

Many Voices

Spring 2020

University of St. Thomas

LUANN DUMMER CENTER FOR WOMEN COVID-19 EDITION



Our spring programming began with our Women's History Month Speaker, **Tarana Burke**, Founder of the 'Me Too' Movement. More than 500 students, staff, faculty, and community members filled the OEC Auditorium. Alongside Dr. Buffy Smith, who moderated discussion, Tarana Burke captivated the audience, carefully holding and honoring experiences spoken and unspoken with her frankness, humor, and expertise. We watched and listened as the two of them shared personal stories,

discussed the social and cultural contexts of sexual violence, and responded to questions with equal parts empathy and practical advice. The impact of both Burke's lecture, as well as the conversation between these two remarkable women, rippled throughout campus for weeks afterward.

Our spring programming also ended with **Tarana Burke**—at least, our regular, in-person programming. Within a week of her visit, campus shut down. St. Thomas, along with hundreds of colleges across the country, sent its students, staff, and faculty home due to the overwhelming and rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus. LDCW programs moved online, and the entire world shifted to a new paradigm; to this day, it remains unclear how we will move forward. We are grateful to St. Thomas students, whose keen awareness and commitment to social justice not only informed but led the online programming included in this issue. We are also grateful to Tarana Burke, whose grace and energy infused the Women's Center with the optimism and sustenance we needed for the challenges ahead.

Cadenza and Summit Singers open for Tarana Burke with "I Believe You" by FLETCHER. They used their rendition to create a powerful [music video](#) for Sexual Assault Awareness month.



A magazine of the University of St. Thomas Luann Dummer Center for Women, the University Advocates for Women and Equity, and the WGSS Program

CONTINUED...

Three days before this issue was to be released, the Twin Cities community mourned the violent death of George Floyd.

The protests across the community, as well as the country and world, have highlighted the urgency of racial justice and the need for thorough examinations of our systems and policies, as well as ourselves.



The LDCW's theme this past year has been "Women & Racial Justice," and while the book discussions, Feminist Fridays, and other programs have addressed this theme, it all feels, well, simply inadequate. We believe that "Women & Racial Justice" is not a topic for a single year; this work must be ongoing, vocal, and unwavering.

We are committed to standing in solidarity with the Black community and supporting this university's BIPOC students, staff, faculty, and community members.

Let us be kind, let us be persistent, and let us demand what is right.
[#BlackLivesMatter](#) [#SayHerName](#)

Christine Balsley
Editor | Designer, Many Voices
Center Coordinator

Emily James
Editor, Many Voices
LDCW Director

FEMINIST FRIDAY GOES VIRTUAL

TELLING YOUR STORY STARTS WITH YOU

WITH DYLAN BARRETT
May 1



Dylan Barrett
Communications and Journalism
Class of 2020



As our global community finds itself increasingly dependent on the digital world, communicating effectively is more important than ever.

In this [virtual workshop](#), LDCW 2019-2020 Undergraduate Fellowship Recipient, **Dylan Barrett**, shared his expertise in media communications and offered helpful tips on utilizing the **tools you already have at your fingertips** to powerfully tell your story on a digital platform.



This spring, Violence Prevention and Awareness and the LDCW partnered in "Let's Talk Prevention! Community Conversations Taking Action," a monthly conversation exploring urgent and timely topics affecting our culture today.

WINNERS OF THE 2020 PHOTO CONTEST: "WOMEN & RACIAL JUSTICE"

Accompanying the Women's History Month Lecture, the LDCW and create[space] sponsored its third annual photo contest. Based on the theme "Women & Racial Justice," multiple talented participants submitted an impressive variety of pieces.

These are the winners:

1st Place:

"Warrior of the First Cactus Flower"

by Bizzy Stephenson



Kalpulli Yaocenxtli shares dance, drum, and song in protest of US southern border concentration camps and family separation policy.

2nd Place: "Skin Deep" series by Izabella Witucki



I wanted to show that what you see on the surface level is NEVER the full story. Everyone, especially women of different cultures and backgrounds, receives judgment and push back because of their looks. I wanted to empower participants by showing that we're all puzzles, each piece representing a large part of what makes us women and that's something we should be proud of! I didn't expect to come out of this experience changed, but the stories and strength of these women gave me a new perspective on what it means to be vulnerable and to love your raw self. I hope to allow other women to find strength and beauty in themselves through these photographs.

3rd Place: "Currency, It Is 2020" by Nadya Anderson



Currently it is 2020, one hundred years since the 19th Amendment was ratified, granting women's suffrage. Valiant advocates reaped in their victory though it would not be until 1964 when discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and education would be banned at the polls. Today still, though literacy tests and poll taxes are banned, institutional and constitutional measures are alive in our prison systems to prevent voices from inmates, statistically and overwhelmingly Black and Hispanic. The right to vote is a right to democracy and a right to identity. The United States' 2020 will see voters change the face of election and change the face of the future, thus these disproportioned numbers of disenfranchisement count. Above and beyond, when will we not have Andrew Jackson prevailing in our wallets?

