Storm Block
2017 - 2019

still connected
volume 21/issue 1/October 2017
Dear Alumni and Friends:

It is hard to believe that we have kicked off the SLFP’s 27th year. As always, it has been another outstanding year full of student development and service to the community. Many updates to the SLFP curriculum have occurred over the years, but the focus on learning by serving has not. We will never stray from the lessons of Robert Greenleaf who said, “The great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to her greatness.”

For our usual program updates, we thought you might like to hear that we now have 1,046 SLFP graduates after the Fire Blocks crossed the stage last April. Our UN 250 Leadership Class projects brought local high school students to the NMU campus for a leadership conference organized and led by the Superior Blue Blocks. We welcomed the 27th group of SLFP members who selected Storm as their color (a purple with some hints of stormy grey in it).

We would like to share an internship story, but it is so hard to choose which one to share. Since 2009, we have had a $500 internship award (money goes to the project site), named the Bill and Wilma Verrette Outstanding Community Service Internship Award, in honor of its generous financial sponsors. This year, the award went to a group of three students: Beth Bertucci, Megan O’Brien, and Katie Pershinske, who developed and coordinated an NMU chapter of Best Buddies for their project. Best Buddies is an internationally recognized non-profit organization that helps develop friendships and community involvement between individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and college students. After getting the organization going, which was no small feat, the three successfully recruited 15 IDD/NMU buddy pairs. In addition to the time that the buddies got together on their own, NMU Best Buddies coordinated several social events for the IDD/NMU buddy pairs and also brought a speaker to campus to address interacting with people on the Autism spectrum. They also hosted a Spread the Word to End the Word informational day to help promote social awareness in the NMU and Marquette communities, for which they were awarded Diversity Program of the Year at NMU. Perhaps their most important success though, was the fluent transition to new leadership, as Beth, Megan and Katie all graduated last spring. NMU Best Buddies is clearly here to stay. What a great legacy these three young women left behind.

We have so many stories like this every year, thanks to the generous support of SLFP alumni and friends like you. Thank you for your continued involvement in the Student Leader Fellowship Program!

Give a gift at CONNECT.NMU.EDU/GIVESLFP
Join us on social media

Sincerely,

Your SLFP Staff: Jon Barch, Michaela McLeod, Melissa Ostrowski, Danielle Bain, Hannah Lewis, Ann Parent

Special thanks to the 2016 - 2017 contributors

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Daniel Stencil
Gary Sterr
Robert Stoll
Ronald Stump
James Surrell
Stephanie Taylor
Michelle Todzy
Ann Toevs
William Verrette
Nicole Weber
Connie Williams
Zonta Club of the Marquette Area
John Zubiena
Congratulations! and will be setting a date to be married in the near future. Alise recently were engaged in Marquette. Damien and his fiancee Alise Shuart, and Katie (2) is a friend to everyone. James currently is a Senior Patrol Leader for his Boy Scout Troop; he also has two boys, Evan (13) and Clara, who is in fourth grade and Clara, who is in second grade. Evan is active in most any sport in the neighborhood. He is a Treasurama and playing with friends in the neighborhood. Jason said looking at the picture of the most recent blocks, he recalled the Green Blocks’ group photo and it seemed like just yesterday. He then calculated that these SLFP graduates could be the children of the Green Blocks. Jana (Vaughn) Tappa is married to Scott Tappa and they have two boys, Will (13) and Charlie (9). After spending most of her career in journalism/publishing, she made the switch to corporate life about two years ago and is a graphic designer/corporate photographer in the Marketing Department at Sentry Insurance. Her new employer really encourages volunteering and giving back to your community—and she finds herself thinking more and more about how awesome it feels to be able to flex her SLFP muscles.) When she’s not taking photos of her boys playing sports, she volunteers teaching Sunday School and serving on the boards of their Pee Wee Organization and Booster Club.

Red Block

Heather (Zuern) Bervinkle currently calls Corpus Christi, Texas home. She lives on Padre Island with her husband Chad, daughter Sarah, a yellow lab named Riley, a long hair Chihuahua named Hershey, and a cat named Bailey. During the regular school year, Heather works for Flour Bluff Intermediate School District as an Educational Diagnostician. During the summer, she gets back into the classroom and spends time teaching. This year consisted of some amazing three and four-year-old students with special needs. Heather and her husband are very active in their church. Her husband is an elder and part of the worship team and Heather leads the Women’s Ministry and an awesome group called Embrace Grace. Heather says her daughter is a math whiz and a talented artist. Every year, they make it back to the beautiful U.P. – alternating summers and winters. This year, they will make the drive up in December, hoping to see some snow. Regarding the SLFP, Heather feels blessed to have been a part of the very first group and to hear that this program is still going strong is great! Eric Bolduc’s daughter, Emma, recently turned three. Eric continues to work as a business insurance consultant for Holmes Murphy in Scottsdale. Eric says their life has really been focused on Emma, and they are getting her involved with school, swimming, and other activities. He wishes there would have been a Skill Builder! on “Parent Leadership!” Eric plans on doing some traveling during the summer.

