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**JEP Annual Report
2019**



Greetings from the USC Joint Educational Project

As the year—and decade—comes to a close, the Joint Educational Project (JEP) staff has been reflecting on our work. We are proud of our long-term partnerships with schools and non-profit organizations in the neighborhoods surrounding campus. We also celebrate the achievements of newer programs that extend our work in meaningful ways.

In the last decade, JEP launched the Pre-Law Project to create service opportunities for students interested in public interest law. This filled a significant gap for undergraduates who lack access to internships and other opportunities that are available only to current law students. The Readers^{PLUS} program created Little Yoginis and USC Yogis to teach yoga and mindfulness to elementary school children. These two programs complement a third—the Peace Project, established in partnership with Sola Community Peace Center—designed to teach peacemaking skills to 2nd and 3rd grade students. We invited high school seniors from Foshay Learning Center into a USC Freshman Seminar (FSEM 100: [W]rites of Passage) to learn more about the transition to college and to get support with writing the college essay. And we established a partnership with Faculty Masters at South, McCarthy and Ilium Residential Colleges to infuse service-learning into residential education.

In 2019, JEP's reach extended farther than ever—across town, over borders and even out of this world! JEP's Young Scientists Program (YSP)

partnered with the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center on USC's Health Sciences Campus to develop curricula for YSP's Medical STEM Program. For the first time, JEP supported a summer international service-learning exchange with Hong Kong Polytechnic University that focused on issues of housing and homelessness in Los Angeles and Hong Kong. And in October, Vermont Elementary School students made contact with astronauts on the International Space Station through YSP.

This annual report provides details about many of these programs; our website (www.usc.edu/jep) has even more. Indeed, JEP has grown tremendously in the last decade—as has our budget. We provide more than \$30,000 in student scholarships annually and support more than 150 student staff members. We truly couldn't do what we do without the support of friends and alumni like you. Thank you so much for supporting the Joint Educational Project and please consider JEP as you plan your philanthropic giving this year—and decade.

Wishing you all the best in 2020!

Warm regards,

Susan Harris
Executive Director

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Use your phone to scan the QR Codes embedded throughout this report to link to our website and learn more about JEP's programs:



Full-Time Staff



Brenda Pesante
Director of Community
Partnerships



Emma Rendón
Director of Non-Profit
Partnerships - Fall



Dieuwertje J. Kast
STEM Programs Manager



Jacqueline J. Whitley
Director of Non-Profit
Partnerships - Spring



Sable Manson
Assistant Director for Student
Leadership and Development



Samantha Bernstein-Sierra
Assistant Director of Research
and Academic Affairs



Sharon Blount
Office Manager



Susan Harris
Executive Director



Tina Koneazny
Associate Director,
Administration &
Educational Outreach

Service-Learning and Community Engagement

Service-Learning “JEP”

Service-learning is an educational approach that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. JEP uses a peer educator approach to support more than 150 service-learning courses each semester. JEP students earn course credit while providing service at a wide range of sites, including local schools, non-profits, health and legal clinics, and other community-based organizations.

Understanding Homelessness through Service

The Understanding Homelessness through Service (UHS) program provides multiple opportunities for service-learning students to learn about the complex problem of homelessness in Los Angeles and abroad.

Readers^{PLUS}

USC Readers^{PLUS} is an America Reads/America Counts literacy and math tutoring program operated by JEP at seven local schools. Since the program began in 1997, Readers^{PLUS} has trained and placed approximately 100 work-study students every semester.

Pre-Law Project

JEP’s Pre-Law Project is an internship program that provides real-world legal experience to undergraduate students who are interested in exploring the field of public interest law.



Little Yoginis

Little Yoginis is a curriculum that integrates children’s literature with yoga postures, meditation and mindfulness. Trained USC Yogis present lessons during the school day and after school to first- through third-grade students.

