

SPRING 2024

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON MAGAZINE



**WHAT MAKES THE
UNIVERSITY OF AKRON HOME**
*People, Places and Programs
Make it a Special Place*

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Whether they're living away from their families for the first time or commuting from home while pursuing their higher education goals, students at The University of Akron (UA) always manage to find a place on campus that feels like home to them. Sometimes, if they can't find the exact sense of home they need, they create it for themselves.

Our faculty and staff work hard to ensure each student finds a place at UA, and in this issue of The University of Akron Magazine we explore how members of the UA community make a home here.

Many of us think about home as a physical place where we live our private lives. Home certainly can be the building or room in which we sleep and, as we learn in a story about residence hall life, our students create comfortable spaces and welcoming environments where they can truly be themselves. We also learn about how UA's Greek organizations create a sense of home and belonging for students.

“What truly makes my office feel like a home is not necessarily the physical elements of the space, but the colleagues with whom I share it.”

UA community members also find home on campus, such as the Zips Athletics season ticketholders whose home in the JAR has been the same seats for decades.

Home can sometimes be much more than a physical place, as highlighted in a Cummings Center for the History of Psychology's exhibit that explores the concept and definition of “home.” It can be a feeling of security, like the ways in which ZipAssist supports students with temporary housing and other needs.

Gary L. Miller

Gary L. Miller
President

UA's athletic teams create a sense of home for the student-athletes who come to Akron from all over the world. Home can also be a student organization or club. And there are many ways in which we create the feeling of home around food and events such as our annual Robsgiving dinner.

UA's performance spaces, such as Guzzetta Hall and E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, and places like the Emily Davis Gallery and Dr. Shirla R. McClain Gallery feel like home at times to me and my wife Georgia because of our deep appreciation of arts and culture.

I always feel at home in my office in Buchtel Hall, which for UA's presidents has been a home base for more than a century. What truly makes my office feel like a home is not necessarily the physical elements of the space, but the colleagues with whom I share it. I am so grateful to all the UA students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members who contribute to that feeling of home on campus by filling it with warmth, energy and UA spirit.

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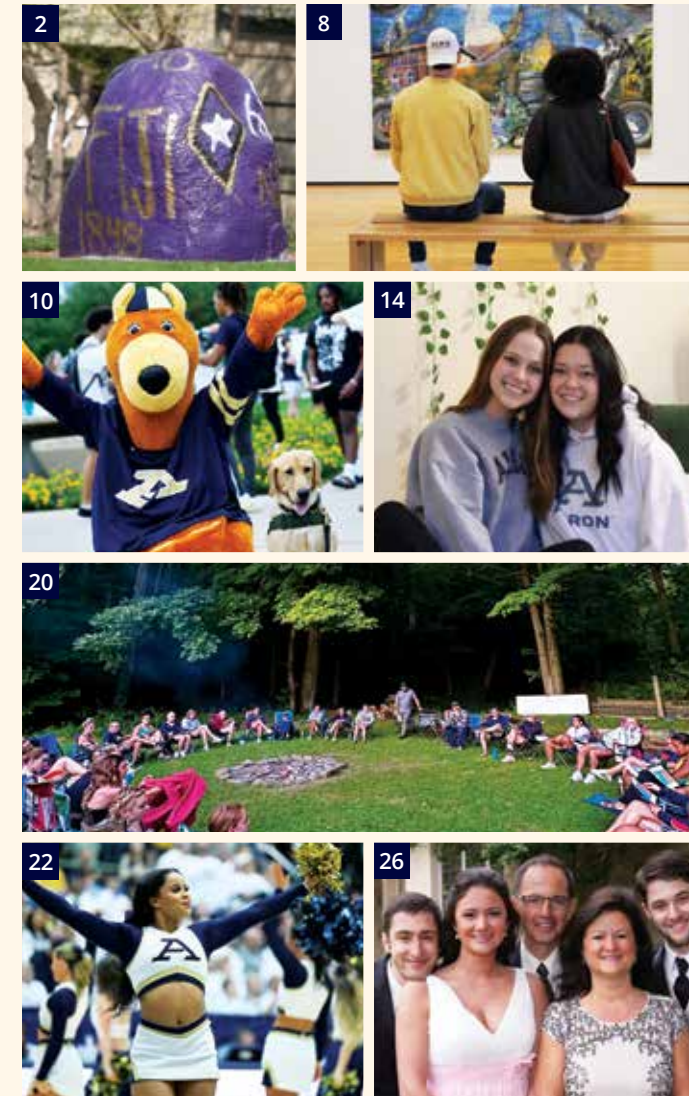
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THE PAINTED LEGACY



BY BREE SABIN

Over the years, the campus has changed quite a bit. Yet, amidst this evolution, one constant has remained: “The Rock.” Positioned in the center of campus for more than 144 years, it stands as a steadfast symbol of tradition at UA.

Akron historian, George Knepper, pointing at “The Rock” before it was to be taken to its new location.



What most don't realize is that UA is home to two separate rocks. The smaller of the two is the original rock, from the Class of 1879, whereas the larger rock is from the Class of 1880.

The Class of 1880 wanted to outshine the Class of 1879, so they discovered a much larger rock that would do just that. Originally situated in West Akron on the farm of Col. Simon Perkins, son of Akron's founder, Gen. Simon Perkins, “The Rock” found its way to campus.

However, its journey was far from simple. Transporting the massive boulder via wagon posed challenges, particularly when a bridge along the route was unable to bear its weight. This obstacle led to a delay until the bridge could be reinforced, allowing “The Rock” to continue its journey.

“The Rock” stood firmly for nearly eight decades, while the campus surrounding it changed. In September 1961, it was decided that the landmark stood in the way of progress, which led to its relocation.

The move to its current location became inevitable with the construction of Zook Hall, which today houses the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education.

Despite its enduring presence, “The Rock's” appearance has undergone transformation over the decades. Various entities, including Greek life, student organizations and athletic teams, have contributed to its ever-changing appearance with a plethora of paint colors and designs. You'll find that beneath all the layers of paint, “The Rock” has “1880” engraved into it.

In 2013, a dedicated group of students from the Geoscience Club began a mission to restore the beloved rock. Amidst layers of paint, their efforts unearthed intriguing artifacts, such as a T-shirt and other memorabilia. Ironically, on the very day of its restoration unveiling, “The Rock” found itself adorned with fresh paint once again.



While things continue to change and evolve across campus, this landmark remains an enduring symbol that alumni of all ages can relate to and share fond memories of, serving as an unwavering reminder of their University experience.

Affectionately known as ‘The Painted Rock’ by UA students, “The Rock” serves as a reminder of our shared history at UA. “It is a living canvas that has been shaped by the contributions of countless students and alumni over the years,” said Willy Kollman ‘08, ‘10,

assistant vice president of alumni relations and executive director, the UA Alumni Association. “I think it's fascinating to consider that what many see as a single monument is actually a composite of two — a class rivalry turned into an ever-changing, colorful symbol of UA tradition.”

Some traditions are not meant to be broken, and painting “The Rock” is one that has endured at UA. ■

Picture of Buchtel College dated May 8, 1912, shows “The Rock” positioned to the right of the building, with students sitting on top.



Left: “The Rock,” before it was stripped, showing its depth of paint.

Middle: “The Rock” after it was stripped and repainted in 2013.

Right: “The Rock” painted by members of Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji).

CENTER FOR INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY STUDIES *renamed* FOR *accomplished* ALUMNUS



The University of Akron Board of Trustees recently approved the renaming of the institution's Center for Intelligence and Security Studies

in honor of distinguished alumnus Michael J. Morell '80, former acting director of the CIA and prominent commentator on U.S. intelligence and national security issues.

Now known as the Michael J. Morell Center for Intelligence and Security Studies, the Center is a resource to prepare the security professionals of tomorrow by bringing together students, faculty and security practitioners for training, research

and education in the areas of intelligence, national security and cybersecurity.

Morell is a Cuyahoga Falls native who graduated from UA with a degree in economics. He also has a master's degree in economics from Georgetown University.

Before his retirement, he served for 33 years as a CIA intelligence analyst and a manager of analysts, and a leader in roles that included acting director, deputy director and director for intelligence, a position that oversees all the CIA's intelligence analysts. ■

Visit uakron.edu/ciss



White House

Michael Morell was in the situation room — fourth person on the left side in the dark suit with arms folded — when former President Barack Obama and other U.S. officials watched live as Osama Bin Laden was killed in 2011.



Theron Brown, assistant professor of practice, marvels at the new Spirio D piano.

NEW PIANO *inspires learning*

Thanks to the generosity of honorary alumna and longtime benefactor Kathy Coleman, students and faculty in the UA School of Music will have access to one of the most unique musical instruments in the world, expanding performance and education opportunities for generations to come.

