

Bridges

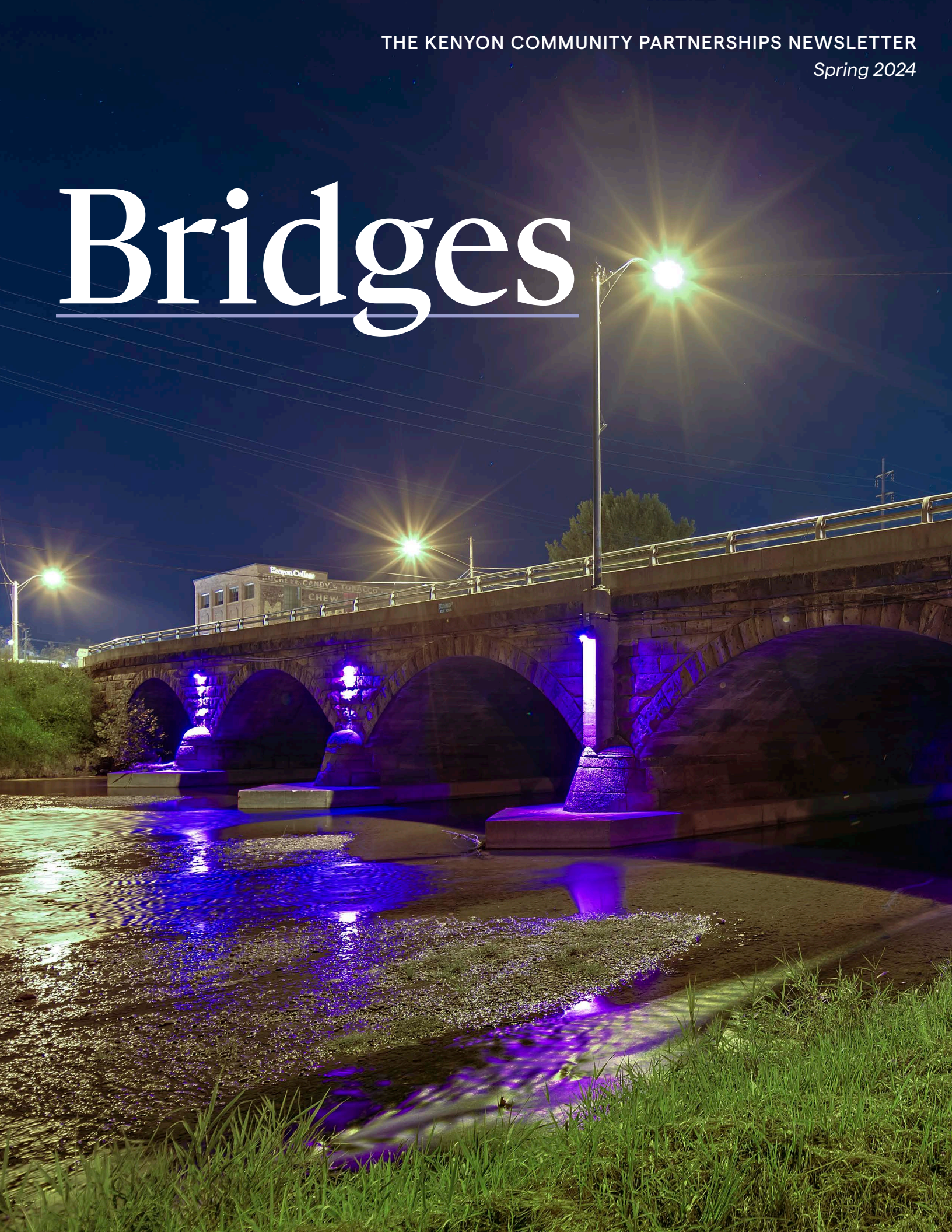




Photo: Graham H. Stokes

Spring 2024

A Decade of Community-Engaged Learning at Kenyon

As Kenyon celebrates its bicentennial year, the Office of Community Partnerships takes a look at one of the most enduring bridges built between college and community: the community-engaged learning (CEL) courses that have united Kenyon students and faculty with individuals and organizations throughout Knox County and beyond.

These courses, which bring community partners into the classroom, or students into the community — or both — as part of regular coursework, have grown in number and popularity since their inception nearly a decade ago. This academic year, 33 Kenyon faculty have offered 40 courses that contain a CEL component.

In this issue, our student writers examine this growing program: **Anna Fahey '24** shares her personal journey partnering with the Knox County literary scene, **Caleb Newman '24** explores the program's inception and **Ben Garst '25** follows a social movements course to Zoar Village in Tuscarawas County.

As we mark Kenyon's 200 years as part of the Knox County community, we offer a sincere thank you to the community partners and faculty who have built this program over the past decade. And to potential partners, we hope the stories shared in this issue will inspire you to come aboard and engage in this exchange of valuable knowledge and insight between the Kenyon and Knox County communities.



Kenyon and Local Literary Partnerships

by Anna Fahey '24

One of my favorite qualities of Mount Vernon and its surrounding area is the remarkable commitment the Knox County community makes to fostering a local love of the arts.

With two higher learning institutions, the Woodward Opera House, the Gund and the Annex, the public library, Paragraphs Bookstore, multiple studios, an arts consortium, several theater groups and more, Knox County is well furnished with a vast array of artistic opportunities at which local residents, tourists and college students alike can come together.

