

**The Stephen D.
London Center for
Community
Engagement and
Social Justice**

**Annual
Report**

2023

Simmons UNIVERSITY

The Stephen D. London Center for
Community Engagement and Social Justice

The London Center

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am so pleased to share this report with you on the work of Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice during the 2022 - 2023 academic year. In these pages you will find many programs, events, and other opportunities coordinated by the London Center. At the heart of all of this work is you: our Simmons community of students, faculty, staff, alums, and community partners whose passion for service and social justice locally, nationally, and globally knows no bounds. Together we continue to learn, grow, lead, and give in ways that make impacts to our communities both large and small, all while holding student leadership development and reciprocal partnerships at the center of all we do.

It's been an amazing year, but also an emotional one. In December the founder of our Center, Professor Emeritus Stephen D. London - the man who truly made all this work possible in the first place - passed away. Steve was a professor of Sociology here at Simmons for 40 years. During that time, he created Simmons Community Outreach, which went on to become the Scott/Ross Center for Community Service, which in turn evolved to our center today. Throughout that time Steve brought a moral vision for the ways in which higher education could contribute to the public good and a sincere love for the students he worked with and the communities he partnered with. As I said at the celebration of his life: his approach informs everything we do here today. We center student leadership because that is what Steve did. We build authentic and mutually beneficial partnerships because that is what Steve did. We open our campus to the broader community because that is what Steve did. We nurture faculty in their public purpose because that is what Steve did.

This is why I am so proud that we have relaunched as the Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice. This new name allows us to honor the legacy of Steve and all of his amazing work, and center social justice as a critical element of that work. Work which I look forward to continuing to share with you all in the coming years.

In Solidarity,

Meghan V. Doran, PhD
Director for Community Engagement and Social Justice



Want to find out more about our work?

Scan the QR code to learn how to get involved:



Looking to donate?

Scan the QR code and include "London Center" in designation:



Our Mission

The Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice facilitates and promotes community-based learning and develops strategic partnerships to advance learning, promote civic engagement, and enhance community involvement in order to create a more just society.

Our Impact

430

Undergraduate and graduate students formally engaged in our programs

40

Organizations partnered with in the greater Boston area

16,265

Hours served during the 2022-2023 academic year

35,975

Federal Community Work Study Dollars paid to students

Our Strategic Goals

1

Promote and support community engagement and pedagogically sound community-based learning, grounded in inclusive and equitable practices.

2

Develop reflective and socially responsible leaders with a readiness for civic action.

3

Through strategic partnerships, support organizations that advance women's and girls' leadership and success.

Bonner Community Leaders Program

Bonner Community Leaders is a four-year, nationally acclaimed service-based experiential learning and leadership program. Bonner Leaders partner with community-based organizations and engage in leadership development and growth opportunities provided by the London Center. This year, we launched our Bonner Program with 9 first-year students as Bonner Leaders.

In addition to receiving the opportunity to participate in an intensive, developmental community engagement experience, Bonner Leaders receive four years of financial aid support, allowing low-income students and diverse, and often historically underrepresented students, including students of color and first generation students, the opportunity to receive financial support for their work in community engagement.



“From my first year as a Bonner Leader I think I will most remember the way that the Bonner group helped me transition into being a college student. Being a Bonner allowed me a safe group of people I could rely on as I was navigating being a college student. It supplied me with peers I felt comfortable with, staff members I felt safe asking for help, and a connection to the Boston community. It also provided me with the leadership skills and confidence to do better in my classes and make more of an effort as a student and member of the community.”

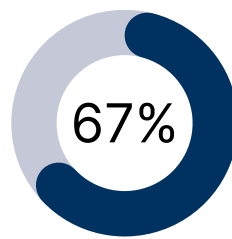


Simmons University is the **first institution** of higher education in Massachusetts and only **the third in New England** to be accepted into the Bonner network.