The new Steinway & Sons Spirio D piano is considered the world's finest high-resolution player piano. A concert grand-sized instrument, the Spirio will be used in the School of Music's Guzzetta Hall, where UA musicians will create, rehearse and perform using its capabilities. The piano arrived on campus in January, and faculty recently underwent specialized training from representatives of Steinway Piano Gallery, based in Boston Heights, Ohio. ■

OPPORTUNITIES IN *chiropractic medicine*

UA students interested in chiropractic medicine will have a new opportunity to complete their bachelor and doctorate degrees in less time as part of the Advanced Scholar Program. National University of Health Sciences (NUHS) has partnered with UA to allow students to complete both undergraduate and Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.) degrees in as little as seven years.

The Advanced Scholars Program is a joint recruitment and dual admission effort that creates a coordinated curriculum specifically for exceptional students who maintain a 3.5 GPA or higher at UA. Students have the option of enrolling in the chiropractic program at NUHS's Illinois campus or at its Florida site. ■



Welcome TO THE BOARD

Mark Lerner '75 was appointed to the UA Board of Trustees on Oct. 27, 2023. He is president emeritus of GOJO and a graduate of the UA MBA program. Dr. David James, director of the Summa Education Initiative, was welcomed back to the Board as an Advisory Trustee. His reappointment was announced at the September 2023 Board meeting. David Reese '03 was appointed as an Advisory Trustee during the March 2024 meeting. Reese is currently vice president, Off Highway, at The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and earned an MBA at UA. ■



Mark Lerner '75



Dr. David James



David Reese '03

MAKING AKRON *possible* GRANT

The University of Akron remains dedicated to its mission of providing accessible and affordable higher education opportunities for all students. To further this commitment, the University introduced the Making Akron Possible (MAP) Grant, aimed at opening doors to higher education for more local students. Starting in fall 2024, the MAP Grant is designed to alleviate the financial burden that often comes with pursuing a college degree. This grant confirms the complete coverage of full tuition and general fees for eligible first-year students from Summit, Stark, Medina, Portage, Cuyahoga and Wayne counties whose total family adjusted gross income is \$50,000 or less, as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). ■

Visit uakron.edu/finaid



ZIPASSIST, EMERGENCY FUNDS *ensure students are safely housed*



BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

As winter break drew closer near the end of the fall 2023 semester, Elise*, a University of Akron (UA) freshman from Cleveland, realized she might not have a place to stay from December to January. She couldn't return to her home — it wasn't a healthy place for her at the time — and with the UA residence halls closed between semesters, she was running out of housing options.

Elise remembered that in previous visits to UA's ZipAssist office in Simmons Hall, she had seen information about temporary housing opportunities. She spoke with Heather Barhorst, assistant director of student basic needs, who works closely with students who come to the Campus Cupboard for food supplies. Elise learned about her options and applied for funding from the University's Student Emergency Financial Assistance (SEFA) program and another special fund designed to help students remain in on-campus housing due to unique circumstances, like displacement, homelessness or emergency need. She was approved, and was granted a temporary place to stay on campus during winter break.

"I have a lot going on at home, so it was like an escape for me to be here," said Elise, who is undecided on a major. "It was nice just to be in my own space. It gave me more of a sense of learning how to be fully independent."

*Pseudonym was used to protect identity.

Independence is one of the goals of ZipAssist, UA's multifaceted student advocacy and support office. ZipAssist operates the Campus Cupboard and a host of other initiatives such as financial wellness courses, parent and family relations, off-campus and commuter student assistance and the Help-A-Zip program.

ZipAssist also manages the SEFA program, which provides critical support to at-risk students who must overcome financial obstacles to persist at the University. Students who meet the eligibility criteria can receive up to \$1,000 non-tuition-related emergency need. Examples of expenses that are eligible for funding include childcare, food or meals, gas, housing/rent, personal automobile expenses and utilities.

"We know that a student's academic progress can be derailed if emergencies aren't addressed quickly," ZipAssist Senior Director Alison Doehring said. "That's why the programs within ZipAssist are so important. They address not only the immediate hardship facing a student, but also get to the root cause."

Students self-identify to ZipAssist when they need emergency funding or can be referred by a faculty or staff member through Help-A-Zip, the University's student early alert and intervention program. ■

Visit uakron.edu/zipassist

NEW re:center IS A *cozy campus spot*

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

UA students now have a cozy, home-like spot in UA's busy Jean Hower Taber Student Union with the fall 2023 opening of the re:center, a former student lounge space that was renovated and transformed into an oasis where students can rest and recharge. ZipAssist played a major role in the development of the space.

The center was funded by a gift from the Women in Philanthropy program of the University of Akron Foundation's Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee. Alison Doehring, senior director of ZipAssist, and Anna Ball, senior associate director of ZipAssist, who co-taught the Zips Recharge Together [Un]class, a spring 2023 course offered by the EX[L] Center for Community

Engaged Learning, encouraged their students to gather ideas for their vision of the space. With the help of an interior designer, the room was thoughtfully crafted as a soothing environment to support mental health and wellness. These features include a nap pod, comfortable furnishings, plants and expansive windows for natural light. Students from UA's Myers School of Art crafted a mural for the space.

ZipAssist added stress-relief items such as stress balls, stickers and coloring books, and keeps the space stocked with information on health and wellness resources available to students. ZipAssist recently ordered additional furniture and seating, which is an indication that the re:center is being used regularly by students who want a quiet retreat during their busy days. ■





BY BREE SABIN

New and returning students often ask, “What is there to do around here?” Zips 100 is the answer to the question.

Originally launched in 2017, the Zips 100 list is a carefully curated list of 100 exciting activities and must-visit places designed to elevate the UA experience. The list is a combination of on-campus and Downtown Akron opportunities, encouraging students to take advantage of the unique setting of UA as an urban campus with downtown just a stone’s throw away.



Recently updated, the list has a variety of things to do — from solo adventures to group outings. It includes recommendations for things to see, and food and drinks to try, all while catering to both those on a budget and those looking for free opportunities to create lasting memories.

A unique element to the Zips 100 list is that some of the downtown businesses are also owned by UA alumni. One of the businesses

featured at #18 on the list, “Create art in Splatter Alley in Street Craftery” is owned by Da’Shika Street ‘16. Street was extremely honored to have her business added to the list.

“As a UA grad, it’s especially gratifying to be supported by the university that I love so dearly. It’s exciting to see UA making such great efforts to connect students with the community around them,” said Street. “As a business owner, we have such anticipation for activating student culture in our storefront and throughout downtown and look forward to seeing how the guide helps make that connection.”

The possibilities of things to do are endless, but the Zips 100 list makes it easy for students (and alumni/friends) to cross things off their UA bucket list.

At UA, we strive to create a sense of belonging, inspire personal growth, and nurture a lifelong connection between students and their surrounding communities. Zips 100 is just a piece of that puzzle, and a fun one at that! ■

Visit uakron.edu/zips100



Zips 100 activities keep students engaged both on and off campus.



K9 DUNKAN

— BRINGING HOME TO CAMPUS



BY CRISTINE BOYD

New on the bustling University of Akron (UA) campus, there is a unique presence that brings smiles to faces and a sense of security to all who encounter him. It's Dunkan, the beloved two-year-old UA Police Department canine who has become an integral part of campus life.

Dunkan's journey began when Tre Richardson '20, a former UA football player with a degree in criminology, joined the University's police force in 2022. Handpicked from a pool of six officers, Richardson became Dunkan's handler in early 2023, forging a tight bond between the two.

When Dunkan isn't patrolling the campus alongside Richardson, he resides in a special indoor kennel at the Richardson home. But it's on campus where Dunkan truly shines, spreading joy and goodwill wherever he goes.

"Being away from home can be stressful for students. Seeing their faces light up when they see Dunkan makes my day and makes his day," Richardson shared, reflecting on the positive impact Dunkan has on the University community.

Indeed, Dunkan's presence goes beyond basic security. He exudes positivity, bringing people together and fostering a sense of camaraderie among students, faculty and staff alike.

One memorable moment for Richardson was taking Dunkan to a football game between UA and Kent State. As they entered the student section, students began to chant Dunkan's name, a testament to his popularity and the bond he shares with the campus community.

But Dunkan is more than just a friendly face; he is a highly trained working dog with a vital role in campus security. Funded by the Department of Homeland Security and trained to focus on explosives detection and tracking, he plays a crucial role in preventative sweeps at sporting events and investigating potential threats in the community.

Despite his serious training and the work he does with explosives, Dunkan's approachability is evident to all who encounter him. People are drawn to him, allowing Richardson to more easily communicate with students. For Richardson, being Dunkan's handler is more than just a job — it's a calling rooted in his passion for community and campus policing. He envisions a future where Dunkan's talents are showcased on a broader stage, perhaps even competing in the Ohio Police and Fire Games.

