

00:05 [Adam Westbrook] Hi everyone. I'm Adam Westbrook and I'm the Director of the Center for Community Engagement.

00:10 While there are many hardships that all of us have experienced this year—the loss of

00:14 loved ones, feelings of loneliness during quarantine and isolation, a reckoning with

00:19 racial justice, and living with a general uncertainty of how the pandemic was going

00:24 to impact our lives—I think this year has also shown us the awesome potential that communities

00:30 have when we work together.

00:32 When I got my COVID vaccine, what struck me was how many different people were involved

00:37 in the process. There is not enough time to list everyone who was a part of the vaccine

00:41 development and the roll out, but when I stopped to consider how many people were involved

00:47 and needed to come together in order for me to get this shot, it truly left me in awe

00:52 and really made clear something that drives us in the Center for Community Engagement.

00:57 When we come together in community, humans truly have awesome power to accomplish amazing things.

01:03 In this video, you'll hear about programs and projects with Suffolk students, staff,

01:08 faculty, and many of our community partners who collaborated this year and came together

01:13 with purpose as a community. People like you and me who have worked together in communities

01:18 here in Boston and throughout the world amidst—and in spite of—the challenges that none of

01:24 us could have imagined a year ago.

01:26 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

01:38 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

01:49 hard things that you've experienced this year, but also, I really encourage you to

01:53 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

02:09 some time to imagine the future possibilities that exist if we were all to work together,

02:14 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

02:25 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

02:34 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

02:45 Week 2021 this year took place from March 31 through April 2. As an institution, we

02:51 participated in critical community-based projects over a span of three days on-campus and over

02:57 Zoom. Our numbers include 137 volunteers, completing over 190 hours of service. We had

03:04 17 community engagement opportunities with 11 different community partners. I want to

03:10 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

04:55 plan, organize, and promote over 70 election-related events across campus. Following the momentum

05:01 of the election, the Suffolk Votes Ambassadors continued to spark civic engagement among

05:05 students through the Activism in Action Workshop Series, Suffolk Votes Podcast, and Election

05:12 Reflection Project. This year, we had more than 300 people attend our events.

05:19 [Luz Pimentel] Hi everyone. My name is Luz Pimentel. This year, I had the opportunity to work for the

05:23 Center for Community Engagement as our Community Partnerships Scholar. I had the opportunity

05:29 to work on programs, such as Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month, Transgender Awareness Month,

05:33 and also connected lots of students with volunteer organizations throughout the city of Boston.

05:41 This year, I learned from the CCE how to increase my involvement at Suffolk University, but also throughout the city of Boston.

05:49 [Kelly] For Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month in November, we held three panel conversations

05:53 with Horizons for Homeless Children, United Way Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley, and Massachusetts

05:59 Housing & Shelter Alliance to educate the Suffolk community about hunger and homelessness.

06:04 Additionally, in conjunction with International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31,

06:11 2021, we partnered with the Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion to hold three transgender

06:17 awareness panels throughout March and April with Youth on Fire, Massachusetts Transgender

06:23 Political Coalition, and Suffolk's Queer Student Union. These panels served to educate the

06:29 Suffolk community about ongoing issues faced by the transgender community and how we can

06:34 get involved to help combat them.

06:36 [Ben Flanders] My name's Ben. I'm the Service After Hours Scholar here in the Center for Community Engagement.

06:40 This semester, I've been working on our panel events with some of our partners within

06:43 the Greater Boston community. We hosted events with the wonderful folks at places like Y2Y,

06:48 Lawyers for Civil Rights Boston, and Hope and Comfort just to name a few. We learned

06:52 a little bit about some of the social justice issues in and around Greater Boston, and how

06:56 these organizations and the people that work within them are working to make their communities

07:00 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.

07:05 [Molly McCafferty] Hi there! My name's Molly. I'm the Volunteer Manager for an early-childhood education program

07:12 called Jumpstart. In this past year, our members did an amazing job to adapting to virtual

07:17 programming. They started the first semester by creating videos based on our session plans.

07:22 So, they were basically professional YouTubers by the end of the first semester. And then

07:28 second semester, they were able to move into live virtual programming with the kids. So,

07:32 they actually got to interact with them and hear from them, learn more about what their

07:37 interests are, and just really dig into the work a little bit deeper and with more connection.

07:43 We're just so proud of everything that they were able to accomplish this year, and we're

07:48 proud of the kids too for sticking with it and being so engaged throughout the year.

07:55 [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

09:01 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

10:37 Asia. The first thing that we did is we held regular meetings with our Habitat for Humanity

10:44 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

11:55 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

12:24 for Community Engagement. As Dennis just talked about, some of the most transformative we

12:29 offer are the Alternative Break programs. During their winter and spring breaks, students

12:34 travel across the country and abroad to address critical community-based issues, such as racial

12:39 justice, affordable housing and poverty, and LGBTQ+ advocacy and justice. Every year, we

12:46 hold a fundraiser to raise funds for student scholarships to participate in these programs

12:52 regardless of their financial circumstances. This year, we held an online raffle, where

12:57 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

13:14 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

13:23 stop us from being resilient, innovative, adaptable. But most importantly, it brought

13:28 us together even though we were miles apart from each other, and that unity was refreshing

13:34 and comforting. And, I am very grateful for the overall experience. And, I will leave

13:39 you with the words of Helen Keller. She once said, "Alone we can do so little; together

13:54 we can do so much."