REPORT ON THE UAWWE

(University Advocates for Women and Equity)



Karin Brown, Chair
Instructional Designer,
St. Thomas E-Learning and Research
(STELAR) Center

Last semester, the UAWWE continued work on several initiatives while considering additional issues. First, members of the UAWWE and staff at the LDCW spent some time sorting through old files to learn more about the history of the UAWWE. Once the sorting was done, Ann Kenne of Special Collections archived the historical materials. Anyone interested in reviewing these records can visit stthomas.libraryhost.com and search for "UAWWE" to see all documents currently in the archive.

The council continues to provide complimentary menstrual products in select restrooms across campus. Thanks to the generous donations provided by the community during last year's menstrual products drive, we can continue providing this critical service. If you would like to donate menstrual products, please email uawe@stthomas.edu. You can visit our [website](#) for an up-to-date **list of locations where menstrual products are available.**

Last year, a sub-committee of council members met with representatives from the Office of Human Resources and the Benefits Office to discuss **the clarification of parental leave policies.** Since then, faculty have been instructed by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to request parental leave directly from the Benefits Office rather than requesting parental leave from their chair, a process that will provide more accurate information. In addition, a physical informational packet on faculty parental leave options is now available upon request in the Benefits Office and information for both faculty and staff on requesting a leave of absence is available on the university's internal intranet. Council members continue to advocate for **parking accommodations for those in the later weeks of pregnancy.**

The council continues to advocate for **increased access to lactation spaces** across campus, particularly in new construction, including the forthcoming STEAM Complex on south campus. An additional lactation space is now available in the new Center for Wellbeing on the St. Paul campus. An up-to-date list of lactation spaces can be found on our [website](#).

It was recently brought to the council's attention that a group of undergraduate students on campus is working to make free condoms available to all undergraduates. The council plans to meet with these students to learn how we can support them in this endeavor.

Last Fall, the UAWWE held its annual Fall Reception. This event provided an oppor-

tunity to welcome new women faculty and staff to the university and to hear from St. Thomas community members how the council can create a more welcoming atmosphere for women.

Traditionally, the council hosts an annual Spring Reception to recognize and congratulate St. Thomas community members for the work they've done to advance the mission of the UAWWE. However, given the current environment with COVID-19, the council decided to cancel this year's reception.

We congratulate Maddie Peters who received the Sapientia Award for Scholarly or Creative Work Focused on Women (co-sponsored with the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department and the Luann Dummer Center for Women). This award is given to a member of the St. Thomas community for an outstanding piece of work that has as its subject and/or focus an individual woman, a group of women, or a concern related to women, and that seeks to empower women.

On June 12, 2020, the Trump administration moved to revoke healthcare protections for transgender individuals. In response, UAWWE council member Monique Dargis wrote a letter to President Sullivan, AVP of Inclusive Excellence Kha Yang, and AVP of Human Resources Michelle Thom, asking them to release **a public statement affirming transgender and non-binary identities and committing to continued healthcare coverage for transgender and non-binary community members.** In response, President Sullivan agreed to have a meeting with Monique. In addition, on June 26, 2020, Kha Yang sent an email to the university which stated that "St. Thomas respects the dignity of transgender and gender non-conforming persons as all members bring a rich

perspective and value to the greater mosaic of the St. Thomas community." The council looks forward to future opportunities to work towards greater equity for all LGBTQ+ community members.

If you have general questions about the council or have issues you would like to see the council address, please contact the council chair, Karin Brown, at uawe@stthomas.edu.

UAWWE Council

Shanna Ames, University Development and Alumni Relations
Dr. Sarah Anderson, Mathematics
Nichole Boehmke, Facilities Management
Karin Brown (Chair), STELAR
Shamika Brown (Treasurer), College of Arts & Sciences
Monique Dargis, Marketing, Insights, and Communications
Hannah Dasyam, Undergraduate Student Representative, Civil Engineering
Emilie Dozer, Undergraduate Student Representative, Sociology & Justice and Peace Studies
Christina Holmgren, Graduate School of Professional Psychology
Grace Kubista, Undergraduate Student Representative, Engineering
Dr. Patricia Maddox, Sociology & Criminal Justice
Dr. Jeni McDermott, Geology Department; Civil Engineering; Environmental Science Program
Talia R. Nadir, Research & Instruction Librarian/Information Literacy Specialist
Katelyn Padden, Undergraduate Student Representative, Political Science & Public Health
Sadie Pedersen, Undergraduate Student Representative, Leadership and Management
Amber Roy, Department of Health and Exercise Science
Dr. Sarah Schmalenberger, Department of Music
Dr. Aura Wharton-Beck, Educational Leadership
Julia Wickham, Undergraduate Student Representative, Political Science & History
Jena Zangs, Associate Director of Constituent Intelligence, UDAR
Dr. Emily James (Ex-Officio), Director of Luann Dummer Center for Women

NEWS FROM WOMEN, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES



Dr. Paola Ehrmantraut
Chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Modern & Classical Languages

Stay home, stay safe, stay feminist!

