

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

OAKLAND
UNIVERSITY

JULY 2016

OU professor, students bring guitar program to Children's Village

Oakland University guitar instructor Bret Hoag and his students Jessica Julian and Keith Kunkel are meeting with a group of 16 young women at Children's Village in Pontiac to launch a new community initiative called Guitars Not Guns. "It was totally awesome," said Hoag. "The girls were enthusiastic and the staff on hand were fantastic." Hoag has been a driving force in forming the first Michigan chapter of Guitars Not Guns, which has the slogan: One Child. One Guitar. One Miracle.

This 501(c)(3) organization uses music as a catalyst to encourage children and teens to use their creativity to foster personal development and to help divert them from destructive influences. The participants are provided with guitars and lessons with qualified teachers at no cost. Once the classes are finished, the new musicians keep the guitars.

Judge Szymanski presides over the Juvenile Division of the Third Circuit Court in Detroit and has long seen the need for programs like this.

A musician/songwriter himself, he first learned about the national organization at a conference. He was introduced to Hoag by Bittick, a mutual friend who has worked with at-risk youth as a counselor and mentor for many years.

Judge Szymanski gets involved with this and similar initiatives because of what he sees in his court. "Most of the young people I work with have been traumatized in multiple ways and need to 'get out of the trauma' as best they can," he said. "Interventions like music are well suited for this. When we are engaged in an activity that provides the right amount of challenge and interest, time is suspended and we become fully absorbed in an activity, and for that time nothing else matters. When the trauma is severe it can seem inescapable to individuals, but when we start to establish our ability to control the memory by loosening its power to preoccupy us, we start to climb out of the hole it has dug for us."

Once the Michigan Guitars Not Guns chapter was formed, Hoag obtained a commitment from Children's

Village for an inaugural program that would cover basic guitar technique, chords, reading music and blues progressions. Now all they needed was 16 guitars.

Hoag approached Walk The Beat, a Grand Haven-based organization with a board of private donors. In his application to board member Larry Halverson, Hoag wrote, "We are only requesting the tools to do the job. We are asking for the guitars, bags, tuners and picks for the students." And although the turnaround time was short, Walk The Beat agreed to fund the project.

In the future, Hoag plans to continue with more classes, involving more of his OU guitar students who he thinks will derive enormous benefits from the program. To keep the program running, there will be a need for ongoing funding from an expanding number of sources. Every time a new group begins their classes, new instruments are needed. But Hoag is undaunted. To donate guitars or find out more about the program, contact him at hoag2@oakland.edu.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Health Sciences professor honored in Voices Under 40 program

Oakland University's Kristin Landis-Piowar is among 12 individuals being recognized as part of this year's American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) Voices Under 40 program. The program was developed to honor ASCLS members who have shown exceptional commitment to the organization, the laboratory profession and their community at large at a young age in their professional career.

Dr. Landis-Piowar, an assistant professor of Biomedical, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Sciences, joined Oakland in 2010. She has served ASCLS at the state and national level, including as vice chair of the Hematology Scientific Assembly and on the Continuing Education Advisory Committee. She currently serves on the editorial board for Clinical Laboratory Science, a peer-reviewed journal published by the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science.

"By active involvement in ASCLS, I'm exposed to the latest science and clinical best practices that augment my research and desire to learn," Dr. Landis-Piowar wrote in a letter to the ASCLS Membership Committee. "Through the amazing mentorship that I received as a young professional, I've made connections in my state and across the country that have been vital to fulfilling several of my professional goals."

In addition to her committee work, Dr. Landis-Piowar received the 2012 Key to the Future Award for demonstrating leadership potential

to ASCLS-Michigan, and the 2015 Donna Duberg Mentorship Award for inspiring and mentoring students and ASCLS-Michigan members. Her scholarly endeavors also include 25 professional presentations and more than 30 professional publications to her credit, mainly focused on cancer research.

To foster educational enrichment in the community, Dr. Landis-Piowar has developed programming for OU's Health Professions Camp, an annual event that introduces high school students to high-demand careers in health-related fields.

Along with the other Voices Under 40 honorees, Dr. Landis-Piowar will be recognized at the ASCLS Member Awards Ceremony on August 3, in Philadelphia.

Innovative green tech energy company from Greece opens first US location in Oakland County

Greek Energy Monitoring Company, Meazon, opens first US office in the Oakland University Incubator: OU INC in Rochester Hills Michigan. Meazon, having made the final call on a current Department of Energy (DOE) energy sub meters technology competition and recently been top 5 shortlisted at the Shell Great Lakes Innovation Competition, Founders Stelios Koutroubinas and John Gionas knew it was time for a US location.

Koutroubinas mentions, "We knew there was a need for our products and services when we visited Michigan and met with potential customers and kept receiving the same feedback- that our products are of the highest quality they have seen and with an excellent Total

Cost of Ownership."

Koutroubinas continues, "We are excited to be in the Oakland University Incubator, where the talent from their engineering program is impressive. We also are very happy to be in Michigan. We've been working with Oakland County's Economic Development & Community Affairs department to help make important connections into the Midwest's energy market.

