Building a Better World

CM students care for the world around them. A course that begins as a study in leadership skills transitions into a sincere desire to make a change in the community. On May 15, the student leaders of the three CM Cares projects for 2014 presented their work and expressed their pride at having contributed something so important to people’s lives.

“I didn’t even tell my board about it for the first couple of months because it seemed too good to be true,” said Jennifer Jones, executive director of the Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Center in Fort Collins. “Sure enough, they came out in January and got to work on our project. We couldn’t ask for nicer or more professional guys to work with.”

The scope of the SAVA Project included ADA bathroom upgrades and a wheelchair ramp to allow clients with limited mobility to access the Center. While working on the site one day, the project team experienced the true impact of what they were doing. “There was a lady in a wheelchair who realized that she couldn’t get into the Center,” said Jedious Aggrey, CM senior and one of the SAVA project leaders. “She asked us for help and we got her into the building. That’s when we realized why we were doing this: we want to make a difference in this world that we’re in and it’s the right thing to do.”

The students working on the Walter Family Project built a better environment for someone with limited mobility. A new bay window, garden boxes and expanded driveway will allow Chris Walter to continue his love of gardening and move more easily about the family’s home in his wheelchair. “These students have vision,” said Nilia Walter. “They have good ideas and I am really glad that we got to experience that. This is a great team, and we couldn’t have done this without them.”

Gavin Grashorn also received some help with mobility from a project team in the form of a wider back door and covered deck structure to allow him to be outside with his parents and little brother. “These guys are amazing and the projects are awesome,” commented Jarah Grashorn, Gavin’s mother. “The time, the energy, the resources that everyone puts into this work is just such a big deal to everyone receiving it. We can’t thank you enough.”

This year’s project sponsors included FCI Constructors, Haselden Construction, ISEC, Inc., and Swinerton Builders, along with contributions from more than 60 donors. Milwaukee Tool contributed several power tools that were especially helpful to the project teams. And according to every team, the volunteers, be they students, industry members, or friends, were instrumental in the success of the projects. “We want to thank every volunteer, even if you were only on-site for a day - swinging a hammer for one nail, carting one wheelbarrow of concrete - you built these projects,” said Chris Lierheimer, CM senior and a leader on the Grashorn project.

These groups continued a tradition that infuses leadership traits in students to create something that makes a positive impact outside the classroom. “CM Cares is four years old and we’ve done at least three projects each spring,” said Lierheimer. “That’s a lot of good going out into the world.”
Swinerton Named Exceptional Community Partner

Nearly all companies in the construction industry are committed to giving back in some way to the communities in which they work. One excellent example of this commitment is Swinerton Builders’ philosophy that “as a company and as a corporate family, we have the duty to participate in the betterment of our communities. We think that our commitments to integrity and excellence in our people - major components of our mission statement - include the responsibility to help those in need and encourage and support our employees to do likewise. This is not simply altruism on our part, but also an investment in the world around us.”

This mindset and determination to give back is why CM nominated Swinerton for the Exceptional Achievement in Service-Learning Community Partner Award at CSU, an honor presented to an outstanding CSU community partner for their notable contributions to and participation in service-learning courses, initiatives or community-based research. John Spight, a project manager at Swinerton, accepted the award on behalf of the company at the Celebrate! CSU awards ceremony on April 29.

Swinerton has been an active contributor to CM Cares since 2012 and has provided mentorship, assistance with securing materials and services, and donated more than $12,000 to the initiative. Swinerton’s first contribution helped procure tools and necessary equipment for completion of all CM Cares projects. In 2013, the company became a project sponsor and acquired materials and tools through donations and leverage with subcontractors and suppliers in an effort to complete the Brinks Family Project.

"Swinerton is teaching our students the importance of giving back to the community and supports this notion with their actions of being involved and working alongside the students on the projects," said Kristin Haller, assistant to the CM department head. "The mentors from Swinerton help the student teams identify possible donors and how to ask for donated funds, materials and labor."

Spight, along with project executive Jared Hoefflich, is currently participating with the student team heading the Grashorn Family Project, which includes the addition of a wheelchair accessible home entrance with an outdoor shade structure to allow the Grashorn family to be together outside with Gavin, a young boy unable to sit or walk. Spight has met with the students for on-site evaluations of the project scope and has been an active communicator in answering questions and providing ideas. "John has shown us how to lead by example,"

"It is an honor to accept this award," said Spight. "We at Swinerton are very happy to contribute to this program and see its success."

CM is particularly grateful to Swinerton and all companies involved in the life-changing work of CM Cares. Whether project sponsors, tools and materials contributors, financial donors, or volunteers, every hand has provided the foundations for these projects and is essential to success. Seeing these efforts recognized by the University and the community is also a great source of pride for the program.

CM Seniors Featured at CURC

CSU greatly values the research and creative contributions of all its students and celebrates these efforts at the Celebrate Undergraduate Research and Creativity event each spring. Seniors involved in CM’s leadership and sustainability courses presented their own work and research in the posters portion of the showcase.

Matthew Henecke presented a poster on the work of the Leadership course that is part of the CM Cares program. His poster focused on the community service aspect of the initiative and highlighted the opportunities provided to students to work directly with contractors on a real-life, short-term project. He utilized examples from the spring 2014 projects to demonstrate the impact that CM students are making on the community.

Patrick Sullivan, Wayne Shaffer, and Geoff Baldwin worked together on their presentation of a community service project that expounded on knowledge gained during a travel abroad course to Costa Rica in January. Their work, in partnership with Earth University, focused on a sustainable retrofit for an eco-tourism farm in Costa Rica. The students improved the efficiency of the structure using surrounding resources and sustainable principles learned on the trip.