1,412 Hours Served

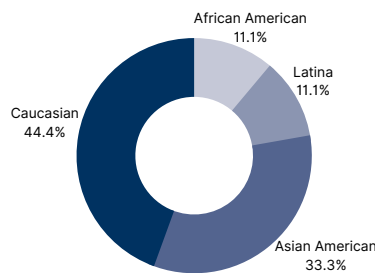
In its inaugural year, Bonner Leaders worked with seven community partners, including: Fenway Health, Dana Farber, Massachusetts National Organization for Women, Girls LEAP, Massachusetts Peace Action, the Boston House, and Orchard Gardens K-8 school. Additionally, Bonners served a total of 1,412 hours this academic year.

The Bonner Program model has proven to be a successful model for the enrollment, retention, and graduation of **low-income, first generation, and diverse students.**



First-Generation

Of the nine Bonner students, 67% are the first in their families to go to college, and 67% of them are eligible for Pell grants.



Program Demographics

Students in the Bonner Program self-identify as: African American (11%); Latina (11%); Asian American (33%); and as Caucasian (44%).

"The close-knit community that the program cultivates through our cohort of nine students is so valuable to me because I can develop genuine connections with people who have the same drive and passion to make a difference in our Boston community."



Jumpstart AmeriCorps

During the academic year, students serve 300 hours by providing language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities. In addition to the 60+ hours of early childhood and social justice training, students work in teams to intentionally plan their classroom engagement to help young children in Boston enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. Jumpstart Simmons is an affiliate program of Jumpstart for Young Children Inc.; learn more by visiting jstart.org.



“Jumpstart is an absolutely incredible program that has provided me with some of the most meaningful experiences of my college career so far. One of the aspects of Jumpstart that I find particularly appealing is the opportunity to develop my leadership skills in ways that I had not been exposed to before. Through this program, I have learned how to effectively manage a team, work collaboratively with other volunteers, and build relationships with young children.”

-Corps Member



Funding & Awards

- \$17,420.76 awarded to students in the Segal Education Award scholarship
- \$95,999 sub-granted to Simmons to staff and operate Jumpstart on campus
- \$54,000 secured in stipends from Jumpstart for non-federal work study students



2022-2023 By the Numbers



5314

Hours served



508

Family activity kits distributed



183

Children served



26

AmeriCorps members enrolled

“I was no longer doing it for a major requirement, and although the work-study funds were a major plus, that wasn’t it either. I found myself fulfilled by those 10 - 15 hours a week I spent in Jumpstart mode! I was genuinely excited to learn from our partner schools, the children, my teammates, and site manager! As cliché as it sounds, I truly felt I had discovered what I was supposed to be doing with my life.”

-Second-year Jumpstart AmeriCorps Member

Strong Women, Strong Girls

Through Simmons University's chapter of Strong Women, Strong Girls, over 30 Simmons students mentored third through fifth graders to develop leadership skills and build a strong, intergenerational community of peers and leaders.

This year, our Strong Women, Strong Girls mentors served 5 elementary schools in the surrounding area:

- 📍 Mendell Elementary School
- 📍 Mission Grammar School
- 📍 John Winthrop School
- 📍 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School K-8
- 📍 Rafael Hernandez Dual Language K-8 School



America Learns

America Learns is an in-school volunteer program that provides fundamental support to teachers and educators at the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School in Roxbury.

Every Orchard Gardens student participates in a minimum of four hours per week of art, including visual arts, dance, theater and music. This year, Simmons Students aided the visual arts classrooms, the music room including both band/orchestra and strings, and the school library!

“

“I've been volunteering in the same classroom since November, so it's been amazing getting to see some of these kids, especially some of the 8th graders, grow their talents with string instruments, as some started off knowing very little, and now are really amazing string players. I've also gotten to see the 6th-7th grade class prepare multiple musical numbers that reflect who they are, so seeing their talent expand has been really amazing.”

-Student Volunteer

”

Alternative Spring Break

Alternative Spring Break ("ASB") is a reflection-based, student-led program where teams engage in a social justice curriculum that prepares them to learn and serve in communities across the United States during the one-week trip over spring break.

This year, a group of 10 students—across various years and majors—traveled to Washington D.C. to explore the myriad of ways in which we can be active citizens in the fight for women's rights.

During the week, the students explored an intersectional approach to women's rights through various pathways including volunteerism, activism, public policy, and exploring outreach and education efforts.



