



GORDON
COLLEGE



SERVING THE COMMON GOOD



“Followers of Christ are engaged in the world with their whole being . . . The whole person in all aspects of her life is engaged in fostering human flourishing and serving the common good.”

—Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith*

GORDON COLLEGE: SERVING THE COMMON GOOD

Because our faith is deeply rooted in **relationship** with God, with others, and with the created world, we believe that our learning should also be rooted in these relationships. Out of this understanding, Gordon College encourages students to elevate the contribution they make to the world around them through thoughtful, dynamic service opportunities—to engage in outreach that not only expresses their Christian faith, but also vitally enriches their classroom **reflection** and develops their vocational **response**. What follows are snapshots and stories from the Gordon community that reveal how engaged service for the common good is happening through *relationship*, *reflection* and *response* within our local community and around the world.

RELATIONSHIP



How to Love Well

The object of the Christian life, as Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae put it, is to increase the assets and effectiveness of love. Unfortunately, Christian love is not always demonstrated well or effectively. Serving with Gordon programs helped me to see some of the errors in my approach to loving others and has inspired me to love differently.

As a freshman volunteer and sophomore intern for Gordon in Lynn (GIL), my hours spent tutoring and mentoring Hispanic youth were coupled with a re-examination of the way I approached the youth we served. Promoting “assets-based community development,” GIL challenged me to view individuals and communities not in terms of their deficiencies, but rather in

terms of their God-given assets—the potential of a junior high school boy’s mathematical genius, the merits of a church-based after-school program, the richness of a culture’s love for music and dance. As I began to see all that the city of Lynn and “Lynners” had to offer, it became natural to see Gordon’s work there as partnership.

The lessons I learned in Lynn led me around the world and back again. As co-leader of service-learning missions trips to the Dominican Republic, I discovered that *listening* to our host organization is not only critical to building and sustaining partnerships, but is also essential for the process of attaining full human flourishing—a process that requires cooperation to be successful. Studying abroad with Gordon IN

Romania, where I interned with New Horizons Organization, I learned that in order to be *sustainable*, community development strategies must replace demeaning and inflexible approaches to community development with those that build agency and capacity.

Senior year, I returned to the Gordon in Lynn program, this time sharing with younger volunteers and interns ways Gordon had taught me to love well—with a love that affirms dignity, acknowledges our solidarity in pursuit of human flourishing, and lasts sustainably.

Joanna Gallagher '12

Participant and Leader through Gordon in Lynn, Global Education and Missions

Creating a Common Vocabulary

Every Monday and Tuesday night I drive 17 minutes down Route 128, walk through three sets of doors, up two flights of stairs, and I am transported into a different world. When I enter, I am greeted in at least a dozen languages as I am ushered to the front of a classroom to assume the role of “Teacher.” In front of a room full of adult English language learners, I am learning some of the most valuable lessons that Gordon has to offer: my team and I are breathing salt and light; we are Gordon in Lynn.

The Night School provides ESL (English as a Second Language) and GED lessons for adults in the city of Lynn. Dr. Claire Crane of the Ford Elementary School spearheaded this project almost a decade ago, and has since worked to do justice

in Lynn by teaching the parents and friends of the students she serves at her public and community-centered school. With three different ESL levels, teachers from the Ford School work alongside Gordon students to convey lessons of language and culture to eager and grateful adult learners.

