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8-15-2019

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Forzano, Justin; Riley, Kwyn Townsend; Joseph, Matt; and Jutte, Christine Vehar, "Alumni Voices: Celebrating Global Engagement" (2019). *Proceedings: 2019 Global Voices on the University of Dayton Campus*. 7.
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Alumni Voices: Celebrating Global Engagement

*Justin Forzano, Kwyn Townsend Riley, Matt Joseph,
and Christine Vehar Jutte*

This session brought together UD alumni who had a wide array of global experiences while here on campus as students; they spoke on how those experiences impacted their lives and careers.



Justin Forzano

I Traveled to Africa; You Don't Have to Go as Far: An Alumnus Perspective on Global Engagement

The Global Voices Symposium aims to bring attention to the importance of global engagement, consciousness, and connection. When I think about my time at the University of Dayton (2003–2008), graduate studies and other visits on various college campuses since, it's obvious this concept of interconnectedness is amiss from many a four-year-degree experience. People across America exist in homogeneous demographic silos, so there should be no surprise that this extends throughout university campuses, including UD. Despite many campuses being hubs for populations from around the globe and homes to studies that encompass all of earth, past and present, many Americans on those campuses lack a connection to “others” from different backgrounds. I did. Then I traveled to Africa. Since then, I have learned that one need not travel across the globe to connect with someone who looks different than them. Often, it's a short trip across town—or the Kennedy Union cafeteria.

From my experience over the past decade, I learned that global engagement is about openness, compassion, empathy, and love. These are the essential ingredients. I have learned over the years, sometimes the hard way, that global engagement is about stepping outside my comfort zone. It's about trying new things and seeking experiences that are beyond typical. It doesn't require a trip halfway

across the world; most need not go too far to meet a person who doesn't look like us or come from the same background. Global engagement is about intentional connection. It's about awareness of self and others.

I began learning this in Kumba, Cameroon, back in 2006 as a UD student participating in the Cultural Immersion program. People taught me those fundamental aspects of global engagement: how to interact with people from a different background and culture; people who didn't look like me. My time spent in Cameroon that first year was far from anything I had ever experienced before. Those early days were quite uncomfortable for me. As a white guy from Wheeling, West Virginia, traveling to a relatively rural area in Sub-Saharan Africa, it was my first time being the minority. The piercing stares were awkward at first. The language barrier, combined with so many new cultural dimensions to learn, made some interactions difficult. There's no doubt I met some of the most hospitable people I have ever come in to contact with. But everything was still very different. Somehow, I did more than navigate and survive this new sociocultural terrain. I thrived. And I chalk it up to one thing: I was open. I left my inhibitions, assumptions, and stereotypes behind. I forgot about "the way we do things in the U.S." and I just went with everything. "Go with the flow" and "don't question much" (unless it was to learn more) is how I approached nearly all my interactions. And it worked. I aimed to "be" like a local and I was. Despite being so different, somehow being open made me feel a part of so much, that one five-week summer trip was not enough. I had to go back!

The summers of 2007 and 2008 were spent with the ETHOS program in Cameroon. Fundraising, design work, soccer, and a lot of learning from locals filled the hours in between classes and studying on campus in Dayton, and sharing cups of palm wine and construction of the gravity-fed water system in Barombi Mbo, a small village outside of Kumba in the Southwest Region of Cameroon. During this time, I learned that I had a lot to learn. I learned that people always carry hundreds-years-old traditions and cultural values with along them, despite the fact they also carry a cell phone and watch CNN. I learned that people are so much more than



they appear at first glance. And the only way to find that out is to take initiative and begin the conversation.

A few years later, I was working as an engineer and I realized I wanted to be back in Africa. I didn't want to work in a cubicle, and I didn't want my work to be limited to Western Pennsylvania. I will not pretend that I spent weeks developing a master plan before launching an international nonprofit organization. I didn't really know what I was doing at the time, but I knew that I wanted something different. I knew that I wanted to be of service and work alongside people who gave me a second home in Cameroon. I just didn't know how. Then, it happened. Early in 2010, in the months leading up to the World Cup in South Africa, I learned about the sport for development and peace movement, now generally referred to as Sport for Good. Less than six months later, I was on my way with a bag of soccer balls and a mission to change lives through the game of soccer.

