

# The EXL Center for Experiential Learning Administrative Activities Review

## **1. Basic Facts and Description of Unit**

### **a. Mission and Goals**

#### **(i) EXL Mission**

EXL's mission is to help students emerge as civically-engaged, adaptable leaders, ready to join in the enterprise of building strong and sustainable communities by promoting hands-on, community-based, problem-centered learning.

#### **(ii) EXL Goals**

- (a) To support, expand, and create new experiential learning programs;
- (b) To assist faculty with overcoming barriers to innovative, interdisciplinary, experiential teaching while also advancing their academic trajectories;
- (c) To provide opportunities for students to explore and take initiative in interdisciplinary and other innovative pathways to effective learning; and
- (d) To sustain existing, and develop new community partnerships that bring UA students and local business and non-profit change-makers together to advance learning while enriching the fabric of the greater Akron community.

### **b. Services**

EXL has six main areas of programming. The critical partners, customers/end-users, key performance metrics, and assessment are described below for each area of programming. The six areas of programming are (i) Akron Community Internship Program (ii) Unclasses (iii) pitch competitions (iv) student driven initiatives (v) faculty driven initiatives and (vi) community engaged courses.

#### **(i) Akron Community Internship Program**

**Description:** The Akron Community Internship Program is a program designed to build authentic University/community collaboration with a focus in particular on addressing civic-oriented issues. Under the direction of a community champion, a student works on a 100-hour project with a specific deliverable. With help from a GAR Foundation grant, a participating student receives \$1,000. Moreover, the community partner receives \$50 to take the student to two Akron-centric events, such as PechaKucha, the Akron Art Museum, Crafty Mart, Stan Hywet, etc. The goal is to link Akron community champions with some of the brightest UA students, such that our students forge significant mentor/mentee relationships with local leaders, as well as an appreciation for the vibrancy and charisma of the City. Importantly, a student obtains a meaningful experience to put on his/her resume, as well as material to discuss in a job interview. Here is the link to the recent Crain's article which describes the program in more detail:

<http://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20170702/NEWS/170709987/brain-retain-is-goal-of-ua-internship-program>

Of note, the article quotes Kirstin Toth, Senior Vice President of GAR Foundation, who indicated: "We thought [the Akron Community Internship Program] was a great way to showcase the EXL Center's work and provide a meaningful way for students to discover the community beyond the campus while earning a small stipend[.] It also is a great way to support organizations throughout the community."

**Critical Partners:** Currently, EXL has worked with nearly 70 community partners, and we are constantly seeking to expand to improve connectivity between campus and community. The current list of community partners is as follows:

Akron Area YMCA  
Akron Children's Museum  
Akron Coffee Roasters  
Akron Honey Company  
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Akron Peace Project  
Akron Public Schools/Summit Educational Initiative  
Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank  
All-American Soap Box Derby

AMP Strategy  
ArtsNow  
Mural Arts Philly, as coordinated by ArtsNow  
ArtxLove  
Bounce Innovation Hub (formerly Akron Global Business Accelerator)  
Boy Scouts of America  
Brightstar Books  
CANAPI (Community Aids Network/Akron Pride Initiative)  
Center for Applied Drama and Autism  
Charisma Community Connection  
City of Akron  
City of Akron, with focus on Infant Mortality Initiative  
City of Cuyahoga Falls  
Community Legal-Aid Services, Inc.  
Community Partnership on Aging (CARE)  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Conxus NEO  
Coso Coaching  
Crafty Mart  
Brightstar Books  
Downtown Akron Partnership  
Elevate Akron  
Fund For Our Economic Future  
Gay Community Endowment Fund of the Akron Community Foundation  
Global Ties Akron  
Gourmet Body Pastries  
Habitat For Humanity  
Halloween Charity Ball  
HC Lobalzo and Sons (a partnership with eBay Retail Revival)  
Heart to Heart Communications  
Hunger Perks  
International Institute of Akron  
Karen Community of Akron  
Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance  
Leadership Akron  
NEOS Dance Theater  
New Territory VR (a partnership with eBay Retail Revival)  
Northside Marketplace  
Peaceful Fruits (a partnership with eBay Retail Revival)

Ravizza Packaging  
Skye Forney Foundation  
Snow Day Productions  
South Street Ministries  
Stay in Play Recreation  
Summit County Public Health  
The Devil Strip  
The Exchange House (Better Block)  
The Well (CDC)  
Timocco  
Tracy Rhinehart LLC  
UJIMA/CAFFI  
United Way - Summit Food Coalition  
Urban Troubadour  
Urban Vision  
Valentine Project (bringing happiness to children with cancer on Valentine's Day)  
Vlipsy Inc.  
Weathervane Playhouse  
Women's Network  
World Relief Akron

**Customers/End-Users/Key Performance Metrics:** While the community certainly benefits, our ultimate focus is on students. The Akron Community Internship Program provides a mechanism for students to obtain mentors, get relevant work experience, build their resume, and feel a sense of connectivity to the Greater Akron Community. Indeed, our motto for this program is that we want our students to be “fluent in the language of Akron.” We have placed nearly 100 students with community partners.

**Assessment:** We assess not only quantitatively, but qualitatively as well. We are including reports for both Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters (attached at the end of this document) which describe in more detail feedback we received from both students and community partners for the Akron Community Internship Program. Four brief case studies are provided below, with quotes from students who interned at Bounce Innovation Hub (the City of Akron's entrepreneurship hub), *The Devil Strip*, Community Legal Aid, as well as Project Ujima.