In the fall, I wrote about some of the ways in which visual art is woven into the fabric of the Knox County community. This spring, as the weather grew warm and then cold again, I spent time with some of the many leaders in Knox County who are dedicated to nurturing a rich literary

landscape in our small, central Ohio community. While the work that each one of these inspiring folks does varies, they are all united by a fierce sense of dedication to nurturing a love of reading and writing.

My journey through Mount Vernon's literary scene started with two stops at the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County, located downtown at 201 N. Mulberry St. There, shrouded by books, movies, magazines, public computers, sunny meeting rooms, and more, I met Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher '96, who works as a writer, editor, teacher and manager of events and writing programs at the library, and John Chidester, the library's director. As

an institution committed to serving all of Knox County, the public library offers a wide array of programming and works with the community to plan events that most interest the folks living in the Mount Vernon area. I was fascinated to learn about how these partnerships blossom, especially between the library and the Office for Community Partnerships (OCP).

Some of these connections are recurring events or longstanding partnerships, like the collaboration between the OCP and the library to sponsor Banned Books Week, in which hundreds of copies of “Maus,” in Fall 2023, and “Fahrenheit 451,” in Fall 2022, were distributed to the community for free as part of a celebration of the freedom to read. Other programs include the Kenyon internship program,

“Whatever my projects are, I want to make sure that our community feels welcome at them and knows that they are for everybody.”

— *Jamie Lyn Smith-Fletcher '96, deputy director of development, special projects and writing programs at the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County*

in which a Kenyon student works closely with Smith-Fletcher to lead writing workshops and facilitate other outreach programs, or the ongoing Theater of War project, which presents dramatic readings of classic plays in order to facilitate community discussions.

“In the time that I have been here, we have had such a great level of support from the OCP,” Smith-Fletcher said. For one such event in early 2021, the OCP helped the library host a reading series based around Dan Rather’s 2017 book “What Unites Us: Reflections on Patriotism,” which

deals with ways to most effectively bring differently minded Americans together. Because the COVID-19 pandemic precluded indoor events, the OCP helped set tents up in the parking lot and made mocktails for guests. “Whatever my projects are,” Smith-Fletcher said, “I want to make sure that our community feels welcome at them and knows that they are for everybody.”

John Chidester, the director, echoed Smith-Fletcher’s sentiments. Chidester has worked at the library for 48 years and remembers everything from his first connection to Kenyon

▼ John Chidester, director of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County, speaks to Kenyon students in front of the library’s main branch on North Mulberry Street in Mount Vernon.



Photo: James DeCamp



“We have kids who are homeschooled, kids from the Mount Vernon school district, kids from private schools ... it creates a nice opportunity for kids and parents to get involved with Paragraphs and with other members of the community.”

— Max Leaning, manager of Paragraphs Bookstore

to the entire history of the library's digitization. His office serves as a sort of time capsule of events past: Margaret Atwood's talk at Kenyon after winning the Kenyon Review Award for Literary Achievement, name tags from conferences past, and more. When I asked him what his favorite part of directing the library was, Chidester said that it was difficult to express. “I have loved the job,” he said. “I've loved this library, the library system, Mount Vernon, Knox County, the people ... you have a sense that what you're doing is of great value for the community. It's a great way to spend your life.”

Max Leaning, who manages Paragraphs Bookstore on Main Street, also loves living a life dedicated to books. Although Leaning grew up right in Gambier, he says that returning to the area as an adult and working at Paragraphs was what enabled him to truly feel connected to the community. At Paragraphs, he sees a large variety of customers every day, especially because of the comings and goings of two different university/college campuses right in town. On the other hand, the close relationships he's made with Mount Vernon locals and his regulars are some of the most rewarding parts of the job. “I can't

really go anywhere without saying hello to someone,” Leaning told me. “I cherish that.”

Outside of interacting with the community through sharing and selling books, Paragraphs also works closely with the Kenyon Review in order to host three weekly creative writing series for elementary, middle and high schoolers. The workshops are organized and run by Kenyon students who work as Review associates and take place right in the bookstore. Leaning sees the workshops as a good way for kids in Mount Vernon to take a break from school and sports and get to know one another in a new way. “We have kids who are homeschooled, kids from the Mount Vernon school district, kids from private schools ... it creates a nice opportunity for kids and parents to get involved with Paragraphs and with other members of the community.”

◀ Paragraphs Bookstore in downtown Mount Vernon partners with the Kenyon Review to host three weekly creative writing series for public school students, which take place in the bookstore.





◀The Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County observed “Let Freedom Read” Banned Books Week 2023 with a book giveaway and a community reading of Art Spiegelman’s “Maus.” The series of activities centering around this work included brown bag lunch community discussions, community leader and expert panels, a counter-book-bans workshop and more. Pictured left to right are co-chairs Alyssa Gómez Lawrence ’10, of Kenyon’s Office for Community Partnerships, and Debbie Nabubwaya Chambers.

Wendi Fowler, the president of the Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon, also works to serve the youth of the Knox County community. Kiwanis is an international service club whose Mount Vernon chapter works to provide for all different types of community members. This year, one of the main focuses of the club is on literacy. In the past, they’ve given to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Effort, which provides registered children with a free, age-appropriate book once a month from birth until age five. This year, the club is addressing the “summer slide,” which is the tendency for children who don’t have access to books over the summer to lose some of the academic progress they built up during the school year. In order to nurture the development of all children of Knox

“As a senior getting ready to graduate in a few short weeks, I know that this community — no matter how big or small — is the thing I’ll miss most.”

— Anna Fahey ’24

County, Kiwanis works with Alyssa Gómez Lawrence ’10, OCP’s assistant director, to organize a book drive so that all children have the ability to read over the summer. “It was a programming that came organically out of brainstorming sessions with our Kiwanis members,” Fowler said. “We have people bringing books to every Kiwanis meeting.”