I had planned to share with you very exciting news: our partnership with the Women's Environmental Institute (WEI), a nonprofit organization run by women that focuses on environmental issues from a feminist perspective. Of course, our plans of visiting their organic farm in North Branch, MN and attending an EcoPoetics workshop with our WGSS students had to be postponed indefinitely. While we were planning this event with Dr. Liz Wilkinson, we could have never imagined we would be teaching via Zoom, worrying about our students, friends and family close and far. This pandemic is truly unprecedented.

Now I am a third-grade TA to my daughter, I make my own bread, and I can only see my students online. Conferences have been canceled, trips postponed, even commencement shifted online. We're all adapting to this new normal, in which a constant stream of ominous numbers, dates and predictions are part of the landscape. **In the middle of this global state of crisis, I have been touched by the amazing and countless examples of solidarity and heroic care**

displayed by so many all over the world. Unfortunately, in the US and in our own community we have also seen reports of people struggling with **food insecurity and the compounding effect of poverty on the pandemic's impact.** When events such as this pandemic are so vast in their desolation, it is easy to think that gender issues are frivolous or marginal to the catastrophic situation so many Americans are facing today.

However, **gender issues have a lot to do with the way our communities are experiencing the pandemic.** Women, and especially households that are headed by single women, face poverty disproportionately and are ill-equipped to weather a looming economic depression. Transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people also experience high rates of poverty, joblessness, and homelessness, which drive the risk for food insecurity. Access to healthcare varies according to socioeconomic status, and housing situations will also predict health outcomes in the weeks and months to come. As a feminist, I look at what is happening around us and I see how much work there is to be done, now and in the future.

This will also pass, and when we return to our campus and surround ourselves with our friends and family, I hope, I really do, that we will be strong enough to keep our focus on the inequality issues that the pandemic is highlighting.

That should be our promise.

GREETINGS FROM QSA!

The QSA community was hit hard by the sudden evacuation of campus. Some students had to go home to unaffirming families, and we all lost the valuable impact that being able to gather physically has. We were unable to continue any additional programming we had planned, however we still held Zoom club meetings every week. SDIS planned and hosted a week of events for the Day of Silence, which included conversations about how the Day of Silence started, what it means to the LGBTQ+ community, and led an oath of silence on the day of.

If you are interested in joining QSA, please contact us to be added to the email list at qsa@stthomas.edu.



We look forward to building more community and expanding online programming next semester, but until then, we will continue to check in and take care of each other from a distance.



Dr. Buffy Smith deftly, and delightfully, leads discussion with Tarana Burke for Women's History Month.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & AWARENESS ADAPTING TO VIRTUAL OFFERINGS



Hello from my home office! You might notice two computers, I use one primarily for zoom meetings and one for other work. I have my zoom meeting computer lifted up to meet eye level by my Scattergories box, a game I've found fun to play virtually. And if you look very closely, you'll notice my "dressed for work" top and casual pants- a look a lot of us find ourselves sporting these days.

VPA's Instagram story and OneStThomas. Instead of a physical display in the library, our SAAM book display was presented virtually on OneStThomas .

We found new ways to recognize Denim Day 2020. Departments submitted screenshots of their staff wearing denim during a zoom meeting, students submitted photos of themselves at home, with family members honoring the day. Instead of Denim Day buttons, we encouraged students, staff, and faculty to change their Zoom profile picture to a Denim Day image.

The day culminated in the premiere of the music video, "I Believe You," produced by Cadenza, Summit Singers and the St. Thomas Film Society. Led by St. Thomas student, Danielle Wong, the group first performed the song to open for the LDCW Women's History Month speaker, Tarana Burke.

Emily Erickson
Sexual Misconduct Prevention Program Director

April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). Every year Violence Prevention & Awareness collaborates with partners across campus to offer a variety of programming. This year SAAM was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently moved to online learning at the University of St. Thomas. While some events didn't lend themselves well to a virtual format, many opportunities originally planned in-person shifted online. "What Were You Wearing?" an instillation of outfits re-created from St. Thomas community members' experiences of sexual violence, was displayed on



VIOLENCE PREVENTION & AWARENESS ADAPTING TO VIRTUAL OFFERINGS

While the original vision for the video included several in-person filming sessions, the group quickly adapted to feature singers in their homes and asked for submissions from the St. Thomas community with messages of support for victim/survivors of sexual violence. The result is a powerful, moving, and beautifully produced video that is reflective of this unique time in history.



