

History Grad Making a Difference in The Bronx by Dr. Roberta Maguire

Michael Wehrley (UHP '05) knew when he graduated from UW Oshkosh that he wanted to make a difference, and he wanted to do that through teaching. What he didn't realize was that in his first year on the job at a public school in New York City he would in fact do very little teaching—at least in his opinion. But he learned more than he could have imagined.

Mike is now in his second year as a corps member of Teach For America (TFA), a nonprofit organization first proposed by Wendy Kopp in the senior thesis she wrote while an undergraduate at Princeton University. Dedicated to “eliminat[ing] educational inequality” in public schools, TFA works toward that goal by recruiting recent college graduates who commit to two years of teaching in

some of the nation's poorest communities. TFA is now in its seventeenth year and serves twenty-five urban and rural areas with a corps of 4,400 teachers. Its alumni number at least 12,000.

“It's an amazing experience,” Mike told us during a recent telephone conversation. “The first year was a struggle because I was the one having to do all the learning—about the cultures my kids come from, about the challenges they face on a daily basis because of poverty and social inequality, and about how unprepared I was to really teach students who don't believe that they can be students, that they can compete.

“But now I can't imagine having decided to do anything else right out of college. I will carry this experience forever.”

In fact, Mike has decided to extend his commitment to TFA for a third year, a choice he made recently because of gains he has seen his students make during this second year, when he doesn't have so much to learn himself. “If I can make a difference now, then next year I can make even more of a difference,” he said.

Mike is currently teaching math to seventh and eighth graders in a dual-language school in the Bronx, one of the

five boroughs that make up New York City. The student population is primarily of African descent or Hispanic. The families of some of his students have been in this country for several generations, while others are the first or second generation to be in the U.S. For many students, Spanish is the only language spoken at home.

“The kids are so awesome. They are sweet and funny--so witty. They are the reason for doing this.”

Since Mike was so enthusiastic about his experience, we asked him to suggest a profile for others who also might be interested in joining the TFA corps. Mike told us, “If you think you want to teach and are not afraid of learning from your mistakes—if you are willing to fall on your face a bit in order to work toward ending a social ill—then this is the program for you.”

We have invited Mike to come talk with Honors students next semester—a “Pizza with Alumni,” if you will—to share his experiences as a TFA corps member and to explain the application process to those who think that indeed the TFA may be for them. Watch this space and our Web site for details!

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Campus and Community Events: What's Going On Around Oshkosh

Saturday, December 2, at 3PM: Student Recital with Jacki Thering, Music Hall, Arts and Communication Center, 926 Woodland Ave. Jacki, a member of the UHP, will play the violin. FREE with student ID. Call (920) 424-4224 for more information.

Saturday, December 2, at 7:30PM and Sunday, December 3, at 2PM: Picnic by William Inge, Fredric March Theatre. Inge's play, which traces a twenty-four hour period in which a drifter disrupts a small Midwestern town on a late-summer holiday weekend, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. *Picnic* is perhaps better known as the film that made Kim Novak a star and William Holden the best thing to happen to Kansas since *The Wizard of Oz*.

Saturday, December 2, from 6PM to 9PM: Art Walk, Main Street in Oshkosh. On the first Saturday of each month, stores and galleries extend their hours, provide snacks, and display local artists' creations. A relaxing way to start off your evening, tour the downtown, and appreciate the efforts of artists in your community, the Art Walk has become an Oshkosh tradition.

Saturday, December 2; Sunday, December 3; Saturday, December 9; Sunday, December 10; and Saturday, December 16; 11AM to 4PM: Sites of the Season 2006 at Morgan House, 234 Church Avenue in Oshkosh. The Morgan House, a meticulously restored Queen Anne home from 1884 that once doubled as a beauty salon, will be beautifully decorated for the holidays and open for touring. This event has been planned by the *Oshkosh Northwestern*, Paine Art Center and Gardens, Oshkosh Public Museum, the Grand Opera House, and The Winnebago County Historical and Archaeological Society, which preserves and maintains Morgan House. While Morgan House will be FREE on December 2 and 3, a donation of \$3 will be requested on December 9, 10, and 16. For more information, please visit www.morganhouse.org.

Wednesday, December 6, at 5:30PM: Graduation Awards for Excellence Ceremony, Reeve Ballroom. Honors Medallions and other awards will be distributed to high-

achieving December graduates. A reception with light refreshments will follow.

Every First/Third Saturday (December 4 and 16), from 10AM to 12PM: Oshkosh Area Writers Group, Oshkosh Public Library, 106 Washington Avenue. Local writers meet bimonthly in the library's lower level to read their own works and to critique others' projects. For further information, call (920) 231-6182 or visit www.oshkoshwriters.blogspot.com.