Since that time, I learned a lot about what it means to work with people from different cultures. It's not easy to run a nonprofit organization, let alone one in Sub-Saharan Africa when you consider the number of different stakeholders with different perspectives on different continents. Communication is one of the biggest challenges, second only to self-awareness. Some of the biggest mistakes I made along the way—and continue to make, who am I kidding—are related to my perspective, which is limited to my experiences. While hurdles, such as technology and infrastructure, bureaucracy, and

funding limitations, stood in the way, navigating cultural nuances is where the rubber meets the road. That is how I learned about real global engagement.

My organization, CameroonFDP, has been in existence since 2010. We currently employ 12 people on the African continent and engage about 600 youth year-round in educational soccer programming, specifically focusing on leveraging youth's passion for the global game of soccer as a vehicle to teach leadership skills and promote gender equity. Since 2015, we've received funding from FIFA, the global governing body of international soccer, and other international foundations. In Pittsburgh, where our U.S. headquarters is based, we have hosted fundraising and cultural events to connect and engage thousands of people over the years, exposing people to different cultures and sharing in our common humanity. We are supported by a Board of Directors and hundreds of donors across the country. This year I recently hired two part-time staff to support exciting developments ahead in 2019.

Along the way, I found the (small) international community in Pittsburgh. Cameroonians welcomed me into their tight network with open arms a few short years after I landed in the city. I served as the secretary to the Pittsburgh community association for several years and celebrated birthdays, holidays, births, and deaths with people who don't look anything like me but are more like family than anything else. I also met people from all over the world. In 2016, our organization teamed up with a few other local groups to host the Steel City World Cup, a soccer tournament dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion and celebrating the immigrant community in Pittsburgh.

Through this work, which has morphed into a way of living, I find opportunities to learn more about others, and therefore myself, daily. Connecting with people who do not look like me is exciting, enriching, and informative. Through others, I learn about myself. It's also challenging, because I sometimes struggle to find commonality in language and experience. There are other social barriers that require additional effort to make a meaningful connection. When I am open and move with intention to find a common ground, the

dialogue ensues, and a connection is made. It's always easier when music is playing, while sharing a meal, or through the "beautiful game."

Justin Forzano is founder and CEO of CameroonFDP.

Matt Joseph

Going Global: Why to Look for Opportunities in the Global Arena, and How to Start in Dayton

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for that kind introduction. I'm very happy to be here today, and I really appreciate your invitation, Dr. Amin. I am going to speak about my experience with international engagement, and I'll be directing my remarks to the students who are here today, both grad and undergrad, but I hope that everyone else will get something out of my remarks, too.

Before I get too far, I want to mention that here in the audience today are a number of people who have been mentors of mine at different points in my education and career. I see Brother Phil Aaron, Dr. Amy Anderson, Dr. Theo Majka, and Mr. Nick Cardilino, all who have helped shape me (and continue to shape me) in some way. I can say with certainty that without these excellent people's guidance, I would not be where I am today.

As was mentioned in the introduction, I graduated from UD in 1994 as an English major, I am a Dayton City Commissioner, I'm married to an immigrant, and I'm working to learn her family's language. How I ended up in politics is a whole story in itself, and we might get to it later, if there's time.

My goals for today are very simple: #1) Nobody falls asleep. I will do my best to tell interesting stories and keep you all awake in this post-lunch session! #2) I will share some reasons why you might want to engage the world. #3) I'll give some examples of how global engagement has changed my life. #4) I'll give you some suggestions for what your next step might be, right here in Dayton. And, finally, #5) a super-secret bonus goal that I'll reveal later.

So, I'd like to start by talking about what you hope to get from engaging the world. Friends, fame, fortune, fun, family? All of the above? These are all possible things you can gain. But, I propose there is even more for you in these experiences.

Here are some important things to be gained by seeking out international experiences. I've added examples from my own experience to illustrate each item on this list. The first benefit is that



engaging the world can help you find your calling. While I was here at UD, taking English and history classes, and trying to figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up, my mom's cousin passed away. He had been a Precious Blood Society priest, and a missionary in Chile for many years, and at his funeral I met some of his colleagues. My years of high school and college Spanish came in handy, and I really enjoyed talking with them about their work. Shortly thereafter, they invited me down to live and work with them for a while to see if I might want to join them. I accepted, of course, and started raising money to pay for the plane ticket. My extended family and some of our parish organizations chipped in and helped me raise enough to go. Then, Dr. Mark Ensalaco and Brother Phil Aaron gave me information about Chile and helped me prepare for what I was going to see and do.