One of the unseen benefits of offering events virtually is that it made them more accessible to folks who previously may not have engaged in in-person offerings. Alumni could join zoom sessions, staff who might not have had the time to walk across campus for an in-person event could pop in to a virtual gathering, and people could engage in emotional and powerful content, like the "What Were You Wearing" display in the comfort of their own homes.

As of November 2019, Violence Prevention and Awareness is housed within the Center for Well-Being, along with Health Promotion, Counseling and Psychological Services and Health Services. Programs and services in these partner areas continue virtually as well. Counseling and Psychological Services continue to offer individual counseling via HIPAA compliant tele-health appointments; Health Services offers tele-health appointments and in-person appointments; Health Promotion continues to offer opportunities to students to help them cope with the stress of these uncertain times.

The way both students and staff quickly adapted to the challenges of the pandemic demonstrates the creativity, care, and resilience of our community.

LDCW STUDENT PROJECTS

Student workers at the Women's Center are encouraged to design and implement a project of their choice each semester. This spring, students adjusted to the need for online programming in creative and resourceful ways:



Savannah Ellison
Class of 2022
Economics Major; American Culture & Difference and Spanish Minors



My student worker project for this semester was a social media campaign focused on community. At a time where we had to be physically separated, I wanted an easy way to remain in conversation with our community. I asked our followers to share how they were supporting their community during this time. This looked different for different people. Some shared their support for local businesses and performers, while others shared about checking in on their friends and volunteering. Everyone who responded was entered to win a prize pack from a local, woman-owned business or artist. Although I miss the excitement of in-person events, I feel like this was a fun way to check-in with our community while encouraging interactions with broader communities as well.



Stickers by RarePress

Book from Moon Palace Books



LDCW STUDENT PROJECTS

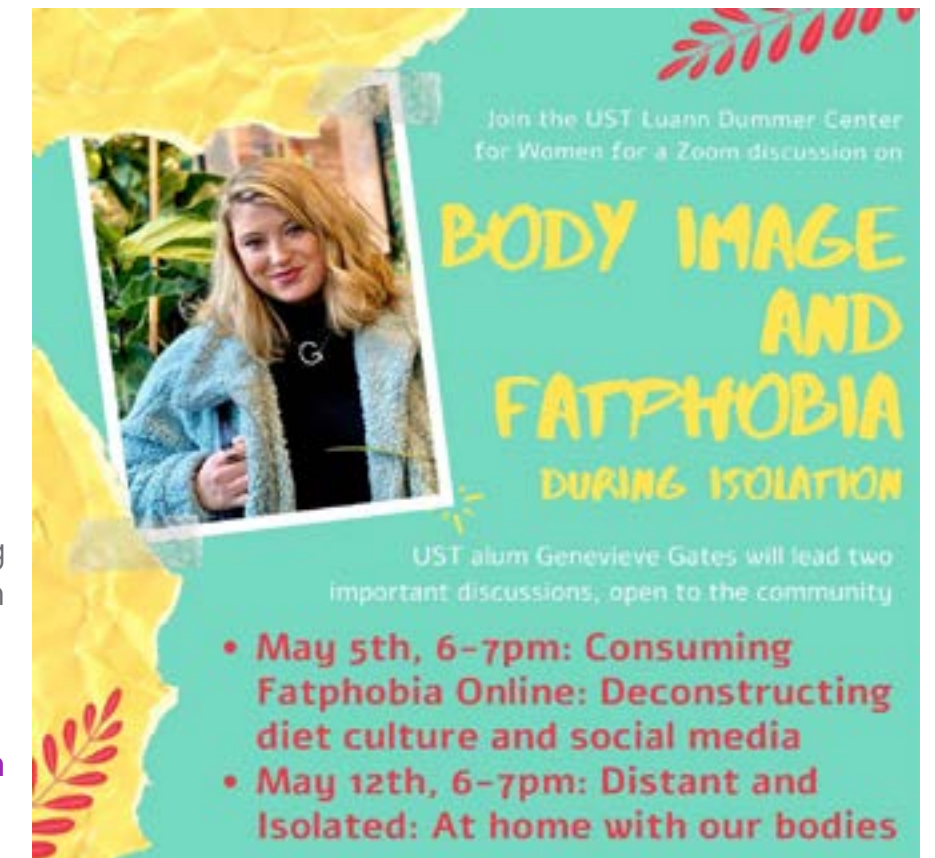
BODY IMAGE AND FATPHOBIA DURING ISOLATION



Bizzy Stephenson
Class of 2020
Justice and Peace Studies; English; American Culture and Difference

These two conversations felt like the collective release of a breath that had been held in too long. So often, weight and size are always on our mind, and yet we rarely talk about these issues. Genevieve and I found it important to take this time (while we are all spending more time alone, more time on screens, more time with family or roommates, etc) to dig into our internalized fat-phobia. **The space we were gifted with felt immensely healing: 20-30 strangers intimately sharing how fat-phobia, diet-culture,**

and the body-positive movement have affected us each individually. Some expressed gratitude for a unique space, some just listened, and spoke so honestly we cried. I am so grateful for the vulnerable leadership and facilitation of Genevieve, support from the Center in this idea, and the willingness of all who joined in. **I hope these resources motivate us all to further interrogate fat-phobia in society, and open ourselves to conversations with our own bodies and the bodies of those we love.**



AND STILL WE RISE

Women Having Conversations About Diversity

A monthly collaboration between Student Diversity and Inclusion Services and the Luann Dummer Center for Women.

