



University of Denver
Center for Community
Engagement &
Service Learning

Public Good E-Newsletter

Engaging campus and community for the public good.

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Issue 5

Editor: Emily Pack

Director's Note: Building Things

By: Eric Fretz, CCESL director

When I think about public good work at DU, I think about our faculty and students as community architects - people who are designing and producing public products that make communities better places to live.

In this edition of the Public Good Newsletter we are focusing on what is produced from DU's vision of being a great private university dedicated to the public good.

Our faculty spotlight is on Professor of Chemistry Don Stedman. For 20 years, Don and his students have built technology that measures automobile emissions. What makes Don's work especially unique is that his machines measure emissions as the cars and trucks drive by on the highway.

Hava Gordon, assistant professor of sociology, has strategically built community-based learning components into her First Year Seminar classes. In the Community-Based Learning section of the Newsletter, Hava writes about her first-year seminar course.

And Ben Waldman, a fourth-year student majoring in international studies, has helped to build a community garden. Working with a large number of community and university stakeholders, Ben and his campus and neighborhood partners have tilled and planted a flourishing garden on High Street, directly across the street from Centennial Towers. Part of Ben's work with the community garden has been generously funded by the Morgridge Family Foundation.

Whether they are creating community gardens, developing technology to monitor automobile emissions or designing community learning courses that allow DU students to connect their academic work with salient community issues, they are all doing public work.

*Our mission is to **educate**, **engage**, and **equip** the campus community to accomplish tangible, public work that improves the lives of people in our communities.*



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Director's Note

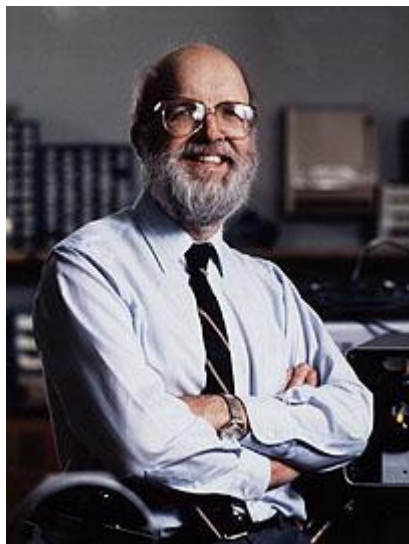
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The Public Good Interview: Don Stedman

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What is your job and title at DU?

I'm Don Stedman, professor of chemistry and biochemistry.

Tell me about your Public Good Project.

In the last 20 years we've been very heavily involved in the invention of measuring emissions from cars as they drive by. You know when you see a smoking diesel truck? You can only see them during the day because you're using the light from the sky which is being absorbed by the smoke before it reaches your eyeball.

I have a little light source at knee height on one side of the road; another detector at knee height on the other side of the road; shoot light across the road, and when the car

comes by, I look for half a second behind the car to see what I can see in the exhaust. We look for the standard pollutants-carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, carbon dioxide, and a reference channel.

What makes it "public good"?

I think it makes more sense to do a 25 cent test on everybody when they're driving than a \$25 test on everybody every two years.

If you fix your car, the public good is served in two ways: everybody gets less air pollution, and the owner gets better gas mileage.

How is your project impacting communities?

If you go to <http://www.sign.du.edu/> and go to "Live web camera," this sign is giving emission information. This billboard is open to the public. People can drive by anytime they want. It's the exit from south I-25 to eastbound 6th Avenue. The readings given are "good," "fair," and "poor." If you get a fair or poor rating, you can go to the website, or telephone 303-871-7777. The website has more information about what to do and how to service your car.

How do you incorporate students into your Public Good project?

I have two grad students in the office next door who are working on truck emissions. And then, you know, you think back...there's got to be close to a dozen grad students that have worked on this project.

How is this project incorporated into your larger research agenda?

I'm heavily involved in ozone in the Denver area. There is no CO problem in Denver anymore. We used to violate 180 days a year or so, and we haven't violated since 1996 because cars have become cleaner.

