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Living the Mission

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John Carroll University

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Introduction

As an incoming first year student, I was drawn to John Carroll because of the university's commitment to service and community engagement. I began to participate in weekly service my first semester on campus, walking each week to Gearity Elementary School. Transformed by my early experiences with service, I decided to keep service at the heart of my John Carroll career. I have encountered a variety of vibrant communities at Griot Village, Julie Billiard School, Hope Alliance Bible Church, Thomas Jefferson Newcomers Academy, and University Hospitals. I began working in the Center for Service and Social Action as a Student Liaison in September of 2018 and later joined the Student Leadership Team in September 2019.

The Social Change Model of Leadership

One of the main responsibilities of the Student Leadership Team is to plan and facilitate monthly trainings for the 80+ Student Liaisons centered around the Social Change Model of Leadership (SCMOL). Established in 1994, the SCMOL views leadership as a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change. This model was built on the assumptions that leadership is socially responsible, collaborative, inclusive, and accessible (Astin & Astin, 1996). It is based on the belief that community engagement is a powerful vehicle for leadership. The SCMOL does not rely on designated leaders with elaborate titles in authoritative positions, but instead gives each member of a group equal opportunity to work with others and promote positive social change. This model contains 8 core values within 3 broader categories.

The first category is the Individual values, which contains the values of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment. Here, we are given the space to reflect on the personal qualities which will help us to promote social change more effectively. Consciousness of Self,

the first value, is about having an understanding and awareness of what motivates us to take action. This can be different beliefs, attitudes, or emotions. Congruence is behaving, feeling, and thinking with consistency and honesty. Lastly, the value of Commitment describes the motivational energy one has to serve. Commitment implies passion, intensity, and duration (Astin & Astin, 1996).

The next category is the Group values. Within this category are the values of Collaboration, Common Purpose, and Controversy with Civility. Collaboration entails working with others in a common effort and is the cornerstone value of group leadership. Common Purpose is when individuals work together with shared aims or values. Finally, Controversy with Civility is the ability to engage in respectful conversation where individuals have differences in viewpoints. This value recognizes that these differences are inevitable and should be shared openly, but with civility (Astin & Astin, 1996).

The last and most broad category in the SCMOL is the Societal values. This category only contains one value, citizenship. Citizenship within the context of the SCMOL is a process in which individuals or groups becomes responsibly connected to the community and the society. This model is commonly used to help individuals understand their talents, interests, and values, especially as they relate to their capacity to provide effective leadership. Additionally, it helps students develop their ability to promote social change (Astin & Astin, 1996).

The Social Change Ecosystem

Another framework for social change that is used frequently in the Center for Service and Social Action is the Social Change Ecosystem. This model helps individuals identify the roles that they adopt when promoting social change and how their roles fit into the larger ecosystem. We all play different roles in pursuit of justice and this model helps to identify those roles. There

are ten roles within this model, developed by Deepa Iyer, and I will briefly describe each of them here.

Weavers see through the lines of connectivity between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements. Experimenters innovate, pioneer, invent, take risks, and course correct as needed. Frontline responders address community crises by organizing resources, networks, and messages. Visionaries imagine and generate bold possibilities, hopes and dreams, and remind others of their direction. Builders develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, people, and resources in service of a collective vision. Caregivers create and sustain a community of joy, connection, and care to nourish and nurture others. Disruptors shake up norms to build power and raise awareness by taking uncomfortable actions. Healers recognize and attempt to reconcile trauma caused by oppressive systems and policies. Storytellers construct and share stories, cultures, experiences, histories, and possibilities through various forms of media. Finally, Guides teach, counsel, and advise, using their gifts of well-earned discernment and wisdom (Iyer, 2018).

Reflection

The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously presented some unique public health challenges: social distancing, mask wearing, and emergency vaccine rollout. It has also presented personal challenges, most notably the need for increased social interaction and connection. Last fall, as I received an email from the JCU COVID-19 Task Force that we would not be returning to in-person classes for the semester, I longed for social connection more than ever. I dreamed of passing people on my way to class, eating food from the cafeteria, and having late night study sessions with my friends in the library.

I am not the kind of person who just waits passively for opportunities. When my friend Delaney Burns and I met up upon my return to Cleveland, we immediately started to brainstorm

ways in which we could remain socially connected and engaged with John Carroll and its community while classes were fully remote. We both were heavily involved in the Center for Service and Social Action (CSSA), and we had not heard of any imminent plans to keep students engaged. As we thought of ways that we could reach people, we threw around the idea of starting a weekly video blog or some sort of Instagram series. However, social media was completely oversaturated with content. If we were exhausted after scrolling for just a few minutes, how could we expect other people to keep up with our content? We decided to pivot to a different platform: a podcast.

