

***Health
Professions
House***

2018-2019 Annual Report

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Goals of a Living-Learning Community

Living-Learning Communities may have different missions and goals, but they are all designed to do the following:

- Develop a sense of group identity enabling all participants to recognize one another as learners, while still valuing the contributions of each individual.
- Help students recognize that participants are neither solely independent nor dependent.
- Provide facilities or spaces where people can come together to meet and engage in transformative learning activities.
- Create a supportive environment that engages new students in the life of the institution.
- Develop a seamless student experience that integrates social and academic experiences for those who are participating in the program because, even though the level of integration will vary, activities and programs are designed to enable students to bring their personal interest into their academic work and to integrate their academic work into their personal and social activities.
- Develop connections among disciplines, recognizing that although ways of knowing may be discipline-specific, knowledge and concepts are not.

Frazier, W., and Eighmy, M. (2012). Themed residential learning communities: The importance of purposeful faculty and staff involvement and student engagement. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 38(2), 10-26.

Research Supports Living-Learning Communities

Supporting Student Learning Wherever it Happens (2000):

“Engaging students in cocurricular activities and settings is a way to model the ideal of a community of learners in which students, faculty and student affairs educators engage in serious inquiry, learning with and from one another.” (Shushok, Henry, Blalock, and Sriram)

Expectations to Experiences : Using a Structural Typology to Understand First-Year Student Outcomes in Academically Based Living-Learning Communities (2010):

Students in collaborative living-learning communities were more likely to interact with their peers around academics and had a more positive perception about their residence hall contributing to enriching their educational experience.

Students who are involved in Living-Learning Communities were more likely to develop relationships with faculty, have stronger communication skills and participate in community service events.” (Wawrzynski and Jessup-Anger)

Academic Success for STEM and Non-STEM Majors (2010):

“Being part of a learning community can contribute to a further sense of campus engagement which, in turn, can contribute to retention.” (Whalen and Shelley)

Themed Residential Learning Communities: The Importance of Purposeful Faculty and Staff Involvement and Student Engagement (2012):

“Students benefited when they were actively involved in their educational endeavors and took an interest in the learning opportunities presented to them in their living environment.” (Frazier and Eighmy)

Health House Faculty Advisors

Sandi Splansky, Ed.S., is the faculty coordinator for the Health House. The Health House has been under her leadership since it began in 2001. She also lived in one of the first U.S. living-learning communities while a freshman at the University of Illinois. She has also served as the director of academic advising in the College of Health and Human Sciences since 1986. Sandi was instrumental in developing the UNIV 101 course for the university. Splansky holds three degrees from Northern Illinois University: B.S and an M.S. from the department of Family and Consumer Sciences, and an Ed.S. in counseling from the College of Education. In 2015, she was recognized as a “Partner of Distinction” by the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. Splansky oversees all Health House activities and is an advocate for promoting a positive on and off campus for NIU students.



Professor Jeanette Rossetti, Ed.D., M.S., RN is a Presidential Teaching Professor in the School of Nursing at Northern Illinois University. Rossetti received her BSN in nursing from Lewis University, her M.S. in nursing from St. Xavier University and her Ed.D. from Northern Illinois University. Rossetti is passionate about teaching and her specialty area of psychiatric nursing. She travels to Ireland every summer with students from the College of Health and Human Sciences leading a study abroad course titled “Exploring Ireland’s Health Care System.” She has received numerous awards for her teaching, and most recently was awarded NIU’s Presidential Teaching Professor award. She worked alongside our ambassadors and staff this year by assisting with service activities, and enjoys the experiences with all of the Health House residents.

Professor Sheila Barrett, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the School of Health Studies and specifically with the Nutrition, Dietetics and Wellness program. Barrett teaches both undergraduate and graduate students. Her main areas of interest are in adolescent obesity and related risk factors for Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Barrett is originally from Jamaica where she completed her bachelor’s degree in education. She obtained her Master of Science degree from the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) and her Ph.D. in nutrition and dietetics at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. She worked alongside our ambassadors and staff this year by assisting with service-oriented projects.



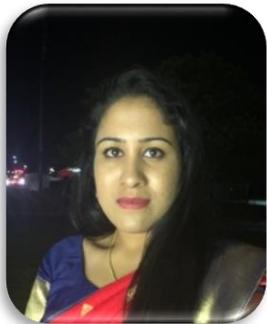
Student Ambassadors in the Health House

Health House ambassadors serve as house leaders to their resident peers and are a vital component to the success of the Health House. Through their leadership and programming initiatives, the chosen ambassadors strive to enhance the academic, service and social realms of the house residents' lives. Please read what they have to say about their experience in the Health House.



Hello. My name is Michael Potoniec, and I am a senior majoring in public health with an emphasis in environment and health. This is my third year being involved with Health House and my second being an ambassador. Like last year, I am the ambassador on the fourth floor and am looking forward to a great year. Apart from Health House, I have been involved with Student Health Organization throughout my NIU career and am currently the president for said organization. Health House has helped me become the person I have always wanted to be, and I hope many other students can say the same.

