

Val R. Christensen Service Center
Annual Report



2019-2020



Front row: Jess Ivie, Abbey Spencer, Olivia Hoge, Claire Wever, Taylor Geddes, Corbin Kasteler; Middle row: Nelda Ault-Dyslin, Vidalia Cornwall, Boston Iacobazzi, Jenn Ha, Erin Lundberg, Emily Cook, Jenna Stoker; Back row: Dawson Croxall, Cole Carlson, Caitlyn Williams, Amy Siler, Emma Brain, Jazmin Bybee, Matt Armbrust

2019-2020 Leadership

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| USUSA Service Vice President | Emma Brain |
| Marketing Chairs | Olivia Hoge & Taylor Bybee |
| Outreach Chairs | Taylor Geddes & Claire Wever |
| Alternative Breaks Director | Bryce Johnston |
| Aggie Red Cross Director | Matt Armbrust |
| Special Olympics Head of Delegation | Jeremy Johnson |
| Special Olympics Games Organizing Committee Chair | Boston Iacobazzi |
| Grandfriends Directors | Cole Carlson & Caitlyn Williams |
| Aggies for Adaptive Adventures Director | Mara Cotner |
| Best Buddies President | Emily Cook |
| Aggies for Education Director | Jess Ivie |
| Aggie Translators Directors | Corbin Kasteler & Jazmin Bybee |
| Utah YOUth Connect Director | Amy Siler |
| STEP Directors | Abbey Spencer & Jenn Ha |
| SNAC Directors | Erin Lundberg & McKenna Smith |
| No Lost Generation Director | Vidalia Cornwall |
| Campus Kitchen Director | Dawson Croxall |
| Food Recovery Network Directors | Kara Bachman & Lauren Gorman |
| Aggiethon Directors | Jenna Stoker & Liz Buck |
| Advisor | Nelda Ault-Dyslin |



Aggie Translators

Directors: Jazmin Bybee & Corbin Kasteler

Community Impact

Aggie Translators helped teach 7 weekly classes English classes throughout the semester, collaborating with two community partners. We also successfully hosted interpretation services at numerous K-12 schools throughout the valley, breaking down the language barriers between educators and parents. Both of these projects have been carried out with the sole purpose of creating a united Cache Valley where language barriers will become less prevalent.

Volunteer Impact

“Working with Aggie Translators for the past two years has opened up so many doors for me. I have been offered jobs, been asked to sit in on several community organization boards, and been able to make countless connections with members of the community. The lasting friendships I have made with those that I have been able to work with have changed my perspective and brought greater joy and happiness to my everyday life as a citizen of Cache Valley.” --Corbin Kasteler, Director

Aggie Red Cross

Director: Matt Armbrust

Community Impact

The 2019-2020 school year marked the introductory year for Aggie Red Cross as a revamped version of the previous program, Aggie Health. Aggie Red Cross aimed to promote, market, and volunteer at blood drives being held on both USU's main campus and the Cache Valley community. We also put efforts towards various other outreach programs such as humanitarian services, disaster preparedness and training, and coordinating with other Service Center programs such as Grandfriends.

Volunteer Impact

Our biggest service project this year was the week-long Blood Battle vs. Weber State University held during the first week of the Fall 2019 semester. We had a large number of volunteers help check in donors at the tables as well as actively encourage students walking around the Taggart Student Center to donate. Many volunteers that helped at our drives were pursuing careers in the medical field, and volunteering at our events was a fun way for them to not only give back to their community, but also to learn about the logistics of collecting blood and how much it impacts those in need of blood.



Grandfriends

Directors: Cole Carlson & Caitlyn Williams

Community Impact

Grandfriends hosts weekly activities at the Williamsburg Retirement & Assisted Living Center and the Cache County Senior Citizens Center. These activities provide students with an opportunity for inter-generational learning and support the elderly in the community. Grandfriends hosted 25 unique activities and collaborated with organizations such as Aggie Red Cross, Utah YOUth Connect, and Great Harvest in order to make our activities engaging and broaden our reach.