Thursday, December 7, at 8PM: UW Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra, Music Hall, Arts and Communication Center, 926 Woodland Ave., Oshkosh. Students are FREE with ID; all other tickets are \$5 or less. Please call (920) 424-4224 for additional information.

Monday, December 11, 2PM to 8PM: Just Plane Chocolate, EAA AirVenture Museum, 3000 Poberezny Road, Oshkosh. Taste your way through the world-class AirVenture Museum to determine the best chocolate dessert in town! You will also have the opportunity to meet and "break chocolate" with Father Christmas himself. Santa, who is a licensed pilot, will arrive by helicopter at 5PM. This event is FREE and is part of EAA's annual "Christmas in the Air" celebration. For more information, visit www.eaa.org or call (920) 426-4818.

December 12 through 15 at 7:30PM; December 16 at 2PM & 7:30PM; and December 17 at 1PM & 6:30PM: Twelve Angry Men at the Fox Valley Performing Arts Center, Appleton. Patience, truth, and cooperation are demanded and homeostatic conditions are tested when eleven jurors, certain of and indifferent to a defendant's guilt, meet Juror #8. With George Wendt and Richard Thomas. For more information, visit <http://www.foxcitiespac.com/> or call (920) 730-3760.

Saturday, December 16, at 9:30AM: UW Oshkosh Midyear Commencement, Kolf Sports Center, 785 High Ave., Oshkosh.

Thursday, January 4, at 7PM: Singin' in the Rain at The Grand Opera House, Oshkosh. All tickets are \$4. Gene

Campus and Community Events (Continued)

Kelly and an amazingly accomplished cast witness and celebrate—as only MGM musicals can—the movie industry’s problem-laden transition from a silent art form to “talkies.” The Grand Opera House is just one mile from campus at 100 High Avenue. For more information or to learn more about this historic treasure, visit www.grandoperahouse.org or call (920) 424-2350.

Through January 1 from 5PM to 9PM daily: Celebration of Lights, Menominee Park (entrance is at Irving Avenue and Hazel). Oshkosh’s lakeside comes alive each evening with decorations, colorfully lit displays, and live reindeer on Fridays through Sundays. FREE on December 7, 14, and 19; otherwise, the cost per car is \$7 or there is a reduced fee of \$5 with a canned food donation. For more information, call the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce: (920) 303-9200.

Through Sunday, January 7 (Tuesdays through Sundays 11AM to 4PM): The Inspired Line: Selected Prints of Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt van Rijn, The Paine Art Center and Gardens, 1410 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh. Tickets for students are \$5 with ID. For information regarding this and other events at The Paine, visit www.thepaine.org.

Weekdays & Sundays 8:30AM to 2PM (Wednesdays until 7PM): Nativity Collection, United Methodist Church, 1174 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh (where Algoma meets New York Avenue). Located just down the street from the university, the lower level of this church houses an enormous display of nativity sets from all over the world. Many of the pieces, which are both handmade and commercially manufactured works of art, are miniatures and are of many different materials including crystal, paper, stone, metal, and wood. Call (920) 231-2800 for more information.

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RED CROSS/UHSA BLOOD DRIVE December 6

In this season of giving, blood is one of the most valuable and lasting gifts you can offer. And it won't cost you a dime....

The Red Cross and UHSA are cosponsoring a Blood Drive on Wednesday, December 6, from 11AM to 5PM in the Scott Hall Lounge.

If you've never been a donor, DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR ID. Also make sure that you eat a good breakfast or lunch beforehand and that you're prepared to provide a brief medical history. Please allow one hour for the whole process, which will include a rest period afterwards.

For more information such as eligibility guidelines and the Top 10 Reasons to Give Blood, please go to www.redcross.org.

Just rewards: we'll have sweets for all donors in the Honors Lounge (Polk 17) so please stop by for a well-deserved sugar boost!



Adam Knudson, Pre-Med Student and UHP Participant, Named Runner Up for Chancellor's 9/11 Memorial Prize by Julie Russo

Adam Knudson earned the runner-up award for an unusual mix of sketches, poetry, and original newsprint that he submitted to the student competition for the Chancellor's 9/11 Memorial Prize. The awards were announced on Monday, November 6, in the Reeve Ballroom prior to the Memories of 9/11 panel, an annual event where presenters are invited to examine and reflect on the events and aftermath of 9/11 from various viewpoints. The judges for the student competition considered projects of all kinds, including essays, poetry, artwork, film, and musical pieces.

The top prize was awarded to Courtney Spinler. Adam acknowledged that her dramatic, superbly detailed drawing "made my entry look like a pre-schooler's artwork." (Adam has not taken an art class since middle school.) But the reasons that one is drawn to a competition are many, and Adam's were not only the prize money but to explore unresolved personal issues about 9/11.