Speaking with all of these passionate, interesting, and committed folks was a joy. Knox County and all the people who call it home are remarkable, and there

is always something new to try. Perhaps an adult writing workshop at the library is a fun new challenge for you, or a Kiwanis meeting will provide you with new connections. Stop by Paragraphs and ask Maxwell for a reading recommendation. Whether you’re a student, local, newcomer, parent, professor or child, there is always a book for you, and always a new person to meet. As a senior getting ready to graduate in a few short weeks, I know that this community — no matter how big or small — is the thing I’ll miss most.



The Story Behind the Creation of Community-Engaged Learning Courses

by Caleb Newman '24

When students come to Kenyon from all over the world, they may read great literature in Lentz House, do research for a chemistry class in Chalmers Library or speak Arabic in Ascension Hall. However, learning does not just happen on the Hill. Over the past decade, there has been an effort from various members of the Kenyon community to expand students' learning beyond Gambier.

Well before the Wright Center opened in 2017, and the receipt of the Mellon Grant that created the Office for Community Partnerships (OCP) in 2014, individual faculty were collaborating with local community members to enhance students' learning. One of those faculty members was Professor of Sociology Jan Thomas who later became associate provost and after that, director of OCP.

When Thomas came to Kenyon in 1996, some of her colleagues were already working with the community in their courses. In developing classes with community involvement, Thomas recalls asking community members to be involved in the classroom. "I started with just, 'Could you come talk to my class? I want them to be able to apply the readings to the real world.' So I invited people from the community to come talk

about their work and their perspective on issues we had been discussing in class."

In one of those courses, "Sociology of Health and Illness" (SOCY 224), Thomas invited participation for Knox County community members who worked in health care settings. "We had conversations with the CEO of the hospital, the health commissioner, a surgeon and a family practice doctor about their work and their views on health care," Thomas said. In her research methods courses, her classes always collaborated with the community on a project. "For example," Thomas said, "we assisted the health department with surveys and data analysis, looked at sex education in the high school and partnered with an MVNU (Mount Vernon Nazarene University) methods class to look at hooking up at Kenyon and MVNU."

◀ Assistant Professor of Film Hao Zhou included a trip to Mount Vernon's Memorial Theater for his film students in Fall 2023.

In 2013, at the same time Sean Decatur became Kenyon's 19th president, conversations started about creating a formalized program building upon the community-involved classes. Kenyon decided to apply for the Sense of Place: College and Community Through Experiential Learning and Service Mellon Grant to create the OCP. Upon the creation of the office, Jen Odenweller was hired as director, and Professor of Spanish Clara Román-Odio became the faculty director.

Odenweller and Román-Odio worked together to establish community-engaged learning (CEL) courses. Thomas, who oversaw the administration of the grant as associate provost, explained, "Clara's role was to train faculty in the pedagogy of community-engaged learning, and Jen's role was to develop community partners. So when faculty are trained and have their syllabus ready, what kind of community partner do they want to work with to accomplish the learning goals? Jen was also on the other side saying, in the community, where are the needs? Is there a project that would be great for community-engaged learning class?"

Thomas describes Román-Odio as someone who pushed for the implementation of CEL pedagogy among the faculty. "She was really that one person that said we need to do this as a college, and I think it was that sort of the right thing at the right time," Thomas said of Román-Odio's passion.

"The first step for me was to create CEL courses and measure outcomes," Román-Odio said. She created a class called "Cultural Productions of the Borderlands," where students

went to Mount Vernon's Columbia Elementary School to understand and see the theories and representations of borderlands in practice. "My students grapple with issues of intersectionality, borders, colonial power through deep critical reflection and by recycling the theories of the borderlands and creative writing by people of color," Román-Odio said. "They read children's stories, and they talk about what it means to be different or to be bilingual or be on those borderlands with the fifth graders."

As faculty director, Román-Odio worked to train faculty on pedagogical best practices for CEL courses. One of the first things she did was to develop a faculty learning community (FLC) in collaboration with Kenyon's Center for Innovative Pedagogy. "The specific objective of this FLC was to support the creation and delivery of courses that utilize CEL pedagogy to promote the development of personal and social responsibility and civic engagement," Román-Odio said. In the FLC, which is a group of professors learning about a subject, Román-Odio worked with faculty to develop their syllabi, so they could teach courses after the training program. "Everything that you are going to do that semester has to be reflected in that syllabus," she said. "It's a contract."

To help get faculty buy-in, Román-Odio also worked with faculty on how to incorporate CEL into their research as well as their evaluations for promotion and tenure. Joe Klesner, who was Kenyon's provost at the time, described Román-Odio as playing a big role in making sure that CEL was in front of professors — for example, at faculty meetings. "Without a strong faculty champion, it probably would have taken us a

lot longer to get to have CEL courses across the curriculum," said Klesner. Additionally, Román-Odio partnered with the then-newly formed OCP to connect faculty members with community members to be able to develop CEL courses.

While Román-Odio was getting faculty buy-in and leading the FLC, Odenweller was helping to arrange additional relationship-building opportunities for both faculty and community members. "The early stages of supporting the coursework development were really around thinking about what faculty needed to think differently about in order to offer a course they maybe were accustomed to teaching many times," said Odenweller. OCP offered workshops, brought in outside speakers who had done the work before at peer institutions and discussed the goals that they had for their class and their academic departments.