The language lessons we teach are fun as well as practical; we aim to teach things that will be useful in every day life in a new city and country. Our SALTeam (Serve and Learn Team, the service-learning component of Gordon’s first-year seminar, The Great Conversation) might be found caught up in an intense game of Simon Says to demonstrate body parts, or having a heart-to-heart conversation with an elderly couple who offer the team

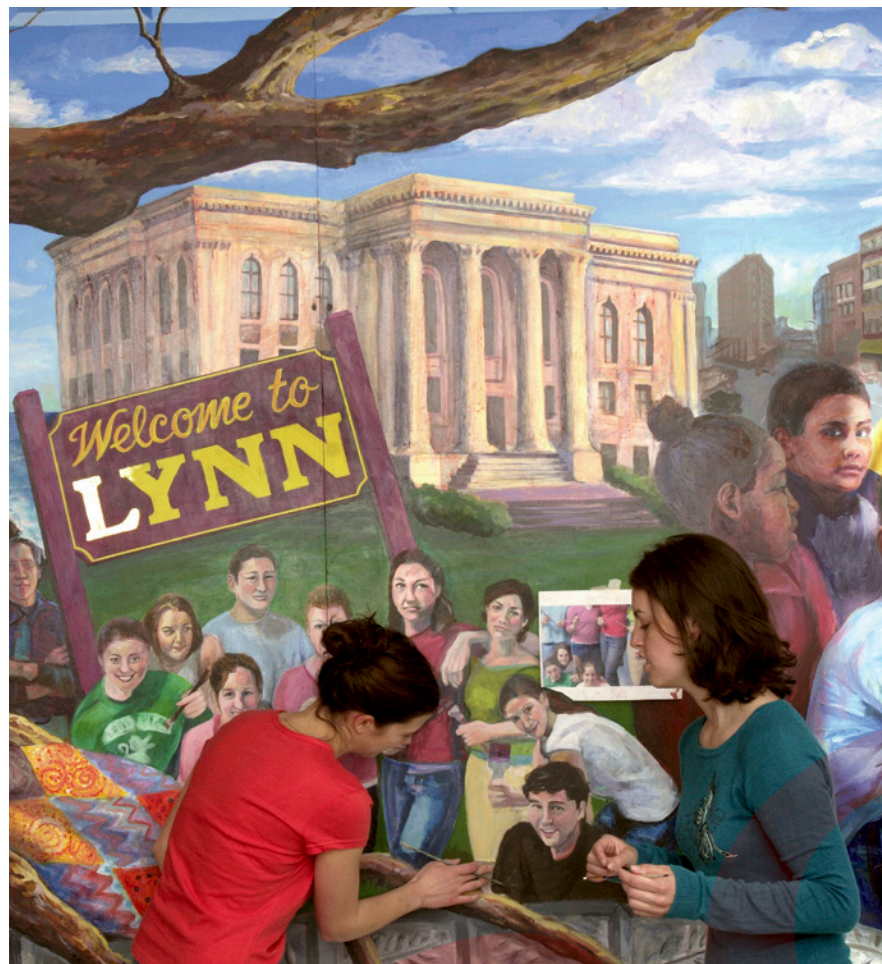
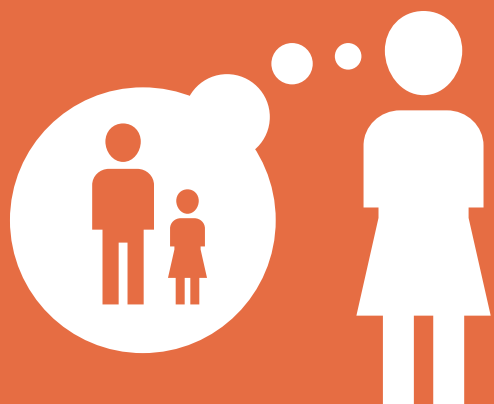
advice and extend an invitation to a home-cooked, authentic meal.

The most important vision, held by each SALTeam member and the Ford School staff, is to create a sense of community and belonging through shared knowledge and love. More than any grammatical or lexical excellence, we aim to create a common vocabulary of *shalom*: peace and understanding shared among people so different. In the process, we begin to wonder why we ever found it difficult to love one another in the first place.

