

Volume 42, Issue 1, Spring 2019

# GRADUATE HUMANITIES

Students and faculty from a variety of backgrounds collaboratively explore interdisciplinary intersections of the arts, historical, cultural, and literary studies within an open, exploratory, and experimental graduate-level educational environment.

Excerpts for the following article were taken from: 1) Carolyn Quinlan's capstone project for her MA in Humanities, "1953: Saint Albans Little League Takes to the Field." It contains historical facts and descriptions of artifacts compiled in 2013, referenced as "Compilation;" 2) An interview recorded at Coal River Coffee Shop in St. Albans, West Virginia, on January 10, 2019, referenced as "Interview."

## Our lead article, "Finding Billy Dunn,"

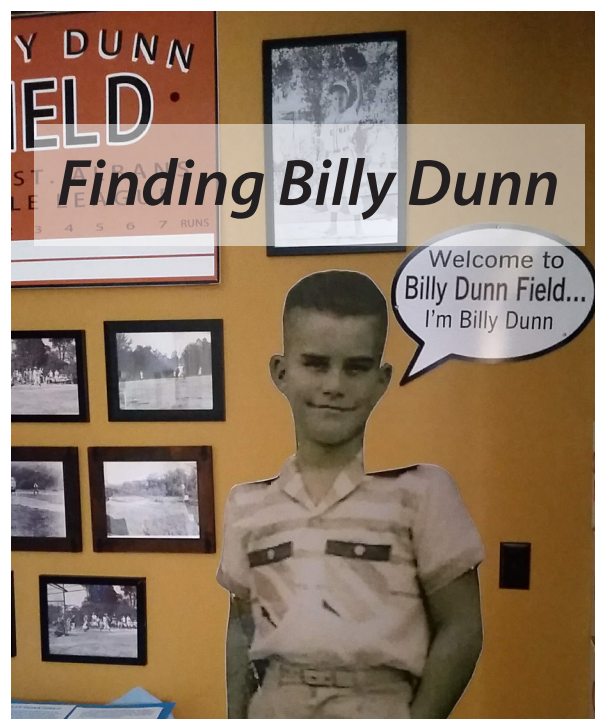
covers a lot of bases. First is Carolyn Quinlan's burning desire to know more about Billy Dunn, a 9-year old boy killed in a car accident in 1957 and the neighborhood baseball field's namesake. It was at this ballpark, Billy Dunn Field, that her husband played Little League and coached their three sons, then continued to coach and umpire for a span of twenty-four years.

Second is the transformative nature of oral history. Carolyn wrote in her compilation, *"As I listened to the words of these men re-telling their memories, I felt as though I was there with them in that time and place. ... I oftentimes wept as I heard their voices .... Some of the narrators wept, too, as they recalled experiences with their children and the close friendships made."* (Compilation, ix)

Finally, this article accentuates the public humanities nature of our program, how scholarship and graduate projects intersect with the life and culture of local communities. *"My goal for the exhibit was to capture and preserve the history of St. Albans Little League through the stories and artifacts of those who lived it. I was hoping people would come to the exhibit, who hadn't been back for years, to reconnect with old friends and recall long forgotten memories of their days playing Little League baseball."* (Interview)

It was approaching noon on a cool Saturday, October 27, 2018, but lowering clouds couldn't keep the crowd away from the grand opening of "Little League: St. Albans and Beyond – A Visual History of Little League Baseball and Local Retrospective by Carolyn S. Quinlan." In the five years since Carolyn graduated, she put together a substantial exhibit of artifacts donated by players and their families connected to Little League baseball in St. Albans, along with texts, essays and stories that helped complete the exhibit.

