Onyx Blocks
2013 - 2015

still connected
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The 22nd group, Banana Blocks, graduated 46 for a new total of 862 SLFP graduates. We are now at nearly 100,000 hours of service through the internships in positions of community leadership at nearly 400 different project sites. Over 650 different community members have mentored, many of them have done it multiple years.

**Honors and Awards**

In 2013 we published an article in the *Journal of College and Character*. We won a NASPA Bronze Excellence Award for being one of the most outstanding, innovative, and effective student development programs in the nation, and as you may have heard, NMU was awarded Michigan’s 2013 Community Engaged Campus of the Year, an honor largely recognizing programs and initiatives like the SLFP!

**Fundraising Update**

By far, the most exciting development for the Student Leader Fellowship Program this past year has been the announcement at our summer reunion that the SLFP endowment was formally named the David L. Bonsall Endowment for the Student Leader Fellowship Program. Accompanying that announcement, was recognition that the endowment surpassed the $200,000 mark and that the gifts from this year alone, undoubtedly due to the secret sharing of our naming plan, was over $30,000.

Though most of you already know Dave pretty well, we would like to share why we are so proud that the name and legacy of David Bonsall will forever be attached to the Student Leader Fellowship Program. Dave was instrumental in creating the SLFP. He has contributed a significant amount of money to the endowment every year since it was established. He was involved with coordinating and sustaining the program for 22 years. He has attended every fall retreat and served as keynote speaker at dinner multiple times. Dave served as the site adviser for multiple internship projects, been a mentor for the past 5 years, presented *Skill Builder!* workshops on a variety of leadership topics, and he taught the UN 250 class for many years. Perhaps, most important of all, Dave lives his life in a way that exemplifies the vision and goals of this tremendous program. For these reasons and more, the SLFP endowment will forever bear his name, his legacy will live on, and his story will be told at fall retreats and graduation receptions forever.

**New SLFP Staff**

As you likely also know, our endowment naming project coincided with the bittersweet retirement of our servant leadership hero and SLFP namesake Dave Bonsall. We
miss him dearly around the office, but the sweet part comes in congratulating Rachel Harris and Jon Barch on receiving promotions and welcoming Teal Block SLFP Alum, Hannah (Kratz) Lewis to the SLFP team as an interim coordinator in the Center for Student Enrichment. We could not be more pleased to have two SLFP graduates at the SLFP helm now. Speaking of changes around the office, we have been tremendously thrilled to have someone as skilled, ambitious, and fun to work with as Kerri Nevala in the position of SLFP secretary since November 2012.

**What’s Next?**

To wrap it up we wanted to mention that the SLFP was recently selected for the Marquette Community Foundation to receive the 2013 President’s Volunteer Service Award later this month. On that same path, we will be applying for the Carter Partnership Award for Campus Community Collaboration again this year so keep your thoughts positive and your ears open for an announcement on this in the spring.

**RED BLOCKS**

DeAnna Doyle-Strand has been married to Fred for 18 years. They have three children: Kennedy who is a junior in high school and has NMU at the top of her list for colleges, Nikkole is in eighth grade, and Trey is in fourth grade. DeAnna is still the training and development manager at Venchurs, was the Vacation Bible School Director again this summer, and continues to be a Girl Scout leader.

Damien Barrett and his family just moved into a 3-bedroom house in Fairfield, New Jersey, with a large yard for his two kids: Casey (6) and Maggie (5) to play. He is still working at MKA, a large private school in northern New Jersey. Damien hopes to start work on his masters this fall. He enjoys playing with his children and has recently taught them how to play chess and checkers. He also continues to teach intro to computers and iPad evening classes at the local adult school. One memory of the SLFP he reflects upon is that 20 years ago he was editing the SLFP newsletter on a 9” black and white screen on a Mac SE/30.