As Dunkan continues to patrol the halls and pathways of The University of Akron, his presence serves as a reminder of the unwavering commitment to safety and community that define the University. ■

OPENING *the* DOOR to A HOME of POSSIBILITIES



BY ALEX KNISELY

In the heart of Akron, Ohio, 4,000 miles away from her native Brazil, Ana Clecia Alves Almeida has found more than just a university; she's discovered a new home in a small corner of the world at The University of Akron (UA).

As a senior studying mechanical engineering, Almeida's journey embodies the transformative power of education and the profound sense of community that transcends borders.

In Brazil, Almeida learned about UA through a friend while exploring college options. She was captivated by UA's prestigious engineering and polymer science program, as well as its appealing opportunities, such as scholarships and co-op placements. These all helped form the foundation of her "home away from home" at UA.

"I considered pursuing a degree in engineering and I have always been passionate about space," Almeida said. "So, I sought a school that could fulfill me in both areas. The Akronauts student-design team already fascinated me."

Since enrolling at UA four years ago, Almeida has built her home with its walls supported by the Akronauts, where she serves as liquid propulsion lead, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) where she is currently president of the UA chapter, and UA's Williams Honors College. She's also an engineering Dean's Team member and a UA Ambassador.

Within these groups, Almeida has discovered a supportive network where fellow students offer unwavering encouragement. Together, like a family at home might often do, they celebrate successes and overcome challenges, forming lasting memories that go beyond cultural differences.

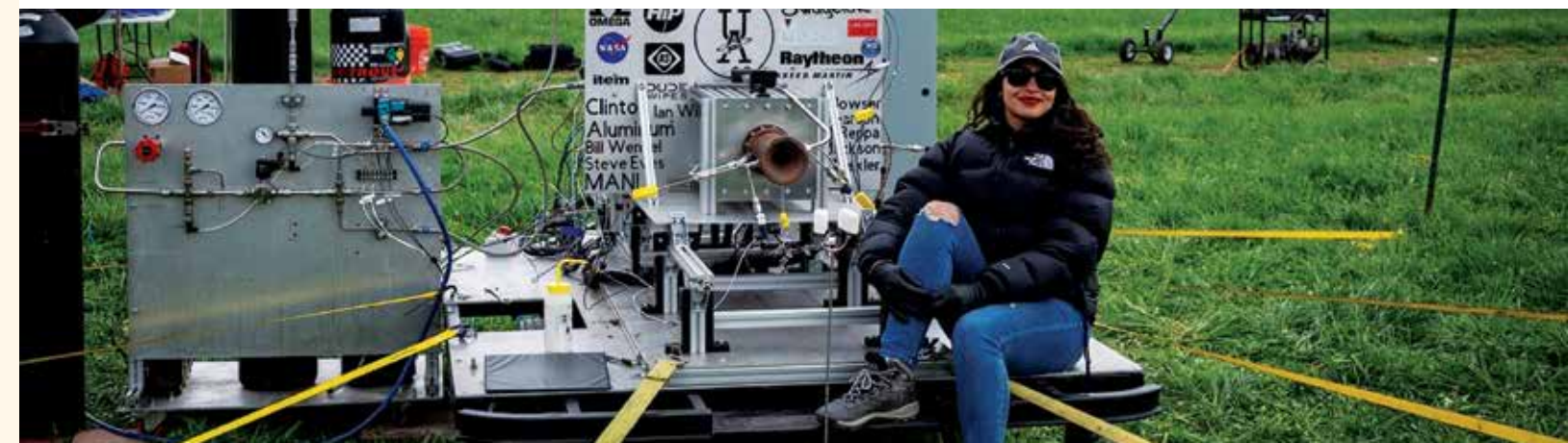
"The most important way to feel like being at home is surrounding yourself with people that you feel comfortable around," she shared. "I think I was able to achieve that by looking to groups that shared similar interests."

But Almeida's "home" extends to off-campus locations as well.

"I love going downtown and glancing over new things or just strolling the Towpath Trail," Almeida said. "Sightseeing helps me learn more about the place I'm living in and what I connect most with. Every college should have easy access to its city and nature so all students can run errands and decompress from professional aspirations whenever needed."

With aspirations to pursue a doctoral degree and advance space propulsion technologies, Almeida stands poised to leave an indelible mark on the aerospace engineering landscape.

"Whatever your dream is, you will find opportunities at The University of Akron to get closer to it," Almeida said. "Here, there's a supportive community to help your passion meet possibility." ■



Finding HOME AWAY from HOME IN UA'S GREEK COMMUNITY



BY ALEX KNISELY

Among the numerous activities at The University of Akron (UA), fraternity and sorority life stand out as a vibrant community fostering camaraderie, support, and personal and professional growth.

Led by passionate individuals such as coordinator Ben Collopy, staff within UA's Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life champion diversity within the Greek community, challenging stereotypes to ensure every student finds their place.

"I like to say that our community isn't a 'typical' Greek community," said Collopy. "We have chapter members from all over the country and across the globe; we have members with majors ranging from education all the way to chemical engineering; we have members of all

different races and ethnicities, and members with all different interests."

There are nearly 600 students involved in sororities and fraternities at UA.

For Izzy Boscarello, joining a sorority meant entering a realm of tight bonds and mutual experiences. Boscarello, a member

of Alpha Gamma Delta, sees her journey as one underscoring the support of the sisterhood's profound influence on her socialness.

"Coming into college, I was very nervous to meet new people, and then I had an experience that I was proud of and excited to share with my friends and family," said Boscarello. "Joining a sorority helped me to meet some of my best friends that I know I will have for the rest of my life, helped make networking connections for my future, offered leadership experience and gave me opportunities that I know I wouldn't have been able to get anywhere else."

Similarly, Khatonia Ford, National Panhellenic Council president and member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, found solace within her sorority during a difficult time when friends matter most.

"During a challenging period recently, I faced a horrific loss," Ford shared. "My sorority sisters and fellow members of the Greek community provided unwavering support with comfort and encouragement. Even now, they continue to check in on me, ensuring that I am maintaining a levelheaded mindset and providing a sense of belonging during my healing process."



Beyond fostering friendships and providing support, sorority and fraternity organizations at UA are dedicated to making a difference in the community. Chapters rally together to raise funds for philanthropic causes, embodying the spirit of service and social responsibility.

Last year, UA's fraternity and sorority chapters raised more than \$62,000 for philanthropic partners, and members completed 9,600 service hours.

Andy Feltman, a member of Phi Delta Theta, emphasizes the role of Greek life in personal and professional growth.

"My involvement has taught me how important it is to be a team leader," said Feltman. "Motivating members of the group to work together and complete their responsibilities is not easy. Communicating is necessary to ensure that everyone is on the same page with our goals as a group. And this involves being a good listener."

Greek life and its impact as a "home" on students extends far beyond campus borders, with members realizing how their traditions and experiences can continue far into their lives with the lessons learned from their peers.

For Feltman, that means being empowered with skills he can use in a future role as a social worker.

"Social workers will often work on large community change," he said. "I had the opportunity to do that in college with the fraternity system. I wanted to see the community at The University of Akron be better off than when I came into it."

And for Ford, these experiences helped fuel her aspirations of working in law and federal government.

"By holding many executive positions, I've learned the importance of responsibility and effective time management, which will undoubtedly benefit me in my future career endeavors. Additionally, as I aspire to become an attorney and eventually a congresswoman, my experiences in my sorority, particularly attending the nation's capital conference as a delegate, have provided me with firsthand knowledge of how Congress operates and what it takes to succeed in such positions. This exposure has further fueled my aspirations and motivated me to strive for excellence, knowing that one day I can make a meaningful impact in similar roles." ■

uakron.edu/studentlife/involvement/fraternityandsororitylife

Brothers of Kappa Sigma are ready for their UA intramural basketball game, which gives students the opportunity to bond with friends and establish new relationships.



Pictured left: Sisters of Delta Gamma posing in front of their house adorned with a homemade sign promoting the organization during its Spring Bid Day celebration.

Pictured right: Members of UA's National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), also known as the Divine Nine. Part of the NPHC's purpose is to assist with the social adjustments of Black college students and promote stronger bonds within the Greek community.

ROOTS OF BELONGING

Kylee Schwartz
and Elyse Schmitt

BY BREE SABIN

Envision this — it's move-in day, and your parents just said goodbye to you at the residence hall that will become your new home. You're feeling a mix of emotions, both excitement and nerves, eager to uncover what the academic year holds. As you settle into your new living space alongside your roommate for the next nine months, you both take a moment to soak in the ambiance. The windows are open and that's when you hear it ... your favorite song. In that instant, it feels like a reassuring sign confirming that you're exactly where you're meant to be.