Michelle (Strantz) Kneisel and her husband, Keith, stopped by the CSE while they were in Marquette to visit. They are pictured here with Jon Barch.

James and Amy McClelland have three children: Liz (16) attends a high school program at Eastern Michigan University and made Eastern’s Dean’s List last semester; Jake (13) is a Senior Patrol Leader for his Boy Scout Troop; and Katie (2) is a friend to everyone. James currently is the Field Director with the Southern Shores Field Service Council, Boy Scouts of America and manages a team of five professionals focused on volunteer recruitment/development, fundraising, and recruiting youth. He also is a Treasurer for Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North.

Blue Block

Damien Barrett, his fiancée Alise Shuart, and children, Casey and Maggie, stopped by for a visit in the CSE while driving through Marquette. Damien and Alise recently were engaged and will be setting a date to be married in the near future. Congratulations!

Green Block

Chante Lasco and Joel Yacks stopped by the CSE with their children, Lorelei and Cooper, and Joel’s mom, Bev, while visiting Marquette. They are pictured here with Dave Bonsall, Bernadette Norden, Ann Parent, Bev, Chante, Cooper, Joel, Lorelei, Rachel Harris and Hannah Lewis.

Jason Maki has lived in Sylvania, Ohio, a western suburb of Toledo, for nearly four years and is very happy to have moved there from Chicago. He and his family enjoy the friendlier people, the ease of getting around, the cost of living, and the sense of community. He said they can see Michigan from their backyard, but are nearly 500 miles from NMU. Jason works for a marketing research company, Kantar, in Digital Development, creating research solutions and operational processes for the cutting edge of the industry, including social media analysis, capturing search behavior, and capitalizing on the vast data contained within Data Management Platforms (DMPs). He met his wife, Jill, in graduate school at Notre Dame and they have two kids, Evan, who is in fourth grade and Clara, who is in second grade. Evan is active in most any sport in the backyard/driveway/street, but is especially keen on hockey and golf. He played in a couple golf leagues this summer and participated in the Drive, Chip, and Putt competition. Clara is their swimmer/gymnast/dancer. Both children love school and playing with friends in the neighborhood. Jason said looking at the picture of the most recent blocks, he recalled the Green Blocks’ group photo and it seemed like just yesterday. He then calculated that these SLFP graduates could be the children of the Green Blocks.

Craig Downs said the little boy that sometimes tagged along with him, has blessed him with a beautiful 4-year-old granddaughter. Craig finally retired 2 years ago after 24 years in the Air Force and Air Force Reserves.
**Purple Block**

Dr. Lisa (Boerner) Power earned a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington last August. Her dissertation topic was Leading Change Through Complexity: A Case Study Exploration of Leadership in Competency-Based Education. She was hired to the full-time faculty at Saint Martin's University in the School of Business. Saint Martin's is a small, Catholic university that follows Benedictine values. These values create a remarkable set of rules to live a life of hospitality within a community, following a servant leadership approach. Lisa's primary interest is teaching marketing with ethical worldview, practiced through service learning and leadership experiences. She also provides outreach to hungry and homeless people in her community through her church. Every Thanksgiving, her family collects warm clothes and blankets to distribute during the community meal. They help prepare and serve the meal when able, but have learned the true need to listen to people who are lonely. Eating alongside the community members they serve is a gift of humanity, which Lisa feels is the greatest gift we can offer. Hospitality and service are two of the important leadership skills she practiced in her doctoral studies. The graduate programs in leadership at Gonzaga University are ideal for distance students who want to explore leadership through service learning while broadening understanding of growing social justice through leadership communities of all kinds. The programs are transformative and life-changing. Lisa would enjoy talking to SLFP students interested in learning more about the Master of Arts in Organizational or Communication Leadership, or the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga.

Karen Saari and her husband, Dave, celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary in December. They have two kids, Max (6) and Ginny (4). Karen says she is a playwright and things are starting to happen! Her play, “In a Clearing,” was awarded a PlayLab reading at a national theatre conference in Alaska this summer and was a finalist for a national award. Previously, it was a 2015 Wisconsin Wrights New Play Festival winner. Two of her one-acts will be performed in Milwaukee and Madison in the coming months. She tries to find time to weed her garden and find recipes to use up trunksloads of summer squash. She enjoys chasing her children around and manages their Airbnb property in the U.P.

Dr. Lisa (Boerner) Power

**Aqua Block**

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year.

**Yellow Block**

Andrea Gommans is getting creative again for her online Etsy shop (ziezoDesigns) after she relocated a year ago to Mozambique. Andrea is heavily involved in the swimming activities and education of her four children and said this school year she will be Chair of the Board of the Dutch School in Maputo. She has so many great memories of the SLFP and is missing the U.P.!

Kris Kranz and his wife, Rebecca, recently bought a 40-acre farm that needs some rehabilitating. Kris looks forward to buying two Dutch Belted milk cows in the coming year. His family consists of 8 beautiful children from 15-years-old to 1-year-old.

