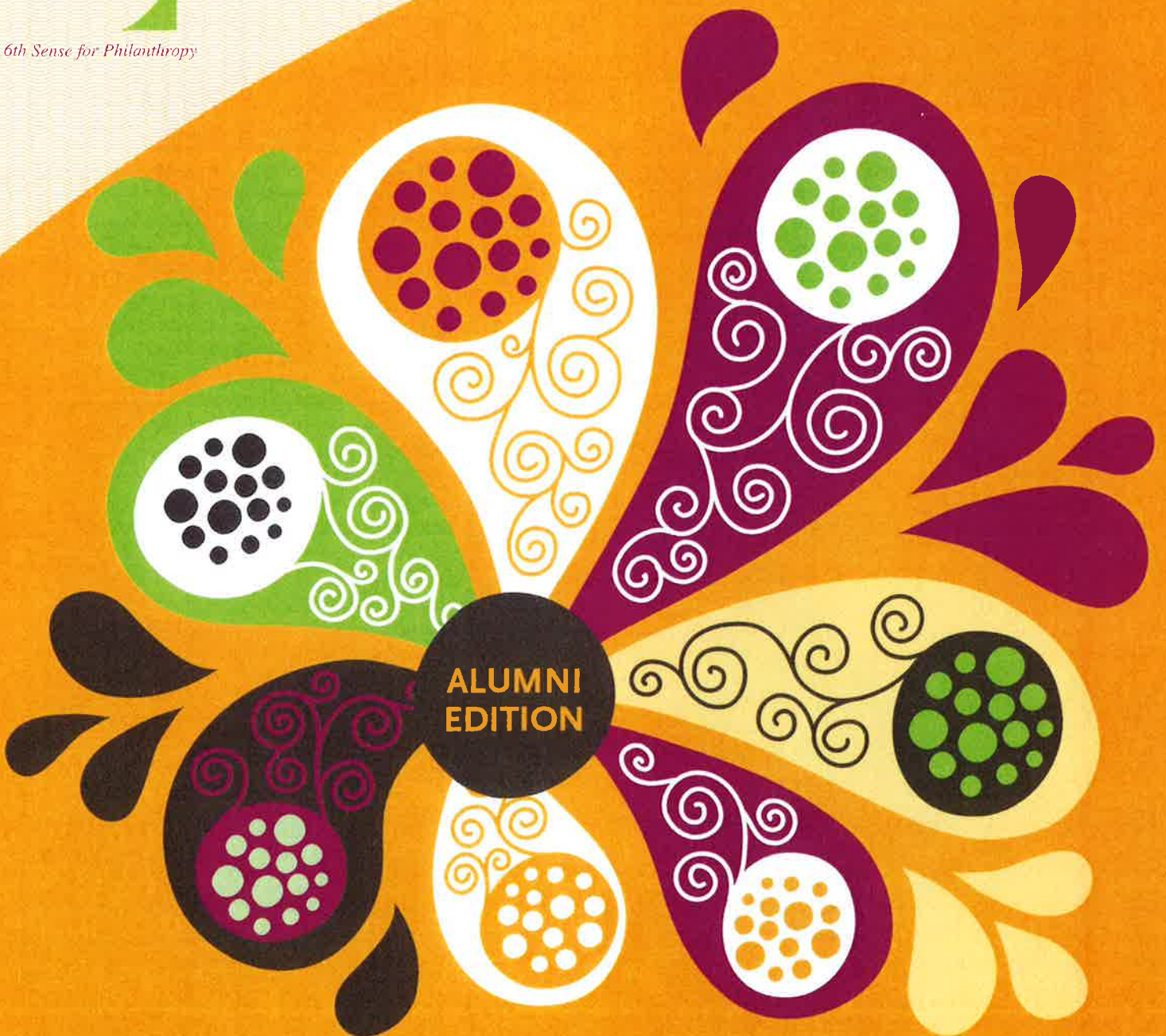


PODS & *pod*sabilities



A 6th Sense for Philanthropy



HELP

AMANDA HYNEK

What are you up to now? I graduated from Graceland University with a Bachelors degree in International Studies. I currently run a lawn care service in the summer and serve as a clerk for the Iowa House of Representatives during the winter. Every Christmas I go to Progreso, Mexico on a building mission trip to either build a playground or renovate a school for a Mexican village.

What did you gain from your Pod experience?