The spring line-up included:

HOW I TRANSFORMED INSECURITY ABOUT MY IDENTITY INTO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER

AND STILL WE RISE
WOMEN HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
MAR 18
5:30 PM
INTERCULTURAL CENTER

NEITHER/BOTH LLC
A SAFE PLACE TO EXPLORE COMPLEX IDENTITY

Lola Osunkoya MA, LPCC

Come hear from mixed race psychotherapist **Lola Osunkoya**, owner of Neither/Both LLC, counseling practice. Lola has created and facilitated racial identity-based content all over Minnesota, and has also been featured on MPR News with Angela Davis, and VOICES on KMOJ.

Sponsored by Student Diversity & Inclusion Services, DAB and Luann Dummer Center for Women

**WORTH MY FIGHT
ENDING DEPORTATION**

AND STILL WE RISE
WOMEN HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY

WEDNESDAY
APR 15
4:30 PM
via **ZOOM**
stthomas.zoom.us/j/429311823

Jenny Srey, co-founder of ReleaseMN 8, whose mission is to provide direct support to Southeast Asian families impacted by detention and deportation. In 2016 ICE took her husband to be deported back to Cambodia. Come join us to hear her story and fight to keep her family together.

Sponsored by Student Diversity & Inclusion Services, DAB and Luann Dummer Center for Women

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020-2021 LDCW GRANT RECIPIENTS!

GRANT	RECIPIENT
UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP	Sophia Tragresser
GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP	Ayana Shakir
WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP	Isabel Rolfes
LDCW STUDENT LEADERSHIP GRANT	Rachel Dahl
WGSS FACULTY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GRANT	Paola Ehrmantraut



After discussing the work in the LDCW's January Book Circle, the Women's Center took two groups to the performance of **Claudia Rankine's The White Card** at Penumbra Theatre.



PROGRESS REPORTS

2019-2020 LDCW GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

Goddess, Mother, Martyr:

Examining Depictions of Irish Women in Street Art



Molly McIntosh

Master's of Art History

With the assistance of the Luann Dummer Center, in 2019 I wrote an article and developed a research project that examines the commonly used gendered themes and female archetypes in the public art spaces of Northern Ireland, a fiercely politicized nation as a result of British colonialism and occupation. This project was accepted by Princeton University for presentation at the Art and Archaeology Graduate Symposium in March, which has been rescheduled for August as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the onset of quarantine, my research took me 3,722 miles away to Northern Ireland where I spent a week in January photographing, documenting, and analyzing street murals featuring women.

Northern Ireland has the traditional beauty of the Irish island: sheep grazing in green pastures, winding coastal roads, and quaint towns hidden in the countryside. But Northern Ireland is also politically polarized. This became apparent as I stood at the base of a 26 foot tall wall

topped with barbed wire called the peace wall. It separates the Belfast neighborhoods of Irish republicans in favor of an independent Ireland, from the British loyalists who support British control of Ireland. Yards on either side of the wall have overhead barriers to prevent Molotov cocktails and thrown debris. This polarization became stronger in Derry, where the Irish independence movement was extremely fierce in the 1970's and 80's. The focal point of my research is nestled in a small Derry park, the Mná na hÉireann mural. This large, colorful work of street art serves as a collage of historic female figures and important events involving Irish women.

My research has sought to **consider the significance of rare all-women political murals** like this one and question why there are so few when the walls overflow with great men.

What does it mean for girls to see women on the walls?

I sought to discuss these concepts with the foremost expert in Irish street murals, Bill Rolston, a former professor at the Queen's University in Belfast. Mr. Rolston couldn't answer all my questions and we both recognized the need for ongoing research and analytics to better understand audience engagement with street art. He connected me to one of the artists of the Mná na hÉireann, Marty Lyons. Over a cup of tea in front of his latest mural, Lyons was forthcoming with answering all the little questions only the artist could know. My favorite was regarding where he found his picture references--there may be some books in the Belfast library missing pictures.



I left Ireland the week before COVID-19 first appeared in Belfast. I have spent quarantine expanding my 2019 article with what I have learned from my time in Ireland in preparation for my presentation at Princeton University. This project has evolved into my graduate thesis that I will present and defend in spring of 2021 for my Master's of Art History here at the University of St. Thomas.