**Burgundy Block**

Jon Barch and his wife, Maggie, have three children. Lenora and Fiona (12) are both on the local swim team and James (10) plays baseball. Maggie was recently hired by the Peter White Public Library and is very active in the local arts community. Jon is still coordinating the SLFP and is missing the U.P.!

Jon is still a member of the local Marquette Area Sister City Partnership and is Chairperson of the Lake Superior Leadership Academy Planning Committee. He also helps coach his son’s little league baseball team. Jon likes to water ski, wakeboard, snowboard, and go camping with his family. Jon still remembers the overhead projector slides that Dave Bonsall used in the leadership class to start conversations about issues of ethics and social responsibility and remembers some good debates in that class with Ryan Burri and Emily Schmidt. What fun they had!!

Marshall Rennick, his wife, Jamie and sons, Owen (9) and Oliver (6), stopped by the CSE this summer to say hi.

**Navy Block**

Lynda (Looker) Crawford has two amazing daughters! Her daughter, Madeline (9) is their little dancer and daughter, Brittany (7) hasn’t met a challenge that she won’t try! Lynda is the Site Coordinator for a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Beaverton, Michigan, and runs an after-school program, as well as a summer school program for 50 students in 1-6 grades. They are a family of bowlers and will often be found at the bowling alley. In the summer, Lynda enjoys kayaking. Lynda, her dad, brother
Orange Block

Zach Lorber is in the process of adopting three brothers from foster care. They are Derrick (9), Eli (7), and Juan (4). These boys came to live with them in June 2016 as foster children/pre-adoptive, and they are working through the legal process, as they are not yet free to adopt. Zach continues to work as a chef at Penn State University and is very happy.

Denise Hartsock married Jake Davis (’05 NMU alum) in 2014 and they live in Arvada, Colorado, which is just outside of Denver. They enjoy all the same outdoor adventures they did at NMU: mountain biking, skiing, hiking and backpacking. Denise works for Kaiser Permanente doing evaluations for public health initiatives across Colorado.

Joshua Pung has three daughters Laurel (15), Adara (14), and Cassie (13). They are strong young women already showing leadership and dedication. Laurel is entering her second year playing French Horn in the Michigan State University Spartan Youth Wind Symphony and will be playing at the Wharton Center again this fall. Joshua recently celebrated 12 years with State Farm, and enjoys being a local agent who can help people through his work, and yet have time to be active in the community. Joshua is gearing up for his third year organizing and chaperoning Marching Band Camp for Waverly High School. He is also very active in the Waverly Band Boosters serving a third term as Treasurer. Before speaking at the local school board meeting regarding current teacher contract negotiations, which have been bitter and dragging on over a year, Joshua was reminded of a conversation Dave Bonsall had with him when he was in his leadership class. For the final group project, their team had chosen a topic Joshua wasn’t very keen on. He doesn’t remember why he was upset about it (other than being young and belligerent), but he does remember going to speak with Dave. As a leader, you have to keep firmly in mind that it’s not about you - your ego, your wants, your needs, your opinions. Know what needs to be accomplished for the group and why - then bring people together to make it happen. Leaders can’t get caught up in petty emotions, a need to be right at all costs - a need to win your way. Your job is to promote understanding and commonality to unite people and ideas for the greater good. Dave’s words echoed as Josh spoke of unity and putting aside of ideology for the good of the district and the community.

Lime Block

Jessica (DeBacker) Pearson is happy being a homemaker for her three beautiful children and wonderful husband. She is the Totus Tuus Catholic Summer Catechesis Program Volunteer Coordinator, St. Wencleslaus School Lunch and Recess Volunteer, Parish Pro-life Committee Chair, Theology on Tap Committee and a volunteer softball coach. Her internship theme of Catholic Catechesis is still where most of her volunteer time goes.

Lea Karavias and her husband, welcomed their second child, Abigail Kay Vega, on November 21, 2016! Abigail joins her big brother, Caleb, and has been a wonderful addition to their family! Lea is on the board of a local group called Colorado Healthcare Strategy and Management, who work to bring the most relevant healthcare topics to the Denver area.

Sky Block

David Anthony lives in Berkley, Michigan and enjoys hiking and camping.

Marina Dupler’s family is now complete, with the arrival of their son, Maxime “Max” Murphy VanCourt, in December 2016. Max joins big sister, Ruby (3). Marina celebrated five years as Assistant Alumni Relations Director at NMU in May. Marina and her husband, Nick VanCourt (’04 NMU alum), announced that they are opening a new brewery in Marquette, solely focused on farmhouse and barrel-aged beers, called Barrel + Beam. Construction is underway on the old Northwoods Supper Club, and they aim to be open this fall. Volunteer-wise, Marina continues to be involved in Marquette County Mom Prom and 40 Below Young Professionals of Marquette County, as well as the NMU Gender Working Group. Since starting her own business, she has renewed interest in leadership and qualities of good leaders. She enjoys listening to podcasts and reading books on the subject and mentioned the SLFP Leadership Library is a great resource!