Odenweller aimed to meet faculty where they were when assisting professors in teaching CEL courses. She had conversations with faculty over coffee and hosted mixers with community members and faculty at the Wright Center to help facilitate the creation of CEL courses. "We really treated those as community conversations," said Odenweller. "A lot of those engagements planted seeds for those faculty members and peers in their department to become more familiar with what opportunities look like."

While working with faculty was new to Odenweller, she was used to working with the community in her previous role as executive director of the United Way of Knox County. Klesner remembers being impressed by the amount of people Odenweller knew in the community. "We were looking for someone who had good

community connections,” Klesner said of the search criteria. In her role with the United Way, Odenweller was responsible for facilitating community-building strategies through program investments made in Knox County organizations that addressed health, financial stability and educational needs of the community. Many of these organizations became close partners of Kenyon.

Odenweller hired Alyssa Gómez Lawrence, who grew up in Knox County and was a 2010 graduate of Kenyon, in early 2016 to help establish the office. Gómez Lawrence was able to provide Odenweller with perspectives about Kenyon culture.

“I will never forget her interview for the position, when she shared ways in which she wished she could have experienced more collaboration with those off of the Kenyon Hill,” Odenweller said. “The search committee knew we had found someone special who would be a key element in building the OCP with the larger community in mind.”

They initially started to look at what other schools had done with similar types of offices. Odenweller worked to develop rules of engagement, such as treating everyone as equals in the process. “It wasn’t an Office for Community Engagement, it was an Office for Community Partnerships,” she said. “We made a very literal choice in establishing an office designed to foster mutually beneficial community partnership building.”

While Odenweller had connections with the local community, Gómez Lawrence developed relationships with departments across campus seeing if they were already working with the community. “We also had to make sure that we are creating relationships with other offices and not remaining siloed,” she said. “We started meeting with each office and said, ‘Hey, we’re here. Great to meet you. Let’s talk about ways that we can collaborate, or maybe we just keep checking in.’”

After Odenweller left Kenyon in 2018, Thomas transitioned into being director of OCP. The role shifted more so that Thomas could oversee and be a face in the community for all the events that a Kenyon representative was asked to attend. “The shift was actually having more presence in the community beyond just the CEL courses,” Thomas said.

The faculty director job also shifted to what the position is today. Now a faculty fellow, the position is a conduit between the faculty and OCP. The job duties are to help lead one-on-one training and continue to foster the CEL courses. “If faculty really wanted to talk to another faculty member in the office, that’s who they could reach out to,” Gómez Lawrence said of the faculty fellow’s role. “They also are more of a support system for these workshops or these faculty learning communities.”

At the same time, the type of training offered by OCP was expanded as the institutional knowledge

around how to create and teach a CEL course started to form. The training offered to faculty today consists of participating in an FLC, attending a workshop or having a one-on-one conversation with a faculty member who has taught a CEL course.

“We like the idea of having a CEL faculty cohort for exactly that mentoring piece,” Gómez Lawrence said. She often connects professors who are interested in creating a CEL class to talk to another professor who has experience teaching a CEL course.

Additionally, as CEL pedagogy has become more widely known across academia, newer faculty coming to Kenyon may have already experienced teaching CEL class before. Klesner recalls that even in the mid-2010s, CEL was a high-impact practice that new professors may have learned about. “Younger faculty, newer faculty coming to the college who were coming out of grad school, came with an excitement about doing a CEL course.”

Overall, Gómez Lawrence still represents the training philosophy that Odenweller held when leading OCP. “We try to meet a variety of people where they are, and that being just a variety of different levels,” Gómez Lawrence said.

Today, not only has there been an increase in the number of CEL courses offered, but also the partnerships that have been created across campus. One of those connections is the Career Development Office (CDO). Together, these offices formed the Kenyon Community Internship Program (KCIP), which allows students to work with local nonprofits on various projects. “KCIP was the brainchild of the CDO and our office,” said Gómez Lawrence. “So we went from two internships in 2017 to 16 this semester, and they were all continued from last semester.”

“The value of internships and the quality and quantity of internships feels very robust ... I can feel that in the community.”

— Jennifer Odenweller, Executive Director, Ariel Foundation

“The value of internships and the quality and quantity of internships feels very robust, is how I would say that has developed and strengthened over time,” said Odenweller, who now is the executive director at Ariel Foundation. “I can feel that in the community. I’m aware of that, even though I don’t personally experience KCIP.”

One of the community partners, who has two interns this semester and in the past has hosted a CEL course, is the Area Development Foundation (ADF), which strives to help foster economic growth by attracting employers to Knox County and supporting the existing communities in the area. Jeff Gottke, the president of ADF, appreciates the commitment that Kenyon has made in the Knox County community. “We’re very lucky to be able to harness the brain power of the Kenyon students and faculty and the resources of Kenyon College in order to bring those very valuable projects to bear across the county,” Gottke said.

The Office for Community Partnerships has come a long way since its founding nearly a decade ago. In the 2016-17 academic year, 228 students participated in a CEL course in one of 19 offerings. This academic year, 704 students took one of the 43 CEL courses offered.

The future remains bright, with Professor of Dance Julie Brodie taking over next year as the third director of OCP. “I think she’s a perfect person to do it,” said Klesner. “She’s been one of the biggest proponents of CEL work and one of the biggest users of it.”

In the past, Brodie has taught a CEL course, “Directed Teaching” (DANC 240), in which students would teach movement to children in elementary schools. Gómez Lawrence recalls Brodie being one of the early adopters of CEL courses, teaching the

course multiple times over the past eight years. “She is another person who’s really passionate about the work that they do and really making a connection with community members,” Gómez Lawrence said. She believes that Brodie will fit right into the position, while also offering fresh perspectives on how to engage in community partnerships.