For University of Akron (UA) freshmen, Kylee Schwartz and Elyse Schmitt, that is exactly what happened. Originally from Salem, Ohio, the two girls were already best friends when they decided to make UA their home for the next four years.

Living in Spicer Hall, their room quickly transformed into a hub of activity, with board game nights becoming a fun tradition. Schmitt, a criminal justice and criminology major, and Schwartz, a psychology major, found camaraderie not only with each other, but also among their fellow floormates.

"It was kind of a requirement that if you wanted to come into our room, you had to play 'Just Dance' with us," Schwartz said, reminiscing about the bonds formed over friendly competition playing the electronic dancing game.

As they have navigated through their first year on campus, the sense of community within Spicer Hall formed. From events organized by Residence Life staff to random gatherings with their neighbors, UA quickly began to feel like home.



"We connected with everybody on our floor, so we got lucky. I really consider this whole floor family," Schmitt said.

But beyond the friendships and camaraderie, it was the little amenities provided by the University that truly solidified UA as their home away from home. From free toilet paper, menstrual products and cleaning supplies to the support offered by Residence Life staff, the sense of belonging was more than just the physical space.

The girls reflected on their journey so far with a mixture of nostalgia and anticipation. "UA feels like home because of all the friends I've met. I truly can see them being future bridesmaids at my wedding," Schwartz shared.

And as they contemplated the inevitable departure that awaits in just a few years, a bittersweet realization settled over them.

"I remember bawling my eyes out, not wanting to leave my hometown. But now, I'm going to be really sad when it's our time to leave UA," Schmitt said.

"Recently, on our way back to Akron from our hometown, Kylee mentioned, 'I can't wait to go home,' meaning back to Akron," said Schmitt. "In that moment, I found myself saying 'me too.' I miss Akron when I'm away. I like being here, having a sense of belonging, being around my friends and the feeling of home that I've built here."

For Schwartz and Schmitt, The University of Akron has become more than just a campus and, as they looked ahead to the future, one thing is certain — no matter where life takes them, UA will always hold a special place in their hearts. ■

Visit uakron.edu/housing



ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE:

*Serving students
at home and abroad*



BY EMILY PRICE '24

In a world where communication knows no boundaries, the journey of pursuing academic aspirations often transcends borders. For international students venturing into the realm of higher education, mastering a second language can be both a daunting challenge and an exhilarating opportunity. The English Language Institute (ELI) at The University of Akron (UA) stands as a pillar of support and direction for these students as they navigate the complex landscape of language acquisition.

The ELI provides an array of services for students learning how to teach English or students looking to enhance their English speaking or writing skills.

"I really enjoy helping students as they pursue their dreams," said Christine Morris, ELI program coordinator. "Moving to another country to earn a degree in a second language is an intimidating prospect. I love making it more manageable for them."

At the ELI, international students benefit by having a place to go where they feel comfortable asking questions without being judged for English fluency.

"Imagine having to speak a second language just to get through your day. Now imagine having to do it while learning new material and being tested in that second language," stated Morris. "Taking part in classroom discussions can be nerve wracking enough without

having to worry if you are saying what you mean. International students can come here to talk about their thoughts knowing that we're here to help articulate them more clearly."

The ELI serves as a home for learning and developing English fluency, offering a place for international students to develop their skills in a nonjudgmental space with programs suitable for a variety of specific needs.

"We assist international students with individual tutoring and small group instruction," says Morris. "I have helped students write papers, review notes and practice presentations."

Morris also explained that there is even a space for graduate students to talk about their future as teaching assistants and practice their English fluency.

Sajjad Emdadi Mahdimahalleh, a student working toward a doctorate in electrical engineering, is one such person who has benefited from services at the ELI.

"Engaging with the ELI has been incredibly beneficial for me," said Mahdimahalleh. "Participating in the weekly English-speaking classes has significantly aided in identifying and addressing my linguistic challenges. Moreover, the ELI offered a more cost-effective alternative for fulfilling my English proficiency requirements compared to traditional exams like the IELTS or TOEFL. Despite a busy schedule, I make it a point to attend their informative Thursday seminars whenever possible."

The ELI can offer an enriching personal experience for international students and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) students alike.

"For students who are pursuing a TESOL certificate, we have materials to work with and I am happy to assist them since I have earned the certificate myself, in addition to having many years of teaching experience both here and abroad," said Morris. ■

Visit uakron.edu/eli

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate student, Reagan Dudones tutors Titus Kirui, an international student from Kenya.



CUMMINGS CENTER EXHIBIT EXPLORES THE MANY MEANINGS OF HOME



BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

What is Home?

Is it a physical space or is it a feeling? Why do our homes look the way they do? What happens if we don't have a home, lose our home or we're away from home for some time?

The Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology at The University of Akron (UA) explores these concepts in an exhibit called "Beyond the Picket Fence: The Places and Spaces We Call Home."

"Our vision at the Cummings Center is to create exhibits and programs that help us explore our shared humanity," said Dr. Cathy Faye, the Margaret Clark Morgan Executive Director of the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology. "This exhibition tells a series of diverse stories about something we all share: a sense of home. We all have different experiences of home, but it is something that we share."

The exhibit was curated by Case Western Reserve University intern Kellyn Toombs and overseen by Cummings Center Assistant Director Dr. Jennifer Bazar. It features five sections that are explored through artifacts from the Center and other collections.

The "Making Home" section considers the physical space of a home, how homes are laid out and why homes look the way they do.

Another section, "House ≠ Home," challenges traditional stereotypes of homelessness. Video interviews of Akron residents who are unhoused play on a loop, with interviewees responding to the question of what, to them, makes a home.

"All of the interviewees defined home as a feeling," Bazar said. "It's about safety, family, friends, community. One woman said she knows she's home when her dog barks. These are things that we can all relate to."

"When Home is Taken" and "Removed from Home," focus on the loss of home, from events such as natural disasters or political upheaval and how institutional settings, such as correctional or assisted living facilities, become new homes to their residents.

"Missing Home" considers the feelings of those, such as college students who may be on their own for the first time, who long to return home.

To round out the exhibit, the Cummings Center collaborated with local housing-related community organizations, including Direction Home, Neighborhood Network and Habitat for Humanity, Summit County Children's Services and community activists who support the unhoused. The Center also worked with the University, its libraries and the Hower House Museum. Funding from Peg's Foundation in Hudson supported the exhibit.

"The people and organizations highlighted here demonstrate what home is for everyday Akronites and what our community organizations do to provide a sense of home," Faye said. "As visitors explore this exhibit, they have an opportunity to reflect not just on what home means to them, but also what it means to those around them in their community and around the world."

"Beyond the Picket Fence" will be on display through the spring. ■

Visit uakron.edu/chp



FOOD *and* DINING SPACES *create* A HOME for UA STUDENTS

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

There's something that Hannah Kelly always notices when she walks into Robertson Dining Hall on the University of Akron (UA) campus around dinnertime. Very few students are sitting alone at tables. She doesn't see many diners wearing headphones or earbuds, and most aren't staring at their phones.

Instead, UA students in the dining hall, affectionately known as Rob's, are often sitting in groups. They're laughing, talking and catching each other up on their days. It's clear that the experience of communal dining helps foster a sense of home at UA and expands the social lives of students.

"Rob's is a lot less about the food and more about being surrounded by people," said Kelly, a junior from Canfield, Ohio, who is the president of the Residence Hall Council (RHC). "It's a community space that's not just about nourishment."

Dr. Melinda Grove, associate vice president for student affairs and chief housing officer, works closely with both students and Aramark, the company that manages the University's dining services at Rob's, Jean Hower Taber Student Union, the Polsky Building and other locations.

"We know from years of working with students that eating together is very effective as they adjust to being away from home and at a university for the first time," she said. "It's a huge component of community development and helping people feel like they belong."

Grove said there is plenty of research that connects student satisfaction and sense of belonging to on-campus living and communal dining. One of the reasons UA offers free meal plans to Resident Assistants, known as RAs, is so they can take students to Rob's or other dining spots to make sure they're eating, meeting new people and taking care of themselves.



The food is, of course, very important to students. Aramark develops menus that offer a wide range of comfort food, healthy choices and options for those who want specialized meals, such as gluten-free or vegetarian/vegan. Recent options at Rob's have included beef goulash, a kimchi fried rice bowl, butter chicken and a buffalo chicken taco.

"There's consistency, but the menus change enough so that I don't think we get bored," Kelly said.

Aramark also designs specialty menus to highlight the cuisine of a particular nation or ethnicity and offers holiday-themed menus. Grove said UA staff review the menus in advance.

For the past nine years, Dining Services has hosted Robsgiving. This event has turned into a sort of new tradition for students and notable UA faculty and staff members are often invited to carve turkeys — UA President Gary L. Miller and other administrators have worked the event in past years.