So, between my sophomore and junior years at UD, I spent two months in Chile doing what the priests and brothers did. I lived in community with brothers just a couple of years older than I was. I learned, went to meetings, prayed, visited old folks, worked with kids, improved my Spanish a lot (since none of them spoke any English!), and got to know an entirely new culture. We lived on the west side of Santiago, in an area called Cerro Navia. Having grown up in middle-class suburban Beavercreek, it was a real shock to see some of the living conditions there. I got a crash course in inequality and it made me want to do something to help fix it. When I got back to the U.S., I really thought about how to rearrange my goals to be

able to act on behalf of those people who really needed my help. I decided that I should take advantage of my speaking, reading and writing skills, and my citizenship in this great country, and study foreign policy with the goal of using the degree to make people's lives better. I did complete my English degree, but along the way I took every political science course I could squeeze in.

I want to mention one important thing that surprised me about my time in Chile. I went down thinking I would spend the time volunteering and helping out folks there, and along the way decide whether I wanted to become a priest. What actually happened is that I ended up learning much, much more than I gave in time and effort. I learned about the culture, the generosity of poor people, about injustice and poverty, and I gained a bunch of new friends and valuable knowledge about myself. I didn't know it quite yet, but I was well on the way to finding my calling.

That particular event happened a couple of years later. I was in grad school at the Elliott School for International Affairs at George Washington University in D.C., and I had just started an internship on the Hill, in Congressman Tony Hall's office. I had been there a week or two, doing important intern tasks like answering the phone, stapling things, and trying to find receptions with free food. I did get to go to some hearings and listen to policy discussions and see the process of legislating from close-up. And I loved it. I watched Congressman Hall going about his work, preparing for votes, building support for legislation, meeting with constituents and stakeholders, and I really loved it. I laugh a little bit about it now when I think of it, because the young 22-year-old me was watching this experienced Congressman and saying, "I can do that!" So from that point on, I knew that I was going to be a politician, and that I would need to use my position to help make people's lives better.

The next point I'd like to make is that international experiences can allow you to do something interesting, and maybe make life a little better for people. Going back to the story I just told, I want to emphasize the impact that watching Congressman Hall had on me as an example of how to use legislative and political power for good. He was (and still is) focused on reducing the number of hungry

people in the world. He did a very good job of taking care of Dayton and the people and institutions he represented in Congress, but his passion was directed towards feeding people. I was lucky to have a role model so close at hand to show me that even in what can be a selfish world, legislators can be good people and make positive change happen.

Another example of this is that I have been fortunate to help organize a number of conferences, events, and exchanges designed to build the relationship between Dayton and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). As you may know, the Dayton Peace Accords, which were negotiated here in 1995, ended the brutal war there. Since then, we have maintained close connections with people who had been on all sides of the conflict, and have worked to bring people together to build understanding, democracy, and prosperity. Even before I met my wife (who is from BiH) or was elected to the City Commission, I was heavily involved with this relationship. I have enjoyed being able to engage in international relations even while holding an elected position that is mostly concerned with local issues. We have a number of exchanges planned, and in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Peace Accords, we are sponsoring a series of events next year to educate and engage people both here and in BiH. We would love to have your help with these, and I'll mention them again in a few minutes.

I'd like to take a little detour and talk about how your worldview will change if you embrace international experiences. You probably realize by now that how you engage, process, and view the world is being shaped and refined right now. A secondary school teacher will probably analyze the world and the things in it starting from a different place and using different tools than a psychologist or an engineer. When something unexpected happens, you will, by habit, process the new information differently than someone trained in a different field. So, by choosing to seek out experiences involving travel and people from different countries, you are introducing this element into your everyday consciousness, and giving it a place in your calculations as you decide how to act or react to situations every day.

This is very important for you and for the world. For you, because it will help you be aware of things happening that some people don't notice. For the world, it's important because your broader view of the world will act as a natural antidote for the current demonization and fearmongering aimed at the "other" in our society. You will know that all people are just people. No need for any additional alarm there.

To close my presentation, I want to give you some ways you can get more involved internationally from right here in Dayton. If you want to help welcome refugees and immigrants to Dayton and to help them get started in their new lives, join Welcome Dayton. It is a city organization that works to make sure all are welcome, no matter where they're from. Our goal is to allow everyone to take advantage of their talents and become a productive part of the community.

If you want to conduct person-to-person citizen diplomacy and participate in educational, business, cultural, and other exchanges, join the Dayton Sister City Committee. We have five Sister Cities, soon to be six. They are Augsburg, Oiso, Monrovia, Holon, and Sarajevo, with Rushmoor, UK, soon to join them. We have exchange programs, cultural programs, and all kinds of things happening.