**Case Study #1: Bounce Innovation Hub with student EbaNee Bond**

“Honestly, the EX[L] Center and [and my internship with the] The Akron Global Business Accelerator (now the Bounce Innovation Hub) have drastically influenced my perspective about Akron and staying in Akron. I can confidently say that in my long, long, long college career, the EX[L] Center has had the greatest impact on my personal development and future direction. I love the idea of ideas which is also why I love the EX[L] Center since it is an incubator for ideas, from civic engagement to entrepreneurship.” -- EbaNee Bond

***Case Study #2: The Devil Strip with students Kelcey Erbse and and Taylor Dawson***

“With the Devil Strip you know everything that’s going on. You get to know what the people are like ... You know how interns go get coffee or like interns do all the other stuff that isn’t important? We really are doing stuff. They even were like ‘What are you interested in with the Devil Strip. What do you like? Let’s get you into that” - Kelcey Erbse

“Akron’s so awesome. There’s so much going on here and the Devil Strip magazine is such a great way for people to get to know Akron. It’s definitely been an interesting way for me to get to know Akron as well... We have that responsibility to go interview people then write an article about them.” -- Taylor Dawson

***Case Study #3: Community Legal Aid with student Sriharsha Voleti***

“I worked on lead paint advocacy by mapping hazardous lead properties in Northeast Ohio. Currently I am working on developing a health equity framework for the state of Ohio to implement to reduce health inequity. I have enjoyed learning and researching about different health policies that cities and states around the country have been implementing to improve health. I also have gained a very different perspective on health, as I am now realizing the impact of many upstream and socioeconomic factors on a person's health aside from standard medical care and biological factors. I also enjoy the fact that my work is meaningful and will ultimately help improve the health of many people in the state.” --Sriharsha Voleti

***Case Study #4: Community Legal Aid with student Kendra Taylor***

“Through the Akron Community Internship Program, I have had the opportunity to work with two amazing community organizations in Akron. The first organization, Project Ujima, hosts weekly pregnancy and parenting circles for Akron women to help lower the rates of infant mortality in Summit County. I am collaborating with them to improve their nutrition education through handouts, cooking demos, and grocery store tours. The second community organization, CAFFI, works to help low income Summit County residents have access to free gluten-free and allergy friendly foods. I am assisting them with coordinating a stronger relationship with area food banks with the goal of increasing referrals to CAFFI’s food bank and promoting awareness of the seriousness and cost of food allergies.” -- Kendra Taylor

Accordingly, we feel that the Akron Community Internship Program is a strength, and we are seeking to expand the number of students and community partners who are involved with the project.

### ***(ii) Unclasses***

**Description:** Unclasses are classes that endeavor to overcome barriers to teaching courses that are innovative and interdisciplinary. Small classes are often canceled by departments/colleges, thereby limiting the ability of faculty to explore new terrain in teaching. Originally aimed at upper-division courses, Unclasses have now evolved to include some lower-division classes as well. EXL provides funding to the relevant department to pay an adjunct faculty member to cover a class for the Unclass faculty of record. Chairs and Deans have been working with EXL to determine how Student Credit Hours are distributed and to assist students in finding effective ways to participate for credit.

The 2017-18 academic year saw 3 unclasses (4 sections) in the Fall semester and 3 unclasses plus one unclass-inspired Honors Colloquium in the Spring. There were ~64 students involved in the Fall and ~67 students in the Spring. The faculty involvement was an increase over the previous year with some role being played by 6 faculty members in the Fall and 17 in Spring. That is a total of 22 faculty members since there was only one overlap between the groups. Descriptions of the courses including participating departments can be found here: <https://www.uakron.edu/exl/unclasses>.

The Unclasses also are geared toward community engagement, and community partners with substantial engagement have included:

Common Hope, Guatemala  
Pechakucha Akron  
Lake Erie Water Alliance  
Summit County Historical Society  
Stewards of Historic Preservation  
Akron Parks Collaborative: <https://www.akronparks.org>  
Art x Love: <http://artxlove.com>  
Habitat for Humanity, Beloved Community Initiative:  
<https://www.habitat.org/support/beloved-community-pledge>  
The Big Love Network: <https://biglovenetwork.us>  
Community Legal Aid: <https://www.communitylegalaid.org>  
The Exchange House: <http://theexchangehouse.org>  
The Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance: <https://www.betterkenmore.org>  
Love Inc. of Greater Akron: <http://www.loveincsummit.org>  
NAACP (Akron Chapter): <http://www.naacpakron.org>  
Ohio Organizing Collaborative: <http://ohorganizing.org> / Akron Branch:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OrganizingAkron/>  
The W.O.M.B.: <https://wayofmindandbody.wordpress.com>  
Project Ujima: <http://www.projectujima-inc.org>  
Shelter Care: <http://www.sheltercareinc.org>  
Second Chance Village: <http://thehomelesscharity.org>  
United Way – Akron: <http://www.uwsummit.org>  
Urban League – Akron: <http://www.akronurbanleague.org>  
Urban Vision: <http://www.urbanvisionministry.org>

**(iii) Pitch competitions for both entrepreneurship & social entrepreneurship**

**Description:** With funding from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, the EXL Center hosted a startup pitch competition during the fall semester, where the top prize was \$10,000 of funding for a student startup team. Additionally, in the spring, with some funding from the Akron Leadership Foundation, the EXL Center hosted another \$10,000 pitch competition with the focus on social entrepreneurship (titled the Be the Change 10K). Both of these competitions were open to any UA student, and a point of emphasis was to introduce entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship to non-business majors. Students were linked up with business mentors from the community, including from the

Small Business Development Center and SCORE. The students did not merely pitch an idea and receive feedback. Rather, students had to meet with business mentors, talk to at least ten customers about their idea, attend at least one entrepreneurship workshop, complete an initial application, complete a more substantive final application, give an oral presentation about their business, and for those student teams which advanced to the finals of the competition, give another more in-depth oral presentation.

The for profit entrepreneurship competition is described more fully in this *Akron Beacon Journal* article:

<https://www.ohio.com/akron/business/breaking-news-business/ua-students-win-10000-prize-for-their-app-that-gives-users-chance-to-earn-free-food>

Aside from Hunger Perks, the grand prize winner that is a mobile app focused on surveys for free food, the *ABJ* article describes the other finalists:

*The other Startup Challenger finalists were DeepHire, a software tool that helps match job applicants with companies; MoovBoard, a device that fits under a desk and allows the user to mimic the movement of walking; Lowery Racing, manufacturer of products for the flat track motorcycle racing industry and reseller of products purchased at wholesale; North Star Bots, holder of patent-pending technology involving longer flight times for drones; and Precision Aerials, which uses drones paired with high-resolution camera sensors to get accurate and high resolution photos for inspection of tall or intricate infrastructure*

The social entrepreneurship competition is described more fully in this article from *Strong Towns*:

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/4/24/changing-the-world-one-pitch-at-a-time>

A notable quote from the *Strong Towns* article is as follows:

*“The excitement generated by Be the Change 10k! pitch eclipses the pessimism often showered upon the younger generation...The students in The Be the Change 10k! competition clearly are not about to sit back and wait to see what others do; they are changing the world.”*



***Customers/End-Users, Key Performance Metrics, End-Users, and***

***Assessment:*** The customers/end-users are again primarily students. For the fall entrepreneurship competition, we had 270 students who participated, forming 109 startup companies. For the spring social entrepreneurship competition, we had 124 students participate forming 42 teams. We plan on running these pitch competitions in the upcoming fall and spring semesters. Notably, we have received a \$10,000 grant from the Key Foundation to help fund in part the spring social entrepreneurship pitch competition.