Carolyn's sons spread the news through social media: *"Mom has been working very hard for a few years on this! You will love the work she has done .... Come see old jerseys, learn about the first teams in St. Albans, learn how Little League started, find out more of how Billy Dunn Field came to be. There will be ballpark hotdogs, Husson's pizza, chips, candy, and drinks while they last! Come down and relive some of the glory days of SA baseball!!"*



Come they did. Waiting for the ribbon cutting, folks milled about the grass parking lot of Billy Dunn Field, taking pictures, remembering sandlot days, laughing, and telling stories ... *Pat Quinlan, Carolyn's husband, played sandlot baseball when he was in elementary*

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## QUINLAN *from page 1*

school. "He was hit in the mouth with a line drive that knocked out his three front teeth, two of which were found. He was the only "kid" in class who could take out his teeth, which he often did for entertainment and to the dismay of the Catholic nuns." (Compilation, 15)

Under the shelter of a small tent set against the cinder-block building housing the exhibit, Carolyn, surrounded by family and friends, looked into the crowd, searching for the ones who played the most significant roles in this project. She motioned for Dr. Eric Lassiter, Director of the Graduate Humanities Program, to help her cut the ribbon. "Oral history class started it all. It's funny, Dr. Lassiter came bopping out to my cubicle. [At the time, Carolyn was Executive Secretary of the Graduate Humanities Program.] He exclaimed, 'Carolyn, you have to take this class!' And I looked up at him and said, 'Yeah, I know ... But, if I do, my project's



Pat Quinlan and his toothless mile.

going to be on St. Albans Little League.' I didn't think he would approve it. But no, he was all for it, since it was community oriented. He opened up the pathway for me with the Graduate Humanities Program because of who he is and what he allows us as students to do." (Interview)

Another key person in the crowd was Billy Dunn's older sister, Susan Middleton, who Carolyn tracked down in 2012. Attending Pat's reunion that year, Carolyn had a conversation with a classmate of his, who turned out to be a cousin of Billy and helped her contact Susan. "It was almost like we were sisters. And she was so grateful ... so willing to share pictures and family history. She's about 13 years older than Billy. When I wrote to Susan, I indicated that I did not want my request for information on Billy to be 'an intrusion on your life and memories. My intention, in addition to providing interesting oral history and installing an exhibit of St. Albans Little League Baseball, is to honor the memory of Billy Dunn so that no one will ever change the name of the field for the lack of knowledge as to who he was.'" (Interview)

"See, we didn't know if Billy played on a team. When he was killed ... they said he was either going to a ball game or going

**"Billy's name is spoken almost daily in the lives of many associated with that field. ... The most grievous knowledge is that no one seemed to know who he was as a person, as a little boy, who like other little boys, loved playing cowboys and Indians, fishing, swimming, camping, and yes, playing baseball."**  
(Compilation, 92)

to practice. ... I wanted so badly to find a picture of him in his uniform and know what team he played for, but I couldn't find anything. He was 9 years old, so it would have been his first year of Little League.

"Susan, Billy's sister, asked Carolyn, 'Why was it named after Billy?' It's just an educated guess but I said to her, 'Jim Coleman was close to your family and was helping build the field when Billy was killed. Jim probably suggested they name the field after Billy and everyone agreed.' Jim was instrumental in building a lot of the fields in St. Albans. We had a team named Coleman Construction, and there's Coleman Field, up on the hill." (Interview)



After the ribbon cutting, the door was opened and we filed in, with a certain amount of awe, to see all the artifacts and the way Carolyn had displayed them. Carolyn confessed, "During the opening, I stayed out of the exhibit room. I was afraid if people were talking to me they would lose some of the experience of it so I didn't really get to see their reactions. Had it been me to turn the corner and see the picture of Billy Dunn, I would have just lost it ... to actually see his face, to know this young boy the field was named after. And that's just one part of the St. Albans league. But learning more about who this boy was and to find his family was very important in my research." (Interview)

*See Quinlan page 4*

Carolyn Quinlan acknowledging support of Jim Lewis (Past President with over fifty years involvement in St. Albans Little League), Susan Middleton (Billy's sister), and Dr. Eric Lassiter, Director, Graduate Humanities Program.

## Summer 2019 SEMINARS • May 20 – August 9, 2019

See [www.marshall.edu/humn](http://www.marshall.edu/humn) for more information, including seminar classroom assignments.