While Brodie transitions from her office in Bolton Dance Studio in Gambier to the Wright Center in Mount Vernon, students continue to do the same with their learning. At the conclusion of each CEL course, students give feedback, so that faculty members can measure outcomes that they had hoped to accomplish. “CEL courses are lauded as being things that enhance learning, and when I’m

reading most of these evaluations, it just is very clear that that’s true,” Gómez Lawrence said. “It’s just great to see that students are experiencing what we hope they would.”

On the other side of the partnership, community members value Kenyon’s commitment to the area. “The Office for Community Partnerships was able to bring Kenyon’s resources and identity off the Hill and into the community, and that has been a huge benefit to ADF and to other entities around the county over the past eight years,” said Gottke, the Area Development Foundation president. “You don’t see colleges making that type of effort to immerse themselves in the community as much as Kenyon does, and I think that is very, very valuable.”

Satisfaction with CEL Courses

AMONG SURVEYED COMMUNITY PARTNERS

100%

reported that they would recommend collaborating with Kenyon

95%

felt that moderate/immersive CEL courses helped advance their organizational missions and/or goals

95%

were impressed by students’ professionalism and creativity

AMONG SURVEYED FACULTY

90%

agree the benefits outweigh the extra effort

100%

felt they developed knowledge/skills they would not have otherwise

90%

experienced professional and personal growth

AMONG SURVEYED STUDENTS

95%

would recommend a CEL course to another Kenyon student without hesitation

100%

felt their CEL course increased their knowledge of and connection with the greater community

85%

experienced academic and personal growth and developed a number of transferable skills



Learning From Utopian Communities, Laborers and Hospitals

by Ben Garst '25

When Alyssa Kuchinski heard about Kenyon's Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) program, she knew she wanted her history class to participate. "Having grown up near Knox County, I always felt that Gambier was sort of isolated from the rest of the county," she said. "I'm from this area and thought it would be wonderful to connect the class to the broader community."

Kuchinski, a Marilyn Yarbrough Dissertation Fellow and visting instructor of history, knew that her Spring 2024 special-topic history class, "U.S. Social Movements," would be a perfect fit for the program. She arranged one in-depth field trip for her students to Zoar Village in Tuscarawas County, Ohio — a trip that classified her course as an entry-level CEL course.

Participating CEL courses are classified as entry level, moderate or immersive, based on the degree of community engagement involved. In entry-level courses, students hear from recurring speakers from the community and take field trips to community sites. Moderate-level courses include those same activities and also include volunteering experience for students, coupled with student reflection opportunities. Those courses designated as

immersive include those same characteristics but at an exceptionally high level. Of the nearly 100 CEL-participating courses, there is a wide variety of department and immersion-level combinations.

Established in the 19th century as a utopian community, Zoar Village was once home to a relatively radical separatist society that advocated for women's rights and abolition. Kuchinski chose the trip to Zoar Village to give the students in her social movements course an opportunity to see first-hand a nearby community whose founding connects directly to the themes of the course. Students in her course explore the organization of social movements, how they handle successes and challenges, their legacies throughout U.S. history, and the diversity in gender, race, social class, religion, and

◀ The gardens at Zoar Village. History instructor Alyssa Kuchinski included a field trip to this historic utopian community in her “U.S. Social Movements” class.

political thought represented in these movements. Like many professors partnering with CEL, Kuchinski is hopeful that the tour and the CEL program will get students outside of their normal perspectives.

While this course is her second to participate formally in the CEL program, Kuchinski has long encouraged her students to build bridges between themselves and those in the larger community. In the course “U.S. Labor and Working Class,” offered in Fall 2023, students examined workers’ movements throughout the U.S., from the late 19th century to the modern day. Students explored how workers chose to influence their own working conditions and broader policy decisions through unions, worker collectives, coalitions with other community and religious groups, and worker centers. The course placed a special focus on workers who often fall outside of the main historical narrative — namely women, people of color, migrant workers, and workers in low-wage jobs — and the different obstacles and discriminations they faced.

In one immersive project, students interviewed workers directly about their experiences. “I had my students reach out and interview somebody who was either in a labor union or was a working class person and just ask them about their experience,” said Kuchinski. “Then I had them write a reflection paper.”

“I don’t think there’s any class that can’t get involved in the community, whether it’s volunteering or incorporating a single, big learning experience.”

—Alyssa Kuchinski, visiting instructor of history

Other CEL courses classified at the immersive level place students directly in the community throughout the semester. In one such course, the biology department’s “Health Services and Biomedical Analysis, students spend more than 50 hours volunteering over the course of the semester in the Knox Community Hospital Emergency Department. In courses like this one, students in fields which often consist of lab work and intensive lectures can make meaningful connections with those in the Knox County community while seeing the concepts they learned in class put into action.

Participation in CEL courses is one way Kenyon meets its stated mission of helping students “build strong foundations for lives of purpose and consequence.” From its humble origins with only a handful of classes, the program has grown to include about 100 courses, offered in departments ranging from economics to film.

“It’s really fruitful for students to [better understand] what it’s like to be in a working class community because that’s what surrounds Kenyon,” Kuchinski said, noting that she found it easy to adapt her courses to be CEL courses. “I don’t think there’s any class that can’t get involved in the community, whether it’s volunteering or incorporating a single, big learning experience.” Growing up nearby, Kuchinski has seen the value that CEL courses bring to students: “I think it’s really important to interact with the broader community.” CEL courses matter because students learn not only about the community, but *from* it.