Trojan Health Volunteers

Trojan Health Volunteers offers undergraduate pre-med/pre-health students the opportunity to obtain valuable volunteer experiences in a number of hospital and clinical settings.

Public Service Internship Program

The Public Service Internship Program is a summer program designed to give JEP students a deeper understanding of the community-based organizations at which they served during the prior academic year.

Young Scientists Program

The Young Scientists Program is an inquiry-based, hands-on STEM educational outreach program. It places USC students as teaching assistants at seven schools and brings scientific laboratory experiences directly into second- through fifth-grade classrooms.

Service-Learning (JEP) Students

PJ Hughes

Freshman, Cognitive Science Major

"I just love doing this kind of work. I think it's super super fun and it's a great way to get course credit, volunteer, or potentially get paid someday because it is such a great field to go into. It has actually influenced my future and career goals."

Alan Dong

Sophomore, Economics Major & Cinematic Arts Minor

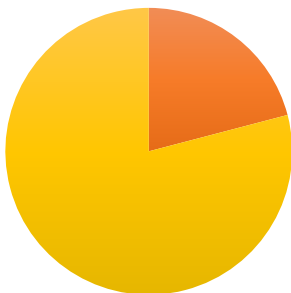
"What the JEP assignment does exceptionally well is connect what you are learning in class to applying it in the real world because that is how children learn the best. I really value service-learning a lot now that I understand how it truly works."

Stella Miller

Freshman, Accounting Major

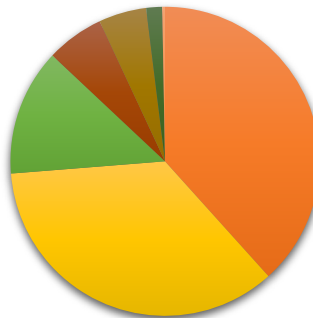
"My favorite moment was when I finally figured out how to help my student better. I gave him something that was a little more fun like a computer science homework related to his math and reading curriculum. It made me really excited to see him spark and be happy about something for once because he didn't really have that before."

First Generation College Student



■ First Generation ■ Non First Generation

Ethnicity



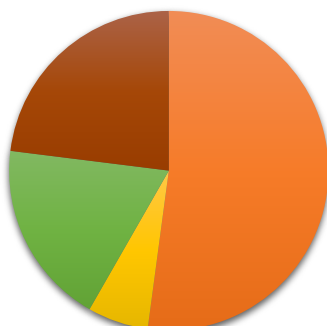
■ Asian/Pacific Islander ■ White
 ■ Hispanic/Latino ■ Other
 ■ Black/ African-American ■ N/A
 ■ Native American

Gender



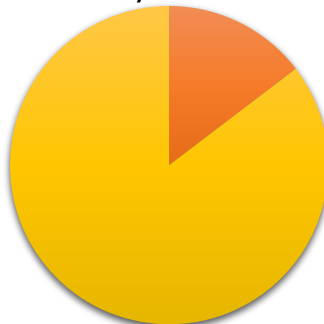
■ Male ■ Female

JEP Assignment



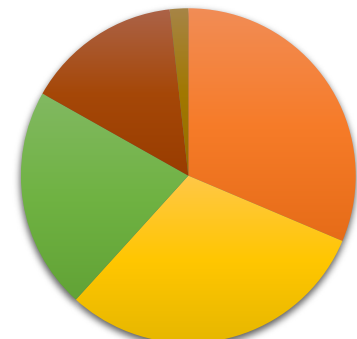
■ Mini-Course ■ Teaching Assistant
 ■ Mentor ■ Special Assignment

Course/Volunteer



■ Volunteer ■ Course

Student Year



■ Freshman ■ Sophomore
 ■ Junior ■ Senior
 ■ Graduate Student

JEP Partnerships

“Working with JEP is a true partnership. Every member of their staff is dedicated, professional, and always willing to go the extra mile to support our program on campus. We have partnered directly with JEP for over 10 years. It is truly an honor to work alongside such a renowned service program.”