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE May 10

### **CULS 610 Seminar in Appalachian Culture (Lassiter) Summer 1: Technology Enhanced with four live meetings: W, 7–9 p.m.: May 29, June 19, July 10, July 31.**

Exploration of selected aspects of culture (e.g., art, music, folklore, history, literature), emphasizing regional culture from an interdisciplinary perspective. *Luke Eric Lassiter is Director of the Graduate Humanities Program and professor of humanities and anthropology. His books include The Power of Kiowa Song, Invitation to Anthropology, The Other Side of Middletown, and The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography, among others.*

**HUMN 600 Introduction to Study in the Humanities (Lassiter); Summer 1: W, 5–8 p.m.** Core course acquaints students with problems of historical knowledge, changes in the interpretation of history, nature of historical forces, and methods of historical research.

### **HUMN 650 Selected Topics – Independent Studies arranged between instructor and student (Contact Program Director to arrange course)**

For students who need to conduct independent research and/or reading in a specific topic in the humanities, the Program

will offer independent studies in those topics as funds allow. Contact the Director for more information. Examples of Special Topics might include: • Film Criticism • Museum Studies • Studies in Appalachian Music • Studies in Poetry • Language and Communication.

**HUMN 680 Independent Research Symposium (Lassiter);** A pro-seminar required of all humanities degree students who are beginning the thesis or final project. Arranged with the Program Director.

## Fall 2019 SEMINARS • August 26 – December 13, 2019

See [www.marshall.edu/humn](http://www.marshall.edu/humn) for more information, including seminar classroom assignments.

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE August 19

### **A&S 600 SelfTp: Song Traditions & Musical Experience (Lassiter); Th, 7–9:50 p.m.**

This seminar will explore song traditions from a variety of perspectives and cultural contexts. It will focus, in particular, on the field of ethnomusicology and develop understandings of musical experience as an individual, as well as a social, process.

### **CULS 600 SelfTp: Philosophy's Practices and Engagements (Gayle Ormiston); Hybrid / Technology Enhanced with five live in-person & Skype matings: W, 7 – 9:50 p.m.: August 28, September 11, October 9, November 13, December 4.**

This course will focus on certain “practices” of philosophy, e.g., the creation of concepts and ideas as “guides to action,” set within specific texts and contexts comprising the philosophic tradition known as American Pragmatism. Through an exposure and introduction to the many “roots” and “engagements” of pragmatism in America, the course will focus on developing—by each participant—an understanding of

- concept creation and context,
- practice preceding theory,
- experience and belief, and
- the varieties of reasoning (abduction, deduction, and

induction) informing belief, habit, and action.

Gayle L. Ormiston is Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Marshall University. He has held faculty and administrative appointments at Marshall (where he was Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs from 2008 to 2018), Kent State University (where he was Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Curriculum, 2002-2008, and Chair of the Department of Philosophy, 1996-2002), the University of Colorado, and Denison University. His publications and professional presentations include works on: hermeneutics and semeiotics; science, technology, and humanities studies; various issues in 19th and 20th century philosophy; and numerous presentations on higher education administration, curriculum development and assessment, and collective bargaining in university and college environments.

**HUMN 604 Expository Writing for Research (Cat Pleska); M, 7 - 9:50 p.m.** This core writing course develops proficiency in writing for research. Cat Pleska, MFA, is a 7th generation West Virginian and her memoir, *Riding on Comets*, was published in

2015 by WVU Press. She is a former book reviewer and radio essayist, and is currently working on a collection of travel/personal essays, *The I's Have It: Travels in Ireland and Iceland*.

**HUMN 650 Special Topics (Independent Studies arranged between instructor and student (contact Program Director to arrange course.))** For students who need to conduct independent research and/or reading in a specific topic in the humanities, the Program will offer independent studies in those topics as funds allow. Contact the Director for more information. Examples of Special Topics might include: • Film Criticism • Museum Studies • Studies in Appalachian Music • Studies in Poetry • Language and Communication.

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## QUINLAN from page 2

The story of Billy Dunn was central to Carolyn's research, however, other stories vied for her attention. "This exhibit started with my husband's stories when he played Little League at Billy Dunn Field and his passion for it. Then when he coached our sons, the passion he and Tom Sutton had, and the importance of coaching the kids ... And the fun that I had, too, as a mother watching my sons play and being on the sidelines. Just meeting with people and having a good time at the ball field ... they would talk about their experiences, talk about the kids, the plays.



