, where he also teaches courses on American Indian history, Dakȟáta linguistics, and Dakȟáta language for teachers and the classroom. He also teaches several community language tables and consults with schools and tribal communities on language education and teacher training. His work focuses on creating new speakers and teachers of Dakȟáta. Čhaŋtémaza is also on the planning team for the University of Minnesota Decolonization Roundtables, a peer support, discussion group on the topic of decolonization and its impacts.

Bettina Fabos, University of Northern Iowa
Bettina Fabos is Professor of Visual Communication and Interactive Digital Studies at the University of Northern Iowa. Both a scholar and producer of digital culture, her current work revolves around digital culture, digital visualization, digital art, and the Creative Commons. She is a co-founder and the Director of the Fortepan Iowa digital archive (https://fortepan.us), which features Iowa family snapshots. Bettina's work has allowed many UNI students the opportunity to not only learn about the importance of digital archiving but about how impactful it can be for community as well.

Krystal Madlock, Wartburg College
Krystal Madlock, Wartburg’s first Associate Dean for Inclusive Community, oversees the strategy and implementation of the college’s DEI work in collaboration with others on campus. She has organized the college’s first Unity Ceremony to present stoles honoring students’ identities, amplified the college’s presence at local inclusion festivals, and organized and executed the college’s first Inclusion Day, which included an education resource fair, a guest speakers, both with community partners. She is also a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., a historically African American sorority dedicated to public service and programs that assist the African American community, and on the Board of Education for Waterloo Community Schools.

Dr. Danielle Schwartz, Winona State University
Dr. Schwartz has advanced the intellectual, social, cultural, and economic vitality of the people and communities WSU serves. She has made it her mission to get involved and create opportunities for her students to engage with the greater Winona community. Dr. Schwartz has helped the Frozen River Film Festival grow the educational arm of their programming by hosting filmmaking workshops for middle and high schools, opening up an opportunity for Film Studies majors to get paid to help facilitate the workshops. She has worked with Project Get Outdoors to make mini documentaries with students that have been archived in an OpenRiver digital collection. She speaks at demonstrations and contributes to grassroots organizing efforts.
Presidents' Community Partner Awardees

This award recognizes a community-based partner or organization that has enhanced the quality of life in the community in meaningful and measurable ways and has engaged in the development of sustained, reciprocal partnerships with the college or university, thus enriching educational as well as community outcomes.

Nawal Hirsi, Augsburg University

In her role as Manager of Community Programs and Initiatives with M Health Fairview, Nawal helps lead the Health Commons, health-focused drop-in centers that operate in marginalized communities in the Twin Cities. She is a responsive partner, having gained the trust of community residents and colleagues as a result of her diligent and compassionate work. Nawal supports students from various universities to build relationships with community members while working to address health inequities and deeply rooted issues of isolation. She partners with the Campus Kitchen program to increase access to healthy food for neighborhood residents. Nawal is exceptional; her work has resulted in the betterment of the lives of those around her.

Vietnamese Social Services (VSS), Bethel University

Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota (VSS) shows Bethel students how to serve new residents of Minnesota with dignity and care. VSS addresses the “basic economic, education, and health needs of refugees and immigrants while promoting healthy and thriving communities.” Our nursing students and communitywork-study students have the opportunity to participate in community engaged learning with VSS. VSS staff model excellence in work, compassion, and treating others with dignity. VSS clients have also taught Bethel students the importance of kindness, patience, and hard work by their example as learners. Students experience firsthand the promotion of thriving communities through VSS and the power of bringing people together in community.

Sharing Our Roots, Carleton College

With a mission to advance a resilient agriculture system that demonstrates the power to heal our lands, nourish our communities, and prepare emerging farmers, Sharing Our Roots has become an indispensable partner of Carleton College over the last few years. We support one another through the community-based work study program, summer internships, volunteer programs, alternative spring breaks, and more. We particularly appreciate the clear values and philosophy that guide the farm’s programs, which creates a rich context for learning at the intersection of theory and practice.

Kids on Course, Coe College

Kids on Course provides a comprehensive array of services encompassing tutoring, enrichment, parent engagement, summer learning, and sustained mentoring, ensuring support for students from elementary school and beyond. In recent years, Kids on Course and Coe College have fostered a range of collaborative initiatives aimed at enhancing the educational experience for all involved. Notably, the annual Kids on Course Day offers a firsthand experience of college life while inspiring them to envision their own path to higher education. Additionally, Coe’s commitment is underscored by their provision of financial aid to students from the Kids on Course program, further facilitating access to quality higher education.

