

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

5-9-2012

Changing policy one performance at a time

University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news

Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Changing policy one performance at a time" (2012). *Campus News Archive*. 413.
https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/413

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Changing policy one performance at a time

Summary: University student helps with Land Stewardship Project play.

(May 9, 2012)-Deon Haider '14, Northfield, worked on the Land Stewardship Project, the goal of which is to inspire rural communities to rally around ideas of land ethics and preservation. The ultimate goal of the project is to change policy to make it easier for older farmers to pass on their farms to younger farmers, rather than selling to big agriculture businesses.

To accomplish this goal, the Land Stewardship Project performed a play entitled Look Who's Knocking. The play centers on an older farm couple who are planning to retire. They would like to pass on their land to a young couple, but are unsure if they can afford to do so, especially given the pressure they're under to sell their land for the highest price. After the play, there is time for discussion with community members.

Haider assisted with publicity for the shows, which toured Minnesota and the surrounding states. She was working specifically on publicity for the shows that took place in West Central Minnesota. She also helped organize follow-up meetings in the community, encouraging people to talk about what the play inspired them to do. "Making a personal connection with people is important," says Haider, who often called people in the area to invite them to the shows.

The job tied together Haider's interests perfectly. An environmental studies major and theatre minor, she would like to farm after graduation. Haider likes knowing who grows her food and adds that smaller farms are more sustainable. "There are always going to be rural areas and there are always going to be people living in them. It just makes sense to build a strong community around locally grown food from small producers." She says that "seeing people get inspired by the play is inspiring itself. People get emotional it really hits home for some of them. It's a very powerful experience."

Haider was connected to the Land Stewardship Project through a program coordinated by the University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns. The program helps to connect Morris students with area organizations in ways that will give students real-world experience while they help provide solutions to community needs.

Founded in 1982, the Land Stewardship Project's (LSP) mission is to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture, and to develop sustainable communities. The organization is growing, with more than 2,800 member households, two-thirds of whom live on farms or in small towns and cities. LSP has a strong presence in rural communities because of its strong record of achievement as an organization, and because the values and day-to-day choices of its members and how they live their lives connects with the mission and values of LSP. Members work with staff in each of LSP's three major programs: farm beginnings, community-based food systems, and policy and organizing.

Funding for this project was provided in part by the West Central Partnership. The U of M West Central Partnership is a legislatively funded initiative led by citizen leaders committed to leveraging University resources to sustain Minnesota's

natural resource based economy and empower citizen participation and leadership. U of M West Central Partnership has partnered with the Center for Small Towns sponsoring "Connecting Students and Communities" program that provides financial support to hire Morris students for community identified projects.

The University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program that serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, K-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize CST's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. CST's mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues while creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.