I had the chance to see the "bigger picture" in grant making. There are so many people and projects that need funding, but my Pod helped me learn how to break down grant applications and decide whose funding would be most effective. I also experienced the reward of giving back to the community and seeing dreams come to fruition.

What advice would you give current Pod members?

Get involved!! Throwing money at a project is never as effective as money and time combined. Go help your grantees. It's a great way to get feedback on your granting decisions.



KEYS

KATE DENLINGER

What are you up to now? After graduating from high school, I chose to attend Indiana Wesleyan University. I am a member of the volleyball team, and am majoring in Psychology and Health Promotion/Wellness. My volleyball team is full of a desire to love and serve, and together we sometimes go out into the community and volunteer.

How many years were you a Pod member? How did your involvement, skill development, and leadership change throughout those years? I was a member of KEYS for five years. I entered KEYS in my 8th grade year. The first year or so of KEYS I was content to sit and watch the older members participate but towards the end of my freshmen year I wanted a bigger role. One of my years, I was chosen as the treasurer and by my senior year I was a co-facilitator. KEYS helped me enjoy service at a deeper level. It allowed me, as a young adult, to feel more comfortable when presenting ideas to older adults. The leadership I have gained from KEYS has allowed me to lead my volleyball team at a younger age than I normally would have thought I could have. Each day, I continue to see ways that KEYS has impacted me.

If you were to live your Pod years over again, what would you do differently...if anything? If I were to relive my time in KEYS, I think I would just try to be more involved in the beginning years. There is always something a person could offer at any age, and I would go back and try to find some more ways to help my Pod and community.

TRAIL AMBER SCHOFIELD

What are you up to now? I attended and volunteered extensively at Troy University where I earned an elementary education degree in December 2007. Since graduation, I have been substitute teaching, and co-teaching at Lindsay Lane Baptist Church (LLBC). I am currently the assistant Vacation Bible School Director, co-teaching kindergarten children's church, and leading a kindergarten AWANA group at LLBC.

What did you gain from your Pod experience? I can remember attending a Youth Pod retreat for all Pods once, and we were asked to create "measurable goals." I remember thinking, "How can a goal not be measurable? You either achieve it or you don't." I think one of the goals we came up with that day was to volunteer more. Someone finally asked, "How much is more? One more time than last year?" I wish I could say that I was really smart and realized then that a "measurable goal" was a specific goal complete with an amount and a way in which to attain the goal...but I didn't. I think I realized what "measurable goals" meant several weeks later, when we had to tell how we had met our goals from the year before. I remember saying out loud, "We've put at least a dollar in our endowment so that counts as building it doesn't it?" (We had put more than that in there, but please take a minute to pause and laugh at what was my frustration with myself at the time.)

My Pod experience taught me some of the basics of leading members of a group. Once an organization as a whole decides to take on a task, a leader needs to delegate to each member what his/her job is and to help him/her outline everything that member needs to do to complete his/her part.

Furthermore, a leader checks in on the members often to see if he/she needs help, if he/she has completed his/her task, etc, and then puts or assists in putting all the pieces together. I think that these qualities of leadership are the most difficult to attain, because it takes many real world experiences and/or training to discover how involved or not involved a leader should be. Since I was in a Pod, which is like a training session and real world leadership experience on steroids, I learned these qualities quickly.

What advice would you give current Pod members? Being a leader doesn't always necessarily mean holding an office in a club or organization. To me, being a leader means using whatever talents, passions, and efforts you have to help others. If you are willing to follow something that you love to do and to use your talents and efforts to help others in that area, you will naturally lead.

If you are willing to help others in the areas that you love, you will not only naturally lead, but opportunities will find you. Leadership and volunteering can be quite stressful - especially in a Pod experience. Realize, though, that all the stress is well worthwhile. I think that the Dekko Foundation's trust in us as a Pod to make real world applications gave me a real feel for what works and what doesn't. Knowing what works gives us as Pod members an advantage in our lives after Pods. We get the opportunity to find what we love so that we can have a good kind of stress, a stress in which we are volunteering in our passion and have confidence in doing so.





SPLASH
CYNDA STANSBERRY

What are you up to now? I am an early childhood elementary education double major at The University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. I currently work as the site coordinator for The YWCA's Kids program in Black Hawk County. We provide full summer childcare as well as before and after school childcare for children from ages 3 to 13.

How many years were you a Pod member? How did your involvement, skill development, and leadership change throughout those years?