Volunteer Impact

"I have come to know the individuals well during these past few years and consider them my friends, as the name suggests. Each individual has a story to tell and I have learned about the challenges and successes they have had in their lives, as well as the different situations they currently face. It has allowed me to learn from those around me and view life from a different perspective. I have learned the value of giving back and the feeling that comes with impacting someone's life." --Cole Carlson, Director



Special Olympics Teams



Head of Delegation: Jeremy Johnson

Community Impact

The community of individuals with mental and physical disabilities was greatly impacted as we were able to recruit new athletes, inspire them to do more, and provide new, innovative opportunities that brought them joy. We were able to register 5 new athletes and they became a part of our Aggie Special Olympics Family, making friends with volunteers, coaches, and fellow athletes. Some of them were more limited than others but we made accommodations for them as needed so that they felt included. Lastly, we worked with them one-on-one to help them practice and improve their skills and abilities.

Volunteer Impact

This year we focused a lot on recruiting new volunteers to assist us in accomplishing our goals. No one volunteer stands out, but it was so exciting to see new volunteers hear about Special Olympics and become involved. For example, roommates heard about us and came to all of our flag football practices. Another became part of our leadership team and helped to organize events and practices. Lastly, an excited student majoring in public relations put together a PR plan not only for her assignments but tailored it specifically to Special Olympics and our needs.

Aggies for Education

Director: Jess Ivie

Community Impact

Aggies for Education made an impact this year by connecting USU students with our broader Cache Valley community. Our volunteers worked hard with local elementary, middle school, and high school students to empower them to achieve their academic goals. We primarily worked on reading, math, and science. We also helped to spread the impact of the Service Center by organizing inter-club events, such as making toys with the Collegiate 4-H club and doing a service calendar challenge with the other Service Center organizations.



Volunteer Impact

"I was deeply impacted while working with a student at Ellis Elementary. This student was learning English as a second language, and struggled with reading, mostly due to a lack of self confidence. As I got to know her, she relaxed and quickly advanced, and made it clear how much I meant to her. She made me feel like a part of something greater than myself, and was one of my first friends in Logan. Watching kids light up through tutoring has made my experience with Aggies for Education uplifting, and has changed Logan from my college town to my home."

--Aggies for Education
Volunteer

SNAC

Student Nutrition Access Center

Directors: Erin Lundberg & McKenna Smith

Community Impact

SNAC has made a difference in hundreds of students' lives this school year. One SNAC patron stated this year, "The SNAC gave me a place to eat over this past summer when I simply did not have enough to eat and was unable to purchase food because it meant I would not have the money I needed for tuition in the fall. I am very grateful for the push to reduce food waste, as well as the people who work at the SNAC. Because of their hard work, I know I have people who support me and care about me creating a home away from home."

Volunteer Impact

Our program offered many students opportunities to impact the Aggie Family and the community around them. Many students wanted to find a flexible volunteer position that would benefit other Aggies. The SNAC pantry helped volunteers learn about food waste and student food insecurity on campus. Our volunteers also were able to participate in activities such as fundraising for a community food backpack program for students around Logan.





Games Organizing Committee Chair: Boston Iacobazzi

Community Impact

This year Special Olympics Games was able to gain a lot of volunteers to help at fun events and helped us create more fun and inclusive opportunities for Special Olympics athletes and USU students than ever before. For the first time we ever we were able to organize a flag football game between USU and BYU that had a lot of fans in the stands and was broadcast through ESPN. We also were able to raise over \$2,000 for the teams. USU is starting to become a much more inclusive campus thanks to our efforts this year.

Volunteer Impact

One volunteer had never even heard of Special Olympics before this year. After his involvement within the committee he started to find more ways to get involved. He planned out an entire week dedicated to promoting our message. He has also continued to reach out to athletes to hang out with them outside of events and practices. He is continuing to get involved by researching more about Special Olympics for his non-profit class this semester.