Ashlie Busone '14

Gordon in Lynn Intern

REFLECTION



Critical Reflection

Academically Based Service-Learning

In his collection of essays, *Educating for Shalom*, Nicholas Wolterstorff reminds us that the goal of Christian higher education is to prepare students for life and work in the Kingdom of God, or for what the Old Testament authors knew as *shalom*, that place of full human flourishing, “when justice and peace embrace.”

In the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) at Gordon College, justice is the “ground floor” of *shalom*, but the concept goes further, incorporating “delight in our right relationships.” This means that students from across the academic curriculum have opportunity to pursue their passions in politics, in education, in the arts and sciences,

all in the pursuit of *shalom*, together with our neighbors on the North Shore. In both the classroom and in the community, the opportunity to serve provides another way to prepare students for their life work.

In these classroom and community contexts, students work with their faculty to bring together theory and practice. Reflecting critically on their experiences, they find their assumptions about justice and charity, about poverty and privilege challenged, in deep ways. Students deepen their analyses of public policy on education, and they explore opportunities to pursue truth and beauty in new contexts.

Reflection transforms service into learning, and learning into service.

SERVICE IS FOR LEARNING

In the very first semester of a Gordon education, students begin to connect their classroom discussions with service experiences. In The Great Conversation, Gordon’s first-year seminar, students join Serve and Learn Teams (SALTeams) that work with community partners throughout Lynn, every week, all semester long. Through class discussions, in written work, and even while driving back and forth into the city, first-year students wrestle through important ideas of community, vocation and justice.

Service becomes a unique dimension to learning, one that helps promote an authentic life of faith.

LEARNING IS FOR SERVICE

Working with the OCE, students in creative writing are invited into a story-telling project in the city of Lynn, highlighting the stories of ordinary people in the city—delighting in the story of the city and its residents. Psychology students examining the complexities of child development in diverse populations host 100 urban fourth graders—many new immigrants or refugees—to explore college and college life. Sociology students studying research design are

involved in collecting data for a green-space initiative in the city of Lynn, to bring recreational space to a local community. Gordon students in Introduction to Painting have created art that now hangs on the wall of a Lynn public school, encouraging young learners to appreciate beauty even as they acquire new knowledge.

As Gordon educates students for life and work in the Kingdom of God—to be faithful global citizens—service becomes much more than a pedagogical tool to deepen learning and promote active citizenship. Students, professors, community partners and children join together in seeking *shalom* in the city.

Through our service and through our learning, we participate in God’s work for justice and delight.



Jennifer Brink

Coordinator for Academic Programs,
Office of Community Engagement



Building on Strengths—Gordon in Lynn emphasizes the importance of building upon a community's strengths, harnessing those assets for the common good.



GORDON IN LYNN

Our learning takes on form and flesh within specific locations. Gordon in Lynn offers students diverse service-learning opportunities, deeply rooted in our North Shore community.

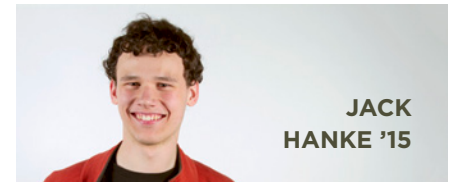
The City of Lynn is Gordon's nearest urban neighbor. Home to over 100,000 people—many of them immigrants and refugees from all over the world—it is a community of great diversity and beauty. Gordon has been privileged to cultivate a long, fruitful relationship with Lynn and its many outreach organizations through Gordon in Lynn.

Gordon students build strong leadership skills as they engage with the College's community partners in Lynn. Building on strengths already developed by the people of Lynn, Gordon in Lynn operates through the leadership of the city's community organizations, schools and social service agencies. Gordon students work closely with these local leaders, helping to realize the community's vision for the city through a broad array of service initiatives.

First-year Gordon students participate in weekly academically-based service-learning (ABSL) opportunities, primarily through service-learning classes built into Gordon's first-year Core seminar, The Great Conversation (TGC). Engagement continues in a growing number of upper-level Gordon classes in which faculty and students integrate service in Lynn with a variety of internships, research projects and experiential learning opportunities.

