



Simmons UNIVERSITY

The London Center for Community
Engagement and Social Justice

“This program will enable students to access scholarships and boost leadership training through community service, campus involvement, and civic engagement. The Bonner program is aligned with our initiative of work and career development as a high-impact learning practice.”

President Lynn Wooten

For more than 100 years, Simmons University has inspired our students to combine learning with action for a more just and equitable world. Today, the Stephen D. London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice takes the lead in advancing this commitment to visionary education and civic engagement by building on our strengths as a woman-centered university and on our commitment to leadership development.

July 2022 - June 2023

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PROGRESS ON BONNER PROGRAM GOALS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2022-2023 ACADEMIC YEAR:

Dear Bonner Foundation,

As we wrap up the 2022-2023 academic year, I am both humbled and amazed at what this community of students, staff, and partners have accomplished. This year, the London Center for Community Engagement and Social Justice returned to a travel Alternative Spring Break, ran our signature America Learns program, supported the Simmons Chapter of Strong Women, Strong Girls, continued our Jumpstart program, instituted a community-engaged learning teaching assistant program and held several campus-wide service events and gatherings.

On top of all of these activities that elevated our programming and reach, we are proud to have launched the Bonner Community Leaders Program, welcoming nine first-year students into the inaugural cohort. It was an unbelievable experience. As much of a whirlwind as the first year was, it was also filled with deep reflection, relationship building, understanding ourselves and our place in the community and much, much, more.

I remember meeting with Bobby during my second week after starting at Simmons. Prior to, I had poured through the Bonner Wiki, trying to gather as much information as possible—there is a lot! But when it came down to it, I knew Simmons was the right place to hold a Bonner program. I talked a lot about how the Bonner model fit with our President's strategic goals and how the center was poised to host the program.

Our goals for the first year were 1) to have a cohort of 10 active Bonner Leaders, 2) to build a robust range of 5 community partnerships to support Bonners throughout their development in the program, and 3) to create a campus-wide collaboration to sustain the effort.

We just missed our target of 10 active Bonners, ending the program with 9 students. We actually entered the year with 9 students, as one decided prior to the academic year that they were not going to participate.

We exceeded our partnership goal, partnering with seven community organizations, including: Fenway Health, Dana Farber, Massachusetts National Organization for Women, Girls LEAP, Massachusetts Peace Action, the Boston House, and Orchard Gardens K-8 school. Their issue areas range from health equity, to women and girls empowerment, to peace proliferation.

Finally, we have begun to lay the groundwork for our campus to become not only aware of, but engaged in the Bonner program and process, which will lead us to have a stronger foothold for community engagement as a university priority. Over the course of the year, we worked with departments across campus including Admissions, Financial Aid, the Multicultural Center, Student Employment, and University Communications. It is our goal to continue strengthening these campus-wide partnerships and further ingraining community engagement in the ethos of our campus.

Overall, as we close out the year, we are proud to have moved the needle for community engaged work at our university and thank the Bonner Foundation for support in getting us there!

With gratitude,
Courtney Kramer
Assistant Director of Community Engagement



Want to learn more about our the
London Center for Community
Engagement and Social Justice?



Scan the QR code to learn more:

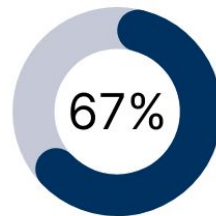


Simmons University is the **first institution** of higher education in Massachusetts and only **the third in New England** to implement the Bonner model.

1,412 Hours Served

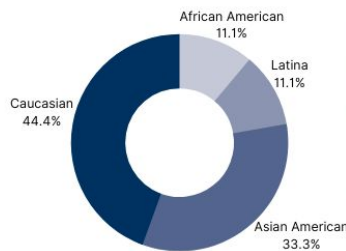
In its inaugural year, Bonner Leaders worked with seven community partners, including: Fenway Health, Dana Farber, Massachusetts National Organization for Women, Girls LEAP, Massachusetts Peace Action, the Boston House, and Orchard Gardens K-8 school. Additionally, Bonners served a total of 1,412 hours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

"Bonner is a beautiful program that focuses on action and reflection, so whatever you're doing is always being consulted upon with others, encouraging humility. It's also a mechanism so that you never fall into doing randomized acts without any end goal or real benefit. I am so impressed by this program, and so grateful to be in it."