- Carolina Canseco, JusticeCorps Program Coordinator

“Our programs at Manual Arts have flourished over the past years of working together and JEP has been such an integral part of that growth.”

- T Sarmina, 826LA at Manual Arts Program Manager

Trojan Health Volunteers (THV)

10 Sites, 217 USC Students

California Hospital Medical Center, Cedars-Sinai, USC Norris Cancer Center, USC Keck, COPE Health Clinical Care Extenders, Good Samaritan Hospital, Hollywood Presbyterian, Orthopedic Institute for Children, Eisner Health, MLK Dental

Pre-Law Project

6 Sites, 55 USC Students

Esperanza, Earth Justice, Bet Tzedek, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Los Angeles County Bar Association - Veteran’s Legal Services Project, and USC Gould School of Law Immigration Clinic

Community-Based Organizations

25 Sites, 360 USC Students

1736 Family Crisis Center, 826LA-Echo Park, A Place Called Home, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA, California Hospital Medical Center, Central American Resource Center, Chrysalis, DPS Cadet Program, Downtown Women’s Center, Good Shepherd Shelter, Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles Public Library – The Source, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Living Advantage, 826LA – Manual Arts, Midnight Mission, Miracle Messages, Neighborhood Academic Initiative, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, PATH-Gramercy, PATH – West LA, School on Wheels, The Francisco Homes, The RightWay Foundation, University Eye Center at Los Angeles, Upward Bound

K - 12 Schools

15 Sites, 1189 USC Students

32nd Street School, Adams Middle School, Alexander Science Center, Berendo Middle School, Birdielee V. Bright Elementary, Foshay Learning Center, John W. Mack Elementary, Lenicia B. Weemes Elementary, Manual Arts High School, Martin Luther King Elementary, Norwood Street School, Richard Merkin Middle School, St. Raphael School, St. Vincent School, Vermont Elementary



Happiness, Yoga, and Reading at the Festival of Books

JEP's growing partnership with the *Los Angeles Times* allowed an amazing new opportunity at this year's Festival of Books. For 25 minutes on Saturday, April 13th, Little Yoginis took over the Target Children's Stage to showcase some K – 5 aspiring authors from our partner schools, as well as the work of a wonderful friend of JEP and our Little Yoginis curriculum.

We were thrilled to have our first, second and fifth grade contest winners from our happiness-themed writing contest kick-off the presentation as they joined us on-stage to read their inspiring essays. Behind stage before presenting, we all took some deep cleansing breaths together to calm our nerves, as I shared with the kids that I was also a little scared and nervous about being on stage in front of so many people! Thankfully, we were graced with the presence of Teresa Power, author of *The ABC's of Yoga for Kids*, a seasoned presenter who helped bring a sense of calm confidence to all of us.

Our Little Yoginis curriculum, which is typically taught to first through third grade children in our neighborhood schools tying children's literature with yoga themes and practice, was co-presented by Teresa and me, beginning with a reading of the book *I am Yoga* (Author: Susan

Verde; Illustrator, Peter Reynolds) and followed by a short yoga practice which invited both kids and parents to focus on their breath as they were introduced to some simple yoga poses and a quiet moment of meditation. It was a joy to look out into the crowd and see young and old breathing and moving together, sharing their light and love with those around them.

While yoga was happening on Saturday on stage, throughout the full two days of the Festival USC Readers^{PLUS} leadership staff and tutors engaged over 500 children in fun, interactive reading and math activities and storybook reading at our program booth sponsored by Dornsife College and the *LA Times*. All children who visited our booth received two free books, thanks to donations from the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Project Books and Blankies, and Skylight Books.

The *LA Times* has brought further happiness to our program this semester by funding four USC Readers^{PLUS} tutors who would not have been able to join us otherwise for lack of Federal Work-Study funds. Many thanks to the *Times*, the kids, and to Teresa for sharing the stage with us!

