

# Wendt



UNIVERSITY of  
DUBUQUE

20  
YEARS

# Character Initiative

SPRING 2024

## Wendt Transitions

### Character Initiative Continues

Change is in the air as Annalee Ward prepares to retire this summer and we welcome Liza Johnson into the position of Director of the Wendt Center for Character Education.

Liza Johnson has been at UD since 2011 and brings with her an expertise in personal empowerment focused on social/emotional learning. She has built a team of instructors in personal empowerment and works collaboratively.

Annalee Ward came into the director position in 2012. Over the years, we have developed the curriculum for the Wendt Character Scholars Program, instituted scholar awards, athletic awards, and faculty character advancement awards. Under her leadership, we have also started the annual journal, podcasts, newsletters, and book discussion groups.

We'll miss Annalee and she will miss UD!

*It's been a privilege to work with this campus community to "catch the good" and encourage us all to grow as people of good character.*

—Annalee Ward



Annalee Ward



Liza Johnson

*I'm looking forward to the next chapter and journey of my professional career. I'm honored to continue to contribute to impacting students' lives through UD's Mission.*

—Liza Johnson

### The Close of Our 20th Year Celebration

Along with our two Character Lectures, a Faculty Character Advancement Celebration (p. 7), and Wendt Tea, we also held a "20 Years of Wendt Character Scholars" reunion, sponsored drink specials at Sylvia's, and displayed the exhibit "Character Journeys" in the Bisignano Art Gallery (p.9).

Thank you for celebrating with us!



Sheila Sabers, designer of gallery exhibit "Character Explorations"



Annalee Ward and Wendt Scholar Alumni at the reunion



Wendt Scholars Angela Tisbert and Anna Haverland enjoy Sylvia's drinks

# Wendt Center Updates

## Welcome, Samara, New GA!



Samara Tanchuck is a new face around the Wendt office this spring. We welcome her as a graduate assistant as she works on her masters in Management, Diversity and Inclusion.

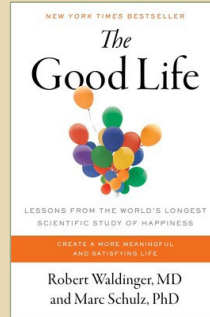
“I am really grateful for the opportunity to work at the Wendt Center and expand my knowledge of character and integrity. I enjoy making a difference on this campus and expanding my community through the Wendt Center. I am blessed to work under Dr. Ward before her retirement and am appreciative for everything they have done for me in these past few months,” states Samara. Wendt office staff are excited to work with Samara on upcoming projects.

*Character Scholars completed over 2,100 hours of service this year!*

## Book Discussions

*The Good Life* by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schulz provided the seeds for dynamic conversations in our spring book discussion groups. We examined the authors’ findings that cultivating good relationships was fundamental to living well and applied their lessons to our life and work.

As we discussed the importance of connection, we found ourselves cultivating our relationships with each other at the same time.



*These discussions are a privilege to be a part of—sometimes even joyful and healing—because participants are so open and trusting that our differences in perspective, interpretation, and experience don't divide us but rather enrich our time together.*

—Book Discussion Participant

## Ready for Summer

Wendt Character Scholars, mentors, staff, and advisory board wish you a fun and safe summer full of meaning and purpose!

Pictured on left stairs (left to right from top to second row): Madison Butterworth, Lizz Tyler (Admin Asst.), Isaac Hays, Kaelyn Nash, Makenzie Knapp, Reese Gottman, Emma Nibaur, Katlin Powell, Kayla Shade, Nora Ralfs, Peter Schiess, Isaac Thompson, Caitlin Jensen, Angela Tisbert, Anna Haverland, Ben Bathje, Elise Kehoe, Christian Melton



Right stairs (left to right from top to second row): Samara Tanchuck (GA), Beth McCaw (Adv. Bd.), Eve Carr, Brady Harnung, Trent DeVries, Alex Arango, Bruno Pallan, Matthew Wolverton, Nolan Nagy, Mike Clarke, Heath Huschitt, Jackson Croft, Kaelyn Weigel, Emma Kempel, Madisen Zych, Mia Miller, Charisma Dontje, Alexia Pecora, Molly McMurrin, George West

Top center: Mary Bryant (Dir. of Med. and Prog.), Franklin Yartey (Adv. Bd.), Anne Funke (Mentor and Dir. of World View), Adam Kleinschmit (Mentor), Molly Hein (Mentor), Annalee Ward (Director), Lori Welsh (Mentor), Jonathan Barz (Adv. Bd.)