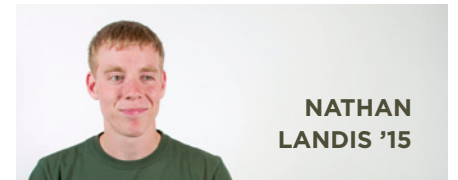
IN ITS WORK WITH GORDON STUDENTS AND THE LYNN COMMUNITY, GORDON IN LYNN IS COMMITTED TO:

- Helping students learn to respect and love people across racial, economic, religious and ethnic barriers in a spirit of mutuality and reciprocity.
- Helping students gain exposure to, and reflect upon, larger structural injustices within an urban context (both locally and globally).
- Helping students integrate their Christian faith into all lifestyle decisions—*whole-life stewardship*—and become more fully engaged in a lifelong vocation of *shalom*-building.



JACK
HANKE '15

“True love, real mentoring, inevitably involves sharing both in the triumphs of others and in their pain. Going forth from Lynn, I feel compelled to continue to reach out into the lives of those who need me, stretching beyond the shallows to invest meaning into ‘deep love.’”



NATHAN
LANDIS '15

“Service-learning has opened my eyes to the fact that, because of the immense blessing the Lord has poured out on me, I must find a way to direct that blessing to those around me.”

60%

of first-year students serve weekly in the City of Lynn for an entire semester

6,000

hours TGC students spend per year building relationships with and serving our Lynn neighbors

26

service-team bus trips into Lynn per week



Growing Together—College Bound is an enriching opportunity for Lynn children and their Gordon student mentors who share in the challenges and joys of learning together.

COLLEGE BOUND

Through Gordon's College Bound program, Lynn children receive the academic resources they need to make positive contributions to their community and to envision a college education in their future.

In partnership with the Lynn Housing Authority, Gordon students working with College Bound provide homework help and enrichment programming for children from Curwin Circle, a subsidized housing community in Lynn.

Four days per week, College Bound tutors work with children from kindergarten to second grade on-site at Curwin Circle. Children in grades 3 to 5 come to Gordon for tutoring, where they have the added benefit of experiencing a taste of college life.

During their daily trips to the College, the children may have the opportunity to enjoy Gordon's library and fitness center, to explore the woods and ponds around campus, or to interact with Gordon students in a science lab experiment or at a musical performance. These enrichment activities are meant to be fun and educational, while helping the children from Curwin Circle to begin to envision their own future at college.

These mentoring relationships with College Bound youth also challenge Gordon students to grow in leadership and service in their chosen fields. Education students, for example, are encouraged to apply skills they have learned through their coursework, such as classroom management techniques or reading and math instruction strategies. Social work majors learn from the example of Lynn Housing Authority staff. Students of all majors grow in their understanding of the challenges facing our country's education system, and how they can serve in the midst of them. Most importantly, by celebrating each child's accomplishments and wrestling together through challenges, Gordon students develop genuine, caring relationships with their young friends.



**STEVE
MULL '15**

"Before participating in College Bound, it was easy for me to forget our neighbor's immediate needs. Going into Lynn every week has challenged me to give up my own concerns by devoting myself and my time to the service of others."



**SARAH
HAGUE '14**

"Working at College Bound has been an incredible opportunity. It has really made me realize how much God has blessed me with, and has inspired me to work on making sure more children have the opportunities I did."

30

Gordon students work as weekly tutors in the College Bound program

Over 40

children and youth from Curwin Circle receive 6 hours per week of individual tutoring and mentoring from Gordon tutors

8 + 8

College Bound tutoring sessions per week in Curwin Circle + years College Bound has been serving in Lynn



Growing Communities—Gordon students working with The Food Project produce healthy food, and they also create leadership opportunities for youth from a diversity of backgrounds.



OUTREACH TEAMS

Through a wide array of student-led volunteer groups, Gordon students are building meaningful service relationships in Boston and throughout the North Shore.