- Tina Koneazny
(Associate Director)





7 Schools - 16 Student Leaders - 97 Tutors

"I have built such close connections to all of my students, the staff, and the schools. You can grow as a person, as a leader, and you can take on a lot of responsibility." - Sabrina Barrow, Math Director

"I like how the ReadersPlus Program has helped me improve my math and how my tutor has helped me pronounce harder words correctly in Charlotte's Web." - Jasmine Rodriguez, 5th Grade



Literacy - Math - Yoga

"I feel like I'm having a great time with the Readers Program. My tutor helped me gain more confidence in reading. I had difficulties with some words but she helped me." - Jesus Lopez, 4th Grade

"I am so thankful for this job and how tutors are able to create such an incredible bond with their students and the staff on-site." - Hana Franz-Myers, Asst. Coordinator, Norwood



Little Yoginis



USC Hatches more Yogis

This semester has been one of growth in terms of introducing yoga to children in our neighboring community. For the past several years, first through third graders have been practicing calming breath, meditation and yoga postures connected to children’s literature during our Readers^{PLUS} afterschool programs. Thanks to the generosity of our good friend, author and yogi, Teresa Power, we were able to hire and train additional USC Yogis to teach five classrooms during the regular school day. Between regular classroom sessions and after school offerings, over 300 six- to eight-year-olds have been treated to weekly yoga practice.

Our twelve trained “USC Yogis” overwhelmingly selected *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss as their favorite lesson. This lesson introduces the yoga principle of Tapas, the Sanskrit word for responsibility, as Horton the Elephant is determined and faithful to his promise to a lazy bird unwilling to mind her own egg. Students practice “elephant breath” and “tree pose” as part of the lesson.

Carol Abrajan, Science Center Readers^{PLUS} coordinator and seasoned USC Yogi in her second year, shared the children’s response to the lesson: “The kids really liked the rhyming aspect and

even learned Horton’s mantra and would recite it whenever it came up in the story. (‘I meant what I said and said what I meant. An elephant’s faithful. 100%’). Once we were done, we talked about responsibility and faithfulness. One child talked about how responsibility is about earning things and showing you are worthy of having treats and privileges.”

Hana Frasz-Myers, new USC Yogi and Readers^{PLUS} Assistant Coordinator at Norwood Elementary remarked on the practice connected to the book theme: “The kids really enjoyed the elephant breathing and some of the harder poses that require more balance, such as tree pose which mimics Horton in the tree.”

All neighborhood students treated to Little Yoginis this semester also received Teresa’s book *ABCs of Yoga for Kids Around the World* at the last lesson of the semester to inspire them to continue to practice yoga at home on their own. We look forward to more Little Yoginis in the new year!

- Tina Koneazny
(Associate Director)



Public Service Internship Program



This summer, through our Public Service Internship Program, the Joint Educational Project was able to offer paid internships to six USC students interested in continuing their service with the JEP sites at which they were placed with during the academic year. The purpose of was to allow students to develop a deeper understanding of how the organizations work, as well as to explore the idea of a career in the non-profit sector. Between May and August of 2019, the students worked with several sites: 826LA, A Place Called Home, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, EarthJustice, and Homeboy Industries. Through close work with agency employees and service recipients, the students were able to make an impact in their community, gain a deeper understanding of the work done through the non-profit they were working with, and assess how a career in a like field might suit their interests and skills.

We recruited prospective interns from the pool of students who volunteered at non-profit partners during the 2018-19 academic year. Applicants were required to consult with the organization to develop a meaningful project for the summer internship. The students submitted proposals, along with a letter of support from the sponsoring organization, to JEP in April 2019. Jacqueline Whitley, JEP's Director of Non-Profit Partnerships reviewed proposals, interviewed candidates, and selected six interns for the 2019 program. All interns worked on-site at the organizations for approximately 200 hours over the course of the summer (20 hours/week for 10 weeks). They received \$3,000 stipends for the work.

