



Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, 2002-2017

Volume 25
Issue 1 *Spring(no.1) 2016*

Article 4

Spring 2016

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Recommended Citation

Obermiller, Tim and Hill, Kim (2016) "Work that Matters," *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, 2002-2017*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/iwumag/vol25/iss1/4>

This is a PDF version of an article that originally appeared in the printed Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, a quarterly periodical published by Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact iwumag@iwu.edu.

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Work That Matters

Four young alumni share the highs and lows of pursuing careers dedicated to helping others.

Stories by TIM OBERMILLER & KIM HILL

As Illinois Wesleyan students, they became friends, sharing a passion for doing what was right and intending to do their part to make the world a better place. Now alumni, the four returned to campus recently to share how their ideals met with some harsh realities after graduation, but in the process led them to rewarding careers and unforgettable experiences.



Alumni “Work That Matters” speakers were, from left, Charlie Sell ’10, Emily Coles ’11, Monica Shah ’10 and Jessica Meyer ’11. As college students, the four friends shared a passion for social justice and global experiences.

Emily Coles '11, Jessica Meyer '11, Charlie Sell '10 and Monica Shah '10 reunited on a panel titled "Work That Matters," sponsored by the Hart Career Center. In

speaking to current students Emily Coles '11, Jessica Meyer '11, Charlie Sell '10 and Monica Shah '10 reunited on a panel titled "Work That Matters," sponsored by the Hart Career Center. In speaking to current students, all four credited their IWU experiences — classes, professors, internships, fellowships and studies abroad — for influencing their desire to make an impact in the nonprofit sector. That sector is the third largest and fastest growing sector in the U.S. With positions as diverse as international affairs and arts and culture, nonprofits offer something for nearly every major and interest. Though fewer than one in 10 graduating seniors nationwide say they plan to go to work for nonprofits, 65 percent of those graduates also said that making a positive impact was more important to them than making money.

The four alumni panelists share that desire to make a true difference in the lives of others. They have found nonprofits, though often far from perfect, to be the best place to fuel that passion. They also want people to know that they're not seeking praise or halos. They aren't looking to become martyrs or feel what they do makes them special. Like so many other graduates, they are just trying to follow their passions and see where it takes them. Here are their stories.

Monica Shah '10: Teaching peace

Charlie Sell '10: The complexities of doing good

Emily Coles '11: Beyond good intentions

Jessica Meyer '11: Searching for the right place