Hi everyone. I’m Adam Westbrook and I’m the Director of the Center for Community Engagement.

While there are many hardships that all of us have experienced this year—the loss of loved ones, feelings of loneliness during quarantine and isolation, a reckoning with racial justice, and living with a general uncertainty of how the pandemic was going to impact our lives—I think this year has also shown us the awesome potential that communities have when we work together.

When I got my COVID vaccine, what struck me was how many different people were involved in the process. There is not enough time to list everyone who was a part of the vaccine development and the roll out, but when I stopped to consider how many people were involved and needed to come together in order for me to get this shot, it truly left me in awe and really made clear something that drives us in the Center for Community Engagement.

When we come together in community, humans truly have awesome power to accomplish amazing things.

In this video, you’ll hear about programs and projects with Suffolk students, staff, faculty, and many of our community partners who collaborated this year and came together with purpose as a community. People like you and me who have worked together in communities here in Boston and throughout the world amidst—and in spite of—the challenges that none of us could have imagined a year ago.

We were able to accomplish so much more because we did this all together. My vaccine experience
01:32 and the work of the CCE this year has only reinforced to me that, truly, nothing of importance can get done alone. We need community, and we need each other.

01:43 I hope you’ll take some time this summer to not only reflect on the very real and very hard things that you’ve experienced this year, but also, I really encourage you to reflect on the examples of truly awesome collaboration we’ve been a part of this year here at Suffolk,

01:59 in Boston, and in our communities all over the world.

02:04 My takeaway this year is that when we work together, the possibilities are vast. Take some time to imagine the future possibilities that exist if we were all to work together, jointly, on projects that impact our communities. It’s pretty inspiring.

02:19 [Yvette Velez] Hi, I’m Yvette Velez. I joined the Center for Community Engagement in January as the Associate Director of Community Partnerships. I want to say thank you to the CCE, our students,

02:29 and our community partners for the warm welcome. This semester, I had the pleasure to bring together a Suffolk University tradition: Service Day. Every April, Suffolk students, faculty,

02:39 and staff come together to live out our identity. This pandemic year was no different. Service Week 2021 this year took place from March 31 through April 2. As an institution, we participated in critical community-based projects over a span of three days on-campus and over Zoom. Our numbers include 137 volunteers, completing over 190 hours of service. We had 17 community engagement opportunities with 11 different community partners. I want to give a special thanks to the Animal Rescue League of Boston, the Women’s Lunch Place,
03:15 the New England Center and Home for Veterans, Christopher’s Haven, Victory Programs, Jewish

03:21 Family & Children’s Service, Jumpstart, 2Life Communities, Big Brothers Big Sisters

03:26 of Eastern Massachusetts, the Paulist Center’s Wednesday Night Supper Club, and Suffolk University’s

03:31 Boston CARES Pantry. It was awesome to see our Suffolk students and staff work on multiple

03:37 projects like assembling toiletry kits, hand-sewing masks, and making animal blankets all to benefit

03:44 our Boston community. Thank you again for the warm welcome. I look forward to working

03:49 with our students, staff, faculty, and community partners in the next academic year.

#SuffolkServes

04:00 [Elizabeth Finn] My name is Elizabeth Finn and I am the Center for Community Engagement’s Suffolk Votes

04:04 Undergraduate Scholar. I am part of the Suffolk Votes Ambassadors, which is a nonpartisan

04:10 group of student leaders who are trained in the voter registration process, and we get

04:15 our peers registered to vote. We plan and prepare voter engagement events and programs

04:22 to raise awareness of the election and its importance. I get to share my passion for

04:27 civic engagement with the Suffolk community and I’m proud to be part of a team that

04:32 mobilizes the next generation of changemakers here at Suffolk.

04:37 [Cortney Kelly] This election season, we had the opportunity to help students become active citizens through

04:41 our voter mobilization programs. 33 trained Suffolk Votes Ambassadors went into 49 classes

04:48 to help over 700 students register to vote. As Suffolk Votes Ambassadors, they also helped
plan, organize, and promote over 70 election-related events across campus. Following the momentum of the election, the Suffolk Votes Ambassadors continued to spark civic engagement among students through the Activism in Action Workshop Series, Suffolk Votes Podcast, and Election Reflection Project. This year, we had more than 300 people attend our events.

Luz Pimentel] Hi everyone. My name is Luz Pimentel. This year, I had the opportunity to work for the Center for Community Engagement as our Community Partnerships Scholar. I had the opportunity to work on programs, such as Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month, Transgender Awareness Month, and also connected lots of students with volunteer organizations throughout the city of Boston.

This year, I learned from the CCE how to increase my involvement at Suffolk University, but also throughout the city of Boston.

Kelly] For Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month in November, we held three panel conversations with Horizons for Homeless Children, United Way Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley, and Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance to educate the Suffolk community about hunger and homelessness.

Additionally, in conjunction with International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31, 2021, we partnered with the Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion to hold three transgender awareness panels throughout March and April with Youth on Fire, Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, and Suffolk's Queer Student Union. These panels served to educate the
Suffolk community about ongoing issues faced by the transgender community and how we can get involved to help combat them.

[Ben Flanders] My name’s Ben. I’m the Service After Hours Scholar here in the Center for Community Engagement.