Immersion

- Partook in a Women's suffrage walking tour led by the National Park Service.
- Visited the Outrage, an activist hub that offers a community space as well as social justice merchandise in which the proceeds benefit local groups.



Engagement

- Volunteered with Thrive DC — a service center for those experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.
- Participated in a training with the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force at Planned Parenthood



Advocacy

- Listened to an International Women's Day talk by Azar Nafisi titled, Woman, Life, Freedom, at George Washington University.
- Enjoyed RIOT! Funny Women Stand Up Comedy Show at the Kennedy Center

“ASB is truly a bonding experience and one which you are constantly learning and growing during. Unless you actively decide to work in a career concerning community engagement, I do not foresee you being able to have a chance like this one again.”

Community-Engaged Learning Courses

The London Center supports community-engaged learning (CEL) courses across the curriculum at Simmons. In CEL courses, students learn through mutually beneficial partnerships with external communities, both in greater Boston and beyond.

Partner Spotlight



In Fall 2022 students in Professor Val Leiter's Sociology of Food course partnered with the local non-profit grocery chain, Daily Table, to assist with outreach and help them increase their volunteer pool.

"This is a great organization with an amazing mission. The class and this organization are very related and pairs nicely with the course material."

-Student

Student Leadership Spotlight

Community-Engaged Learning Teaching Assistants



In the Spring semester with generous funding from the Bonner Foundation, we were able to train and place two Seniors as peer support teaching assistants in CEL courses.

"I appreciated their perspective on service learning through the lenses of inclusion, equity and ethics. I really valued their willingness to support the course and our students as needed."

-CELTA Faculty Member

By the Numbers



202 undergraduate students and **65** grad students took CEL courses this year.



Students engaged with **30** community partners in Boston and across the country.



They contributed to a total of **4,205** hours of service through CEL courses.

Social Justice Art Gallery

In the fall of 2022, the London Center launched our Social Justice Art Gallery in the 3rd floor lobby of the Management and Academic building. The gallery showcases art at the crossroads of service and advocacy efforts with our community partners.

Opening Minds Through Art

Our fall show featured the art of Opening Minds Through Art, an intergenerational, abstract art-making program for older adults and those living with dementia, which several Simmons students have participated in through Goddard House and Mount Pleasant Home in Jamaica Plain. We were excited to work with OMA facilitator and Simmons alum Ginny Mazur '77 to install this exhibit.



Period Pop-Up Show

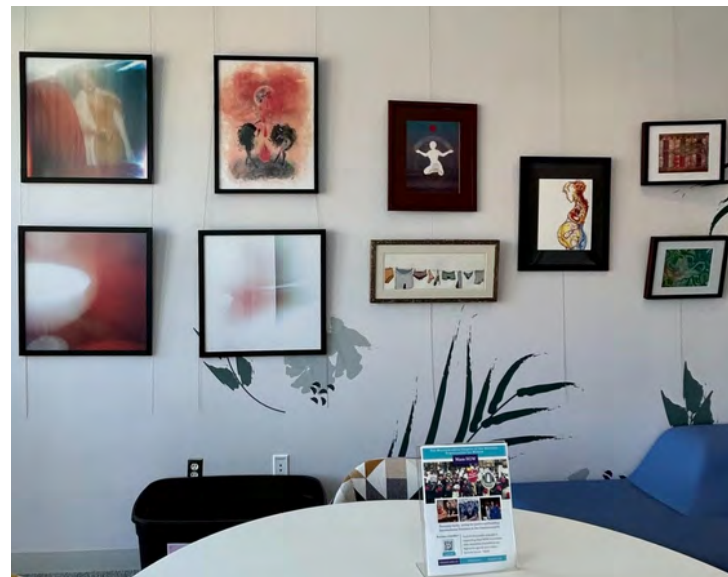
Our spring show featured our community partner Mass NOW's Period Pop Up Art Show, which was created to spread awareness about issues of menstrual equity. This show coincided with a supply drive for menstrual products to be donated to Women's Lunch Place, a local shelter, and the Women and Gender Studies annual Bread and Roses celebration, at which Mass NOW spoke about their advocacy efforts for menstrual equity.