KENYON FACULTY TEACHING CEL COURSES, 2023-24

Eliza Ablovatski, *history**
Rob Alexander, *economics and environmental studies***
Nuh Aydin, *mathematics*†
Anna Aydynyan, *modern languages and literatures**
Patrick Bottiger, *history*†
Jared Bragg, *anthropology and environmental studies***
Piers Brown, *English*
Marci Cottingham, *sociology*†
Krista Dalton, *religious studies*†
Leah Dickens, *psychology***
Rokhaya Aballa Dieng, *modern languages and literatures*
Dani Ezor, *art history*
Ruth Heindel, *environmental studies*†
Eric Holdener, *physics and scientific computing***
Dana Krieg, *psychology***
Alyssa Kuchinski, *history**
Christopher Levesque, *law and society, and sociology*
Iris Levin, *biology and environmental studies*†
Ben Locke, *music*†
Zachary McGee, *political science*
Rosemary O’Neill, *English*
Cindy Juyoung Ok, *English*
Rachel Ozerkevich, *art history*
Alyssa Quinn, *English*
Kora Radella, *dance*†
Matthew Rouhier, *chemistry*†
Lauren Rudolph, *neuroscience*
Lauren Schmitt, *environmental studies***
Joan Slonczewski, *biology*†
Arianna Smith, *biology*†
Jon Tazewell, *film*
Natalie Wright, *biology*
Hao Zhou, *art history*

* Has registered more than one CEL course

† Has taught at least one CEL course multiple times



A Sweet Farewell to Summer

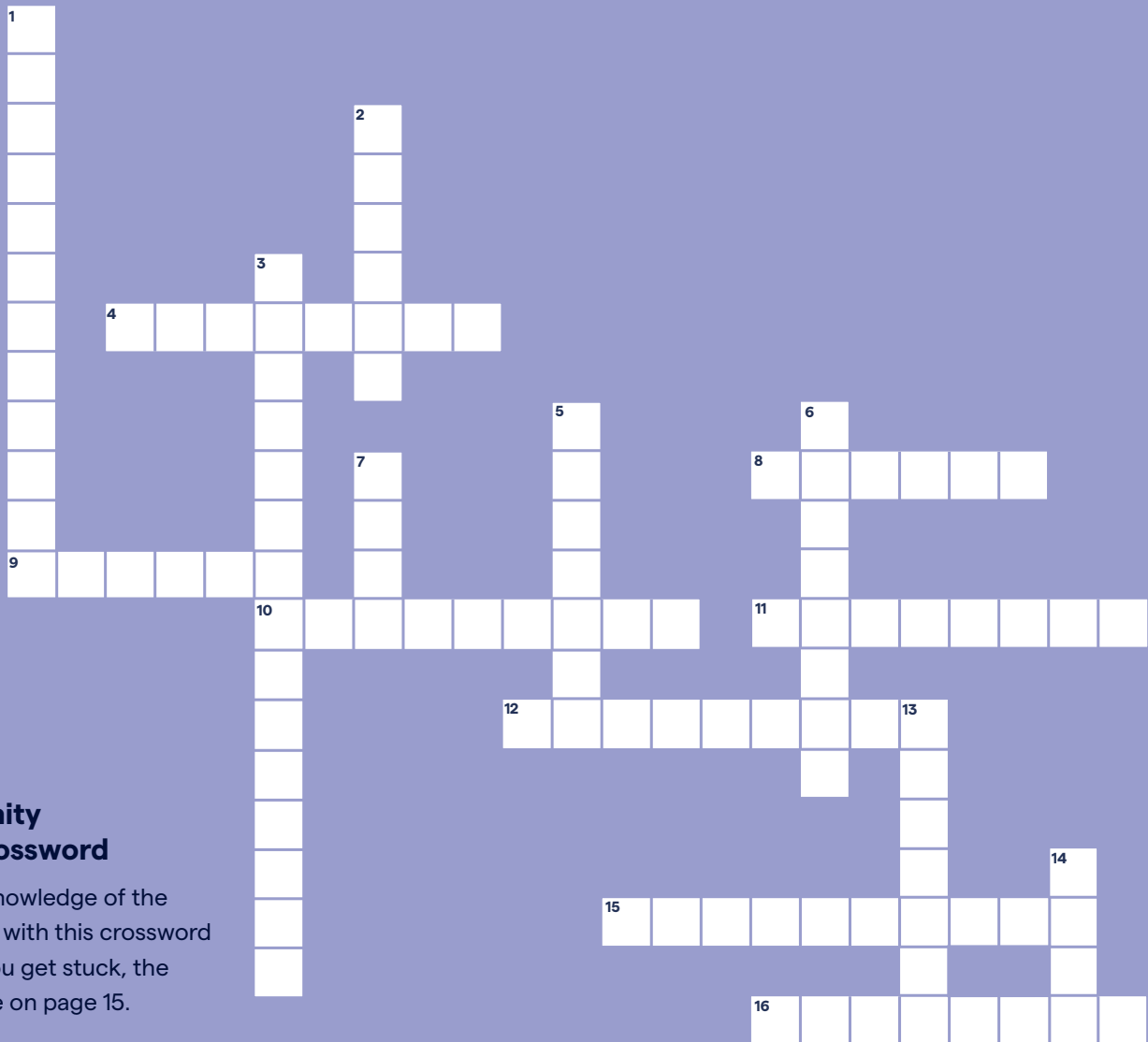
As the summer events season kicks off in Knox County, we take a look back at the Johnny Appleseed Festival — the last celebration of the season — which took place over October break in downtown Mount Vernon.