"We are thrilled to have Meazon in Oakland County," commented Irene Spanos, Director of Economic Development, "It's our second Greek-owned firm in Oakland County." Spanos continues, "Meazon fits into Mr. L. Brooks Patterson's Emerging Sector initiative, aimed at diversifying the make-up of Oakland County with emerging technology companies." In 2012, Spanos spoke to dozens of high-tech companies, in a partnership with US Embassy in Athens, on how to "How to Grow Your Business in the USA". It was a panel discussion with Amy Butler (Oakland University), Clara Mager (Butzel Long) on everything you need to know about expanding in the United States.

"As a result we continue to work with several Greek tech companies on their first US location in Michigan. We have a great business case in Oakland County, Michigan. We have a globally educated workforce, great business environment and we are already home to over 1,000 foreign-owned firms from 39 different countries," promoted Spanos.

Meazon is involved in several new pilot projects throughout Michigan.

STATE AND NATIONAL HEADLINES

New Study Shows Advances in Higher Education Outcomes for African Americans –

The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education and the University of Pennsylvania's Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy recently released a study examining trends in higher education based on family income, race/ethnicity, and family socioeconomic status.

The report, "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States — 2016 Historical Trend Report" highlights some bright spots but also some less positive trends.

For example, the report shows that while bachelor's degree attainment rates have increased for all family income quartiles, the distribution of bachelor's degree attainment between family income levels has remained relatively unchanged since 1970, with students from the top two income ranges garnering a majority (77 percent) of all degrees in 2014.

"Whether we believe that higher education is a civil right, an essential element of a full democratic society, or a fundamental requirement to enabling all to achieve the American dream, the 2016 Indicators Report shows that higher education opportunity and outcomes are highly inequitable across family income groups," the report read. "Moreover, on many indicators, gaps are larger now than in the past."

The report purports that the disinvestment of state funds from public institutions and declining federal aid lent toward the income inequities.

On a more positive note, the report

does indicate that college enrollment and degree attainment rates among Black students have increased. For example, in 1970, almost one-third of Black high school graduates enrolled in college and, by 2014, that figure rose to 58 percent.

AFRO

May 7, 2016

America's Divided Recovery College Haves and Have-Nots

Over 95 percent of jobs created during the recovery have gone to workers with at least some college education, while those with a high school diploma or less are being left behind. *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots* reveals that those with at least some college education have captured 11.5 million of the 11.6 million jobs created during the recovery. While jobs are back, they are not the same jobs lost during the recession. The Great Recession decimated low-skill blue-collar and clerical jobs, whereas the recovery added primarily high-skill managerial and professional jobs.

The jobs recovery deepens the economic and political divide between workers with and without a college education.

America's Divided America: College Haves and Have-Nots finds that over 95% of the jobs created in the recovery have gone to those with education beyond a high school education. The report also finds:

- For the first time, college graduates make up a larger share of the workforce than workers with a high school diploma or less.
- Out of the jobs created in the recovery, 8.4 million have gone to those with a bachelor's degree or higher, while high school jobs

only grew by 80,000.

- Occupational and industry shifts have been major drivers of change in the labor market.
- The recovery added primarily managerial and professional jobs.

State, Local Spending on Prisons Outpaces Education Funding

State and local government spending on prisons and jails increased by 89 percent between 1990 and 2013, while state and local appropriations for higher education remained flat, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Education. During that same time period, 46 states reduced higher education spending per full-time-equivalent student, the department found. On average, the report said state and local higher education funding per student fell by 28 percent while per capita spending on corrections increased by 44 percent.

"Budgets reflect our values, and the trends revealed in this analysis are a reflection of our nation's priorities that should be revisited," U.S. Secretary of Education John King Jr. said in a written statement.

Inside Higher Ed
July 8, 2016

A year later, class of 2015 is busy with work and school Dive Brief:

- More than 80% of graduates from the class of 2015 are employed or enrolled in graduate school one year after leaving college.
- In keeping with industrial trends, graduates with degrees in STEM fields are



Wilson Hall, Room 123
371 Wilson Boulevard
Rochester, Michigan 48309-4486

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Rochester, MI
Permit No. 17

**OAKLAND UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
(248) 370-9882 | oakland.edu/govrel

Rochelle A. Black
Vice President
black@oakland.edu

Nicole Wells Stallworth
Assistant Vice President
wellstallworth@oakland.edu

Bonnie Bochniak
State Relations Director
bonniemaluchnik@oakland.edu

Claudia DiMercurio
Executive Assistant
dimercur@oakland.edu

Jacqueline Racchi
Executive Secretary
racchi@oakland.edu

State and National Headlines *CONTINUED*

having the easiest time finding job placement and earning the best starting salaries.

- Liberal arts graduates' employment rates improved in comparison to graduates from 2014.

Dive Insight:

The class of 2015 has benefited from the slow return of jobs in key industries like manufacturing and job creation in tech, transportation and public health. Colleges and universities which have emphasized interdisciplinary collaboration are reaping rewards for their investment; more baccalaureate graduates are finding an easier time with job placement thanks to skills learned and developed outside of their traditional major curricula.

Community colleges, as reported in Inside Higher Ed, do not have similar employment outcomes for 2015, but they will become an essential partner in training the workforce that will handle frontline and administrative management for growing companies and industries.

As politics may shift in the next few months to reward job creation within domestic borders, more industries will seek out entry-level employees to staff low- and mid-level positions with flexible skill sets — something two- and four-year schools are strengthening their capacity to teach.

Education Dive
June 9, 2016