**BLUE BLOCKS**

DeAnna Doyle-Strand and her three children

Maggie and Casey Barrett
Sherry (Szczpanski) Rosenkranz purchased her dream home last year in Clarkston, Michigan, with her husband, Christopher, and daughter, Jill. She currently is holding the role of group director, strategy for a social media company in Birmingham, Michigan, and she absolutely loves it. She is in her fourth year as a LIVESTRONG leader and in her second year as a board member for Camp Kesem, University of Michigan. Camp Kesem is a college student-run summer camp for kids with a parent who has or has had cancer. One memory she would like to reflect upon is how fortunate she is to be close to her SLFP buds.

**PURPLE BLOCKS**

Congratulations to Holger Wagner and Andrea Gommans (Yellow Block) who welcomed their fourth musketeer! They have begun the six-month legal process of adopting a 19-month old girl, Zuri Baraka (meaning beautiful blessing). She is fitting in well with the other three musketeers.

**YELLOW BLOCKS**

Andrea Gommans is completing her 6th year of living in Nairobi, Kenya. Her family just gained custody of a 19-month old girl named Zuri Baraka (see a photo of Zuri under her husband, Holger Wagner, Purple Block) and are starting the legal process of adopting her.

**AQUA BLOCKS**

Father Allen P. Mott is still living in Houghton and is the priest at St. Albert the Great University Parish on the campus of Michigan Technological University. He has celebrated his 10th anniversary as a priest of Jesus Christ and celebrated his 50th anniversary of St. Al’s as a student parish in August. He just acquired a bell cast 1912 for Holy Trinity Church in Ironwood, and he hopes to get the 1,875 lb. bell installed and calling folks to prayer. He and his parents are putting an addition on their hunting camp.
process to adopt her. They have three other children: Zoe, Noah, and Niall who are very excited and helpful with their new sister. Andrea is currently a full-time mother and spends many hours volunteering at her kids Waldorf School and creating and managing her online Etsy shop.

Kristina (Balzarini) Wommer is living in the Detroit area and working as a business manager for an R&D company. She and her husband traveled to South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe last November. She says if you are planning any trips you should consider incorporating some “voluntourism” into your itinerary. She wants to wish Dave a very happy retirement; she enjoyed working with him and all of his enthusiasm!

Eric Martin recently moved back to Michigan after living in Washington, DC with his family for seven years. In January he and his wife Melissa will celebrate their 10th anniversary. They have two daughters: Grace Rose (4) and Amelia Lynn (who turned 2 in July). Eric is currently an analyst with the US Department of Justice’s research and evaluation arm. He also teaches online classes at George Washington University. He doesn’t do much outside from work and family, but he likes to be able to catch a Tiger game now and then. His favorite memory is the leadership class that Dave and Rachel taught. He says that this is the class that he draws on most in his professional career.

Lea Karavias and her husband, Gabe, who were married on July 5, 2013! They are currently living in Denver. Lea works for a biologics company and has been there for the past three years. Lea practices yoga as much as she can, and she will be attending a yoga retreat in Naples, Florida. The company she works
for recently started a leadership program, where certain employees were selected to participate in a personality test and a teambuilding exercise. At that first meeting, it occurred to her that she had been here before—NMU and SLFP are years ahead of corporate America in shaping leaders. Thank you!

**MANGO BLOCKS**

Chena (Filizetti) Beaudry and her family are currently living in Clawson, Michigan, while she finishes her residency training in neurology. Her husband, Shawn, is currently a stay-at-home dad to their 15-month-old son, Luca, who keeps them both busy. Chena and Shawn just celebrated their fourth wedding anniversary in June. She graduated from Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine with a doctorate in osteopathic in 2011 and is now in her third year of her neurology residency program at St. John Oakland-Macomb Hospital. Congratulations! The SLFP memory she would like to reflect upon is the Christmas party at Presque Isle and how pretty the decorations were and how everyone was squeezed tightly into the little room playing “Greed” while laughing and having fun.

Congratulations to Tyson and Lindsey Butorac who welcomed their son, Mitchell Allen, to the world on October 11, 2012! Lindsey is enjoying this age since he is starting to sit and entertain on his own. They are still living in the home that they built in 2010 in Ishpeming. Lindsey is still the manager of HRIS and Payroll at NMU. Mitchell keeps them quite busy so there is not much time to participate in leisure or community activities, but she will once he gets involved with things. One memory she’d like to reflect upon is Dave’s retirement and how it is a bittersweet moment for the program. She is grateful she had the opportunity to be a part of such an excellent leadership program. Thanks for the memories, Dave!

