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Four Students Named Weir Fellows

March 19, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University's Action Research Center (ARC), now in its tenth year, has announced the 2013 Weir Fellows. The recipients of the grant are Matt LaLonde, Annette Rauch, Dave McGrath and Meagan DeSalvo. ARC awards the \$1500 fellowships to students who have successfully implemented a project that has the potential to forge and sustain collaborative efforts in the community.

Elizabeth Weir, a 1950 Illinois Wesleyan graduate with a degree in sociology, who has been active in community service since her days at Illinois Wesleyan, founded the Weir Fellowship, which the students can use the award as income or to assist in project development.

LaLonde, a junior accounting major from Downers Grove, Ill., is a former IWU ARC intern, who received the award for his work on the Bloomington Tool Library. The Tool Library is a tool renting service that makes maintenances affordable. When it came to LaLonde's attention that many libraries of such kind are being set up across the country he thought the Bloomington-Normal community should have one of its own. The library was opened to the public this year on Jan. 12. It currently has an inventory of 150 tools and all of the Weir funding will be used to purchase more tools according to LaLonde.

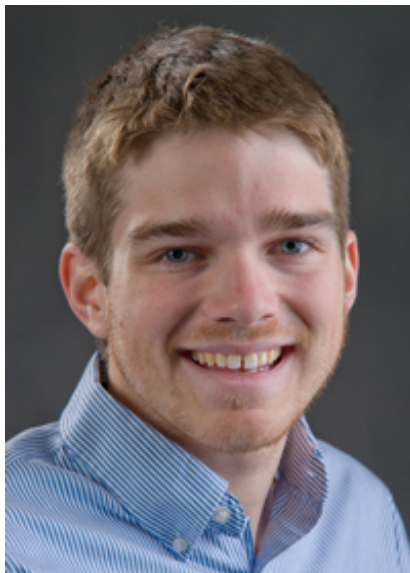
Apart from being actively involved with the ARC, LaLonde also completed an internship in Paris this winter. He was chosen to be one of the 51 interns in KPMG LLP's Chicago office. LaLonde was one of the only two students selected for the Global Internship Program. According to LaLonde his experience with the ARC helped him a lot, "I believe that my participation in ARC was a key factor



Meagan DeSalvo



Matt LaLonde



Dave McGrath



Annette Rauch

in my selection for the program. Illinois Wesleyan is a well respected university, and my academic standing was a key factor to my being chosen, but I believe that what set my resume apart from others was my community involvement, which is directly linked to my participation in the Community Partnership Program through the Action Research Center.”

Rauch, McGrath and DeSalvo created and are planning “The Westside 5K Run and Walk.”

“We wanted to promote wellness in West Bloomington, especially through exercise,” said Rauch, a sophomore Hispanic studies and sociology major from Shoreview, Minn. “The three of us who received the grant are all cross country runners so we thought organizing a 5K would be a good way to use the our skills to help the community of West Bloomington.”

The race will be held on Sunday, April 7, at 9 a.m. and will start from the Boys and Girls Club (615 Illinois St., Bloomington). Sophomore, risk management major McGrath a resident of Wheaton, Ill., said “With this opportunity, we are striving for the vision of bridging not only the communities of IWU and the city of Bloomington, but also the different communities that are present even throughout Bloomington.”

The proceeds from the event will support various Bloomington non-profit organizations that are located on the west side of the town such as Western Avenue Community Center, Milestones Early Learning Center, Habitat Restore, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, West Bloomington Revitalization Project and Mid Central Community Action.

“This is a huge honor to receive and I am grateful,” said DeSalvo, a sophomore elementary education major and a resident of Darien, Ill. “The Fellowship allows for us to pursue our goal of putting on a top quality event and to donate the proceeds to local organizations.”

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