Front row: Kailey Tyburski, Vanessa Blake, Lilly Duff, Megan Cooley, Blake Thomas, Garrett Johnson, Vladimir Hudson, Abdelakim Baba Traore, Allison Gonnella, Jacob Sparber

Not pictured: Dan Fleming (Mentor), Adam Hoffman (Adv. Bd.), Adam Smith (Adv. Bd.)



## World View Corner



Anne Funke  
Director of World View

It's been a year of excitement and learning as Anne Funke transitioned into the role of Director of World View Studies and moved into the Wendt Center. This transition has fostered collaboration across academic and co-curricular departments, built community, and encouraged deep reflection on the work that is and can take place in the World View courses. 21 instructors facilitated World View Seminar I and 15 instructors facilitated World View Seminar II. Combined, nearly 650 students were engaged with World View Seminar content and curriculum this academic year.

The Wendt Center has received a NetVUE Program Development Grant from the Council of Independent Colleges for the 2024-25 academic year to deepen students' vocational exploration and discernment in World View II classes. This will enable Anne Funke to invest more time in developing curricular modules and units.

As we look forward to implementing the generous grant from NetVUE, we foresee exciting possibilities of what students' experiences in World View can become. From meaningful service experiences to vocation-focused education and reflection on character, values, and purpose, we will continue providing students with opportunities to explore important topics and build classroom communities on campus that support character education and the University Mission.



World View Seminar I students together for a lecture



World View Seminar I students working together on a group project

## Gratitude for Nancy Wendt



Nancy and Dick Wendt

The generous endowment given by Dick and Nancy Wendt in 2004 has enabled the Wendt Center's work to shape character for lives of purpose for the past 20 years and will continue to sustain it into the future.

Nancy Wendt passed away on April 4. We are grateful for the vision she and Dick gave to the University of Dubuque to cultivate a culture of good character, to support and encourage our students.

# Wendt Character Lecture

## Truth Beyond the Mountains

### Freshta Tori Jan

Our fall Wendt Character Lecturer, Freshta Tori Jan, informed us of the Hazaran genocide currently happening under the Taliban in Afghanistan and asked us to search for creative solutions to bring an end to the genocide.

As Hazaras, the original inhabitants of Afghanistan, who valued education and gender equality, Tori Jan and her family were targets for ethnic cleansing. They endured years of violent persecution and death threats, witnessing many atrocities, including the deaths of neighbors and friends in Afghanistan. They had to flee to new homes many times, split up, change their names, and speak a different dialect to hide their true identities.

Now in the U.S., Tori Jan advocates for the Hazaras who continue to suffer under the same persecution, but she cannot fully escape the threats against her, as she has been poisoned, physically attacked, and her family back home threatened after sharing her message.

The first step towards achieving justice is gaining knowledge about the problem. We encourage you to be moved by Tori Jan's terrible story of genocide to spread the word and strive for answers to end the violence and killing.

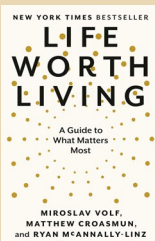


Before the lecture, Tori Jan had coffee and lunch with faculty and students, and answered many questions about her experiences, advocacy, and culture during a session with several UD classes from the Education and Psychology departments, as well as DNAS.



### Coming Up

#### FALL FACULTY/STAFF BOOK DISCUSSIONS



Faculty and staff, watch your email in August to sign up to read and discuss *Life Worth Living: A Guide to What Matters Most*, by Miroslav Volf, Matthew Croasmun, and Ryan McAnnally-Linz.

Let's ponder together questions of purpose, meaning, and what sort of life we should pursue. Note that World View Seminar I will read this book as well, so you'll get a glimpse of what the freshman are discussing.