After being a traveling nurse for five years, Erin Wills now has a permanent job and is living in Denver, Colorado. Congratulations! She left her job as a bedside nurse in the Pediatric Critical Care Unit and has taken a job as the clinical information system coordinator for the medical surgical units at Children’s Hospital of Colorado.

**FUCHSIA BLOCKS**

Congratulations to Alana Stuart for finishing the on-campus coursework portion for her Master’s degree in international education this May at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont! She is currently interviewing for a position in international student recruiting or study abroad. This summer she led a group of high school students on an experiment in international living trip around Spain for five weeks.

**MINT BLOCKS**

Amber Chiapuzio moved back to the mainland from Hawaii in April and is now living in Fort Irwin, California. She says it’s a little hot for her, but there are many things to do in the surrounding area (LA and Vegas!). She has been in the army for
3½ years and is about to be promoted to captain. Congratulations! Recently she graduated from an OB/GYN specialty course and now can help as a labor and delivery/postpartum nurse. She enjoys hiking, going to the gym, traveling around California for baseball and hockey games (Dodgers and Kings), and heading back to the U.P. as often as she can to visit friends and family. The memory she would like to reflect upon is the fall retreat which was always a blast! She also misses the dinners, guest speakers, and mentor program.

**Liz (Becker) O’Brien** just moved to Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Congratulations to Liz and Matt O’Brien who were married on July 21, 2012! She is an RN at UW Hospital on trauma/MC inpatient floor. She enjoys traveling (they went to Jamaica for their honeymoon). She volunteers with organizing her grandma’s remembrance race. Liz thinks about her fellow Mint Blocks and mentors often.

Congratulations to **Katie (Trevor) Olds** who recently bought a house in Cane Ridge, Tennessee! She was promoted to cytogenetics technologist II and will be helping build the company’s new array CGH department and training for the incorporation of the new laboratory information system. She currently volunteers in her church to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children in the area.

**Jeron Schmidt** is living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and absolutely loves it. Jeron is still employed as a senior admissions counselor for Northern Michigan University. In the fall he keeps busy by reffing football (it will be his fourth year as a registered official with the Minnesota State High School League). One memory Jeron would like to reflect upon is the anxiousness he had waiting to find out who his mentor was going to be. In the end, the worrying was useless as he and his mentor got along great.

**Melissa Engelmeier** is living just outside Duluth, Minnesota. They recently wrapped up Grandma’s Marathon weekend. She is working at the University of MN-Duluth in the catering services as an event coordinator. She has been able to learn more tasks and is always involved with what’s happening on campus. She enjoys running, spending time outside, and has been volunteering a lot of her time at church doing a monthly newsletter and various youth activities.

**Raechel Percy** is currently in the process of moving to Lexington, Kentucky, to begin her residency at UK HealthCare. In May 2013, she graduated from Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine with her doctorate in osteopathic medicine. Congratulations! She doesn’t have much free time but wants to get involved with the adaptive rowing program at the Louisville Rowing Club once she gets settled in.
Kentucky. One memory Raechel would like to reflect upon is the retreats at Bay Cliff Health Camp, as an employee, volunteer, and member of SLFP it has helped shape her career path in physical medicine and rehab.

Nicole Stumpf has recently settled down in her hometown of Appleton after moving around Wisconsin for the past three years. She is currently working towards her Master’s in school counseling at Lakeside College and is expected to graduate in December 2014. She is a Tastefully Simple Consultant and loves it! One memory she would like to reflect upon is the friendships and experience she gained during her CSI. She still goes and visits the Girl Scout office every time she comes to Marquette and has dinner with staff and volunteers. She uses the same skills every day at work and hopes to implement a program on adolescent self-esteem that she developed during her CSI in her internship this fall. She has a fond memory of winning the first outstanding CSI award, and it was from then on she knew she wanted to work with youth for a living.