This semester, I’ve been working on our panel events with some of our partners within the Greater Boston community. We hosted events with the wonderful folks at places like Y2Y, Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston, and Hope and Comfort just to name a few. We learned a little bit about some of the social justice issues in and around Greater Boston, and how these organizations and the people that work within them are working to make their communities a better place for everybody. We also had the chance to connect with some alumni along the way and it was an awful lot of fun.

[Molly McCafferty] Hi there! My name’s Molly. I’m the Volunteer Manager for an early-childhood education program called Jumpstart. In this past year, our members did an amazing job to adapting to virtual programming. They started the first semester by creating videos based on our session plans.

So, they were basically professional YouTubers by the end of the first semester. And then second semester, they were able to move into live virtual programming with the kids. So, they actually got to interact with them and hear from them, learn more about what their interests are, and just really dig into the work a little bit deeper and with more connection. We’re just so proud of everything that they were able to accomplish this year, and we’re proud of the kids too for sticking with it and being so engaged throughout the year.

[Dadrian Bernard] Hi, my name is Dadrian Bernard and I’m the Graduate Fellow for the Alternative Break...
08:00 Program. With our activities online this year, I experienced what it’s like to reconstruct
08:06 a program to fit an online format. Through our weekly workshops and service day
initiatives,
08:13 I learned problem-solving, time management, and leadership skills.
08:18 [Dennis Harkins] So, this year, our Alternative Spring Break or ASB program adapted
several times and ended
08:26 up successfully working with local Boston community partners remotely. Our seven
student
08:33 leaders worked very, very hard, both the fall and spring semesters, designing an ASB
program
08:41 that would offer a meaningful and impactful experience for our students and our
community
08:47 partners. The two local partners that our students worked with included the New England
08:54 Center and Home for Veterans, which is right down the street next to One Court, and 2Life
Communities. And, our teams ended up participating in a seven-week social justice
training that
09:09 was facilitated by our student leaders and that explored issues that are faced by Veterans
09:17 and the elderly. We also hosted two service days on-campus, in-person, as well as a
HyFlex
09:28 format for students that aren’t local to campus, that focused on assembling care packages
09:34 for residents of both organizations that ranged from, you know, personal hygiene products
09:40 to food items. And together our student leaders and participants assembled 120 care
packages
09:47 for the New England Center and Home for Veterans and 60 care packages for 2Life
Communities.
09:53 So, I just wanted to take an opportunity to, you know, give a huge thank you and
congratulations
10:00 to Dadrian, who is our Alternative Break Graduate Fellow, and all of our ASB leaders this
year
10:08 for all that you've contributed, your flexibility, and your dedication to continuing our program

10:15 during COVID and continuing the dedication that we have to the community.

10:23 So, for our Alternative Winter Break program, despite that we couldn't travel internationally

10:30 this January, we were still able to engage with several of our partners in Southeast Asia. The first thing that we did is we held regular meetings with our Habitat for Humanity partners in both Myanmar and Cambodia to receive on the ground updates on what's happening

10:52 in terms of the public health crisis in each country, as well as brainstorm most recently

10:58 how our students could potentially help fundraise for each organization during the summer and

11:04 in the fall. In addition to that, we held some panel conversations. We held a conversation

11:12 in early March to educate the Suffolk community about the coup in Myanmar. And, most recently,

11:20 we invited Arn Chorn-Pond, who is a humanitarian and a Cambodian genocide survivor, to come

11:29 speak with us about the NGO that he founded called the Cambodian Living Arts. Finally,

11:35 alumni of our program, Kristiana Le and Anna Grace, successfully wrote a grant as part

11:44 of the Global Good Grant Program, and I'm happy to report that it was successfully funded

11:50 to benefit one of our educational partners in Cambodia called the Cambridge Cambodia School Project. On behalf of the CCE, I know I speak for everyone when I say THANK YOU

12:02 SO MUCH, and I mean that in the all caps that I’m currently reading right now. Thank you,

12:08 thank you, thank you for all that you have done this year, and I am really looking forward
12:13 to returning to a new state of normal and seeing you all in person this fall. Have a great summer.

12:21 [Kelly] Hi everyone, I’m Cortney Kelly and I’m the Administrative Coordinator in the Center for Community Engagement. As Dennis just talked about, some of the most transformative we offer are the Alternative Break programs. During their winter and spring breaks, students travel across the country and abroad to address critical community-based issues, such as racial justice, affordable housing and poverty, and LGBTQ+ advocacy and justice. Every year, we hold a fundraiser to raise funds for student scholarships to participate in these programs regardless of their financial circumstances. This year, we held an online raffle, where we raised $560 that will go directly to student scholarships to participate in these programs.

13:04 Thank you to everyone who donated and thank you to our partners who donated raffle prizes this year.

13:09 [Jessica Mejia] Hi everyone! My name is Jessica Mejia and this past year, I had the pleasure to work in the Center for Community Engagement as a Graduate Fellow working in the civics department.

13:20 As all of you know, this past year was filled with unprecedented times. Yet, it did not stop us from being resilient, innovative, adaptable. But most importantly, it brought us together even though we were miles apart from each other, and that unity was refreshing and comforting. And, I am very grateful for the overall experience. And, I will leave you with the words of Helen Keller. She once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”