

news

ACCESS program shines at Ashland

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Four years ago, former Ashland University student Abigail Melton had a vision to create a group of Native English speakers.

She wanted to help international students at the Ashland Center for English Studies make friends and have the opportunity to practice conversational English and embrace American culture.

Since 2015, the ACCESS Mentor Program had hundreds of students from China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Yemen, Pakistan, India and all around the world.

While students get the chance to have real conversations and first-hand experience with the American culture for an hour a week, the mentors also get to enjoy exploring other cultures.

Kristen Marshall, a business administration major, runs the mentor program. Marshall was born in Ukraine and lived part of her life there.

“The reason why I joined the ACCESS is because I grew up abroad for ten years. I lived in Ukraine, and I went to public school, so I had to learn the lan-



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AU students gather together for the ACCESS program.

guage, and I know what it is like to be an outsider,” Marshall said. “I know what it is like to not know the language and I just can connect with them in a way normal Americans can not. I understand what it is like.”

Mentors meet with their mentees once a week for one hour for some activities.

Yue Yan (or Kristui, the name she likes to be called within the U.S.) came to the U.S. to work toward her Master of Education. She joined the ACCESS program before starting her master degree to learn the English language, and while learning it, she signed up for the mentor program.

“I joined the mentor program

because I wanted to practice my English and to know the American culture,” Yan said. “I would recommend it to other international students as it is a good way to practice English and make friends with American students.”

Marshall thinks students will like joining the program because they can mentor international students during their journey to learn the language.

Criminal justice and psychology double major, Hannah Outen, started mentoring in the of fall 2017. She saw how her floor resident assistant bonded with the mentees.

“It is such a great opportunity to meet people from around the

world and experience other cultures without having to go too far from home if you do not want to,” Outen said. “It is just really cool to see their culture and how they experience their life here.”

Outen thinks it is a rewarding experience for American students to be mentors.

“You meet new people, get new connections, you experience the other cultures, and then I still talk to my mentees from when I first started. A couple of them headed back to their homes and a couple of them stayed here,” Outen said. “It is really nice to build lasting relationships with people from all over the world, it is really awesome.”

Outen believes that mentoring is a good way for people to expand their horizons.

The ACCESS program is celebrating its 40 years this year and the mentor program is starting its fourth year.

Outen says the the program gives you a glimpse of what other countries are and can see how they are different from each other.

“A lot of people go to school in America, they don’t leave America, especially like my family. A lot of them have never traveled out of the country, and that is something I have always wanted to do, and I think this is kind of a good place to start,” Outen said. “You can kind of see a little bit of parts of the world without going too far from your comfort zone.”

Currently, the mentor program has six mentors, Outen, Jakson Kennedy, Lia Downs, David Grim and Talyah Fogle.

ACCESS welcomes students to join the program to mentor international students and experience other cultures.

To join the program or ask for more information you can contact Kristen Marshall at kmarsh10@ashland.edu.

Homecoming concert open to community

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In honor of the 140th anniversary of Ashland University, the school invited Cathi Muckle to host a free concert on Sept. 21 to kick off homecoming weekend.

The performance will take place in Hugo Young Theatre and will consist of various selections from Frank Sinatra that is being dubbed “Cathi Muckle Sings the Sinatra Songbook.”

Muckle is the niece of Ameri-

can singer and actress Rosemary Clooney, as well as the sister of Ashland’s very own president, Dr. Carlos Campo. She owned and operated her own recording studio for 20 years in Las Vegas where she still resides. Muckle has been featured on more than 300 commercial jingles and even went on tour with her famous aunt and recorded a cover of Frank Sinatra’s “The Coffee Song” with her.

“The people of Ashland should expect a very talented singer who is also a great person. She is also

funny, engaging, and a true professional,” Campo said. “They should also be transported to another era, where the music of Frank Sinatra will give them a break from the stress of life for a wonderful hour of music.”

The band accompanying Muckle will comprise of AU Professor of Music Dr. Thomas Reed on saxophone and clarinet, AU alumni Paul Martin on bass, local musician Lanny Gooding on piano and Jim Rupp, the drummer for the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra.

Campo hopes that “people take away the ability of music to speak to every generation with hope. We hope they feel entertained, moved, and with a renewed sense of the many blessings we share.”

This will be Muckle’s third performance during AU’s homecoming weekend. In 2016, she performed “Tenderly: A Tribute to Rosemary Clooney” and in 2017, she performed “An Evening with Cathi Muckle” that featured selections from the Songbook of George and Ira Gershwin.

Campo ensures that this event won’t be one to miss.

“We believe that it is the community culture that matters so much at AU,” Campo said. “To have my sister here for this historic Homecoming is something we will all treasure.”

The homecoming concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening at 7 p.m. and is a free event to all.

New emergency fund helps students in crisis

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Ashland University launched its first ever “Student Emergency Fund” on Sept. 17, with fundraising for the fund going live at (website).