***(iv) Student-Driven Initiatives (SDIs)***

Student Driven Initiatives (SDIs) are projects developed by UA students that exist outside the classroom but have clear academic content that link specifically to student learning goals. A process for student application and proposal analysis is under development. An example of an SDI that EXL supported is the 24-hour hackathon put on by HAKron, a student group at UA focused on computer coding and problem solving, for which we provided resources and introductions. Here is the link to the ABJ article that covered that hackathon:

<http://www.ohio.com/news/local/students-hack-ideas-for-solutions-at-ua-s-first-hackathon-1.762453>

Other SDI activity in 2017-18 include student participation in a Washington, D.C. trip organized by Akron area resettling refugees; student attendance at 2 conferences (South by Southwest in collaboration with CWRU's LaunchNet and a blockchain conference); funding and support to The Cube, a series of dialogues on difficult topics; funding and support to The Right to Be "Hueman," an exploration of race in society; as well as various other initiatives.

***(v) Faculty Driven Initiatives***

Faculty-Driven Initiatives (FDIs) involve research where faculty are encouraged to strategically challenge barriers to experiential learning (which we define as hands on, problem-based, team-based, and/or community-based learning). FDIs are written up as funding proposals to EXL. The proposals are vetted by the EXL Faculty Steering Committee, whose recommendations are used by EXL leadership to determine funding.

This year's recipients were Dr. Shanon Donnelly and Dr. Elisa Gargarella. Dr. Donnelly (Geosciences) received an FDI for *A Comparison of Current and Historical Vegetation on Sites Mapped by A.B. Williams in the Early 20th Century*. Building on recent efforts by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, this project contributes geo-referenced historical maps and a current inventory of the plants and animals in these areas which will allow a unique assessment of what has and has not changed over the last century in Northeast Ohio.

Dr. Gargarella's (Art) project sought to expand the academic impact of her work. A recipient of Knight Foundation funding for Art Bomb Brigade, Gargarella and the Myers School of Art are now transforming this important contribution to place-making in Akron into an experiential learning course for Spring 2018. The course partners with Community Support Services of Summit County, an organization providing healthcare to individuals living with mental illness. Gargarella's proposal adds social science data collection and video documentation of this course allowing her and her students to explore this approach to art therapy and consider the impact of such community engagement.

#### **(xi) Community-Engaged Courses**

Community-Engaged Courses (CECs) are normal classes at UA that include service-learning or community-based research components. Such classes often require small financial support (\$1000 or less) for supplies or to assist with community partner participation. EXL leadership receives applications from interested faculty members, and funds as many quality CECs per semester as financially feasible.

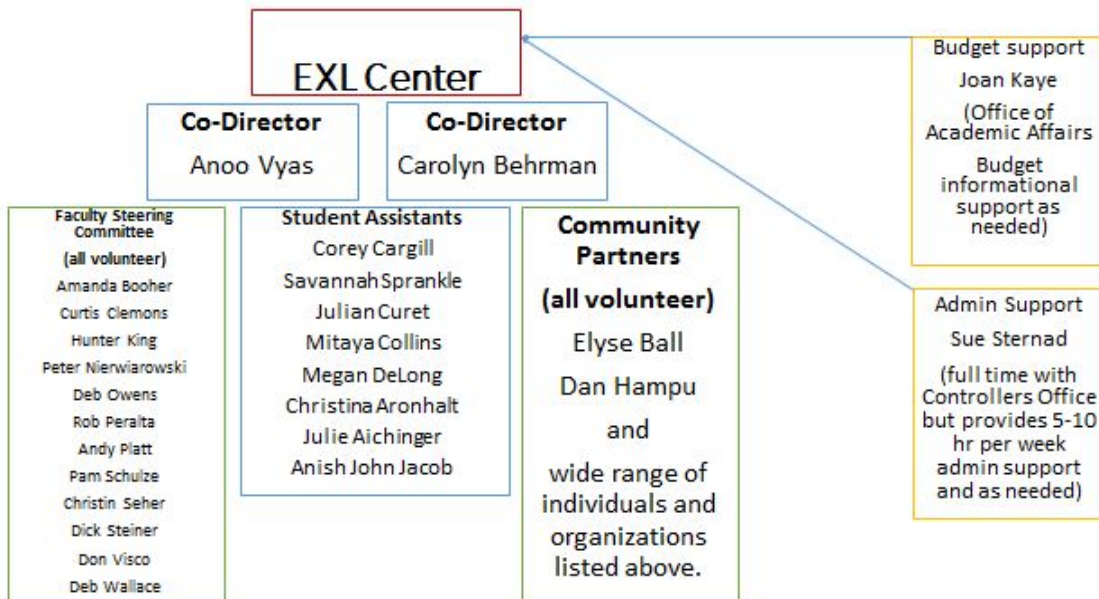
Fall 2017 saw 3 CECs funded. These involved ~48 students, 4 faculty members, and 3 community partners. Departments involved included English, History of Psychology Archives, School of Communication, and Criminal Justice Studies.

In Spring 2018, EXL funded 5 CECs involving ~105 students, 5 faculty, and 8 community partners. Departments involved included Art (2), Accountancy, English, and Dietetics and Nutrition.

### **c. Resources**

#### **(i) Personnel**

EXL's Organizational Chart 2017-18:



**(ii) Financials as of 7/10/2018**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Total Exp</b>	<b>Remaining</b>
<b>2016</b>	439,166	369,449	69,717
<b>2017</b>	373,494	309,562	63,931
<b>2018</b>	482,184	467,567	14,617

**(iii) Space**

EXL has two offices for each of its co-directors, as well as Room 168 in Bierce Library for its main operations.

**2. Future Plans**

**a. Potential changes**

EXL seeks to expand programming to directly recruit high school students through a variety of initiatives. For example, it has been discussed that a pitch competition for high school students could be implemented, such that high school students can begin to see the various opportunities to pursue entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship at UA. Moreover, EXL has already coordinated internships in conjunction with Akron Public Schools for high school students with faculty, partners at UA, and partners in the broader community, and we are exploring the expansion of this program. Specifically, APS students need internship opportunities for course credit, and EXL has developed relationships with certain teachers at APS who teach these internship courses, and we have assisted these teachers in placing students. We feel this can help with recruiting, as high school students may feel that they have mentors at UA.