"Robsgiving is a big deal for students," said Kelly, who is a double major in business data analytics and economics. "You make a game plan for it, get together a group of friends, claim a table, and go back and do different rounds of food. It's a shared experience."

RHC and Aramark collaborate on study breaks during finals weeks. Students enjoy late-night desserts or sweet breakfast options and the opportunity to take a few minutes away from studying to socialize.

Kelly said RHC and Aramark welcome student feedback and has seen herself what happens when students submit their ideas. Students have expressed, for example, an interest in more fun treat options at the campus Union Market. A few weeks later, students noticed that new desserts were available in the refrigerator for purchase.

"They care about our experience and what we're getting out of it," Kelly said. "Feedback is meaningful when it comes from students." ■



THE WALLS TELL ALL: *Inside the history of UA's bowling alley*

BY BEAU BALIZET '25

The University of Akron (UA) has a variety of athletic facilities on campus where students can unwind and be around friends. From the basketball courts in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center to the Lee R. Jackson Practice Field, students are always able to find a place that feels like home.

But no other spot boasts such a rich history of achievements and generosity as the Edward G. Elias Bowling Alley in the Roo Lounge. The facility is not only a bowling alley, but a museum.

It all began with Edward G. "Eddie" Elias '58, an Akron native who became a sports agent and created the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) in 1958 involving 33 professional bowlers. Before the PBA, no bowling organization ran tournament circuits. Elias' innovative idea led the PBA to become one of the longest-continuing sports series on network TV today, with some regarding him as the "Father of Bowling."

The 2018 winners of the Edward Elias Bowling Tournament.



Upon Elias' death in 1998, his wife Peggy played a vital role in financing UA's bowling alley to bring the sport to UA students. Peggy also provided many photos and memorabilia of Elias during his career, which can be seen hanging throughout the bowling alley walls.

Peggy's deep commitment to helping UA students also led to the creation of the Edward G. Elias Bowling Tournament, an annual event hosted by the UA bowling alley that provided scholarships to both male and female winners. Each year the tournament, which ran until 2018, provided custom shirts, and each year's shirts are displayed throughout the bowling alley.

"We have so many donors who genuinely care about UA," Kim Cole, vice president of advancement and executive director of the University of Akron Foundation said proudly. "The opportunities students have received because of the Elias family are truly spectacular."

Next time you are bowling at the Edward G. Elias Bowling Alley, look to the walls to experience more than 50 years of UA bowling history. ■



ZIPS ATHLETIC TEAMS

*create a home for
student-athletes*

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

Every August, just as University of Akron (UA) students are arriving for the fall semester, Zips women's swimming and diving Head Coach Brian Peresie takes his team off campus.

The team heads to Camp Muskingum near Carrollton, Ohio, where they spend a weekend sleeping in tents, cooking meals outside and completing outdoor activities. It's always a fun weekend, but for Peresie there's a greater importance to the trip than just a weekend away. It's the start of creating a home-like atmosphere for a group of student-athletes and coaches who come from all over the world, with a huge range of life and swimming experiences, who must work together as a team in just a few weeks.

"The trip is always a unique experience and sometimes there's a fear factor to some of the activities that we do," Peresie said. "But everyone supports each other, and it becomes a positive experience. The more opportunities we create for them to be together outside of the pool, the stronger the relationships on the team are going to be when we're in the pool."

The team recently won its 10th Mid-American Conference championship in the past 11 years, so it's clear that the bonding experience early in the academic year strengthens team dynamics and fosters an atmosphere of success — something that all UA coaches and teams strive to do.

More than one-third of the UA swimming and diving team is international, with eight countries represented on the Zips roster. Even the student-athletes from the U.S. are diverse, with team members coming from 10 states across the country.

Sara Bozso, a fifth-year swimmer from Budapest, Hungary, was unsure of what to expect when she attended her first team camp in 2019. Not only was she new to the country, but as an only child, she had never shared a room or a bathroom with others.

"We had to set up a tent, make a bonfire, cut wood, cook dinner," said Bozso, a breaststroke specialist who is majoring in exercise science, applied exercise physiology. "We spent the whole weekend together and it showed how we can work together as a team and a family. I felt like there was such a great connection after the camping trip. It was the weekend I started to learn names and to see other people's personalities and their backgrounds."

Brian Armelli, a coordinator of academic support services for UA Athletics, knows from experience at different institutions in his higher education career that international student-athletes can sometimes need extra support to feel at home. Many international student-athletes simply want opportunities to speak their own language to feel more at home, he said.

Around 50 of UA's approximately 425 student-athletes come from outside the U.S.

In 2023, Armelli started the International Student Athlete Club (ISAC) at the University. Meetings have given student-athletes a chance to share information about and pride in their home countries, get to know other student-athletes who may also be missing home, and learn important career services information for international students.

"We're seeing more students from other teams bonding at meetings, and that really makes it feel like home," Armelli said. "It's important to get those students together so they know they have other student-athletes to work with and rely on."

He also connects student-athletes with UA's English Language Institute, which offers free tutoring and study space for all international students.

In addition to the August camping trip, the women's swimming and diving team also volunteers for the Akron Marathon. During weekends when recruits are visiting, the

entire team might go apple picking or participate in game nights. The team continues to practice outside of the winter competition season and will occasionally take a trip to Cedar Point for a fun day off.

One of the most impactful activities of the camping trip takes place on the final evening, when team members share some of the experiences that have transformed their lives. The trust that develops through that activity helps transform a team of around 30 individual student-athletes into one tight-knit group.

Bozso has relied on that environment during her UA career. From the shock of the COVID-19 shutdown in 2020 to dealing with injuries and illness, she has been able to rely on her teammates

and Peresie for support.

"I've gone to his office a million times, and he never says no when I need help with something," Bozso said. "He always picks up the phone, calls people and makes sure we have everything we need to build up a successful team. We all have a huge amount of respect for each other, and he is always looking for ways to make that even stronger." ■



SEASON TICKET HOLDERS FIND A HOME AWAY FROM HOME WITH ZIPS ATHLETICS



BY CRISTINE BOYD

Athletic facilities aren't just places for UA teams to compete; they're like a second home to dedicated fans. Just like the student cheering section (AK-Rowdies), season ticket holders bring spirit and dedication to games.

The Dort Brothers

Brothers Steve Dort '93, a computer drafting major, and Paul Dort '91, who majored in engineering, grew up going to the annual Acme Zip football games at the Rubber Bowl with their parents. They are some of the most loyal season ticket holders for Zips football, men's basketball and men's soccer. Their wives, Missy and Christine, often accompany them to games, making it a family affair.

The two brothers laughed when thinking back to memorable moments such as the legendary Thanksgiving Day in 2005 when the football team battled Kent State in a near blizzard at the Rubber Bowl, clinching the Mid-American Conference East Division title. Or the epic bus trips to away basketball games, where the camaraderie was as fierce as the competition on the court. And let's not forget the time Zippy crashed Steve's wedding reception!

Paul's a sports fanatic through and through. But ask him his favorite spot, and he'll tell you it's FirstEnergy Stadium during a soccer match. He says there's something magical about watching the game while gazing out at the campus.

As for Steve, well, he says he and Paul have no plans of giving up their season tickets anytime soon. They're in it for the long haul, supporting the Zips through thick and thin. "We believe in them," Steve says with a grin.

Chalker Fadel

Chalker Fadel '56, '70, is a true-blue Zips fan with a heart of gold. For more than 20 years, he's been a fixture at football and men's basketball games, proudly holding his season tickets.

Hailing from Akron, Fadel knows the campus like the back of his hand. Back in the day, he juggled soccer games with his civil engineering studies, proving his dedication early on.

As a proud graduate, Fadel's roots run deep. He put in the hours as a student worker for (then-dean) President Guzetta and pulled night shifts managing the student center, all while being an active member of the Lambda Chi fraternity. After earning a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and Industrial Management, he served in the Air Force before returning to earn a Master of Business Administration.

Being a season ticket holder isn't just about catching games for Fadel; it's about staying connected and giving back. Favorite memories include hanging out inside with other football season ticket holders when the weather got too cold, and dining in the Tommy Evans Lounge before basketball games with other fans. "I enjoyed when Coach (Keith) Dambrot and his family would come in and address the group. We also often had access to the coaches after the games at the University Club."

But Fadel's love for the Zips goes beyond the games. He's on a mission to share that UA spirit with everyone he knows. "I make it a point to bring along friends to the games, introducing them to the Zips family," he says with a smile. "It's more than just sports; it's about seeing old friends and making new ones." ■

To purchase tickets visit gozips.com

Above: Chalker Fadel enjoys a meal in the Tommy Evans Lounge in the James A. Rhodes Arena.

Opposite: (left to right) Steve and Missy Dort with Christine and Paul Dort before the start of a Zips men's basketball game.