Alumni Owen Jones talking history with his daughter and Carolyn's son, Scott Quinlan.

"Dr. Andu Meharie, adjunct professor for the Graduate Humanities Program, knew my passion for this story so he presented me with the book, *Play Ball: The Story of Little League* by Lance and Robin Van Auken. When I read that book, I thought, 'I've got to go to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, where Little League originated.' I wanted to see what it was like for these boys to walk over to their uncle's house, Carl Stotz, who founded Little League, and pass ball with him. How far was that? What were they thinking on their way over?"

"I'm a type of person ... I have to feel, I can't explain it, it's an internal thing ... [Carolyn's voice drops almost to a whisper.] I've got to feel it. And with this project I could feel

the story. It's not that you just go down and watch a ballgame and leave. I absorb things around me. Every seminar I took after that oral history seminar centered on the project. I took independent classes and read a bunch of books. I did my homework and had my questions ready for the interviews. So that oral history class was what said, 'Yes, this needs to be done.' And the more you hear these stories, you gotta do that next one, and that next one. And you've got to share this information with the community." (Interview)

The first artifact from outside the family came from another Little League mother. Carolyn told her, 'If you ever decide to get rid of this uniform, let me know.' I probably asked her if I could just exhibit it and then give it back. ... The boy, now an adult with children of his own, didn't want it and neither did his "kids." So she reluctantly handed it over to me. People just started giving me items. One gentleman gave me his grandfather's glove, his father's glove, and his glove. Now, who does that—three generations? I guess he realized they were all in his closet and nobody else 'gives a hoot' so I could have them." (Interview)



Gloves from three generations.

The exhibit was seven years in the making. "Through the exhibit, I want to help people realize how this national sport, which began in 1939, extended across the borders of Pennsylvania into Saint Albans, West Virginia, in 1953, with the same enthusiasm as it did for those who founded Little League Baseball in Williamsport, Pennsylvania." (Compilation, x)

**"A gentleman asked me recently, 'I might have some stuff ... would you be interested?' I said, 'Fix up a card and give me some history on it. When was it worn? Who wore it? I don't want just stuff. It's got to have a story.'" (Interview)**

"Three people offered to help but none of them worked out. How do you take what all is in here, your soul, and give it to someone else to do? So I made up my mind I'll just do what I can. It was hard. It was a love/hate relationship. I had a lot of physical labor involved in it, creativity involved in it. My very first seminar was "20th Century Collage" with artist, Mark Moore. When he invited me to take the course, he said, 'You don't have to be an artist.' ... I don't? I gained so much from that seminar. That probably kept the artistic part going – wanting to create.

"I finally got to the place where I could say, 'It's okay. If I drop dead today, it's ready ... it'll tell a story.' I was pleased with what I had done. It was ready. Wow! That was one of the happiest days of my life. The day the exhibit opened and the community came together, sharing memories, under one roof. Mission accomplished! It was a success!" (Interview) ■

**Note:** Carolyn's hoping to have another exhibit opening after Little League season begins. Nothing is planned yet, nor beyond that, at this time. If anyone wants to see the exhibit, they may contact her at [csquinlan@suddenlink.net](mailto:csquinlan@suddenlink.net), to schedule a visit (after the next opening).

## Recent GRADUATES

### Angela Holley '18

Major Emphasis: Cultural Studies

Project Title: "Yours Affectionately: The Intimate Letter of Lucy Woodbridge and Lewis Summers"

## Work in Non-Profits:

# Appreciating the Charitable Section Seminar (Part One)



Photo Op at Step By Step's Big Ugly Community Center, Lincoln County, West Virginia

When Dr. Lassiter asked last year if I would teach a graduate seminar focused on the humanities, non-profits, and Appreciative Inquiry, I was elated—especially because I could weave together several of my professional loves into one seminar fabric. In addition to being Program Assistant for the Graduate Humanities Program for the last seven years, I have eighteen years of facilitating and training experience in the non-profit arena and thirty-five years of involvement with non-profit projects.