## **b. Trends**

EXL fits nicely into the University's new "Five Star Fridays" structure, as it will provide substantial programming and experiential learning opportunities for students. For example, students on Fridays (and other days) can dedicate time (i) to working at their Akron Community Internship (ii) attending pitch competition workshops and strategizing for the launch and growth of their businesses, and (iii) pursuing student driven initiatives.



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# Fall 2017 Report

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**EX [ L ]**

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER FOR  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON**

# Overview

The Akron Community Internship Program (ACIP) is designed to increase University of Akron students' awareness of the professional opportunities in Akron, and also to showcase the vibrant local arts and culture scene. The goal is to communicate that Akron is an attractive place to live and work, and to introduce students directly to community mentors and resources. The program is also designed to link students' interests and courses of study to community-based work experience.

ACIP began as a pilot project in the summer of 2016 with nine students. Since the program's formal launch in Spring 2017, the EX[L] Center has placed almost 50 University of Akron students in internships, involving nearly 40 community partners in Akron. The internships consist of \$1,000 for 100 hours of work. Students are also required to attend two Akron-centric events outside of their internship before completing their hours with funds provided by the program. These events are meant to highlight the cultural wealth of Akron.

EX[L] looks forward to immersing even more students in the culture of Akron and providing them with opportunities to strengthen their skills and build a network of valuable contacts. The expanding list of community partners will ensure the availability of a wide variety of internships appealing to the many majors offered by the University of Akron. Thanks to the generous support from GAR Foundation for helping students become fluent in the language of Akron!

# Examples of Internship Opportunities



## **Akron - Canton Regional Food Bank**

Duties include screening potentially eligible clients for SNAP, completing intake or referral forms, assisting with SNAP workshops and presentations. The intern will produce a field experience report to be presented to the Foodbank SNAP Outreach team.



## **Art x Love**

The intern will aid in the research, development, and implementation of @Play, a Knight Cities Challenge project to foster civic engagement and increase Akron neighborhood vibrancy.



## **Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority**

Duties of this internship will focus on updating the AMHA website with enhancements to its user friendliness and communication of the resources offered by the Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake.



## **Bright Star Books**

Besides assisting the executive director with the transition to and establishment of the new headquarters in North Akron, the intern will assist in coordinating volunteer activities, and help organize and run community events, including a book fair and an open house for the new headquarters.



## **ConxusNEO**

This internship centers on database development. The project will build upon the Career Training Opportunity database that helps jobseekers find training and education programs that align with their interests and goals.



## **Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance**

The position requires a digital media intern who will assist in maintaining the website, promoting and organizing events, help with email marketing and outreach, and create content for social media feeds.



### **Leadership Akron**

A digital archiving intern will assist in the Akron Digitization Project and convert analog video content that features legendary Akron leaders discussing their work and the community to digital files.



In partnership with



### **Northside Marketplace**

Entrepreneur assistance will be informed by statistical analysis, performed by the intern, on sales and shopper data. Other duties will include marketing and promotion of content on social media accounts, creating business/vendor profiles on the website, and providing written sales reports for each vendor.

### **Round House Media Productions (now Snow Day Productions)**



An intern will help design, code, and launch a dedicated website for Akron Adventures, a Middle Grade podcast series for this publisher of educational and entertaining, original content for children, ages preschool to young adult.



### **Summit Artspace**

The goal of this project is to create an arts organization for Barberton. The intern will assist the executive director by performing research, risk assessment, identifying local artists, and attending local meetings and events.

### **Women's Network**



Two studies, one focused on non-profit board diversity and the other on gender equity, will each require an intern for qualitative and quantitative research, data maintenance, report writing and collaboration.



**Akron Community  
Internship Program  
Highlights  
Summer - Fall 2017**



## Intern EbaNee Bond, Senior, Mechanical Engineering

“Honestly, the EX[L] Center and The Akron Global Business Accelerator have drastically influenced my perspective about Akron and staying in Akron. I can confidently say that in my long, long, long college career, the EX[L] Center has had the greatest impact on my personal development and future direction. I love the idea of ideas which is also why I love the EX[L] Center since it is an incubator for ideas, from civic engagement to entrepreneurship.”



## Intern Kevin Karas, Graduate Student, Communications

“The opportunity to participate in this program has helped me deepen my connection with community leaders in the greater Akron community. This experience has been and continues to be invaluable to me and truly, I cannot thank you, Carolyn, Annal, the EXL center and the financial supporters enough.”

Kevin and  
Akron Peace Project  
Founder,  
Zachary Freidhof



Akron Peace Project

## Intern Harsha Voleti, Sophomore, Pre-med



“I worked on lead paint advocacy by mapping hazardous lead properties in Northeast Ohio. Currently I am working on developing a health equity framework for the state of Ohio to implement to reduce health inequity.”



“I have enjoyed learning and researching about different health policies that cities and states around the country have been implementing to improve health. I also have gained a very different perspective on health, as I am now realizing the impact of many upstream and socioeconomic factors on a person's health aside from standard medical care and biological factors. I also enjoy the fact that my work is meaningful and will ultimately help improve the health of many people in the state.”

## Intern Julian Curet, Senior, English & Anthropology

“My internship as a grant writer has reshaped my future goals and plans. Working with Crafty Mart has provided me with great professional relationships and also experience in the arts and culture community. Because of this, I have decided to remain at the University of Akron and pursue a graduate degree in arts administration. My goal is to work with non-profit organizations within the arts and culture sector in the Akron-Canton region.”

Julian with Crafty Mart  
Executive Director, Brit Charek  
and Director of Education,  
Marissa McClellan



Julian jamming with  
David Lackey from  
Lackey Road. Guitar Co.





## Interns Kelcie Erbse and Taylor Dawson

### **Erbse:**

“With the Devil Strip you know everything that’s going on. You get to know what the people are like ... You know how interns go get coffee or like interns do all the other stuff that isn’t important? We really are doing stuff. They even were like ‘What are you interested in with the Devil Strip. What do you like? Let’s get you into that.’”