STUDENT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

BY BEAU BALIZET '25



A NEW START, BRINGS NEW ART

Akron's Coalition of Student Sculptors

Layla Davis-Branner, a third-year sculpting major, was a freshman when she noticed something needed to be added to campus: a club for sculpting majors. With this idea in mind, Davis-Branner was driven to create an organization fueled by art, community and inclusion. Davis-Branner's hard work and determination led to UA's newest student organization: Akron Coalition of Student Sculptors (ACSS).

"I hope ACSS will be a haven for those who work in 3D art," said Davis-Branner. There are very few of us. ACSS will be a way to bring us all together, but also provide more opportunities to show our work and gain experience in our field."

Despite ACSS just beginning, the organization has already held events, such as workshops, gift exchanges and juried exhibitions. ■

REAL EXPERIENCE MAKES DREAMS REAL

Investment Club

Experience is essential for college students; learning firsthand, industry-specific strategies will jumpstart students' full-time careers. Finance is no different, as knowing how to properly manage large sums of money and make informed decisions based on current markets and data is imperative. UA's Investment Club does exactly this, allowing members to manage and make decisions with a \$100,000 portfolio.

"We discuss the overall economic standing of markets and how news, data and company findings affect our \$100k actively managed portfolio," said Nick Maricocchi,

a senior majoring in finance and president of the Investment Club.

But the Investment Club does more than just prepare its members, it gives them the chance to demonstrate what they have learned to employers and industry professionals.

"We host workshops for resume building, internship searches and networking. While we like to focus on finance, we also give our members the best chance of finding their dream careers whether that be finance or another related field," said Maricocchi. ■

BEYOND THE MAT

UA's Wrestling Club

Wrestling is one of the oldest and most physically demanding sports. To be successful on the mat, you need to work hard, be accountable and have discipline. UA's Wrestling Club provides no better example. The team has weekly practices and has attended more than 10 tournaments throughout the year, while hosting their own tournament in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

Their hard work makes them no stranger to success. Seven members recently qualified for the Club Wrestling National Championship and member Derrick Andolek took eighth place nationally.

"Wrestling is more than a sport," said Anthony Janowski, a second-year biomedical engineering student and president of the Wrestling Club. "It is a time to get away from the stress of school, focus on your physical health and be around others who share the same passion for wrestling." ■



STEADY GROWTH

Geo-Challenge Design Team

Success doesn't usually follow a smooth path; it's full of twists and turns. Challenges pop up along the way and can shake up your progress. However, for the UA Geo-Challenge Design Team, success has been remarkably steady.

Each week during the spring semester, the Geo-Challenge Design Team meets to prepare for the national design competition at Geo-Congress. Each competition is held in different states, such as North Carolina and California. The goal of the competition is to assemble your team's Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) wall with the lightest amount of reinforcement within a designated time frame.

"Each year, the team has gotten better," said Jesse Pennington, senior civil engineering major with a minor in geology and president of the Geo-Challenge Design Team. In 2022 and 2023, the team won third place in the Geo-Wall student competition. This year, the team won second place in the Geo-Wall competition, second place in the Geo-Video competition, where teams develop short videos explaining various engineering concepts that could be used in classrooms at various levels, and first place in the Geo-Shirt competition, where teams design a T-shirt for students participating in the Geo-Challenge competitions. ■



UA has almost 300 student organizations to keep students engaged on campus.

FINDING OUR VOICE

AshBelt

Publishing one's writing is often an intimidating task, especially if it's a student's first time. The fear of putting their works and voice on display may deter them from publishing, in addition to the fees that often accompany the submission process. However, AshBelt — a student-run literary journal that exclusively features UA undergraduates' creative literary work — does the opposite.

The official AshBelt journal is published annually during the spring semester. Each year's journal offers a diverse array of creative expressions, such as fiction, flash fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry and scriptwriting. AshBelt's acceptance of different creative literary works allows students to articulate their voices with authenticity and style. Moreover, unlike many journals, there are no submission fees, ensuring accessibility to all aspiring contributors.

"I always want people to feel encouraged to submit their work," said Emily Price, a fourth-year English major and president of AshBelt. "It's wonderful to have such a variety of student voices in one published volume." ■

GIVING BACK WITH GIVE

GIVE (Global Initiative for Volunteer Efforts)

One of the most eye-opening experiences is giving back to others. The activity allows a glimpse into others' lives and cultures, building lasting memories for years to come. GIVE, a global organization dedicated to immersing its members in local communities and cultures while giving back to those communities, has made its impact on the Akron community.

This is the exact reason why Gracyl Collins, a second-year Spanish major, minoring in sociology and dance, and current president of GIVE, joined the club her freshman year.

"GIVE focuses on looking after our local community, as well as communities around the world. It also offers various travel abroad programs," said Collins. "That's why I joined GIVE — because I am extremely interested in traveling abroad.



I stayed in the club because I enjoyed the community service aspect."

The group has hosted events and gatherings dedicated to helping the Akron community, such as donating holiday cards to Akron Children's Hospital, holding blanket-making gatherings and organizing trash pick-ups. ■

THE Neugebauer family legacy



BY BREE SABIN

The University of Akron (UA) isn't just a place of learning for the Neugebauer family; it is a thread that weaves through generations, binding them together in a shared love for their alma mater. Without them realizing it, UA became a family tradition.

Beginning the Legacy

Gerard Neugebauer '87, '91, is deeply rooted in Akron. Growing up in Firestone Park, and the sixth born of nine children, he was no stranger to the importance of education and community. All nine of the Neugebauer children attended UA, with eight of them obtaining degrees. Most of their spouses and children also became Zips.

However, Gerard's journey through UA began with a decision that shaped his life and his family's future.

With an engineering degree and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Finance, Gerard found success in the utility services and construction industry. But his achievements extended beyond academics and business. He also served as the Mayor of Green for two terms, leaving a mark on the city he loved.



Gerard Neugebauer and wife Maria on homecoming court in 1984.

The Neugebauer family

Yet, amidst his accolades, Gerard found some of his fondest memories in the mascot suit of Zippy, UA's beloved kangaroo.

"One basketball game, the cheerleading coach was filling in for Zippy, because the student Zippy had quit that year. While in costume, the coach came up to me at that game and asked for help, because he suddenly wasn't feeling well. He couldn't find someone to unlock the office where he had stored his street clothes," Gerard recounted. "So, I met him in the bathroom, and I gave him my jeans and hoodie and he gave me

Zippy. That's how I ended up being Zippy. I never thought for a minute before that moment that I would be a college mascot, but I felt comfortable because I already knew all the cheerleaders. I ended up continuing as Zippy for the rest of the season, and then an additional two years."

The story of how Gerard became Zippy was a twist of fate that tied him closer to the University and, ultimately, to his future wife, who was a cheerleader at the time.

The Legacy Continues

Rachel (Neugebauer) Markle '15, Gerard's daughter and one of his three children who attended UA, discussed how her parents' roots in the University also helped her decision to find a home here as well.

"My parents had so many stories about my mom being a cheerleader and my dad being Zippy at the same time. It was funny because when I was on campus and would mention my dad had been Zippy, people would get so excited. So, there was something nostalgic about that that also geared me toward UA."

Rachel's journey began even before she officially became a student. In high school, she immersed herself in College Credit Plus courses at UA's campus, forming bonds with professors and fellow students. By the time college decisions approached, UA was the obvious choice.

"I already felt at home on campus before I had to make the decision where to go to college. This made my decision to attend UA an easy one," said Rachel.

Rachel ended up graduating from UA in four years as a double major, with a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, as well as an advanced Spanish for Health Care certificate.

But her time at UA wasn't just about academics; it was about building connections and embracing the vibrant community that had become a second home. From her involvement in various campus activities to her transformative experience studying abroad in Peru, every moment shaped her into the person she was meant to become.

One of her proudest accomplishments was co-founding the Kangablue A Cappella group, where she served as president with one of her cousins as vice president.

After graduating from UA, Rachel went on to attend Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) where she earned a Doctor of Pharmacy and is a state-certified pharmacist.

Rachel walked the same paths her parents once did, and she couldn't help but feel a sense of belonging, a connection to something greater than herself. The legacy of the Neugebauer family lived on in every corner of the campus, in the memories shared between generations and in the pride they felt for their alma mater. As Rachel and Gerard reflected on their respective journeys, it was clear that UA had left a huge mark. From forging lifelong friendships to pursuing their passions, their experiences at The University of Akron had shaped not just their careers, but their family's legacy for generations to come. ■

Gerard Neugebauer as Zippy in 1984.



Visit akron.edu/magazine for the entire list of Class Notes, Farewells and other alumni news. You'll also find full-length versions of the stories in this issue, along with videos and additional images.

Class Notes

1970s

James F. Glasgow, A.A.S. '77, B.S.T. '81, M.S.T. '87, was awarded the distinction of professor of computer science emeritus in May of 2022 in recognition of 24 years of outstanding service as a faculty member at Malone University.