Carissa Waters completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) from Rush University in December and is now the Clinical Nurse Specialist for Critical Care at Illinois Masonic Medical Center in Chicago. She is pictured with her parents at graduation. Now that she is done with graduate school, she said she is free to travel! She has enjoyed many camping trips and participates in long-distance cycling events. One of Carissa’s favorite SLFP memories was the time she was on the other side of a volleyball net from Dave Bonsall and her team won!

Jade Block

Katie Allen is currently working as a Food and Beverage Manager of Strategic Sourcing for Hilton. Part of her role is to assist new properties with their opening equipment for kitchen and breakfast areas. She is also a co-chair for their McLean Corporate Office Community Committee, which plans the company’s community service projects during
their Global Week of Service. Last year, they built a school garden for a DC elementary school. Hilton discovered that the school had a catering manager in a past life, so she spends some time planning their annual global meetings and holiday parties, which keeps her busy! Katie says work keeps her fairly busy, but you can still spot her out on a running trail or cooking in her kitchen. Her friends look forward to her themed parties - last summer was a Great Gatsby themed party and every year she throws a Lord of the Rings party to watch the extended versions and do all Hobbit meals (breakfast, second breakfast, elevenses, luncheon, afternoon tea, dinner, supper). Katie also travels when she can and has been to Colombia and New Zealand in the last year. She still feels connected to all of her SLFP friends - mostly fellow Jade Blocks. In fact, Katie recently traversed to New Zealand with two of them. Pictured Katie Allen, her friend, Ashley, and Jade Blocks, Alyssa Barto and Amanda Dinkel, on their most recent trip to New Zealand in June where they chased Hobbits and tried local vinos.

**Dustin Blackwell** made his solemn vows in the Carmelite Order within the Catholic Church (he is a Friar), in August 2016, and is now known as Brother Nicholas Dustin Blackwell, O. Carm. He was recently ordained in New York by Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Cardinal Dolan is one of the Catholic leaders in the USA and he was one of the Cardinals that elected Pope Francis. Brother Nicholas will be serving as a priest at the parish of St. Simon Stock and St. Joseph in the Bronx, New York. He enjoys walking around New York City and seeing the sites. Brother Nicholas served in Lima Peru for his religious order and traveled to Brazil. He said the SLFP chats played good deeds that have helped him become the man he is.

**Shannon (Carmichael) Jedd** has two sons, Wyatt (4) and Zachary (2). She still teaches elementary school--second grade this year instead of third. All free time is spent with her kiddos these days! Shannon said she has all great memories of the SLFP! Pictured with Shannon are Shannon’s mom, Zach and Wyatt.

**Krissy Petersen** got married in October 2016 in Portland, Oregon to the man she has been with for over five years, Scott Fendley. Krissy said they are thrilled with this new chapter in their lives and look forward to lots of married adventures together with their adorable and loyal dog, Maebly. Krissy landed the job of her dreams as an Academic Advisor at Central Washington University (CWU) in April and is loving the job, students and school. CWU reminds her of NMU because of the strong community and all of the incredible opportunities for students to get involved and learn both in and out of the classroom! She said it’s such a positive place and is thrilled to be helping CWU Wildcats! In her spare time, she’s a voracious reader, juggling at least four books at a time. She spends a lot of time exploring the Pacific Northwest with her husband and dog. Krissy said they take many road trips to the Seattle and Portland areas to go to comedy and theater shows and have as much fun as they can! Every fall, she thinks about the SLFP retreat and how much fun she had trying to decode the symbols on the nametags and making new friends. Krissy said the SLFP was an incredible experience and the retreats were the best events of all!

**Sara (Barclay) and Gavin Telfer** are having a blast hanging out with their son, Camden (3). They spend a lot of their time exploring New England, playing at playgrounds and traveling when they can. Sara was recently promoted to Associate Director of Alumni Engagement at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) and received the President’s Good Steward Award for SNHU from New Hampshire Campus Compact for her work organizing SNHU’s Global Days of Service. Sara said she was just looking through pictures from the SLFP’s 20th anniversary and is missing the folks she was able to see over that weekend!

**Monica (Drusch) Wolf** welcomed Abigail Elaine on November 15, 2016 and big brother Jameson (3) was in love at first sight!

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**Mango Block**

Lindsey (Pepin) Butorac and her husband, Tyson, welcomed Amelia Rose Butorac on November 8 and she joins big brother Mitchell who turned 5 this month. She and Tyson celebrated their 10 year anniversary in June. Lindsey is the Assistant Director of Human Resources for Payroll and HRIS at NMU. She serves on the Board of Directors for Great Lakes Recovery Center. She said they are enjoying life as parents of little ones - you never know what they will say or do next! Lindsey can’t believe it’s been 12 years since her SLFP days!

Julie (Braun) Cook welcomed her son, Denver Owen Cook this past January.