### **Dawson:**

“Akron’s so awesome. There’s so much going on here and the Devil Strip magazine is such a great way for people to get to know Akron. It’s definitely been an interesting way for me to get to know Akron as well ... We have that responsibility to go interview people then write an article about them.”



## Intern Tyler Reed, Junior, Integrated Marketing Communications and Sales Management

“I want to make sure that the work and organizations I involve myself with will help others no matter how big or small. This city and the people in it have given me so many opportunities and my hope is that these opportunities will allow me to give back to Akron every step of the way.”

“Presently, I am working at Heart to Heart Communications as a Marketing and Sales Intern. I want to help move this company to the next level to help even more companies in the area. Heart to Heart helps people and companies find their purpose at work which leads to growth and lasting results. My passion is to use my skills to help this company help so many others companies in Akron to make this city the best version of itself.”





## **Interns James Carter and Scott Swiatek with Anthropology professor Dr. Watson**

James and Scott conducted interviews and research that will aid the culturally appropriate treatment of substance abuse within the Bhutanese refugee population of Akron



## Intern Deb Dragomir, Graduate Student, Social Work



“2017 has been an amazing summer. I have met some wonderful people throughout Akron, took on a small role of revitalizing a very talented community, helped with a play and even attended an amazing kid's concert, Restaurant Next Door.”

-about the Kenmore Kreative Youth Theater

### **“Successful Kenmore Better Block a temporary utopian version of what business district might become”**

By Fred Cay, The Akron-Beacon Journal, September 2, 2017

“Deb and Tom Dragomir ran a stand featuring fresh produce.

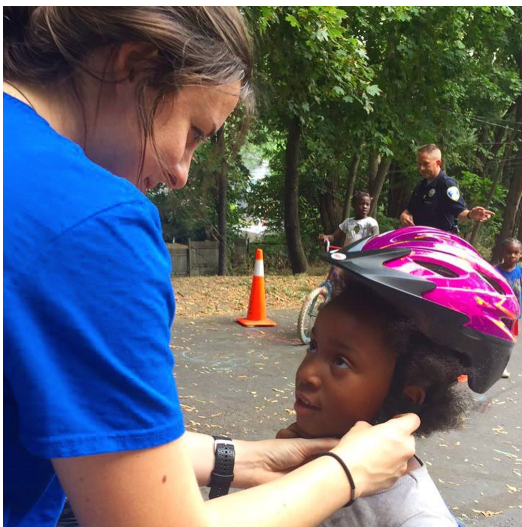
“This is a food desert,” said Deb Dragomir. “There is not good produce in Kenmore. So my dream is to do this every weekend, And I have a passion for food insecurity.””

““Here’s the thing about Kenmore Boulevard and Kenmore in general,”” said Tina Boyes, chairman of Kenmore Better Block. “There’s so many people from Kenmore who are proud to be from Kenmore, they’re just waiting for a reason to really celebrate Kenmore again. And so many of them showed up [Friday] night. That’s a testament to the deep roots here.””



## Intern Taylor Swift

“One of the best experiences during the program was during the last week of August. The Bike Shop partnered with the Akron Police Department and Akron Children’s Hospital to help instruct kids on bike safety as well as provide helmets to the kids once they conclude the safety program. It was refreshing to see so many kids react so positively to police and medical professionals. The kids seemed to learn so much from the safety course as well.”



“I highly recommend this program to anyone who wants to get involved in working with children and other volunteers. The ability to learn problem solving skills, communication skills, and teamwork skills were valuable during this experience. Plus, learning how to assemble and disassemble bikes is a skill that I have always wanted to learn. I will continue to do what I can to help push this program forward in the future.”

# *Stay in Play* RECREATION

## **Intern Zach Weiss, Junior, Integrated Mathematics Ed.**

“My experience with Stay In Play Recreation has been extremely rewarding. I have gotten the opportunity to work with bigger named sponsors for the company like First Energy and Goodyear. Event planning has also been a major focus of my time in the internship. We are successfully planning a volleyball tournament with lots of fun activities, using our connections and making new ones to get vendors and donations for the event. I have also had the pleasure of running two kickball leagues where I have made a great deal of new friends and connections in the Akron community. That has undoubtedly been the most rewarding part. I am quite happy with my experiences with Stay In Play Recreation this summer, and I hope other students in the future are able to have an opportunity the same or at least similar to mine!”



**Interns Zachary Weiss and Rachel Appelbacher**

# Past and Current Community Partners

**All-American Soap Box Derby**

**Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank**

**Akron Global Business Accelerator**

**Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority**

**Akron Peace Project**

**Arts Now**

**Art X Love**

**Brightstar Books**

**CANAPI**

**Center for Applied Drama and Autism**

**City of Akron**

**Community Legal Aid Services, Inc.**

**Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

**ConxusNEO**

**Crafty Mart**

**Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center**

**The Devil Strip**

**Downtown Akron Partnership**

**EANDC**

**Elevate Akron**

**Fund for Our Economic Future**



**Gay Community Endowment Fund of the ACF**

**Global Ties**

**Halloween Charity Ball**

**Habitat for Humanity**

**Heart to Heart Communications**

**Hunger Perks**

**International Institute of Akron**

**Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance**

**Leadership Akron**

**Neighborhood Network**

**Northside Marketplace**

**Ravizza**

**Snow Day Productions**

**South Street Ministries**

**Stay in Play Recreation**

**Summit Food Coalition**

**Summit County Public Health**

**Summit Art Space**

**Timocco**

**Women's Network**





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**EX [ L ]**

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CENTER FOR  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON**

# Overview

The Akron Community Internship Program (ACIP) is designed to increase University of Akron students' awareness of the professional opportunities in Akron, and also to showcase the vibrant local arts and culture scene. The goal is to communicate that Akron is an attractive place to live and work, and to introduce students directly to community mentors and resources. The program is also designed to link students' interests and courses of study to community-based work experience.

ACIP began as a pilot project in the summer of 2016 with nine students. Since the program's formal launch in Spring 2017, the EXL Center has placed almost 120 University of Akron students in internships, involving nearly 70 community partners in Akron. The internships consist of \$1,000 for 100 hours of work, with the cost ideally split between EXL and the community partner. Students are also required to attend two Akron-centric events outside of their internship before completing their hours with funds provided by the program. These events are meant to highlight the cultural wealth of Akron.