Carol J. Spears, A.A.S. '73, B.S. '77, has returned to her hometown and family in Akron after living 12 years in Florida. She continues into her sixth year of being chief executive officer for the Music for Healing and Transition Program, which trains and certifies musicians to play live therapeutic music directly at the bedside of patients. This is Spears' second career after retiring from 30 years working for the National Park Service.

1980s

Daniel L. Mammone, A.A.S. '85, B.S. '86, started a new job on August 28, 2023, as a chief engineer at Audacy, Inc. in the Richmond, Va. market.

John Mastrojohn III, B.S.N. '87, has been named president and CEO for Center for Hospice Care. Mastrojohn will also assume the role of president/CEO of the Hospice Foundation, Global Partners in Care and Milton Adult Day Services. With more than 25 years of experience in hospice and palliative care leadership, he has been a tireless advocate for increasing access and enhancing quality of care, locally, nationally and internationally.

Thomas Saylor, B.S.I.M. '82, M.A. '85, recently completed 28 years as a history faculty member at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. He now works as institutional grants manager at the university. Saylor also served from 2013-2023 on the Board of Zoning Appeals for the City of St. Paul, chairing the Board from 2019-2022.

1990s

Mary L. Alexander-Lee, M.P.A. '93, started a nonprofit organization, Sweetie's Heroes and Heroes NOLA, named after her daughter, Timika, whose nickname was Sweetie. Sweetie died in 2017 of complications from Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). Sweetie's Heroes and Heroes NOLA's initial focus is three-fold: to motivate people to support the vision by donating blood to save lives; to advocate for the voiceless and those treated with malice, contempt and accused unfairly due to their specific medical requirements; and to educate people about the truth surrounding the misinformation and stigma of having SCD, who it affects, and how the trait/disease appears in a family's lineage.

Heather M. Barnes, B.S. '96, has been named to the 2024 Ohio Super Lawyers list. Super Lawyers is a rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. The patented selection process includes independent research, peer nominations and peer evaluations.

Christopher J. Benko, B.S.A. '96, was awarded a George F. Hixson Fellowship by the Cloverleaf Area Kiwanis Club. The award recognizes members who have demonstrated a longstanding commitment to community service through Kiwanis. Benko, a certified public accountant, is audit managing director for Apple Growth Partners in Akron, where he leads the construction/real estate niche and nonprofit organization team. He is a 20-year member of Kiwanis, where he has served as a past president, past secretary and is currently club treasurer.

John R. Hunt, A.A.B. '90, has secured a U.S. patent for his invention of a unique magnet configuration to help alleviate many health conditions. Hunt indicates that by using his system for 9-15 minutes each day, he has discovered ways to reduce the duration and intensity of common cold symptoms and is currently collecting data for influenza, and viral infections, along with many other diseases.

Michael E. Kovack, M.P.A. '92, was elected to the office of Medina Municipal Clerk of Courts Nov. 7, 2023. He was sworn in for a six-year term in January 2024. Kovack previously served as the Medina County auditor for 30 years.

Christina L. Sweigert, A.A.B. '90, B.A. '03, was awarded a 2023 Women in Supply Chain Award. The Women in Supply Chain Award honors female supply chain leaders and executives whose accomplishments, mentorship and examples set a foundation for women in all levels of a company's supply chain network.

Sharon A. Valente, Ph.D. '96, serves as director of institutional effectiveness at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. In this role, she is responsible for providing leadership and oversight of the institutional effectiveness efforts for academic and administrative units.

Jacinda N. Walker, A.A.B. '93, B.F.A. '96, is one of the winners of the Cleveland Arts Prize 2023. Walker won in the category of Mid-career Artist for Design. Walker is celebrated for her design, diversity, research and strategy work. She is the founder and creative director of designExplorr, a social impact organization whose mission addresses the diversity gap within the design profession by exposing design education to African American and Latino youth and raising awareness for corporate organizations.

2000s

Leslie E. Bell, B.S. '06, M.A. '10, is working at Rust College in Holly Springs, Miss., as an academic advisor and has been in the role since April 2022. Rust College is the oldest historically Black college and university in Mississippi and the second oldest private postsecondary institution in Mississippi.

Angela D. Carter, M.S.E. '00, M.S.E. '02, was named the superintendent's chief of staff at Akron Public Schools. Carter's journey in education reflects a deep passion for teaching, learning and leadership.

Dennis M. Campbell, B.A. '09, has been named executive director of the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce in Kent, Ohio. Campbell brings 12 years of experience with him in public education and a passion for community involvement.

Melissa G. Dunham, M.T. '09, has been named Partner at Bober Markey Fedorovich. Dunham specializes in corporate tax returns, offering comprehensive tax planning strategies for various entities including C corporations, S corporations, partnerships and LLCs. With a career spanning nearly two decades at BMF, Dunham has demonstrated exceptional leadership and contributed significantly to the firm's success.

Ronald V. Johnson, Jr., J.D. '04, has been named senior vice president and general counsel at KeyBank. As general counsel, Johnson will oversee the Cleveland Fed's legal department and the Office of Corporate Secretary. He will also provide corporate legal counsel and advice to the bank.

Susan M. Newell, M.S.N. '04, D.N.P., CRNA, received the American Association of Nursing Anesthesiology's 37th Annual Alice Magaw Outstanding Clinical Anesthesia Practitioner Award in August during its 2023 Annual Congress in Seattle. The award was established to recognize the accomplishments of CRNAs involved in direct patient care. Newell is chief CRNA in obstetrics at Capital Anesthesia Solutions/Sound Anesthesia where she provides obstetric anesthesia and oversees hiring, policy development and education. Her current work has her travelling from Ohio to Scranton, Pa.

Jay P. Reidy, B.S. '06, has been named the new vice president and president — aerospace group, at Parker Hannifin Corporation effective Jan. 1, 2024. Parker Hannifin is a Fortune 250 global leader in motion and control technologies.

Matthew R. Wise, B.S.E. '03, has been promoted to the position of president, Europe at RoviSys. RoviSys is a leading global provider of manufacturing automation solutions, control systems integration and information management. In this pivotal role, Wise will spearhead strategic growth initiatives, oversee existing business operations and further RoviSys evolution to thrive in the diverse cultural landscape that is unique to Europe.

2010s

Joseph A. Manno, B.S. '11, J.D. '14, has been selected for the 2024 Ohio Rising Stars list. Rising Stars are outstanding lawyers who are age 40 or younger, or who have been in practice for 10 years or less. While up to five percent of the lawyers in a state are named to the Super Lawyers each year, no more than 2.5 percent of the lawyers in a state are named to Ohio Rising Stars.

Brian Palisin, M.T. '12, has been promoted to principal at HW&Co., a leading CPA and business advisory firm. Palisin is a member of the Tax Planning & Strategies Department and has significant experience in tax research, accounting, business financial structure and strategy, sales and use tax, flow-through entity taxation and individual taxation.



Misc.

The following UA alumni were named 2023 Crain's Cleveland Business 40 Under 40:

Paris M. Lampkins, B.A. '05, is the director of learning and development at The Albert M. Higley Co.

Jessica L. Sublett, J.D. '09, is president and CEO at Bounce Innovation Hub.

Farewells

For more Farewells, visit the website.

Becky S. Alexander, B.S.E. '76, Nov. 21, 2023

Steven T. Black, B.A. '91, B.A. '94, M.P.A. '94, Feb. 14, 2024

R. Cary Blair, Oct. 5, 2023

James Boyazis, J.D. '66, Aug. 7, 2023

Deborah J. Charleston, M.A.E. '80, Sept. 7, 2023

George Chelovitz, A.A.S. '74, Aug. 21, 2023

Bonnie L. Collins, A.A.S. '64, B.S.E. '71, Jan. 2, 2024

Dale K. Doepke, Oct. 22, 2023

Mark Dowd, Jan. 3, 2022

Judith L. Elliott, B.S. '83, M.S.T. '84, Dec. 22, 2023

David J. Gruccio, M.A. '71, B.A. '80, B.A.E. '99, Jan. 8, 2024

Deborah A. Hart, B.S.N. '90, Sept. 7, 2023

Lewis N. Lossing, B.A. '65, B.S.I.M. '79, Jan. 25, 2024

Bernadette Kiel, B.S.E. '73, M.S.E. '88, Feb. 12, 2024

Syed K. Mowdood, Feb. 25, 2021

Lowell E. Mulhollen, B.S.I.M. '64, MBA '65, Dec. 24, 2023

Sandra Nedoh, B.S.E. '79, M.S.E. '89, Feb. 7, 2024

Marvin S. Platt, J.D. '77, Jan. 31, 2024

Jon G. Pounds, B.S.E.E. '60, Nov. 22, 2023

Charles Reed, B.S.I.M. '64, M.S.M. '70, Dec. 11, 2023

Ross L. Riggs, A.A.S. '78, B.S.T. '81, May 28, 2023

Anna M. Shepler, B.S.E. '51, M.S.E. '68, Dec. 26, 2023

Emily D. Smucker, Oct. 7, 2023

Willard F. Spicer, B.S.E. '65, J.D. '72, Aug. 27, 2023

Frederick J. Sturm, B.A. '67, M.A.E. '68, Ed.D. '79, Oct. 27, 2023

Soterios S. Tsouflias, M.S. '60, Aug. 29, 2023

William R. Turner III, B.S.E. '71, Oct. 30, 2023

James F. Wable, A.A.S. '84, B.S. '84, Nov. 30, 2023

Laura J. White, A.A.B. '83, B.S.I.M. '88, Feb. 1, 2024

Thomas D. Williams, A.A.S. '06, B.A. '09, M.S.W. '11, Jan. 2, 2024

Caryn Zmeskal-Wilson, B.S.E. '78, Nov. 21, 2023

Moved? Changed Names? New Job?