Lillian (Florenski) Shaker and her husband, are expecting their second child around Christmas, and their oldest son, Padraig, will be 3-years-old when his little sibling joins them. They recently moved from Oak Park, Illinois to River Forest, Illinois, so it has been a big year for their family. Lillian continues to be a stay-at-home mom and works out four-five times a week at their local Y. Lillian is entering her 10th year as a volunteer secretariat member for the American Model United Nations International Organization, which hosts an annual conference for college students. Last year they had their largest number of participants at over 1,900 students from all over the country and from around the world. This year, Lillian will be helping the conference by working with the hotel on needs and accommodations for their simulations. Lillian still smiles when she remembers her first time at Bay Cliff, especially waking up on the beach and realizing she had sand in her mouth and says it was a really fun weekend.
**Crimson Block**

**Cassie (Zeratsky) Charlier** and her husband have been together since high school and recently celebrated their 10-year anniversary in July. They have three little ones, Katelyn (6), Austin (3) and Gavin (1). Career wise, Cassie has been with the same company, JJ Keller and Associates, for over nine years. She is now in a senior sales position, and has advanced her career throughout her nine years there. The activities she is involved in are biking, running, fishing, boating, taking summer walks, bug hunts, watching their monarch caterpillar transition into a butterfly, teaching their kids about the outdoors, going to concerts with her husband, and spending time with family and friends, etc. She says they are a very busy family! Some favorite memories are the sense of community the Crimson Block had. Cassie said the SLFP truly enriched her life by setting the tone for the retreat every time!

**Dayna (Keranen) Watson** married Brent Watson in 2006 and they have two daughters Evelyn (2.5) and Eloise (1.5). Dayna left her job (External Affairs with Integrys Energy) in 2014 to be home full time with her girls. She takes small contracts from time to time to keep her brain from turning to mush! Dayna said she does not have much time for leisure or volunteering with two little ones, but they recently purchased a lake house in Munising, so have enjoyed being back in the U.P. and spending the summer in the lake! Dayna said the bonfire on the shores of Lake Superior was one of her favorite SLFP memories!

**Nate Windy** and his wife, Rachel, recently celebrated their 11th wedding anniversary. Their son, Leo, is now 3-years-old. Nate is a territory sales manager for Reco Equipment, a heavy equipment company, and he is responsible for the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Nate enjoys outdoor activities, especially hunting and fishing in his free time. He assisted with installation of new playground equipment at their local elementary school this summer and is a member of the local Knights of Columbus chapter. Nate has very fond memories of the fall retreats in Big Bay with Dave Bonsall’s smile, energy, and attitude setting the tone for the retreat every time!

**Fuchsia Block**

No alumni responses. We miss you and look forward to your response next year.

**Mint Block**

**David Hedberg** and his wife, Bethany, have three children: daughter Claire (5), son Caleb (4), and daughter Cadence (2).

**Krista Leidi** is married to fellow NMU grad, Chris Gagne. Krista works as a nurse at Otsego Memorial Hospital. Krista, her husband, and doggie children, enjoy boating on the many inland lakes in Northern Michigan. Krista said Bay Cliff will always have a special place in her heart.

**Cerulean Block**

**Richard Andersons** is engaged to Grace Gambino, who is from Angleton, Texas, and they will be getting married January 2018. Richard was promoted to Employment Manager at Wood Group-Infinity, and continues to use his SLFP skills to develop staff and lead processes in hiring people in the construction industry. Richard picked up disc golf this last year and is trying to embrace the Texas heat. Richard is missing his fellow Cerulean’s and the activities on-campus at NMU and intends to bring his fiance’ up to NMU one day and convince her to move here!

**Abby (Starich) Lengas** lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin with her husband, Eric and daughter, Nora Rose, who was born on March 1. She weighed 9 pounds, 9 ½ ounces and was 21 inches long. Abby said she and Eric have been married for five years now. She has been an associate veterinarian for Green Bay and Allouez Animal Hospital, Inc. for just over a year and is learning how to be a working mom right now. She enjoys bike riding, playing with their dog and cat, crocheting and the Green Bay Packers! Abby said she always looked forward to the fall retreat and had so many wonderful, fun memories!

**Raechel Percy** completed her residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Kentucky, and has moved down to Jackson, Mississippi, to start her practice specializing in musculoskeletal medicine at Methodist Rehabilitation Center. This practice promotes adaptive sports and recreation for people of all abilities.

**Faren Peterson** is currently engaging in the dual career of Artist-Art Therapist and is a licensed therapist in Colorado, contracting with KIDSTUFF Child and Family Counseling, while maintaining a private art practice on the side. Inspired by travel and the Rocky Mountains, art keeps her sane and engaged in the world. Faren plans to branch out into art galleries, art fairs, and community art spaces in Fort Collins. If you’d like to learn more or follow Faren’s journey, visit: farenpeterson.com. Faren said she misses Marquette, the
beauty of Lake Superior and wishes she could visit the U.P. more often, especially in the summer! She is grateful for her experiences in Northern Arts & Entertainment and the SLFP, as it helped her to get out there, battle her fear and learn about marketing, making contacts, speaking, and working with teams - all skills utilized today as she pursues her own path of entrepreneurship.