EXL looks forward to immersing even more students in the culture of Akron and providing them with opportunities to strengthen their skills and build a network of valuable contacts. The expanding list of community partners will ensure the availability of a wide variety of internships appealing to the many majors offered by the University of Akron. Thanks to the generous support from GAR Foundation for helping students become fluent in the language of Akron!

# Examples of Internship Opportunities



## **Akron - Canton Regional Food Bank**

Duties include screening potentially eligible clients for SNAP, completing intake or referral forms, assisting with SNAP workshops and presentations. The intern will produce a field experience report to be presented to the Foodbank SNAP Outreach team.



## **Akron Honey Company**

Duties of this internship will focus on creating a blockchain service in order to create transparency, and tell the story of where the honey is from and how the skin care line is produced. When completed, there are hopes to expand to more organic companies.



## **All-American Soap Box Derby**

This internship centers on preparing detailed Operations Overviews to convey details of events. The project will allow the intern to interface with multiple departments, calculate budgets, assist in client tours and find solutions for problems concerning any services provided by the Derby.



## **Arts Now**

The intern will work alongside the Project Manager to create a public art demonstration project, create professional development workshops for artists and community organizers, and build a community of support through this work.



## **Great Trail Council, Boy Scouts of America**

The intern will aid in creating a promotional video to adjust their marketing approach since girls are welcome in the summer camp. The intern will also be responsible for post-production as the video will be featured on the main website.



## **Urban Troubadour**

Besides maintaining a social media presence for Urban Troubadour, the intern will assist in planning and executing concert events, offering ideas and brainstorming for new events, and curating an interesting and sophisticated visitor experience.



## **Charisma Community Connection—Fame Fathers**

The intern will assist in creating program resource development and research important information for grant writing and proposals. The intern will also be working in a team to empower the community and enhance their lives through job development, family development and education.



## **Community Legal Aid Service, Inc.**

An intern will work along side state advocates to bring consumer voices to the forefront to tackle issues. They will also create documents laying out the Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage agenda for the rest of 2018.



## **Gay Community Endowment Fund**

The intern will create a visual story telling project, accompanied with an interview segment. The project aims to tell the subject's truth with care and honesty in a safe space and to make members of the LGBTQ community visible and empowered. The story will then be used in a fundraising campaign the intern will help coordinate..



## **Northside Marketplace, Testa and Downtown Akron Partnership**

The goal of the intern is to implement social media and website marketing strategies and create a dynamic website for customers to learn about what the Northside Marketplace has to offer. The intern will create daily posts, updating and maintaining a calendar of events for the venue, and tracking the success of promotional material.



## **South Street Ministries**

The intern will participate in the summer Bike Shop Program where they will empower children and adults to repair their own bikes. The intern will serve as a liaison between bike shop donors and the program, while also developing journaling skills.



## **Weathervane Playhouse**

The intern will be tasked with creating educational study guides for student matinee performances, researching and implementing marketing opportunities, creating evaluation procedures, and assisting in creating new curriculum materials for classes.



**Akron Community  
Internship Program  
Highlights  
Spring 2018**

## Interns Chance Jones and Kayla Madigan



Interns will gain a better understanding of the need that exists in Northeast Ohio, building relationships with community partners and Foodbank donors to help further the mission of the Foodbank. Chance and Kayla will be working in NPP for the next 10 weeks to help individuals apply for SNAP at partner programs and community events. As a dietetics/food science major, Kayla will also create monthly nutrition pieces for clients served through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

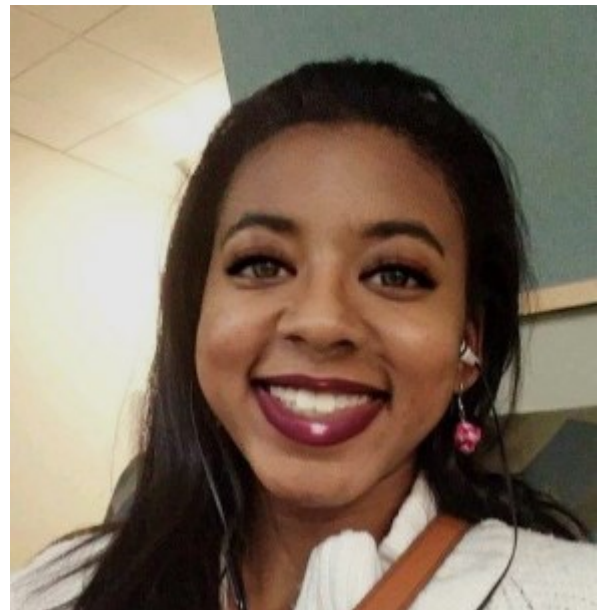


## Intern Gabrielle Barnes, Public Relations Major



“Gaby is a curious and driven professional who is eager to learn, has an eye for detail, and a bit of a perfectionist streak. She is also super super smart, so we love throwing crazy new things her way. She is steadfast and trustworthy.” - Mac Love, Chief Catalyst of Art X Love

**“I am glad to have gained an internship with Art X Love because it focuses on the potential every Akron neighborhood has.”**



# Intern Malik Hudson, Communication & Media Studies Major



## ART X LOVE

“Malik is currently helping us transform Perkins Woods Pool. My hope is to get him behind the camera to help us tell these stories.” - Mac Love, Chief Catalyst of Art X Love



Malik Hudson, far left, Mac Love, far right And crew working on installing murals at Reservoir Park in Goodyear Heights.

## Intern Scott Swiatek, Sociology Graduate Student

**“I feel that holding an internship provides me with the opportunity to give back to both the community and my school. In general, I have a strong relationship with the city of Akron, which has given me numerous opportunities to grow as a person.”**



Scott with Pastor Eugene Norris, CEO of Charisma Community Connections/Fame

“My internship with Charisma Community Connection (CCC) has been an outstanding experience. I have already submitted my first federal workforce development grant, and I am continuing work on another federal grant. I have also attended meetings regarding Akron's African American Male Wellness Walk at Summit County Public Health. I am incredibly grateful for having the opportunity to work with CCC.”



*Community*

LEGAL AID

## Intern Evan Morris, Digital Forensics Technology Major

Evan has worked with state advocates on advocacy strategy, created legal documents, and redesigned a webpage focused on consumers.

“It has been a great experience and really helped to solidify my belief that I want to become a lawyer.”