Update your information by scanning the QR code, emailing alumni@uakron.edu or calling 330-972-7271.



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SATURDAY MORNING POLKA:

35 years of Akron's musical tradition



BY BREE SABIN

We're all familiar with the scenario: it's a Saturday morning, you hop into the car to tackle errands, tune in to your beloved station, 88.1WZIP, and are greeted by the lively sounds of polka music pouring from the speakers.

The Saturday Morning Polka Show on WZIP has been an Akron staple since August of 1989. Originally the show was played on Sundays, but over the years it has moved to Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to noon.

This year the show celebrates its 35-year anniversary. Saturday Morning Polka is run by four individuals, Matt Schafer '67, Fred Carty, Tracy Stevanov and John Snelick, all with a passion for polka music.

Schafer has been with the show since its inception.

"A lot of people enjoy polka music. We play a variety of polka music — Polish, Slovakian, Italian, German. Our listeners have these backgrounds, and we try to serve that need. Some of the lyrics are even in the ethnic tongue and people relate to that," said Schafer, explaining how the music reminds them

of home. "We have the request line as well. People call in for birthdays, anniversaries and for people who passed away."

The numbers are there, and they show that listeners are alive and well for Saturday Morning Polka.

"Just because the polkas and waltzes that Matt, Tracy, John and Fred play are not current, does not mean that the listeners are trapped in another era. They are also listening online from all over the country. We had to change our streaming service a few years ago because it was jammed on Saturday mornings, and we were paying overage fees," said Chris Keppler '91, '14, general manager of WZIP. "We are also podcasting the first hour of the show each week. In the last 2.5 years, the podcast has had about 26,000 downloads, has reached all 50 states and more than 50 countries."

The polka show helps fill a cultural void in the community for people around Northeast Ohio who still cherish the music. That is part of the basis for the FCC granting a license to the University, because the station offers programming that is unlikely to be heard on any commercial radio station.



Pictured above: Matt, Tracy, John and Fred of Saturday Morning Polka.

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"There are people who appreciate us showcasing ethnic backgrounds and the various styles of polka music. There was one caller who called to tell us we are her 'entertainment lifeline' every time she listens to the radio," shared Schafer. "There's a real need for it and we do have quite a following."

There is no end in sight for this long-standing radio show, and the ratings continue to improve. Thousands of people tune in to the broadcast every week. While most would believe the polka show attracts an audience of 65-plus years, that age group makes up only 20 percent of the audience. In fact, nearly 15 percent of the polka listeners are between 12 and 24 years old.

"We will continue to be on the air as long as the University will have us," said Schafer. ■



"A LOT OF PEOPLE ENJOY POLKA MUSIC. WE PLAY A VARIETY OF POLKA MUSIC — POLISH, SLOVAKIAN, ITALIAN, GERMAN."

Matt Schafer '67

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FOREVER A ZIP!

CLOSING SHOTS

UA RECEIVES \$826,202 GRANT for mental health support ON CAMPUS

College students face a demanding academic schedule compounded by extracurricular activities and jobs, often straining their physical and mental well-being. A recent Health Mind Survey revealed that nearly 60% of responding UA students struggle with mental health disorders. Responding to these concerns, UA secured an \$826,202 grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education to enhance mental health support on campus.

The grant will be utilized in a four-step comprehensive care model aimed at educating students about available resources, reducing stigmas around seeking help, partnering with mental health organizations, and training faculty and staff in supporting students' mental health needs. The funds will establish new mental health programs, including counseling services expansion, awareness campaigns, peer support initiatives and data-driven approaches to address specific mental health challenges. ■



UA HISTORY STUDENTS HELP DOCUMENT BLACK BUSINESSES FOR GREEN BOOK

UA graduate students are helping to make contributions to local history through a collaborative venture called Green Book Cleveland, a project to preserve stories of Black leisure and entertainment in Northeast Ohio.



Originating from the crucial role of "The Negro Motorist Green Book" in facilitating safe travel for Black motorists from 1936 to 1966, this project is documenting Green Book sites and previously unrecorded locations in the region. Professor of History Dr. Gregory Wilson is leading graduate students as they diligently comb through archival materials and historical sources

to compile missing data, uncovering stories of thriving businesses and cultural landmarks in the Akron area. Despite challenges such as urban development erasing physical remnants of this history, the project serves as a testament to Northeast Ohio's vibrant past and aims to amplify marginalized voices in historical narratives.

Through partnerships with various organizations and ongoing community engagement, Green Book Cleveland endeavors to promote awareness of African American history beyond conventional narratives. ■

Visit greenbookcleveland.org

ELIZABETH BUCHEL Awards

ELIZABETH BUCHEL AWARD RECIPIENTS



Marie Bevilacqua '71, '74

Raised in a family that prized education and hard work, Marie Bevilacqua's journey led her to become a dedicated educator and philanthropist alongside her husband, Frank '72, '74. Together, the couple established the Frank P. and Marie L. Bevilacqua Family Foundation, supporting various civic interests in Akron, including education and health care. Their strong ties to The University of Akron (UA) are evident through scholarships and donations, reflecting their commitment to giving back to the community. Bevilacqua's unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives drives her philanthropic efforts, ensuring that students with limited resources can pursue their dreams at UA.

Karen S. Steininger '82

Karen Steininger embodies the essence of intentional good deeds and community support instilled in her from a young age. Hailing from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Steininger's philanthropic endeavors in Houston, Texas, reflect her commitment to uplifting underserved individuals and families. Despite the geographical distance, her roots in Akron remain strong, evident through her generous contributions to UA. Alongside her husband Frank '81, she champions scholarships and initiatives aimed at reducing financial burdens and fostering academic success for students.



2024 UNIVERSITY OF AKRON HONORARY ALUMNUS AWARD RECIPIENT



Sally D. Read

The 2024 University of Akron Honorary Alumnus Award recipient, also presented at the University of Akron Foundation Spring Meeting hosted by the Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee, is Sally Read, a warm and generous individual with a deep-rooted commitment to the community. Her dedication to helping others, particularly students at UA, alongside her husband Roger '63, '66, extends to various committees and philanthropic efforts. She serves UA in a variety of capacities. She has been a member of the University of Akron Foundation's Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee since 2018 and a member of the Arts Advancement Council since 2022. The Read family's benevolence extends far beyond campus. They support a variety of organizations throughout Akron, including Julie Billiard Schools, Open M Ministry, Project GRAD, Children's Concert Society, Goodwill Industries of Akron, Leadership Akron, Akron Kiwanis for Kids, Rotary Club, Stewart's Caring Place and the Akron Symphony Orchestra. Read's legacy has left a significant impact on those she assists throughout the wider Akron community. ■



THE ELIZABETH BUCHEL AWARD IS PRESENTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON FOUNDATION SPRING MEETING HOSTED BY THE STEWARDSHIP & WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY COMMITTEE. THE AWARD IS NAMED FOR ELIZABETH DAVIDSON BUCHEL, WIFE OF UNIVERSITY OF AKRON (UA) FOUNDER, JOHN R. BUCHEL. DURING HER LIFE, SHE AND HER HUSBAND DONATED THEIR TIME, FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND EFFORTS TO BUILD WHAT IS NOW THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON AND PROVIDE FOOD, LOANS AND SUPPORT TO STUDENTS. THIS AWARD HONORS WOMEN WHO, LIKE ELIZABETH BUCHEL, HAVE BEEN LEADERS IN PHILANTHROPY TO UA AND HAVE MENTORED BOLD AND SELFLESS GIVING BY OTHER WOMEN.

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Friday, Oct. 4 - Sunday, Oct. 6

- Homecoming "Forever a Zip" Tailgate
- Football Game: Akron vs. BGSU

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