**Melissa (Engelmeier) Plante** had her first child, a son Easton, on March 12. She has started her Master’s Degree at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, where she has been employed for eight years. Melissa is also training for a fall half marathon.

**Nicolle Stumpf** married Christopher Zehren on October 10, 2015. Their son, Landon, was born Christmas Eve 2015. Nicolle also has a step-daughter, Savannah (8). She is an elementary school counselor at Oneida Nation Elementary School and recently celebrated the first anniversary of her group “Baby Bunch of the Fox Cities.” They are a Facebook-based playgroup for moms and babies, birth to age two. Nicolle saw a need in her community for mothers of very young children and used skills learned during the SLFP to fill that community need. She organizes events around the community once or twice a week. She said it’s great because she is giving back to her community and having quality time with her son at the same time.

**Amanda Umstead** is getting married to Kelsey Birkner in September 2018. Amanda is a Pediatric Audiologist at Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana and she specializes in cochlear implants. She enjoys going to festivals all around Indianapolis and local concerts.

**Keith Voorheis** has been at Hunton and Williams for just over a year in Richmond, Virginia as an associate with the Global Technology and Outsourcing Practice Group. He and his family spend as much time as they can on the weekends either hiking and relaxing in the Blue Ridge Mountains or renovating their row house in Richmond’s Fan District.

**Kiwi Block**

**Ben Ayotte** recently relocated to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to begin his medical residency at Mayo Clinic Health System. He is transitioning into his first year of residency and seeing patients of his own has been a very rewarding, challenging and exciting experience. Ben feels fortunate to be part of the Mayo Clinic Health System and their tradition of service to patients and the greater community. He looks forward to making a positive and tangible impact on the members of his fellow community by exercising servant leadership and resonating the core value of the Mayo Clinic—the needs of the patient come first. Ben and his girlfriend, Ashley, have been exploring the greater Chippewa Valley area and visiting the Twin Cities, which are just over an hour away. Ben says as they make friends and become increasingly connected with the community, they plan to engage in various service projects and endeavors in their free time. The SLFP retreat at Bay Cliff was one of Ben’s fondest memories of the program—in particular, the bonfire on the beach. He felt the program was very well organized and helped him to not only understand the various forms of leadership, but also allowed him to make several friends and memories he carries with him to this day. Pictured are Ben and his mentor and dear friend, Dr. Ernie Balcueva at Match Day in March. Match Day is an event where fourth-year medical students find out where they will be training for their residency.

**Kurt Brandly** moved to Denver, Colorado and recently received his Master’s Degree from the University of Colorado. He has had four promotions in his banking job and works remotely. He enjoys doing a lot of traveling.

**Andrew Kandell** and his wife, Harriet, have a one-year-old daughter Mia, who keeps their hands full! Andrew recently accepted a position as an Academic Advisor for South Dakota State University. Andrew said the retreat and all the wonderful people (mentor, alums, etc.) are his favorite SLFP memories.

**Anna (Ewing) Miller**’s daughter, Lily, is five and started kindergarten and Anna’s son, Theo, was born this past February. Anna finished her second year of teaching and originally taught first grade, then third grade. She now teaches third grade again, and has the amazing opportunity to team-teach so that she is teaching only in the mornings so she can go home at lunch to spend the afternoons with her own two children. Anna is extremely excited to be able to continue furthering her career as a classroom teacher, as well as getting the opportunity to take some time to be a mom as well.

**Lacey (Wallace) Solloway** is living in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and has been married for six years to her husband, Chad. They have two English Mastiffs named Peach (7 months) and Daisy (14). Lacey graduated from the University of New England with her Doctorate in Pharmacy (PharmD.) in 2016 and is now working as a Pharmacist at Rite Aid. Lacey enjoys playing tabletop board games. She said she is new to the area, so is still trying to find community service opportunities in the Sault. Lacey said the overall experience of the SLFP is something she has drawn upon time and time again as she continues in her career.

**Teal Block**

**Megan Forrest** is currently working on a Ph.D. in Genetics and Genome Sciences in the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, with hopefully just a couple more years to go! This past year, she had the opportunity to use what she learned about servant leadership as the Chair of the Biomedical Graduate Student Symposium, a student-run event that showcases graduate student research at Case. She is also an active member of the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization. Megan enjoys baking, running, and exploring Cleveland when she has spare time! In the SLFP, Megan loved getting to interact with people of very different backgrounds, career interests, and personalities as part of the leadership courses, Skill Builders, and the retreats.

**George Peterman II** worked last winter at Winter Park Resort in Winter Park, Colorado, as a Human Resource Clerk and processed onboarding/offboarding paperwork for seasonal employees. George is in the process of
applying for teaching work abroad, but will continue this job until he finds out the results of his interviews. George likes to study languages in his free time and is currently working on Spanish, Korean, and Japanese. George said he really enjoyed the very first retreat in Big Bay and remembered staying up really late and chatting with some fellow SLFP Teal Blocks.