You might recall that I mentioned my involvement with the follow-up to the Dayton Peace Accords. If you want to help build the relationship between Dayton and Bosnia and Herzegovina with travel, exchanges, and events remembering and building from the Peace Accords, [there is] the Dayton Peace Accords Committee. We go over there as often as we can, and we host delegations here regularly. Our current thrust is to work together with our counterparts over there to resolve issues that all cities have. We also do high school and college-age exchanges, which have been called life-changing by more than one participant!

Or you can join another of the many international-facing organizations, like dancing with Zivio! Or volunteer to help resettle refugees with Catholic Social Services. Or attend the World A'Fair at the Convention Center. Or eat dinner at a new and unfamiliar place, like Cedarland Bakery and Restaurant.

I would be happy to connect you with the right people in these organizations if you want to get involved. This was the super-secret 5th goal of the presentation: to get you involved in our local international organizations!

I will close by thanking the organizers for inviting me to present as part of such an impressive panel. I love coming back to UD. To you students, whatever you choose as your next step, just jump in and try it. Your life will never be the same!

Thank you.

Matt Joseph is a Dayton City Commissioner and a 1994 graduate of the University of Dayton.

Christine Vehar Jutte, PhD

India, ETHOS, and Inclusion

It is such a pleasure to be back here at UD. Thank you, Dr. Amin, for inviting me today. Dr. Amin asked that I come here and reflect on my undergraduate years at UD to see if I could identify any ideas or discussion points that may be relevant to our dialogue at this symposium.

So my story doesn't actually start off in college but in high school. Thanks to my dad who learned about UD's Women in Engineering Camp, I attended the camp and realized I wanted to become an engineer. In 1997 I arrived as a freshman. I came to UD to learn what I didn't

know, such as heat transfer, thermodynamics, and mechanical design. I liked that UD was a Catholic university, as I had a passion for service and hoped to realize my calling while in college. At that particular point in my life, I had no specific goals for after graduation.



My mother, Eileen Vehar, left, and me at the conclusion of the 1996 University of Dayton's Women in Engineering Camp, which I attended while in high school.

As a couple years passed, I started to become very unsettled. I was involved in many great things at UD: service clubs, campus ministry retreats, cheerleading, an engineering co-op with an aerospace company. But something was missing. The more I thought about it, I realized that I wanted to use my technical abilities to more directly help people—and the people that kept coming to my mind were those living in developing countries. I was starting to wonder if I was being called to serve like Mother Teresa, but with an engineering degree. As a child growing up, my mother shared with

my brothers and me how she had the opportunity to meet Mother Teresa during one of her visits to the U.S. From hearing my mother describe this little woman, this saint, and the impact she had on her, I knew that if I ever wanted total fulfillment from an act of service, it would be working side-by-side with Mother Teresa's sisters—maybe *that* was the fulfillment I was missing.

Long story short, during my junior year I learned about Campus Ministry's Cultural Immersion Trips, and I took my question straight to India. To offset some traveling costs, I applied for a Hull Fellowship prior to my trip. In my fellowship application, I proposed that I would learn how to implement appropriate technology in India. This meant that I would immerse myself in the Indian culture, make use of a community's local resources, and help that community develop a technology that addresses their needs. I also made a commitment to further develop this technology in my upcoming senior design lab when I arrived back at UD.

Thanks to Brother Phil Aaron and the rest of the trip organizers from Campus Ministry's Center for Social Concern, my four weeks in India exposed me to so much. As I visited Bangalore, India, I soon realized that three assumptions I had prior to the trip were completely wrong. The first assumption was that people in poverty could be taught to empower themselves by cleverly using the resources around them. My second assumption was that the lack of basic needs in a community was a purely technical problem. And my third assumption was that as long as an engineer is respectful of others, developing and implementing appropriate technology within a community is fairly straightforward.

From meeting people living in slums and leprosy colonies, from talking to a social worker who teaches disease prevention in these poorer areas, and from living in a rural village for a week, I quickly learned that language barriers, cultural ideologies, and even local politics were just a few of the challenges hindering my intended plans—the plans I had laid out prior to the trip. I started noting what worked when engaging a community in a joint technical project, but more often, I noted what didn't work. In the end, here is what I learned:



Meeting people living in an impoverished area in Bangalore, India.