Congratulations to Dayna (Keranen) Watson on getting married last September! Dayna and her husband purchased a home last June and are calling Appleton, Wisconsin home. She is currently employed with Integrys Energy Groups where she is the community relations lead for the External Affairs Department. She is involved in many community-based organizations through work. Dayna enjoys spending time with her husband, friends, and dogs. The memory she would like to reflect on is spending the evening on the shores of Lake Superior during the retreat at the bonfire.

Ara Wittwer moved to Virginia last year for a new job. She works at a high school in Poquoson, Virginia as the lead athletic trainer. Ara has volunteered at a community health awareness program by giving physicals to under-insured adults. Free time is scarce but she was able to snowboard this winter and is paddleboarding and surfing at the beach. She is looking at continuing her education classes to become a physician extender. One memory that sticks with Ara is during an icebreaker in class she now automatically attaches an alliteration adjective to his/her name.

Kiwi Blocks

Becky Rasmussen moved to Fife Lake, Michigan, in June with her husband, Mitch Foster. Congratulations to Becky and Mitch who got married on July 13 at her lake house in Laona, Wisconsin! She recently graduated from St. Cloud State University with a Master’s degree in Cardiac Rehabilitation/Exercise Science. One memory she wants to reflect upon is being recruited to the SLFP by Abby (Starich) Lengas when she was a freshman and again by her for the leadership programs coordinator position. “Abby still likes to remind me how she changed my life while living across the hall from me and taking me under her wing,” says Becky.

Gold Blocks

Congratulations to Geneva Martin who graduated from NMU in May! She lived a nomadic lifestyle this summer in Minneapolis and the
other part in Marquette. In August she began a 9-month Naturalist Training and Environmental Education program in Finland, Minnesota. After the 9-month program, she hopes to find a job in an urban area working to reconnect youth with the environment. She has volunteered abroad in both Ireland and Haiti in the past year.

**BANANA BLOCKS**

Cassy Hastings has one more year left at Northern before heading off to medical school. She recently took the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) and is currently filling out her application. This summer she volunteered with her mom for meals on wheels in her hometown, and she was in Paris, France, for two months doing research in physics. One memory she would like to reflect on is how she always enjoyed the fall retreats!

Katie Miller was in Alaska for the summer where she was born and raised. She still has two more years of attending Northern, where she is working toward her BFA in ceramics. In October she will be running the Chicago Marathon as a fundraiser for Cornerstone Community Outreach, a homeless shelter in Chicago.

Liz Sabin worked at her family cottage in Boyne Falls, Michigan, this summer. She was also substitute teaching all over Grand Rapids, which is her hometown for experience which will help with her future career. She also volunteered at Lake Louise Camp again this summer. She hopes to complete a mini-tri by the end of the summer.

Melissa Esser will be graduating from NMU in a year with a degree in psychology/behavior analysis. She currently works in the Center for Student Enrichment as a Superior Edge student coordinator. Her involvements on campus include Superior Edge, Circle K, Psi Chi, and she is the president of the Student Psychological Association. As of right now, she only has a boyfriend, Kevin. When she graduates next year, she hopes to attend graduate school and her career goal is to become a behavioral therapist for children, specifically on the autism spectrum. Her favorite memory of the SLFP was her Community Service Internship with the Women’s and Children’s Center at Marquette General Hospital.

Rachel Gruler spent time at home in Petoskey, Michigan, this summer and is now at NMU for her senior year where she is pursuing a nursing degree. This summer she worked at Galley Gourmet, a deli and catering service. She also participated in Camp STAR in August at Bay Cliff Health Camp. She will never forget the SLFP graduation, as it was great to see what everyone accomplished individually and as a whole.

Shelbi Lisecki worked in Marquette this summer at her old internship site. She currently works for Child and Family Services of the UP as the fundraising and communications coordinator, this position is a direct result of her participation in SLFP. She would like to volunteer with either the hospital or hospice to continue pursuing the prerequisites she needs to apply to med school. One memory she wanted to reflect on is the great friends she met through the program.