**Stefane Preston** paid a visit to the Center for Student Enrichment (CSE). She is pictured with Ann Parent, Rachel Harris and Jon Barch from the CSE.

### Gold Block

**Jacqueline Carroll's** career world consumes her every moment and she loves it! She teaches in the East Lansing Public School District, and her job is changing every year. Last year, she taught sixth grade art, seventh/eighth computer animations/applications, high school digital and darkroom photography, and she now also teaches Pre-AP American Lit! Needless to say, there never is a dull moment. Jacqueline joined a Crossfit gym two years ago, and said she can’t seem to get enough of it. Aside from trying to stay fit, Jacqueline is pursuing her Master’s Degree in the evenings. Big Bay will always be a memory that she thinks fondly upon and said it was then that she really connected with her community at NMU, and still maintains many of those friendships.

**Derek Dake** lives in Big Rapids, Michigan, and on August 13, 2016, married Brook Derusha (Banana Block). He is currently doing clinical rotations and finishing his last year of Optometry School. Derek will soon graduate from the Michigan College of Optometry with his doctorate. He is a student liaison for the Michigan Foundation for Vision Awareness and in January, provided free eye care in the Dominica through Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity.

**Molly Davis** currently lives in Eagan, Minnesota, and is going through a career change after volunteering as an intern for Wildtracks, Belize, a non-profit, manatee and primate rehabilitation center, for the last four years. She has been solely focused on the animals and other events going on at Wildtracks in Belize and hasn’t had much time for other activities. Wildtracks hosts two of the four official rehabilitation centers in the country. The first center is the Manatee Rehabilitation Center, which rescues orphaned and injured West Indian Manatees. Just like in America, manatees are often injured or killed due to boat strikes, sometimes leaving their calves orphaned. Wildtracks has been successfully releasing manatees since the late 1990s and has the most successful release program in the region. Molly is pictured bottlefeeding Khaleesi, who came in as an orphan when she was less than a month old. Molly met her when she was just 28 pounds and less than a year old in 2014. Khaleesi is now on soft-release, she weighs almost 300 pounds and will officially be back in the wild within the year. The second center is the Primate Rehabilitation Center. Belize has two native primate species; the Yucatan Black Howler Monkey and the Geoffroy’s Spider Monkey. Both are globally-endangered and threatened due to habitat destruction, hunting, and poaching for the international illegal pet trade. Primates come in at all ages and from many different circumstances. Young primates are placed into the nursery and slowly grouped with others of the same age to form troops. Howler Monkeys then move through rehabilitation stages with their troop and are eventually released around the age of three into Fireburn Reserve-a protected area in Northern Belize. Spider Monkeys are transferred into the Spider Monkey Complex and will hopefully begin releases within the upcoming year. Molly said she has been lucky enough over the past four years to work with all of the rehabilitation stages and in Fireburn Reserve on the post release monitoring team. Molly is pictured here with Piper, a Howler Monkey in the nursery, who was rescued from the illegal pet trade.

**Brendan Franklin** and his fiancé Sara Smolucha, stopped by the CSE this summer to say hi.

**Kacey Lewis** is the Education Associate at the Photographic Center Northwest in Seattle, Washington, a non-profit photography education institution. She is working with some colleagues from graduate school on a project about empowering women through financial wealth. This project is currently in the early stages, so they are not sure what exactly it will look like. Kacey has recently been dabbling in black and white film photography, and catching up on reading for fun. Her CSI for SLFP turned into a four-year internship with the Marquette Regional History Center. Kacey thinks the CSI requirement is the most important part of the SLFP, as it allowed her to network within the community, grow relationships, and prep her for graduate school.

**Geneva Martin** recently finished a one-year fellowship through the State of Minnesota in the Minnesota Office of Continuous Improvement, doing communications work, leading process improvement projects for different state agencies, and leading statewide trainings. Her fellowship was extended, and in the meantime, she is looking for her next career opportunity.

**Tracy (Pickering) Wimmer** married Danny Wimmer on June 24, and is currently serving as a Communications Specialist for the Michigan House of Representatives Democratic Caucus. She is serving as the President of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, Secretary for the Ingham County Women’s Commission, Social Media and Digital Marketing Director for the Junior League of Lansing, and is a weekly volunteer at Ele’s Place, a center for grieving children. In her free time, she has begun a small
business sewing custom wedding gowns. Tracy misses the SLFP “fellowship” portion—it was always so motivating and inspiring to be part of a community so like-minded in their dedication to public service.

**Banana Block**

Brook Lynn (Derusha) Dake married Derek Dake on August 13, 2016. She is attending graduate school (Family Nurse Practitioner Program via University of Michigan-Flint) while working as an RN.

Alecia Heckathorn recently finished her first year teaching dance in a New York City Department of Education elementary school, where she does vocal coaching and dance intensively. Additionally, she recently made her New York City cabaret debut at The West End Lounge in Manhattan.