I was involved with the Lucas County SPLASH Pod for 5 years. SPLASH was started when I was in 7th grade, and I was chosen to be the 7th grade Pod member that year. It was a great experience for me because SPLASH was just getting started so I actually had the opportunity to experience every aspect of what creating a Pod was like. I got to assist in creating the by-laws, codes of conduct, and grant making guidelines. My leadership changed a lot throughout my time as a SPLASH member. I started out as the recorder, and for the last two years I served as president of the Pod.

If you were to live your Pod years over again, what would you do differently...if anything?

Oh my goodness! I would change A LOT. I would have made SPLASH more of a priority in my life. I feel that the leadership skills that I learned through SPLASH have helped me tremendously throughout my time as a leader in my current position at Y'S Kids. I wish that I would have taken that leadership to the next level during SPLASH so that we could have helped more people and had more of an effect on the community.

ROCCS
APRIL MOHLER

What are you up to now? I am in my third year at Grinnell College, where I am majoring in history and will obtain a secondary teaching licensure. Aside from engagement in coursework and the general sociability of the college environment, I enjoy swing dancing, working in academic support, and co-facilitating a campus microfinance group. The mission of this group, The Social Entrepreneurs of Grinnell (SEG), is to seek to foster mutually empowering connections between the developed and developing world. SEG works to give agency to individuals in order to sustainably address the self-perpetuating social and economic problems of inequality. SEG has provided many entrepreneurs all over the developing world with microloans. This past summer, I was fortunate enough to receive an AmeriCorps position in my hometown of Lamoni. My main responsibilities were running a summer program for middle-school aged youth and supervising the local youth center, The Alley.

What did you gain from your Pod experience? Too much in my life has been positively impacted and enriched by my experience in ROCCS to feel that I will be able to do this question any justice! Nevertheless, I shall make my best attempt and will limit my comments to two main gains. First, the mentoring relationships from my time in ROCCS were pivotal to my development and confidence as a young person and have been sustained, even after "graduating." These relationships are an especially valued benefit from my time in the Pod. Secondly, I credit ROCCS with clarifying and deepening my desire to work in youth development. In ROCCS, I witnessed adults within the Pod providing support and the Dekko Foundation providing the resources necessary for the success of young people's endeavors. In my experience, the Youth Pod was a great means for utilizing, encouraging, and developing members' unique strengths, and in ROCCS meetings, so much seemed (and was!) possible. We youth gained a great sense of self-efficacy - we could be the doers of good in our communities! As a teacher, I likewise hope to provide my students with the resources and support necessary for their success, and to create a space of possibilities in which they can realize and develop their passions and envision the sort of world they will help to create.

What advice would you give current Pod members? Live up your Pod experience for all it's worth, and don't lose touch with the mentors and friends when it's time to move on! I recommend using the time in your Pod to develop your strengths and leadership abilities. Take risks. Let your passions fly free. Always question why and for what purpose your Pod undertakes its various projects. Don't immediately shoot down projects that seem amazing but impossible - if you leave the space for discussions, someone may come up with how to accomplish it, or the project may be possible in a different form. Lastly, take time to reflect on your experience as a Pod member. Think back on the knowledge and skills you have gained as a Pod member and look for ways to employ them in further service to your community as you move on from this experience.



VOICE AMY CROWE

What are you up to now? I graduated from Manchester College in December 2008 with a bachelor's degree in Accounting and a minor in Nonprofit Management. I am currently working for Crowe Horwath LLP as a staff tax accountant. I just bought a house and moved to Fort Wayne, IN. I am currently involved in a group called Study Connection. Students from area elementary schools come to our office and we tutor them and help them complete homework assignments.

How have you used your Pod experience in your current job/classes/service?

My Pod experience taught me how to view different perspectives and listen to others' opinions. That experience helped me a lot in college because I attended a liberal arts college with a lot of diversity. I think I was better prepared to handle and adapt to the diversity and embrace the differences of others and their opinions because of my Pod experience.

Describe how your Pod experience has influenced your current involvement in philanthropic efforts? VOICE showed me how awesome it was to help people and the joy it can bring to your life and the lives of those you've touched. I remember one time specifically we sponsored a family for Christmas. We went to Wal-Mart and bought all of their Christmas presents, and then we delivered them. I remember the look on the mother's face when we showed up and she realized that her kids were going to have presents to open on Christmas morning. Through the granting process I was able to see just how many different opportunities were available in my community. I chose to pursue a minor in Nonprofit Management at Manchester College because I had so many great experiences with VOICE. One day I hope to combine my accounting and nonprofit management knowledge with my VOICE experiences, and open up a nonprofit organization in my community. My Pod experience definitely had a positive influence on my life, and I am so grateful to have been a part of DeKalb's VOICE.



