



**Sixth Annual NEW Leadership™ Wisconsin
Mount Mary College – Milwaukee, WI
May 31 – June 5, 2011**

Participant Biographies

**Heather Marie Breunig
University of Wisconsin – Baraboo – Sauk County**

Heather Breunig is a freshman at UW - Baraboo - Sauk County. She has returned to college after 20 years out of school. With returning to school, she has a tendency to blend her life skills as well as the professional skills she has acquired along her journey, with a focus on true balance. Heather is a proud mother of two wonderful children. Growing up, Heather had two distinct dreams; one, to be a mother and the other to obtain a Law degree. With the support of her family and guidance from UW Baraboo - Sauk County, she is taking the necessary steps to law school. Heather finds great value in life and her community. Her belief is that you must give to receive. She currently volunteers (tutors) at the local middle school, at UW Hospital, and at UW Children's Hospital. Working with her community and helping children truly bring her great joy. She believes that making a difference and giving is what puts life in perspective. Heather finds worth in small things, and feels fulfillment in those great moments. She would like to walk the same path as many other great women, and lead by example, with her family and her children beside her.

**Jessica Cox
Mount Mary College**

Jessica Cox was born in Chicago, Illinois, but has lived in Milwaukee, WI for 11 years. She is a sophomore at Mount Mary College. She hopes to become an Occupational Therapist and work with the elderly. Her goal is to help them to live more active, productive and independent lives. She is very interested in education because she feels that education is the key to success. Jessica is the first of her family to attend college but she will not be the last. She has nine brothers and sisters, and a large family to which she is an example. She wants to show them that anything can be accomplished. She has devoted 421 hours towards serving the elderly at St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus. This is one special accomplishment of which she is very proud. During her hours of service learning, she learned about the injustices the elderly face, which include ageism and neglect. Her learning experience has allowed her to raise awareness of these

issues. Jessica wants to be able to use her voice, not only for herself but for the elderly population as well. Jessica hopes to gain more leadership and advocacy skills through the Women's Leadership Institute.

Tracy L. Diaz

University of Wisconsin – Marinette

Tracy Diaz is a freshman at UW – Marinette. She plans to graduate in 2013 with her Associate's degree in Arts and Science with an emphasis on Pre-Nursing and a Women's Studies certificate. She is currently a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) on campus, with hopes of joining the Student Senate during her time at UW – Marinette. In her small community, Tracy is a cheerleading coach for the N.E.W Youth cheerleading team and a member of the Machickanee Players which is the local theater group in Oconto, WI. Between her work with her team, the theater and raising her two teenage children, Tracy keeps herself very busy and looks forward to expanding her horizons. In the future she plans to step even further out of her small town.

Danielle Dicientio

University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

Danielle Dicientio is a junior at UW – Whitewater majoring in Social Work with a minor in Women's Studies. She will graduate in spring 2012. She has participated in Student Social Work organization events and volunteered at the 5th Annual LGBTQ Conference at Whitewater this past spring. Public policy is important to her because each policy is enforced by legislators and has a large impact on clients that she will work with. In 2012, Danielle would like to start an internship at the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. The welfare of children is especially important to her because she feels that children's voices are not always heard. Danielle wants to use her voice and life experiences to empower parents to make positive changes within their lives, which in turn will also help their children. She also wants to use her voice to create new public policy and change the implementation of current policies. Throughout her life, she has realized that using her voice is sometimes the only way to empower someone to change the unjust policies and thoughts created by society. Despite her Cerebral Palsy, she has been able to complete three years of college and change lives along the way.

Colleen M. Easton

Mount Mary College

Colleen completed her Associate's degree in Accounting at Waukesha County Technical College in Spring 2010. Last fall she enrolled full-time at Mount Mary College. She will be working on completing the coursework necessary to obtain a B.S. in Accounting. She is a single mother of two children. Her daughter, Kathleen, is a sophomore at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, and her son, David, is a junior at Brown Deer High School. Colleen holds a part-time care giving position. She also volunteers for Feeding America. Her favorite hobby is gardening because she enjoys planting and caring for the flowers around her condominium home in Brown Deer.

Mariana Lima Eisenberg
Mount Mary College

Mariana Eisenberg is a sophomore at Mount Mary College where she studies Dietetics. She has volunteered for years in vulnerable communities in her home country of Brazil. She is engaged in multiple campus activities such as International Club, Students Building Bridges and the Mount Mary Honors program. As a future American citizen, Mariana feels that it is very important to be aware of and involved in the political sector. By being active, she hopes to make positive changes in social issues in this culture.