What else would you like to tell me?

I invented a detector for nickel carbonyl in the mid 1970s and the company built them and sold them to the 24 people in the world who cared about this molecule. Since 1978, in the countries where they have my detector, I only know of one fatality from nickel carbonyl poisoning.

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(The Public Good Interview, continued from p. 2)

Ontario, Canada happens to be one of the places where they have these things. I was there one afternoon, walking around the lake on a beautiful spring afternoon.

I was thinking to myself that all of these people walking in the opposite direction - I had probably saved the lives of their sister, brother, cousin, aunt, uncle, or them. They had no clue who I was and I had no clue who they were, and that's kind of a good feeling.

My most useful contribution to the public good was to be a member of the National Academy Committee which 23 years ago recommended banning smoking on airplanes because of the danger to the flight attendants.

Public Good Project of the Quarter

By: Ben Waldman, Senior



My name is Ben Waldman and I am a fourth year student studying international studies. During my third year at DU I helped start a campus-community garden. Through raising community and student support we were able to convince DU to allocate us a piece of land. The student body funded the garden through the student activity fee and I also was awarded a grant through CCESL's Morgridge Community Scholars program.

The experience of the project was simply amazing. I learned quite a lot about organizing communities, growing food in a backyard, and managing budgets for projects.

This project was made truly successful because of the community's investment and willingness to "own" the garden. They undoubtedly wanted to see this project happen and did not hesitate to take responsibilities and dedicate their time.

The community garden demonstrates just one method of how we can build stronger, more intimate communities. In addition to building a stronger community, the garden helps educate both neighbors and students about the benefits of locally grown, organic food. Community gardens are inexpensive, educational organizing tools that can be replicated in just about any neighborhood. (continued on p. 4)



(Public Good Project of the Quarter, continued from p. 3)

We hope to create more gardens around DU that are designed for different on-campus groups with the ultimate goal of reducing our environmental impact and building a tight-knit DU community. I think it is critical that students get involved in these gardens and learn more about the U.S.'s inequal food system. Community gardens are just one step in the right direction.

To get involved, please visit <http://dugardens.org/> or send an e-mail to duenvironmental@gmail.com. We are just beginning to build a permaculture garden next to Ben Cherrington Hall that will exemplify how to get the most amount of food with minimal resources (labor, space, materials). Come help out!

Service Learning Course Spotlight

By: Hava Gordon, Sociology



Last year, I taught a Service Learning FSEM: "Youth Cultures: Inequality, Resistance, and Empowerment." This was the first time teaching my FSEM as a service learning class, and it was an amazing experience. With the help of my wonderful Service Learning Associate, Cameron Lewis, our class partnered with "The Spot" youth center and Rainbow Alley. Both organizations work to empower teens by providing a safe and creative space for low-income, homeless, and LGBTQ youth. FSEM students joined outreach workers at The Spot

on night walks around the city, distributing needed items to homeless youth. Students also participated in consciousness-raising workshops at Rainbow Alley, connecting with Rainbow Alley youth through these workshops.

FSEM course material focused on youth and social inequalities, including issues such as how racism and poverty affect youth, how youth occupy public spaces, and how youth cultures resist oppression through art and activism. Although these are powerful themes, the service learning experience brought these experiences to life in a way that readings alone could not. Students witnessed police harassment of homeless youth. They learned about the lives and identities of queer youth. They learned about the importance of art and activism in countering inequality. In discovering the similarities and differences between themselves and these youth, students had to grapple with their own privilege(s). And when The Spot encountered economic crisis and was faced with having to discontinue its hip-hop arts program, students learned about the fragility of truly youth-led environments in the face of dwindling funding and shifting political will.

I have learned that teaching a service learning course requires tremendous flexibility. The partnership between the class and community organization can unexpectedly shift. Students might need extra time to process an unexpected event, insight, or struggle. However, the complexities raised and the insights learned are well worth it.

If you have story ideas for the Public Good E-Newsletter please contact:

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