Over lunch one day in March, Dr. Lassiter and I dreamed specifics of a seminar that blended scholarly research and multiple interactive methodologies used in my work as a facilitator/trainer. And true to our program's emphasis on collaborative ethnography and Public Humanities, we would have the students co-design and implement a research project: they would interview staff members of Step By Step, a local non-profit, and produce a research report that could be used by Step By Step for program planning.

We chose Step By Step, because, although very busy with implementing their vision, they understand our humanities perspective and value our research methodology. Since 2010, we've partnered with its director, Michael

Tierney, on an ongoing project, "Oral Histories of West Virginia Activists," and co-designed other graduate seminars, a public exhibit, a publication, and attended an international conference together. (For more information on the work of Step By Step on behalf of economically disadvantaged children and families in West Virginia, see [www.stepbystepwv.org/about](http://www.stepbystepwv.org/about).)

Working with a living, breathing non-profit brought a scheduling dynamic to our syllabus we hadn't fully appreciated: Step By Step faced fiscal reporting and grant deadlines; staff and students had conflicting work hours. Thanks to the good will of all, time was allowed for interviews and follow-up email correspondences. The final project report, "An Appreciative Inquiry into a Thriving Step By Step," will help Step By Step celebrate 30 years of serving children and families (through afterschool and special programming) and inform their strategic thinking.

The following excerpts were selected from the student's reflection papers to give an inkling of the seminar's transformative nature.



A South Park Summer Program field trip.

### **Tyler Lucas 3 September 2018 Excerpt from Reflection Essay #1**

"My initial reaction to the course material was not entirely a positive one. When I pulled into my driveway, I turned my car off and I sat there. ... I started thinking about the tremendous amount of inequality in our society. ... I was left with the feeling of resistance that is a common feeling for me. Little did I realize at this point that it was actually my preconceived notions of what non-profits are like. It took cracking open the book to finally discover the answers I sought... "In Wheatley's book, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, she says, 'The cure for despair is not hope. It's discovering what we want to do about something we care about.' This really flipped my insecurities on their heads. The issues I worry about

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*“The issues I worry about so much are actually the things I care most about and what I do with them truly matters.”*

so much are actually the things I care most about and what I do with them truly matters. I came in to [the seminar] pessimistically, holding on to my ‘me’ knowledge, but now I am feeling an essence of purpose. ...”

**Bethany Buckner**  
**11 October 2018**  
**Excerpt from Reflection Essay #3**

“Meeting with Sue Julian was the highlight of the last few weeks of class. ... It was nice to speak with Sue about her work in non-profits, and to learn that she too wanted to decrease suffering in the world. [Sue co-founded a non-profit, Laotong Yoga, that holds weekly yoga classes and teacher training for inmates at Lakin Correctional Center, Mount Olive Correctional Complex, and Charleston Correctional Center.]

“One statement of hers really struck me: ‘none of us are entirely our worst behavior.’ From this I understood that none of us is defined by the worst thing we have ever done. This was eye-opening for me because it encouraged me to think about personal situations where I have held grudges against other people for their actions.... I know now that I need to reconsider my hard feelings and take a hard look at myself.

Another important takeaway of mine from her conversation is that decisions should be made only when everyone impacted has a seat at the table.

“I find inspiration on every page of Wheatley’s book. ... I found the idea that we all have a primary vocation of being completely human as intriguing. She claims that this may be the most difficult thing to do in our society, and I would entirely agree with her. Her argument is that we have the solutions for our problems at hand but that we lack the will to implement those changes.

*“I found the idea that we all have a primary vocation of being completely human as intriguing.”*

A gap exists between knowing and doing, which is where the human heart should come in. I think this heart can be represented by the spirit of non-profit organizations, when their motivations are true and their work is meeting the needs of society.”

**Royce Diehl**  
**3 December 2018**  
**Excerpt from Reflection Essay #5**

“I am increasingly happy that we have been able to conduct these interviews. I think it has been a learning process for everyone. ... We have all been able to share something with one another.

“Each in return is lending their time to this project so that we can form something substantive and beneficial for those at Step By Step.