One intern, Alvin, created an educational workshop and resource which benefited 826LA as well as other organizations he works with. Another intern, Catherine, was thankful for the amount of support she received at EarthJustice particularly from other professional women of color. Catherine

said it was inspirational to see women of color not only in leadership positions but also so willing to help students' future career aspirations. Intern Giselle enjoyed making connections with her students at Homeboy Industries. She described working hard to establish trust with her students and feeling like a "homie" whenever her students would remember her name and want to share personal stories with her. A Place Called Home Intern Jacqueline was able to gain insight into the importance of educational services for the whole family in creating a conducive college-going environment. She plans to apply these lessons directly to her future work in educational counseling. Finally, our last intern, Tracey, reported how timely her internship opportunity at Asian-Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ) was for her. Not only did the experience help her acclimate to Southern California but her experiences confirmed her passion for minority group advocacy and non-profit work. Her time at AAAJ also helped her better connect personally with her parents' immigrant story.

All our public service interns reported having overwhelmingly positive experiences with their organizations and enjoyed working closely with colleagues they already knew and admired. Many of our public service interns plan to continue volunteering/contributing at their service sites because of the personal and professional connections they were able to establish with their supervisors, clients, and colleagues.

- Sable Manson
(Assistant Director for Student
Leadership and Development)



Young Scientists Program

Initiating Contact in 3...2...1!

The Young Scientists Program and Vermont Elementary School make radio contact with the International Space Station

After over a year of proposal-drafting, internal preparations and establishing partnerships with dedicated, licensed ham radio technicians in the Los Angeles area, students at Vermont Avenue Elementary School became the first K-5 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to participate in an Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) radio contact event. ARISS is a volunteer organization that recruits licensed amateur radio technicians and pairs them with educators to schedule designated times and dates with NASA for initiating radio contact with the International Space Station (ISS). ARISS partners directly with NASA to make these contacts possible, and due to the incredibly packed schedule of the crew members on the ISS, only 15 contacts across the world occur in a calendar year, making such contact slots highly coveted and prestigious.

A competition was held at the school in the early Fall of 2019, facilitated by Vermont Elementary School teachers and the leadership staff of YSP, to select 10 students whose questions for the ISS crew were thoughtful, unique and “not easily Google-able.” These students had the opportunity to ask their questions directly to astronaut and ISS Commander Luca Parmitano (from the Italian crew on-board the ISS Expedition 60) during a tight, approximately 9-minute contact window in the early afternoon of Monday, October 28th, 2019. The contact period itself was limited by the angle at which the ISS was due to pass over the elementary school on that particular date, and directional and radial antennas installed on the roof of a building just outside the multipurpose room at the school allowed for precise tracking of the space station during this contact period.

In addition to being part of a truly historic event for the school district and the community more broadly, students participated in a modified version of the ISS ABOVE curriculum, established by ISS ABOVE creator Liam Kennedy and in collaboration with myself (Rita Barakat) and DJ Kast of YSP. Students learned about the various interstellar forces that act upon our planet and other celestial bodies in our solar system, as well as the kinds of research projects scientists on-board the space station conduct. Students also engaged in hands-on, inquiry-based science activities that focused on specific aspects of life in space, including how to eat and sleep in a microgravity environment such as that on the space station.

Immediately after the contact event, fourth grade teacher Ms. Elsa Campos commented that “one of my students turned around, looked at me and said ‘We really talked to a real astronaut! Wow!’ The look on his face: absolutely priceless.”

We at YSP would like to thank the following individuals and organizations, without whom this contact would not have been possible: the amazing Ham Radio Team, whose collective radio expertise and equipment made this event possible, the office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, who helped expand the breadth of circulation about this historic event, and Congresswoman Karen Bass and Jacqueline Hamilton, a representative from the Congresswoman’s office, for marking this historic event by issuing certificates to the students and YSP staff who participated in the contact.