And yes, I did have a Guinness while in Ireland.

PROGRESS REPORTS

2019-2020 LDCW UNDERGRAD FELLOWSHIP

Focusing the Lens:

Action Research on Communication Strategies to Support Social Entrepreneurship & Advance Maternal Health Education



Dylan Barrett

Communications and Journalism
Class of 2020

My research explores how film and communication strategy can support women's health initiatives. Specifically, I am working in partnership with my friend and Tommie alum Fatoumata Jaiteh, founder and CEO of From Mother to You (FMTY), a nonprofit dedicated to maternal health.

Trip to West Africa

Fatoumata and I spent 35 days over J-Term 2020 in Senegal and The Gambia capturing photo and video content that Fatoumata can use to promote her work. I combined the cycle framework of action research (diagnosing, planning action, taking action, evaluating action (context and purpose), repeat) with everything I've learned from my mentors and interviewees in visual storytelling to capture this content and support the efforts of From Mother to You and Muso Makoi.

We spent most of our time with healthcare professionals at the Reproductive Newborn Child and Adolescent Health Clinic (RNCAH) in Farafenni, The Gambia. From Haddy Sarr, the inspiring head nurse to the clinic's interns, we experienced their commit-

ment and passion and saw the literal hundreds of women and mothers they serve each day.

Muso Makoi

Muso Makoi (MM), which means "Help the Women" in Mandinko, officially launched October 2019. It sells handmade African wax fabric tote bags and donates a portion of all proceeds to women's health organizations. MM has done well over \$1,000 in sales and has a great start in its mission to ensure all women have access to quality health care. I worked on implementing a new brand and created a website / online store through Shopify ([musomakoi.com](https://www.musomakoi.com)) that Fatoumata can use to blog and handle orders of product. On our trip, we also spent time with Pape, the tailor from Senegal who hand makes the Muso Makoi bags. His video profile will be coming out soon.

I am now taking time to go through all the photos and videos to organize and edit into usable stories for the brands. If you are interested in staying up to date, be sure to follow @musomakoi and @from-mothertoyou on Instagram or Facebook!

Overall, I can't thank the LDCW enough for this experience. On top of being able to do this action research and interdisciplinary collaboration, this grant allowed me to genuinely experience a new culture and strengthen my friendship with Fatoumata and her family.

COVID-19 updates

My faculty mentor Vern Klobassa and I were unable to present at the AshokaU changemaking conference.

At a spring Feminist Friday, I presented a storytelling workshop via Zoom and shared how you can capture stories around you, as well as concrete tips to improve your photo and video skills.

FEATURED VOICES

We asked our student workers about their quarantine experience over spring semester. Here's what they had to say:



Isabel Rolfes
Class of 2021
Political Science Major, WGSS Minor

Learning to be an Introvert

Quarantine is affecting us all differently. As a student, every day I get asked, "How are classes going?" "Are you adjusting to online learning?" "Are you able to keep up with your homework?" In order, I typically answer, "Good", "Yes" and "Yes". **What doesn't get asked enough is, "How are you adjusting from seeing hundreds of people a day to living alone?"** As a college student, the first part of that identity plays a bigger role in my social life than the latter, so I think this is the most important question to ask. I am extroverted and can't think of a day before this quarantine that I didn't have friends over, go to a friend's house, hang out on campus, or have discussions in class. This quarantine is detrimental to us all for many reasons, but I am taking it as an opportunity to get to know myself. I have no choice but to be alone more often than not at this point in the crisis, and I'm forcing myself to be okay with that. I'm learning that I don't need others around to have a good time-- I am finding myself, by myself. I find myself enjoying things I didn't enjoy before: I go on longer

walks, I just sit outside and listen to nature, or I do a puzzle and listen to podcasts. I don't believe that I'm alone in this. College students are constantly surrounded by their peers, and for there to be an Executive Order in place to prohibit that, we have no choice but to adjust. I'm finding that some people don't do this as well as others; those are the people who don't take an interest in finding themselves yet.

There have been calls to action worldwide due to this crisis, but these calls are essentially for regular people to act in the form of inaction: to stay home, to not see people, to social distance, and to not gather in groups. Through this inaction, I think we can all rise up and do something good for ourselves: self-care.

That means something different for everyone, but from my observations, those who have kept regular schedules, gotten fresh air, and maintained their academic endeavors have found themselves surviving this crisis much better than those who view this stay-at-home order as an excuse to lay on the couch. I have found my flow in this time by doing yoga consistently, working out (less consistently), going for walks, and preparing meals that I typically don't have time to make.

Although this time is very hard, it's also eye-opening. This has exposed massive flaws in our institutions, and in ourselves. When we are alone on our couches, we can really only fix one of those things. I have decided to accept that challenge and find myself, so when this all ends, I'm able to resume normal life and feel like I got something positive out of this terrible situation.