- People in poverty do want to help themselves and they know how, but they have limited resources to work with.
- The lack of basic needs in a community was less of a technical problem and more of a cultural, political, and economic problem.
- Even if an engineer is respectful of others, developing appropriate technology within a community is a complex and learned process.

I was starting to realize that if I wanted to use engineering to help people, I had to understand *people* themselves, including their social influences and constraints—simply put, it took this trip for me to realize why engineers are required to take humanities-based courses here at UD.

Now if that wasn't eye opening enough, I still had Calcutta to visit. Remember, I was wondering if God was calling me to serve in a similar manner as Mother Teresa but with more of an engineering focus. Mother Teresa had only passed away three years prior, so I knew her influence would still be very much alive in the city.

The most impactful day I had in Calcutta was when I was able to serve with the sisters. The day began with mass at the Mother House. After mass, we were appointed to work at an orphanage for disabled boys. When we arrived, I was paired up with a boy named Thomas. The sisters asked that I take him for a walk down the alley alongside the orphanage. So Thomas and I were off, and right away I started to notice major differences between the two of us. Thomas was blind, he was mute, and his hands would sometimes start waving wildly, but I took his hands into mine and did my best to guide him during our walk. At times he'd get scared and cling to me, so I'd have to remind him he could do it, and we'd press on. At the end of the alley was a bench, so we sat down and took a short break. This location was partially shaded, which was nice; but along with the stagnant shade came mosquitos, and one bit me right on my ankle. That annoyed me, but I wasn't going to let it ruin my moment with Thomas.

So then Thomas and I began walking again, and right away I noticed that this bite was already starting to itch. I was thinking, "Should I stop and scratch it?" Being that I was his guide though, I thought that might confuse him, so I tried to ignore it and continued on. In the meantime, I was starting to notice that Thomas wanted me to let go of his hand. I knew that wasn't a good idea, so I gave him some encouragement and we pressed on. However, Thomas became more and more persistent about pulling his hands way from mine, so finally I reluctantly let go of him and closely watched for his next move.

What does Thomas do? He squats down and scratches his ankle! I was immediately struck by the irony and burst into laughter. The poor guy got bit by a mosquito too! That whole time he was dying to scratch his ankle and I wasn't letting him, while I wanted to stop and scratch my ankle but didn't want to confuse him. Why was I thinking he wouldn't have the same issue I was having? Were we not both sitting on the same bench with mosquitos? Were we not both human? It's so amazing how a mosquito enabled me to connect with Thomas on such a basic human level.

So, what did I do next? Yes, I squatted down and scratched my ankle too. We were equals. He was one of Mother Teresa's poorest of the poor and I was a college kid from UD, but we were side-by-side, both



Thomas is the child sitting in front of me (Calcutta, India).

trying to lessen our itch, and we were equals. It was at that moment that I realized God answered my question, my question that I traveled all the way to India for. Did God want me to serve Thomas? Yes. Did God want me to remain in India with Thomas? No, that was not the calling. Instead, I felt extremely challenged to take my voice, my education, my talents, my opportunities, and my citizenship and make this world a better world for Thomas. Thomas couldn't do it, but I knew I could. A fire was ignited inside me. Yes, I could have chosen to stay with the sisters and perform their service, but I did not feel that that would use my full potential, and *I was coming to realize that humanity needs everyone's full potential.*

India humbled me. My three assumptions about helping people through engineering were completely wrong, and making that human-to-human connection with Thomas made me almost embarrassed that I wasn't doing more with all the opportunities I had available to me, given that some people like Thomas are limited to so little.

Upon my return to UD, I reread my Hull Fellowship proposal that I wrote before the trip. It seemed so narrow-minded now. It was frustrating because bigger changes needed to be made. *I couldn't see solving the world's problems with one piece of technology anymore.* However, as I forced myself to focus on the natural resources I saw

in India, it became clear to me that one of the world's greatest resources was not coal, wood, or clay, but college students.

College students, just like me, were typically more optimistic, fairly well educated, and looking for new adventures and experiences. All this was the recipe for someone, who with the right opportunity, *can also come to realize how much more they are needed by the world than they originally thought*. Yes, college students are one of the world's greatest resources; we just have to catch them before they graduate. For me, the Campus Ministry Cultural Immersion program ignited a fire within. It gave me that global perspective, that joyful connection with others, that call to action. And since then, for some engineering students here at UD, the ETHOS program has done the same.