HANDS BRAD BOHNSTEDT

What are you up to now? I am currently in my 3rd of 7 years of neurosurgical residency at Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. Unfortunately, this limits most of my free time but within my program I have been working on developing a rotation for neurosurgical residents to an underserved community in Eldoret, Kenya.

What did you gain from your Pod experience?

My time in HANDS helped me to develop a sense of community, philanthropy, and an understanding of boards for nonprofits. As individuals and organizations came to us for funding, I was made more aware of needs in the community that I grew up in that I otherwise would not have been aware of. Seeing that individuals were taking an interest in the needs of the community and creatively seeking opportunities to address these needs gave me a sense of pride for the community I had come from. While there have been many organizations and groups that I have been a part of since HANDS that put forth philanthropic ideals, I had minimal exposure to this when I started in the organization in the 8th grade. This commencement on a road to better the lives of those around me has continued with me since and is encompassed in the field I am in today. The HANDS organization being a board of students from 8th -12th grades may not always have the appearance of the large or formal boards of the United Way or the Dekko Foundation, but it was an introduction to Robert's Rules of Order and the way board members must interact and make compromises in order to benefit the organization.

What advice would you give current Pod members? Take time to evaluate the needs in the community. Critically assess the proposals that are brought to you. Generously give to help those in need and those with a mission to help.





PULSE
KYLE HAYES

What are you up to now? I graduated from Wabash College with a B.A. in biology in May of 2009 and am currently planning on beginning medical school this fall or the next. In the interim, I have been volunteering as a soccer coach for my old high school team, and am looking forward to a few other volunteer opportunities in my community as well.

What were the highlights of your Pod experience? The biggest highlights of my Pod experience (P.U.L.S.E.) were the Pod retreats held every two years and playing an active role in the education of both my community and other communities within the county. The retreats were a highlight not only because of the leadership and philanthropic skills that were gained, but also because of the interactions with Pods from other counties. As for the educational aspect, it was very rewarding to enter a classroom and know that grant monies we had approved were in use. Furthermore, the hands-on experience of actively participating on a board was exciting at the time and has continued to be extremely useful in many ways.

How did your Pod experience differ from other activities and opportunities available during your middle/high school years? My Pod experience differed greatly from almost every other activity and opportunity available during my middle/high school years. While most other activities involved some philanthropy, leadership, self-discipline, or perseverance, the Pod experience required the integration of all of these qualities, and others, in order to truly succeed in accomplishing the goals that we set for ourselves and for education in our community.

LIFE
JULIE WINGSTROM

What are you up to now? I am a senior nursing major at Valparaiso University. I have played three years of Division I tennis there, and am a member of the Gamma Phi Beta International sorority. I am also a member of Sigma Theta Tau (the nursing honor society) and Mortar Board (senior honor society). I am involved with the Student Athletic Association Committee (SAAC) where I help plan events to bring all of the student athletes together and provide feedback between the athletic teams and the administrators. I am also a member of the Student Nurses Association. I volunteer as an Ambassador for the College of Nursing where I talk to prospective students and alumni, attend a variety of events to represent the College of Nursing, and give tours of the nursing building. I volunteer at least 10 hours each semester through my sorority by landscaping and painting at local camps. This summer I interned as a student nurse at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN on the gastroenterology unit.

What was the highlight of your Pod experience? When asked about the highlight of my Pod experience I really have to stop and think. There are so many memories I made and opportunities I was given by being involved in LIFE. I loved getting to know and establishing relationships with students and teachers from other schools, counties, and states. I'll never forget traveling to Iowa on a huge Greyhound bus with all the other Pod members I didn't know. It was so fun to hear about what all the other Pods were doing. I feel that one of the best parts about being involved with LIFE was being able to give money to the community and schools. We always had so many excellent grant applications and hard decisions to make. We had teachers and community members thanking us for the money we would grant them, and seeing others benefit from the money we could give out was truly rewarding.