Hello, My name is Dominique Velazquez and I am a sophomore majoring in health sciences with an emphasis in pre-physical therapy. This is my first year being a Health House ambassador. I am an ambassador on the third floor of Stevenson. Currently, I am involved in pre-physical therapy club and robotics. Having the privilege to be an ambassador has given me the responsibility that I believe will carry me for a lifetime. This position has encouraged me to be more outgoing and I hope that in the future students will carry on this legacy.



My name is Jovitha Katla and my major is pre-occupational therapy. I am a junior transfer from Elgin Community College. I also have two minors - Human development and child studies and psychology. I decided to be a health ambassador so I could step outside of my comfort zone and be able to reach out to more people about why Health House is so great. I've lived here ever since I transferred, and I believe it's a great community.

Hello! My name is Jada Blackmon, and I am the Health House ambassador on the seventh floor. I am currently a sophomore, and my major is health and human sciences. I plan to graduate with a B.S. in nursing in the fall of 2021. This is my first year being a part of the Health House and I absolutely love it! This position has allowed me to grow as a leader and form great bonds with our residents.



Hi there! My name is Angelina Scherer, but I go by Angie. I am the Health House ambassador for Floor 6 of Stevenson A Tower. This is my first year living the Health House, but my second year living in Stevenson. My favorite thing about being a Health House ambassador is working with residents to make sure that their year goes smooth and they get involved while they're in college. If you see me on campus, feel free to stop and say hi!

Programming: Snack Chat Series

In Making the Most of College (2001), Richard Light States:

Part of a great college education depends upon human relationships. One set of such relationships should, ideally, develop between each student and one or several faculty members... the single most important bit of advice I can possibly give to new advisees (is): Your job is to get to know one faculty member reasonably well this semester, and also to have that faculty member get to know you reasonably well, (Light, R.J., 2001). Making the Most of College. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. pp. 85-86).

A main component of Health House programming is the Snack Chat series which was formally known as Dine & Discuss in earlier years. These Snack chat events enable residents to network with faculty, staff and guest presenters outside of the typical structured classroom setting.

Snack Chat with Health Services

September 12, 2018

Meg Burnham, NIU registered dietitian, spoke to our Health House residents about various ways to make meals at the dining halls fun and exciting, yet still healthy. Meg works in Dining Services, Health Services and with the NIU athletes. Meg also talked about different snack ideas that a lot of students enjoyed. We were able to come up with ways to help those students who are struggling to fit healthy eating in their hectic schedule.

Snack Chat about Study Abroad

September 20, 2018



Jeanette Rossetti, School of Nursing and Jeanne Isabel, School of Health Studies spoke to the Health House residents about NIU's Study Abroad program, as well as the programs that they coordinate individually. In the summer, Rossetti offers a trip to Ireland focusing primarily on mental health and Isabel offers a trip to Belize focusing on general health and diabetes.

The discussion was centered around the benefits of studying abroad. They also spoke about the details of traveling abroad such as cost, classes, scholarships, living arrangements and culture. as well as the vast array of choices that would be available to students at the annual Study Abroad Fair.

Snack Chat with Career services

October 3, 2018

Ms. Teri Schmidgall talked with residents about NIU Career Services. She offered information about the Career and Internship Fair and showcased many of the services provided such as conducting mock interviews, going over résumé, drop-in hours and assisting with professional development after graduation. While touching on key points about Career Services, Schmidgall also touched on major-specific details for the residents who attended. With many pre-physical therapy majors present, Schmidgall talked about the various opportunities to get involved with such as the Wisconsin Dells Easter Seals summer position. Schmidgall was very informative and offered specific examples that got the residents engaged in the conversation.

Snack Chat about Disability

November 13, 2018

Matt Sprong came in to talk about disabilities and rehab in society focusing the true meaning of having a disability. He also shared his family history and how a disability affected him and his family.

Healthy Microwave Cooking in the Residence Halls

February 6, 2019

Two students studying for their master's degrees Nutrition and demonstrated Health House residents how to make healthy meals in the microwave. The presenters prepared the food while explaining the process and benefits. In the meantime, the residents were able to taste test the food. All the feedback from this event was very positive.

Programing: Special and Service Events

Welcome Days Ice Cream Social

August 29, 2018



Residents mingled and networked with ambassadors, NIU faculty, CHHS academic advisors, and Dean Derryl Block for this Health House and college event to welcome first-year students to NIU. Everyone enjoyed ice cream in Stevenson Hall's New Orleans Room.



YMCA Halloween Bash

October 19, 2018

Every year the YMCA sponsors a Halloween Bash for children in the DeKalb/Sycamore Community. Health House residents volunteered to assist with setup, mediate games and be a part of a haunted house. This was a great opportunity for Health House residents to interact with the DeKalb community.

Huskies Give Thanks Event

November 15, 2018

The Health House hosted an event called "Huskies Give Thanks" at which residents wrote thank you cards to NIU faculty and staff who have positively impacted them. The attendees were engaged in the event and participated in writing multiple cards for different faculty that have made a difference in their time at NIU. It was great to see students return the favor to some NIU's most passionate and hardworking instructors and workers.