## Intern H. L. Comeriato, University of Akron Senior, English

“We are Human Beings Just Like Everyone Else”  
by Noor Hindi, *The Devil Strip*, April 26, 2018

“[H.L.] was able to pair up and work with Shane Wynn. #TransAkron shares personal stories about the subjects alongside their photographs and statistics about transgender people. It also teaches people how to respectfully interact with the transgender and non-binary community.”



Shane Wynn (Photographer at the Devil Strip) and Intern H.L. Comeriato

“UA professor Heather Braun stated ‘[H.L.] is fantastic and we worked together for years. Every class she took with me she would write about these issues. So when the internship with GCEF opened up, it was perfect.’”

## Intern Katie Hickman, Public Relations Major



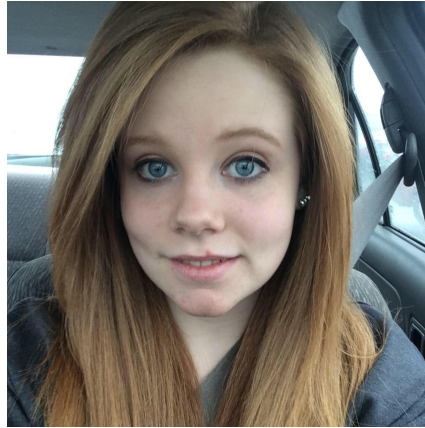
“With this internship, I am looking forward to improving my writing skills as, a major part of my work with KNA will be news writing for local Kenmore E-News”

“I’ve designed a website in the past, but with this website, I learned how to utilize different widgets like MailChimp subscribing. Also, doing a blogging/news page was new for me. I loved getting to design this with a unique and edgy theme to represent a unique and edgy city.”





## Intern Kendra Taylor, Nutrition & Dietetics Major



“Through the Akron Community Internship Program, I have had the opportunity to work with two amazing community organizations in Akron. The first organization, Project Ujima, hosts weekly pregnancy and parenting circles for Akron women to help lower the rates of infant mortality in Summit County. I am collaborating with them to improve their nutrition education through handouts, cooking demos, and grocery store tours. The second community organization, CAFFI, works to help low income Summit County residents have access to free gluten-free and allergy friendly foods. I am assisting them with coordinating a stronger relationship with area food banks with the goal of increasing referrals to CAFFI's food bank and promoting awareness of the seriousness and costs of food allergies.”



**Intern Alex Gingrich,  
J.D./MBA**

**“I feel much more confident in my abilities and professional demeanor after this internship. I would recommend an EXL community internship to any student.”**

“The community internship through the EXL Center, where I worked with Vlipsy for 10 weeks was even more beneficial than I initially thought it would be. The CEO of Vlipsy asked me early in the internship if there were any additional kind of projects I would be interested in. I expressed my interest in video editing and animation, soon after I was working on video projects with critiques from the team to better my abilities. One video I did the vast majority of work on is going to be posted by Skypes social media team to show the Vlipsy and Skype integration.”



## Intern Melissa Tippin, Arts Administration Graduate Student

“I cannot express how grateful I am for all of the awesome experiences I’ve had at Weathervane so far. Doing things such as planning events, developing curriculum, updating spreadsheets and checking students in before their classes, have armed me with the knowledge and confidence I’ll need to succeed in the arts administration field. All of the staff at Weathervane have been so warm, welcoming and patient as I learn about the day-to-day operations and tasks.”



Melissa Tippin also starred as  
Cinderella in Weathervane  
Playhouse’s production of  
*Into The Woods*



**Weathervane**  
— PLAYHOUSE —

# Past and Current Community Partners

All-American Soap Box Derby  
Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank  
Akron Children's Museum  
Akron Global Business Accelerator  
Akron Honey Company  
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Akron Peace Project  
AMP Strategy  
Arts Now  
Art X Love  
Boyscouts of America  
Brightstar Books  
CANAPI  
Center for Applied Drama and Autism  
Charisma Community Connections/Fame Fathers  
City of Akron  
Community Legal Aid Services, Inc.  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
ConxusNEO  
Crafty Mart  
Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center  
The Devil Strip  
Downtown Akron Partnership  
EANDC  
Elevate Akron  
Fund for Our Economic Future  
Gay Community Endowment Fund of the ACF  
Global Ties  
Halloween Charity Ball



Habitat For Humanity  
Heart to Heart Communications  
Hunger Perks  
International Institute of Akron  
Kenmore Neighborhood Alliance  
Leadership Akron  
Ma'Sue  
NEOS Dance Theater  
Neighborhood Network  
Northside Marketplace  
Open M  
Project UJIMA  
Ravizza  
Snow Day Productions  
South Street Ministries  
Stay in Play Recreation  
Summit Food Coalition  
Summit County Public Health  
Summit Art Space  
Tech Grit  
Tracy Rinehart LLC  
Timocco  
Urban Troubadour  
Vlipsy  
The Valentine Project  
The Well  
Weathervane  
Women's Network



# **BE THE CHANGE**

10k Social Entrepreneurship Challenge

**FINALISTS**





*First-Place Winners*

## **Erie Open Spec**

*Jiansheng Feng*

*Banafsheh Khakipoor*

*Kelly Siman*

*“Creating a culture of stewardship toward our water resources, by enabling citizens engagement in ecological monitoring.”*

Erie Open Spec is working to build a public website to let people share environmentally relevant discussions, data, tools, etc., to organize meets, events, and other actions, to form lasting and extensive collaborations and interest-driven communities to create a culture of caring and protecting the environment. We wish to benefit the community by raising awareness of the environmental issues people face locally and globally, and cultivating a collective consciousness in which every member of the society takes on the responsibility to proactively protect and preserve the natural environment.



# CUBE

*"What's your side?"*

*Corey Cargill  
Dmitry Klingensmith*

"CUBE" is a conversation platform dedicated to connecting a diverse group of people together for conversations in the real world. We focus on civil issues that need to be discussed.

CUBE wants to benefit the community by creating both an outlet and a space that allows citizen voices to be heard. The major problem being solved is the lack of diversity in opinion when conversing. We plan to execute this project by establishing a physical medium to converse (called CUBE) that utilizes our facilitation method. We will then move to create a digital medium that helps to diversely connect people on a global scale.