Natalie Finkley
Mount Mary College

Natalie Finkley attends Mount Mary College. She is finishing her education in Nursing, Behavioral Science/Psychology and Spanish, with a certificate in Peacebuilding. She enjoys being involved in the Mount Mary community. On campus, she is involved in the BES club, she holds a student worker position with the Grounds Department, she serves as an English tutor for Empowering Latino Parents, she is in the Honors program and she is a leader in Common Ground where she is a CORE member. She has recently been offered and holds several positions on campus including that of a SOAR leader, a BES Club leadership role and an internship with the Women's Leadership Institute. She is motivated to build and work on new relationships and opportunities. Helping people in need, political issues and making a change by stepping out of the path of least resistance are all important to her. She has a passion for Anthropology and respects culture. For seven years she worked as a Nursing Assistant. Natalie believes in being ethical and feels it is a personal responsibility to prioritize and meet her goals and tasks. In her spare time, Natalie loves to be with her two children and husband. She is an active Military wife and a mother who is involved in her children's education, lives and hobbies.

Rachel Harrison
Carthage College

Rachel Harrison is a student at Carthage College in her hometown of Kenosha, WI. She will graduate in spring 2012 with a B.A. in Criminal Justice with an emphasis in pre-law, and minors in Political Science, Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies. Rachel is currently the President of Phi Alpha Delta, the academic pre-law fraternity at Carthage College. She is also a member of GEAR at Carthage. GEAR stands for Gender, Equality, Alliance, and Realized. It is an organization aimed at promoting equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender. Rachel has also been on the Mock Trial team for the past two years and was awarded a trip to the National Mock Trial Tournament last year. Currently, Rachel works for three law firms in Racine, WI, and she also interns with Chief Judge Mary Wagner at the Kenosha County Court House. This summer, Rachel will also clerk for Michael Phegley, the Municipal Court Judge for Mt. Pleasant, WI. Rachel will be applying to law schools this fall to further her education after graduating from Carthage College.

Cheryl Honeycutt-Stroud
Mount Mary College

Cheryl Honeycutt-Stroud is a Mount Mary College student in the College in the Community program. She will complete the program in May 2012. Her ultimate goal is to receive her Bachelor's degree in Nursing. She is currently a Registered Nurse by profession. She is a Nurse Supervisor at Lutheran Home and Harwood Place. She volunteers with Red Cross and Feeding the Children. Cheryl loves to travel all over the United States, take walks, watch movies, play board games, bowl, and browse the internet.

Carissa Ihm
Mount Mary College

Carissa Ihm is a sophomore at Mount Mary College. She is double majoring in Secondary Education and Broad Field English. Carissa has a passion for teaching and helping where she is able, especially for those who normally can't receive help due to some injustice. She feels it is nice to be able to give something back, especially when she has been so blessed with love and support from friends and family. This is partly the reason why she chose to enroll at Mount Mary College. The College's mission is centered on leadership and social justice. Carissa is a Caroline Scholar (requiring 350 hours of service learning for a social justice issue per year) at Mount Mary and this has helped push her in the right direction in terms of leadership and taking initiative. She tries her best in her classes and strives for a high academic standing.

Lakesha L. Jones
Mount Mary College

Lakesha Jones is 29 years old. She has been married for almost nine years and has two beautiful little boys. She works full-time at St. Joseph Hospital as a HUC/PCA and she is a full-time student at Mount Mary College. She plans to graduate in May 2012 with her Bachelor's degree in Justice, a minor in Political Science and a Peacebuilding certificate. At Mount Mary College, she is involved in Justice on The Rise, Student Parents Alliance, Peacebuilding, Campus Ministry Spiritual Connections and Flight Campus Ministry. In her spare time she is involved in church functions and she volunteers at Washington High School. For fun, Lakesha loves to spend time with her family, attend church, volunteer and she enjoys cooking. Currently, she is dedicated to preparing herself by getting an education so she can better help her family and community.

Katrina Leonard
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

Katrina Leonard is a sophomore at UW – Eau Claire where she is a Women's Studies major and a Sociology minor. She is involved in several groups on campus, including UWEC College Democrats, UWEC Men Opposing Sexual Assault and UWEC College Feminists. She is also co-chair of UWEC Advocates 4 Choice and President of UWEC College Free Thought Society. Katrina is a strong supporter of women's rights and issues, particularly reproductive rights. She hopes to inspire other women to fight for their natural, human rights.

Lessa Marty
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

Lessa Marty is a senior at UW – Whitewater where she is majoring in Women's Studies. She is involved with groups such as PEACE, PSSO, Fair Wisconsin and others. Lessa feels strongly about promoting and educating her fellow students about transgender issues and peoples' experiences. She understands, being trans herself, that these issues often go ignored. She hopes to one day be a college professor.

Tilene McGee
Milwaukee Area Technical College

Tilene McGee is a student at Milwaukee Area Technical College, where she is majoring in Business Management. She plans to graduate with an Associate's degree in Business Management in May 2011. She hopes to receive her Bachelor's degree by 2013. Tilene enjoys and values helping others. She values the ability to pass on information she feels is accurate and that can help another. She feels good to know someone else is gaining knowledge.