#### SAVE THE DATE OCTOBER 7



Our Fall 2024 Wendt Character Lecture will be delivered by Captain Tammie Jo Shults, one of the first female F/A-18 Hornet pilots in the United States Navy. Captain Shults went on to save the lives of passengers aboard Southwest Airlines Flight 1480 by successfully landing the plane after an engine exploded mid-flight.

We hope to see you on October 7 at 7 p.m. in John and Alice Butler Hall, Heritage Center.

# Character Athletes

SPRING 2024

## Congratulations, Character Athletes!



Each year, we recognize UD athletes who have demonstrated exceptional character. Coaches nominated athletes on their teams who exhibit the character attributes of integrity, justice, and compassion. From these athletes, UD Athletics staff selected Gabbie Kluever and Wes Spitzmiller to receive the Wendt Character Athlete of the Year awards. Congratulations, Gabbie and Wes!

### Wendt Character Athletes of the Year



**Gabbie Kluever**



**Wes Spitzmiller**



*Gabbie is dependable and trustworthy on and off the mat. She is a compassionate teammate and is always encouraging and lifting up others. Gabbie respects all of her teammates and leads by example through showing dedication to her sport. Her hard work and positive attitude shine through every practice and event!*

—Coach Tade

*Wes is a leader in everything he does. He does not allow people to underachieve and pushes them to be their best selves at all times. He is compassionate towards others, understanding of all situations and willing to help them in any way possible.*

—Coach Maiuri

### Wendt Character Athletes of Each Sport

- Micah O’Neal - Baseball
- Makenzie Knapp - Women’s Basketball
- Alex Arango - Men’s Basketball
- Gabbie Kluever- Cheer and Stunt
- Joey Wohlers - Men’s Cross Country
- Kianna Vogel - Women’s Cross Country
- Wes Spitzmiller - Football
- John Dobbe - Men’s Golf
- Elizabeth Tucker - Women’s Golf
- Brandon Rossetti - Men’s Hockey
- Arwen Sims - Women’s Hockey
- Sam Todd - Lacrosse
- Zach Floss - Men’s Soccer
- Maya Ganser - Women’s Soccer
- Audrey Morris - Softball
- Ryan Linkie - Men’s Tennis
- Adriana Benavente - Women’s Tennis
- Jaidyn Williams - Men’s Indoor Track and Field
- Victoria Zoltowska - Women’s Indoor Track and Field
- Katelyn Pfaltzgraff - Women’s Outdoor Track and Field
- Garrett Byrd - Men’s Outdoor Track and Field
- Lindsey Smith - Volleyball
- Micheal McCutcheon - Men’s Wrestling
- Tatum Levendahl - Women’s Wrestling

# Character on Campus

## Character Sightings

With the snowstorms that came in to kick off the year, many of us had to stay home from school and work. Though it is not always a positive thing, everyone loves an extra day off or two. However, not everyone here has the luxury of sitting back and enjoying the snow.

The food workers in the Heritage Center, groundskeepers, and housekeeping continuously braved the January storms to get to campus. They provided students with food when everything else on campus was shut down. They mopped the halls every morning and left out salt and shovels for students to use if needed. These are just two examples from this semester of facilities staff who ensure the smooth running of our school.

Next time you see them, show your thanks and remember that good character is around you every day. Show character by recognizing those around you and letting them inspire you to continue growing.



Campus was covered in snow for days on end. Most cars appeared like the one above. All of the roads on campus were covered in thick layers of both ice and snow, it was impossible to get drive or even walk due to the below-freezing temperatures!

## Character in the Disciplines: Mathematics and Computer Science

By Dan Fleming



Information Technology has come to dominate nearly every aspect of our lives, from choosing our friendships and romances to jobs, hobbies, and political activities. Because of the wide impact IT has on this world, unethical activities make the headlines all too frequently. Recently this has included cryptocurrency scams, failed companies based on technology that did not exist, sales of political influence through algorithms, and technology being used to make war ever more deadly.