No Lost Generation

Director: Vidalia Cornwall

Community Impact

This year, No Lost Generation has focused on strengthening our relationship with Athletics United and the refugee community in Cache Valley. Often, our volunteers make up the majority of volunteers at biweekly library nights and weekly running practices, allowing Athletics United to grow and serve more kids. The combination of tutoring at library nights and just having fun at running practices has allowed the relationships between our volunteers and the kids to grow stronger.

Volunteer Impact

One of our regular volunteers, freshman Emmy Heywood, said: “Volunteering with NLG taught me that sometimes these kids don’t need a math tutor; they need someone to play checkers with, someone to fangirl over Cristiano Ronaldo with, someone to listen to how their day went. Sometimes these kids just need a friend. Way grateful for all the awesome friends I made at Athletics United! It was the funnest part of my day!”



Campus Kitchen

Director: Dawson Croxall

Community Impact

The Campus Kitchen at Utah State University has managed to provide over 4,000 meals to USU's on-campus food pantry, the SNAC pantry. The Campus Kitchen produced these meals using leftover food donated from USU Dining Services and local restaurants, as well as several hundred bags of donated white sugar. The Campus Kitchen has also continued producing meals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Volunteer Impact

The Campus Kitchen has several dedicated volunteers. One of these volunteers is named Jarom Hale. Prior to getting involved with the Campus Kitchen, Jarom had not been involved with any on-campus activities. Since becoming involved with meal production at the Campus Kitchen, Jarom has been inspired to continue to branch out and get involved with other service-based activities as well as other on-campus organizations.



Aggiethon

Directors: Jenna Stoker & Liz Buck

Community Impact

This past school year we had the opportunity to include local miracle kids from the valley in additional events raising awareness of childhood illness and injury in the community. One miracle kiddo got to be part of the “starting five” at a home men’s basketball game, 4 other miracle kiddos were introduced at a USU gymnastics meet, and 9 were recognized at the dance marathon. We also raised over \$35,000 and much of that will go to helping families who can’t afford medical bills.

Volunteer Impact

“Aggiethon is such an incredible movement! Being involved in Aggiethon has taught me a lot about myself and has opened my eyes to the impact each of us can have on children’s health. It is amazing how you can experience so much unity and have a ton of fun while being a part of something bigger than yourself. Getting to hear the kiddos’ stories at the event touched my heart. They really are miracles. Seeing their positivity and courage motivates me to continue onward, making the world a better place. Aggiethon truly is an experience I will never forget!”
--Becka Denney, Aggiethon Participant



Food Recovery Network

+ USU Gleaning Team

Directors: Kara Bachman & Lauren Gorman

30,797.8 lbs of food
recovered, including 15,000+ lbs
of fruit from local trees



Volunteer Impact

“[I have] run the Food Recovery Network program for the last 2 years. Although I don't use the food provided for students in SNAC very much, I do see the food improve the quality and quantity of food in USU students' day-to-day lives. As the director of the Food Recovery Network program, I support 50+ volunteers who pick up food from USU Dining Services 4 days a week, rain, snow or shine most days of the year. They are incredible people who donate their time, energy, and ideas to bring in day-old food

which would otherwise go to waste.” --Kara, Director

Alternative Breaks

Director: Bryce Johnston

Environmental Conservation in Moab



Fall 2019 Trip Leader: Bryce Johnston (Moab)

Volunteer Impact

“Overall, the trip was eye-opening.... [T]o become an active citizen, I will keep myself informed on current immigration issues and vote.... I will also keep doing my part to help those in need. Even if it may not be specifically towards asylum seekers or immigrants, providing service to strangers sets an example to others, and also restores some hope in humanity.” --Sam, Alternative Breaks Participant

“[I realized] that one of the biggest issues with food insecurity is distribution. The problem is not that there isn’t enough food for everyone, because there actually is plenty. The issue here is transporting extra food to those in need in a timely, economically-sustainable manner.” -- Sage, Alternative Breaks Participant

“Even though there were many engineering majors on the trip, accounting and finance is still needed in [sustainability] areas to find the most cost-effective approach to implement sustainable and energy-saving technologies.” -- Lia (Finance major), Alternative Breaks Participant



