

SVSU students 'Battle,' raise money for suicide awareness

SVSU students continued their tradition of benefiting their surrounding community by raising \$36,210 in the annual "Battle of the Valleys" fundraising competition.

The funds will help the Barb Smith Suicide Resource and Response Network expand its evidence-based suicide awareness training sessions in the community and on college campuses, said the organization's executive director Barb Smith.

"The fundraiser will allow our organization to promote mental wellness, decrease the numbers of suicides and be here to support those who have lost someone to suicide," Smith said.

The \$36,210 was raised during the annual fundraising competition between SVSU and Grand Valley State University. Each year, both institutions select a nonprofit partner, then spend one week collecting donations for those respective organizations.



"Not only is the money greatly appreciated, but the awareness and suicide education that took place this past week is monumental. You can't put a price on that," the organization's board president Craig Voorheis said.

This year's Battle of the Valleys week began Sunday, Oct. 21 at SVSU with a kickoff celebration and concluded Saturday, Oct. 27 when the final tallies were announced during

halftime of the football game between SVSU and GVSU at SVSU's Harvey Randall Wickes Memorial Stadium.

"The greatest moment came when I walked onto the SVSU football field with many of the SVSU students and fans that were supporting us," Smith said. "It brought tears to my eyes to have the opportunity to experience their energy as they anticipated hearing the amount announced."

SVSU students Nolan Twardy and Caitlin Coulter raise "Victoria," the traveling trophy that goes to the winner of the annual Battle of the Valleys fundraising competition between SVSU and Grand Valley State University. Twardy is a supply chain management major from Warren and speaker of the SVSU Student Association; Coulter is a biology major from Clio and president of the SVSU Student Association. Photo by Michael Randolph.

GVSU students collected \$14,915 for their Replenish Student Food Pantry fund, which provides food to their students facing food insecurity.

Between SVSU and GVSU, the universities have raised a combined total of \$652,385 since the competition started in 2003. SVSU has contributed \$425,657 of that total.

The university raising the largest sum of money during each Battle of the Valleys competition claims ownership of a three-foot-tall trophy known as "Victoria" until at least the next year's rematch. Victoria has remained at SVSU since 2008. Of the 16 Battle of the Valleys competitions, SVSU students outraised GVSU during 13 of those years.

When looking back on the past week, Smith said she will be forever grateful that the Barb Smith Suicide Resource and Response Network was chosen as this year's beneficiary.

"This week definitely demonstrated SVSU is half the size but twice the heart," Smith said. "I was not only proud, but honored to be with this next generation of young adults who represent our future."



Faculty and staff of the Scott L. Carmona College of Business & Management joined other campus, community and business leaders to celebrate a \$25 million construction project that will enhance business research and education, while also supporting the region's business community through state-of-the-art educational resources and strengthened partnerships with local entrepreneurs. The Oct. 22 groundbreaking ceremony for the planned 38,500-square-foot building expansion was held near the entrance of SVSU's Groening Commons, next to where the addition will be built. The \$25 million project is funded in part by a \$9.8 million commitment from the State of Michigan. The SVSU Foundation is leading a \$15 million fundraising campaign to support the expansion project. Photo by Michael Randolph.

Joan Garant

Administrative Secretary • September Staff Member of the Month

Joan Garant is a constant, steadying force in an academic college that has experienced its share of change during her tenure, colleagues say.

"She is a very caring and extremely professional person who treats everybody who walks into that office with dignity and empathy," said David Callejo Pérez, an associate provost and, since August, interim dean of the College of Education.

"Whether she is working with students or administrators, she wants to do what she can to help you, and all while keeping the mission of the college in mind. She has been a backbone for us."

After serving in various SVSU offices, Garant began in her current role as administrative secretary for the College of Education in 2001. A growing physical campus, new leadership at the academic college and shifts in the education industry highlight the changes experienced by Garant in the years since.

She has worked alongside six academic deans during her two decades in the position. In the early 2000s, the College of Education building opened, moving Garant from their operations in the South Campus Complex at the time. And, while the total number of College of Education faculty members has decreased from 52 to 17 during her 17 years there, Garant has witnessed demand for the college's services shift from high to low — then back to high again — in reaction to the state's turbulent education industry.

"When I first started, there were so many jobs for teachers," she said.

"There was a time where our students were forced to relocate out of state, moving as far as Alaska to teach.

"Now with the current teacher shortage, the students have teaching opportunities waiting for them. So it's a lot like when I started."

Through it all, Garant said she has enjoyed serving the students, staff and faculty around her. The job offers new challenges each day, but some things never change.

"I'm here to make everyone feel welcomed when they come into the College of Education," she said. "I like being able to help people."

When the Alpena native goes home, she enjoys spending time with family. Married to her high school sweetheart, Dan, for 40 years, the couple have three children in their 30s as well as six grandchildren, all under the age of six. Another two grandchildren are soon to arrive in the world.

"I really enjoy spending time with my grandkids when I'm not at work," she said. "Family time and working for SVSU — those are both important to me."



Andrea Hamlin

Director of Student Wellness Programs • October Staff Member of the Month

Keeping the living healthy and nourished comes natural for Andrea Hamlin.