*“Sometimes it can be challenging to adjust one’s own self to be able to see their point of view. But it is extremely important to present that point of view.”*

“The interview process along with drafting [the write-ups] have certainly been a learning process for me. This is a style of writing that I am not inherently used to. ... When you first interview and type up the initial logs it seems everything is important. ... However, you must sort through the vast amount of material that is collected during the interview. At that point you look through that material for any themes and arrange the material to align with those themes ... and it then becomes a living thing. You are trying to present the voice of the interviewee in your report.

“Sometimes it can be challenging to adjust one’s own self to be able to see their point of view. But it is extremely important to present that point of view. As we have gone through in our past classes it is important to strike a balance between summary and quotation. The dialogue itself must be preserved so that the story stays in the voice of the person being interviewed. ... We have recorded the personal experiences of these individuals and their stories so that we may share what we have learned from those stories, but also what the interviewee has learned by working with the organization.

These may very well be stories and opinions that have not previously been shared.” ■

“All citizens should have the opportunity to be active, but all will not respond. Those who do respond carry the burden of our free society. I call them the Responsibles. They exist in every segment of the community—ethnic groups, labor unions, neighborhood associations, businesses—but they rarely form an effective network of responsibility because they don’t know one another across the segments. They must find each other, learn to communicate, and find common ground. Then they can function as keepers of the long-term agenda.” ~ John Gardner

By Trish Hatfield ('08), Program Assistant

## Work in Non-Profits:

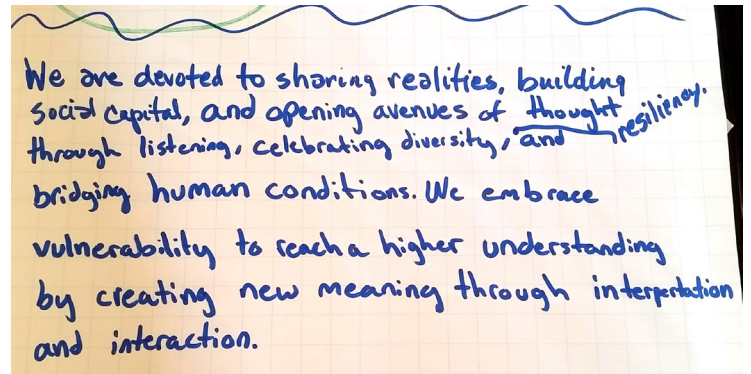
# Appreciating the Charitable Section Seminar (Part Two)

"Organizations are centers of human relatedness, first and foremost, and relationships thrive where there is an appreciative eye: when people see the best in one another; when they can share their dreams and ultimate concerns in affirming ways; and when they are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds but better worlds." ~ Dr. David Cooperrider.

According to his website, David Cooperrider is best known as the "co-creator and creative thought leader of Appreciative Inquiry." And that characterization rings true.

I have been using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) since 2005 as my chief methodology when facilitating with non-profits. Dr. Lassiter had my familiarly with AI in mind when he asked me to teach the humanities non-profit seminar. It's a natural fit because both collaborative ethnography, a key component of our academic-community partnerships, and Appreciative Inquiry demonstrate their respect, by their processes, for our human experience and capacity to learn.

From the beginning of the seminar, I introduced AI to the students by way of readings, modeling, stories, quotes, discussions and reflection essays. Once the students got the spirit of it, for it's as much a spirit as a process, the four of us interviewed each other about when we'd experienced extraordinary communication. After discussing our stories and what they might mean, we came up with a definition: "Extraordinary Communication is Metamorphosis." We co-created a visual metaphor: butterflies emerging from their cocoons—because that's what we felt happened to us when communicating well with another.



The "Bold Statement" created by students and instructor. (See text.)