- Rita Barakat (Graduate STEM Program Assistant & Coordinator)





"I grew up two miles away from USC, so I benefited from JEP and the programs it offers the community. Their volunteers and workers taught me various subjects such as science, government, and history. They came to not only my elementary but also my middle and high school. USC students were exceptional in my eyes because every time they would enter my classroom, it was a reminder that there was more to life than what I was experiencing daily. They also made me want to pursue higher education. The passion many of these students used to teach the subjects they were learning about was highly captivating and intriguing. As an elementary student, I remember learning that by mixing mentos and soda, it would create an explosive reaction. That was the day that I told myself I would grow up to be just like those students. And well here I am today, after being accepted to USC, I applied to work with a fantastic program (YSP), and was accepted. I continue to work within YSP and will do so until I graduate."

- Jasmin Sanchez, YSP Coordinator



Trojan Health Volunteers

New Dental Program

Trojan Health Volunteers offered a new site alternative this semester for our pre-health students, specifically those focused on pursuing dentistry. Dr. Ryan Grier, the program director for the Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Dentistry at Harbor UCLA worked with us to establish this new program to allow USC students to observe dental residents. The goal of this general practice residency is to educate and train dentists in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that represent the highest level of excellence in general practice and hospital dentistry. These pre-dental students have the opportunity to gain exposure to oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral pathology, orthodontics, orthognathic surgery, MJ pathology,

implantology, facial trauma, and facial pain while they shadow the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery and Hospital Dentistry (GPR) residents while they rotate at Martin Luther King Jr., Outpatient Center. Here, they will bring much needed care to the underserved community that this Los Angeles County Department of Health Services facilities serves. This new site serves as the first alternative to pre-medical volunteering opportunities, and has officially become our 10th volunteering partnership offered to pre-health students.

- Claire Cassianni,
THV Director



Speaker Events in 2019

Dr. William Magee



Dr. Magee is working at the Division of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He has travelled the world to help Operation Smile, a nonprofit medical service organization which provides cleft lip and palate repair surgeries to children worldwide.

Scott Kobner



Kobner is a resident Physician at LAC+USC. He completed his undergraduate degree at Emory University with a BS in Biology, just before entering into New York University School of Medicine. He is a member of the American College of Emergency Physicians as well as the Emergency Medicine Residents Association.

Dr. Peter Hegyi



Dr. Hegyi is the director of translational medicine at the University of Pecs in Hungary. He is involved in several fields of scholarship, largely focusing on the physiology and epidemiology of the pancreas. He is currently in charge of leading the Centre for Translational Medicine.

Stephen McAndrew



McAndrew is the Deputy Regional Director of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). He led IFRC's life-saving operations in Sierra Leone at two of the main Ebola treatment centers in the cities of Kenema and Kono and critical community outreach, contact tracing and psychosocial support services.

Pre-Law Project



Interview with Pre-Law Project Intern Stefanie Portillo Freshman, Political Economics and Public Policy Major

Could you explain your assignment to me?

"I currently intern at Gould School of Law's Immigration Clinic and what we do there is that we basically help people apply for citizenship. Depending on how complicated their case is we have to go through paperwork and asking the lawyers who work with us certain questions. In addition to that, sometimes there'll be other projects that we are asked to help with - especially for me because I speak Spanish. They ask me to translate for these projects, especially for some of the law students who are also working in a different section in the Immigration Clinic."

What was your favorite memory from your assignment?

"I don't know if I would say favorite as in "it was fun to experience" but it is definitely something I am glad I got to experience. [I]t was one of the people I first translated for. I translated for a law student in the clinic because he was writing up a declaration for one of the clients who had come from Honduras. [His client] was talking about his experiences back at home in Honduras. [He] was applying for asylum and there were things that were said that were very impactful to me. Especially because when you are translating you translate in first person so it is as if you are saying it yourself, as if it is your story, so the things that were said felt to me as if I was living through it. Not to say it was traumatizing but it definitely made a big impact on me. I mean, obviously I knew these things happen but it never became real to me or I don't think I have ever met anyone who had gone through the things that he was explaining. You read about it but it is not the same as if you hear it from someone directly. That is something that people need to understand because it helps you empathize with people and their experiences."