Julia McLean moved from Marquette to Ann Arbor a year ago and is working in the Emergency Department at the University of Michigan. At work, Julia was recently elected to a position on the unit-based committee. She is looking forward to getting more involved and taking on more of a leadership role and putting her SLFP skills to use :) 

Tina (LaValley) Pap stopped by the CSE with her son, Owen. They are pictured here with Jon Barch and Rachel Harris from the CSE.

Elizabeth Sabin finished her second year teaching elementary school in Marquette and loved it! She is a mentor for the YMCA Reach and Rise Program, just competed in her first mountain bike race, and is starting to train for a triathlon. Her favorite SLFP memory was Bay Cliff with the Northern Lights - talk about fellowship!

Rachael Williams was married on September 30. She recently begun to referee. Cassie said she always enjoyed the retreat at Bay Cliff, and because of these retreats, she continues to play ice hockey and has recently begun to referee. Cassie said she always enjoyed the retreat at Bay Cliff, and because of these retreats, she ended up working at Bay Cliff, and because of these retreats, she ended up working at Bay Cliff Health Camp last summer and said it was an unforgettable experience. She was, unfortunately, unable to work there again this summer.

Onyx Block

Brittany Ridge works in the Emergency Department and NICU at Nationwide Children’s Hospital and is involved with the Columbus Dream Center. Brittany loves spending time with her small group of friends.

**Onyx Block**

Lizzy (Owens) Arnquist was married on June 17, 2016. She is a special education teacher at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State and enjoys exploring the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

Tony Carlson has been living in Ann Arbor for over a year, working downtown for a family of websites that helps various causes including animal shelters, breast cancer research/care, veterans and hunger all over the world. He is working as an email marketer/copywriter/art director for the company and is really enjoying it!

Sara Hujar currently works for Downtown Green Bay, Inc. and Olde Main Street, Inc. as the Events Manager. During the course of the year, they host over 150 events for the community, which she oversees and coordinates. In January, Sara became an official member of the Kiwanis Club of De Pere. With this organization, they host several service projects and events throughout the course of the year, such as the Memorial Day Parade in De Pere. Besides Kiwanis, she also volunteers her time as the 10U Girls Softball Tournament Team Coach for the Southwest Softball Association. Alongside her coworker, Pam, they coach a group of 14 energetic and wonderful girls! Sara mentioned she had so many wonderful SLFP memories, she couldn’t pick just one!

Sydney Landers works on the Partnership Servicing Team at Tough Mudder, as a Partner Services Coordinator. She said she met one of her best friends through the SLFP by being thrown together in different groups both in class and at the retreat. Sydney said she’ll be forever grateful for the experiences the SLFP afforded her.

Melissa Orzechowski works for Taste the Local Difference in Marquette and is figuring out what her next life steps will be. Living at the Marquette Climbers Coop, Melissa is gardening as much as possible, rock climbing and mountain biking. She also volunteers with the Queen City Seed Library.

Cassandra Ross is in graduate school at Central Michigan University, where she is studying for a Master’s Degree in Public Health. She volunteers at the Women’s Aid Service, which serves Clare, Gratiot, and Isabella County, and provides services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Cassie continues to play ice hockey and has recently begun to referee. Cassie said she always enjoyed the retreat at Bay Cliff, and because of these retreats, she ended up working at Bay Cliff Health Camp last summer and said it was an unforgettable experience. She was, unfortunately, unable to work there again this summer.

Emerald Block

Meghan Marquardt has been working at WEAU-13 News in Eau Claire, Wisconsin for over a year now, where she now directs newscasts - controlling cameras, graphics, mics and other elements live-on-air and says it’s a blast!

Jordan Paquet and his wife are expecting their first child very soon and they cannot wait for what’s to come. Jordan is celebrating his first year working in global marketing for Helly Hansen, a sailing, skiing and outdoor brand, in Norway.

Trent Podskalan married Leann Herrmann (’15 NMU alum). Trent left his position at Ferris State to begin as Residence Hall Director at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in July. Prior to having ankle surgery, Trent was frequently going to clean off the top of gravestones in a nearby cemetery of deceased veterans.
Bailey Andrzejewski is working as a pharmacy technician. Liz Dow was recently hired as a sixth grade teacher at Charlton Heston Academy in St. Helen, Michigan, teaching math, science, and writing, to a class of 24. She mentioned there are a few other Wildcat alumni on staff at the school. Ben Harris recently moved to Traverse City, Michigan to work in Software Development at Hagerty Classic Car Insurance. He is working on finding service opportunities. Ben’s favorite memories were the SLFP retreats and his CSI as the coach/mentor for the Robogators FTC Robotics Team.

Abby (Austin) Trefilek married Matthew Trefilek, a fellow Ice Block, on July 1! She is a Biology and Human Anatomy Teacher at Hononegah High School in Rockton, Illinois and is working on getting involved in the Madison Community and Hononegah School Community. Abby is still adjusting to the city life! All of the friends she made in the SLFP have been great influences on her life! Whether it was helping her and Matt find a place in Madison, wedding planning, or getting adjusted to the new move, they have all been a great help!

Katie Pershinske is getting married in July of 2018. She traveled to Norway for a couple weeks this summer.