Dan Williams, College of St. Scholastica

As the Executive Director of The American Red Cross Serving Northern Minnesota, Dan Williams works to enhance the quality of life in the community by making homes safer, disaster response, supporting families after tragic fires, emergency communication for military families, and education on humanitarian law. Dan has been a consistent partner with the College for our Biannual Community Days. Dan hosts community day volunteers in service projects that are educational and grounded in gratitude. Additionally, the Red Cross regularly hosts St. Scholastica interns and clinical students for community clinicals. Dan is a true collaborator and inspires action through service.

The Indigenous Association, Concordia College

The Indigenous Association is a nonprofit organization created in 2019 by the Native American Commission for the purpose of building community connections through cultural events, workshops, and activities. IA serves peoples representing 23 Native American Nations. From the capacity as a community partner, IA has worked at the faculty and institutional level facilitating relationships with indigenous knowledge carriers and indigenous institutions enabling faculty to integrate indigenous knowledge across disciplines through partnerships. At the institutional level, IA’s work created opportunities for Concordia to expand offerings in Ojibwa and take steps toward building a transfer program with the White Earth Tribal College.

Midway Chamber of Commerce, Concordia University, St. Paul

Midway Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Concordia University to bring meaningful business experiences for our students. Most recently, the chamber recruited Concordia students to assist in strategic planning efforts for a new vision for the Midway.

Broadlawns Medical Center, Drake University

On September 8, 2023, Broadlawns Medical Center & Drake University celebrated the grand opening of the Broadlawns Community Clinic at Drake. This 12,000 sq. ft. facility meets a community-identified need, and by co-locating student health services within the facility, Drake and Broadlawns expanded the medical and mental health services available to the campus and surrounding community. In addition to student health services, Broadlawns is the official medical provider for Drake Athletics. Broadlawns also serves as an academic partner for athletic training, pharmacy, health sciences, occupational therapy, and accelerated nursing. The latter is a new collaborative program. *Broadlawns Medical Center is a nonprofit healthcare organization
River’s Edge Hospital, St. Peter, Gustavus Adolphus College
River’s Edge Hospital has been an outstanding community partner for Gustavus and for students interested in the health professions for 14 years. They are a willing and engaged community partner and have gone above and beyond to offer in-depth opportunities for Gustavus students to explore health careers. River’s Edge recognizes the importance and value of promoting health careers and giving students the opportunity to observe health career success needs to be given to Paula Wilson, CEO of River’s Edge Hospital, while in a different role partnered with us to get this program started. And to Kimberly Smisek for her willingness, enthusiasm and follow-through to coordinate and plan this exceptional opportunity.

Kitchen Coalition, Hamline University
Kitchen Coalition “serves up culturally connected, freshly prepared meals and a whole new way to fight hunger.” They have been an amazing partner to the Hamline Food Resource Center. Their staff is wonderful to work with and they provide us with our convenient pre-packaged microwaveable meals each week. They ensure these meals are accommodating, and diet friendly. Because their meals are quickly heated in a microwave, these meals have had an enormous positive impact on the Hamline community as they help save time, energy, and money for our shoppers.

Emily Bowman, Inver Hills Community College
Emily is the Neighbor Services Regional Outreach Specialist at Second Harvest Heartland, and has been an invaluable partner to Inver Hills Community College. Emily goes above and beyond to provide resources and education to students, faculty, and staff about SNAP and other basic needs resources. Her passion, energy and dedication inspire all of us at Inver Hills and encourages us to strive for excellence in SNAP outreach and education.

Josh Jasper, Loras College
Josh Jasper and Resources Unite routinely demonstrates to Loras College interns and field placement students not only that there is much work to be done in this community, but that when a team of caring individuals collaborate towards the greater good, miracles occur. Daily, the RU team works to provide individuals and families with food, furniture, transportation, housing, and compassion while area youth are encouraged to participate in fundraising efforts so that they begin to develop an investment in their own community. As a community partner, Resources Unite lives by, strives for, and teaches their motto that “teamwork makes the dream work.”

Marvin Anderson, Macalester College
Mr. Marvin Anderson via the Rondo Center of Diverse Expressions (RCODE) and the Rondo Commemorative Plaza preserves the rich historical heritage of St. Paul’s African American community. He has brought together scores of youth, college students and professors, government leaders, and community elders for learning, healing, innovation, and cultural exchange. Serving as President of RCODE, Mr. Anderson has collaborated deeply with Macalester students, faculty, and staff over many years and is the epitome of a community teacher and elder. RCODE is a modern outgrowth of the Rondo Days festival and Reconnect Rondo, both endeavors seeking to recapture the cultural enterprise zone of the Rondo community before Interstate 94 broke it up.

