

# OACS Alumni Newsletter

[february 2018]

[www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs)

## Alumni Spotlight



*Amanda Bowers,  
class of 2008*

I had the opportunity to work at OACS for about six years in various capacities. Reflecting on my time there, I think about all the colleagues, staff, students, and community partners I had the joy to collaborate with and learn from. We went to Ecuador, we caucused in Iowa, we interned in DC. We also worked across the city of Nashville. All year, students are out in local community organizations gaining experience and growing personally and professionally. Many of their professors are also out in the community conducting various forms of research. With all of this activity, I began to wonder if we were coordinating our efforts enough, if we were holding ourselves accountable. Service is often associated with positivity and generosity, but it can also reveal the systems and structures we have constructed as a society that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Did we have enough criticality and responsiveness in our work? Enough intentionality? How would we know?

The desire for a deeper perspective and better skills to pursue these questions led me to a Ph.D. program at the University of Louisville. My current research is focused on the processes large, public, research institutions use to determine their "impact" in the local community. The work suggests that most universities may not actually know what difference they have made at the institutional level – across the sea of activity occurring – even as significant work is being done every day. Yet, this research is also illuminating the importance of individual action as a driver for change-making, something OACS has always helped to cultivate.

Amanda Bowers is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Louisville. She plans to graduate this spring 2018 with a degree in Educational Leadership, Evaluation, & Organizational Development.

To learn more about OACS programs and to donate visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs)

## OACS Events

### Volunteers Needed at Second Harvest

Second Harvest Food Bank needs our help! Second Harvest has put out a call for immediate volunteers. The recent winter storms have put their food sorting efforts behind schedule, and they need volunteers to sort frozen food donations in their cooler.

To register, go to <https://secondharvestmidtn.org/act/volunteer/>. Help Second Harvest provide quality food to families in our Nashville community.



Volunteers are needed for the following dates:

#### INDIVIDUALS

February 9 (8:30 - 11:30am) February 10 (9am - 12pm)  
February 13 (1 - 4pm) February 1, 5, 7, 14, 20, 27, 28  
(5:30 - 8:00pm)

#### GROUPS

Tuesday – Friday (8:30-11:30am and 1 - 4pm) Monday –  
Thursday (5:30 - 8pm)

### Spring DIVE Kick-Off

Local OACS DIVE: Empathizing With the Lived Experiences of Refugees is a service learning program designed for students to explore the current global crisis of human displacement through a local lens in the Nashville community utilizing human-centered design. Student participants in the DIVE cohort will engage in a highly immersive service-learning partnership for 2-3 hours each week with a local resettlement or refugee services agency to better understand the lived experiences of refugees in the Nashville community. Following a brief introduction to the causes of human displacement and the resettlement process, the seminar series will require students go out into the community to better understand refugees' access to affordable housing, health care, education, cultural preservation, and advocacy in Davidson county.

Utilizing the human-centered design thinking process, and with its intentional inclusion of community partner and community member feedback, students will develop evidence-based and targeted approaches to alleviate community-identified stressors and promote advocacy within Nashville's refugee populations, culminating in the presentation of a developed prototype. At the conclusion of the program, students will present their prototype in an effort to enact actionable change.



Define Stage



Ideate Stage



Prototype Stage

## Connect with Us

### Alumni Advisors

OACS is seeking Alumni Advisors to help us plan our developing alumni outreach initiative! Our Alumni Advisors will participate in 1-2 one-hour focus groups this spring, either in person or over conference call depending on your location. Our hope with these groups is to:

- Connect alumni with one other to strengthen their network of service-minded community leaders
- Update alumni on OACS programming, particularly in relation to alumni engagement
- Seek feedback and suggestions from our alumni on how to better connect and encourage service within our alumni base

If you are interested in becoming an Alumni Advisor, email your name, job title, and current location to Lauren Moon at [lauren.moon@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lauren.moon@vanderbilt.edu).

VIEW

## VIEW Internship Placements

The 2018 Vanderbilt Internship Experience in Washington, D.C. (VIEW) program is off to a great start with a new cohort of students passionate about careers in the public service sector. VIEW provides students with an opportunity to meaningfully explore careers in the public service sector in the dynamic setting of the United States' capital. This eight-week program introduces students to the career opportunities in the public service sector, provides training and support for the summer internship application process, connects participants with the local alumni chapter for networking and mentorship, and facilitates a community experience of this fast-paced and exciting hub of public policy development. VIEW is facilitated by the Office of Active Citizenship and Service, in partnership with the Vanderbilt University Career Center.

## Call for Mentors

Alumni mentorship is a key component of the VIEW program, and we invite alumni living in the D.C. area to express their interest in serving as a mentor using the 2018 VIEW Program Alumni Mentor Interest Form. Questions about the program? Email Meagan Smith at [meagan.smith@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:meagan.smith@vanderbilt.edu).



### Did you know...?

#### OACS has an Alumni Network on LinkedIn!



We want to connect with you! The OACS Alumni LinkedIn page serves as the social media hub for alumni seeking opportunities to engage and connect. With weekly updates of information and articles relevant to community engagement and action, the LinkedIn page provides alumni with an opportunity to network around service and active citizenship. Alumni can connect with each other and OACS staff as professional resources.

Join the "Office of Active Citizenship & Service (OACS) Alumni Network" group on LinkedIn today!

## Job Opportunities

### United Way



United Way of Metropolitan Nashville is seeking a Community Engagement Coordinator. The Community Engagement Coordinator contributes to the efforts of UWMN by strategizing, creating, and executing community engagement activities that attract investors, potential investors, and corporate partners to volunteer throughout the year. This position is responsible for ensuring all events are executed with excellence to grow relationships and increase the number of top UWMN partner volunteers from year to year, which in turn will grow awareness and funding for the organization based on the understanding of the importance of the model volunteer, advocate, and give. For more information, visit [www.unitedwaynashville.org/careers/community-engagement-coordinator](http://www.unitedwaynashville.org/careers/community-engagement-coordinator).

### Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE)

NICE, one of this semester's OACS DIVE program partners, has several positions available: Youth Program Manager, Youth Education Liaison, Refugee AmeriCorps Employment Assistant, and R&P Caseworker. For more information about any of these positions, visit [www.empowernashville.org/careers/](http://www.empowernashville.org/careers/) or email [careers@empowernashville.org](mailto:careers@empowernashville.org).



Have a job you'd like OACS alumni to know about?

Email [lauren.moon@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lauren.moon@vanderbilt.edu) to have it included in our next Alumni Newsletter.

## Give to Service



### South Africa Alumni Fundraiser: Kurios Trend Volunteer Projects

Alumni of the South Africa Global OACS Program are fundraising for Kurios Trend Volunteer Projects. Kurios Trend coordinates volunteering and service-learning projects for university students. They operate from within the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, South Africa - employing and creating opportunities for locals, in addition to supporting already established schools and community centers. They are a small, local organization meeting real community needs, including support of community partners such as Bethelsdorp High School (BD) and Missionvale Community Center. This fundraiser is to help Kurios sustain its programs, its employees, and the community, supporting everything from marketing costs to donations at BD to financial support for members of the community who are dependent upon the income stream generated in previous years. Everyone involved is grateful for your support and well wishes. To donate, go to [www.youcaring.com/kuriostrendvolunteerprojects-1085084](http://www.youcaring.com/kuriostrendvolunteerprojects-1085084).

Vanderbilt University Office of Active Citizenship & Service

[www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs)

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Check out our Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts for the latest on Vanderbilt Active Citizenship and Service.