

## **Local and global practicum experiences prepare EMU's next generation of peacebuilders**

Writing an instructional manual about growing and using elderberries for medicinal syrups may not look like peacebuilding at first glance, but senior Ben Rush's practicum last fall had broad implications. Peacebuilding and development (PXD) majors complement classroom studies with semester-long practicum placements. Graduates have entered fields such as civil rights law, public policy, education, human rights, humanitarian action and others. Rush worked at the Blacks Run Forest Farm with founder Jonathan McRay, a 2013 graduate of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. The farm fosters the societal embodiment of "a culture of trees: abundant, diverse, renewing, mutual, slow, rooted, cyclical, nurturing and deeply connected underground." In addition to writing the manual, Rush helped with tree propagation in the nursery and worked with school groups. Such real-world opportunities abound in EMU's peacebuilding and development program's lineup of practicums — there have been 60 since 2007.

## **Peacebuilding institute invites leaders of U.S. Congress to learn more about talking sticks and circle processes**

EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding has invited leaders of Congress to learn more about using talking sticks in circle processes at its Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI). The invitation was issued after a group of senators used a talking stick to help negotiate an end to the recent government shutdown. Daryl Byler, the center's executive director, sent the invitation to Senate and House majority and majority leader and whips.

The circle processes course, taught at SPI by internationally renowned circles practitioner Kay Pranis, is offered May 24-June 1, 2018. Twenty other courses are also taught, including several related to collaborative communication practices involving facilitation, truth-telling and restorative justice. Since 1994, SPI has hosted more than 3,200 people from 120 countries.

During the government shutdown, Senator Susan Collins – reportedly tired of members of the Common Sense Coalition talking over each other – initiated the use of a Masai talking stick. The discussion was not without mishap, when the passing of the stick resulted in slight damage to a glass elephant in Collins' office. After the incident, the group switched to using a small ball.

"How to have healthy discussions – to listen respectfully and wait your turn to speak – is exactly part of what we teach in our circle processes classes," said Bill Goldberg, SPI director. "But we don't have any glass elephants."

## **How can EMU be of service to your congregation and conference?**

Contact the church relations office to schedule the president, dean or a faculty guest speaker at 540-432-4597 or ChurchRelations@emu.edu.

### ***Central District Mennonite Conference Connections to EMU***

#### **Undergraduate Students**

14 students from CDMC were enrolled in the fall 2017 semester at EMU.

#### **Giving**

CDMC churches gave \$19,424 in matching grants to their students at EMU during the year ending June 2017.

- ▶ **Susan Schultz Huxman**,  
*president*
- ▶ **Nancy Heisey**, *associate dean*
- ▶ **Kirk Shisler**, *vice president of advancement*
- ▶ **Les Horning**, *director of seminary admissions*
- ▶ **Matt Ruth**, *director of admissions*

### **Our Mission**

***EMU prepares students  
to serve and lead in a  
global context.***

*Our community of  
learning integrates  
Christian faith, academic  
rigor, artistic creation  
and reflective practice  
informed by the liberal  
arts, interdisciplinary  
engagement, and  
cross-cultural encounter.*