How do you think your assignment has helped you both personally and professionally?

"Personally, it really helped open up my eyes to the things that are being experienced by people and I know for a fact that I became motivated. Sometimes school becomes super un motivating but hearing his story made me remember what I wanted to do, whether that is going into law or going into another sector of government. I think it was definitely inspiring and motivating to go do something and change the world for the better. Professionally, I would say I definitely understand more how the office experience works and how it feels to be self-accountable and disciplined. Another way it has helped me was to communicate not only with people in the office but also with people who don't necessarily understand legal terminology or how certain laws are functioning. So working with the general public has helped in that space."

What do you think is the best thing about JEP?

"I think it is very good at helping connect students to resources because I definitely would not have known that there was a position open at the Immigration Clinic or any of the other places that I did apply to if it was not for the Pre-Law Project. Also, I was told that usually Freshman don't get internships, especially not at the Gould School of Law. However, because I was applying through JEP, it kind of gives me an identification which holds more weight than if I had just applied by myself. People mostly tell you "Oh if you're not a Junior or Senior don't bother applying," but through JEP I felt like it encouraged me to try - and then I got it!"



Understanding Homelessness through Service

Frameworks for Interdisciplinary Exchange (FIX)



Frameworks for Interdisciplinary Exchange (FIX) was a collaboration between the JEP's Understanding Homelessness through Service (UHS) program and USC's Thematic Option Honors Program, held in Spring 2019. The FIX courses offered students interdisciplinary service-based approaches to engaging "wicked problems," problems that are difficult or impossible to solve because of the complex, contradictory, and changing nature of the issue. FIX courses from spring 2019 focused on homelessness in Los Angeles through a combination of coursework and service providing students with a unique opportunity to collaborate, learn, and serve with their peers across the schools of USC.

Professor Seth Kurzban, from the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, led the primary 3-unit course, establishing a historical, social, and political foundation for students to understand homelessness in Los Angeles. Three other faculty led 1-unit courses focused on specific sectors of the homelessness issue: Rev. Jim Burklo, Senior Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life, led a course on faith-based approaches to hunger and homelessness; Professor Abby Mandell, from the Marshall School of Business, led a course on Social Entrepreneurship and Chrysalis; and Dr. Cara Esposito, from the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, led a course on homelessness Philanthropy and Non-profits. Students used the experiences from their in-classroom learning and on-site volunteering to create final project presentations highlighting potential recommendations and

solutions to the homelessness problems they encountered that semester.

JEP placed students at service sites most relevant to their 1-unit course including Midnight Mission, Chrysalis, MADE by downtown Women's Center, and School on Wheels. Our FIX Program Assistant, Gloria Cheng, supported students by helping facilitate their service experiences and by providing valuable feedback on students' written reflection assignments. In students' final reflection essays many identified their experiences in FIX and serving with JEP as contributing towards their understanding of homelessness, interest in service, and validation of their academic and career choices. The students' final presentations affirmed their commitment to future service and intentional effort to address homelessness in Los Angeles.

One participant, Daphne Armstrong, concluded "working at Midnight Mission really reinforced the material we had learned in class. It offered so much humanity to the statistics and facts that we learn in lecture. Sometimes my class would get really down when we would think about all of the complex issues that cause homelessness and the even more complex solutions needed. When I worked at Midnight Mission, I felt hopeful again, because there was so much joy and optimism mixed in with the struggles."

- Sable Manson
(Assistant Director for Student
Leadership and Development)



Understanding Homelessness through Service

Summer Exchange with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University



In association with JEP's Understanding Homeless through Service (UHS) program, in summer 2019 JEP launched a service exchange program with Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Poly U) to examine homelessness in Hong Kong and Los Angeles. The summer exchange program was designed to help USC and Poly U students unpack some of the complex problems faced by people experiencing homelessness in two global metropolitan cities. JEP hosted three USC students and six Poly U students for four weeks as a complement to a sister program in Hong Kong, also four weeks, organized by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Office of Service Learning.