Abbehi Medrano
Mount Mary College

Abbehi Medrano is currently attending Mount Mary College and is double majoring in Spanish and Justice. She strives to be involved in the community. She enjoys educating people who may not have access to resources, of the opportunities available to enhance their knowledge of social issues. She believes that your vote plus your voice equals your victory, and that a person needs to speak up in order to see change in something.

Linda Ann Moreno
Mount Mary College

Linda Ann Moreno is a non-traditional student at Mount Mary College. When making the decision to return to school, she felt very scared and intimidated by the barriers life can hold. She had to take into consideration these barriers, such as how her husband would handle things, transportation, and the cost of books and tutors. Linda was motivated but needed the help of her family. Her mother and grandfather raised her to the best of their ability. They did not always understand the full value of an education but they often told her to stay in school. They instilled their Christian faith into her and taught her the value of family, communities and job integrity, which she values. In 2008, she decided to attend Mount Mary College. She is majoring in Speech Pathology/Audiology with a minor in Communications. Her anticipated graduation date is 2015. In her free time she is interested in the Gospel Choir, Physics, enjoys family gatherings and taking day trips with her husband.

Camille B. Ross
Mount Mary College

Camille Ross is a second year student at Mount Mary College where she is a Justice major and plans to earn a Peacebuilding certificate. She initially enrolled at Mount Mary for the Fashion Merchandising program. After taking the Leadership for Social Justice Seminar course, she knew her calling was advocating for social change. She is very passionate about volunteer work and being a role model for youth. She stresses the importance of integrity and academic success. Her biggest accomplishment yet has been receiving an award from the Mount Mary English department for her research paper, "SIDS: Milwaukee's Sudden Epidemic."

Kathryn (Katka) Showers-Curtis
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

Katka Showers-Curtis is a senior at UW – Whitewater. She currently works as a Leadership Assistant in the P.B. Poorman Pride Resource Center and is a Diversity Advocate for Residence Life. Katka has a double major in Women's Studies and Central and Eastern European Studies and a double minor in Linguistics and Writing. Her work on campus has come mostly through Impact, the LGBTQQIAA student organization at UW – Whitewater, and in her position with Peace, Education, and Activism through Creative Engagement (P.E.A.C.E.). She has also been involved with the Disability Advocacy and Awareness Coalition, Students Allied for a Greener Earth, Students for a Fair Wisconsin, the UW – Whitewater Karate Club, and the Sexual Assault Prevention Advisory Committee. She is an avid reader, writer, music-maker and activist. One of her life-long hobbies has been fifeing and bugling in the Janesville Fife and Drum Corps, while teaching others parts of American history. Katka received the first UW – Whitewater "Genderqueer People in Leadership" award this year.

Courtney P. Thompson
University of Wisconsin – Whitewater

Courtney Thompson is a senior, double majoring in Women's Studies and Biology at UW – Whitewater. She is involved with two groups on campus, the McNair Scholars Program and the Dean's Advisory Council. In addition, she tutors Chemistry and Biology on campus. Through the McNair Scholars Program, Courtney has been conducting research focused on empowering high school biology student learning with bioinformatics skills. She has presented her research at Undergraduate Research Day at UW – Whitewater, the McNair Symposium at UW – Milwaukee, NCUR at the University of Montana and the National McNair Conference in Delavan, Wisconsin. This past summer she was granted the opportunity to conduct research with Dr. Alleyne Green at UIC, where her research focused on the relationship between eating disorders and risky sexual behaviors among adolescent females with a history of physical and sexual violence. After graduation in May 2012, Courtney intends to pursue graduate school, focusing on HIV prevention methods for black females who are considered "high-risk." Her participation in undergraduate research, student led organizations, and tutoring has enriched her life deeply, and she hopes to do the same for others.

Andrea Walker-Cousins
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point

Andrea Walker-Cousins is a sophomore at UW – Stevens Point. Her major is Political Science/pre-law and in the future her hope is to add Spanish as a major and Philosophy as a minor. She anticipates graduating in May 2014. Her future goals are to be a lawyer and judge, with high hopes to eventually reach the Supreme Court. She has high academic goals to receive above a 3.7 G.P.A. and high hopes to then be able to receive an invitation to join Phi Eta Sigma, which honors high academic achievement for first year college students. Andrea is a member of the UW – Stevens Point Black Student Union and Phi Omega, a local sorority. When she has down time, Andrea loves to listen to music, shop, and hang out with friends. Her biggest accomplishment currently, is attending college and remaining focused on her future goals.

Ny-Eida Wilson
Carthage College

Ny-Eida Wilson is currently attending Carthage College. She anticipates graduating in 2012. She is majoring in Political Science with a minor in Criminal Justice. She is a member of the Carthage College track team as well as the Black Student Union, NAACP and United Women of Color. Ny-Eida also enjoys singing with the gospel choir at Carthage College.