The competition also provided an opportunity for him to revisit an assignment from his Fall 2005 Honors Seminar when English professor Pam Gemin asked students to write a poem about themselves. Adam recalled, "It was then that I realized how much 9/11 impacted me. It was [already] four years after 9/11 but I couldn't help but include mention of 9/11 as a major part of my life.... Everyone remembers exactly where they were and what they were doing on 9/11 the moment they saw or heard about the attacks."

Adam decided to complete a multimedia piece for the Chancellor's 9/11 Memorial Prize competition by incorporating two of his Honors Seminar poems, some charcoal depictions of the Statue of Liberty and the World Trade Center, and long-saved front pages of newspapers, which were then adroitly arranged to form the number nine, a hyphen, and the number eleven. This result may sound contrived, but the quality

and the impact of the individual pieces and the striking manner in which they're collectively displayed make the project ingenious.

When we asked Adam about his personal interests and what he is currently studying, he described himself as a typical Honors student who has a passion for learning and knowledge, a gift that has proved a hindrance in his ability to choose a major and a career path. He is interested in history, foreign languages and cultures, and photography, but Adam has finally settled on a major in Biology and is a pre-med student because he feels that medicine "best suits my interests and will best utilize my abilities to help others." Other plans include transforming a German minor into a major and to study abroad next fall in Italy. For Adam Knudson, it would seem safe to assume, studying for any length of time in the birthplace of the Renaissance would be a natural fit. And it just may feel like home.

WANTED: UNWANTED BOOKS

UHSA is coordinating a book drive in the Honors Lounge (Polk 17).

All books are welcome—even your past-its-prime textbook or that really-awful-but-nonetheless-tearstained romance novel.

Please use the drop boxes in Polk 17 and thank you for contributing!

Need an Advising Appointment?

Not sure how to best accommodate your Honors requirements? Adam BellCorrelli is here to help!
Call (920) 424-1362,
E-mail bellcora@uwosh.edu, or
stop by Polk 10:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Monday | 9:30 to 12 1 to 2 |
| Tuesday | 10 to 2 |
| Wednesday | 9:30 to 2 |
| Thursday | 9 to 12 |
| Friday | 9 to 12 |

Fall 2006 Thesis Symposium

Congratulations to two UHP students, Heidi Galica and Tiffany Shadick, who presented their year-long thesis projects on Thursday, November 30, at 5PM in Reeve 215.

Heidi, who is a Chemistry major, was advised by Dr. Brant Kedrowski and presented on "Bioengineering More Effective Antifungal Drugs." Tiffany, an Athletic Training major, worked with Dr. Hal Strough on her thesis entitled "An Analysis of Motion and Time During Face-Mask Removal of Football Helmets Using Power Screwdrivers and Rotary Tools." A reception with light refreshments followed the presentations.

Have you seen a Wishing Tree in the Polk Library?

The University Honors Student Association (UHSA) has collected the names of some of the children in our community who are in need this holiday season. Each paper ornament on the wishing tree will specify a child's age, gender, and a suggestion for a holiday gift for him or her. Please consider selecting an ornament and purchasing the suggested gift. There is no need to wrap the gift but we do

ask that you attach the ornament to it. All packages can be left in the drop-off box conveniently located by the tree.

If you would prefer to provide a donation instead of shopping for a specific child, self-addressed envelopes to the University Honors Program (Polk 8) will also be available on the tree. These monetary donations can be forwarded to the UHP in Campus

Mail or dropped off in person. They will be used to purchase gifts for any children whose ornaments were not picked off the tree by the end of our program.

Thanks for your generous support of the Wishing Tree program! The UHSA sincerely appreciates your participation!



University Honors Student Association (UHSA) Wishing Tree Donation Form

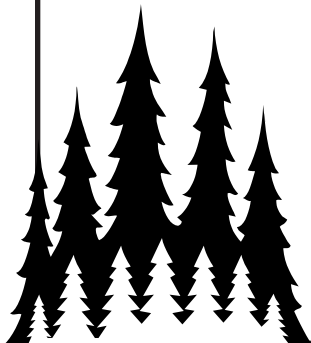
Please donate to help us make a child's holiday wish come true.
100% of the collected funds will go toward the purchase of gifts for children in need.

Name _____

Donation \$ _____ cash / check payable to UHSA (please circle)

Given in Honor of _____

Message: _____



Congratulations, Fall 2006 Graduates!

These students have completed both their academic and Honors requirements and will be awarded the Honors Medallion at the Graduation Awards for Excellence Ceremony. All are welcome to attend on Wednesday, December 6, in the Reeve Ballroom (227) at 5:30PM:

- 🔥 **Heidi Galica - BS (Chemistry); minor in Microbiology**
- 🔥 **Lilly Hoffman - BSE (Double Major in Elementary and Special Education)**
- 🔥 **Katie Kubicki - BSN (Nursing); minor in Studio Art**
- 🔥 **Catherine Schmitz - BSE (Mathematics [Secondary Education]); minor in Spanish**