The offerings for the third-annual festival included, among many others, apple-related food products like breads and granolas produced and sold by Miller's farm market stand, wooden craft goods crafted by ASE woodworking, an assortment of food trucks and even a cider press demonstration presented by Kenyon's very own Brown Family Environmental Center.

Noted Todd Taylor, board president of the event's sponsor, Experience Mount Vernon: "This is a local event with all of our food and talent coming locally, we've found that giving the local talent and vendors access to the public is really key to making events like these successful."

— Ben Garst '25

◀Kenyon students Hayden Ashworth '27, Maya Lennox '27 and Grace Dalenberg '27 (left to right) visit the Johnny Appleseed Festival in downtown Mount Vernon.



Community Trivia Crossword

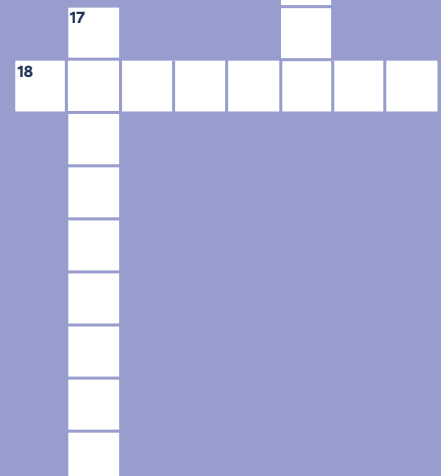
Test your knowledge of the community with this crossword puzzle. If you get stuck, the answers are on page 15.

Across

4. "River of Little Owls"
8. Local, large ice cream company
9. This country wrote an article on Mount Vernon as a "model of order and accomplishment"
10. Knox County Hollywood Square
11. Oldest pre-Civil War opera house in the country
12. Danville is this direction from Kenyon
15. Ariel Corporation is named after this type of vehicle
16. Oldest-played sport at Kenyon
18. Knox County's best-known waterfall

Down

1. The location of the Office for Community Partnerships
2. The Henry who showed Philander Chase the land that will do
3. Nomadic-living legend who owned plots in Mount Vernon
5. This city's canine fountain inspired Mount Vernon's own
6. Knox County village named after a Lenape chief
7. Knox County liberal arts institution with the motto "To Seek to Learn is to Seek to Serve" (abbreviation)
13. 1800s photography process created by Knox County resident
14. Local preserve hosts this type of salamander
17. All-time leading basketball scorer at Kenyon, recruited by the Milwaukee Bucks



Community Reading

A unique community partnership brought acclaimed actors, elected officials, scientists, journalists and local community members together in April to perform dramatic readings of scenes from Henrik Ibsen's renowned play, "An Enemy of the People." Theater of War Productions, in collaboration with Kenyon and the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County with support from the Mount Vernon Arts Consortium, presented "An Enemy of the People: A Theater Project from America's Hometown."

The readings took place in back-to-back evenings, first at Mount Vernon's Memorial Theater and then at Kenyon's Oden Hall Auditorium. For each event, in keeping with the format of all Theater of War Productions' events, performers first read through the play's text. Afterward, the panelists who were

members of the local community initiated a discussion of what most resonated with them in today's world. Bryan Doerries '98 H'17, artistic director of Theater of War Productions, then facilitated a discussion with the audience

The April readings brought together members of the Knox County and Kenyon communities with nationally known actors. Included were David Strathairn, known for his roles in "Nomadland," "Lincoln" and "The Bourne Ultimatum;" Elizabeth Marvel, recognized for her work in "Homeland," "Burn After Reading" and "Love & Death;" Bill Camp, acclaimed for his performances in "The Queen's Gambit," "The Night Of" and "Joker;" Matthew T. Starr, mayor of Mount Vernon; Julie Kornfeld, president of Kenyon; John K. Chidester, director of the Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County; Jon Tazewell '84,

Thomas S. Turgeon Professor of Drama and Film at Kenyon; Peter Marks, former chief theater critic of The Washington Post; Marjolaine Goldsmith, company manager at Theater of War Productions; Osose Omofomah '26; and Wendy MacLeod '81, James Michael Playwright-in-Residence/Professor of Drama at Kenyon.

This project was made possible through the generous support of several organizations, including the Ohio Arts Council, ArtStart Grant, LSTA Competitive Grant Program, National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America Grant, Kenyon Bicentennial Fund, and the Kenyon Office for Community Partnerships.

▼ The April readings of "An Enemy of the People" brought together a number of performers, including (left to right) John Chidester, Marjolaine Goldsmith, Wendy MacLeod and David Strathairn.

Photo: Graham H. Stokes





Photo: Graham H. Stokes

A Mayoral Welcome

Kenyon kicked off its bicentennial year by welcoming Julie Kornfeld, the College's 20th president, who began her tenure on October 1, 2023. Several community leaders were on hand to welcome Kornfeld at her inauguration ceremony on Saturday, April 13, 2024.

Mount Vernon Mayor Matthew T. Starr spoke, welcoming President Kornfeld to Kenyon and giving testimony to the importance of community partnerships. "As a former football coach here at Kenyon in the 1990s and early 2000s, I came to know and love Kenyon, and the academic excellence and camaraderie and, of course, the overall excitement of being on a college campus," said Starr. "Serving as mayor of the city of Mount Vernon, my current role, solidified in my mind how important it is that the relationships we cultivate continue to have an impact on the community and beyond."