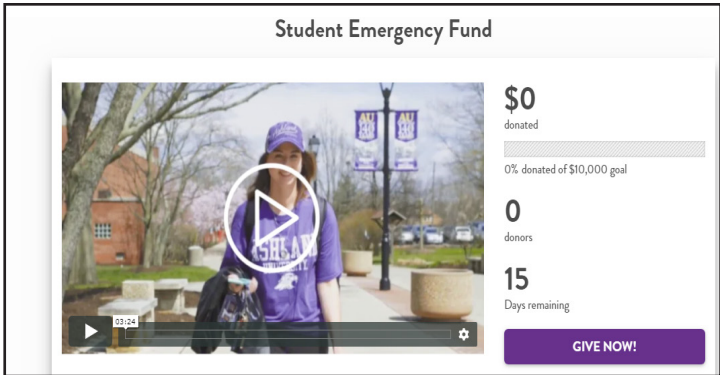
Taylor Kochheiser, the assistant director of Annual Giving, said that the fund will eventually serve as a potential aid to students that have come across an unexpected personal crisis, such as an emotionally significant event or radical change in their life that may jeopardize their ability to stay in school.

It will be completely different than the system that is currently in place, she said.

“We were able to take the fund a step further outside your typical scholarships, academics and athletics support and invest specifically into individuals who are dealing with an unforeseen personal crisis,” Kochheiser said. “This is just a way to allow our whole Ashland community to rally around the students and allow them to stay at AU and finish here.”

Kochheiser came up with the idea for an emergency fund when she was at Mount Vernon, where they raised money for a similar fund on a much smaller scale.

When she had come to Ashland, she wanted to put into place a similar fund at a larger scale because people had wanted to really help students at Mount Vernon, she said.



STEVE SHRENKEL

The main page of the student emergency fund website.

“When I came here, all I heard about was the accent on the individual and was like man, we should really start a program for this because people love it,” Kochheiser said. “It’s a great way to allow people to know that they’re giving to specific individuals and to the students. Here, we’re able to specifically say here’s the student’s story that are impacted by someone who gave. And here’s the outcome of that.”

Amanda Florio Middis, the director of Annual Giving, said that they have been working to get the fund up and running since 2017.

“We talked a lot with schools, kind of benchmark schools for our fundraising and schools that we interact with at conferences asking them what they are doing and what works,” Middis said. “Ours doesn’t exactly work like everyone’s else’s does. We tried to design something that was a right fit for Ashland.”

There have been a lot of technical details to work out, especially

for athletes who may need help, to make the fund as comprehensive of a policy as possible, she said.

“We went all out to make sure that we were in compliance with the NCAA for our athletes,” Middis said. “It’s a very comprehensive policy that has been put into place.”

Kochheiser said that there has been a lot of collaboration with different offices throughout AU to make sure that any student would be able to get the potential help that they might need in a crisis.

“We’ve been able to collaborate a lot with different offices on campus to overcome those hurdles and allow students to be able to get help in any way when there is a crisis,” she said.

She thinks that Ashland will have the best dual program fund compared to other universities, she said.

“I feel like just from research, that the program is the best dual program,” Kochheiser said. “A lot of student emergency funds

are just for scholarships or just for students needs in other areas. We never really found one that was a combination of those.”

Students, alumni and community members all can donate as much or as little as they want to the fund. Money, however, cannot be given to a specific individual.

“You can’t give specifically to an individual you know,” Kochheiser said. “You can, however, give to help individuals like the ones you know.”

As a bonus incentive, if at least \$25 is donated by an individual by Sept. 29, they can receive a throwback Ashland T-shirt with the design having been voted on by former AU alumni. If they donate \$50, they can get two shirts and so forth.

All the individual must do is submit their name, address, e-mail and shirt size to receive their T-shirt or they can choose to opt out of getting the throwback tee.

A video on the website can also be found to help explain how money raised will help students in crisis.

Kochheiser hopes that people will see the overall purpose behind why they’re getting a shirt, she said.

“We’re trying to shift the focus so that people see the purpose behind why they’re getting the t-shirt and not just that they get a t-shirt,” Kochheiser said. “The purpose here is to help students and give to help students in crisis.”

The fund will continue to remain open past the 29th, just without

the option of getting the Ashland T-shirt.

Middis, Kochheiser, and Fran Reddick, the director of Planned Giving, all have the same message for students when it comes to the emergency fund; that people want to help and that there is always someone to support students especially when faced with a personal crisis.

“I just want the students to know the people that are out there, the donors, the people that want to support and give to them, they’re going to do it through this program,” Middis said. “Truly, our donors want to have an impact on the lives of our students.”

Kochheiser agrees that there are donors willing to support students, she said.

“It’s important for the students to know that even though they’re here and not back at their home, that Ashland is home and that there’s people supporting them every single day no matter what they’re going through,” Kochheiser said. “There’s always people here supporting them.”

Reddick has this message for students who may currently be struggling and need help.

“What a student needs to know is that no matter what, they should never become hopeless,”

Reddick said. “Don’t become hopeless. Don’t ever become hopeless here. You are at Ashland and here, we take care of our own. And we will take care of you if you are in a crisis.”

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