FIRST YEAR TRIP: EXAMINING HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS, AND GENTRIFICATION IN D.C.

Mission Statement: Our mission is to gain a deeper understanding of the intersectionality between homelessness and gentrification in Washington, DC by leveraging its historical background and the current conditions of the neighborhoods that shape this city. Through empathy, communication, and team-building skills, Bonner Leaders will collaborate to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of gentrification and its impact on unhoused community members. The insights and experiences garnered from this trip will inform the identification of possible solutions to address this critical issue, how it connects to other careers, and will also serve as a way to compare and contrast Washington, DC and Boston in the lens of gentrification and homelessness.



ENGAGEMENT IN WASHINGTON D.C.

- Students visited The Outrage, an activist hub that offers a community space as well as social justice merchandise in which the proceeds benefit local groups.
- Bonner Leaders volunteered with Thrive D.C., a service center for those experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.
- The group attended the National Museum of the American Indian to learn further about the history and legacy of Indigenous peoples.
- Students volunteered at Bread for the City, an organization that works to provide food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services to reduce the burden of poverty.
- The group travelled to the DC Department of Housing and Community Development to immerse themselves further in the areas current housing conditions.
- Members conversed with author Shilipi Malinowski about D.C.'s history of gentrification.





WHAT BONNER LEADERS HAVE TO SAY:

“The **close-knit community** that the program cultivates through our cohort of nine students is also 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. As an aspiring physician, the Bonner program provides me with **opportunities** to further explore the healthcare field and **accomplish my goals** of advocating for healthcare equity through the program's community partner organizations. With the Bonner program's **four-year curriculum** driven of leadership and community service, I have the opportunity to be educated both in the mind and heart to **best serve the communities I value.**”

—Justine Paragas, '26

“

My favorite part about being a Bonner is definitely that it helped me get out of my comfort zone. Growing up I was always scared to meet people and I struggled to settle into a new environment, but through the Bonner program I was able to become confident with voice my opinions. Because we are a small cohort, the bond that we all have with each other is really precious and strong. It's just so amazing the bond that you share.

”

“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.”



BONNER LEADERS NOT ONLY ENGAGED WITH SEVEN COMMUNITY PARTNERS DURING THEIR FIRST YEAR, THEY ALSO DEDICATED HOURS TO PERSON, PROFESSIONAL, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

As part of the program, Bonner Leaders commit to serving internship-level community service (280 - 300 hours per academic year, roughly 10 hours per week). They also participate in customized, experiential learning opportunities designed to make them stand out as civic leaders, social justice agents and active global citizens.

This deep work is designed with reciprocity in mind, supporting both the students' development and the community needs.

Student	Academic Year 2022 -2023		
	Service Hours	Training Hours	Total Hours
Student 1	198.5	40.5	239
Student 2	198.5	30.5	229
Student 3	14.75	39.25	54
Student 4	19.55	45.25	64.8
Student 5	144.75	41.25	186
Student 6	222.75	44.25	267
Student 7	132.5	30	162.5
Student 8	202	31.5	233.5
Student 9	55.25	24.75	80

Partner	Total Hours
Girls LEAP	198.5
Mass Organization for Women	400.5
Sociedad Latina	14.75
Fenway Health	242.3
Boston House	144.75
Mass Peace Action	132.5
Dana Farber Cancer Institute	55.25

“My favorite part so far has been working with my partner and getting to experience nonprofit management in the real world.”

Thank you for a wonderful year!



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THE PAST YEAR IS A YEAR TO BE PROUD OF THANKS TO OUR MANY PARTNERS AND PEERS.

The successful launch of the Bonner Community Leaders Program would not have been possible without the participation, dedication, and support of our seven community partners. In addition, the support and guidance from the Bonner Foundation was fundamental in getting the program off the ground. And finally, the Bonner Network—the many, many students, staff, faculty, and friends who collaborate together, share ideas, offer advice, and genuinely care about one another—were pivotal throughout our journey to create a program which will equip students to be lifelong engaged citizens and agents for social change. Thank you!