*Good character is vital to appropriate interpretation and use of data.*

—A recent campus visitor

In Computer Studies at UD we take the ethical and character formation of our students seriously. From the very beginning we dedicate time in our class discussions and readings to aspects of ethics. We ask how ethics impacts running electricity-intensive technology when the electricity comes from CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting sources, or how secure our computers need to be. We also give students hands-on experience with projects for local non-profits, showing both how technology can help a community and how to behave professionally and ethically in delivering IT services, developing their character.

Our capstone class centers on ethics. We read about the positive and negative uses of information technology from multiple perspectives. The students argue for their ethical vision of technology.



## Faculty Character Advancement Celebration

UD students nominated faculty for advancing character in their teaching, learning, and living. Seminary Dean Beth McCaw's remarks encouraged us all in our efforts to further good character. Faculty, your work connecting character to education lies at the heart of the university mission and the Wendt Center mandate. We are grateful for you and all you do!



## Anne Funke and Katie Boyer Receive Faculty Character Advancement Awards

A student who nominated Anne Funke for the Faculty Character Advancement award shared that she "shows great character when it comes to inclusivity. She really gets involved within the program and she brings in good energy. All around she is a great teacher."

Another student shared that Katie Boyer "cares about her students and treats everyone fairly. She always reaches out to her students and is always friendly on campus. She's a mentor to her students and reflects great character each and every day."

Congratulations, Anne Funke and Katie Boyer! Keep it up!



## Eclipse Excitement

Much of campus came outside to share the experience of viewing the partial solar eclipse that passed over UD. Thanks to all who passed around their eye protection so everyone could enjoy the view!



## Last Lecture

Mark and Annalee Ward shared lessons they had learned through their lives, reminding us to enjoy the journey and not worry so much about the destination—to value relationships and expect surprises along the way.



# Character Scholars

## Curriculum

Explorations of justice and injustice came to the forefront as Wendt Character Scholars focused on institutions such as the legal system, healthcare, and the digital realm.



One-man show, *Blood Done Sign My Name*



Scholars' spring book-read



Screening of *Just Mercy*



Shea Chapin "The U.S. Legal System and Justice"



Daniel Fleming "Technology's Invisible Injustices"

## Healthcare Simulation

Our Wendt Character Scholars and mentors participated in a healthcare simulation that focused on highlighting injustices within the U.S. healthcare system. The participants were assigned a family unit and navigated life together over the course of three rounds, trying to pay their bills while being faced with a variety of health issues.

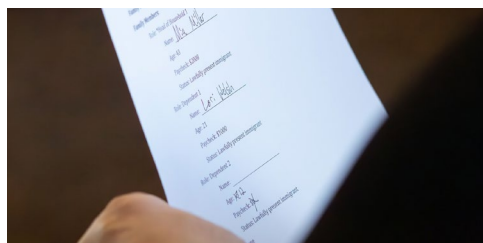
With a focus on justice, the simulation aimed to highlight the detrimental impact poverty has on someone's ability to get adequate healthcare. This can lead to poor health outcomes as well as a harmful cycle of increasing debt stemming from unmanageable medical bills and insufficient insurance. Poverty was at the root of many of the challenges in the simulation, but students also encountered specific elements that impacted access to healthcare, such as transportation and language barriers, the stigma of being on Medicaid or uninsured, and the opaque nature of healthcare insurance.

Students and faculty from Nursing, Education, and World View helped us run the simulation for our Wendt Scholars. We could not have managed it without every one of them!



*I took away new knowledge about the healthcare system and how difficult and expensive it can be when you do not have the right resources.*

—Kailey Tyburski



*Injustice in one area of healthcare spills over to create injustice in many areas of everyday life.*

—Heath Huschitt







## Group Service at Convivium

Scholars spent a rainy April evening at Convivium, a local non-profit with a mission to “improve life through food,” helping them prepare for spring planting, organizing supplies, and mulching garden beds. Despite the cool weather, our spirits were high and we enjoyed serving together.



## Character Journeys Art Gallery

Our Character Scholars reflected on their character journeys for a beautiful February exhibit (designed by Sheila Sabers, DART professor) in the Bisignano Art Gallery. We hope gallery visitors came away with ideas and thoughts, both new and familiar, that challenged them to consider the life events, people, and experiences that helped them to define and explore virtues such as integrity, justice, and compassion.