Study tables

December 9, 2018

May 5, 2019

The purpose of the study tables is to provide well-lit and relatively quiet study space for Health House residents to study prior to final exam week and to build community and to enable student academic success as the semester winds down. The intention is to group tables by subject area (chemistry, physics, math, English, etc.). Students were able to come and go as they please. We would like to provide light refreshments and nourishment.

Welcome Back Dinner

February 21, 2019

This event was to welcome Health House residents back for the spring semester. There was an opportunity to network with faculty, staff, ambassadors and peers. We also recognized residents who have been active during the fall semester.

Game Night

February 21, 2019

On February 21, 2019 the Health House hosted its first pre-planned game night of the year! (Many spontaneous "game nights" occurred with residents throughout the year!) The event was held in the Stevenson South Fishbowl room was filled with lots of fun, food and laughter.

Field Trips

(Field trips include both on- and off-campus events)

School of Nursing - Simulation Lab

October 4, 2018



Kristen Selig lead students on a tour of the School of Nursing Simulation (SIM) Lab. The SIM lab is a state-of-the-art lab used in educating nursing majors to develop critical skills. Residents were involved with hands-on demonstrations and experiences with the SIM lab human dolls, such as deliver a baby and giving oxygen to a patient in need.



NIU Davis Hall Observatory

October 8, 2018

Residents visited the NIU Davis Hall Observatory where Health House residents listened to Chris Marshall, a graduate student manager, talk about stars, planets and space. During this open discussion, Marshall showed Health House the observatory's telescope while demonstrating its ability to find planets in our galaxy. The residents were able to see both Jupiter and Mars that day and got many answers to the questions they asked. The discussion was very open-ended and engaging so that Health House residents could ask about questions regarding our universe and the intricacies of our world. Marshall was knowledgeable in astronomy and was eager to host another event in the winter to show constellations that are only visible in the winter.



Jonamac's Haunted Corn

Maze October 26, 2018



Health House joined the Honors House LLC on their trip to Jonamac's Haunted Corn Maze. The residents of the LLCs relied on teamwork to navigate the maze while watching out for spooky monsters and creatures. It was a great experience for residents from different backgrounds and areas of study to get together to bond over being terrified in a dark corn maze.

Brookfield Zoo Holiday Magic celebration

December 1, 2018

Health House and Honors House went on a trip to Brookfield Zoo to see the Holiday Magic celebration. Everyone was extremely excited about seeing and learning about animals and their various environments while also witnessing the interesting light shows and decorations on display. The weather at first seemed to not be suitable for a pleasant outdoor viewing experience, but it ended up cooperating and the residents seemed to really enjoy it. Many noted that their favorite exhibits were the giraffe and swamp exhibits. Others really enjoyed seeing the light shows and listening to the festive music. Overall, it was a great way to end the semester.

Chicago Steel Hockey Game

March 2, 2019

Health House and Honors House went to watch the Chicago Steel hockey game. Prior to the game, residents met with Jim Schroeder, Steel Athletic Trainer, for a tour of the facilities and to discuss the procedures associated with training and treating the players. Residents were very intrigued by what Schroeder had to share and appreciative of the opportunity. Students also enjoyed cheering the Chicago Steel on to victory!

Mercyhealth Javon Bea Hospital Tour

March 29, 2019

Health House students traveled to Mercyhealth Javon Bea Hospital – Riverside Campus for a tour of the new, state-of-the-art hospital on the Riverside campus. The tour was led by Kathy Gehrke, nurse manager Adult In-Patient Unit (and former NIU pre-licensure coordinator) and by Anna Eich, RN (NIU alumna and former Health House ambassador). The tour involved visits to various floors to see facilities and learn about how the physical environment impacts the well-being of hospital staff and patients. Following the tour, an HR representative talked about career opportunities at the hospital. This an educational opportunity that allowed Health House students the chance to not only learn about a hospital facility, but also gain insight about careers offered as well. Many of the students shared that this trip was the highlight of all the Health House trips this year. We hope to offer this opportunity again in the future.

**Special thanks to all faculty and staff who have
dedicated their time and energy to
Health Professions House.
Your contributions are greatly appreciated.**

- Sheila Barrett, Health House Faculty Advisor, and Assistant Professor, Dietetics and Nutrition
- Meg Burnham, Coordinator, Nutrition Program, Recreation and Wellness
- Derryl Block, Dean, College of Health and Human Sciences
- Jac Cooper, Program Coordinator, First- and Second -Year Experience
- Elbia Del Llano Menendez, Hall Director Graduate Assistant
- Andrea Hein, CHHS Advisor
- Beverly Henry, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Health and Human Sciences
- Nicole Holland, CHHS Academic Advisor
- Jeanne Isabel, Chair, School of Health Studies
- Jerri Reynolds, CHHS Academic Advisor
- Jeanette Rossetti, Health House Faculty Advisor, and Presidential Teaching Professor, Nursing
- Elina Savoie, Complex Coordinator
- Teri Schmidgall, Career Counselor, Career Services
- Brian Schneider, Director of Residential Dining
- Stephanie Smialek
- Matthew Sprong, Assistant Professor, Rehabilitation and Disability Services
- Liz Yee, CHHS Advisor