Outreach Teams cover a wide range of community engagement opportunities at Gordon, often working through partnerships with established local service organizations. Gordon students are encouraged to serve on any number of existing Outreach Teams, or even start and lead a new service group through this program. Various groups focus on youth, arts, sustainable farming, the elderly, those with special needs, and the homeless.

STUDENT-LED OUTREACH TEAM OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

The Food Project—Working with staff and youth from this community partner organization, Gordon students plant, harvest and sell nutritious food from various North Shore gardens. The Food Project aims to grow a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system.

REACH Drama—REACH Drama Ministry develops skits based on Gordon students' personal experiences to share with local youth. Skits deal with real-life problems including peer pressure, abstinence, popularity, divorce and depression.

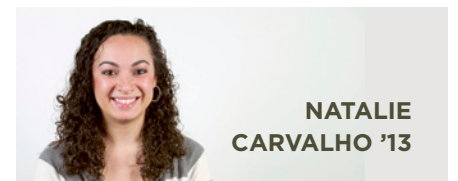
Homeless Ministry—Through weekly fellowship, Homeless Ministry team members cultivate relationships with people living on the streets of Boston. Students spend Saturday mornings on the Boston Common, sharing food and conversation with dozens of homeless adults.

Girls Inc.—Gordon students work with nationally recognized nonprofit Girls Inc., providing afterschool programming for Lynn-area girls. Student volunteers can join the outreach as tutors or college access mentors, or simply offer companionship and support for these neighborhood children and youth.



ASHLEY MILLER '13

“Serving at The Food Project reminds me that although the world is big, messy, chaotic and full of hurt, God’s Kingdom is sprouting up like little green shoots. Like the compost pile that transforms discarded waste into black gold, God is redeeming the ugliest parts of us and using them to give life to the world.”



NATALIE CARVALHO '13

“REACH Drama Ministry reminds me of what it means to be a servant leader, like Jesus calls us to be. . . When even one teenager looks up to you and trusts you enough to be vulnerable and ask some of life’s hardest questions, that’s when you know it’s all worth it.”

2,600

gallons of soup served over the last 20+ years by Gordon students building friendships with the homeless on the Boston Commons

2,000

service hours Outreach Team students spend per year engaging Gordon’s neighboring communities

RESPONSE



“Life is all about **responding to a call**. Like the Great Commission given to the eleven disciples by Jesus in Galilee, we are all called to act. Through my service here at Gordon, I was able to get a real grasp of what **servanthood in a Christian context** really means, and what humility truly looks like.”

SHELBY LINDSEY-VAUGHN '16,
MISSIONS



“My service has taught me how to love my neighbors. It has been a lens through which I have seen the **heart of injustices**, the **beauty of community development**, and the success that comes from **mutually beneficial partnerships**. It has grown me personally, relationally, and certainly spiritually. Looking back I realize that I was the true beneficiary.”

HALEY DROLET '15,
GORDON IN LYNN

“I have so **loved the opportunities** to meet and connect with all kinds of people, from the wonderful OCE staff and community partners, to student volunteers of all different years and majors! All of those relationships, paired with the different experiences serving in contexts I'm interested in, have been invaluable in **equipping and inspiring** me to continue putting my own feet down in the world.”

JORDAN CARR '13, OUTREACH TEAMS



“Service makes you see your life from a **new perspective**, appreciating things you seldom thought of before.”

TREVOR HINSHAW
'14, MISSIONS



“I'd describe my experience in Thailand as **'world-opening.'**”

RACHEL BELL '12,
STUDY ABROAD

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS IN THIS BOOK



Gordon in Lynn:
www.gordon.edu/lynn



Outreach Teams:
www.gordon.edu/outreachteams



College Bound:
www.gordon.edu/collegebound



Missions:
www.gordon.edu/chapel/missions

PROOF



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