

Allen College Honors Projects by BSN Graduates

May 2016



Front Row - L-R Clair Wadding, Kara Bolte, Lisa Berns
Back Row - L-R Melissa Johnson, Dana Schmitt, Emily Montgomery

Kara Bolte and Clair Wadding – Iowa Campus Compact Civic Ambassadors

Kara and Clair participated as Civic Ambassadors representing Allen College as part of the Iowa Campus Compact. Kara and Clair were charged with leading a student engagement project on the Allen College campus. Kara and Clair were the leaders of the “Put Hunger in the Gutter” project for the Service Honors class which focused on collecting donations for the Northeast Iowa Foodbank. The original idea of this project was that Allen College students, friends, and families would donate to the foodbank and then participate in a fun evening of bowling to celebrate their participation. Unfortunately, the bowling event was cancelled due to

low student interest. However, Allen College students, faculty, staff, families, and friends were still able to provide support for the foodbank by filling two bins with food and collecting \$325 in monetary donations.

Kara and Clair both stated that they learned more about how to be an effective leader and feel like they are better prepared to lead in the future through this experience. Kara stated “I learned just how hard it is to get a big project accomplished, and how many things there are to figure out behind the scenes of the whole project.” Clair reported “This semester I learned that I do like leading projects, though it did not turn out how I intended and there are areas of leadership that I need to work on and improve at. I ended up liking the challenge of it and I really enjoyed working with everyone involved (students, staff, and community).”

Melissa Johnson – Nashua-Plainfield Elementary School

Melissa volunteered at an elementary school within the Nashua-Plainfield School District. Melissa spent the majority of her time in the classroom tutoring students, designing bulletin boards, and organizing the classroom. One of the original plans that Melissa had for the classroom was to do some fundraising to install a bookshelf in the classroom. However, this plan was unable to be implemented due to constraints within the school district. Melissa stated that she learned that she really enjoys volunteering. “I have volunteered in the past and it has always been fine, but I always felt like I did it because someone was making me. This semester I felt like I wanted to volunteer even if I wasn’t forced to do so. I learned that I do have a passion for volunteering.”

Dana Schmitt – Turkey Valley Girls Track Team

Dana was able to act as a mentor for 16 high school girls that were all members of the Turkey Valley Girls track team. This experience allowed her to act as the only female coach available to the girls during this athletic season. Dana was also able to work one-on-one with two of the girls, building a trusting relationship with them, and allowing them the opportunity to turn to her for help with anything they needed. One of the realizations that Dana had through this experience was “I have learned how important service is for my small community, no matter how small the project. I have had a number of people reach out to me as a result of my time working with the track team for help working with other students or on other projects in the community. This has been a very positive experience for me, and has helped me to get to know the community on a much more personal level.”

Lisa Berns – Charles City Parks and Recreation Department

Lisa completed her Service Honors project by partnering with the Charles City Parks and Recreation Department. Each semester she has spent time picking up trash in the community and engaging her family and friends in this activity as well. During the Spring 2016 semester, they picked up 26 bags of trash from the bike trail, community, and county roads. Lisa had intended to assist with fundraising efforts to help purchase doggie bag dispensers in the dog park that is being developed. However, there were some difficulties with communication and another group began these fundraising efforts instead. Lisa stated that one of the things that

she learned about herself through this experience was “I learned that I can be flexible when things don’t go as planned. This semester I was very open to doing a project that would help my community partner. When things didn’t work out, I made the best of the situation.”

Emily Montgomery – JOB Foundation

Emily partnered with the JOB Foundation for completion of her Service Honors project. One of the major impacts that she had through her project was being able to build a one-on-one relationship with a student by tutoring her every Wednesday afternoon at the Salvation Army. Emily also assisted the JOB Foundation through her volunteer efforts with providing transportation to families to and from events, helping teach financial lessons to the children on parent nights, and assisting with the program’s shopping day with the children. Emily stated that through this experience she learned more about poverty than she could have ever learned in the classroom. “I have learned even more so this semester how much children in poverty can be affected by such a lifestyle that they do not choose but are born into. . . I can see how the cycle of poverty just keeps going. As children we do what our parents do. Many of these children do not have good examples, and if they do, they may have a great single mom or dad doing his or her best, but he or she still needs help from programs like the JOB Foundation to help him or her family financially to meet their basic needs.”