At the age of 8, the SVSU alumna began tending to the greenhouse used for her mother's business in Oscoda. It was Hamlin's responsibility to make sure the flowers blossomed to their full potential. That same desire to watch those gardens thrive now also applies to the students whose health and wellness she oversees.

As director of Student Wellness Programs, Hamlin coordinates educational and fitness-gear programming that aim to strengthen participants' mental and physical health. As part of her responsibilities, she coordinates education programs relating to sexual assault prevention. She leads a team of 25 volunteers, 15 student employees, 15 fitness instructors and five personal trainers.

"There's a lot of communication going on, but there are a lot of people who are supporting me," Hamlin said of those she leads as well as her mentors including Sidney Childs, the associate provost for Student Affairs and dean of students, and Josh Ode, the associate vice president for Academic Affairs who led many of her exercise science-related classes when he was a faculty member and she was an undergraduate.

Around the time she was still caring for her mother's flowers, Hamlin envisioned herself in a different profession. She wanted to become a meteorologist. She remained on the path to such a job when she arrived as a student at SVSU. But, partway through

her undergraduate experience, she was inspired by a classmate suffering from Stage IV Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"He had promised himself that he would exercise regularly and eat healthy while going through chemotherapy," Hamlin said. "He knew the importance of being as healthy as possible while he was going through that. Seeing his dedication to that had a huge impact on me."

Her classmate went into cancer remission — he remains healthy to this day — and she chose exercise science as her academic major shortly thereafter.

After earning her bachelor's degree in 2010, Hamlin worked as a personal trainer in Midland for one year before accepting a job at SVSU overseeing fitness programs. She later earned a master's degree in sports administration and moved into her current role as Student Wellness Programs director.

While she began managing the health of humans, she never lost interest in the life she first cared for as a child: flowers. Five years ago, Hamlin began selling her garden-grown flowers alongside her Saginaw Township home. That hobby blossomed into a growing enterprise — now called Andie's Arrangements — that includes providing flowers for weddings, baby showers and other large events. She recently purchased two acres of land specifically to expand her garden.

"They say, 'If you enjoy something, it's not work,'" Hamlin said. "I'm enjoying what I'm doing."



SVSU receives research grant aimed at reducing Saginaw Bay Watershed contamination

SVSU has received additional resources to study environmental conditions in the Saginaw Bay Watershed and improve public health for people living in and visiting communities in the watershed. SVSU faculty, staff and students are performing research aimed at identifying and reducing contamination in regional waterways.

SVSU recently received a \$200,000 grant from the Office of Great Lakes, which is a division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, to perform molecular source tracking in the watershed. The research involves tracing the origin of fecal contamination found in the environment to determine whether it originated from humans, cows or other sources.

"This information can potentially be used to eliminate the contamination before it even occurs, which could result in fewer beach closings and safer recreational water," said Tami Sivy, SVSU professor of chemistry.

Sivy and other SVSU researchers have studied water quality in the Saginaw Bay Watershed for several years. She said finding the answers will involve examining DNA markers extracted from bacteria in water samples.

SVSU is home to one of only two laboratories at higher education institutions in Michigan capable of performing such research.

"The Saginaw Bay Watershed has proven to be a bit difficult to do some types of water quality analysis, so they wanted someone to do this who was committed and familiar with the region," Sivy said.

The study began in August and is expected to extend into February 2019. SVSU faculty and students will test hundreds of water samples collected during summer 2018.

The project is a continuation of earlier SVSU-led research projects examining bacterial contamination in Michigan waterways. The previous research was supported in part by partners including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and is a collaboration with health departments from Bay, Huron and Iosco counties.



Tami Sivy (center), professor of chemistry, discusses water quality testing with SVSU student researcher Trenton Vogel, a chemistry major from Bay City, as Shannon Briggs (left), Ph.D., from the Water Bureau of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and John Riley, area of concern coordinator for the Great Lakes Management Unit for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Office of the Great Lakes, observe.

Condolences

- To **Robert Beauchamp**, electrician, whose mother, Laura Jane Beauchamp, passed away Oct. 10.
- To the family of **Jennifer Seifferly**, who passed away Oct. 19. She graduated from SVSU with an M.A.T. in 2000 and was an adjunct instructor of teacher education from 2002-2014.

Professional Profile

- **Julie Foss**, associate professor of modern foreign languages, presented the sessions "Building Career-Readiness Through Language" with Irma Torres of Oakland Schools and Emily Spinelli of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, and served as a panelist at the MIWLA Methods Instructors Forum at the 54th annual conference of the Michigan World Language Association October 18-19 in Lansing. She serves on the MIWLA Executive Board as Public Affairs Liaison.
- **Kellie Konsor**, assistant professor of economics, recently had two papers accepted for publication: "Market Structure and Product Variety in the Music Industry Revisited" in the *Empirical Economics Letters*; and "Intrafirm Competition and Release Dates: Evidence from the Recorded Music Industry" in the *Journal of Media Economics*.

- **Kevin Meyer**, assistant professor of economics, had a paper titled "The Impact of Agricultural Land use Change on Lake Water Quality: Evidence from Iowa" published in *Studies in Agricultural Economics*.

New Cardinals

- **Dennis Savard**, assistant professor of criminal justice, announced the birth of a son, Elliott Savard (10 lbs., 21.25 oz.), Oct. 16.

The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

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