Farm to Fork in San Francisco, CA

Trip leaders:
Bryce Johnston &
Kara Bachman

Immigration in Tucson, AZ

Trip leader:
Daniel Sykes



Sustainable Cities in San Diego, CA

Trip leaders:
Laura Christiansen
& Katie Clark

Homelessness & Civil Rights in Phoenix, AZ

Trip leaders:
Claire Wever &
Dawson Croxall



STEP

Students Together Ending Poverty



Directors: Abbey Spencer & Jenn Ha

Volunteers preparing food for the Plate of Poverty event that raised awareness about food insecurity in Cache Valley. Speakers from Families Feeding Families presented, and participants raised money for the Cache Community Food Pantry.



Utah YOUTH Connect

Director: Amy Siler

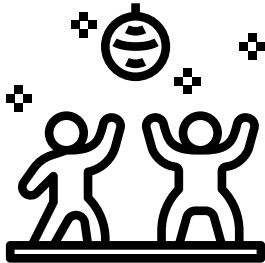
Five college mentors worked with Key Clubs and service groups from Logan High School, Ridgeline High School, and Uinta Academy. These teenage students planned and carried out activities at local retirement homes and assisted living centers.



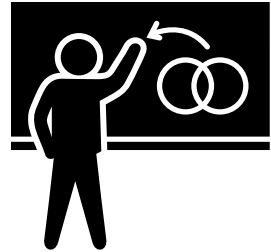
7 weekly English classes taught in two locations



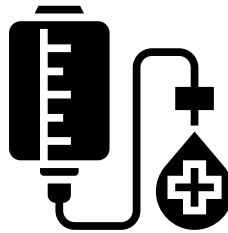
\$8,857.52 raised through Swipe-a-Meal



\$35,468 raised for Primary Children's Hospital



Translation for 27 different parent-teacher conferences



1,747 units of blood



10,166 visits to SNAC pantry by 2,146 individuals



200+ direct service hours with senior citizens during 25 weekly activities



**25-35 refugee kids
regularly attend
weekly running
practice**



**\$2,200 raised for
Special Olympics of
Utah**



**5 college mentors
worked with 55
local youth from
2 schools and 1
youth home**



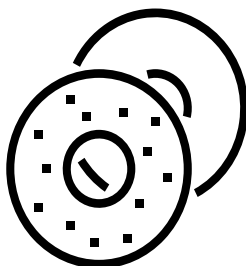
**Tutoring in 5 local
schools**



**5 new athletes
recruited**



**4,535 meals created
from recovered food
& donated to SNAC**



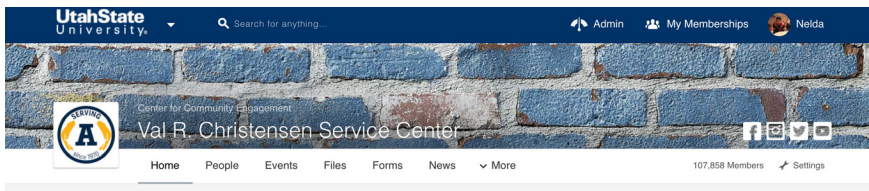
**30,798 lbs of food &
fruit recovered**

End-of-the-Year News

On March 11, 2020, Utah State University announced that all university-sponsored activities would be canceled as part of the institution's COVID-19 precautionary measures. This meant that many Service Center program activities that were in the works were put on hold.

SNAC, Campus Kitchen, and the Food Recovery Network remained operational, working with dedicated volunteers who committed to remain on campus to help get food to Aggies experiencing food insecurity. This would not have been possible without the work of James Wirth, the Utah Food Corps AmeriCorps VISTA member stationed at USU.

The Service Center also said goodbye to AggieSync, the service database that was used to promote opportunities, communicate with volunteers, and log hours. As of April 2020, people across campus logged 24,639 hours of service in the lifetime of the database.



Next task: celebrating the golden anniversary of the Service Center in Fall 2020!



The Val R. Christensen Service Center is a program of the USU Center for Community Engagement, with financial and leadership support from USUSA.

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