FEATURED VOICES



Sadie Pedersen
Class of 2020
Entrepreneurship Major; WGSS Minor

I will never forget my senior year in college.

It started off as one would expect. There was going to class, organizing my clubs, the likes of FemCom and Mixed Race Coalition, work, and of course hanging out with friends as much as possible.

The progression of COVID was a slow burn. The signs that this virus was going to completely disrupt our lives started creeping in everywhere we turned; in social media, in the news, in the worry of our parents, in the way our professors talked about the future. It slowly built and burned until online classes hit. The universe forced us out of denial and all the way back to our hometowns. We could not deny what was happening anymore. Although we told each other that we would come back soon - that we would reunite and celebrate our four years - I think we all knew deep down that was not going to happen.

People always say trouble comes in groups of three, well if that's true my three would be: the departure from college, cancer, and chemotherapy. Shortly after returning home from college, I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a type of blood cancer that attacks the lymphatic system. To get cancer, and in a pandemic at that, was an experience so overwhelming that my body went numb to cope rather than feel fear and risk emotional combustion. Audre Lorde says that, "I must let this pain flow through me

and pass on. If I resist or try to stop it, it will detonate inside me, shatter me, splatter my pieces against every wall and person that I touch." One must never argue with Audre Lorde. So, I let myself risk combustion and felt every emotion. The sadness, fear, anxiety, anger, hopelessness, anguish, and grief. If it needed to come, it came, and it went.

Life continued to go on as it does. There were more zoom classes and less showers. More FaceTime calls and less club events. More trips to the hospital and less trips to the library. More puzzles and less parties. More rest and less work. More delicious snacks and less restrictive dieting (thank god!)

Predictably, college continued online for the rest of the semester and a video graduation ceremony replaced the in-person celebration. There was no last dinner at Scooters, last study session at the library, last class in McNeely, last workout at the AARC (ha! Just kidding), last shift at the Women's Center or Financial Aid Office, last goodbye before we all separated and went out into the world. Emotional closure is not a term used in a pandemic. Nonetheless, we must commence a ceremony in our hearts and carry on.

It is difficult at times not to get wrapped up in the things I lost this year. But I try every day to remember that I have not lost my path forward-- just the path I expected. I must remember that I have not lost the people in my life, just the typical way I would communicate with them. I remind myself to remember what is important and be grateful for what I do have.

My people are important; my family, my friends, my community. They have provided me with everything that I need. The humor from my brother, the fruit bowls from my dad, the hugs from my mom, the constant FaceTime from my friend Benni, the encouraging texts from my Auntie Ascia and Uncle Syed, the TikToks from my friend Kaitlyn, the flexibility from my professors, the snapchats from all my gal pals, the bouquet of lollipops from someone unnamed, the kindness from my nurses and doctors. I hope I have given in return.

There is still good and light seeping into life. That is what I will remember the most.

FEATURED VOICES



Bizzy Stephenson

Class of 2020
Justice and Peace Studies; English;
American Culture and Difference

Turning to humor to cope with this new (ab) normal, in the first weeks of isolation, I tweeted **"In unsurprising news, the Leo, extravert, middle child is sad and unmotivated."**

I found myself sinking into the realization that my identities and experiences have perfectly suited me to lose most of what I find meaningful and necessary. I can not help but reflect on how grief is individually complicated by our personal needs, everyone challenged with their own experiences that contain any amalgamation of uniquely combined emotions.

How ordinary an experience to shoulder guilt and loss symmetrically. So many people in my community have shared that they feel grief over whatever that unique combination looks like for themselves (loss of graduation, being with their friends, going to a restaurant) and feel guilt that so many others have lost so much more (a job, the ability to see their families, their health). This moment has shown me how essential it is

to shoulder all of the challenging emotions and allow ourselves to hold both that loss and the awareness that others are also struggling, without comparing our struggles and suffering guilt. Let us remain patient that our pain is valid pain, and that we can and must be empathetic to our communities. **We must make space to hold onto personal losses as well as collective grieving**, practicing self-acceptance and love for our neighbor.

After acceptance comes fulfillment. Isolation asks us to name our values and find creative ways to celebrate our accomplishments, moving forward to fulfill our human (or leo, extravert, middle child) need for recognition. If we cannot rely on worldly structures to continue automatically making meaning for us, it is still important to make our own meaning. This time in isolation has prompted me to think about opportunities to celebrate my own accomplishments in ways that are intentional and consistent with my individual values. I am committed to seeking out creative ways to release the built up inertia of the halted semester, in order to allow myself closure and celebration for all that we had begun. This means intentionally connecting with people I would have celebrated with, through FaceTime or even snail mail, sending thank yous and you're welcomes. This means turning what would have been a toast at a brewery into a message to the group chat. This means writing down, for myself, all that I have learned and accomplished in the past four years.