"I build connections with all the artists and talk about each others pasts and how different their upbringings were to mine. It's really fascinating to hear their stories. I feel like I have an extra friend here"

-Mya Jara, OMA volunteer, BSW '25

"Our theme is 'the personal is political' in order to support the I AM bill and normalize language around menstruation. The I AM bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in prisons, homeless shelters and public schools... This pop-up art show seeks to illuminate and bring to life the period experience."

-Mass NOW



International Women's Day

On March 8th, Simmons hosted the 25th annual Boston-area International Women's Day breakfast, with a theme of "Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future." President Wooten joined Boston Mayor Michelle Wu in welcoming an amazing panel to discuss the past and future of advocacy for women's equity.



“

This day also serves as a call to action—it's what I call 'leading from the head, the heart, and the hand.'

-President Lynn Perry Wooten

”

“

"When I first started coming to these events early on as a young councilor, there weren't that many shoutouts to give to women in elected office and women leading institutions in various spaces. Today, we are nowhere near where we need to be, but we've come a long way as a city and as a commonwealth."

-Mayor Michelle Wu

”

Reading Douglass Together



With generous funding from the Mass Humanities Council, Simmons joined organizations across the Commonwealth to host a collective reading of Frederick Douglass' speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" City Councillor Julia Mejia joined a panel of Simmons faculty including Professors Gary Bailey (Social Work), Eugenia Knight (Social Work), Brianna Martino (Communications) and Meenakshi Verma-Agrawal (Public Health) to contemplate the meaning of the speech today.



Professor John Young shows Fenway High School students the lab where he and his colleagues study developmental biology.

Fenway High School Partnership

Over the past couple of years, Simmons has been building an institutional partnership with nearby Fenway High School (FHS) as a part of our commitment to contribute to our local community. In coordination with the College of Social Sciences, Policy and Practice, and the College of Nursing, Behavioral, and Health, Simmons faculty spoke at the FHS career day, served as judges in their science fairs, and gave students tours of some of the brand new laboratories in the Lefavour Building during their project week. Simmons faculty and graduate students also administered pre-participation physicals for FHS students to participate in sports.

Drives and Volunteer Opportunities

Service, volunteering, and philanthropy are activities which help participants in the Simmons community learn about and understand social injustices and ongoing efforts to make real and lasting social change. This year, the London Center provided several opportunities to invite the Simmons community to engage and support our local communities as well as learn in and with those communities.



Campus-Wide Drives

- Winter clothes drive
- Menstrual product drive
- Queer books drive

Campus-Wide Volunteering

- Muddy River Cleanup
- Fenway Community Center Halloween
- MLK day



National Volunteer Week

- Cradles to Crayons
- Community Servings
- Daily Table
- Create a Thank You for a community partner activity
- Muddy River Cleanup with the Muddy Water Initiative

"With your help, we managed to completely fill 2 bags totaling 40.5 lbs! All of this trash would have likely ended up in our waterways without your intervention, so thank you so much for your hard work."

-Muddy Water Initiative

The London Center's Partners 2022-2023

Bonner Community Leaders

- Girls LEAP
- Massachusetts National Organization for Women (NOW)
- The Boston House
- Fenway Health
- Massachusetts Peace Action
- Dana Farber Cancer Institute
- Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School

America Learns

- Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School

Strong Women, Strong Girls

- Strong Women, Strong Girls
- Mendell Elementary School
- Mission Grammar School
- John Winthrop School
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School K-8
- Rafael Hernandez Dual Language K-8 School

Volunteer Events

- Muddy Water Initiative
- Cradles to Crayons
- Community Servings
- The Daily Table
- Opening Minds Through Art