Good in the ‘Hood, Second Harvest Heartland, and Neighborhood House, Metropolitan State University
Metro State recognizes three outstanding nonprofit partners. Good in the ‘Hood (created by Reverend Shawn Morrison) provides essential resources (i.e., food, footwear, and support services) to economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Second Harvest Heartland provides hunger relief regionally through initiatives including SNAP outreach, food shelf provisions, and school meals. Since Covid-19, it has provided free restaurant styled meals to people in need. Neighborhood House provides assistance to refugees, immigrants, and other communities in need through housing, education, and food. Metro State is honored to receive food and material support for our "Food for Thought Food Pantry" from these three organizations.

Riverview Center, Mount Mercy University
Riverview Center is a nonprofit agency committed to providing compassionate, client-centered care for individuals affected by sexual assault and domestic violence in Iowa and Illinois. They have been a great source of support and encouragement to students at Mount Mercy University who have been directly affected by sexual assault. They have also partnered with several colleges and universities in the Cedar Rapids area during Sexual Assault Awareness Month to coordinate a traveling art exhibit which honors survivors of sexual violence and promotes hope, healing, and ally-ship through art. They have been an invaluable partner in bringing resources, education, and awareness to the Mount Mercy community.

Nort Johnson, South Central College
Faribault Chamber President, Nort Johnson, led the community Vision 2040 task force that resulted in the number one goal for the community is Excellence in Education and the development of a Cradle to Career (C2C) initiative. C2C prepares children for success in school and life by utilizing data to organize, align, and adapt learning and community resources. Nort’s vision led to the development of the High School to College pathway (H2C), to close opportunity gaps by providing underrepresented students, students in special populations, and students in non-traditional fields the opportunity to pursue college credit while still in high school.

Marshall Public Schools, Southwest Minnesota State University
The SMSU School of Education was recently awarded continuing approval of our PELSB accreditation. Marshall Public Schools (MPS) was a key participant in our site visit for accreditation and MPS was highlighted by PELSB in their report. The accolade was given for the beneficial relationship that encourages both the district and SMSU to experiment with innovations meant to optimize K-12 education. The accreditation team acknowledged the highly collaborative and innovative partnership MPS has with the SMSU School of Education. The success of our partnership is largely due to Jeremy Williams and Beth Ritter at MPS.
Face to Face, St. Catherine University
Face to Face provides wraparound services, which include medical care, mental health, housing support, workforce development, youth justice, and community programs for low-income and insecurely housed youth aged 11 to 24. In 2023, they served over 3,000 youth, with 85 percent identifying as BIPOC and 15 percent as LGBTQ+. Students in St. Kate’s community-engaged learning (CEL) courses work with Face to Face at their SafeZone drop-in center. Coordinator Ashley Bauer-Yuen eagerly engages with students and has visited campus to meet with the student senate. One St. Kate’s graduate continued volunteering after her CEL course and now works as a housing case manager with Face to Face.

Project Friendship, St. Olaf College
Project Friendship is a 50+ year old mentorship program that provides support and helps build confidence during childhood by pairing over 275 St. Olaf and Carleton students with local youth. Project Friendship emphasizes the importance of developing positive self-worth and creating an environment to encourage youth to think freely and make an impact. The mentors also receive an invaluable experience of intrapersonal development and unique, extensive training.

Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, University of Iowa
Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County is dedicated to building a better future for people in low-income neighborhoods through programs that educate, foster self-esteem, strengthen families, and create a sense of community. They are a community-based, family-centered, human services agency serving Johnson County, Iowa. There are two community centers in Iowa City that provide outreach and programing to an additional five targeted neighborhoods and a dozen schools. The programs and activities reach over 400 children/youth and 200 adults each day. The Neighborhood Centers have provided essential resources and opportunities to the Iowa City community since 1873.

Autumn Macias, University of Minnesota, Morris
Autumn has been instrumental in serving as a core partner for the Rural Intercultural Education Initiative. She serves on the advisory council for the initiative, providing insightful feedback about the challenges the Latino community is facing and ideas for ways to address these; she routinely connects students and community members to address and meet needs and encourage learning. Through her work with the local schools, she has advocated for the Latino parents’ needs, ensuring that student teacher conferences were extended to allow for interpretation, that interpreters were trained through the UMN Morris TERCEO program and were engaging ethically and skillfully, and that interpreters were paid a stipend for their work.