The gallery was a wonderful success, bringing together students, scholars, family, and faculty.

Many thanks to scholars who helped install the exhibit!



# Character Scholars

## Spring Banquet

### Completing Scholar Awards



Congratulations to our completing Wendt Scholars, Mentors, and Director! Pictured: (third row) Adam Kleinschmit, Bruno Pallan, Vanessa Blake, Alex Arango, Molly McMurrin, Brady Harnung, Blake Thomas, Ben Bathje, Annalee Ward; (second row) Molly Hein, Emma Nibaur, Reese Gottman, Kailey Tyburski, Nora Ralfs, Kaelyn Weigel, Isaac Hays; (first row) Makenzie Knapp, Peter Scheiss, Christian Melton, Garrett Johnson

### 2023-24 Wendt Character Scholars



Adam Kleinschmit's Mentor Group



Molly Hein's Mentor Group



Dan Fleming's Mentor Group



Anne Funke's Mentor Group



Lori Welsh's Mentor Group



## Scholars of the Year and Service Awards

Scholars with a perfect record of assignment completion and attendance received Scholar of the Year awards! We also recognized scholars who had gone well above and beyond the 15 hours of service required each semester.



Service Award for Scholars with over 100 hours of service this year: Madi Zych, Lilly Duff, Elise Kehoe, Alex Arango, Reese Gottman



Honorable Mention for Service for Scholars with over 50 hours of service this year: Makenzie Knapp, Kailey Tyburski, Megan Cooley, Vanessa Blake



Scholars of the Year: (back row) Emma Kempel, Charisma Dontje, Angela Tisbert, Heath Huschitt, Nolan Nagy, Kailey Tyburski, Lilly Duff, Kaitlyn Powell, Mia Miller, Megan Cooley, Caitlin Jensen, Ben Bathje; (front row) Makenzie Knapp, Akim Baba Traore, Elise Kehoe, Madi Zych, Alex Arango

## Celebrating Good Work

Mentors deeply impact a students' experience. We are grateful to Molly Hein and Adam Kleinschmit for the three years they committed as mentors to our Wendt Scholars. Annalee Ward's twelve years as Director of the Wendt Center also left a profound mark on Scholars and alumni. We are thankful for their wise nurturing and guidance.



Molly Hein and Adam Kleinschmit



Annalee Ward

## Choose the Good

Beth McCaw, our banquet speaker, used the Ignatian practice of examen to remind us to practice reflection as we go forward—Remember the character lessons we learned together, serve others, and practice gratitude. Do the hard thing for the common good as well as the personal good.



# Director's Note

## Surprised by Snow

I wasn't paying attention to weather forecasts, so the snow surprised me. I wasn't paying attention to time, so talk of retirement surprised me. The unexpected and the sudden come to us all. Certainly many problems can be avoided by paying better attention in life. But even attention doesn't head off all of the interruptions to our plans nor the inevitability of change.



This year's research team chose the theme of Character and Inevitability, which should have helped me recognize the march of time. It did, however, challenge me to consider how character fortifies one in times of difficult surprises as well as in times of change.

As we all at the University of Dubuque experience these in-between days and wonder about the future, be assured that we don't stand alone.

God reminds us in so many places in his word that he "will never leave us or forsake us." What an amazing promise to hold on to. But we have to add in the rest of the message: "Do not be afraid." We all face surprises, changes, and the vagaries of life, but we are not alone and we do not have to be afraid.

As we live into the desire to continue growing as people of character—people of integrity, justice, and compassion—we stand in a community of God's people held together by a hopeful mission and vision for a better world. We get to do that good work, wherever we are yet bound as sisters and brothers who serve the living God who loves us and walks with us through it all. May the surprises ahead become opportunities for growth and joy.

With gratitude for you,

wendt

character change grateful people thankful transition future blessed hope ud

### WENDT CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

**Dr. Annalee Ward**  
Director

**Mary Bryant**  
Dir. of Media and Programming

**Anne Funke**  
Dir. of World View Studies

**Lizz Tyler**  
Administrative Asst.

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