Jumpstart AmeriCorps

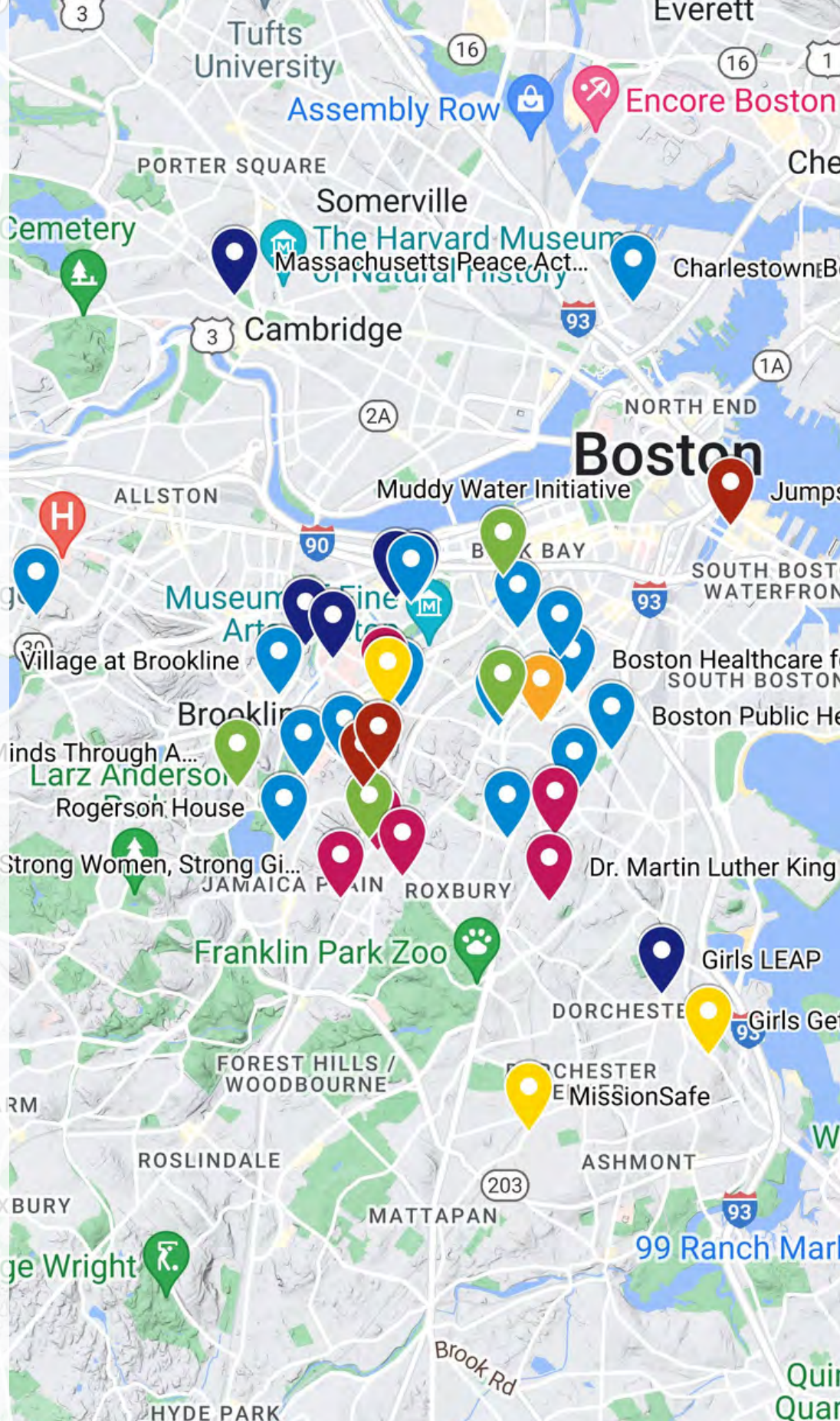
- ABCD Jamaica Plain Head Start
- Nurtury Learning Lab
- Jumpstart for Young Children

Service-Learning Courses

- Boston Uncornered
- Boston Healthcare for the Homeless
- Boston Scores
- Boston Center for Youth and Families
- Charlestown Boys and Girls Club
- Hearth Inc.
- Mount Pleasant Home
- Rogerson House
- Three Point Foundation
- Boston Public Health Commission / Peer Leadership Institute
- James W. Hennigan School
- Roxbury YMCA
- Village at Brookline
- 2Life Communities
- Operation PEACE/Peterborough Senior Center

Summer Programs

- Sociedad Latina
- Mission Safe
- Girls Get Going



Our Community

During the 2022-2023 academic year, Simmons students engaged with 40 organizations across the Greater Boston area through the London Center.