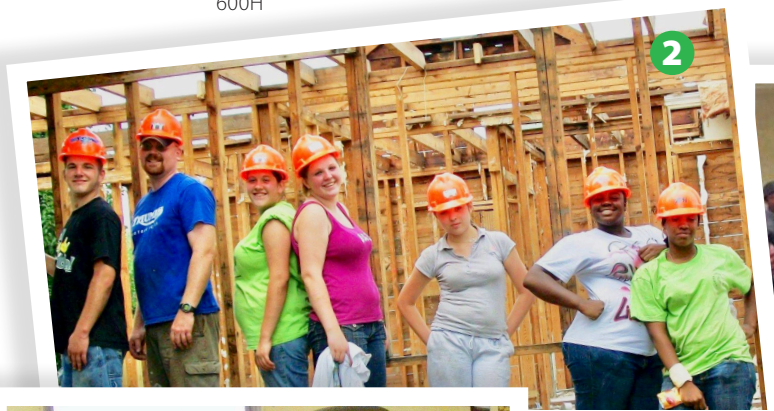
As we studied our visual metaphor, five other descriptors from our interviews came to mind: shared vulnerability, shifting realities, valuing one's self, growing in some way, and adaptability. Several weeks went by before we attempted to write the "Bold Statement" above. Grounded in experience and looking toward the future, this bold statement captured how we wanted to relate to each other in our weekly seminars and our collaborative ethnography with a non-profit. ■

Graduate students Tyler Lucas, Bethany Buckner, and Royce Diehl sorted draft interview questions to discuss with Step By Step Executive Director, Michael Tierney (not pictured). Once everyone agreed on the questions, we started an "Appreciative Inquiry into a Thriving Step By Step" with staff and board members Tierney chose to participate in this project.



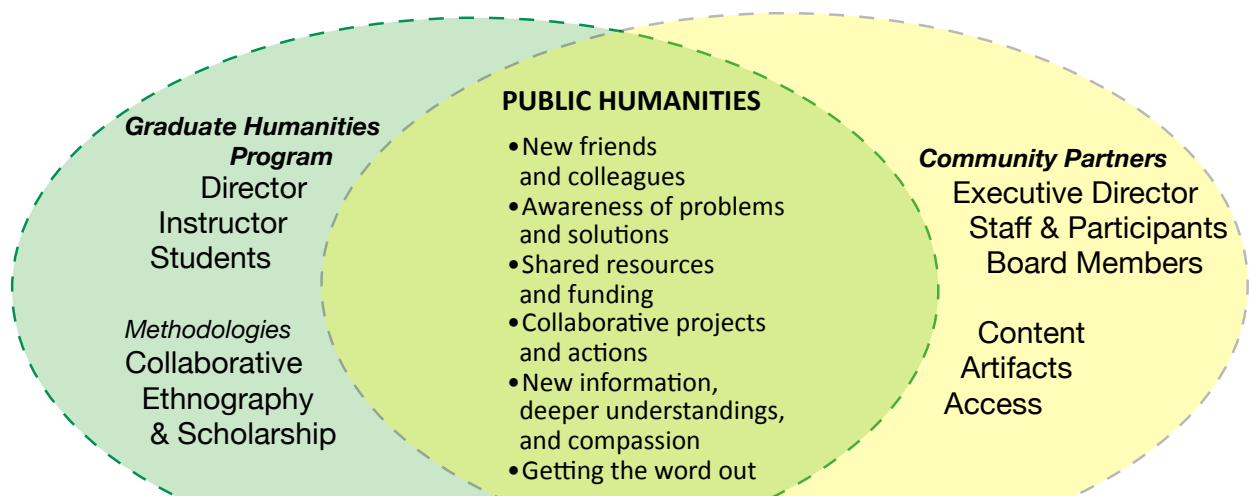


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*Pictures from one of our Community Partners, Step By Step*

- 1 **WV Dreamers AmeriCorps VISTA** Volunteers work tirelessly to “eliminate poverty.”
- 2 **Summer of Service** Program Participants help Habitat for Humanity deconstruct a building.
- 3 **West Virginia Dreamers After-School** Staff feed and tutor children four days each week.



**Visual for Public Humanities Academic & Community Partnerships in the Graduate Humanities Program**

Combined competencies run broad and deep; our joint endeavors bring out the best in us. Although it may sound complex, and sometimes is, it can be as homegrown as researching a local baseball team or interviewing people helping children keep their dreams. Details inside.