With the help of Carolina Kane, a former part time staff member of CSSA, we were quickly putting our plan into action. We decided that we would name our podcast *Living the Mission*, a classic mantra used commonly in CSSA and at John Carroll as a whole. We developed the cover art, picked a catchy jingle, and drafted a list of potential guests that we would like to feature. Soon our name, *Living the Mission*, turned into much more than just a catchy tagline. Delaney and I decided that each week, we would bring on a member of the John Carroll community and talk about one aspect of the Social Change Model of Leadership. We would then transition that conversation into a discussion about how we can actively live the John Carroll Mission. In this way, we would be able to create a platform where we could make people feel connected to the JCU community even if they were not on campus and inform others of this important framework of leadership.

For example, in Episode 2, Delaney and I interviewed Andrew Cera to talk about how the value of Consciousness of Self has aligned with his Jesuit formation. We discussed how important it is for proper discernment to be aware of our own emotions and the world around us. Additionally, in Episode 6, we spoke with Dr. Krista Stevens, professor of theology at JCU,

about the value of Citizenship. Dr. Stevens believes that you can participate in citizenship locally, globally, or even within the human community. We discuss how to be a faithful citizen by promoting the common good. Dr. Stevens recognizes that our work may not be perfect, but that it is important, nonetheless.

The target total run time for each episode was anywhere from 20-25 minutes. After recording each week with our guest, I edited the audio together and Delaney wrote a brief description of each episode that would appear on our streaming platforms. We would then upload each episode to Anchor, a podcasting platform which delivers content to a variety of other streaming platforms including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. Below is a recap of the guests that were brought on for Season 1.

- Consciousness of Self: Andrew Cera, S.J.
- Congruence: Dr. Tracy Masterson
- Commitment: Dr. Kyle O'Dell
- Collaboration: Carolina Kane and Blake Yoho
- Common Purpose: Chris Knestrick
- Controversy with Civility: Various members of the Student Leadership Team
- Citizenship: Dr. Krista Stevens

Season 1 of the podcast was so successful that we decided to launch Season 2. This time, each episode was centered around a particular role in the Social Change Ecosystem. Below is a recap of episodes in Season 2.

- Visionaries: Caroline Maltese '21 and Delaney Burns '21
- Guide: Scott Embacher
- Storyteller: Dr. Carrie Buchanan
- Builders: Dr. James Krukones
- Caregiver: Leah Berdysz
- Experimenter: John Jackson

I have grown tremendously during my time developing and hosting the podcast. Personally, I have grown in my leadership skills throughout discussion in the Social Change Model of Leadership. I have become much more aware of the values that one has to foster to promote effective social change. I have also become more confident in my abilities to lead and guide others through a reflection of their experiences. Additionally, I have connected much deeper to the John Carroll University Mission statement and considered how I can continue to live it out after leaving campus. I aspire to excel in learning, leadership, and service by continuing to foster the 7 values discussed in the SCMOL and by experimenting with the roles in the Social Change Ecosystem. Professionally, I have had to remain very organized and punctual. I have also had to learn how to operate audio editing software to edit each episode.

The thing that I most enjoyed about *Living the Mission* was having total creative freedom over the direction of the podcast. Although *Living the Mission* was the official podcast of CSSA, our supervisors allowed us to take full ownership of the project and take it in whatever direction that we pleased. I also enjoyed having the opportunity to bring forward voices that are not as loud in the JCU community. There was an intentional effort made each week to feature a guest who many students may not get to hear from. Lastly, I enjoyed being able to learn more about myself and how I best promote social change. Each episode, I was able to think about a new value that I could foster or a new role that I could step into to work for justice. I learned that we all have unique gifts and talents that suit us better for some roles over others, but that each and every role is important. I came to value the diversity of the human experience in this way.

The most significant realization that I had throughout this process was about my motivation for wanting to become a physician. I learned that promoting social change and social justice is something that I am passionate about and something that I want to continue doing in

my future career. I want to work to provide accessible and equitable healthcare to every person. The improvement of primary health care for under-represented or marginalized populations is essential to reducing health care inequities. Primary medical care, especially pediatric care, is not one size fits all. Patient needs have diversified due to increased family stress, demographic diversity, and unjust social disparities. A primary care physician has a responsibility to understand and address the root causes of poor health to provide better quality care. I envision using my medical education to promote social justice by implementing tools and models that address social determinants of health, promoting cultural competence in the workplace, improving low health literacy, and advocating for marginalized patients. This approach to primary care will help to diagnose, address, and minimize the existing health disparities.

Overall, I had an incredible experience producing and hosting *Living the Mission*. Together, my partner Delaney and I produced 14, high-quality, informative, engaging, and thought-provoking podcast episodes that were available on all the major podcast streaming platforms. In total, we have 444 total plays across 8 streaming sites. *Living the Mission* is a representation of my best work and I am very proud of the product that I have created. I am so grateful to all of the staff in the Center for Service and Social Action for trusting Delaney and I to take on this project and for giving us so much creative freedom.

Podcast Links

All podcast episodes are available to the public and can be accessed using the link below.

<https://anchor.fm/jcu-cssa>

References

Astin, H. S., & Astin, A. W. (1996). *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development: Guidebook: Version III*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

Iyer, D. (2018). Social change Ecosystem Map. Retrieved May 08, 2021, from <https://buildingmovement.org/our-work/movement-building/social-change-ecosystem-map/>