Oh and if anyone comes up with a good answer to the question "how are you doing?", please let me know.

FEATURED VOICES



Kaitlyn Spratt

Class of 2020
English Major; Theology and
WGSS Minors

My goal for my last semester was simple. To have fun, stress less, and celebrate the four years that shaped me as a person. I wanted that proverbial goodbye, like the final scene in Legally Blonde.

Now, the class of 2020 won't have that rite of passage.

To say that this isn't the way I pictured my senior year would be an understatement. For a few weeks I was angry. Why couldn't this have happened a year from now? I kept wondering.

But that anger turned into gratitude when I thought about all the experiences that I have had, and not mourning those I won't. While it would have been nice to walk across that stage and celebrate with my best friends, I know that I don't need it. **It isn't the end that makes life meaningful, it is the turbulence of the middle.** Late night "studying" with friends, getting lost abroad, and Femcom meetings mean much more. I know I'll be carrying the pieces of the last four years everywhere I go.



Members of the St. Thomas community excitedly gather with **Tarana Burke** before her Women's History Month Lecture

YARN TAMERS GOES VIRTUAL

TUESDAYS | NOON - 1 PM

Yarn Tamers is an opportunity for students, staff, faculty, and community members to spend a relaxing hour working on yarn projects, meeting new friends, and socializing.



For the last few months, Yarn Tamers have been meeting weekly through zoom and channeled their creativity in a variety of ways! Included here are just some of the projects worked on during quarantine:



Here's a pic of what I have been working on. It's a Flax Light sweater for the soon-to-arrive baby of a close friend across the country. Making the rainbow stripes has lifted my spirits!

~Rachel Willson-Broyles, Community Member

After 9 months of only knowing how to do one stitch, and not being able to meet with the ladies from Yarn Tamers to learn a new stitch due to the pandemic, I resorted to YouTube. I watched the same video again and again until I got the hang of the stitch. I was then hooked and could not stop crocheting until the hat was complete.

~Sarah Chamseddine, Staff



This time has inspired many folks to pick up knitting and crocheting. After seeing numerous posts of dishcloths by new makers on social media, as a long-time maker, I decided to put my cotton yarn to work instead on a summer bedspread. The image shows my queen-sized summer bedspread, just in time for the warmer weather.

Upon moving onto Zoom for hours a day, I also decided I needed some "Zoomwear" (aka neckwear) to spruce up my outfits, and also hide my aging neck. The result was 7 pieces I whipped up (one a night) in cotton and other fibers. Fun, practical, and wonderful for stress relief projects! (below, right) ~Susan Anderson-Benson, Staff



Shortly after returning home in March, I came down with COVID symptoms and isolated for the recommended two weeks. Now I'm back in self isolation, after contact with someone who later tested positive for COVID and now testing positive myself.

Knitting has always brought me joy, but I have found it an especially important constant in my life after it seemed like everything else turned upside down. I'm so thankful that the Yarn Tamers have been able to meet over zoom; it's so nice to have a little piece of St. Thomas here with me at home.

I can't wait until I can see everyone's beautiful smiling faces and amazing projects in person again!

~Maggie, Student (sweaters and featured scarf)



YARN TAMERS *Creativity Continues*



I've been making homemade paper out of shredded paper and other scraps, and have so much of it! I learned a Japanese book binding technique, so bound one book and am sending it off as a birthday gift.

I also needed to upcycle an old pair of shorts, so I embroidered patch!



At the beginning of quarantine I was making lots of cards—drawing, watercolor, any design I could copy off of Pinterest, and sent them to some local retirement homes for the elderly that can't get visitors.
~ Cari Monroe, Class of 2018
(all projects above)

Even though Yarn Tamers cannot meet together in person, I'm still very glad to meet with all my friends on Zoom and share my progress on the sweater I am knitting. I'm also posting my progress on Ravelry, where I've titled it "The Corona Sweater." Since the local yarn stores are closed, the idea of this sweater was to take up the challenge of using scraps of yarn and piecing them together into a bigger project. The result is colorful! I decided to make it a gradient. The collar of my sweater fades from the lightest warm colors in my stash to the darkest. The results are pleasing!

~Joan Wiedland, Class of 2020



Luann Dummer Center for Women
2115 Summit Avenue Mail 4075
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105 USA

CONTACT

Email: WOMENSCNTR@stthomas.edu

STAFF

Christine Balsley
Editor | Designer, Many Voices
Center Coordinator

Dr. Emily James
Editor, Many Voices
LDCW Director

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Savannah Ellison
Benni Greene
Sadie Pedersen
Isabel Rolfes
Kaitlyn Spratt
Bizzy Stephenson

For more information on LDCW programs and opportunities, join our mailing list at www.stthomas.edu/lcdw

Stay tuned for Fall 2020!

For more information on LDCW programs and opportunities, join our mailing list at www.stthomas.edu/lcdw