For the Los Angeles portion of the program, JEP placed USC and Poly U students at several homeless-serving non-profit organizations in Los Angeles, i.e. Midnight Mission, School on Wheels, Union Rescue, where they completed approximately 15 hours of service a week. Their service complemented a weekly seminar led by Professor Seth Kurzban, from the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. These weekly lectures focused on the evolution and current state of homelessness in the United States, with particular focus on the economic, social, political and criminal policy factors. Students also participated in educational tours and service field trips which allowed students to engage the topic with service providers and those impacted by homelessness. Examples included a walking tour of downtown Los Angeles and visit with Urban Voices Project: The Skid Row Choir, a tour of LA Family Housing

and California Hospital Medical Center, and making a meal with PATH Cooks Los Angeles and Bread and Roses.

Reflections from students

"I think the best part of this service exchange program is I can work and attend the lecture so as to have a better understanding on the underlying causes of homelessness in US, and how different organizations support the homeless people."

- Anonymous Program Evaluation

"My time spent at the service sites was truly an eye-opening experience, and I have learned a lot through readings and lectures. Through these reflections, I have been able to process my thoughts and understand how the program has challenged my previous conceptions and notions surrounding the homeless community." - Charlene Lam

"During these three weeks of service learning, I think I have become more patient. Interacting with the children in School on Wheels was what made me realize how important patience is when dealing with a population that may need a little extra help. I am not saying to treat people dealing with homelessness as if they were children, but I do feel like we can be more understanding of their predicament. To me, patience is really important because it is a reflection of how I want to deal with the problem of homelessness." - Jessica Lai

- Sable Manson
(Assistant Director for Student
Leadership and Development)



Student Leader Voices



Tommy Nguyen
JEP Program Assistant

"My favorite memory working for JEP was meeting people from all walks of life. I was born and raised in the LA area with little travel experience. I was able to meet, talk, and grow with people across the country and globe. It's truly humbling and admirable to meet people with different perspectives and understand the world through their lens."

Kruthi Annigeri
Young Scientists Program Coordinator

"Being a student leader at JEP has taught me just how much is possible if you just ask. JEP is very welcoming to all people and their ideas, and within the YSP staff, you can tangibly experience the impact that every single coordinator has had on the program. Our leadership positions are not nominal—we do have a real effect on the program and I love being in a position to make the changes I want to see."



Aspen Cole
Readers^{Plus} Literacy Director

"My goal is to create equitable educational outcomes for low-income and minoritized students in Los Angeles. Having grown up attending underfunded LAUSD schools, I saw at an early age that socioeconomic inequality is further perpetuated by a lack of educational resources in communities that need it the most. Having the privilege of serving as the literacy director of Readers^{PLUS} allows me to help combat this inequality on a larger scale than I could working with a program that only serves one school."

Caitlin Rowe
Understanding Homelessness Through Service Program Assistant

"I've learned that you can accomplish great things when you're in a supportive environment. JEP as an institution does so much good for the community, and it's all made possible because the staff is welcoming, supportive, and passionate about the cause."



Student Leader Impressions



About Us

Established in 1972, the USC Joint Educational Project is one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the United States. Based in USC's Dornsife College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, JEP integrates university-level academic coursework and community service in the Los Angeles area, with a strong presence in the university's neighboring community.

Mission Statement

In collaboration with campus and community partners, the Joint Educational Project develops service-learning activities for USC students that address community-defined needs, complement coursework, and encourage critical reflection on contemporary social issues.

How you can help JEP

To help support our efforts, donate via giveusc.edu and select USC Joint Educational Project or reach out to learn more about specific funding opportunities:

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