How did your Pod experience differ from other activities and opportunities available during your middle/high school years? My Pod experience was very different from all of the other activities and clubs I was in because I was able to be involved with and develop relationships with students and advisors from other schools. In athletics, I knew other players, but I never got to work with them to accomplish something that would benefit the community. I feel being a part of LIFE helped me see what was most needed and most important in the community. I also realized how lucky I was to have all the opportunities and resources available to me that I did. LIFE taught me how to be a leader, and it taught me the importance of volunteering and the true meaning of philanthropy. I learned that even though I may not have my own money to donate, my time and the talents that I have are equally important and influential.





YACC
VALERIE WHITE

Currently I am working at the Union County Extension Office as the Program Assistant. My main role here is with the Child and Adult Care Food Program. I assist in monitoring the safety and sanitation of in-home childcare providers. In addition to this role I also work with youth programs within the Union County Extension Office, helping with trainings, camps, and youth empowerment projects. Part of my position at the Extension Office includes work with the Youth Pod, YACC, (Youth Answering the Call of the Community) where I serve as one of the four Navigators. When I am not working I spend as much time as I can with my husband, Jesse and son, Christian. They are both such a blessing to me. And in our spare time we enjoy volunteering at our local church, and spending time with our extended family and friends.

I was a Pod member for two years, my junior and senior years in high school. My involvement as a member shaped much of my life today. Because of the leadership skills I gained through running meetings, speaking to service groups, and volunteering in the community through YACC, I gained confidence in my speaking skills and in my ability to work with youth and adults. Throughout my time as a Pod member and beyond, these skills were being developed. My Navigators and other Pod members empowered and shaped me to be a leader of the future. Now as a navigator I hope to empower other young people. Because I was empowered I now have the knowledge and opportunity to empower others.

My experience as a Pod member was amazing. I'm not sure there is anything I would change about that experience. If I were to have to come up with something it would have to be that I wish I had recognized at the time what an amazing opportunity I was given. I was very active in YACC; however, there is so much more I could have done to better serve my community and the Pod. With the resources the Dekko Foundation gives to Pod members, young people can have a huge impact on the success of their community.

FIST
MEGAN CALLAHAN

What are you up to now? I'm a Senior at Trine University in Angola, IN majoring in Secondary Education - Biology. I coach freshman volleyball at Fremont High School in the fall, and I am the manager for the Trine Wrestling team during the winter. I work as a waitress at a family restaurant in Fremont called Clay's. I am a Youth Ambassador through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana (YPII), and continue to volunteer through the Steuben County Community Foundation.

How have you used your Pod experience in your current job/classes/service? My Pod experiences have helped shape me into the young adult that I am today. Working with people and using philanthropic ideas in everyday life were concepts I took a hold of while learning and growing with my Pod. Through YPII I learned of a program called Learning to Give, and I will be presenting this program to the University's Education students this coming fall. From managing meetings and dealing with people, to leadership and organization, the experiences and insight I gained with the help of my fellow Pod members and leaders have impacted my life immensely.

Describe how your Pod experience has influenced your current involvement in philanthropic efforts? I find that I am always doing something. Whether it is on my own or through the foundation, big or small I find some sort of project and lend a hand. Either spending my time, which is what is most valuable at this point in my life. Or financially investing in a project or idea that I find to be worthwhile there is always some aspect of philanthropy in my life. It has become a part of me. I've learned that there are some ideas that I am very passionate about and it is important to follow my passions and to love what I am doing. Working with and teaching youth - empowering them to become influential people to the peers and adults is what I get most excited about, and I know that this is only because I know how being a part of a youth Pod affected my life. I can only hope that more youth can learn and experience these ideas.





A 6th Sense for Philanthropy

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CCOPS

JESSICA KLINKER

What are you up to now? I graduated from Iowa State University in December 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and criminal justice studies. I recently moved to West Des Moines and am currently working as a 911 dispatcher for WestCom. We dispatch police, fire and EMS for the cities of West Des Moines, Urbandale, and Clive.

What was the highlight of your Pod experience? I would say the highlights of my Pod experience were getting to meet new people and help others in the community. I remember making holiday cards for people in the hospital, going to visit them, and reading to preschool children and giving them books for Christmas. It was always a pleasure doing such a thing because the kids enjoyed it and the smiles they showed were memorable.

How did your Pod experience differ from other activities and opportunities available during your middle/high school years? My Pod experience was different than other activities because it was more community involved. We did not do fund raisers to benefit our own needs, but instead the needs of the community.



YOUTH PODS are groups of young people that meet to learn and practice philanthropic skills. Philanthropic skills refers to knowing how to give of your time, talent, and money to help other people, or to help make your community a better place to live.