

SPRING 2016

THE DORNSIFE CONNECTOR



**SHARING
EXPERIENCES**

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Greetings, and Happy Spring!

What better time to honor the generosity of others than spring - a time of seasonal renewal and generous rain that yields beautiful abundant flowers that multiply and provide continued and consistent beauty year after year. During this time, I can't help but think of our partners who, through their generosity, help us grow, thrive, and reach our potential to support and have an impact in our community.

The generosity of our volunteers who offer their time...

The generosity of our interns who bring their energy and passion...

The generosity of our staff who go above and beyond...

The generosity of our neighbors who welcome us...

The generosity of our partners who believe in our work and help us maximize the possibilities...

The generosity of our funders who make our work possible...

In this edition of the Connector, you will read about the generosity we are all sharing here at this special place.

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STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Name: Kevin Williams
Job: Technology Instructor for KEYSPOt
Hometown: Everywhere! I was a military kid.
Current residence: East Falls
Favorite food: Good old southern soul food
Fave literary genre: Sci-fi

What is your job?

I work in the KEYSPOt and help people find the resources they're looking for and show them how to use technology to do the things they need to do - job search, resume writing, social media, research, education, or even QuickBooks. I also offer assistance to the other partners of Dornsife as it relates to technology.

Where will we find you at the Dornsife Center?

I'm in the KEYSPOt. That's where everything happens - it's like a town hall - you find out what's going on with the people and the community.

What is your favorite thing about the Dornsife Center?

You can't help but like the people - those in the community as well as those who work here.

What do you do when you're not at work?

Believe it or not, I am usually working. I am working with a start-up company, helping them with their sales and marketing strategies. I have worked in educational and technology sales and training for almost 20 years now. And anyone who knows me, even remotely, will know my first love is food - that's cooking it and eating it. I like to learn how to cook other cuisines such as Thai, Italian and Chinese. In addition to soul food, Cajun and bar-b-que are favorites. I never met a rib I did not like (lamb, beef or pork). I also never met a chicken I didn't like.

FORGING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

It has been just about two years since the Dornsife Center wrapped up its renovation and opened its doors to neighborhood residents, our various program partners, and the Drexel community. We went from squishing all of our programs into that one-room space at Mantua Square to our three beautiful buildings. Likewise our relationships have grown in much the same way. In that time we have all witnessed the blossoming of new friendships as we have all gotten to know one another a little bit better.

Maybe you've given your knowledge and time as a program leader, or perhaps you've volunteered to prepare taxes, to deliver holiday turkeys, or to serve dinner. You might have saved a seat for a neighbor at our monthly community dinner, or you might have stood around on a cold evening waiting patiently while your kids peered at the moon through a telescope. You have shared your job-search triumphs and disappointments with friends. There have also been times when you've shared some of your most personal experiences with fellow writers.



The 2015 holiday turkey giveaway



The Writers Room presents its first community anthology



Jerry and Tyrone building one of our outdoor chairs together

We started out as polite acquaintances. Now we are dancing, eating, reading, and learning together. Sometimes we argue together. Most of us have at least one new friend we greet with a hug each time we sit down at a class or program together. What is certain is that each person who comes through the doors of the Dornsife Center contributes in a significant way to building the foundation of sharing and generosity that we will continue to strengthen with each Side By Side class, meeting, monthly dinner, music performance, and job training workshop.

Nothing of this culture is new: this spirit of giving always existed in our disparate worlds of Powelton Village, Mantua, and Drexel. The uniqueness of this project comes from combining forces and ideas from our diverse backgrounds and stories to create a shared future in which we all give something of ourselves in the spirit of well-being, inquiry, and creativity.

MORE THAN INFORMATION AND REFERRALS

When you are struggling with a stressful situation and don't know the best solution or where to go for support, what do you do? You talk to someone you trust; someone you know will listen to you. You want to be heard and you want helpful information you can act on. Even if you first Google your problem for a possible solution, you run it by a trusted family member, friend or colleague - someone you know won't judge you and someone you know has valuable insight to share.

That is what we strive to offer at UConnect. We strive to be a safe, judgement-free place that will listen to your unique situation and direct you to the best people, places or programs that can help. We think outside the box, brainstorming creative solutions to difficult problems. We utilize a strengths-based approach, advocating on your behalf, assisting in overcoming obstacles and barriers to success.

UConnect is an information, referral and follow-up program. At UConnect we pair trained volunteers, called Navigators, with those in need of support. We connect you to local programs, services, and other resources and opportunities that can help move your life forward. We follow up to see how you are doing with the referrals given and if you need any further assistance or support.

Our volunteer Navigators advocate for our neighbors, learning along the way about the injustices that so many face. Our unique approach provides for a welcoming space where everyone gives, receives and learns from each other. Through this experience, both our volunteers and those receiving services learn the valuable lesson that we are not so different after all; at the end of the day, when we are in a tough place, we all need the same thing.

UConnect is a program of the Lindy Center for Civic Engagement, Drexel's College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dornsife Center. You can find us in the Lindy House at the Dornsife Center. For more information or to make an appointment, please call (215) 571-4860.



UConnect Navigators



VISIT
[DREXEL.EDU/DORNSIFECENTER](https://drexel.edu/dornsifecenter)
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