Preserve Historic Dinkytown, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Dinkytown is a small commercial district adjoining the University of Minnesota’s historic east bank campus. Dinkytown has a rich history, including playing a highly significant role in the evolution of American folk music, the creation of community food co-ops, and the emergence of grassroots political initiatives. Dinkytown’s identity is embedded in the lives of tens of thousands of UMN students and alumni, artists, and the characters and clubs that have made up its sidewalks and upper floor apartments. Preserve Historic Dinkytown (PHD) engages University students every semester to be a part of this living history.

McElroy Trust, University of Northern Iowa
The R.J. McElroy Trust was founded in 1965 and is located in Waterloo, Iowa. The Trust has funded a broad range of educational programs—including scholarships, fellowships, internships, student loan funds and numerous other projects to benefit youth of all ages. UNI has benefited from a rich and deep partnership with the R.J. McElroy Trust for many years. McElroy Trust has provided UNI students, faculty, staff, programs, centers, institutes and departments with funds that have helped many to succeed.

The Larrabee Center, Wartburg College
The Larrabee Center assists people with disabilities and the elderly on their journey to becoming or remaining valuable and independent members of the community. The college partners with the nonprofit in several mutually beneficial ways, including a collaboration that provides employment opportunities for Larrabee clients in the college dining hall. Wartburg students also volunteer at the thrift store on Martin Luther King Jr. Day as part of the college’s Day of Service and have served alongside members of the organization as part of The Residence Service-Learning Projects. During this partnership, residential hall suites work with the organization to fulfill Service-Learning hours during the academic year.

Jennifer Walters, MBA, RD, LDN, SNS, Winona State University
Jennifer Walters is the School Nutrition Director for Winona Area Public Schools. She has been an instrumental community partner for health education and public health students. Jennifer has worked the grant writing class every Spring to write grants for WAPS. The focus of these grants has been to improve the school district’s Farm to School program and other school meal and nutrition programming, as well as to upgrade school kitchen equipment in various schools throughout the district. This has allowed the school district to increase access to healthier food and build healthy habits. Just this past Spring, two student-written grants were used to obtain $30,000 in funding from the MN Dept of Education and the Winona County SHIP program.
Engaged Campus Award for Alumni Leadership

Recognizes an alum from a member institution making strong contributions to their community and demonstrating the values of the civic mission of higher education.

**Jesse Phenow**, Bethel University

Jesse Phenow emphasizes that the K’nyaw and Karenni communities are his teachers. Jesse is the co-founder of The Urban Village, a non-profit committed to invoking the village collaborations lived out by K’nyaw and Karenni communities. Displaced by war, these refugees and their descendants foster a generosity of support for one another while confronting disparities in the US. Urban Village’s programs for youth include: offering resources for developmental formation, establishing college scholarship funds, and creating camp excursions embracing the significance of K’nyaw and Karenni traditions, history, and heritage. Jesse’s humanitarianism, teachability and humility make him a worthy award nominee.

**Honorable Mention: Billy Weathers, Simpson College**

Engaged Campus Award for Community Collaboration

Recognizes a collaboration co-created with community organizations, leaders, and/or partners that is deep, reciprocal, and transformational.

**The Social Support Collaborative**, Southwest Minnesota State University

The Social Support Collaborative (SSC) (including Western Mental Health, Southwest Minnesota State University Public Safety, WoMens Rural Advocacy Program & New Horizons Crisis Center) is committed to strengthening the relationship between students and faculty at SMSU and the resources that exist within the community. This collaborative between on and off-campus resources helps to increase awareness and recognition of services available to students, staff and faculty of SMSU who may be experiencing a variety of crises. The highlight of the SSC is the ability to co-advocate for the needs of individuals.

**Honorable Mention: MLK Jr Day of Service, University of Northern Iowa**

Engaged Campus Award for Emerging Innovation

Recognizes a recent project, program, or initiative making unique and innovative contributions that demonstrate strong future potential, including student-led projects.

**Dr. Michael Bechtel**, Wartburg College

Dr. Michael Bechtel is using his passion for agriculture to create Ioponics, a system that combines aquaculture and hydroponics to cultivate an interest in science in the next generation while creating the infrastructure to help bring nourishment to food deserts. Educational Ioponics systems are currently in more than 76 Iowa counties, 14 states, and 3 countries. Systems in schools include grade-specific lesson plans. The program, which was helped in the early days by Wartburg business and engineering students, has been sustained by Bechtel and a team of mostly education students at the college. Bechtel continues to research opportunities for the system, including large-scale implementation, woody agriculture, and exotic flora and fauna.

**Honorable Mention: Uniquely Abled Academy, South Central College**