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## The Mother of Invention

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# The Mother of Invention

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Wednesday April 28, 2021

By Eric F. Spina

I stopped by Maggie Cahill's front lawn on Stonemill Road last week to hear her describe how she edited a full-length memoir and worked with the author to prepare it for submission to a publisher.

In the chilly morning air, she spoke with great confidence about learning professional book editing techniques and helping the writer shape the final manuscript, all as part of her honors thesis with adviser Patrick Thomas.

Over on K Street later in the day, Michaela Miller strummed a guitar on her porch as an audience gathered on the sidewalk to discover how music therapists can better work with young people of color, particularly Latinx communities.

If "necessity is the mother of invention," then the Stander Symposium and the talented students who participated once again modeled how to safely present student research, scholarship, and artistic achievements during a pandemic.

The Stander is no small affair, either. More than 700 students, guided by 156 mentors, shared over 300 projects on April 22 during the daylong celebration of student work. Some presented live on their porches or in Zoom rooms from their bedrooms, others recorded their work, and a number prepared downloadable posters for the largely virtual event. The presentations are available on demand in [eCommons](#) — effectively expanding the symposium’s reach and allowing students to promote their work on résumés and graduate school applications.

I was so impressed by the pedagogy, thoughtfulness, and creativity behind the presentations that I had the fortune to hop between or learn about.

As his criminal justice studies capstone project, [Huthayfa Usman](#) offered a first-rate analysis of how community policing is being used on college campuses across the nation. That includes our own campus, where he started the Public Safety Advocate Program as a liaison between UD students and the police.

I’ve watched [Maura Collins](#) seemingly fly through the air to successfully dig the volleyball during a Dayton Flyers match, but I marveled at how this year’s team captain used a logistic regression model to predict the probability of a kill on a first ball or transition play during games. *That’s a true Dayton Flyer, I thought, using her intellect to improve athletic performance.*

In inspirational sessions, the [Chaminade Scholars](#) shared a [powerful video](#) depicting how they’re living their vocations through their academic passions, while graphic design students created a logo and brand guide for the [Oakwood Inclusion Coalition Project](#). The [River Stewards](#) presented their designs for a storm drain mural wayfinding path to the Great Miami River — on Earth Day. How perfect.

As part of the fourth annual “[Our Voices Matter](#)” project, students collected anonymously submitted writings and artworks from LGBTQ+ students, shared personal stories, and randomly divided us into small groups to talk about how we communicate our own identities to the world. It was quite an engaging session that gave voice to students, revealing both their hopes and fears.

I salute the [Stander Symposium committee](#), particularly coordinator Andrea Wade and co-chairs Jordan Bailes, Diana Cuy Castellanos, and Katy Kelly, for their flexibility and willingness to look beyond the event’s traditional rows of poster sessions in the RecPlex to an interactive extravaganza of student achievements.

For this university president, it was a feast for the mind — and a preview of how UD students will make their mark in the world.

*(Photo by Lucy Rauker)*