CEL Partners for 2023-24

The Office for Community Partnership thanks the following community organizations who have partnered with Kenyon faculty in CEL classes during the current academic year.

Area Development Foundation
August Wilson House
Brown Family Environmental Center
City of Mount Vernon
Craft Center
Crows Shadow Institute of the Arts
Foundation Park Conservancy
Fox Hollow Farm
Freedom Center
The Gund and The Annex
Habitat for Humanity
Historic Zoar Village
Kenyon Farm
Kenyon Maintenance Department
(grounds crew)
Knox Community Hospital
Knox County Agricultural Museum
Knox County Head Start
Knox County Municipal Court
Knox County Symphony

Knox Memorial Theater
Kokosing Nature Preserve
Laymon Family Farm
Mount Vernon High School
Mount Vernon Municipal Court
New Directions
Noor Islamic Cultural Center
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Transportation
Ohio Eastern Star Home
Public Library of Mount Vernon
and Knox County
Qaumajuk Arts Center
SPI
United Way
University of Cincinnati
Village of Gambier
West Baffin Cooperative
Wiggin Street Elementary
Woodward Opera House

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across

4. KOKOSING
8. VELVET
9. RUSSIA
10. PAULLYNDE
11. WOODWARD
12. NORTHEAST
15. MOTORCYCLE
16. BASEBALL
18. HONEYRUN

Down

1. WRIGHTCENTER
2. CURTIS
3. JOHNNYAPPLESEED
5. TORONTO
6. JELLOWAY
7. MVNU
13. TINTYPE
14. HELLBENDER
17. JOHNRIKA

The Neighborhood

From our home in the Wright Center, the Office for Community Partnerships is fortunate to be situated in vibrant downtown Mount Vernon. Be sure to visit our neighboring businesses for shopping, entertainment, or a night out.

Business marked with an asterisk (*) accept the K-Card from Kenyon students.

Arts and Culture

- 1 Knox Memorial Theater
- 2 The Woodward Opera House
- 3 The Schnormeier Gallery
- 4 Kudos Artist Co-Op
- 5 Pine Row Studio
- 6 The Coleman Gallery
- 7 MTVArts Warehouse
- 8 SPI Spot
- 9 South Main Dog Fountain
- 10 Veterans Memorial
- 11 The Annex

Dining and Drinks

- 1 North Main Cafe
- 2 Creno's
- 3 Green Vibes Juice
- 4 Half Baked Cafe
- 5 Cindy's Perogis
- 6 Georgetown Caribbean BBQ
- 7 Flapper's Bar and Grill
- 8 The Alcove Restaurant
- 9 Honey Buckets Tavern
- 10 La Paloma
- 11 Moss Rose
- 12 Happy Bean
- 13 Fiesta Mexicana
- 15 Dave's Cosmic Subs
- 16 Happy Street Brû Werks
- 17 Whit's Frozen Custard
- 18 Fit-Mix Nutrition
- 19 Baxter's Wine & Whiskey
- 20 Domino's Pizza*

Lodging

- 1 Mount Vernon Grand Hotel
- 2 Mount Vernon Inn
- 3 Comfort Inn
- 4 Coleman Suite

Shopping

- 1 Old Mr. Bailiwicks
- 2 Willy & Wade
- 3 Almost Famous Sweets & Sodas*
- 4 Moonlit Soul
- 5 Dancing Bee Market & Studio
- 6 The Blessed Life
- 7 Paragraphs Bookstore
- 8 Williams Flowers & Wine
- 9 Y-Not Cycling & Fitness
- 10 Flowers for You
- 11 Cricket's on South Main
- 12 Nick & Melvins Collectibles
- 13 Down to Earth Natural Foods
- 15 Gospel Christian Life Store
- 16 Herald's Appliances
- 17 The Woolson Company
- 18 Down Home Leather
- 19 Jackie K's
- 20 Hunnicut's Jewelry
- 21 eNew Zone
- 22 Harmony Salt Spa
- 23 Natures Kratom
- 24 Rejuvenate Med Spa
- 25 Living on the Edge
- 26 Summit Axe Throwing*
- 27 House of Youth
- 28 Roots Down
- 29 Fat Dog Vinyl
- 30 Mount Vernon Apparel

Miscellaneous

- 1 Ariel-Foundation Park
- 2 Chamber of Commerce
- 3 Convention & Visitors Bureau
- 4 Mount Vernon Arts Consortium
- 5 Mount Vernon City Hall

Map Key

- P Parking
- Bike racks available





Kenyon College Wright Center

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Anna Fahey '24 is a senior from Wilmington, Delaware. She is an English and French double major and is spending this summer guiding backcountry canoe trips in Northern Ontario.

Ben Garst '25 is an anthropology major passionate about people and documenting local community life. He is highly considering a community-interest focused career in public policy post-Kenyon.

Caleb Newman '24 is a sociology and political science double major with a concentration in public policy from Arlington, Virginia, who likes to tell a few stories along the way.

Published by the Office for Community Partnerships and Office of Communications at Kenyon College.

Cover photo by James DeCamp.

Printed by Good Impressions Printing in Mount Vernon.



A Visit to Pittsburgh

Students in film and drama professor Jonathan Tazewell's "August Wilson and Black Pittsburgh" class visited the August Wilson House, a cultural center located at the restored childhood home of the esteemed African American playwright. The visit was part of a three-day fieldwork experience in Pittsburgh — just one of the many community-engaged learning experiences offering Kenyon students the chance to learn directly from community organizations. **This issue of Bridges explores this unique program, which unites classes with community throughout the Kenyon curriculum.**