ETHOS stands for Engineers in Technical Humanitarian Opportunities of Service-learning. ETHOS is a program on campus created in 2001 by engineering students, led by Bob Hawley, Jason Huart, Garret Prom, and myself.¹ And since then, thanks to the heartfelt dedication of UD's students, graduate students, faculty, staff, deans, and even presidents, there have been over 400 students who have stepped off campus and immersed themselves into 20 different countries, including our own United States, through the ETHOS program. ETHOS provides our engineering students the opportunity to work side-by-side, face-to-face, with partners in entirely different communities both here and around the world. To ensure sustainable solutions, ETHOS students are partnered with

¹ During the creation of ETHOS, Chris Schmidt (engineering graduate student) provided helpful guidance based on his experiences in developing countries. Engineering students—including Ben Dietsch, Bill Eger, Tonya Elder, Chris Perkins, and Charlie Schreier—provided support and participated in sharing the idea of ETHOS with the University's president, Brother Ray Fitz. Chemical, civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering disciplines were all represented among our student group. Other university members who provided helpful feedback during the program's development included Brother Phil Aaron, Dr. Kevin Hallinan, Dick Ferguson, and Brother Ray Fitz.

organizations that are already in-country and addressing technical needs with these communities all year round.

You may be wondering how engineering students had the time or resources to establish such a program? Thanks to the encouragement and support of Dr. Kevin Hallinan of the Mechanical Engineering Department, instead of developing an India-inspired technology in my senior design lab as I had originally planned, he let us design ETHOS, a university program! So ETHOS is now one of the many opportunities made available to students here at this university.

Let's take a step back now. I have been asked to not only share this story with you today but to also help address the following two questions: how can we make UD a more welcoming community, and how can we enable our students to be more globally conscious?

No matter what approach we take, we need to find ways to help students *want* to be more welcoming and *want* to be more globally conscious. That's kind of what I encountered in India. Whenever I wanted a certain task to get done in India, I expected that the community would be rallied around me and want to work on it too, but I was often left confused and somewhat alone. I eventually realized that I never asked the community what their needs were. I never let them prioritize what we tackle first. I never let them delegate the tasks.

I think we need to better understand the needs of our students here at UD. And once we do, we can help them realize that being more welcoming and being more globally conscious will actually help them achieve their goals—along with enabling them to become happier and more energized citizens of the world.

Similarly, I would also love to see a short course that is required of all students here at UD, possibly during their first year, that teaches the art of conversation and how to use conversation to confidently reach out to others and create communities that promote inclusion.

Along with that, I look at myself and ask, well what made *me* want to travel to India and be open to new people and new ideas? Like I said, it wasn't always easy, as I found my assumptions about people and the world were frequently wrong. For me though, I think

it was *personal interaction* with my mother that played a large role here. For example, often times my mom would be sitting next to me at mass on Sundays, and when certain songs would be played, she'd stop, lean into me, and point to the words. Words such as:

Here I am Lord
Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go Lord
If You lead me
I will hold Your people in my heart²

This type of interaction motivated me to search for my calling, and my search just happened to lead me to India. So just like my mother was for me, we need to be that person that reaches out to individual students, face-to-face, and helps them identify their own talents and realize how their talents are valued and needed in this world.

Additionally, we also need to help students recognize the opportunities they have before them and not let them take these opportunities for granted. Before I went to India, I was uninterested in both politics and graduate school, and I saw no need to help develop a program here at UD. Well after my personal interaction with Thomas, the little boy in Calcutta, I wanted to act more globally for his benefit, and suddenly I recognized opportunities in things that I had never valued before. Thomas didn't have a voice in the world's most powerful government, so I went on and spent the next summer as an intern in Washington D.C., because I wanted to learn how engineers can have a positive influence on the public policy process. Thomas had limited educational opportunities, but I realized that with additional education I'd have a stronger voice in the global community, so I went on and earned a PhD in mechanical engineering. And finally, Thomas couldn't meet all the students I

² Lyrics by Dan Schutte.

wanted him to, so I helped create the ETHOS program. Now students have an opportunity to come face-to-face, maybe not with Thomas, but with their own Thomas.

I have learned that college students are capable of so much, that they *are* one of the world's greatest resources. Sometimes all they need is that face-to-face encouragement from an individual, or someone to listen to *their* needs in order to help them figure out the next right step, or an opportunity that allows them to realize their calling, or a story that resonates with them and transforms them to be more open to new ideas and new people.

I am so thankful that we can all be here today to discuss these topics. I appreciate you allowing me to be part of this conversation. Thank you.

Christine Vehar Jutte, PhD, is a 2002 graduate of the University of Dayton.