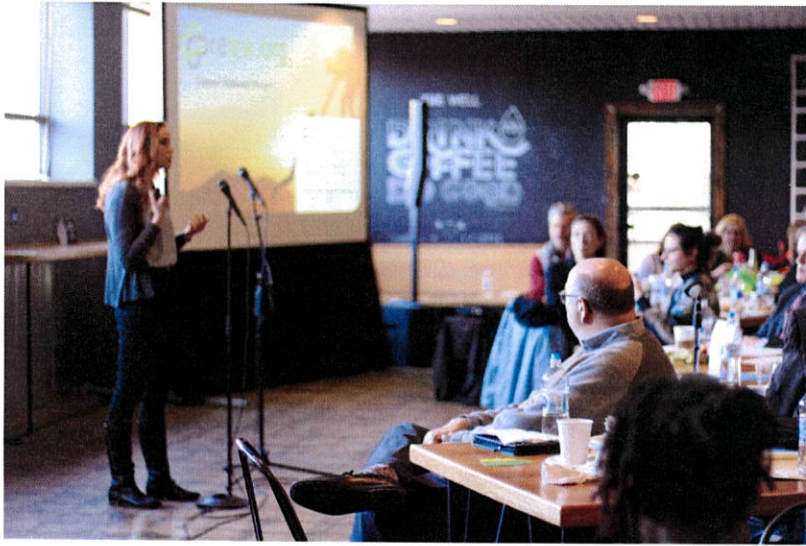
## Tail-Wags (for Smiles)

*Anna Tombazzi  
Hannah Adams*

According to a study by the American Association of Retired People, 45% of people said that they felt lonely. This means that approximately 20.25 million people are at risk of early death due to loneliness.

“Tail-Wags (for Smiles)” is a platform dedicated to addressing the “silent killer” present within the lives of the elderly: loneliness. We tackle this issue by creating a platform that combines the needs of younger people who desire someone to spend time with their dog while at work, with the needs of the elderly in need of companionship.





# Relink

*"CONNECT. EMPOWER. RESTORE"*

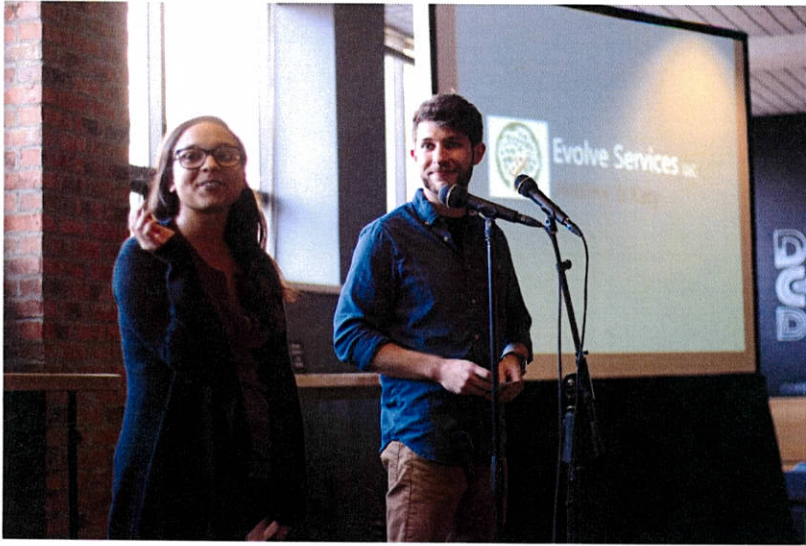
*Bethany Friedrichsen*

*Tim Elliott*

Relink.org is the first ever free online database of addiction recovery and reentry providers that is searchable by location, gender, organization type, and insurance.

According to the CDC, an average of 14 Ohioans die every day of an opioid overdose -- equaling over 5,000 per year. 1 in 10 Americans have a family member or close friend that has been addicted to drugs, and local communities and governments are spending millions of dollars every year due to the crisis.

Relink.org changes the lives of those directly in need of addiction services as well as those who may be indirectly affected by filling the gap between needs and services.

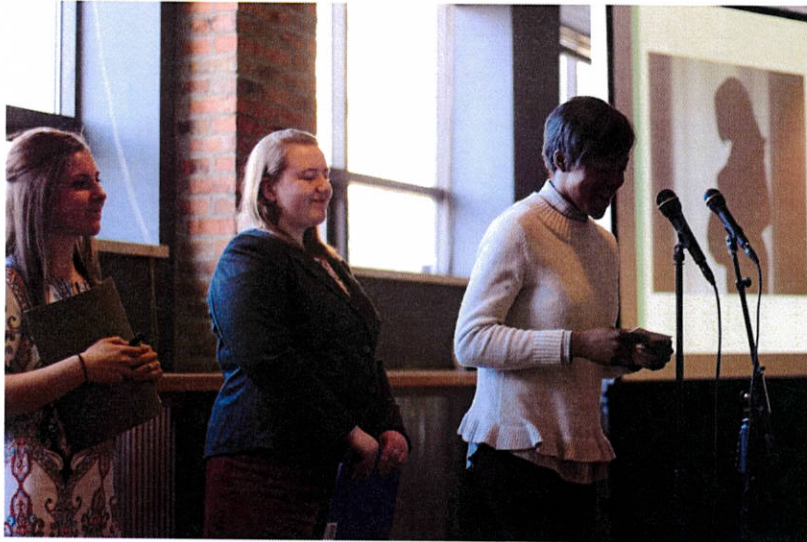


# Evolve App

*Katy Nichols  
Andrew Durr*

The Evolve App is a business to help school-aged children overcome barriers they may be facing in their academic, social, and family life.

Evolve is targeting the barriers using one-on-one training, which will have components of cognitive training, specific skill based training, and mindfulness techniques. We take assessment of each child to determine their individual needs and tailor their program to their needs. In addition to receiving one-on-one academic, cognitive, and skills based training as needed, children will also be able to participate in social group activities such as game nights and community volunteering.



## Better Nutrition at Your Doorstep

*Sydney Goulden  
Elisha Banks  
Dajah Hughley  
Abbey Perkins*

Infant mortality is a significant problem in Ohio when compared to the national average. Within Ohio, The highest IMR is seen in West Akron with 12.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is nearly double the national average. In 2016, racial disparities in IMR between white and black infants was alarming; in Summit County, the non-Hispanic Black IMR was 4.5 times higher than the non-Hispanic white rate at 18.7 and 4.2 respectively.

Better Nutrition at your Doorstep aims to solve this problem of a lack of access to affordable fresh produce for pregnant African-American women in the Akron area by partnering with Akron Summit Community Action, Pathways HUB and Fort Romig to deliver produce to pregnant women twice monthly by their community health worker.