"I found presenting at the CURC showcase to be one of the most inspiring and fulfilling moments in my educational career to date," said Shaffer. “Equally as rewarding as informing judges and attendees on my subject was the opportunity to share my passion for sustainability and its relevance in the construction industry.”
For decades, U.S. Engineering has worked with Colorado State University to provide high performance facilities for quality education.

Recently, U.S. Engineering completed The Suzanne and Walter Scott, Jr. Bioengineering Building, built to house research and academic space for the students of Colorado State University.

As the mechanical contractor, U.S. Engineering helped the building achieve a LEED® Gold status.
Speaker Fund Brings Industry to Campus

In 2013, William Duff (M.S., ’94) committed funding to the CM program to bring guest speakers from industry to campus as a benefit to student learning and preparation for their future careers. This spring, the William Duff Architects Speaker Series fund allowed student groups to bring two influential industry members to CSU.

On April 8, as part of CM’s first Evening with Women in Construction Management, the student chapters of Construction Management Association of America and Women in Construction utilized a portion of the funds to host Barbara Wagner, Vice President of Clark Construction. She brought a project manager with her and together they discussed career paths, gender differences in the construction industry, and how students should develop key skills to help with advancement of their careers. More than 100 students from several majors attended the event and participated in a question and answer session following the presentation.

On April 21, The Design-Build Institute of America and US Green Building Council student chapters hosted Nancy Kralik, senior director of health, safety and environment at Fluor Construction, as part of the speaker series. Her presentation, titled “Design-Build for Healthy Sustainable Projects,” featured best practices that significantly impact advancing construction education and leadership. “I really enjoyed my time at CSU,” said Kralik. “There is a high caliber of students, and they represent CM well.”

CON 461 Students Experience Scheduling in a Real Project

April 7 and 8 students enrolled in CON 461, Construction Project Scheduling and Cost Control, toured the Legacy 22nd Apartments project in Denver and observed firsthand the uses of scheduling on a complex project. CM alumnus Will Bruce (’13) provided the tour on behalf of Catamount Constructors, Inc.

The tour focused heavily on the scheduling aspects of the project and highlighted the complex planning involved in the six-story building with a two-story underground parking structure. Unforeseen conditions underground led to a delay and subsequent re-sequenced work order and recovery schedule to ensure completion of the work on time.

Bruce also highlighted the importance of baseline schedules and resource loading to lend credence to the subject matter taught in CON 461.

“I thought this field trip was very beneficial to the class and I learned a lot about the sequencing of events and problems that a team can run into in regards to scheduling,” said Ethan Beaver, a CM senior. “I am a hands on learner and it really helped me to see in person what Will was talking about in relation to the schedule as we walked through the project.”

The Legacy 22nd complex is scheduled for completion in January 2015.

Faculty Members Visit NSF

Caroline Clevenger and Rodolfo Valdes-Vasquez visited the National Science Foundation in April and met with directors of the Undergraduate Education and Engineering Education divisions as part of their work on a proposal titled, “Creating Effective Strategies to Teach Collaboration Skills.” The long-term goal of this study is to develop innovative teaching strategies that can be implemented in construction and engineering programs to better prepare students for careers in the construction industry. Clevenger and Valdes-Vasquez hope to create new evidence-based strategies that can be used to significantly develop the collaboration skills among construction and engineering students. “Our communication with NSF was very helpful in guiding our process,” said Valdes-Vasquez. “We will be finishing the proposal this summer.”
Guest Speaker Addresses Housing in Colorado

On April 7, CM’s National Association of Home Builders student chapter partnered with the College of Business’ Real Estate Club to bring guest speaker John Cheney, manager of acquisition and development for Oakwood Homes, to speak on the new home construction market and its future. More than 60 students attended the event for the discussion of topics ranging from regulatory impacts, water costs, and cost and quality of lots to what will happen to home prices once the bargain lots from the recent economic recession are gone.

“The impact of all of these issues is a higher cost to builders for buildable lots and increased home prices for consumers,” said Scott Glick, CM faculty member and advisor for the NAHB student group. “John discussed how everything from stagnant wages in the economy to lawsuits over poor construction and mold place a high demand on an already tight entry-level housing market and drive up prices for starter homes.”

Oakwood Homes is the largest privately held home builder in Colorado. Serving the Front Range for more than 20 years, Oakwood prides itself on using local resources to build homes to suit every budget.

Lopez del Puerto Earns AACE Award

CM faculty member Carla Lopez del Puerto was informed on April 17 that she was selected to receive the 2014 Outstanding Woman in Project Controls award from the Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering International, or AACE International. This award was established in 2008 by the Women in Project Controls committee to honor women who have overcome obstacles pursuing the career of project controls and made significant contributions to the profession. Lopez del Puerto will accept her award at the AACE Awards and Installation Luncheon in June.

AACE is dedicated to furthering the concepts of total cost management and cost engineering in the construction industry around the world. It strives to promote these concepts through education and scientific means, forums and media, standardization of terminology, and cooperation among organizations.

Upcoming Events

2014 CM Awards Banquet
Scholarship donors and recipients: Save the date for the 2014 Awards Banquet to take place Wednesday, September 10, 2014, at the Hilton in Fort Collins. Invitations will go out this summer. We hope to see you there!

Fall 2014 PADB Meeting
The date for the Fall 2014 PADB Meeting will be announced in July. Members, please keep an eye on your e-mails for more information. Interested potential members, please visit cm.colostate.edu/industry/about.aspx for membership details. We hope you will join us!

Connect with us!